It's only Rock 'n' Roll

A man recently performed a simple experiment. He set up his drum kit in his town house and late in the evening began to do a little practice. Bang, crash, boom, boom, boom. Off he went. He was in the zone—grooving to his epic drum solo. But, not unsurprisingly, within a few minutes neighbours began to appear at his door. And their message was pretty simple, and very direct. So, the first part of the experiment found—bang on your drum kit late and night, meet your neighbours—very quickly.

On another night, he implemented the second part of his experiment. He played a very loud recording of a domestic dispute, complete with a woman's screams and crashing noises. This time? No one came. Not a soul. Not one neighbour stopped by to see if the woman needed help.

Maybe that is a little like our church. Set up a drum kit at the front of most Adventist Church’s, and you'll soon find that many are more than happy to have our say about it (in some churches, if you remove the drum kit, you'll have a similarly passionate debate). However, what do we do when there is domestic violence going on among church members? Do we talk about it openly and search for solutions? Do we ever preach or teach about preventing domestic violence? Or are we like the neighbors in the development—silent in the face of the epidemic of domestic violence not only all around us, but even within us? Next Sabbath has been put aside by the world church for a focus on the prevention of domestic violence. Let's prepare to use the Sabbath to address this evil head on. After all, if we have the time to have our say over drums, why not about an issue far more important?
You can view a video of the experiment on the RECORD website’s “On the Web” section or [here](#).

**One million men: one million promises**

More than one-third of all women worldwide—35.6 per cent—will experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, usually from a male partner. Michelle Abel calls men to stand up.

**Be the end**

Can domestic violence happen in your church? It can and it does. James Standish looks at the issue of abuse in the church.

**Read RECORD**

Domestic violence is a silent evil lurking in our midst. This powerful issue of RECORD looks at what churches and individuals can do to stamp it out.

**Watch/download InFocus**

Anticipation for the 7 September Australian Federal election is building and opinions are flowing thick and fast. Religious freedom expert James Standish weighs in on same-sex marriage, and we hear from author Roy Williams, who has researched the faith of every one of Australia’s
City transformed as thousands accept Jesus

During the program, crime rates and hospital admissions dropped, as half the population turned out to see the Last Empire.

South Pacific Division workers take on CHIP

It's one thing to have the health message; its quite another to live the health message. A third of the entire staff of the South Pacific Division are currently going through the CHIP program.

23 Prime Ministers. Nutritionist Sue Radd offers some relief with nature's wonder-beverage. Check it out!

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from James Standish, RECORD editor

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More than one-third of all women worldwide—35.6 per cent—will experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, usually from a male partner. This was one of the results from the first comprehensive study of its kind by the World Health Organization, reported in UK newspaper The Guardian on June 20. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Personal Safety Survey 2005, less than half of women in Australia who experience domestic violence report the assault to police. Additionally, only 30 per cent (18,000) of the estimated 60,000 adult sexual assaults are reported to police each year. In Papua New Guinea, two-thirds of women reported being constantly exposed to domestic violence and about 50 per cent experienced sexual assaults. The rates in the provinces of Chimbu and Western Highlands were 97 per cent and 100 per cent respectively. Let me spell that out clearly: of the women surveyed in Western Highlands, ALL of them said they had experienced gender-based violence.

I am a woman. I have two daughters. I am horrified by these numbers. We need to talk about how real violence is tearing apart the lives of women and children every day. Remember, many of those children are young boys. Violence against women affects everyone. This can’t be labelled a women’s issue. Overwhelmingly gender-based violence is violence perpetrated by men to women. This is something men need to talk about too. Some high profile men are speaking out publicly against gender-based violence. Sir Patrick Stewart (best known as a distinguished Shakespearean actor or a major player in the Star Trek universe—depending on your perspective on popular culture) survived a childhood where his father regularly beat his mother. He says: “The truth is that domestic violence and violence against women touches many of us. It is not a private matter. Behind closed doors it is shielded and hidden and it only intensifies. It is protected by silence—everyone's silence. Violence against women is learned. Each of us must examine—and change—the ways in which our own behaviour might contribute to, enable, ignore or excuse all such forms of violence. I promise to do so, and to invite other men and allies to do the same.”

In the city of Dallas, Texas, Mayor Mike Rawlings recently made the following public announcement: “Make no mistake: men's violence against women is a men's issue—it's our problem. And I'm here to say we've had enough of women being disrespected, and we won't tolerate it any longer. It's not only about not being violent; it's about changing a culture that says ‘violence is okay’. I promise to stop laughing at jokes we've all participated in. I promise to speak out against domestic violence. And I'm asking men in Dallas—and everywhere—to do the same. Let's make our homes, and our cities, safe for all.”

Michael Kimmel is among the leading researchers and writers on men and masculinity in the world today. His books include The Politics of Manhood (1996) and The History of Men (2005). He writes: “Because it is—some—men who commit violence against women, it must be men who change. By this we mean not only those men who use violence in their relationships. We also mean the majority of us who have remained silent. Men dominate parliaments, pulpits and police forces. When we are silent, we allow violence to continue. Men today support equality not only because we know it is fair and right, but because it will enable the women in our lives to be safer and to exercise their power—and because it will inspire us to be better fathers, friends and partners. Which means: we will all have better lives.”

The above quotes were taken from the One Million Men: One Million Promises campaign. The campaign is providing a way for men to...
publicly state what they will do to stop gender-based violence. On the website the promises made by ordinary men in many countries scroll through forming a wall of hope. The campaign provides the following guidelines that all of us can use to help stop gender-based violence in our communities.

Start by asking yourself the following questions:
• Am I doing all I can to challenge inequality in my family, classroom, office, sports team, church or group of friends?
• Can I start sharing chores and responsibilities with my sisters?
• Will I call out friends (or online commenters) who disrespect women?
• Does my company need anti-sexual harassment/discrimination training?
• How can I safely interrupt the violent argument I overhear in my building or witness on the train or bus?
• How can I be a role model for younger boys?
• What action can I take, just in the world I inhabit and influence?
• How can I be accountable?

During June I spent some time in Papua New Guinea, working with ADRA on its strategic planning. Following a week of intense discussion and prayer about the vision and key areas for ADRA’s projects in PNG over the next five years, staff wrote the following vision statement: “For the five years between 2013 until 2018 our vision is to be a committed and empowered team of professionals, providing quality services characterised by innovative programming, gender sensitivity and sustainable relationships with partners.”

In response to the frightening reality of gender-based violence in PNG, ADRA has chosen not to regulate gender issues to be dealt with by a women’s program. Instead ADRA PNG has placed gender sensitivity right up there in its organisational vision, to be included in all its projects with communities. This vision is endorsed by the mostly male ADRA PNG Board, and endorsed by all the leadership of ADRA PNG—male and female.

Jackson Katz is an educator, author, filmmaker and social theorist who has long been recognised as one of America’s leading anti-sexist male activists. He recently made a stirring speech concerning men’s involvement in stopping gender-based violence. I watched this speech with some ADRA PNG staff during a break in the planning sessions. He made the following call: “We need more men with the guts, with the courage, with the strength, with the moral integrity to break our complicit silence and challenge each other and stand with women and not against them.”

Amen!

Links:
1. http://breakthrough.tv/ringthebell/
2. http://www.ted.com/talks/jackson_katz_violence_against_women_it_s_a_men_s_issue.html

Michelle Abel is an international community development consultant based in Sydney. She is currently working on projects in Papua New Guinea and Rwanda. She previously lived in Mongolia and Papua New Guinea, where she worked for ADRA.
She’s a global celebrity; a best-selling author. She’s fabulously wealthy; and wonderfully glamorous. She comes from a world of privilege and power. Both sets of her grandparents were successful in business. Her father was Margaret Thatcher’s Chancellor of the Exchequer and now sits in the British House of Lords. Her brother edited London’s Sunday Telegraph. She has the right to use “the Honourable” as a prefix to her name. And if all of that were not enough, man can she cook!

Yes, I am talking about the one and only Nigella Lawson. You can have your My Kitchen Rules and MasterChefs, you can keep your Gordon Ramsays and Jamie Olivers. In my mind, Nigella reigns supreme as the queen of cuisine—even if I wouldn’t eat 90 per cent of what she makes . . . And so it came as a terrible shock when photos of her husband grabbing her around the neck during an argument emerged recently. If a woman as rich and powerful, as glamorous and famous, as Nigella Lawson can be physically mistreated in public by her husband, can any woman be safe?

According to experts, the answer is “no”. Any way we can slice or dice the demographics—by income, ethnicity, location or education—we’ll find sexual and physical violence present in a shockingly high percentage of homes. And although some studies find that such violence is less prevalent in the homes of regular church attendees, it certainly exists.

I know this personally, because a few years ago we attended a lovely Adventist church very near the General Conference. It had nice padded seats, a pristine white interior and a crisp churchy exterior. Everything was in its place, and everything rolled on time. The sermons were good, the people friendly and the potlucks bountiful. It was, I suppose, an ideal largish church, in a beautiful upscale suburb; just the kind of place where anyone could slot in and feel at home. But there was a problem. A huge problem.

You see, whispers started swirling around the church that some of the men of the congregation were in the habit of beating their wives at home. But somehow it was a problem our church family could never seem to address.

There were many reasons to stay silent. A whisper isn’t, I suppose, a fact. And when it comes to internal family matters, who wants to be the one who wades in? Then there was the cultural issue—it was claimed that this was just the way the men from one of the ethnic groups in our multicultural church treated their women. Would speaking up be an act of cultural imperialism? The men thought it was really the territory of women to deal with. The women, on the other hand, felt powerless to address the male abusers. And so it rolled on, year after year. Quiet, discreet, out of sight and, if at all possible, out of mind.

I suppose during those years we sat through 300 sermons. We had Christology, hamartiology, soteriology, the occasional sermon pertaining to ecclesiology and, of course, good doses of eschatology. But never a mention of the cancer among us. We had our disputes. About music. About church expenses. About clapping in church. But never about domestic violence.

I look back at those years and I’m ashamed. I’m ashamed at myself for not having the guts or the wisdom to raise the issue publicly. I’m ashamed at my church family for not having the focus, or even the language, to candidly address the problem. I’m ashamed that I was part
of a community—a church family—that failed women who desperately needed us to say something. I know the past is the past and I can’t undo it, but what about the future?

This Sabbath, August 24, is the Adventist “enditnow” Sabbath. It’s a Sabbath set aside by the General Conference to focus openly and honestly on the debilitating evil that is domestic violence. It’s a time for every pastor, every elder, every adult Sabbath School teacher, to raise our voices against the physical and sexual abuse of women in society at large, but most particularly, the abuse of women in Adventist families. If we never acknowledge it, if we never talk about it, if we never confront it, we can never end it. By the grace of God, let’s have the courage to address this evil head on. Together. And together, let’s end it now.
Family conference celebrates sex in marriage

The annual National Christian Family conference, provided by the Church’s Family Ministries Department, was held in late July at the Fox Valley Community Centre in Wahroonga. The conference was attended by psychologists, social workers, counsellors, pastors and students who work in the people-helping professions.

“This conference is designed to provide current research-based information to enhance and enrich the knowledge and skills of people helpers from both the SDA and non-SDA communities,” said Trafford Fischer, Director of Family Ministries (SPD) and conference convenor. “This year was no exception, and we were very pleased with the contribution made by this year’s presenters, Dr Cliff and Joyce Penner, from Pasadena, California.”

The conference theme for 2013 was sexuality and intimacy in marriage.

Dr Cliff and Joyce Penner, from Pasadena, California.
It’s one thing to have the health message; it’s quite another to live the health message. From caffeinated drinks through to sugary desserts, from fatty foods through to inactivity, many Adventists fall far short of converting head knowledge into life practice. And there are few places that is more obvious than in the South Pacific Division, where the abundant life has made many of the team rather abundant in size.

So, like any good employer, the South Pacific Division is doing something about it. Specifically, it is offering the CHIP program to its employees. A third of the entire staff of the South Pacific Division are currently going through the CHIP program. “We’re delighted at how the program is going,” states Paul Rankin, the CHIP program director—who himself lost 30 kilos with a CHIP lifestyle. “The level of interest and enthusiasm among the SPD team has exceeded my expectations. And the results we’re getting already are very encouraging.”

Sharon Martin, from the Discovery Centre, Paul Rankin, CHIP facilitator and Jarrod Stackelroth, associate editor of RECORD.

“I’m one and a half weeks into it, and I’ve lost 3 1/2 kilos,” states Jarrod Stackelroth. “I’m excited to be improving my health with the support of friends and colleagues. Some of the information is new and startling, and some I already knew. But I think the most important thing, is that it gives me impetus to make the changes that I was putting off or making excuses about. I’ve always done the cooking at home, and CHIP has focused me on making good food. Last night when I got home, I whipped up the CHIP creamy mushroom recipe in 15 minutes, boiled corn on the cob, and made a four-bean salad. It was delicious.”

Even the very trim Mark Baines, of Adventist Employment fame, is attending CHIP. “Look, I’m coming because I have a lot to learn. Being a good weight is one thing, but there is much more to living a healthy life. You can be trim and still unhealthy. I was raised in a healthy home – but I’m like anyone, I love chocolate, ice cream, etc. So just because I was raised healthy doesn’t mean I live healthy. I’m in the CHIP program because I want to experience optimal health.”
Theodora Amuimula agrees, “I want to improve my eating habits, so the part of the program that I’m most interested in is the cooking demonstrations. I’ve learned that lots of things I thought were healthy are not that good. Paul Rankin explained to us, for example, that you get 6 oranges worth of the fruit’s sugar in a glass of orange juice and none if its fiber. Much better to eat a couple of oranges—it will fill you up more, and weigh you down less.” The SPD CHIP program runs through to mid-October.

To find out about putting on a CHIP program at your church or workplace, visit http://chiphealth.org.au/. 