



# August 2008

## Stories of Hope

### Inside this issue:

Stories of Hope	1
Prayer in Schools National Prayer Breakfast	2
More Stories of Hope	3
More Stories of Hope	4
Through the Gateway— Coastlands and Gateways	5

**2008 has been declared a year of hope! Our town celebrates with a united church event this August and as part of that we are devoting the prayer guide to stories of hope and thanksgiving. Thank you to those who have contributed. We hope as you read this month's edition you will be encouraged, prayerful and thankful to our wonderful God!**

First a little news from us by way of thanksgiving!

It has been a busy and fruitful year in the life of our town and here at Colchester Prayernet (CPn) we continue to produce a monthly prayer guide, with articles focussing on prayer for the borough, the nation and the world. We have also introduced an occasional "special edition" that has a more in-depth focus on particular subjects. More people have joined CPn, with 53 congregations involved.

CPn also continues to attend events for the borough, including Colchester 2020 and the Crime and Disorder Reduction partnership. It is so encouraging at these events to be able to offer prayer to those in authority and those working within the town.

New initiatives that have become reality this year include Out for Good, Street Pastors, a prayer room in a secondary school, the New Neighbours' project and the Hope 08 town centre event (see July prayer guide for more details). Each of these represents people uniting in prayer and service to bless others, and we

sense a new level of unity and cooperation amongst Christians in our town. Praise God!

Other initiatives continue to grow and become more established; Beacon House, Open Door and the soup run continue to serve the homeless. Night Stop won a national award to continue to help young people who might otherwise become homeless. Friends International, together with the University chaplaincy, continues to work among students and discipling many.

In March the Boiler Room community ran 2 prayer rooms in Turkey and then of course in May the first 24/10 prayer room in Colchester, which many congregations joined.

In April CPn were able to host (as part of a national initiative) a series of four training days under the Company of Prophetic People (COPP) banner. These have been well attended, with over 40 people each time from Essex, Suffolk, Hertfordshire and Surrey!

We thank God for His many blessings upon this town, His faithfulness to us all. We always like hearing your feedback and good news stories,

Contact us at the CPn address.

Thank you!

**O Lord, You are my God; I will exalt You and praise Your name, for in perfect faithfulness You have done marvellous things, things planned long ago.**

*Isaiah 25:1*

**Prayer Breakfast:**  
There is no meeting in August

## Prayer room report + National Prayer B'fast

### Prayer room in school report

One thing that surprised us was the number of boys who came. These lads really engaged with the different activities and especially the 'holy of holies' quiet space.

The feedback we had from the students is very positive and points to a spiritual awareness of God's presence which is the whole point of the room. Also we overheard their name for the prayer room - "The Jesus Room". Which is kind of interesting as although "god" and "God" got a mention in some of the written reflections, Jesus didn't. I love it that young people give these things names that we wouldn't touch with a barge pole.

In an amazing answer to prayer, we never had to turn people away because the room was already full - it's like God was controlling the numbers!

The room also seemed to create its own atmosphere. People were hushed, even though nowhere were they instructed to be quiet. Sometimes we were accidentally noisier than the students.

We also had a steady flow of teachers coming through to see what had been going on during the week.

I think we can honestly say that Sanctum has matched our expectations in terms of the way it worked and exceeded our expectations when it comes to the response of the students.

The general consensus was that Sanctum should happen here again next year.

Icing on the cake was a visit from a member of staff from another school who decided there and then that they need to have this happen in their school too.

As a team we'll review how it went

and see if there's any fine tuning to do before we launch it again in September in the next school. For now we're deeply grateful to God for this incredible project, for those within the school who worked with us to ensure it linked with their priorities, for all the young people who amazed us with their responsiveness and proved it's worth doing, and for all those who helped to make it happen. *Tim Abbott*

### National Prayer Breakfast

On June 23rd Christian leaders, ministers, MPs and government officials met to worship and pray at National Prayer Breakfast at Westminster.

As ever it was a wonderfully inspirational time where we heard of the amazing things God is doing, and how His people are serving God in their various areas of influence. The breakfast this year was entitled

### "All over the world, God's people are going about doing good"

This has become one of the highlights of the year for me for many reasons, but mainly I think because; there is tangible evidence of answered prayer. When you hear how things are progressing in our central government, it is so encouraging! Ministers from all the political parties uniting together for the sake of the gospel.

We often read in the media of the weaknesses and mistakes of those that work in government. We often receive negative reports. However, having spent 24 hours at the prayer breakfast and associated events I would like to offer a different perspective for our prayers and encourage us all to continue to pray according to 1 Timothy 2:1-3.

We pray for MPs:

- Pressure of work

- Marriage and family
- Protection for those pioneering

We thank God for :

- Unity and prayer ministers from every party
- Fulfilment of vision and God's purposes for our nation

We pray for new initiatives:

- Micah challenge [www.micahchallenge.org.uk](http://www.micahchallenge.org.uk)
- Theos [www.theosthinktank.co.uk](http://www.theosthinktank.co.uk)

We pray for those working in the media:

- To report truth
- True representation - resist the temptation to write what will sell
- True representation of facts that reflects people's motivation to serve, think the best Phil 4:8
- For those affected by media pressure in central government. Increasing pressure and fear of consequence.
- Protection for those defending Christian values and those pioneering to establish godly values and protection for their family
- Media to focus more on good news stories and the good things that are developing in the areas of justice, poverty and debt relief
- MPs to find creative ways of communicating God's love, God's heart and His commitment to this nation and the nations of the world

Prayer groups meet to pray for our local MPs, Bob Russell and Bernard Jenkin. If you would like to meet to pray for your MP contact Teresa or Marie at CPn.



## More Stories of Hope

"When I came to England 2 years ago, the biggest purpose for me was to get a Master's degree in English Language Teaching in Essex University. But now as it turned out, I can say that the most significant purpose for me to come here was to encounter the religion that I can trust, that I can rely on, and that I can follow to live a meaningful life. That religion is Christianity.

The length of the time for me to reach the decision to become a Christian was quite short. In December last year when I was asked, "Are you Christian?" my answer was "No, I'm not." However, in the middle of February this year, I had already decided, I would become a Christian.

Then, what happened to me? What convinced me to become a Christian within such a short period of time? Honestly, I myself was also surprised. Reflecting on the events that happened to me, it might have been a natural step but I cannot help thinking it was prepared by God for me.

Here, please let me tell you three of the events, which were deeply related to my decision to become a Christian.

Firstly, the thing that I learned in Bible Study Class, which is led by Friends International, exerted a great influence on me. One day I learned that Jesus was crucified to save us from our sins. Jesus sacrificed His own life through a human body to pay a debt that I was unable to pay.

Maybe I have heard this when I was a university student in Japan. My university is a Baptist University and learning the Bible was one of our core courses. But this fact may have reached my ears but didn't reach my heart at that time. Therefore, I didn't really understand why Jesus had to die on a cross.

Now when I realized the meaning of the death of Jesus Christ and His resurrection, I was profoundly moved and I thought, "I want to ask God for forgiveness of my sins." Because I know I am a sinner and Jesus' merciful devotion means a lot to me.

Secondly, I had never prayed to Jesus before. But one day, I was strongly urged to pray - pray to Jesus for my friend's recovery from her serious burns on her face and hands caused by a fire accident. I prayed to Jesus for the first time crying tears thinking of my friend's suffering. Since then I continue to pray and read the Bible every day. As a consequence of my daily prayer, I am convinced now that God is watching me, listening to me, protecting me, responding to me, and above all loving me. This conviction is getting stronger and stronger.

Thirdly, it is 8 Christians that have influenced me and guided me to the decision. Especially, if I hadn't met Eileen, I would not stand here now and I might be a still non-Christian. These Christian friends have something in common. That is their incredible love for others. I know they are willing to spend their time, their energy, and sometimes even their money. And I also know that their unconditional love for others come from the love of Jesus, the love to Jesus and their strong faith. There is no doubt that many people including me, both Christians and non-Christians gain the benefit of this Christian love.

Through encountering these people and learning what they are doing rather than what they are saying, I came to realize that Christianity is the only way for me to choose in order to live a meaningful life and Jesus Christ is the

only Lord of my life.

Finally and most importantly, I would like to thank God for giving me a great opportunity for this baptism in ELD LANE Colchester Baptist Church as I have been reborn spiritually and want to grow my faith sincerely. Amen." *Yumiko Mitsumizo*

"I went to visit my husband in hospital after he had a major operation. Complications meant that we were not sure if he would survive. Imagine my surprise to find him sitting up in bed saying 'I've found God!'" *Name withheld*

### Comings and Goings

*We continue to pray for our leaders and their congregations.*

**Richard Morgan**, Rector of St Andrew's, Mark's Tey, is moving to St Paul's in Salisbury.  
**Mark Ambrose**, Minister at Plume Avenue URC, will be the new chaplain at St Helena Hospice.

**Nick and Sally Lear** will move to Colchester Baptist Church, Eld Lane, and begin their ministry in September.

**A Story of Hope for Healing**  
After a series of tests I was told I had cancer of the liver. At the start of February I began a course of chemotherapy tablets. The side effects of the tablets was sufficient to put you off treatment. Praise the Lord the actual side effects were very few. I had lots of prayer from Gosbecks Christian Fellowship, the Clacton Healing Rooms and friends.

On 18th June I went for a scan. Praise the Lord 3/4 of the cancer has gone; only 1/4 left to be cleared up. *Sid Hare*

## More Stories of Hope

*This story is told with the full permission of those involved. Diana has cystic fibrosis and at 49 is one of the oldest people in Britain living with this illness. She is on oxygen 24/7.*

In faith I am speaking out Isaiah 25:1, believing for a breakthrough, after many years of persevering prayer for the complete divine healing for Diana.

Diana and her mum have met with me weekly for a number of years. Recently we have been joined by Margaret. We have seen many encouragements, and some disappointments along the way.

Last year a team from the Clacton Healing rooms came here. There were eight of us in my little home! Since then Diana has visited the Clacton Healing Rooms twice. Many negative words have been spoken over Diana. Possibly the worst was when she was put on the waiting list for a double lung transplant three years ago. She was told that if she didn't have the operation by Easter (three months ago) it would be too late.

Monday afternoon, 14<sup>th</sup> July, as we were preparing for our time of prayer, Margaret saw an angel beside Diana and while she was praying for Diana, the angel gave her something to give to Diana. The power of the Holy Spirit was heavily upon us. After this Diana was asked if she could remove her oxygen and take three deep breaths. We had more powerful prayer including prayer for her family.

At the beginning of this year I asked the Lord for a Scripture for 2008. I was given Revelation 21 v 5 "Behold, I make all things new." I have been praying this for Diana for 6½ months now as I don't believe we have a God of second-

hand parts, but a God who is able to make new lungs. In faith I believe this is what the angel brought for Diana. I continue to believe for a miracle. Diana is already a walking miracle, but I am believing for completion. *Grace Smith*

### Street Pastors

As we continue to pray for the work of Street Pastors we praise God for positive relationships with the police, those enjoying town centre night life and the media. The following article is from the Evening Gazette.

"Churchgoers who have been helping revellers on Friday nights have been praised by police.

Twenty street pastors have been patrolling Colchester town centre until as late as 5am on Saturdays.

They have been helping people who have had too much drink to get home safely or find friends, or even occasionally stopping fights breaking out.

The current pastors, from a range of churches but based at the Baptist Church, Eld Lane, have been praised.

Sgt Chris Barker, neighbourhood policing project manager, said: "Colchester town centre saw a five per cent reduction in crime for the winter. These reductions are so much more easily achieved with the work of partners and we welcome the street pastors into that group. Their presence in the town centre is clearly helping to reduce antisocial behaviour and violent crime."

Town chaplain, the Rev Alison Finch, said the group had been welcomed with open arms by everyone they had spoken to, disproving claims that Colchester was a night-time no-go area.

"The relationship that we have with the youngsters is really great," she said. "People say that they feel safer knowing that we're around. The feelings of all the street pastors is that they feel that they are doing a good job. It's something that they are happy and privileged to be a part of as part of their Christian life."

[www.colchesterstreetpastors.co.uk](http://www.colchesterstreetpastors.co.uk)

### Gospel Singing Workshop

♪ With Song Leader Jeanette Cleary, Member of the Natural Voice Practitioner's Network

**On: Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> August**

**Time: 2pm - 4pm**

**Venue: St Stephen's Church**  
Canterbury Rd,

♪ No music reading or vocal skill necessary, just a desire to explore and express your spiritual and musical creativity  
**£5** advanced booking **£6** on the door

[j.net@naturalvoice.net](mailto:j.net@naturalvoice.net)

[www.naturalvoice.net](http://www.naturalvoice.net)

01206 500429 or 07954

371370

**Sharers in the Promise** will be performed at St Botolph's Church, on **Saturday 29th November 2008**.

Introductory workshop on Saturday 27th Sept, 2 - 5pm,. If you would like to sing in the choir, please email:

[sharerschoir@cantusfirmus.org.uk](mailto:sharerschoir@cantusfirmus.org.uk)

stating your name and contact details, and whether you sing Soprano, Alto, Tenor or Bass, and whether you read music'.

*Richard Hubbard*

## Coastlands and Gateways

God has given us a mandate to stand, watch and pray for our nation in order that He will provide a shield of protection and an environment where people can experience the love of God.

We give thanks for a number of issues:-

**Isaiah 52 v 8 "Your watchmen lift up their voices and sing together."**

- The gathering of thousands of Christians to pray together for our nations e.g. Global Day of Prayer, etc.
- All the prayer groups walking the land and seeking God on behalf of their communities.
- For the work of our emergency services who have stopped dangerous situations before they have even happened.
- The safety of our road, sea, rail and air networks.
- The drop in the general crime figures.
- The outpouring of healings and salvations in some of our communities.

Please continue to pray:-

**Luke 8 v 17 "For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light".**

- That guns, drugs and people smuggling will not succeed in entering our nations through any of our gateways and for protection of all our transport systems.
- Protection and wisdom for Gordon Brown and the government as they struggle with the economy.

- Families & businesses struggling with stress or depression due to financial squeeze.
- For wisdom to enable people to cope with increased pressures.
- For the media to have a balanced report as so much news releases hopelessness.
- For our troops in Afghanistan and Iraq
- Security of information after several breaches of government held data.
- Increase of the security of our borders by strengthening structures and procedures.
- Righteousness and truth within our government and those in authority to prevent manipulation and control of those in authority.
- For increased vigilance by police, security personnel and those manning airports, coastlands, rail and road links;
- Protection for those standing and speaking out against gun and knife crime; for those people and communities most vulnerable particularly children and young people. General violent crime has dropped by 12% whilst violent injury against children has increased with under 10's rising by 212% since 2006. Some of this is violent crime within the home and child against child. Pray for a raising up of Mothers and Fathers once again with a restoration of family values. Malachi 4:6 "He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a

curse."

- Scotland and Wales are seeing suicide statistics (including within the prison networks) rising as many people are finding themselves trapped in drug and alcohol addictions with major relationship breakdowns.
- London as it prepares for the 2012 Olympic Games; for wisdom for those responsible for

### Saturday 16th August

Half day of prayer and fasting in preparation for Hope on the Streets event

**10 am - 4 pm**

Orchard Baptist Church, Mersea Road, Blackheath

You do not have to stay for the whole day.

For more information please contact Aaron Campbell  
aaroncam85@yahoo.co.uk  
07931 174 996

### Hope on the Streets

**Saturday 30th August**

**10 am - 4 pm**

For more information contact

James\_collitt@hotmail.co.uk  
07977 510880

### Developing a Healing Ministry

Saturday 13th September 2008

Speaker: Rev Anthony Rose.

Hosts: St Luke's Church.

Tel: 01206 851933 for details

**To contribute to next month's prayer guide contact Marie Morris at: marie@colchesterprayernet.co.uk**  
*The contributors views are their own and do not necessarily express those of the editors.*