



CONNECT

December 2008

'To know Jesus and make Jesus known'

Dear All,

This year we have seen absolute turmoil in the global banking system, and sky high petrol, food, gas and electricity prices. The impact on people has already been great, job losses, home repossessions, fuel poverty. I have read of men who have committed suicide because of the amount of money lost on the stock markets. I have watched people crying on the television as bailiffs have moved in and their homes have been repossessed and who knows what is going on behind closed doors, broken dreams, hardship, fear and worry. It's all happening at a time when we are supposed to be shopping for Christmas and buying all kinds of luxuries and goodies. The whole scenario beggars the question "what would I have left if I lost everything?"

Last Tuesday evening I asked this question of a group of women who have for the time being lost everything, including their family and their freedom. They were inmates at Eastwood Park Prison in Wotton-Under-Edge. Their response was wonderful. They still have their faith in the one who cannot be taken away "Jesus."

Maybe it's as we loose the material things of life we are forced to look at our spirituality and how deep our roots really go. To ponder on whether our faith in God is strong enough to sustain us through these hard times, after all He has promised to provide for all of our needs. Maybe it's time to reflect seriously once again on the gift of Jesus to a needy broken world. Maybe it's time to put Him back at the heart of Christmas where He belongs. Maybe it's time to remind the world of God's gift to us. So if you're finding it difficult to buy gifts this year then share the gift of Jesus. It will be the best present anyone could ever receive.

I wish you all a very special and blessed Christmas.
Sue

The November church meeting was a big night for CKBC. In Baptist churches both the individual and the church have to confirm that God is calling a minister to lead the church. We agreed this at the November meeting, strongly believing that God is calling Sue to continue as our minister into the future. We thank God for Sue and thank Sue for all her hard work and patience with us. At the meeting we also agreed our strategy and focus for the coming year which you can see on the left hand notice board in the foyer.

Prison Chaplaincy

I have led a prison Bible group for four years and been a paid chaplain for a year, but still find it difficult to communicate about this with those outside. Prison is very different from its image in the popular press. The women inside often have drug addiction, serious mental illness, abusive childhoods and problems with self-harm. They include foreign nationals with very limited English and British women who cannot read. A few prefer prison to living in hostels or on the streets (especially at Christmas) but most are desperate for home, especially missing their children.

Our women come directly from courts across the south-west, midlands and Wales so we cover all crimes. Many women are on remand and the average stay is only 49 days so there is a continual "churn" as they are moved around prisons. The facilities include juvenile (17 yrs), young offender (18-20 yrs), mother and baby, de-tox and isolation wings/units, all served by highly stressed but dedicated prison officers and other staff including chaplains. The chaplaincy team represents many Christian denominations and world religions. Our statutory duties include worship, visiting those in isolation (daily), supporting self-harm "management", seeing new arrivals and all who request a visit. Anyone (e.g. prostitutes, forced workers, persecuted Christians, witches, nurses, ex-soldiers, travellers, those affected by the headline stories in our newspapers and those who make the headlines themselves) can want to see a chaplain.

This week I spent time with an ex-City professional trying to make sense of her past experiences (family suicide, victim of violent crime, subsequent alcoholism) and future anxieties (court, relationships, housing), to the back-drop of A Wing (shouting, TVs, banging metal-work). We identified what she *could know* and she *could do* and handed the rest to God as prayer. In faith terms, chaplains come alongside those suffering the personal cost of sin - both committed *by* them and *against* them. This is Jesus' area of expertise, not mine, and so as a chaplain I need to know my own limitations and hand the rest to God as prayer myself.

KH

Church Neighbours

Charlton Kings Church Neighbours do very much what an ordinary neighbour would do. If you see a newcomer in your area you introduce yourself to make them welcome and maybe give them advice as to where the nearest amenities are.

Church Neighbours are a band of about 100 individuals in Charlton Kings who mostly have a connection with one of the churches. They look out for newcomers in their area and deliver a 'Welcome card' and 'Information to Newcomers to the Parish,' which gives information on local doctors, dentists, schools, clubs, libraries, etc. The 'Welcome card' has address and telephone numbers of the five churches in the Parish.

Christmas and Easter, they deliver 4,000 + cards to houses, clubs and hotels in the neighbourhood advertising the times of the services at the five churches. It is not an arduous task but it would be helpful to have more people on board to look out for newcomers.

Do you think you would like to join the Welcome/Delivery group? If so, please speak to Anne Austin. Thank you.

Eastwood Park

Gifts of toiletries for the young offenders will be very much appreciated. Please note that they should be in plastic bottles only, and no aerosols. Gifts should be given to Barbara by 14th December. Please do not wrap them.

An Answer to Prayer-Kolkata

We give thanks to God that the builder has now handed over the key for the Hostel to Enouk and Subir in Kolkata. This means that they will be able to take in more children from the streets. The boys will move into the new hostel in December, and the girls will stay in the original hostel. They will take in more children in January 2009. At present, they have around 150 children in the hostel, which can now increase to 250. All the children at the hostel get the chance of a good education, warmth, shelter and food, and some of the older children that have been there since the age of 7 have gone on to college to train to be teachers. The money that was generously given from CKBC has gone towards kitting out the kitchen at the new hostel with washing machine, cooker, etc.

Services for December
Morning Services are 10.30am
Evening Services 6.30pm

Sunday 7th December
10.30 Communion Service
"The Big Picture" The Prophets
6.30pm Prayer Service

Sunday 14th December
10.30 "The Big Picture"
6.30 Communion Service with Prayers for Healing

Sunday 21st December
10.30 Sunday Club Presentation "Superbabes"
6.30 Carols by Candlelight

Thursday 25th December
10am Christmas Celebration

Sunday 28th December
10.30 Morning Service
No Evening Service

Lunch Club Christmas Songs of Praise
Thursday 4th December 1.30pm

Sonbeams Crib Service and Christmas Party
Tuesday 9th December 10am

If you would like to:

- advertise an event on this newsletter;
- submit an article;
- tell the world about how God has answered your prayers;

Or

- Receive this by email

Then please email me before the end of the month at
mellerina@tiscali.co.uk

www.ckbc.org.uk