

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

In Britain and Ireland, as in all Western Europe, we face a great evangelistic challenge. The majority of people do not know Jesus Christ as Saviour and are without God or hope. It is important to campaign for freedom of speech and for the law to respect biblical teaching, but the greatest need is for us to proclaim the gospel, by word and life. In this issue we focus on four such ministries.

Gospel churches see evangelism as a priority. A *Passion for Life* is a nationwide initiative which will involve many churches working together and praying for each other in gospel partnership.

Training young people in evangelism is a strategic ministry. For many years UBM have been engaging with people on the beaches and streets of Britain and Europe. UBM teams provide excellent training and experience in evangelism for young people. Many of our present church leaders and missionaries gained valuable experience with UBM.

Strategic church planting is an urgent need. The Gateway Christian Fellowship in Derry is a bold church-planting project by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland to reach out to people who urgently need to hear the gospel in a predominately Roman Catholic community.

Training a new generation of gospel ministers is vitally important. LTS and other theological colleges linked to Affinity are committed to the task of equipping them to teach the Word of God faithfully, bringing the gospel to our society and to all ages. We need to engage the younger generation and win them for Christ. Colleges need our prayers and financial support as they train our future church leaders.

Affinity brings together these and many other gospel ministries. Please pray that the Lord will richly bless them and move powerfully amongst us by the Holy Spirit.

Warmly yours
Peter

What is

A Passion for Life 2014?

AP4L is a national mission initiative that aims to galvanise churches to make a special effort to work together to get the gospel out in the month or so before Easter 2014.

It has been initiated and organised by the various regional Gospel Partnerships around the country. It is not centrally-organised; there is a very small Steering Committee. AP4L simply asks Churches to do what they are doing already, but to push themselves to do so on a bigger scale and in co-operation with others.

There are a number of distinctive features of the AP4L mission:

Gospel Centred

The churches involved are united by their commitment to the core truths of the gospel.

Gospel Proclaiming

AP4L is committed to proclaiming the verbal message of what God has done for us through the Lord Jesus. Whilst most of the churches involved also serve their communities in many practical ways, we believe that this is not evangelism in itself,



and that the gospel must be proclaimed as well as demonstrated.

Local Church Based

We believe that God's work is done through faithful local churches proclaiming Christ, and we trust them to know how best to do so in their own communities.

National

Churches in every part of the UK will take part. Many find it an encouragement just to know that they are part of a larger initiative which will see hundreds, if not thousands, of like-minded churches working and praying at the same time to get the gospel out.

Co-operative

One of the distinctive features of AP4L is that it has sought to encourage churches to work together, whether in a town, a city or an area. This enables resources and ideas to be shared, and allows bigger events to be held than any individual church could mount on its own. One of the great blessings of AP4L is that it has helped to bring Anglican and Independent churches together.

Why are we holding A Passion for Life in 2014?

The first was held in 2010 and the reason why we are holding another is that the churches wanted to do it again. Many were encouraged by what had been achieved: some people were wonderfully converted either during the mission or as a result of it; churches gained a renewed confidence in evangelism and were especially helped by the pre-mission training; many tried new ideas for effective evangelism and learnt from what others did; lasting relationships between local churches were established.

To find out more about what is happening in your area and about the resources that are available for training and evangelism, visit the Passion for Life website at <http://apassionforlife.org.uk>

John Stevens

National Director of FIEC



Read more about AP4L on John's blog: <http://www.john-stevens.com>

Gateway Christian Fellowship, Derry

Gateway Christian Fellowship is a recently established congregation of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland.

We work largely on the west side of the River Foyle in the city of Derry. During the Troubles many Protestants moved across the river to the east, forcing the closure of the Derry congregation. Today only about 1,000 Protestants remain on the City side, surrounded by up to 80,000 Roman Catholics. This is our mission-field.

We have taken our name because most of the people we work among have no idea what a 'Reformed Presbyterian' is. Our main aim is that people become **Christians**. The word is misused and misunderstood today in this city, but it is a Bible word we need to emphasise and explain. The **fellowship** of every true Christian is with the Father and with his Son through the Holy Spirit. People who have been born again have become members of one family, no matter what their politics. Sometimes the chat after our morning service lasts as long as the service itself! The **Gateway** part carries a meaning on two levels: More obviously, we meet for

worship in the Tower Hotel, which can only be reached by entering one of the gates in the city wall. On a deeper level we seek to present Jesus Christ as the only gateway to eternal life.

"Blessed be the LORD, for he has wondrously shown his steadfast love to me when I was in a besieged city"

Psalm 31:21

Some 25-30 people covering most age-groups meet for worship each week. Several families from two other congregations have joined us and lend us stability and wisdom. Through the simple study of God's Word some from a Roman Catholic background have been converted to Christ. Because of poor teaching in the churches – Roman Catholic and Protestant – we need to be patient as folk grasp what God means by 'Jesus', 'repentance', 'faith', 'grace' and 'assurance'.



Others come from various backgrounds and we are praying that God will open the hearts of many, young and old, to himself. We have been handing out leaflets and visiting door to door in several areas, as well as adapting our outreach to the City of Culture celebrations.

Pray that God will deliver people from the darkness and confusion of all-embracing Catholicism, and that those of our number whom he has delivered will be so joyful about God saving them that others will want to come and find out more. Pray that God will use us in a city that is superstitious, 'religious' and materialistic in about equal measure. Pray, too, that we would count the cost of following Jesus so that we are persevering protagonists in this spiritual battle which Jesus has already won.

Stephen Neilly



United Beach Missions

Update

Last year 24 years of missionary work was condensed into one summer as UBM ran 83 missions totalling 1250 worker weeks! Thousands of people were spoken to and countless pieces of literature were distributed. But it was the many individual stories for which we thank the Lord. Here are some highlights:



From Llandudno:

"A man in his mid 40s staying at a local hotel, although deaf, was able to listen since one team member was fluent in sign language. She signed the entire week for him. Through listening, reading and personal conversations he got to a point when he was crying about his sin and fear of hell. The team believe he turned to the Lord."

From Carcassonne:

"8 unbelievers came for the Saturday evening event – one of these then came to church on Sunday with his mother and also to the Tuesday Bible study with a friend."

From Ballybunion:

"A lady trusted Christ at the conclusion of the Sunday service."

From Mablethorpe:

"A child converted at the Beach Team last year has been making her own way to church with no encouragement from home."

From Bournemouth:

"The Islamic student from the Middle East continues to ask serious questions and seems close to accepting the gospel."

From Canterbury:

"A Muslim lady moving to London wants a team member to find her a church and then accompany her to it!"

From Looe:

"He has just come to tell me that the 'Trust in Christ' booklet had made things crystal clear and that he has taken that step."

UBM is not just about what happens during the summer – the work carries on throughout the winter.

We want to make sure that people like those above are helped in their new-found faith. As well as putting people in contact with good local churches, many team members write to people they met during the summer. We also respond to requests for literature,

emails, websites and phone apps. And there is the Postal Bible Club (this summer 490 children signed up) and adult bible correspondence course.

Then in September 350 team members, ranging from ages 15 to 78, gathered for tremendous fellowship at the annual reunion where the theme was "Let's talk about Jesus". As well as reports from the summer there was excellent bible ministry from Peter Williams, Roger Carswell, Jason Duffin, David Harding and Gerard Chrispin (available for download from <http://www.ubm.org.uk/audio.html>).

UBM is already planning its missions for 2014. One big prayer point is for more team members. Hopefully the decrease in 2013 was a temporary blip. For more information or to request someone to come and share about the work, please contact office@ubm.org.uk

Tim Howlett

Training Gospel Ministers at London Theological Seminary

Our mission is to train gospel ministers. There are many other kinds of course that we could run, but our focus is on the preparation of men for preaching and pastoral ministry.

This specialisation uniquely enables us to shape every aspect of our course to that one objective. It ensures that men study what they need to study during their time at LTS and are not distracted by matters of less relevance to their calling. It also provides an ethos amongst the student body that is focused entirely on preaching and ministry.

Part-time study is increasingly popular at LTS, alongside practical training in the home church or else a part-time job to help pay the bills. Either way, men are able to study the full LTS course (over a longer period), without moving home and uprooting family to do so. There are many advantages to this way of training, not least the continuity with the home church.

We have recently introduced a third year of study, on top of the two years which have formed the staple of the LTS course since its inception. This has proved very successful, giving time for deeper study of God's word and of doctrine, as

well as opportunity to pursue projects of the student's choice under supervision provided by the Seminary. One of our current third-year students is examining the devil-ransom theory and its use by C. S. Lewis; another is investigating evangelistic methods for reaching Congolese in north London. There are currently about 30 men pursuing the LTS training course. About half of these come from the UK. Many are on bursaries, as God's people give generously to our bursary funds to enable students, from the UK and from other countries, to study at LTS who would not otherwise be able to do so. We are very grateful for all who give in this way to support our students.

The LTS course is complemented by the work of the John Owen Centre for Theological Study, headed by Dr Garry Williams. The Centre is not primarily for historical study in general or for the study of John Owen in particular. Rather, it serves those already in pastoral and preaching ministry. We run seminars and conferences, provide opportunity for supervised study breaks and run a ThM degree course from Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia. Pastors from the UK and around the world are benefitting from a sustained period of study at the Centre.

Robert Strivens
Principal

**Please pray
for us in this
demanding work**

To find out more about the work of LTS or study opportunities at the John Owen Centre, please visit www.ltslondon.org or email registrar@ltslondon.org



Affinity News

New Members

We are pleased to welcome the following new members as Independent Partner Churches:

Peterhead Congregational Church and Limes Avenue Baptist Church, Aylesbury

Conferences

“Being a Missional Church”

This day conference will be held on **Saturday 25 January 2014 at Emmanuel Evangelical Church, Newport** from 10.30am to 3pm. It will focus on the mission of the local church both in its own community and worldwide. Speakers include Mark Pickett (WEST), Andrew Paterson (FIEC) and Mike Frith (OSCAR). The day will include Bible teaching, Church Reports and Seminars. Mission agencies in fellowship with Affinity will also display information about their work and report on their ministries.

Salt and Light Conference

This day conference will be held on **Saturday 8 March 2014 at Monyhull Church, Birmingham** from 10.30am to 3pm. It will focus on the challenges and opportunities facing us as we engage with our society and the needs of those around us.

Subjects addressed will include how, as churches, we can engage with the social needs of people around us. Speakers include Ray Evans (Grace Community Church, Kempston) and John Ling (Evangelicals for LIFE).

More information about these conferences can be obtained by emailing office@affinity.org.uk

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.

Publications

The Bulletin

The latest issue of The Bulletin is now available on our website. It includes a piece on whether children should be taught about pornography in schools, an analysis of the recent British Social Attitudes Survey and a major briefing on the recent changes to the legal definition of marriage in England and Wales. This paper deals with many matters of concern for churches and schools about the implications of the new legislation for biblically-held beliefs and practices. We hope it will be very widely disseminated. Because of its importance, we have also made it available on our website www.affinity.org.uk as a stand-alone document, entitled ‘Responding to the marriage downgrade’.

Foundations

Issue No 65 of our theological journal, Foundations, will also be available by the end of November. It includes articles on Gathered Worship, Global Mission, Augustine on the millennium, and the Spirituality of Philip Doddridge and John Gill.

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