



# January 2010

## Happy New Year

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### "Doors open at Abbeyfield"

Richard Smith has been appointed as the new Community Worker for the church sponsored Abbeyfield Community Project. His role is to be a Christian presence and foster community on the Abbeyfield development.

Richard and Katy have moved into the Community House on the Marlborough Place estate. They will be bringing Colchester Boiler Room Community with them, to establish regular prayer, worship and hospitality.

St Stephens, Christchurch, St Margarets, Abbeyfield Community Church and Colchester Methodist Circuit also support the project.

"This is an amazing answer to prayer for us," says Richard. "We had been praying for a prayer room venue. God has provided this, but also a new home and a venue to build Christ centred community! We are praying regularly, meeting and listening to our neighbours, and inviting people to join us as community."

Abbeyfield Community Project has been running for 4 years. Jane Mason's work has established a great reputation for the Project locally. Abbeyfield Community Church are seeing many people connect with them as they run community activities in the Churchill Gate area.

### Give thanks for;

- Church congregations working

together to enable this work

- The good work that has already been done in the Abbeyfield area
- The provision of the prayer room and community venue

### Please pray for;

- God to reveal and open up opportunities for individuals and the whole community to flourish
- Workers to join Richard and Katy who will commit to building Christ centred community in this area
- People to encounter Jesus and become disciples in these communities
- A large venue that can be used for the Abbeyfield Community Church meetings, and for community activities.
- That God would enable us to be master builders, building on the foundation that Jesus has already laid (from 1 Corinthians 3:10).

**We aim to be running a prayer room at the Abbeyfield Community House, 170, Berechurch Road, for 24 hours every week. We aim to start Friday noon—Saturday noon from January 8th 2010.**

For more information, or book a slot in the prayer room, contact Richard Smith 01206 570361 or [richard@colchesterboilerroom.org.uk](mailto:richard@colchesterboilerroom.org.uk)

You could also visit [www.abbeyfieldcommunity.com](http://www.abbeyfieldcommunity.com) with big appreciation, Richard Smith Abbeyfield Community Worker [www.colchesterboilerroom.blogspot.com](http://www.colchesterboilerroom.blogspot.com)

### Prayer Breakfast

Saturday 2nd January

8.30 am - 10 am

Stanway Evangelical Church, Chapel Road

## Through the Gateway... Africa

**In the November prayer guide we prayed for the Transformational Business groups (TBG) trip to Africa. Thank you for praying. Here is their report.**

"We worked with African churches to develop would-be entrepreneurs by giving them the basic skills and knowledge they need to run their own businesses.

The Rwandese and Ugandans we met see business as a way out of poverty; they are perfectly aware that their poverty is not a natural or desirable state but the high rate of business failure reflects an almost complete lack of understanding about how to create and maintain something that can sustain them and their families. In the words of one of the pastors, "many servants of God try to do the small business to feed their family because the people are very poor." The aim of the training was to provide some of this basic "know how".

We worked with two churches; the Burning Bush Baptist Church in Katenga, and Pentecostal Church in Masaka in southern Uganda. We used the material developed by Reconxile which is aimed at this audience and translated into their language and spent four to five hours each day both teaching and facilitating small group work. The reality hit home for me when I asked one of the delegates, "Why do you want to start a business?" "To stop my children from starving" came the reply.

Over the two weeks we got to know some of the very different business problems people have to wrestle with there and were privileged to help them work through some of the solutions.

There's not many better feelings than when you see the lightbulb switch on in someone's head and they understand what it is they need to do differently.

We were grateful for those of you who prayed for safe travel while we were away. Rwandan roads are particularly lethal and we were brought up with a start when the same Rwandair flight (and plane) that we took from Kigali to Entebbe on the Sunday, four days later lost control and smashed into the terminal building killing two and severely injuring five others.

What will I remember? The experience of meeting ordinary Rwandan and Ugandan brothers and sisters and beginning to understand a tiny part of their daily problems and challenges. The primary school in the middle of the Ugandan bush we visited and the welcome we received from the pupils there. The generosity of those in the Ugandan church who with virtually nothing were also organising Christmas boxes for those with even less money than themselves. The experience of being in an ethnic minority and the curious stares and whispers. Pastor Egide preaching and reminding his congregation, and us, in a paraphrase of Paul, that, "In Christ there is neither white nor black, neither African nor Westerner, neither Tutsi nor Hutu..."

And finally – does this work, or is it about making rich Westerners feel good? The evidence from Reconxile after similar courses is that it does make a difference, and one course can help lift over 50% of those attending and their families out of poverty; personally I'm looking forward to hearing from the two churches in six months' time to understand what's

changed. But perhaps I'll leave the last word to one of the Ugandan delegates on the evaluation forms we asked them to fill in (anonymously). "May God bless you – really you have pulled me from the pit where I have been so long" JOHN HATTAM

**CYO.** "Although Christmas is nearly upon us and the term is nearly over, our thoughts are turning to next year. Already we have some wonderful opportunities in schools, exciting new initiatives and there are inspiring stories to tell from the work we've been doing this term. During the first week of next term we will be taking a little time out to pray over our work with young people and to seek God for his continued leading. As part of this we will be holding our termly CYO Prayer Evening and would love to invite you to join with us and others to pray for the work of CYO. We will be at The Life-house (formerly The Jesus Centre) on King Harold Road, Colchester on **Wednesday 6th January from 8pm to 9:30pm.**

The latest Events Update for the Mayor's Charities is now on our website with more information, particularly about the many excellent January events. We have provisionally booked a table for 10 at the Malaysian Curry Night on Saturday 30th January so if you'd like to join us please book through the Town Hall or let us know and we'll put your name on a ticket. Click this link to view or download the latest Mayor's Charity news:

[http://www.cyocolchester.org.uk/files/mayors\\_charity.pdf](http://www.cyocolchester.org.uk/files/mayors_charity.pdf)

Wishing you a very happy Christmas and an exciting new year". Tim and CYO team

## New leadership - CACC

*We want to welcome and pray for Bryan Morrissey as he takes on the leadership of Colchester Area Community Church. He tells us a little of his history and future vision.*

"At the age of 13, I told the careers counsellor at school that I wanted to be a minister in the church. I wasn't a Christian, but had been to church and wanted to be a Methodist minister. Being a little lacking in ability I was told to think of another career and so I decided to be a computer programmer. Again, I was advised that this was likely to be beyond my ability. Ignoring the presented options, I left school and entered employment with BT.

At the age of 19, I became a Christian through the Methodist church and joined CACC at the age of 21. God blessed me with an amazing wife, Helen, and we settled into church life here in Colchester. God blessed us with two wonderful children, Caitlin and Nathan who are a delight to us both.

When I turned 30, I was challenged to fast and seek the Lord for my future. For a week I fasted and prayed, asking God to show me by the time I was 40, what He wanted me to do with the rest of my life.

Not long after turning 30, following a promotion within BT, I transferred to a Computing Centre in the middle of Ipswich, moved to Manningtree and started to worship in Ipswich.

During this period, I had become a software engineer with BT

achieving my second career choice by my mid 30's. I still wasn't satisfied with doing that for another 25 years though, Lord there has to be more to life than this!

Due to my teams work being outsourced to India, I decided to take voluntary redundancy at 36 and was all set to become a train driver! Its a long story, but God had other plans and I found myself not as a train driver, but with a company in Ipswich as Head of IT.

At the age of 39, I had to accept that this was to be my long term future. Then out of the blue, completely unexpectedly, I was asked to consider becoming leader of Colchester Area Community Church. By the time I was 40, God had revealed His plan for the next 20+ years! A destiny that as a kid, had been in my heart.

The vision I have from God is to make His house, that He has asked me to lead at this time, a house of prayer.

Nothing, nothing will ever happen in our churches or town unless we pray and pray in unity. Prayer is so easily slipped in or out of the service depending on available time, but prayer should be our focal point, the best bit on a Sunday!

Jim Cymbala makes the point that prayer meetings are the barometer of spiritual maturity in any given church. He also goes on to say that you can find out how much the people really know God and love Jesus by who will come just to wait on the Lord in prayer.

How are we doing in our

churches? How are we doing as a town?

Can I encourage you in 2010 to pray like you have never prayed before. Commit to pray at least once a week for unity amongst us all and for this town.

God is so faithful and keeps all His promises. Have you a desire in your heart that seems so far away? Did you once dream big for God but life and circumstance caused those dreams to diminish? Disappear? Talk to Him now and tell Him those things in your heart, the disappointment, the shattered hopes. Your desires. He loves you so much, He really does. Furthermore, He wants you to succeed. Each one of us has a purpose and destiny in Him. Seek His wonderful plans, do them as He asks and you will succeed and be blessed."

Bless You,  
Bryan Morrissey, CACC  
<http://www.pempo.co.uk>

"You can buy a man's time; you can buy his physical presence at a given place; you can even buy a measured number of his skilled muscular motions per hour. But you cannot buy enthusiasm... you cannot buy loyalty... you can not buy the devotion of hearts, minds and souls. You must earn these."  
– Clarence Francis

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The contributors' views are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the editors.

## Town News

### Week of prayer for Christian Unity - 18th - 25th January

"The resurrection stories in the Gospel have immense power that touch upon so many different aspects of human experience - dashed hopes, disappointments, grief and loss. But they also speak of a difficulty to accept change and recognise new realities.

This year, the host nation for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is Scotland, and they have chosen the vivid account of Jesus' Resurrection as the focus for our thought and prayers about Christian unity.

The unity in Christ that we seek and pray for implies that we are called to embrace something new, something that will change us and the church - from something disunited to a Church that is one in Christ. At the present time, commentators have observed that the ecumenical movement is 'becalmed'.

Recently, CTBI has been pondering that metaphor and have related it to another - the desert. In Christian spirituality the desert is not only a lonely, sometimes hostile place, but also a place of spiritual renewal and growth, a place where faith is strengthened and deepened. So if there is a sense that we are 'becalmed' in our ecumenical journey we might see this not as a cause for mourning but an opportunity for renewal and rekindled hope.

During this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity I hope you will join with us to pray for that renewed passion for Christian Unity and see in particular the risen Christ in our midst".

Revd Bob Fyffe, General Secretary Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI)

### Colchester Food Bank

God has really answered prayer for the Food Bank. Events have moved on at a tremendous pace.

#### We praise God that:

- Local schools and churches have given us very generous donations of food.
- The Big Yellow Storage Company has given us a large storage unit free for one year. We managed to fit all the food we have been given into it.
- We have held two distributions sessions, a number of food boxes have been given away.
- Colchester Borough Council are very keen to work with us and have taken a number of emergency food boxes to give out from Angel Court.
- We are forming good relationships with other agencies.

#### Please pray that:

- We will have continued good relationships with the council.
- There will be more volunteers to help with the work.
- More churches and other suitable premises to act as food distribution centres.
- We will have wisdom to arrange the best ways for food boxes to be given quickly and efficient to the most needy.
- God will speak to those who receive the boxes.

Our next distribution will take place at Abbeyfield Community Church, Abbeygate Street from **10.00 a.m. to 12 noon on January 9<sup>th</sup> 2010.** *Brian Ford*

**Safeguarding Children**  
At Christmas time many of us

were thinking about the birth of Jesus, foretold by the prophet Isaiah as "Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace". It strikes me as relevant to this generation of children as ever, who so need to know the Everlasting Father, when their own have been missing for whatever reason.

There has been a lot of publicity about safeguarding children procedures. At the same time there are equally well publicised stories of children who have been abused by those closest to them.

In December 2009 Ofsted publicised their annual report of Children's Services at Essex County Council. It has been given the lowest Ofsted grade and a "Notice to Improve" in the area of safeguarding children.

#### We pray for:

- An end to any form of child abuse
- All those who seek to protect children, particularly for those in stressful positions such as Child Advocates and Social Workers
- Support for families under pressure
- God's healing and forgiveness to be at work
- Procedures to be in place that are truly effective in safeguarding children.

#### We thank God for:

- Jesus, who can transform lives in despair
- Strength that He gives those seeking to help children at risk
- Individuals and organisations that work with integrity with children and young people.

*Marie Morris*

# International Justice Mission

From Gary Haugen, Founder and President International Justice Mission (IJM)

Dear Friend,

Having just returned from visiting my IJM colleagues in India, I write with a sense of great urgency. Our teams are relentless in their fight for justice – and lives like Ammani's bear witness that the battle is one worth fighting.

Ammani is up before the sun, boiling rice over a smoky fire. Her work will stretch on past sunset. She spreads the water-bloated rice on cracked concrete slabs, where she will walk back and forth hundreds of times today, slowly moving the grains so they dry in the bright afternoon heat. This is what she did yesterday, and it is what she will do tomorrow. When her two-year-old daughter cries out for her, the rice mill owner shouts at her to continue working. Ammani is a slave. Her work hasn't slowed, despite the fact that Ammani is nine months pregnant. She and her husband have begged the owner to allow her to stay with her mother for the birth – but he refuses to let her leave.

This is the simple reality of oppression in our world: men and women and children, stripped of their lives, liberty and hope by those who hold more power than they. Widows, brutally thrown from their homes; young girls, trafficked into forced prostitution; children, sexually assaulted and left without an ally: They all know something of Ammani's pain – the ache of violence and of voicelessness.

Forbidden from leaving the mill, Ammani gives birth to a baby girl, assisted by two fellow slaves. They lack even sufficient water to

clean the newborn. Ammani names the child Kaasika, taking in the infant's dark eyes and the matted swirl of black hair crowning her head. She counts the tiny fingers and toes – her precious little girl, born on a concrete rice mill floor. Weak, Ammani rests that night, her newborn infant cradled between her and her husband, their two-year old daughter at their side. She thinks about what the future will hold for her little girls, and she is afraid.

But as Ammani sleeps, my IJM colleagues in Chennai, India, are awake – and they are making final preparations to conduct an operation at the mill where she is held. They know the owner is a man of great violence, but are not deterred. As the dawn breaks, the IJM team and local government commence the operation – and, gloriously, at the start of Kaasika's second day of life, she is freed from a future of slavery.

Over the protests of the owner, my colleagues rescue 11 men, women and children. Ammani, who hasn't eaten since giving birth the day before, walks unsteadily alongside her husband and their two-year old daughter, holding her baby girl tightly. The family steps out of the nightmare and into freedom.

The reality of oppression is dark, but I am filled with hope that life can be different for this family, and for entire communities crushed by violent oppression. In addition to the hundreds of victims rescued by IJM around the world in 2009, we are seeing signs of lasting transformation. In one of our target areas in the Philippines, we have witnessed a 70 percent reduction in the number of young girls being abused in the commercial sex trade.

The battle for justice is fierce, but we believe this is a fight we can and will win.

In fact, the greatest threat in this season is not opposition in the field, but whether we will secure enough resources in 2009 to ensure we can press forward in 2010. It is critical that we do not pull back in this season, but build on the progress we have fought hard to establish.

When the IJM aftercare team recently visited Ammani, she carried herself with a quiet determination. "Now we are brave," she explained. "We have courage to stand again." It has been about four months since her rescue; her husband has a job, and she dreams of opening a small shop. Both parents are excited to enrol their daughters in school when they are old enough.

The hope this family has today testifies unquestionably that this fight is worth it. But IJM can only stand with Kaasika, Ammani and those who wait for rescue if you send us to do this work.

We would be honoured if you would consider partnering with us financially. Consider signing up to be an IJM Freedom Partner, [www.ijmuk.org/freedompartner](http://www.ijmuk.org/freedompartner) and using one of the attachments, either the monthly giving form for a donation of £50 per month or the one-off gift form for a single year end gift - this will enable us to press forward in the fight for justice – thank you!

Yours joyfully, Gary A. Haugen

Colchester Prayernet are grateful for all donations that help us to send the monthly prayer guide free of charge. We support IJM and in 2010 will give 10% of all gifts to this ministry.