

Summary Report sent to workers in Western Canada Provinces

Sep 17

WINGS Note: This report was prepared by one of the friends.

Scope of the CSA/SA Problems

Current data collected by reports of CSA after March 2023:

As of July 14th, 2023, there are credible allegations against 550 abusers.

What this means is that per capita, we have surpassed the Catholic Church for abusers. This means that the chances of knowing an abuser, having had them in our homes, or meeting with them in fellowship are extremely high. Every family has been touched by this CSA crisis in one way or another.

Each perpetrator has a minimum of 2 separate allegations, meaning there is a minimum of 1500 victims. (and reports continue to roll in).

What this means, is that in every meeting, there will be a minimum of 1 or more survivors in that meeting. Every meeting needs to be a safe place for our survivors. This means that family, friends and those we meet with have been fighting battles we did not know about. Learn how to support them, the proper language to use and be an advocate for change. It is impossible to know the exact number, partly because SA and CSA are rarely reported. (Less than half of SA cases and only about one in 10 CSA cases are ever reported to authorities.) Based on statistics about how many victim-survivors a single perpetrator abuses, these reports could indicate 5,000-8,000 people subjected to SA or CSA within the Truth.

Around 21 workers in the US and Canada have been removed.

What this means, is we have an unusually high number of perpetrators in our ministry. This means that we have been left vulnerable and unprotected as we have been encouraged to trust our workers. This also means that steps are being taken to listen, learn and remove those from their place of ministry due to allegations.

At least 15 or more workers have left on their own due to mental health or personal convictions (just in 2023 so far).

What this means is our workers are under a large amount of stress. These conversations have been triggering for them. They have been encouraged to continue with gospel meetings and conventions despite their own mental health. Those who have tried to speak up have been pushed to the side. They are not experts in the field of CSA, marriage counseling, or financial matters, yet over the years they have been made responsible for advising in those situations. We need to normalize taking rest/breaks from the work, if they need a rest or are dealing with issues that hinder their ability to preach an honest transparent message. I hope every worker realizes that we love and support them regardless of their place.

8 or more elders have had public allegations made against them.

What this means is we have been choosing dangerous men to serve as elders. Is it possible that we have been choosing based on home size and parking rather than the qualities we read of in 1 Peter 5. We have 'forgiven' past CSA sins and given eldership to those who should not be in the presence of children. Creating an unsafe environment for children, survivors and vulnerable people.

Some CSA crimes happened 20 years ago so some people think it should stay in the past.

When you say, 'it happened 20 years ago', you are saying that you don't care about the trauma of the survivor, which lasts well beyond 20 years. Survivor trauma lasts a person's whole life. When you say, 'it happened 20 years ago', you are saying that you are not concerned about the predatory habits of an abuser and that you think it is reasonable to put children at risk rather than hold an abuser accountable to the consequences that are the result of the abusive behavior. God's arm is not shortened to abusers. An abuser can find help from God. They don't need to do that by putting innocent children in harm's way.

6+ Conventions have been canceled and/or adjusted this year (some by workers, some by the owners).

What this means is many convention owners are not willing for the liability that comes with a convention ground where predators are allowed to attend. This means that convention owners understand the seriousness of the crimes and are willing to take a break from convention this year until our fellowship is in a safer place.

98% of CSA/SA allegations are proven true (only 2% are false allegations).

What this means is if someone discloses abuse to you, you should believe them. Chances are extremely high they are telling the truth. Be supportive. Have empathy. Of the 2% that are false, they typically have to do with custody arrangements and money. Neither of which applies to these situations. Coming forward with an allegation takes immense bravery. There is little reason for someone to face the obstacles of reporting SA and CSA if they were not abused.

Some People say that everyone should be innocent until proven guilty.

Actually, a guilty person is always guilty, whether it is proven or not. The law in the USA and other countries is that a person is "presumed innocent" of a criminal offense in a court of law until the state proves him/her guilty. This does not mean that a charged person isn't guilty and/or dangerous to others. This statement is not meant to inform whether or not individuals set boundaries in order to keep people safe. The wrong statement speaks of absolute innocence; the correct statement is limited to a legal presumption of innocence applied during prosecution.

Only 16% of CSA allegations are ever reported to law enforcement. Less than 4% ever lead to conviction due to statute of limitation laws and other factors. It takes 20 to 40 years on average for survivors of CSA to come forward.

What this means is that survivors face a lot of barriers when it comes to reporting. Our court system is not victim friendly. There is often no 'proof' and it is hard to take to court. Survivors take years to process the trauma they experienced as the result of abuse as children. And even as adults, are plagued with shame and doubts. They want to be heard, but going through the courts is triggering and retraumatizing for survivors. We cannot build a culture of safety by relying solely on law enforcement to handle everything, and expect that survivors of abuse will come forward quickly and simply. Often we must use discernment to determine that certain behaviors pose risks to others, even if law enforcement hasn't been involved. Those behaviors have consequences and those consequences need to be upheld to protect children.

What does this mean for Canada?

The perpetrator count for Canada was 50+ as of a few weeks ago. Canada has no statute of limitations and therefore survivors can come forward to law enforcement with no time limits. (We know that trauma has no time constraints so Canada is ahead of many countries here). What this also means is if we are knowingly putting alleged perpetrators into meetings with children and in peoples' homes, we too can be held accountable by the courts. That is where the push to listen and take every allegation seriously comes from, to

have meetings be taken out of homes of perpetrators and asking those with allegations to not attend meetings or conventions.

This also means that we need our leaders to be educated on disclosures. We don't expect you to be experts—but we ask that you are willing to listen and seek advice from trained professionals. We have many abusers who are currently in meetings with survivors, children, and potential victims. Without relationships with the experts, who have experience in dealing with sexual offenders, a pastor or community can make grievous decisions that may unintentionally wound a survivor. We ask that you respond to disclosure of abuse with love and concern for their safety and the safety of others. We ask that you not shame those who are speaking out and asking for meeting changes.

Last of all this means that other states and provinces are beginning to listen. They are realizing that we need to prioritize the survivors, those who have been silenced so long. They are removing those with convictions—past and present, and those with allegations of CSA/SA from eldership, meeting and conventions. They see this is for the safety of children, survivors and vulnerable people. They are consulting professionals to create procedures to ensure that everyone knows what to do in the case of CSA/SA. They are putting in boundaries to ensure we keep our youth safe. And they are spending time listening to those who have been hurt so deeply. Trauma has no time limit and no miracle cure. They are also holding worker workshops to educate themselves and learn about selfcare.