

# Newsletter

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December 2005

**21 years**

**IN ST PAULS**

**1984 – 2005**

**God is faithful**

*Crisis Centre  
Ministries*

Bringing God's grace and healing love to people  
with life-disrupting problems

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## *Christmas Greetings and Happy New Year from everyone at Crisis Centre Ministries*

Christmas is a time to give. One of the most important ways you can support our ministry is through the gift of prayer... Throughout this issue you will find a number of prayer requests, usually at the foot of a page. Please spend a few precious minutes bringing each request to the Lord, your support is much appreciated.

## *Christmas Party*

Our clients' Christmas Party is being held on Friday, 16 December from 7.00 to 8.30pm at City Road Baptist Church. We are really privileged to have OAC puppet show as one of the main attractions (besides the food!) They were with us last year and their show was a brilliant way to present the Gospel. Please pray for this event. If you receive this newsletter in time and would like to contribute towards the food and the Christmas presents we hand out then please contact the office.

*Please pray for: 'S', a client, recently gave birth to a beautiful baby boy. Because of her personal situation and difficulties, the baby has been placed in temporary foster care while plans are made to support mother in caring for her baby and considering whether she will be able to keep him.*

# 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday Celebration

**21 years** providing ‘an inner city resource to people with life-disrupting problems such as homelessness, addiction, mental health, long-term unemployment etc’. If you were able to be with us, you may have seen the PowerPoint Presentation (courtesy Andy Luxford) outlining the ministry and its activities over this time. **This presentation is available on request to groups, churches and individuals – simply contact the office (details on the back of this Newsletter)**

It was a brilliant occasion! Thank you so much to Trinity Tabernacle for allowing us the use of their property, and particularly Clive Richards who helped in so many ways. Over 100 people came and it was good to share together in this celebration of 21 years’ of Christian presence and outreach in Bristol’s inner city to a group of people described as the ‘underclass’ – and also look to the future and how we see the ministry developing in partnership with churches in the Bristol area. Whereas, 21 years ago, we were the only provider of the initial point of contact for these people, there is now a breadth of provision – but the needs continue and, in fact, have grown. As Christians, we continue to have a unique opportunity to reach out to the poor and weak in our city.

The church was decorated to mark our birthday celebration. A wonderful 21<sup>st</sup> birthday cake (made and donated by Jenny Monks) took pride of place centre front.

The evening started with the business of the Annual General Meeting. Anni Davey, chair of Trustees, thanked our supporters for their interest, involvement and support in many different ways – financially, through prayer, volunteering, baking etc. We welcomed Stephen Brown as a new trustee,

and there were reports on the ministry and our financial situation over the past year – all of these included in our Annual Report. The past six months have not been easy financially; our regular income has not been meeting our outgoings and this is an ongoing situation. Because of the generosity of our supporters and some amazing one-off donations, we have been able to cover our commitments but it does continue to be a difficult situation.

Ed Marsh of Highgrove church then led us in worship, and we were very privileged to have the Bishop of Bristol as our keynote speaker, talking about Christian Social Action. Some of his comments, and also a précis of Paul Hazelden’s report, are included in this newsletter.

# BRINGING SHALOM TO OUR CITY

*Who else but us, as God's people, can do this?*

## Becoming a mature Christian

*“Christian maturity is loving God more and loving my neighbour more.”*

**Bishop Mike Hill, 17.10.05**

At our 21<sup>st</sup> birthday celebration on 17 October, we were very privileged to have Mike Hill, Bishop of Bristol as our keynote speaker. He encouraged us to consider Christian maturity, and how we might gauge this, and offered three questions: “Am I loving God more?” “Am I loving my neighbour more?” “What is the evidence of that love?”

In exploring this further, he drew from the story of the Good Samaritan where the ‘neighbour’ was the man who had been beaten up. He asked “Who is my neighbour?”, and suggested that this is anyone in our sphere of influence who is in need. Then, in answer to “How might I respond?”, made two points: (i) it is good to avoid blame (“the man who was beaten up was his own worst enemy: no-one in his right mind would walk on that road alone; people could have told him it was his own fault, but where that of got him?”), (ii) the story tells us not to walk past need, even if we are on our way to church.

He referred to the needs of people in our cities, the value of treating symptoms (feeding the hungry, responding to addiction and homelessness etc) and also the importance of getting to the root of the issue. He said that there are implications for a nation which loses contact with God – things start to go wrong. “Part of what we are about, as Christians and Christian organisations, is not just showing love, but trying to point people in the direction of God and His transforming power”.

*(This is a very brief synopsis of the Bishops talk. We have a full record included in the minutes of the event available on request)*

***Please pray for:*** Paul's health - this has improved as a result of light treatment he has been receiving. Please continue to pray for him

# Reaching out to the helpless – whose responsibility?

Paul Hazelden, our General Manager, talked about partnership. Reaching the poor, weak, vulnerable and helpless in our city is the role of the church, rather than a charity or organisation, he said. Perhaps churches are missing

the point if they see The Crisis Centre or another group as being responsible: “CCM can only do it on behalf of the church in Bristol”

Jesus preached the good news of the Kingdom and healed every disease and sickness. He touched peoples’ real needs – physical, emotional and spiritual. Evangelism and social action was what Jesus did and, as God’s people, this is what every Christian is called to do. He identified a special responsibility for those on our doorstep. Once people are on the streets, he said, they are ‘helpless and harassed’, they need help and they need God’s people to show them God’s love.

## *Thank you*

Axa Sun Life. Some companies in Bristol provide opportunity for their staff to be involved in supporting charities. Axa Sun Life is one such company. Crisis Centre Ministries ‘challenged’ them to come and help with redecorating the basement of our property and also the stairs and hallway to the first floor. Challenges from various groups are presented to staff and they are able to choose what they would like to be involved with. Our challenge was accepted and earlier this year, a team (pictured here) came and worked alongside some of our staff and volunteers. Thank you so much to Axa Sun Life for supporting our work in such a practical way

*Please pray for: Sue, Paul’s wife, who continues to recover from surgery for benign brain tumor. Thank you for your continuing prayers.*

# PARTNERSHIP

## Getting Involved

**Erica Bebb writes about her experience of volunteering, and also about her church's involvement.**

"I was musing one day how 'cool' it was (to coin my daughter's phrase) that as many as 15 people from our church (St Mary Magdalene Stoke Bishop) - including my quite amazing mother - serve as volunteers in The Wild Goose. I gave myself and my church a nice little pat on the back! On another day I was talking with Paul Hazelden, the Centre's General Manager, enthusing about how much I and my friends had gained from working as volunteers. "*Why don't you write an article for the newsletter*" was his response "*oh yes*" was my reply, and then I started to talk to God.

What have I learnt? Predominantly, I am more in touch with my own poverty and the tangible blessing of receiving from those who actually have a hidden wealth untapped by the majority. If I want to truly follow in God's footsteps, I sense I need to pursue a greater revelation of my poverty before my Lord. I wholeheartedly agree with the wise words of Christopher Cocksworth and Rosalind Brown in their book 'Being a Priest Today' "*Mercifully, with God, holiness is often carved out in the raw situations of life when our poverty is most evident*" Whilst I

serve in the Crisis Centre I wonder who is really poor.

I am also learning more about being heart focused. This week I had the privilege of being with Rev. David Self, Vicar of St. Agnes church in St. Paul's and he said "*if we are heart focused we naturally share joy with others and weep with those who weep*". In volunteering for the Crisis Centre I thought I was doing a good turn; my motivation pales into insignificance as the blessings received hugely outweigh anything I give. I quote from Angela Cattell another volunteer from our church "*the customers so appreciate the hot food and acceptance of their individuality ; we receive much much more than we give*". Serving in The Wild Goose is refreshing. It is a tonic to work in a place where many of the idols of our age are not being worshipped; idols such as materialism, status and the power of success. Everyone is embraced as human. David Self is a man who knows the heart of St. Paul's and all that this embodies. He has said of his parishioners "*acceptance is my peoples' gift, they are all embracing. They are not resentful about others, there is no rage*".

I may stray to think I'm wonder woman facing the lifestyle of some of the customers at the Wild Goose but their acceptance of me works as a gift from God. Stephanie Wren also from St. Mary's writes "*I am not a regular helper at the Crisis Centre, but have helped out on a few occasions. The main thing that has struck me each time I have helped out is how appreciative the clients are - not only for the food provided but also for the opportunity to talk about themselves, their lives and their ups and downs. I have felt very humbled by the openness of the people I have met. There has always been a very warm atmosphere at the centre and I have had a real sense of God's presence each time I have helped. I have also had an overwhelming feeling that the work of the centre is a very tangible example of God's love and the Holy Spirit at work*"

Our church is learning too. Our perspective has widened and there is a growing excitement in our corporative involvement. All members of one of our housegroups visit the Centre. It is very worthwhile. Sadly, due to lack of staff, the Centre is not open every day. I say to myself, "*Where are the hundreds of practicing Christians*

*within the fair city of Bristol?"* What about you trying this in your church?

Perhaps you are reading this and wondering if you could help in any way. In the words of St Teresa "*Christ has no body now but ours*". Perhaps you are thinking your body is too old, or young, or insignificant. My mother is a volunteer and her glorious white hair serves as a magnet to all. As long as you are 18 or over, there are skills and experiences you have which can be used at The Crisis Centre – and they do also provide training.

I am going to finish with the words of Anne Endacott, my mother, whose example of service has inspired me all my life. In a sense they are a plea, could they be speaking to you?

*"The Crisis Centre is a place of Hope for our fellows - mainly younger women and men who no longer live in a regular home with their families. Sometimes, older men come to the Centre. My feelings run deep as I wonder what circumstances brought them to this place? I am a senior citizen. I have been duly impressed by the polite manner of the greater majority of customers. I deem it a privilege, being able to spend some time with them."* Erica Bebb

**Erica is a very valued volunteer of Crisis Centre Ministries. She has been involved with us for quite a long time and brings with her a humility, openness and enthusiasm to serve God, those who use our Centre and our staff team.**

*Please pray for: 'N' comes in from time to time. He's very angry and unfortunately has been banned from various support agencies because his behaviour can be difficult. He has difficulties with his housing at present.*

# PARTNERSHIP - Options

*James Preston, Manager of The Wild Goose says:*

*and the services we provide) and then Elim cover the cost of the vouchers used; for some time Vineyard church have been taking responsibility for the Monday evening sessions in The Wild Goose; people from Woodlands are about to start taking responsibility for an evening session each week. **Thank you to all of these for being so actively involved in the ministry.***

*“As well as St Marys, Stoke Bishop, other churches have specific ‘partnership’ involvement with us: Ebenezer and Westbury-on-Trym Baptist consistently provide us with home made cakes; Elim @ Bristol operate a luncheon voucher scheme with CCM whereby they hand out vouchers at specific times in the week, our clients bring these into The Wild Goose and receive a nourishing meal (as well as making contact with us*

*Thank you too to all the churches which have given us their harvest goods this year.*

*There are many options for partnership and we are very happy to explore with you how your church, or a group from your church can be involved – in a way which enriches you as well as reaches out to the least and the lost. Please get in touch with the office to find out more.”*

## Partnership Again

Crisis Centre Ministries does not just help homeless people. Many of our volunteers tell us they have gained a great deal by their involvement with us. Churches across Bristol have benefited from increased skills, abilities, experience, confidence and faith that their members have gained through involvement with us.

We are putting together a package to take to churches, to help them understand how involvement with CCM can not only help homeless people – it can also help their church in a number of ways. There will probably be more about this in the next Newsletter, but in the meantime if you are interested in finding out more about this aspect of our work, do feel free to contact me. **Paul Hazelden**

# Korean Social Care Workers Come to Bristol

*Jong Gyun Seo has been a volunteer with Crisis Centre Ministries, in The Wild Goose coffee shop, for some time. He was involved in organizing the visit to England of a group of Korean people in August this year. Among other places, they were able to visit us, and Jong writes about this experience:*

From the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> August, 7 Korean people came to Bristol, having visited London beforehand. They planned to look around a variety of places related to homeless people in Bristol and visited 9 organisations: day centres, hostels, sheltered accommodation, training centres, resettlement support teams, initiatives to support homeless people to get and keep their jobs, and also CCM.

They had time to ask what they wanted to know, look around the facilities, and talk to some clients. They tried to absorb as much information as they could. One of them told me that she wished to have a chance to join one of the outreach services!

They returned to Korea, and are currently producing a report on the visit despite them all leading very busy lives. Amazingly, they have also just finished making a short film.

It is hard to guess exactly what they found through the visit. However, I remember what they had mentioned before they left Bristol “*inspiration*”, “*not to hurry too much*”, “*basic Principles*”, “*belief and confidence*”, “*how to meet our clients*”, “*long-term perspective*”, “*network and community*” and so on. I am sure that they have gained a lot of information to adapt and practice in Korea, from simple games or programmes for homeless people to the workers’ philosophy to help them.

They told me they felt very close with people they met in Bristol. Taking this opportunity, I would deeply like to thank you all for welcoming them so warmly. Your friendship will make a difference in Korea.

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***Please pray for: ‘S2’ was a student on LITE. He has had surgery for throat cancer and now has to have his palate reconstructed***

# A Tricky Problem

We have been selling meal vouchers for something like ten years. They are an excellent idea: if you don't want to give money to the people you meet begging or busking on the street, and you don't want to ignore them either, a meal voucher is the perfect alternative. They get a hot meal, and you contribute in a real way to helping them.

However, we have been charging £5 for a book of 5 meal vouchers all this time. Ten years ago, £1 for a hot meal with coffee and pudding was quite a good deal; these days it is astonishing value.

## **SO WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?**

Quite simply, a lot of people buy a meal vouchers as a way of supporting us. And, in a sense, they are: it encourages homeless people to come to the Coffee Shop, where we can meet them, get to know them, and try to help them. But each meal we serve costs us, on average, £3. So every meal voucher we sell is costing us £2. We make a loss of £10 on every book of vouchers we sell.

## **SO WHAT DO WE DO?**

One option is to do nothing. People buy meal vouchers to help homeless people, and the system is working fine. We are not trying to make a profit (or even cover our costs!) from the coffee shop, so making a loss on sales is just par for the course.

We could increase the cost of the meal and the meal vouchers. But by how much? I can't see us suddenly starting to charge £3 for a meal. We are happy to continue to sell the meal for less than it costs: the point of charging is not to gain revenue, but to help the clients understand that what they are receiving has value, and as a way of treating them as responsible people who can play a part in seeing their own needs being met.

We could make the meal voucher sales more complicated, and charge a minimum of £5 but point out that the meals will cost us £15 and leave it up to the person buying the vouchers how much they want to pay.

*Or perhaps someone has a better idea? We would like to hear what you think.*

## **What's it all about, Alpha!**

(A bit of a take off of Alfie and a measure of the humour which is around in the CCM office!) We will be exploring what knowing God is all about, using an Alpha Course. This will be launched at our clients' Christmas party and will start in January, on Wednesdays on the first floor of our property. Tony Joyce (one of our volunteers and a retired vicar), will be doing most of the talks, and there will be informal discussion and food.

*It would be really good if you would pray about this.*

# They came, they ran and they stuffed themselves with food

and deservedly so, for they had shed blood, sweat and tears for the noble cause: and that was just the supporters!

Our valiant heroes James Preston, Phil Nendick, Dave Dowding, Paul Price, Megan Luxford and Dave Corp ran in the Bristol Half Marathon on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, to raise sponsorship for the Crisis Centre. James got his priorities right and as soon as he crossed the finish line, announced “Anyone for lunch?” So runners and supporters celebrated the triumph with a slap up nosh at Café Rouge.

All six runners did fantastically well with Dave Corp, our fastest, finishing, in 1 hour 32 minutes 54 seconds. The total so far raised is £1105. If you would like to help us reach our target of £2000 you are very welcome to send your donations! (*Please write “Half Marathon” on the back of the cheque and indicate if you would like it gift-aided.*)

***Please pray for:** ‘A’, another ex-student of LITE has been actively looking for work for some time, but unfortunately without success. He is from Africa where he worked in education.*

# 6 Ways YOU can help CCM

## Old Postcards, Used Stamps, Albums, Cigarette Cards etc

We can convert these to money. Please don't remove stamps from the items. Where you want to let us have the stamps only, leave about half an inch around the stamp. How about getting your local school or church involved?

## Old Mobile Phones

These can be converted into money. Contact the office for more information.

## Amazon

If you buy items from Amazon, **via our website**, 5% of what you spend comes to CCM at no extra cost to you.

## Buy at CCM

Shop for less and support CCM! You can now buy a wide selection of items on line, in a way that benefits CCM and at no extra cost to yourself. By using this facility, you get frequent special offers and good prices, gift ideas, free postage in many cases. Retailers presently included on our site are M&S, John Lewis, CD WOW! Littlewoods, MFI, Comet, Index, T Mobile, Virgin Wines, newitts.com. To find out more, visit our Community

Webshop, [www.buy.at/CCM](http://www.buy.at/CCM).

## Financial Donations

Cheque donations and regular giving through Bankers Standing Order are greatly appreciated. These can be Gift Aided, adding to the value of your support. Please use the reply slip enclosed or ask for the Bankers Standing Order Form

## Prayer

This is such an important aspect of the support we receive and affects everything we do. Please continue to pray for all aspects of the ministry, including our staff and volunteers.

**Crisis Centre Ministries** 12 City Road, St Pauls, Bristol BS2 8TP

Tel 0117 942 3088, email [admin@crisis-centre.org.uk](mailto:admin@crisis-centre.org.uk)

Website [www.crisis-centre.org.uk](http://www.crisis-centre.org.uk)

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