



# Royal Commission Post



What will, “The Royal Commission into the Institutional Responses to Childhood Sexual Abuse” do to the standing of our church?

There has been much debate in social media today about the Royal Commission and its possible ramifications on the church. As an organisation, we are gearing up to be heavily involved in the therapeutic recovery of survivors from all denominations and organisations that have been linked to this epidemic.

It is worthy to make several points about this period in our history.

What will the Royal Commission ultimately do with all the information being gathered?

The terms of reference are far reaching but the aim is in the title. The Royal Commission is primarily concerned with the responses to this issue by the institutions involved. It is patently clear that there have been many cover-ups in the past and present. Most institutions have not handled this well in the past and our own church is no exception. When the commission delivers its findings, the government of the day will be forced to act on its recommendations. Why? Because the outrage, publicity and weight of public opinion will force it to do so.

This is good for our organisations and for the people affected by this sinful scourge. Guidelines will be stringent and people will complain. So be it. The reasons it has come to this is because for too long we have been happy to push this under the carpet, for reasons of self and church interest. So if it affects the way we do things in the future, we have only ourselves to blame. The RC has certainly put the long awaited spotlight on an issue that has choked our prisons, health and social welfare systems for decades. There are people literally rotting away in institutions and families that are like rotting away and all because we didn't want to deal with it or didn't know how to deal with it.

This church has thousands of lost lambs and it's all because they suffered at the hands of predators from within and the pious indignation of the perfect Christian that has infected our pews for decades. Our children have not only been physically raped and institutionally raped. They have also been spiritually raped by the well-meaning perfectionists who refused to take their side and protect the church at all cost.

## **The RC will be Good for the Church and for Christianity**

Why?

1. God wants His church cleaned out and cleaned up. He loves His church as a Groom loves his bride. But these events have the Groom struggling with the knowledge that His wife is committing adultery.

2. Better policies will permeate through the system. We have made great advances already and Pastor David Robertson and the Safe Places team have made huge advances in protection. But they can only do what they are permitted to do and that is nowhere near enough.

3. It will give survivors—and I refuse to call them victims because they have overcome incredible pain with courage—the long awaited voice they need; the chance to be heard without judgement, and yes, to be compensated properly for the trauma that was *permitted* to go unchecked in their lives.

4. It will help to stem the abject naiveté and pious indignation that comes from far too many in the church that falsely believe this can't happen in our church and that the victim must have encouraged it. Perhaps now the people will stand with love and support for the lost lambs and they can return safely to a flock that is not only well guarded by a good shepherd but to a flock that is loving, graceful and non judgemental. Can this be the Adventist church?

In closing, I wish to say this.

The church will confront the Royal Commission.

The church will be changed for the better as a result.

The church we love so much may become a place where the spiritually and physically raped can return to Christ in the fullness of fellowship in a healthy church.

Will the church survive?

Of course it will, it's God's church and He will protect it. But He wants it cleaned out and He wants it to love the children and the lost. If it can't or won't do that, it will die. But then it will die anyway unless we confront the evil that lives in our churches. The incidence of the abuse of children is no higher in the church than in the community at large with one proviso. The church is a place where vulnerable people come to heal and it is in this environment that certain individuals see as being target rich. When all this comes out, and it will, the very best way forward is for us all to admit our mistakes

and embrace real healing; not pretend healing. It will require us to keep our petty little judgements to ourselves and love those who have the courage to come forward. It beholds us all to practice the Jesus Response. Ladies and Gentlemen, if there is no Grace to be found in what we do then we won't be in it and neither should you.

God will bless and protect His church and He will have it clean or there will be the devil to pay. Literally.

God bless.

*Graham Hood.*