

Intouch

News of ministries within
the Affinity Family

NEWSLETTER
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Director's Desk

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Affinity is a growing network of 1200 Bible-centred churches and Christian agencies throughout Britain and Ireland.

affinity
gospel churches in partnership

Affinity churches have much in common because of our relationship with the Lord. At our recent Theological Study Conference we considered the thrilling theme of 'Union with Christ'. Every Christian is 'in Christ' and because of our union with him we are united with one another. So we do not create unity; God creates it through the Holy Spirit. Our work is to 'make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace'.

Through our fellowship together in Affinity we are able to present a united witness at national level and, in partnership with others, to make representations to government regarding planned legislation. This is important because the main political parties are committed to following 'progressive' policies, all of which run contrary to the teaching of the Bible and are deeply damaging to our nation.

It is also important to promote grassroots fellowship amongst Affinity churches in our locality; we grow together as we meet together. I encourage you to

consider ways in which you and your church can do this. Some churches arrange joint prayer meetings, pulpit exchanges and united missions (including other local evangelical churches not part of Affinity). The *Find a Church* section of our website provides an easy way to identify other Affinity churches.

If you send us news of any joint ventures in your area we will be very glad to encourage prayer for them through our monthly Prayer Diary.

The great desire of every Christian is to be more like the Lord. One way in which we can do this is by sharing, and practically expressing, his love for the whole church, which he redeemed at such great personal cost. Paul wrote, 'Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.'

Warmly yours
Peter Milsom (Director)

The Globe Church, London

Compelled by the gospel

Without Christ people are facing a lost eternity. That fact must energise and motivate us for mission. In London there are millions of people heading for that future. The need could not be more urgent and Jesus could not be more wonderful. We have to find ways of reaching more people and raising up more workers for a lifetime of mission. That is why we are excited to be planting a new church in London.

London

London presents a pretty extraordinary opportunity for the gospel. It is a *huge* city – over 8 million. To reach

that many people we need hundreds more churches. It is also a *global* city. People come to London from all over the world – a glorious mix of cultures and nationalities. What an opportunity to reach the nations for Christ. Plus it is a *temporary* city; many come for a few years to study or work and then move on to other parts of the UK and the ends of the earth.

All this is a glorious opportunity for the gospel (as well as making church life quite a headache).

Church planting in London is vital. There are many wonderful churches but we need many more of different sizes, styles and varieties. Supermarkets realise this: a few large superstores need to be supplemented with many small local branches.

Churches that focus on training and equipping people are vital too. If people are only in London for a few years then we want to invest those few years wisely, to raise up the next generation of gospel workers to serve the church across the world. It is hard when people leave a church but it is terrific when they are *sent*.

Another church on mission

That is why plans are underway to plant *The Globe Church* on the South Bank as an FIEC Church in partnership with the Co-Mission network of churches and supported by a variety of evangelical churches and agencies in London.

We plan to launch on 20 September in The Bankside Space – just behind the Globe Theatre. In preparation we are busy building a team of people who are willing to join us on this mission. We are meeting every Sunday to pray and study God's word and to get ready for all that God has in store for us.



For more information, or if you are interested in joining the team, you can look at our website: www.theglobchurch.org follow us on twitter: @theglobchurch or email Jonty Allcock (the Pastor): jontyallcock@gmail.com

God sets children who are unwanted in families



Tears come to the eyes of Jean Hasnip as she talks about children whom no one seems willing to foster except for Christian carers from Cornerstone, an evangelical fostering and post-adoption support agency (and registered charity) in the north-east of England.

Cornerstone strives always to reflect the love of God and Jean, former General Manager, and now a trustee, has seen many remarkable transformations. B was a severely disabled boy whom social services had assumed no one could possibly want to foster long-term. He had suffered terrible neglect before being taken into care and ended up unable to move, see or speak. He simply lay in a hospital bed, not responding.

B's social workers were disbelieving when Jean said that a Christian family wanted to foster him. Yet the foster family had no doubts: God's love reaches to every single person and they wanted to open their home to B.

The carers fully understood that it would be a daunting task but they knew they would be totally supported by Cornerstone. The family started visiting B in hospital and gradually the child brightened. He was starting to come to life. Eventually B

went to live with them. From day one his new parents came up against the hard reality of his physical and mental disabilities. It was extremely demanding.

'I'd seen... the transformation of a child who had once shut out the world'

Gradually B began to respond to their love. One day when his foster mum was stroking his arm as a way of communicating, B suddenly moved his hand. This child who couldn't move unaided put his hand on top of hers in a gesture of love. Jean says 'I'd seen with my own eyes the transformation of a child who had once shut out the

world, now responding to the love that his foster family were lavishing on him.'

Years have passed. B has been adopted and has blossomed into a handsome teenager. He still can't speak or see, yet he is deeply loved by every member of the family. Not all Cornerstone's children are disabled physically but all have been through the most appalling experiences and need the healing love of God.

Cornerstone only places children with foster families who hold biblical Christian beliefs. Local authorities appreciate Cornerstone's distinctive Christian ethos, and Cornerstone has received official acknowledgement that its way of working is acceptable under current legislation.

Now Cornerstone has exciting plans: Their hope is to be not only a fostering agency but also an adoption agency, to place children directly for adoption and so help more children whom local authorities can't find homes for.



Will you catch the vision and sign up for Cornerstone's mailing list at www.cornerstonenortheast.co.uk ?

Affinity Theological Study Conference

2015

The excellent facilities of Kings Park Conference Centre, Northampton, was the new venue for the biannual theological conference.

The theme was *Union with Christ*. The unique strength of the conference is its structure; the papers are available a few weeks earlier, then at the conference an opening summary is followed by small group discussion and then summarising the lessons.

The first two papers looked at Union with Christ from an *exegetical* stance; Tim Ward focused on the apostle Paul's teaching in Galatians. For Paul, union with Christ is the basic fact of Christianity and in Galatians the justification of the believer is the articulation of one particular aspect of that union. Cornelis Bennema then focused on Union in the apostle John's writings; after a careful analysis he suggested a new category for us: relational ontology.

The next papers took an *historical* perspective; Robert Letham's paper was on John Calvin's theology of Union; our soteriological union with Christ involves both a new status and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which are distinct but inseparable. John Fesko's paper argued that

John Owen was not dependant on Calvin's teaching but emphasised the same two foci: The new legal status and the mystical indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The final pair of papers took a *theological* slant. David McKay's warm paper on Justification affirmed the covenant motif as 'a fruitful framework for understanding both union with Christ and justification.' The covenantal union between Adam and those in him (the fall of man) should be compared with the covenantal union of Christ and those in him (the salvation of man). 'Believers are united in covenant bonds with Christ crucified and risen'. Paul Wells' detailed paper on Sanctification began with a warning: 'Individualism that forgets the corporate and covenantal perspectives of union with Christ is the blight of western evangelicalism.' Sadly, the theme of 'holiness' has often been divorced from the context of the *ordo salutis*, and when it is isolated from covenant theology it easily

becomes moralism. Wells writes, 'sanctification is God 'creating' holy dispositions, not us obtaining them by spiritual gymnastics'. It was a rich paper, especially the insight of 'a foundational distinction between holiness and righteousness, the first concerning the realm of being, the second involving status'. A grasp of this deepens our grasp of the seriousness of sin and the wonder of salvation in Christ.

The final session is always fascinating as we are privileged to listen to a panel discussion. It is always a stimulating and stretching conference and good to meet with other evangelicals from different traditions.

Nathan Pomeroy
Pastor, Arnold Road
Evangelical Church,
Nottingham



Read any good books lately?

The UK church is in theological decline. People are involved in what John Piper calls, 'The relentless pursuit of leisure even at the expense of the means of grace.' Many of us are spending endless hours watching futile television programmes. Our children are bombarded with materialism, individualism, hedonism and relativism. How we need to be challenged to realise that the Bible is food and drink which we need *daily*.

An inmate in Virginia Penitentiary wrote to me, 'I was put in solitary confinement... I found a tattered, mildewed copy of a book. I started to read it. I had never read a Christian book in my life before. At half past two the following morning I gave my life to the Lord Jesus.' The book was *The Mortification of Sin* by John Owen. Who in his right mind would give a book with that title to an inmate? However, God has different plans.

Books work when you cannot. A mother gave a book to her wayward son. The mother died. That book was sitting on the shelf years after the mother died. One Sunday evening he picked the book up. It resulted in the conversion of both himself and his wife. He is now a minister in the Highlands of Scotland. What was the book? *Around the Wicket Gate* by C H Spurgeon –

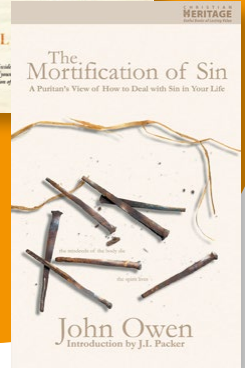
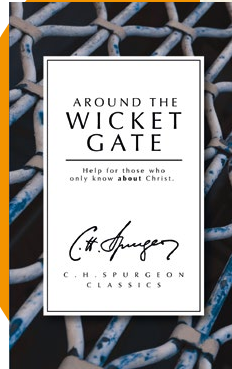
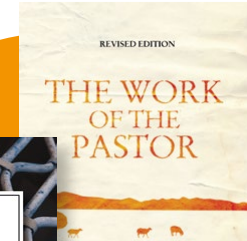
published a hundred years ago.

A young pastor was very downcast and feeling like giving up the ministry. He bought a copy of *The Work of the Pastor* by William Still. The next day he said, 'I'm better now. I know what my job is.'

Lenin said, 'I would rather write a pamphlet than speak at twenty mass rallies.'

Ralph Winter from the US Centre for World Mission said, 'Two things are central to the entire history of missions – the Bible and the printed page.' Meetings come and go, personalities come and go but the printed page continues to speak. It never goes on holiday, it never leaves the mission field, it is never sick or dormant and many years later it can still blossom.

If only the leadership in the churches in the UK



would realise that a half hour exposure to the Word preached once a week is less than what our people need. Thankfully, some congregations do have a planned project to ensure that people use books, read books and use them to evangelise.

Those of us engaged in Christian literature ministry need the prayerful and practical commitment of the community we are trying to serve and I hope this little article might bring some to think of the opportunity presented by literature and take advantage of that in full dependence on the Lord Jesus.

William Mackenzie
Christian Focus Publications



Affinity News

Forthcoming book

Later this year Christian Focus Publications will be publishing the papers from this year's Theological Study Conference on the theme of 'Union with Christ'. The papers were written by Cor Bennema, John Fesko, Bob Letham, David McKay, Tim Ward and Paul Wells. The book will also contain a chapter from conference chairman, Stephen Clark. Further information regarding publication date and price will appear in due course.

Rod Badams

Rod Badams has recently retired from his role on Affinity's Social Issues Team and as editor of the Team's Bulletin. He will be sorely missed. Rod has been at the heart of all the Team's work for over seventeen years, starting from the days when he was also the administrator for the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC). A journalist by trade, Rod has used his skills to great effect. He has written countless letters to government departments to hold them to account, as well as penning very many perceptive articles for the Bulletin that tenaciously grappled with complex matters, dissecting many of the moral and legal issues of the day, explaining the detail in ways that the ordinary man and woman could understand. We thank God for his faithful contribution to the work of Affinity and pray for the Lord's blessing on him and his wife Margery in the future.

Editors' Code of Conduct

Affinity has facilitated discussion between the editors of a number of evangelical publications to prepare and agree an Editorial Code of Conduct. This has now been approved by the editors and their respective boards and can be viewed on our website. Those who have prepared and subscribed to the Code of Conduct feel it is very important for evangelical publications, whilst retaining full editorial freedom, to be committed to upholding and maintaining biblical standards and principles.

The Bulletin

The latest issue of The Bulletin is now available online at our website. It contains articles on loneliness in society and how the church can help counteract it; an assessment of the new school standards regime; marriage statistics since the introduction of same-sex marriage; the second part of a review of Herman Bavinck's book on the family, as well as all the usual important bioethical issues and legal cases.

North Wales Missions Conference

A missions conference for local churches and Christians is planned for Saturday 19 September at Christ Church Deeside. More details will follow in due course but please put the date in your diary now if you are in the area.

Personal Members

We are encouraged by the growing number of Affinity Personal Members. Personal Members receive a monthly update and a copy of the Prayer Calendar so they can pray more intelligently for the work. If you would like to become a Personal Member please send an email to office@affinity.org.uk and we will be happy to send you further information.

Affinity, The Old Bank House,
17 Malpas Rd, Newport, NP20 5PA
t 01633 893925 w affinity.org.uk
e office@affinity.org.uk

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