

“It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness”



Parenting Special

CANDL Light



April 2003

Church and Neighbourhood Development in London



Babyfathers Speak Out!

The headline on hundreds of posters distributed around east and south London over the past few weeks read, *'The Babyfather Alliance presents an evening with Patrick Augustus'*. Organised jointly by CANDL, Poplar Pentecostal Church, the Bonneville Christian Centre in Clapham, and Barnardo's, the two 'Babyfather' evenings aimed to provide a forum for discussion, debate, drama, dance and poetry, all focussed on the on-going concerns

around parenting, particularly amongst young black men. As you may remember from the article in our last CANDL Light, Patrick formed the Babyfather Alliance following the success of the 'Babyfather' books and TV series, and the issues that were raised by those who read and watched.

The panel on both evenings was chaired by Dr Robert Beckford from Birmingham University, and included Revd George

Hargreaves, the Minister of Poplar Pentecostal Church, and a member of the CANDL team, Anne Marie Howell a social worker and psychologist, Patrick Augustus, and actors from the series, Petra Letang, Heshima Thompson and David Harewood. The panel at Poplar also included Leroy Logan, chair of the Black Police Association.

So why did Patrick write the Babyfather books in the first

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“Who’s your keeper? Brother!”

In previous editions of our newsletter we have featured adverts for our Good Practice Raids. These are gatherings for people with lead areas of responsibility for a church or church project to come together and share ideas information and expertise.

This coming together facilitates a higher level of shared understanding of the subject to be discussed and provides the leader with a safe space to explore themes and issues. Comments from people who attended the “avoiding leader burnout” event, and previous Good Practice events, have provoked a lot of discussion within CANDL about the need for peer support and accountability amongst people in leadership roles.

Leadership accountability has been in the past, and is also today, a major issue in the church. As the stories of community leaders, government officers, royalty, priests, pastors and leaders behaving in the ways that are contrary to man’s law (let alone God’s) come to light; the question must be asked: “Who are church leaders accountable

to?”

Whether it is in secular society or in the Church, accountability is an essential hedge against abuse of leadership. Church leaders are accountable to God - however this obvious accountability is too often used as an excuse for the inactivity of others. It would seem that the theology of “He/She is God’s servant – God will deal with them” has allowed leadership abuses and excesses to go unchallenged for a long time.

At the same time, there is also the question of “Who can I trust?” if a leader has been in the position of having had their trust betrayed or broken in the past. It cannot be denied that a leader in this position needs to be able to trust someone or some system before again making the decision to join a group or come under another covering and become accountable to them. Forgiveness, prayer, and hearing from God are clearly the courses of action that a hurt leader will need to take before embarking on an open system of accountability and the resulting relationships that are a part of it.

The issue of absent

accountability is no respecter of persons, denomination, or theological persuasion. Whether it be priest or pastor, traditional mainline church or independent, the secular media happily bear testimony to the magnitude of this issue.

CANDL is seeking is to explore how existing networks do or don’t meet the need for peer support and accountability for those in Church leadership roles. The heart behind this work is the desire to look at issues, but also to seek for solutions. We are inviting you to send in your thoughts, ideas, systems, processes of accountability, etc. We are looking for these to be in the spirit of Ephesians 5: 21 which says “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ”, and Proverbs 11:14, which says “In the company of many counsellors there is safety.”

We would like to hear your views. Please email CANDL at candl@barnardos.org.uk. If you are happy for your response to appear in our next newsletter please indicate this.

The GOAL
conference
exploring Governance, Openness,
Accountability & Leadership

Tuesday 20th May 2003, 9.30am - 4.00pm

Tel: (020) 7207 2131 Fax: (020) 7207 2150
Email: lkirk@eauk.org Web: www.eauk.org

Ruach Ministries
122 Brixton Hill London SW2 1RS
Venue

evangelical alliance
uniting to change society

acea
AFRICAN AND CARIBBEAN EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE

It's Official! The law is becoming more family friendly!



In November 2002 a new Employment Act was passed which will have a huge impact on many families. Parents will be entitled to new rates of maternity and paternity pay, and fathers will be entitled to up to two weeks paternity leave following the birth of their child.

The main points of the new legislation are:

- ❖ Any parent whose baby is due on or after April 6th 2003 is entitled to the new rights, even if the baby arrives early. (The Government is still trying to decide what to do about those babies who are due before April 6th, but arrive late!) All pregnant employees will be able to take 26 weeks unpaid Ordinary Maternity Leave, regardless of how long you have worked for your employer, or how many hours you work.
- ❖ If you have worked for your employer for 26 weeks by the 15th week before your baby is due, then you are entitled to Maternity Pay of 90% of your average earnings for 6 weeks, and £100 per week, (or 90% of your average earnings if this is less) for 20 weeks.
- ❖ 2 weeks paid paternity leave for fathers is being introduced for the first time. If you have worked for your employer for 26 weeks, then you are entitled to £100 per week for two weeks.
- ❖ Paternity leave can be taken from the date of birth, or up to 8 weeks from the birth.
- ❖ There will also be a new right to 26 weeks paid 'Adoption Leave' which will be available to parents adopting a child up to 18 years of age.

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A New Project for Gingerbread

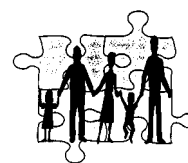
You may remember reading in our last edition about the appointment of a new Asian worker for Gingerbread, the organisation for lone parents.

Kirti Chandarana has now officially launched the Asian Lone Parent Project in East London. The project is based at:
Sure Start C3 Mills,
1 Abbey Lane
London E15 2SD

For more details, you can contact Kirti on 020 7407 1114, or
Email her at alpwginger@yahoo.co.uk

P.S. Why 'Gingerbread'? The organisation was originally set up in response to a letter from a lone Mum in the Guardian newspaper. The first group of mothers met in the 'Gingerbread Café', where they were treated to free coffee and biscuits!

Family FOR Life



Spring Table Fair

Saturday April 12th, 10 am - 4 pm.

at the ARC Building, Westbury Court,
Westbury Road, Forest Gate, E7 8BT

*Proceeds will go to Family FOR Life's
work with children and families.*

More details from Jess
at 020 8552 8051

or Carris at 020 8555 4245

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Babyfather panel at Poplar Pentecostal Church

place? Interviewed by Dr Beckford at the beginning of the evening, Patrick spoke of his desire to dispel the stereotypes that abound around the black male. “There used to be a saying – if you want to keep something from a black man, then put it in a book.” He was sure that the books would be read - there was great concern among the black community about parenting and certainly the advent of the TV series has ensured that the issues involved have reached a wide audience.

Anne Marie spoke of the difficulties many black children face as they reach puberty. They do not know who their father is, and so many of them find it hard to form any sense of identity, without that crucial knowledge. She also felt that there were issues around stereotyping; young black men are constantly surrounded by negative images from the media, and children are presented all too often with negative images of fatherhood. The black community needs to teach its young people to believe in themselves, by exploring issues around values, respect and empowerment.

Does God love a Babyfather? The answer from George Hargreaves was a resounding ‘yes!’ A Babyfather himself, he spoke movingly of the non-judgemental love he had received from the church, and his early struggles when he had care of his son. At Poplar, he was challenged from the floor by a young man who had received exactly the opposite treatment from the church. George replied that we should be caring for the sinner, and not simply looking at the sin, teaching these young men how to love their children, and helping in a practical way. All too often, he felt, the father gives up. “I can’t afford to visit my child and take her out” is a common cry – perhaps some of the energy that certain churches have put into condemning, could be channelled into more useful areas, such as producing information. “How to have a weekend with your

child for a fiver” could prove very popular! Interestingly, a straw poll at Bonneville showed that a majority of single parents there felt they had received good support from the church.

What is the role of the church in the current crisis? This was the question posed by Robert at the Bonneville meeting. The reply, loud and clear, was “hope”. The church needs to redefine ‘Fatherhood’ in this context; the difficulties many people have with the concept of a Father God were touched upon, and an acknowledgement was made of the absence of men from many churches. These issues need to be raised and discussed within the churches.

Although the two evenings shared the same theme, in many ways they were very different. At Poplar much of the emphasis was on racism. Was racism an excuse for bad parenting; are black men simply not facing up to their responsibilities because that is the stereotype? Overwhelmingly the panel felt that there was no excuse for men being bad role models – unemployment for instance is no excuse. There was a feeling amongst all those who were there that black people must take responsibility for their actions, and not hide behind the ‘race card’.

Leroy Logan spoke of the extra burden that racism places on young black men, and the need to help those who don’t have parenting skills. He too had found that the church empowers people to make positive choices in their lives, particularly where parenting is concerned.

At Bonneville the emphasis was somehow more positive. Speakers from the floor spoke of their positive perceptions of black men, and of their own personal experience of being brought up by both parents. There were of course contributions from lone parents; a very powerful contribution from a young woman, with her 13-month old baby on her hip, telling how she had been abandoned by the fathers of both her children. “He wanted me to get rid of the baby – I decided to get rid of him.” Although three-quarters of her salary went on childcare, she was coping well.

Some speakers felt that the name ‘Babyfather’ was itself an example of negative stereotyping; Patrick explained that he felt he needed to meet people where they were, and certainly he would look at the issue of language in any further writing.

But it wasn’t all talk! At Poplar a group of young people from the Barnardo’s ‘Leaving Care’ Project in Manchester presented a drama around issues of

young black parenting, reminding us that it is not always the man who is unfaithful – sometimes the fault can lie with the woman!

At Bonneville, a dance group based at the Jasper Project spoke about their experiences both as children brought up by lone parents, and as a lone parent, then treated us to a very spirited and energetic dance interpretation of the Christian song



‘Incredible’.

Star Panelists from the Babyfather TV Series

So what of the future? Barnardo’s has now received Home Office funding which will mean that the roadshows can continue. It is hoped that workshops and follow-on projects will evolve, and ‘safe’ spaces will be created to enable experienced fathers to talk to those who are new, and less experienced. There are also plans for a resource pack. Barnardo’s and the Babyfather Alliance are committed to working with the local communities, so – watch this space!!

For more details on the forthcoming Babyfather roadshow events, contact Errol John by email at errol.john@barnardos.org.uk.

Open Day at CANDL

Tuesday 15th April 2003

New to CANDL? Want to know more about the service we offer? Need an update?

CANDL is holding an Open Day on **Tuesday April 15th**. Come along and talk to the Project Workers, browse through our extensive resources, and network with other similar groups or individuals. We will even throw in a free lunch!

More details on **020 7729 9701**

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The new Act has also introduced the right to apply to work flexibly. Employers will have to consider any application you make to change the way you work so that it fits in better with your family commitments.

You could ask to:

- ❖ Work ‘flexitime’ – as long as you work the required number of hours, you can be flexible as to when you work. (One person in the CANDL office works from 6.45am – 2.45am, whilst another works from 8.30am – 4.30pm)
- ❖ Work wholly or partly from home
- ❖ Job-share
- ❖ Work a specific number of hours per year, being flexible as to when you work them
- ❖ Work term-time only
- ❖ It could be a change as simple as starting work half an hour later so you can take your child to school, making up the time later on in the day.

The responsibility to ask for flexible working will be on you, the employee. Your employer does not have to agree – it is not yet the law – but he or she has to give you a clear business reason why your application cannot be

This new right will provide working parents with more opportunities than ever before to try to balance their work and their family life; if they want to, they will be able to play a much fuller part in their children’s lives.

If you would like more information on the new Employment Act, then please contact Margaret Collins, the Family Life and Parenting Support Worker at CANDL on (020) 7729 9701.

The Hackney Young Families Support Services

This month, as part of our series looking at local parenting projects, I have been to visit the Hackney Young Families Support Service based in Provost St in Hoxton.

The project forms part of the work of the Family Welfare Association in Hackney, and was started almost three years ago, funded by the Hackney Health Action Zone, although as the Service comes to the end of its first three years, there is concern about its future funding.

So – why “Young Families” and what does the project set out to do?

HYFSS works with parents who are aged under 21, and who live in Hackney. The three Family Support Co-ordinators give direct advice, help and practical support to young people who are experiencing problems with a whole range of issues, including housing, (by far the most pressing issue for many young parents) finance, parenting skills, health, education, and personal and relationship issues.

The service is unique, and provides a holistic service for young parents who often find it difficult, for all sorts of reasons, to access services and get help.

Gaby Ross is the Support Service Co-ordinator. “A lot of young people feel very vulnerable, and



they all have different needs. It can be difficult for them to access services, and they are not always treated with the respect they deserve. A lot of the help we give them is with routine things like applications for housing grants, but we occasionally come across things that we haven't encountered before, such as the issue of female genital mutilation.”

The young parents are usually referred to the service, often by health or housing workers. Unfortunately, due to the high demand for its services, there is sometimes a waiting –list, but the service also runs three advice sessions per week in the Borough, which are open to all – anyone who feels he or she needs help can simply walk in off the street, and the service will do their best

to advise them.

Urgent needs are tackled as soon as possible, and the service gives priority to the younger end of the age-range, and to those affected by rape, or as refugees. Young parents can choose the time and place of the meeting – no question here of having to get to an inaccessible office at a difficult time!

HYFSS also gives young parents a chance to enjoy themselves with their children. Over the past couple of years they have organised visits from the Body Shop, had a photography session where the children could have their pictures taken by a professional photographer, and organised trips out, including a very successful trip to the London Eye, using the bus!

So what do you as church groups need to remember about HYFSS?

- 1) Remember that it's there if you have a concern about a young parent in Hackney.
- 2) Remember that its workers will tackle almost any issue that concerns young parents.
- 3) Remember that it will accept donations, and that further details can be obtained from their Fund-raising and Gift Department!
- 4) Remember to pray for the service, as it aims to help some of Hackney's most vulnerable young people and their children.



By Margaret Collins
Family Life & Parenting Support Worker

**COMMUNITY
 FUND**
 Lottery money making a difference



DDA IS COMING!

David Downing's Anniversary? Deadly Disease Arriving? Day of Divine Annunciation? No, none of these but the Disability Discrimination Act is being fully implemented in 2004. We have previously mentioned this in CANDL Light so just to remind you of the details:

By October 1999 churches and their projects should have made reasonable changes to policies, procedures and practices, and taken reasonable steps to ensure equality of access to services for all disabled people.

By 2004 churches will be required to take reasonable steps to make physical changes to buildings to ensure equality of access to services for all disabled people.

What should you be doing?

- Talk to disabled people about what the Act means to them (and to you).
- Ensure that your church decision-makers are aware of their obligations under the Act.
- Develop a statement of commitment to action in your church and its work.

- Carry out an access audit of your premises.
- Identify the areas that need attention in the short term (e.g. large print service sheets and books, induction loops for hearing aids, clear signage, etc), and in the long term (e.g. physical changes to the building) – develop a plan for undertaking the work.
- Discuss your plans/proposals with disabled people and with your architect/surveyor and, where necessary, with the local planning department (as they may be subject to building regulations and/or require planning permission).
- Start to build reserves or gain funds to cover the costs of physical changes to property
- Ensure that the brief for acquisition or rental of new property always includes consideration of this issue

It is extremely important that all churches with buildings take this issue seriously, especially those independent ones without that the de-nominational resources to

assist them with the process. If you do have any queries or would like any help do approach us at CANDL. Below are some resources which may be of assistance to you:

Widening the Eye of the Needle - Access to Church Buildings for People with Disabilities, by John Penton. (Church House Publishing, ISBN 0 7151 7581 5, £10.95)

Council for the Care of Churches, Fielden House, Little College Street, London SW1P 3SH

(tel: 020-7898-1866, fax: 020-7898-1881, e-mail: enquiries@ccc.c-of-e.org.uk)

Centre for Accessible Environments, Nutmeg House, 60 Gainsford Road, London SE1 2NY. The Centre offers information services and training in relation to disability and built environments, and offers an extensive range of publications (tel: 020-7357-8183, fax: 020-7357-8183).

CANDL is planning to hold a "Good Practice Raid" practice-sharing event in May. Get in touch if you would like an invitation.



FACING THE UNTHINKABLE

Child Abuse and the Church

A specially designed seminar run by **Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service** for all those working with children in churches and other organisations.

Tues 29th April 2003 9.15am - 1.30pm
Diocesan House, 36 Causton Street, SW1P 4AU
Sat 9th August 2003 10.30pm - 3.45pm Lighthouse Fellowship, 133 Rye Lane, SE15 4ST
Thurs 18th Sept 2003 9.15am - 1.30pm
Diocesan House, 36 Causton Street, SW1P 4AU
Sat 1st Nov 2003 9.15am - 1.30pm
Diocesan House, 36 Causton Street, SW1P 4AU

The cost is **£15.00** (including a workbook, value £3.00), with 1 free place for every 5 booked. If you can't manage the full fee PCCA will accept whatever you can afford. Send your booking giving the date and venue you want to attend, your name, address, and telephone number to PCCA, PO Box 133 Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ. For more info tel. 01322 667207 or fax 01322 614788 or e-mail info@ccpas.co.uk.

THE GRAFFITI PROJECT



The Graffiti Project is a youth project that involves young people in the improvement of their environment through removing graffiti.

If you have graffiti that needs removing, please contact Muksood Shaikh on **07947 138684**.

NB. The project currently only serves Tower Hamlets.

Parental Responsibility

Did you know that even if you are a child's natural father, unless you are, or were married to the child's mother, or have acquired Parental Responsibility, then you have no legal rights with regard to your child?



Your child could be placed in local authority care, or adopted; his or her surname could be changed without your consent, and a guardian could be appointed, all without any reference to you. You may not be able to get information about your child's progress at school, be denied access rights, and may have no say in any decision about hospital treatment, or within which religion your child should be brought up. Your child may even be taken out of the country without your knowledge or consent.

So what is Parental Responsibility, and how do you acquire it? It is defined in the Children's Act 1989 as:

"All the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law the parent of a child has in relation to the child and his/her property."

In other words, if you have Parental Responsibility, then very little can happen legally to your child without your being consulted; without Parental Responsibility you have virtually no rights of any kind. If you are married when the child is born then you and the child's

mother will both automatically have Parental Responsibility, even if you subsequently divorce. Unmarried mothers automatically receive Parental Responsibility.

There are four different ways to acquire Parental Responsibility.

- 1) A Parental Responsibility Agreement. This is a legal document that the mother must sign. It must be witnessed and filed with the Principal Registry. (0207 947 6936)
- 2) A Parental Responsibility Order. The father can apply to the court for an order if the mother refuses to make a Parental Responsibility Agreement.
- 3) A Residence Order. This confers Parental Responsibility automatically, once the child lives with you.
- 4) Marriage to the child's mother

If a Parental Responsibility Order is applied for, then the court will want to see evidence of a commitment by the unmarried father to the child, and evidence of a degree of attachment between the father and the child. Unless there are very good reasons as to why it should not be granted, the application is usually successful.

It is also worth remembering that an unmarried father who does not seek Parental Responsibility will still be liable to maintain his child in the context of the Child Support Grant!!!

The government has now recognised the commitment of most unmarried fathers to their children, and new legislation soon to come into force will mean that, provided a father signs the child's birth certificate, then Parental Responsibility will automatically be conferred.

BUT: THE NEW LAW WILL ONLY APPLY TO NEW FATHERS; IF YOU ALREADY HAVE CHILDREN YOU WILL STILL HAVE TO APPLY FOR AN AGREEMENT OR ORDER.

If you would like any more information on Parental Responsibility, then please contact Margaret Collins, the Family life and Parenting Support Worker here at CANDL, or go to the 'Families Need Fathers' website, which covers the subject very comprehensively!! (www.fnf.org.uk/pro.htm)

If you would like to submit an article about your church group/organisation, or you'd like us to include your flyers/information in one of our mailings, please contact George - details below.

[The deadline for inclusion with the next issue of CANDL Light is Friday 13th June 2003](#)

This newsletter was brought to you by the CANDL Team:

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CANDL is a Barnardo's Project committed to supporting church groups of all denominations in their community work. The kind of support we can offer is outlined on p.7, while other pages report on some of our current involvements and provide up-to-date bulletins on other local developments and opportunities for churches. Barnardo's vision, which succinctly encapsulates CANDL's own, is expressed as... '...that the lives of all children and young people should be free from poverty, abuse and discrimination'.