



June 2007

Tollgate Project

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“On Saturday 28th April there was a meeting to share prayer and vision for Tollgate. Representatives of various denominations attended the morning which featured a prayer station, a short presentation and time for networking and sharing.

Val Carter (from the Tollgate Project group) outlined the proposed growth of housing and retail outlets. 600 new houses are already agreed, 200 under construction and further housing is possible. There are also areas earmarked for industry and mixed economy retail. Although money has been identified for a community centre and primary school, it seems likely that these will be provided at the end of the development. The usual planning specifications will apply – this means that the new development will have 25% affordable housing split 80:20 rent:buy.

The Tollgate group shared some of their dreams and visions for the area. Ideas include:

- Provision of a crèche for people using the retail park, for work, leisure or shopping.
- A “meeting place” venue run in co-operation with social services for estranged parents and children, or those needing supervised access.
- A “listening post” or mobile unit on the car park of retail centre. A place where people could drop in for a confidential chat, a listening ear, support or prayer. A rota of volunteers from a number of churches could run this.
- A venue for ecumenical worship, at times and in ways to suit the

community – fresh expressions of church

- A counselling service
- A Christian healing centre
- A Christian Book shop
- A Fairtrade outlet
- A conference centre to host large scale Christian events and concerts
- Chaplaincy to the stores

Other ideas were added:

- Find out from residents of Tollgate what they feel is needed.
- Prepare a pack for new residents that contains details of the various churches’ service times and other events
- A welcome steward who would visit a new resident (armed with cake and the pack)
- Young people’s events and activities (it seems likely that many households with secondary age children will be among the incomers as Stanway School is highly regarded).
- Street pastor scheme could be trialled, perhaps in association with the “listening post”
- The relocation of a church, currently looking for a new home.
- Joint Alpha course

The Parish Council are about to undertake some surveys of local residents and there have been early discussions regarding chaplaincy to at least one store.

We were encouraged to find others who share our interpretation of God’s plan for Tollgate”.

Val Carter

For further information please contact:

Val and David Carter

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Dave Cornell

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Prayer requests from Bob Russell MP

Armed Forces

Bob Russell is part of the Armed Forces Parliamentary scheme. This means he will spend 28 days this year with the Army. He has spent 5 days so far, including 2 days with top officers at the Joint Services Command and Staff College.

Bob requests prayer for the British troops serving at home and abroad, and for their families. He is especially concerned for those serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Bob also requests prayer for the church community that will be based at the new Garrison church. He would also like us to pray for good use for the old Garrison church building.

Crime

Bob Russell is supporting a campaign for action against knife crime. This campaign is being organised by a woman from the Colchester area, whose son was murdered in a knife attack in the town. According to recent statistics, knife crime occurs 3 times more than gun crime. Bob would like knife crime to be punished more severely in law.

Community

People with complaints about noisy neighbours are frequently coming to Bob for help. As a result Bob is chairing the All Party Noise Reduction Group. He aims to improve building regulations to try to reduce the problems with noisy neighbours.

Bob is concerned that the number of single parent families have increased by four times. He is concerned that this is an indicator of the break-up of the family, and the wider community family. Bob is also concerned by what he sees as the growth in materialistic values. Bob thinks that there are other things that are more

important than material wealth. Please pray for the strengthening of families and the wider community in Colchester. Please pray for the role that the church has as part of that wider community.

Bob is very pleased with the success that Colchester United has enjoyed these last two seasons. He feels that the family spirit of the club and self discipline of the players has paid off. He feels that the success of the football club is significant because "it puts Colchester on the map" nationally and internationally.

Housing

Bob still sees a need for sufficient, affordable, public rented housing for families. He says that there is a particular need for 3 & 4 bedroom houses. Many families live in a sub-standard housing situation. Bob thinks that better housing is a crucial piece in the "jigsaw of life", and will enable people to have a better chance for employment, health and education.

Bob thanks us for our prayers for better housing for families in Colchester. He feels it is important to persevere in prayer for this matter, because it will require long term change at national government level.

Personal

Bob is thankful for his long marriage. He and his wife celebrated their Ruby wedding anniversary recently. Please pray for his daughter's upcoming wedding in Shrub End, and for a blessed marriage. Please continue to pray for wisdom for Bob as he seeks how best to help those in need who come to him for help. Also, for his role in Parliament as he seeks to be part of producing the best possible legislation for the country and for the world.

Aglow International

St. Johns and Highwoods Community Centre, Highwoods

Saturday 2nd June

Meeting 1.30pm -4.30pm.
Registration fees £3.50 including lunch.
With speaker Joan Sackey, "God's troops need to be up and running".

Grace and Mercy Ladies Day

at Christchurch, Ireton Road, on **June 9th 2007**, from 10am to 4pm.

Everyone is welcome to hear Dotha Blackwood. **Unity** are coming to lead worship and tell us about their involvement with children in the Philippines.

Cost £6 (including a ploughman's lunch)

Tickets available from Mavis Knight (540650), Juliet Keay (382621) and Pauline Stevens (544257)

SMILE Puppet Ministry Mega Kids Club - NEW VENUE

Friday 1st June
Kingsland Church Lexden Rd
(new building)

Contact Ella Havell
01206 735925 or
EllaHavell@aol.com

Street Pastors' meeting

Friday 8th June (postponed from Friday 25th May)

Time: 9.30 pm - 11 pm

Colchester Baptist Church, Eld Lane followed by prayer led by CBRC. *Please continue to pray for Street Pastors. See May Prayer guide for more info or contact Tim Abbott*

tim@cyocolchester.org.uk or
01206 863835

Through the gateway. The persecuted church

This month we offer prayer for the persecuted church.

Turkey: Last week David spent two nights in prison. He lives in Turkey. He hadn't broken the law and wasn't charged with any crime. His offence was to talk openly about his Christian faith.

It's not illegal to preach the gospel in Turkey, which is constitutionally a secular state. However at birth every Turk is designated "Muslim" on their identity papers, and it's against regulations for police officers to be Christians. There is an immediate tension between the legal position of Christians and their actual standing in society. Once someone becomes a Christian, and changes their identity card, they may lose their job, and all contact with their family and wider community.

For Christians who choose to live in Turkey to share their faith, imprisonment like David's is commonplace, and deportation routine.

It's easy to assume that the persecution experienced by the early church is now uncommon, and it's true that international law protects religious freedom, including the liberty to share with others what you believe. But, as David and others have found, the practice of persecution is common in many countries today. In the twentieth century, more people were killed for their faith than in all the previous nineteen combined.

Kidnapping

Iraq: Iraqi priest Douglas Yusuf Al-Bazy retells the details of his kidnapping. "I'm not afraid any more, When you meet the face of death, you aren't afraid of death after that."

Al-Bazy had just left church and

was driving home when four cars surrounded his vehicle and forced him to pull over on November 19, 2006. Men from the vehicles blindfolded Al-Bazy at gunpoint and pushed him into the trunk of his car. The priest said his captors drove him around before eventually escorting him to a house after nightfall.

On the sixth day the priest finally begged his captors to kill him. The men responded that he was their first captive to have ever asked to be killed.

"It is different between us," the priest told his kidnappers. "Maybe for you death is the end, but for us death is only the beginning."

"Stop talking like that, we don't understand what you mean," his captors responded.

Survival Strategies

The priest knew his life may have been on the line when his captors asked him which group he thought they were from.

"I know that if the situation were better, all of you would be in other jobs as teachers, doctors and lawyers," he responded carefully. "But because times are so bad, you've been forced to work with the resistance." The priest said that his response opened a floodgate of emotion among his captors. They

each began to tell him their own stories and how they had been forced into their work as kidnappers.

He said that the single easiest way to target the hundreds of families at his Baghdad parish, St. Elijah's, had been to take out the church's only priest, himself. "If the priest disappears then the community will disappear," Al-Bazy said.

Prayer group

To join a group that regularly prays for persecuted Christians, contact Joan Davies on 01206 862070 or joandavie@gmail.com

Here is part of a brief report of the funeral of the three men who gave their lives for Christ in Turkey recently:

"In the closing moments of this incredible service, one of the pastors shouted "Afferin Necati! Afferin Tilman! Afferin Uður! Which translated means "Well done Necati! Well done Tilman! Well done Uður! We are certain the Lord echoed those same sentiments, as He received those precious men into His heavenly kingdom! Then, as Necati's body was lovingly ushered onward to its final resting place, applause and praise resonated throughout the garden! As we looked up, we noticed that the media stood utterly dumb-founded!

We were quite certain they had never witnessed anything like this before. Yet, as believers we knew we had been in the very presence of the Lord. It seemed as if we had observed church history in the very making. Most importantly, we believe that the precious blood of these saints was not shed in vain, but will be used to further God's kingdom in a manner that has not occurred since the time of the apostles. So let it be written, so let it be done!"

Please pray for these countries where Christians experience greatest persecution

1. North Korea
2. Saudi Arabia
3. Iran
4. Somalia
5. Maldives
6. Yemen
7. Bhutan
8. Vietnam
9. Laos
10. Afghanistan

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Feedback - 24/7 prayer rooms

St Stephen's Church, New Town

"Lots of people experienced a sense of God's presence in the prayer room. One person wrote 'my time in the prayer room has been a wonderful moment of healing in a safe place where we felt able to be open with God and one another, 3 hours went very quickly.'"

There was also the chance to just relax and be yourself. One of our visions for the prayer room is summed up in this next quote that someone wrote during their time 'be still and know that I am God ... they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength...'

During the week this theme of light has been a feature of some people's comments in the prayer room log. Some prayed that our church would be a beacon of light for Colchester and Hythe. Some people felt strongly that God is seeking to give a voice to this church in our community and saw this church covered in light drawing many to his kingdom.

During the week many scriptures have been given, Mary was repeatedly given Isaiah 40 v 9-11 and v 29-31. One friend who is an agnostic was reluctant to go but on entering someone prayed with him and he found it a comforting place and stayed for two hours.

The superb news is that our prayer room has inspired another at Wickham Bishops. We also felt the need to do more prayer together and therefore a 24 hour day of prayer has been arranged"
Richard Smith

West Mersea

"We managed to secure a vacant shop premises that was situated right in the heart of the community. The leaseholder was very generous in allowing us to use it

for free for the week.

The vision for the week was that the shop would be a place where people from the community could come and find out about Stop The Traffik and its work to prevent human trafficking. We encouraged about 100 people to sign the declaration and put their handprint on our freedom wall.

Alongside this there were many prayer activities for people to do and it gave opportunity for people to express themselves in prayer in new ways. Throughout the week people from the various churches in the area got involved and there was a real sense of fellowship between the many and varied Christian community. Fantastic friendships have been built as a result and we all believed Jesus' prayer that we 'may be one' was being answered.

One evening a group of teenagers came in the shop. They would normally never step foot into a place that had something to do with God! They signed the petition, put their handprints on the freedom wall and stayed for an hour chatting. We pray that the conversations that we had are a beginning to seeing these guys again and again.

On the Saturday morning we gave hot cross buns to passer-by and encouraged them to come into the shop and sign the petition. Time and time again throughout the week people said to me that they could come here, no matter what time of the day, and really meet with God and have fellowship with other Christians.

Our prayer is, what happens next? How do we keep this vision alive? How can we continue to support Stop The Traffik? How do we 'flesh' the gospel out? Please pray with us that we may know the heart of the Father".

Joe Haward

"The Jesus Centre 24-7 prayer room was used by more than 40 people from over 10 church congregations. There were also prayer requests posted into the prayer room by the local community. The prayer room hosted worship music sessions, united prayer with local congregations, soaking prayer and sessions with young people.

Here are some stories from people using the prayer room.

- ⇒ "I valued the community feeling in the prayer room. It felt like home. It was a wonderful place with intercession, worship and creativity going on all at the same time. It was a place of personal spiritual expansion."
- ⇒ "I came back from a time away and walked into the prayer room. I fell to my knees from the presence of the Lord, crying, praying for Colchester and thanking God. I was led to pray for the homeless and The Lakes (psychiatric hospital)."
- ⇒ "I thought it would be just hard work, and that I'd only last ½ hour, but I stayed for 2 ½ hours!"
- ⇒ "My colleague from work came to the prayer room. He loved it. He said the smell of fresh baking reminded of him of his grandmother's house! He came back the next day to read more prayers and scripture, and to receive prayer."

Richard Smith

If you'd like to see a week of 24-7 prayer in your congregation, contact Richard Smith 01206 522781 or r_g_smith@hotmail.com

Prayer for Leadership

We pray for those in leadership

1 Timothy 2:1,2. 'I urge you then that requests, prayers intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness'. We pray for:

- Leaders of the council, Robert Davidson (Council leader), portfolio holders, newly elected councillors and those who have served for many years.
- For righteous and Godly decisions to be made. (*Micah 6:8*)
- For business leaders, for a clear united vision, common goals and cohesive strategy
- For those in retail, Town Centre Partnership and COLBAC.
- Those influencing the arts and media (*Philippians 4:8*)
- Church leaders and those in Christian leadership throughout the Borough (*Romans 12: 9-13*)
- Leaders of the voluntary sector, those involved in Col2020 (*Philippians 2: 1-4*)
- For head teachers, leaders in the University, etc
- Health leaders, trust directors and decision makers in social care.
- For the police, magistrates, those influencing justice
- For our newly elected Mayor, Ray Gamble and his wife Jenny
- Those involved in sports and leisure particularly with planning for 2012 Olympics and the new community stadium

Colchester Garrison

We pray for the Colchester Garrison, for:

- The Chaplains of the different units, seeking to pastor and minister to men and women who may have to lay down their lives somewhere in this world.
- Families of soldiers away serving in other parts of the world
- The schools supporting Army families and the challenges they may face
- God to minister to areas of fear, grief and uncertainty within the Garrison community
- The work of the church within the Shrub End area
- For those who have lost relatives, friends and colleagues during the last few years
- Strengthening of the support networks in place for families
- Outreach to soldiers and their families through relationship support, school clubs, Alpha courses, etc
- The new opportunities available to the new garrison church
- Those passing through our town from other areas

A prayer.

As impressive as the world powers are, dear God, and as arresting as the headlines of their activities, I choose to put my trust in you, invisible and unobtrusive. Amen

*Thank you to everyone who contacts CPn each month. Write to Teresa Lasky at 1, Lodge Court, West Bergholt, CO6 3JL or to **contribute to next month's prayer guide** contact Marie Morris at: info@colchesterprayernet.co.uk*

Prayer for MPs.

Prayer groups are now in place for Bernard Jenkin (Colchester North) and Bob Russell (Colchester Town). Please contact CPn with your postal address, church affiliation and the name of your minister if you would like to be involved.

Prayer Breakfast

Date: Saturday 2nd June
Time: 8.30 am - 10 am
The Ark, Highwoods

For more information on praying for the persecuted church:

Open Doors

Tel: 01993 885400
Email: info@opendoorsuk.org

Release International

Tel: 01689 823491
Email: info@releaseinternational.org

Compass Direct

News from the frontlines of persecution
www.compassdirect.org

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