



VIOLENCE AND THE FAMILY



EDITORIAL

A family is at the heart of the Christian story. As this Newsletter goes to print, Christians all over the world are once again turning their gaze on Mary and Joseph, and their new-born child. It's an image which speaks of warmth and unconditional love. It's an attractive image, even though we know that for so many families in our world, it seems a false image – an elusive image – because it doesn't reflect the reality of their experience. That image of warmth and safety breathing its holiness doesn't reflect the experience of so many children traumatised and beaten down by violence in their own home. That image of powerful and unconditional love doesn't reflect the experience of women who hide the misery of domestic violence, and their bruises, for fear of being judged and ostracised by their communities.

This Newsletter is the first of a series of three editions looking at the universal phenomenon of violence in the family – how it is experienced, how the churches are responding, and how further work can be developed. It is clear from the articles in this edition that, for too long, elements of cultural heritage, and of Christian and other faith traditions, have been skewed in such a way as to permit violence in the family as a private matter and to condone an imbalance of power in the home that leads to a self-perpetuating cycle of oppressive behaviours. There are stories in this Newsletter about cultural perceptions of women as inferior to men, or the wife being the property of her husband, and

stories about the sheer breadth of child abuse, from beating and child labour to trafficking, sexual abuse and even sacrificial killing.

Even so, these stories speak of hope as people bravely speak up and speak out. Workshops, projects and programmes are bubbling up through the hiddenness and stigma of family violence. Positive cultural traditions are being reclaimed and taught to the new generations. Scripture is being explored and expounded afresh. The sacredness of our children and grandchildren is being reasserted. Jesus' words are entering more deeply into our conscience, "Whoever receives one of these, receives me".

There is hope, but there is also so much more to do. Every church, every community and every village needs to be aware and equipped to promote safe families. The second Newsletter in this three-edition series will report on IAFN's recent regional consultation for Oceania on the theme of *Violence and the Family*. Hosted by the Family Centre in Lower Hutt, Aotearoa New Zealand, the consultation gathered together practitioners in family ministries from across the region. The report will describe the process of the meeting and offer it as a model action plan for any church, diocese or Province wanting to get going with the work of bringing family violence to an end.

The third Newsletter will look at some of the concrete outcomes of the Oceania consultation and give examples of just some of the work being done in response to family violence, in churches and dioceses in other parts of the Anglican Communion.

All our approaches to violence and the family will need us to let go of the denial and disbelief, and the clinging to power that distorts right relationship and holds us back. And in letting go, we will be free to stoop down to embrace the baby in Bethlehem lying in a feeding trough – God's love, incarnate and vulnerable, and longing for the flourishing of all creation.

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ZAMBIA



A brighter future for girls?

Photo: Sarah Jupe/Mothers' Union.

In September 2009, along with 29 participants from other Christian denominations, I was privileged to attend a Gender Workshop in Mansa, the Provincial Centre for Luapula here in Zambia. The workshop was sponsored by Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation in conjunction with the Norwegian Church Agency.

The theme of *Violence and the Family* was ably tackled with the facilitators presenting issues of gender-based violence in both the private and public spheres: from the first category marital rape, manipulation within the home, sexual harassment, domestic violence, confinement, emotional abuse and dowry abuse were highlighted. In the second, the focus was on abuses such as sexual assault, rape, trafficking, prostitution, pornography, manipulation at work or at school.

After the workshop, I called church leaders comprising Seventh Day Adventists, Roman Catholic, United Church of Zambia,

It was shocking to learn of what happens in homes and churches. Women are battered by their husbands and are not supposed to challenge the abuse because men are heads of homes, women are not equal to men and because the African culture demands that women should obey in silence. Women are not allowed to speak in some churches because the Bible says so.

Pentecost Church and Anglicans to gather at St Michael and All Angels Cathedral, Chipili Mission Station, where I am Dean. Twenty leaders attended a shortened version of the violence workshop.

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supposed to challenge the abuse because men are heads of homes, women are not equal to men and because the African culture demands that women should obey in silence. Women are not allowed to speak in some churches because the Bible says so.

Also shocking was that some men did not tell anybody that their wives beat them because of the humiliation they would suffer being beaten by a woman. Worse still was that some women had been raped by strangers but kept silent. Children are not spared either; they are abused through defilement, child labour and trafficking.

As Church leaders, we then sat down and critically looked at the issues and agreed that even some churches use scriptures repressively to perpetuate violence in the

family. Advocacy steps needed to be taken to curb this violence by sensitising the community. We therefore established the *Chipili Interdenominational Pastors/Leaders Council* which goes round the churches and the community to make clear to them the negative impact of violence on the family.

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The project endeavours to:

- mobilise the religious sector to join the local efforts to combat violence in the family
- work vigorously to raise the challenges of violence in the family
- train 300 key community activists in the three chiefdoms surrounding the Chipili Anglican Mission Station
- funds permitting, the project needs to build the capacity of religious institutions and leaders in combating violence in the family.

Violence within the family greatly affects every human being where the violence is done. It is wrong to perpetuate it. We should not be like Cain in Genesis 4 who killed his brother and said "Am I my brother's keeper?"

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Woman bearing burdens.

Photo: Sarah Jupe/Mothers' Union.

In Malawi, as in other countries, there is violence in families. Culturally, women are seen as inferior to men. This starts from childhood where boys are seen as stronger than girls and continues to adulthood when, in marriage, men are superior to women.

Elderly women, when giving pre-marriage counselling, used to say that the head of the family is the husband. Some

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irresponsible husbands would take this for granted and start regarding the wife as inferior and with no say in the home.

There are so many cases of violence against women. For example, in rural homes both husband and wife would be going to the farm; the woman would wake up very early to go and draw water, make sure the compound is swept, prepare food for the children and leave for the farm. She would be carrying the hoes, water to drink and at times a baby on her back and be heavily pregnant whilst the husband is carrying nothing. When coming back after farming, she would fetch firewood, wild vegetables and carry the hoes – again with firewood on her head. When arriving home, the wife would go straight to the kitchen to prepare food for the family and water for the husband to bathe. After food, the husband would be resting or go for beer-drinking with friends, whilst the wife will be thinking

of what to prepare for the evening meal. The best meal would be given to the husband. In our local language we say “*mamuna mpa mimba*” meaning that for you to keep a man you should make sure he is properly fed.

After harvesting the crops which they were farming together, they would take some to the market for sale, but the money would be kept by the husband who would at the end misuse it – on gambling, beer or other women. When he comes home, he would expect the wife to give him food, and if she asks him about the money she would be called all sorts of bad names. If she insists, the end result would be a fight – she would be beaten and not able to enjoy what she had toiled for. A few years ago, a husband chopped off his wife's hands.

There is also violence against children – we read in the newspapers, listen to radio reports, that a father has raped his own daughter or an uncle raped his niece. In the past, these crimes used to pass unnoticed because the victims' mothers would not report them to avoid embarrassing their husbands and the entire family.

In the past, a girl child was deprived of education because of school fees. The family preferred sending a boy to school, saying the girl would get married and will be looked after by her husband. Boys were also regarded as superiors like their fathers in the home and treated the same. The girl would be cooking for

the school-going boy and helping her mother with household chores.

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These days things have changed – the Government, the NGOs and the Church talk much against these malpractices. There are many workshops being organised on violence against women and child abuse to sensitise on the dangers of such violence. Victims are told to report the matter to the police and are encouraged to attend counselling sessions at designated centres that have been opened to offer moral support to them and their families. Primary school education is free, so that all the children, boys and girls, have the right to education. We see girls graduating from Universities with good grades and some are in good jobs.

For the Church, The Mothers' Union has not been dormant on these issues. We have been organising seminars to sensitise members on the dangers of such violence and encouraging them to report the matters to the police or their village elders. Another improvement is that offenders such as rapists are imprisoned.

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ZIMBABWE



Young man accused of the rape of his 8 year old cousin.

Photo: George Philipas/Twenty Ten/Panos Photos.

Violence against women and children within the family is caused by many factors such as poverty, lack of parental love, immaturity (early marriage), lack of education, and insecurity.

Violence against women and children has a long history: history of suffering; of being marginalised and treated as subhuman beings in their society or community by their own people. Most of the perpetrators are people who are very close to these women and children, or members of the same family. Some critics point to the fact that perpetrators of violence against women and children are failures in life and have no respect in the community.

I am going to tell you a story – it is my testimony against violence against women and children in Zimbabwe. As a pastor in one village where I was ministering, a certain woman was abused by her husband throughout their marriage. We shall call

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the husband M. She decided to run away and left her husband with the three children. M. was also a very dangerous father. He violated and assaulted his own children. He started raping his 14-year-old daughter. She was in form Two at the time. The girl appealed for help in the community and at school but no one responded. M. raped her until she became pregnant and then made a plan to abort the pregnancy.

M. was a cruel man. He sent his other two children to a shop 10 km away to buy beer so he could put his plan into action when there was no one nearby. M. locked his daughter in the house and started beating her in the stomach with a heavy stick. The young boys who had been sent to buy beer returned and found their sister being beaten, crying inside the house. They ran to find help in the community for

their sister, but before help got to her M. had beaten his daughter to death; she died in the house.

The daughter was my parishioner. I was a visiting priest at that outstation in a very remote rural area. Her duties in the church included cleaning the church and reading the bible. Members of the church buried her. As I am writing, M. is in prison.

What could be done to prevent violence against women and children?

In my opinion, it is high time that the Church has well-trained counsellors. The victims of this violence suffer psychological problems, socially, emotionally and mentally. Furthermore, in

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Violence against women and children should also be addressed with young people at an early age. It is important that young people are well informed and receive proper education on the subject and given equal status within the families, in churches, schools and working places.

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PAKISTAN



Brother and sister: the focus is on the boy.

Domestic violence – also known as domestic abuse or spousal abuse – is very much part of Pakistani culture. In a wider sense, domestic violence is understood as family violence, often used to include child abuse, elder abuse, and other violent acts such as beating and battering among family members.

The family is often considered a sanctuary – a place where individuals seek love, safety, security and shelter; but the evidence shows that it is also a place where dangers live and breed some of the most drastic forms of violence. It is mostly women and their children who become victims of domestic violence, which is generally physical; however men can also be victims of violence, which is generally verbal and psychological.

All forms of abuse have the potential to lead to mental illness, self-harm, and even attempts at suicide. There is no single factor to account for violence perpetrated against family life in Pakistan. Various interrelated factors, such as cultural, economic, legal, political and religious, can be seen to lead to these abuses.

Cultural

Gender-specific socialisation plays an important role. A society which comes from traditions of male domination naturally gives more facilities to the man. Division of professions based on the sex becomes a source of violence too. Quite often, women want to contribute to the society at large but are compelled by other members of the family, mainly male, to confine their role within the homes. So called honour-killing has a substantial acceptance in society; families that kill “for honour” will threaten girls and women if they refuse to cover their heads, their faces, or their bodies or act as their family’s domestic servant. Wearing makeup or Western clothing is also unacceptable, and choosing friends (particularly boys) can sometimes become the cause of killing in the name of honour. “Karo-kari”¹ is part of the cultural tradition in Pakistan. It is supposed to be prosecuted as an ordinary murder, but in

practice police and prosecutors often ignore it. Although it is unconstitutional in Pakistan and the senior judiciary take action when it happens, it still enjoys a strong social backing in some areas. There are many other cultural norms and traditions like the customs of marriage (bride price/dowry) which need to be transformed. The acceptability of violence as a means to resolve conflict also creates more and more violence.

Economic

In most cases of domestic violence, the man will be the guilty person, and the reason for this is economic. In Pakistan, it is usually the man who manages the financial needs of the family, looking after his wife and children and his elderly parents who are all economically dependent upon him. The man, often the only or main source of financial support, may get tempestuous when he feels the resources raised by him are being

mismanaged. If he gives 2,000 Rupees (\$23) to his wife and she spends 1,000 rupees (\$11.50) to purchase a Shalwar suit and he then slaps her on the face; this would be viewed as a perfectly ordinary reaction.

When men cannot meet the financial needs of their families because of being jobless, or supporting the escalating expense of a big family, if the wife or other female members of the family (especially unmarried sisters) offer to help, this may not be welcomed. Sometimes men think that the women just want to spend time out of their homes. The money they bring in is not

considered as valuable or blessed as the money earned by the man. It is a pity that the men feel the need to take on all the pressure to support the family financially because this can lead to great mental stress.

There is an increasing rate of suicide of whole families. There was a time when it was possible for one member of the family to meet all the expenses, but now it is not so easy as the life and demands have totally changed.

It is a calamity that the religious extremists target children from poor families and explain that their religious organisation will give them an education. Poor people are easily convinced that this is a good thing because of their economic difficulties. Pakistan is one of the countries where child labour is a major problem. Certainly children want to study and enjoy their life instead of working and earning money for their parents. But the children’s education and other necessities of life are not easy to pay for with just one salary. Female literacy is just 35%. For males it is 61%. Parents who cannot afford to send all their children to school, usually send the boys and keep the girls at home. In rural areas of Pakistan, boys are three times more likely than girls to complete their primary education.

Today, there is an improvement because of the women’s rights organisations. Educated and skilful women are building a working class where there are more job opportunities in multinational companies for women; the economic pressure is then removed from the men and helps them to see alternatives especially within their households.

Legal

Most victims of domestic violence have a lesser legal status either by written law and/or by practice. Laws regarding divorce, child custody, maintenance and inheritance bring in a sense of insecurity and can later cause violence in the families. The Haddood Laws, seeking to establish what supporters saw as an Islamic system of justice, were promulgated in 1979 but the progressive voice in Pakistan and the international community raised a voice against it, so in 2006 the Women Protection Bill was passed by the Parliament to make amendments. Legal literacy is at a very low level and the victims of domestic violence are often not aware of their legal rights. Some victims are content when they find that the level of violence they face is not as bad as that faced by others in their community and so do nothing about it. To achieve the rights provided in the law is not straight forward. The process is quite complicated and expensive; moreover insensitive treatment of women and girls by the police and judiciary sometimes creates hopelessness among the victims of domestic violence.

Political

The military has long played an active part in the politics of Pakistan, so the democratic culture in the country is not nurtured. The feudal class and the rich people have a strong hold on politics. They are not victims of domestic violence as the ordinary people are, so there has not been a serious and continuous struggle against domestic violence.



Family members are sometimes used as domestic servants and women servants are particularly vulnerable.

Religious

Pakistani society is largely dominated by religion. The majority of the population belongs to Islam, and the relationship between religion and domestic violence is disputed. Most human rights organisations claim that the religion (Islam) is predominately misused to support the violence. Cultural norms are also an important factor.

Religion is always interpreted in a way that it becomes a source of domestic violence. Women always feel that they are one of its victims. A number of laws have been constituted which seem to be supported by the Islamic religious traditions. Christian women and those who belong to other minority groups have very strong reservations about these laws.

Women, who are beaten by their husband or other male members of their family, usually hide their bruises and do not go to the doctor or tell anyone because there is a fear that if they tell their story it will affect the social respect of their family. Even if they risk telling someone about the violence they have faced in their home, doctors may well not support them or

expect to give them medical care, because they would not want to get into any trouble with the male members of the victims' families.

Summary of the problems

- The subordination of women is effectively written into the law. Women have limited or no recourse when they are victimised by domestic violence.
- Men view their wives as property, and in fact certain interpretations of Islamic law and the cultural norms allow husbands to control and physically discipline their wives.
- Evidence suggests that a majority of Pakistani women are victims of domestic violence.
- The Pakistani legal system is comprised of tribal codes, Islamic law, Indo-British judicial traditions and customary traditions that have created an atmosphere of oppression around women, where any advantage or opportunity offered to women by one law, is cancelled out by one or more of the others.
- Pakistan does not have any specific legislation against domestic violence.
- Even egregious crimes such as "honour-killings", where a man murders his wife for apparent or suspected infidelity, almost always receive minimal punishment.
- Women who bring claims of assault often face bias within the justice system from police officers, prosecutors and judges who are more likely to believe that a woman is trying to "frame" a man or that domestic violence is a private matter that is sanctioned by the law and culture.
- A woman claiming sexual assault is more likely to be jailed for fornication or adultery than to be successful in her suit.
- Marriage is a complete defence to a charge of rape.

Ways Forward

Domestic violence is a complex problem and a number of factors are behind it. The government, NGOs and the international community are working to change the situation. Christian churches also address the menace of domestic violence within their limited resources. Following are a few points which could help to bring change in Christian circles, and to become a template for the wider society.

- Parish priests, pastors and leaders of the congregations can play an important role by adopting themes on domestic violence for their preaching and Bible studies.
- Find ways to encourage the victims to share their problems with others, neither to hide nor to allow others to continue with it.
- To encourage the victims to become a member or associate of the organisations that stand up for them.
- To challenge the cultural norms and traditions that support domestic violence.
- To encourage the theological colleges and clergy training institutes to introduce courses on domestic violence, and to produce a sound theological material in this regard.
- Seminars and training programmes for counselling of the victims, family doctors, community workers and also for the perpetrators of domestic violence.

The Christians in Pakistan are not in a big number – rather a tiny minority, politically, economically and socially deprived. Thus, to create a violence free environment where mutual respect, justice and equality exist, where citizens enjoy peace and freedom and families become agents of peace and love in society, Christian churches should join hands with other organisations working against domestic violence. Ordained and lay people need to work together so that pulpit and pew together become the source of restoration by giving a practical example of the Magnificat (the Song of Mary Luke 1:46-56):

For the Mighty One has done great things for me holy is his name.

His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.

He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.

He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.

Endnotes

'Karo-kari is part of cultural tradition in Pakistan and is a compound word literally meaning "black male" (Karo) and "black female" (Kari), in metaphorical terms for adulterer and adulteress. Once labelled as a Kari, male family members get the self-authorized justification to kill her and the co-accused Karo to restore family honour, although in the majority of cases the victim is female, while the murderers are male.

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ENGLAND



Women hide that they are abused. Only the image in the mirror shows the bruises.

Mothers' Union Guildford Diocese

Our MU branch works alongside the local Women's Aid Refuge, supporting the women with necessities, Christmas and Easter gifts and helping to equip the unit.

What is a refuge?

There are about 250 refuges – safe houses where women and children can flee from domestic abuse – in England and Wales and these are run by various charities. Many refuges are funded by a government-funded organisation but also rely on donations from individuals and local groups.

True story (names have been changed)

Anne met Eddie when she was 16. They got together after about six months and he was like her best friend. She could talk to him about anything.

After two years together things changed: Eddie had cheated on her but it didn't matter to Anne – she was in love. He became controlling and manipulative – wanting to know about her every move. They split and a year after, he raped her; she didn't class

it as rape until she spoke to a police officer. Anne blamed herself for that incident. He strangled her and put her down calling her names and making her feel worthless. Over the next eight years their relationship was on and off until Anne fell pregnant. She thought that the baby would change him but he got worse. After the baby was born, he threatened to kill her and the baby. She wasn't allowed to have another partner as he did not want another man raising his child even though he wasn't there. Anne tried to sort her life out; she moved three times after the baby was born. He followed and asked her for money and called her abusive names. She was like a prisoner in her own home, afraid to leave in case he was outside, afraid for her safety. She wouldn't even open the door to the postman.

She finally found the courage to leave after 10 years. She is now in a refuge. She is making changes, having positive thoughts and learning to relax. She has great ambitions for herself and the

baby. If it wasn't for the girls in the refuge she would have never been as far ahead as she is now. The staff and the girls have been a great help and a great support. She took the chance to turn her life and the baby's life around.

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Mothers' Union: Bath and Wells Diocese

Confidentiality is important to all the refuges to ensure the safety of the women fleeing from abuse and they have a strict "no new visitor" policy. Care has to be taken getting gifts to the refuges. Donations can be sent through Post Office Boxes, using existing Mothers' Union "trusted visitors" or arranging handovers in an agreed meeting place – sometimes even on a railway station platform.

A ground-breaking development in our area is the opening of a refuge for men. It is often forgotten that men, too, can suffer from domestic abuse. It is early days, but Mothers' Union members will work to support them too, though it will mean a slight change in the variety of gifts donated!

Clergy abuse

One lady, married to a clergyman, found herself having to resort to the support of a refuge, along with her daughter.

“I didn’t know what to do,” she said. “For over twenty years I’d been married to a bully who preached the Gospel every Sunday and yet returned home to threaten and abuse me and my children. It all came to a head one weekend, and I just snapped. I had to leave. So I walked out with nothing except the clothes I was wearing and a few things in a bag, taking my daughter with me. Fortunately both the boys were at University by then. If it wasn’t for the loving support of staff at the refuge I don’t know what I’d have done. They took us in, no questions asked, and gave us a room and food to eat. They pointed me in the right

direction for professional and legal help and even organised getting my daughter to school. They gave me a breathing space to get organised and I haven’t looked back. I now have my own house and a rewarding job and have regained the confidence I had lost.”

What is obvious from our encounters with the refuges is that the abuse of women in our society is a vast and growing problem and they need all the support that we can give them.

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AUSTRALIA

Mothers’ Union – Providing ‘care bags’ for women in women’s shelters

In our local community, there might seem little need for support in the area of domestic violence. We are largely a farming community – on the surface quite affluent – but in tough times of drought and falling crop prices, families struggle. Men become depressed because they are failing to support their families, and women often bear the brunt of their worries. More and more, families in difficult circumstances are encouraged to leave the cities to live in the country and often the isolation and lack of job opportunities provide for unsettled family situations.

In 2009, we approached Uniting Care Wesley, a support organisation of the Uniting Church, which has the responsibility of providing sheltered accommodation for women in our local area, the mid-north of South Australia. The organisation

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provides accommodation in several women’s refuges in this area. The address of the shelters is confidential for reasons of security but we were made aware that they existed and were in need of support. It was surprising for us to learn that in our supposedly ‘well to do’ community, many women experience domestic violence on a regular basis and that there is a need for sheltered, secure accommodation for them to use – sometimes for quite a considerable amount of time. In the shelters, they are provided with legal support and social welfare counselling.

We were advised that women using this sheltered accommodation often leave home with their children at very short notice. Quite often they flee with nothing but their handbag and a few clothes. The shelter co-ordinator suggested that they would welcome supplies of cleaning products, toiletries and in particular children’s activities such as colouring books, pencils and jigsaws. Children are often involved and toys are in short supply. Cleaning products are also needed as they



Care bags provided by Mothers’ Union members.

are costly to buy and not the sort of thing taken to a shelter by women fleeing from domestic violence.

To help women fleeing domestic violence situations, we purchased a supply of MU Australia bags and collected products with the help of members of our church congregation. These were gratefully received by a local representative of Uniting Care Wesley to be distributed to women using the shelter.

This year, we again contacted the organisation and were told that the bags had been well received. As our branch is quite small in numbers, this time, we intend to spread the collection of goods to the Church congregation and the local community

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and – as it will be nearing Christmas when we make our presentation – we will include some family Christmas ‘goodies’. We believe that we can make this an ongoing project which will continue to support those in our community who are less well off than ourselves.

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VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN



A warm and loving family can be both nurturing and empowering but for many children it can be a dangerous place where children endure the humiliation and pain of corporal/physical punishment and psychological abuse including name-calling, rejection, isolation and persistent threats.

The first Global Study on Violence against Children was conducted during the UN International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010) by the UN Secretary General's independent expert, Professor Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro. The Study Report has made

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visible the vast scale of violence against children and its devastating impact on their lives. The report reveals that violence against children in the home and other settings occurs in every country of the world, cutting across culture, class, religion, education and ethnic origin. The report makes the clear assertion that no violence against children is justifiable and all forms of violence are preventable and it calls for urgent action to prohibit and eliminate it.

Save the Children's consultations with children in over 13 countries reveal the high concern children themselves have about violence and they identified corporal punishment as a priority issue to be addressed in their family and close environment. Children and young people who took part in each of the regional consultations for the UN Study spoke movingly about the routine violence they experience in the home and described the humiliation and pain of corporal punishment at the hands of parents and family members. A child from East Asia stated: "With these two hands my mother holds me, cares for me, this I love. But with these two hands, my mother hits me – this I hate."

Corporal punishment is often deeply rooted and entrenched in cultural, religious and traditional practices. The mistaken belief that it is an effective form of discipline for children is widespread. Many people do not view it as the act of violence that it is and many children and adults accept it as an inevitable part of childhood. But corporal punishment is never justifiable; it breaches children's fundamental rights to physical, emotional and spiritual integrity. Its legality means children, the smallest and most vulnerable people in society, have less protection from assault than adults.

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The problem is compounded by a reluctance to intervene in what many regard as the private family sphere. But children's human rights, respect for their human dignity and physical integrity and State obligations to protect children from violence does not end at the family door. These obligations should ensure that corporal punishment is prohibited by law in the home and all other settings.

One of the biggest challenges faced by those working to end this common-place form of violence is religious justification for corporal punishment of children. In some communities the Bible and other sacred texts are still used to justify its use. Corporal punishment remains commonplace across all faiths despite evidence of its ineffectiveness in changing behaviour and despite increased awareness through research of the physical, psychological and spiritual harm it does to children both in the short and long-term.

Hitting children and causing them pain and humiliation does not fit with the core values expressed in most religious teachings which are very similar to the human rights principles of respect for human dignity, compassion, non-violence and justice.

Since the launch of the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children, religious involvement in what is now a global movement to end corporal punishment of children, has broadened considerably. There are growing numbers of religious communities and organisations often working in multi-religious partnerships to address the problem.

Religious leaders have stated clearly that there is nothing inherent in their faith which justifies the continued legality and social approval of corporal punishment. They emphasise that the core values which most faiths share and the sacred respect which each religion holds for the human dignity of every child, are not compatible with corporal punishment of children. They have used their unique opportunities as teachers, scholars, leaders of worship and community leaders and activists to speak out as advocates for children. They have also clarified misconceptions about the word 'discipline' which has become for some groups synonymous with 'corporal punishment'.

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During 2007 the South African Council of Churches (SACC) – an umbrella organisation representing over 16 million Christians of 26 denominations in South Africa – produced a document explaining religious arguments against corporal punishment entitled: Religions, the Promotion of Positive Discipline and the Abolition of Corporal Punishment. They stated: "The root of the word 'discipline' in the New Testament

Children can be disciplined without violence that instills fear and misery.

comes from the Greek word 'disciple' meaning to guide, instruct and to teach." The paper states: "Any attempts to justify corporal punishment of children through biblical 'proof texts' and/or through psycho-social and religious interpretations of the scriptures is unchristian, unorthodox and in the light of a human rights context, bordering on a dangerous abuse of children's rights."



Happy father and child.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, a supporter of the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, wrote in the

One of the biggest challenges faced by those working to end this common-place form of violence is religious justification for corporal punishment of children.

Global Report (2008): "Children can be disciplined without violence that instills fear and misery, and I look forward to church communities working in solidarity with others and using the context of the UN Global Study to make further progress towards ending all forms of violence against children. If we really want a peaceful and compassionate world, we need to build communities of trust where all children are respected, where home and school are safe places to be and where discipline is taught by example".

In May 2007, all New Zealand Anglican Bishops declared their support for law reform to prohibit and eliminate physical punishment in the home and other settings. They presented a signed statement to the Prime Minister Helen Clark. In response to Christians who argue that the Bible condones corporal punishment, the Bishops stated: "As Christians our reading of the Bible must always be done through the lens of Christ's teaching and life". The Bishops explained that legal reform would reinforce the total unacceptability of violence against children. They stated: "As Christians our primary role model is Jesus Christ. The way of Jesus was non-violence. This is a moment for our values to shape our laws and the future of our nation. This is a moment to make a positive difference."

29 countries have now prohibited corporal punishment in the home and other settings, including the most recent: Tunisia and Kenya (2010).

Articles, further information and resources are available on www.churchesfornon-violence.org

Contact Person: Chris Dodd, CNNV, 6 Sylvia Ave, Hatch End, Pinner, Middx HA5 4QE, ENGLAND, see also website www.endcorporalpunishment.org

UGANDA



Archbishop supports the Children's Unit.

Working with children can be a great inspiration as well as a lifetime challenge. It's great to see children getting to know the Lord, grow and trust in him and get involved in the main stream of the church. This has always been my motivation, and has given great satisfaction.

Many children under the age of 17 are at risk, even those who have loving parents. The nation's media reports daily of children lost, taken for child sacrifice or kidnapped for ransom.

The Children's Ministry unit, based in the office of the Archbishop, coordinates and works closely with the 33 dioceses in the province. This gives us the opportunity to share passionately the challenges that we face. Many children under the age of 17 are at risk, even those who have loving parents. The nation's media reports daily of children lost, taken for child sacrifice or kidnapped for ransom. The country operates below the poverty line and eaten up by high rate of corruption so that children are denied justice at many levels. However 80% of the total population are Christians! In 2005, Uganda passed a Child statute with right to protection from torture, abuse, early marriage, child labour, trafficking and abduction.

Child Trafficking

It is difficult to understand how God's children can be regarded as just commodities. In one district it has been revealed that some children have been sold for as little as the equivalent of one pound sterling. These children are then sold on for child labour or sacrifice. We are made to understand that some are

sold by their own parents and families and others are orphans.

Child Sacrifice

It is believed that for every child who dies today, especially in Kampala, 20% are due to child sacrifice. This horrendous fact may be due to witch doctors and their devilish practices. For the others who get involved in this practice, nobody knows what they are up to.

The unit with the help of the Archbishop, the Church, including the children, has mounted a campaign against this vice. In addition a child protection policy is under development. Our hope is that

Photo J. Muhindo.

this document, together with other state policies, will be used to enforce justice for children.

For everyone who loves children for who they are, it is disheartening to see the amount of violence against children. We do not lose hope however, because the God who created them cares and is still in control of the world. Our prayer is that God will quickly intervene to save the innocent. "Who ever receives one of these, receives me" Matt: 18:5.

School Drop Outs

The UNICEF children's charter state that identity; clothing, food, love, protection and education are the basic rights for every child. Even though the Ugandan government has declared compulsory education for all children aged 6 and over, only 25% stay on to finish secondary school which means that parents are unable to provide for their child's needs to support the government efforts; this scenario is not helpful to influence the literacy rate of the church nor the nation.

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Contact Person: Revd Canon Janet Muhindo, Education Dept, Church of Uganda, PO Box 14123, Kampala, UGANDA

FURTHER ACTION BY CHURCHES

ECUADOR

In August this year, the Litoral Diocese of the Episcopal Church of Ecuador held a workshop covering the theme 'Domestic Violence in our Ecuadorian society'. The workshop looked at types and characteristics of violence in the family, and the factors that underlie this violence in the Ecuadorian context, such as cultural values, personal history and psycho-social environment. Participants in the workshop also looked at the typical recurring cycle of domestic violence, which moves through minor incidents, loss of control, distancing (the 'silent treatment') and a phase where the perpetrator of violence may beg forgiveness and promise not to repeat their behaviour. More details about the content of this workshop are on the IAFN website, in Spanish and English, at <http://iafn.anglicancommunion.org/news/index.cfm>

Contact: Licensed Minister Elizabeth Calderón Salmerón, Diocesan Women's Coordinator, Diócesis Litoral, P.O. Box 09015250, Guayaquil, ECUADOR

SCOTLAND

Interfaith Exhibition on Domestic Abuse



Shoes tell the story of violence.

Photo: Ann Glenesk/Mothers' Union.

Shoes signifying life journeys form the exhibition, which is based on an earlier YWCA project where 104 pairs of shoes represented the two women who die each week in the UK from domestic abuse.

Some of the shoes speak on behalf of abused individuals who suffer at the hands of their abuser. Other shoes and comments represent a faith perspective from those who journey alongside. Scottish Episcopal Church contributors include the Primus, and the Bishop of Edinburgh who donated the shoes he wore at the Lambeth Conference in 2008 in memory of the moving plenary session, involving Bishops and their spouses, which considered the story of the Rape of Tamar in 11 Samuel 13.

The exhibition material states that "it is God's intention for all human beings, male, female, child and adult, to enjoy safety, freedom, dignity and fullness of life. Abuse in the home is a violation of God's wish for humanity as it can adversely affect an individual's relationship with God and also creates substantial damage in the family, in the community and in society as a whole".

The faiths represented are Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

For further information contact Ann Glenesk, Diocesan President Glasgow & Galloway Diocese, Diocesan Office, 5 St Vincent Place, Glasgow G1 2DH, SCOTLAND

What you can do next

- Recognise that this is a hidden problem and it may be happening in your community.
- Find out about the resources in your area for people and children suffering domestic violence.
- Look out for the next IAFN newsletter (to be published early in 2011). This will contain a report of the consultation held in Oceania and set out a practical action plan for churches and dioceses throughout the Communion to work to end violence within families. For those with easy access to the internet, fill in your e-mail on the subscription page on the website www.iafn.net and you will be notified (free of charge) when the next issue is available on line. To request a printed copy, contact the Network office (address below).
- Let the Family Network know about work that you and your Province/Diocese/Church are doing, so that the third of the three newsletters to be published by IAFN on *Violence and the Family* will be a celebration of action taken by the international Anglican Family.
- Pray for the ending of domestic violence and for those who work to achieve this and to help the victims and survivors.

PRAYER

Gracious God

We come to you in gratitude for the privilege and responsibility of bringing up children, with all their capacity for wonder and delight.

We come to you also in sorrow that often our children receive so much less from us than they deserve, even to the point of abuse.

We pray that you will move in the hearts and minds of parents, teachers, lawmakers and all people everywhere with an urgent desire for respect for our children and peace for our families.

Give us humility to learn better ways than the ways of violence, and more creative paths than those of power.

For what we have received in our children make us truly thankful

And for what we have got wrong with our children make us truly penitent.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

John Pritchard, Bishop of Oxford 2008

IAFN is an Anglican forum for the exchange of information about challenges facing families in different countries and contexts, and the practical work being undertaken by churches and individual Christians. See website www.iafn.net for further information and how to receive the newsletters electronically or in the printed version.

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