

News & Views...

to encourage and inform women involved in ministry

My challenge for this year was to complete a 'Times crossword' but as that was too hard I confess I gave up. However, I have taken up a new activity which is certainly a challenge, it's called 'Aqua Running'. For the uninitiated this means wearing a deep floatation belt (no, not a rubber ring!) to keep you upright in the water; then being tethered to a lane rope. Once all the equipment is in place we spend the next 50 minutes running, sprinting, jogging, skiing & climbing in the water, with a brief interlude of working with foam dumbbells under the water. When we're not engaged in a particular activity, it's 'active recovery' time, no keeping still and taking a breather! It's a challenge in many ways, firstly because the friend I go with is nearly 20 years younger than me and I'm determined not to be left behind. Then it's

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the physical effort of working for that period of time with the added resistance of the water. It is good fun though, and you certainly feel well exercised at the end of the session. But apart from the physical and social benefits it has also helped me to reflect spiritually on the importance of encouragement.

One week, we had a stand-in, in the absence of Terry our normal instructor. He gave us the instructions and expected us to get on with it until we changed activity. It was so hard to keep motivated and really work hard when left so much to ourselves. Terry, however, constantly keeps at us, phrases such as 'make it count', 'you can do it', 'more effort', 'step it up a gear'

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certainly help get the best out of us. Added to this he has learnt everyone's name and he uses them frequently. 'More effort, Julia' certainly has an even greater motivational effect! Reflecting on this has made me ask the questions, 'who is encouraging me to keep on running the race?' and 'who am I encouraging, by name, as an individual to run the race?'

I thank God for those godly friends who don't just ask how I am, but also ask how I'm doing, those who know me intimately on a spiritual level, those I pray and share with who can ask those challenging questions about how my time with the Lord is, how my attitudes are being transformed in those areas that I find difficult. Those who can see when I'm finding the path ahead tough and can come alongside to spur me on to keep on running the race, giving me words of encouragement and affirmation.

For the other side of encouragement, this has re-energised me to see the need to encourage individuals by name, one to one. To look and pray for God-given opportunities to say that word to help a sister to keep on going, to not just settle for a meandering jog, but to strain ahead to the prize that is ours. One example was a young woman, a young Christian whose enthusiasm seemed to be waning as her involvement seemed to be diminishing. I expressed my concern for her spiritual life and asked how she felt it was going and if she was growing. We then talked through what might help and we prayed together. A week or so

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later she thanked me for speaking honestly about my concern for her and she shared her delight at a rediscovered closeness to God and an enthusiasm to grow.

I also had the privilege of visiting a woman in her early 60s in the last weeks and days of her life. The day before she died we considered Jesus' words in John 14:2 *“In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you”*. She knew she was at the end of her earthly race, physically she had become immobile, yet she was still 'running the race' looking forward with confidence to her heavenly reward, to her place in her Father's house. As happens so often when we go to encourage, I came away encouraged by the peace and trust she enjoyed in spite of her great suffering. I was glad we had shared that part of our race together.

I suppose to sum up, what I've learnt from my instructor's example of encouragement is to be thankful for the encouragement I receive and to prayerfully look for those who might need me to be their encourager. My hope and prayer for you is that you'll find encouragers in your life and be used, more and more, as encouragers in the lives of others.

USEFUL WEBSITE

In Issue 9 of News & Views we mentioned a website www.peacehopeandhealing.co.uk. This ministry has since developed into CASA (Christian Action on Sexual Abuse) and now includes help for victims of other forms of sexual abuse.

Do check out the website again - feedback would be appreciated by CASA.

PASTORAL ISSUES

Richard & Lucy Mason live in Dorking Surrey, with their two children Chester (6) and Maddie (4). This is Lucy's account of dreadful suffering they have gone through and how the Lord has kept them.

After one year of marriage, Richard was diagnosed with Cardiomyopathy. Within three years I found myself watching as doctors shocked his heart to save his life. At the time our little boy, Chester, was only six months old.

During the next few years we were faced with numerous ordeals...Richard went into the last stage heart failure and had an artificial heart. We were constantly in each other's sight/hearing while we waited for a transplant. I knew I might have to perform CPR on him anytime. For 18 months I performed daily dressings, at one stage they were 4" deep. The nightmare continued when he nearly bled to death. The pump, which kept his heart going, caused a haemorrhage. Next a yeast infection attacked his body, leaving scarring on his brain. It infected his artificial heart, so an operation changed it to one that hung outside his body.

We had four false transplant alarms. What do you say to your husband driving to the hospital? Would this be the occasion I returned as a widow? The emotional trauma was agony. During the worst false alarm his chest was cut open, but when the heart arrived it was in too poor a condition to use.... What would I say to him when, or even if, he came round expecting to have a new heart? This heartache continued as I tried to be a 'happy' Mum with my son when at home, endeavouring to bring him up in the midst of chaos.

All our family and friends, who gave us remarkable support, watched Richard for months on end in intensive care with many tubes going in and out from his body - wondering what if...? Personally, I found the psychological and emotional pain even harder to cope with than the practical things. In some ways everything seemed out of control...

"In some ways everything seemed out of control... but we knew for sure that God was in control."

but we knew for sure that God was in control.

Many family, friends, acquaintances and people we didn't even know around the world begged in prayer for the Lord to help us - and praise God He did! In October 2004 Richard finally had a successful heart transplant! One year later he even returned to work. On 3rd March 2006 our daughter Madeline was born! Another miracle! God has been so very good to us.

A Bible verse which I found particularly helpful through all this was Psalm 23 v 4:

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me: your rod and your staff they comfort me."

As we went through this horrific trial, God promised us that we would reach the other side and He wouldn't let us down. We read

PASTORAL ISSUES

Psalm 23 regularly to Richard whilst in Intensive Care , and he even felt at peace when under heavy sedation and dreamt of green pastures! The Lord provided for us in so many ways.

As we look ahead to the future it's not all rosy for us. We still have worries about organ rejection and kidney failure, which could happen at any time. But God has given us His word to rely on, and His Spirit to help us. He is in control of all things, including our lives. So, with confidence, Richard and I hold on to Isaiah 40: 28

'Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth. He does not grow faint or weary; His understanding is unsearchable'.

"But God has given us His word to rely on, and His Spirit to help us. He is in control of all things, including our lives."

INTERNATIONAL FOCUS

Interview with Maura Baldwin, former worker with SIM in Ethiopia

How did you first become interested in mission work?

My parents were missionaries in the United Arab Emirates, where I grew up, and I always felt that the Lord would probably take me back to work for him in the Middle East. In readiness for this I trained as a nurse, but after marrying David it became clear whilst he was studying at Belfast Bible College that we should actually be looking to teach in Ethiopia. We applied to SIM and went to Africa in 1996 with our two oldest sons, Joshua then aged five and Luke who was three.

Tell us a bit about your early years in Ethiopia.

We lived for the first six years 'down country' first in Hosanna (south) and then Jimma (southwest) where David taught at Kale Heywat (Word of Life) Bible Schools and also had a teaching ministry among the local churches. Like the capital Addis Abeba, these two rural towns are situated high up in the Ethiopian mountain plateau. One of our first tasks was to get to grips with the local language, Amharic. David mastered this with the discipline of a true teacher – I managed with my 'market Amharic' as I mixed with the locals and shopped at the many market stalls. Our family increased whilst we were at Hosanna, with the births of Alfie and Phoebe and much of my time was taken up with home schooling the children.

...and where did you go after Jimma?

Maura & David with three of their children, taken during their time in Ethiopia

In 2004 we moved to Addis Abeba, partly so that the children could go to Bingham Academy but also because, after a lot of prayer, we felt the Lord would have us set up an English Language School there. We did this with the backing of SIM and with the aims of helping to increase the standard of English language and as a means of outreach into the many different ethnic communities in the city. It was a struggle in some ways to get the school up and running but the need was huge and within a fairly short space of time we had almost a hundred students, representing many different nationalities and backgrounds. It was so encouraging to see how many of the students were also eager to join in the Bible studies that were arranged outside of the normal curriculum.

What brought you back to the UK and what work are you and David now involved in?

Two years ago our eldest son was approaching 16 and we needed to make some decisions about his further education. Josh was enrolled for sixth form in a Reading school we'd previously viewed on Home Assignment and circumstances made us believe that the Lord was saying it was right for the whole family to return to the UK rather than board him. All through our years in Ethiopia we were conscious of God saying that we were there 'for a time', and this was the time for it to come to an end. So, we came back to Reading and re-joined our sending church, Carey Baptist. We soon began to see again how the Lord had been planning in our lives as the church asked us to head up their international work among an ever-growing community of mixed nationalities. David and I are now co-ordinating a team of about 10 people who run an English

Language School at the church and also organise social events and International Bible Studies. These have all proved to be a great means of meeting new people and making new friends, finding out about different cultures and having the opportunity when appropriate of sharing our faith with folk who otherwise would not come into a church. It has been amazing to see how the Lord has provided us with qualified teachers to staff the language school.

Finally, what was harder, settling

"All through our years in Ethiopia we were conscious of God saying that it was 'for a time', and this was the time for it to come to an end."

into life in Ethiopia or coming back to the UK?

Definitely the latter. It's lovely to come 'home' but it's impossible to work in a different country and be involved with the people for more than 10 years without leaving a bit of your heart behind. Besides, turning on the tap and always having water come out takes a bit of getting used to!

PS - Maura's home schooling was obviously very effective as Joshua is due to start at Oxford University this term. Congratulations!

FOR MINISTERS' WIVES

Healthy Marriage Checklist for Ministry Marriages

We are all aware that marriages need working at but perhaps we are not so good at taking the time to work at our own.

Here is a useful checklist to ensure we are keeping on the right lines:

1. Are you praying together?

To keep Christ at the centre of your marriage and to maintain spiritual intimacy this needs to be a daily priority. (Husbands – take the lead please.)

2. Do you understand and share ministry priorities?

Our primary calling is to be more like Jesus. Our secondary responsibility is to our spouse and children (we lead by example). After this comes our responsibility to ministry 'duties'. Although there will be times when certain church 'duties' will clash with quality time within family life this should be infrequent and not the norm.

3. Do you set time aside for each other?

This doesn't happen by accident. Demands of ministry life can squeeze out the time you should invest in each other. Put in the diary (and guard ferociously) regular time just for you. Arrange for a babysitter. Have a meal together / go for a walk / share an activity that enables you to communicate with each other.

4. Do you take time to encourage each other?

Husbands need the godly and discerning input of their wives. The context of committed, unconditional love is the best place to encourage strengths and correct weaknesses. Wives need their husbands to affirm and en-

courage them in the use of their gifts and the development of their character.

5. Do you treasure physical intimacy?

The cultivation and enjoyment of God's good gift of sex is especially important when one of Satan's main weapons to disable gospel ministry is through temptations in this area. The routines and demands of ministry life mean couples need to be wise and creative in establishing frequent quality time for each other.

6. Do you get enough sleep?

Tiredness is one of the most effective ways of increasing stress and irritability. Ministry life is highly pressurised and establishing wise night time routines is essential.

7. Have you mutually agreed parameters for computer time?

So much ministry these days is conducted on computers and via the internet. This can be very consuming and isolating. Wisdom suggests that no spouse should ever have cause to be jealous of time their partner spends in this way. Agree time boundaries and adhere to them.

8. Is 'joy' a characteristic of your relationship?

To be in ministry is both a weighty responsibility and a glorious privilege. Whatever the pressures we face, our delight in serving the God of grace should be evident to each other and to all we interact with. Laughter and praise should be common sounds in our homes.

9. Do you share at least one meal a day with each other?

The timing of meetings (and sadly television schedules) can conspire to prevent couples taking time to eat together. This is especially vital when there are children in the home, as the meal is not only a valuable time for communication but also for modelling godly interaction.

10. Do you both know how to use the word 'sorry'?

Ministry couples are no different from other Christian couples. The demands upon time might differ but the underlying truth remains that we are redeemed sinners battling our fallen self with the help of the Spirit. For that reason we need to be experts at repentance, not only before God but before each other. 'Sorry, I was wrong, please forgive me' should be the ready response of the spiritually discerning.

A Prayer for Ministry Wives

Mrs Mary Mohler offered a prayer for the wives of pastors at the Sunday night session of the Southern Baptist Convention Pastors' Conference. Here is her prayer:

"Father, what an honour it is to lift up my sisters in Christ who serve as pastors' wives. Thank you for raising up these women to serve you in this unique and vital calling. I pray your blessing upon each one - wherever she serves across our denomination. May she be mindful of the role she alone fills in the church as the wife of the pastor. May she take seriously the importance of respecting her husband, encouraging him, praying for him and loving him with all of her heart.

May she never underestimate the importance of watching well over the ways of her household as she seeks to provide a happy home environment that will be a welcome refuge for him from the pressures and perils of ministry. If you bless her with the wonderful gift of motherhood, may she nurture her children in such a way that they not only love and follow you, Lord, but also that they come to love their life in a ministry family as she ensures they appreciate the privileges that are theirs in this special calling.

As she serves your church, may she enthusiastically develop and use the gifts and

talents that you have already given her through the power of the Holy Spirit. May she foster a deep and abiding love for the people to whom you have called her to serve.

As the women of her church look to her as a mentor, and they will, may she seize that opportunity to reflect godliness, contentment, honesty, compassion and perseverance. In order to do so, may she embrace the daily discipline of being a serious student of your Word, committing it to memory and spending much time in prayer.

Guard her heart; guard her mind; guard her tongue; guard her feet as she seeks to not grow weary in well doing even as many of her completed tasks may seem to go unnoticed. May she truly do her husband good and not harm, all the days of her life.

Your word tells us that *"the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the entire earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His."*

I pray boldly that you will find us to be just that kind of people and that you will use us as ministry wives alongside our husbands to do great things for the kingdom for the sake of the Gospel and for your glory.

You also tell us that you are able to do *"exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,"* and with that in mind, I ask all of these things in the powerful and matchless name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

TRAINING

Two training ideas that can be done at home....

Juxtaposition: Being Closely Connected for the Glory of God

Connie Dever, from Capital Baptist Church in Washington USA, developed this course as part of the church's pastoral internship programme. Juxtaposition promotes the idea that a pastor's wife is to be closely connected to God, her husband, family, and the other members of the church in a way that fulfills the biblical roles for all wives, mothers and church members, and yet which also makes the most of the special opportunities that being a pastor's wife have to complement her husband's ministry.

With the idea that a pastor's wife is not a paid position in a church or a "two for the price of one" deal for a church, this study guide provides questions on topics that are helpful for the pastor's wife and also for those whose husbands are training in the ministry. The topics are typical for all women and also unique for those in the ministry. It provides a way to talk about the different issues ministers and their wives face.

The course has nine sessions that can be sub-divided if so desired. They apply key concepts to pastors' wives in different seasons of life and various ministry situations. Each session includes small group discussion with application questions and optional in-depth further study. There is also the opportunity for you and your husband to consider the topics as a couple.

The topics are:

1. The pastor's wife's role
2. The pastor's wife's relationship with God
3. The pastoral marriage, vibrant and healthy
4. The opportunities and challenges of raising children in ministry families
5. Supporting our husband the pastor
6. Our roles as discipler and counselor and the special opportunities brought to these roles as pastors' wives
7. Joy amidst the physical demands of ministry
8. Joy amidst the emotional and spiritual demands of ministry
9. Dangers of seeking worldly success, and true rewards of God for those who faithfully serve Him

The books used in the study along with the Bible are:

One with a Shepherd: The tears and triumphs of a ministry marriage, by Mary Somerville. (\$11.99 US),

Spiritual Disciplines of the Christian Life, by Donald S. Whitney. (£8.99)

<http://involve.9marks.org/site/DocServer/juxtaposition.pdf> (free downloads)

Royale McMasters - Trinity Road Church, Tooting

Gospel Transformation is a unique course designed to help us believe the gospel is for us in everyday life, as well as at the point of conversion. Only use if you are prepared to be challenged! Topics covered include repentance, forgiveness, the flesh, compassion and much more. This is a 36 week course broken down into six-week modules. It can be used in quiet times or small group Bible study. Superb material - with life transforming results with the Lord's help. It would be a significant, effective resource in the life of any church. Available from www.clearcutmedia.tv £26.99 - cheaper if bought in bulk.

...and two women's experiences of Prepared for Service

I did PFS North with Nick my husband prior to him becoming a pastor. It was great to be able to travel with him on the same journey and have good fellowship with other students. The teaching was excellent. I especially benefited from the Bible Overview with Desi Maxwell, The Gospels with Philip Hacking and the assignments .

I had a young family at home but with support from friends who offered child care I found it a do-able course as it was only eight sessions a year for 2-3 days at a time.

Sarah Angell

My name is Aileen Moss and I'm married to Peter who is coming to the end of his first year of his first pastorate at Hull Orchard Park Evangelical Church (H.O.P.E). We have two young sons. The past year has been a steep learning curve for both of us, especially with regard to the demands on our time and the realisation that you are on call 24:7. Pastorally, we have both had to learn to deal with situations and problems that are far removed from our own life experiences.

Prior to Peter taking up the ministry at H.O.P.E., we both undertook the FIEC's *Prepared for Service North* course in Chesterfield. The course was part-time over two years and covered many different elements including Bible overview; systematic, applied and practical theology; evangelism; pastoral issues and church history.

The PfS brochure states that the course derives its name and ethos from Ephesians 4:12, as the whole purpose of the course is: ***'to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up'***. It was certainly excellent preparation for us and helped to equip us in so many ways: greater biblical and theological knowledge and understanding; practical advice on such issues as undertaking evangelism and leading services and meetings and an awareness of issues affecting individuals and churches within today's society. Our PfS files are easily accessible and we both regularly refer back to them.

One of the main things that PfS encouraged us to do, and which we have found invaluable in our own ministry, was to consider presenting the message of the gospel in many different ways. We have tried teaching memory verses with actions; incorporating sketches into services; encouraging the congregation to participate in telling Bible stories through repeating refrains and undertaking quizzes; writing and teaching new choruses and using powerpoints and videos as visual reinforcement. Our next aim is to learn how to use puppets.

For me personally, it was wonderful to be able to study and learn alongside Peter on PfS. This has helped me to understand and appreciate the pleasures, problems and pressures that he faces as a minister and also to support and work alongside him more effectively.

PfS certainly provided us with the firm foundation for full-time Christian ministry but now we need to take what we have learnt and continue to build on it as we work for God's glory at H.O.P.E.

For information about PfS contact pfs@fiec.org.uk

BOOK REVIEWS

Two books by Helen Roseveare are reviewed by
Gill Kilpatrick from Bethel Church, Liverpool:

Living Holiness - £6.99

Christian Focus ISBN 978-1-84550-352-9

‘Putting Him first in everything
and crowning Him King,
not just in our hymnody but in reality.’

Writing almost thirty years ago (reprinted 2008) Helen draws on her many years experience in Congo/Zaire to challenge her reader to holy living. She takes us through the Congo revival of 1953 and encourages us to search our hearts as we search for God and his holiness. The book is challenging. As we consider what we are prepared to give up for God, she poses the question: ‘Is my love for God greater than my love for myself?’

Guidance as to how holiness can be achieved is given. As Helen rightly says, God himself calls us to be holy and he, through the Holy Spirit, will equip us to that end.

Helen’s illustrations are apt and often moving. This is a book well worth the read in your pursuit of holy living.

Living Fellowship - £6.99

Christian Focus ISBN 978-1-84550-351-2

‘True fellowship is right relationships worked out in our lives: peace with God, peace with ourselves and peace with each other ...
Being complete in Him.’

Picking up the book my initial reaction was, ‘Wow, a new book by Helen Roseveare!’ yet I was quickly disappointed to discover, as I began to read, that this is not a new book, but rather a reprint of one written almost thirty years ago.

Despite the lack of contemporary style in the opening chapters, I was glad I persevered and if you are serious about following Christ then this book is well worth reading. Helen is faithful to the scriptures as she brings her reader through the various aspects of fellowship: the yoke, the trowel and the cup; drawing on her own experiences, including those as a missionary for more than twenty years in Congo/Zaire. Pondering on the humility of Christ she warms the heart and challenges the reader. Jesus came to do the will of the Father; are we ready to fellowship in His suffering?

You Can Change: God’s transforming power for our sinful behaviour & negative emotions

Tim Chester

IVP ISBN: 9781844743032 £7.99

When I first saw the title of this book I immediately thought of a person who could do with reading it. Shame on me! It only took a read through the first chapter to realise that this is a book for all of us, including hypocrites like myself.

Tim Chester’s easy, insightful and honest style cuts to the heart of our thought and behaviour processes. Using biblical principles and real examples Chester reveals the process of forgiveness, grace and hope in personal transformation to be more Christ-like. At the start of the book he encourages the reader to

engage in a personal ‘change project’. Each chapter ends with a series of brutally honest questions to ask yourself and then Biblical truth to apply. It encourages introspection in tandem with rigorous, practical theology to lift the reader’s eyes to Christ. Jesus was the champion of change, encouraging people to believe in him and become more like him.

So if you can think of anyone who you think may need this book, while you buy them a copy, get one for yourself too.

Heather Stephens, Kingston Upon Thames, - and one in need of Christ’s changing power.

Teenagers

Ann Benton £7.99
IVP ISBN 9781844743544

The phrase that comes to mind when reading all of Ann's books is 'godly common sense' and this book is no exception. Ann writes from her own experience as a mother, her observations of others and with a mind that is soaked in God's word. In *Teenagers*, Ann helpfully applies teaching from Proverbs to the subject. Getting used to my eldest teen becoming legally an adult, I found real wisdom to help me adjust to this new stage in our relationship. Ann terms this as the intention that 'your authority will become influence'. This book gives clear biblical principles, it looks at potential difficulties and gives advice on dealing with them. Perhaps the greatest accolade for this book is that my 16 year old even picked it up and had a read!

***The Gospel of Ruth:
Loving God enough to Break the Rules***
Carolyn Custis James
Zondervan
ISBN 13: 978-0-310-26391-3
£9.99

The Gospel of Ruth is Carolyn James' third book and the one she claims in her foreword, she was 'born to write'. You may be familiar with her other two books: *When Life and Beliefs Collide* and *Lost Women of the Bible*. In my opinion, this is her best piece of writing yet. When we think of the book of Ruth, we often think of a nice love story, but what you find on this book's pages is quite different. It is the story of three different people who converge in a powerful alliance that transforms their lives and changes the world. The book was written when personal tragedy was assailing Carolyn's life. This gives it empathetic depths when exploring the suffering of Naomi. It meant that writing this book was no academic exercise for her. She draws interesting analogies between Job and Naomi and explores the fact that Ruth, rather than being a passive character, was full of love for God, which mobilised her to radical living. Carolyn also explores the ezer idea further, ie women being strong helpers of men, serving the Lord together. Themes of the biblical roles of women, suffering and the transforming power of the gospel in our everyday lives, are covered in depth. As the dust jacket says: 'The Gospel of Ruth reveals how God can resurrect and transform a woman's life and then use her in the building of His Kingdom – all woven into the fabric of a moving, ancient and surprising story.' I commend it to you.

For those of you who follow blogs – check out Carolyn's : www.whitbyforum.com

Total church

Tim Chester & Steve Timmis
IVP ISBN 9781844741915

I took this book slowly so that I had time to reflect on each chapter.

It's a book that challenges our understanding of 'doing church' by emphasising the importance of total commitment to the community of believers and the larger community too. This community mindset is shown to be effective in evangelism - relationships rather than events, nurturing new believers, encouraging spiritual growth, dealing with pastoral problems and even youth work. It challenges many of the ways we do things and stimulates our thinking as to how we can be more effective.

The real-life examples scattered throughout lift it from being purely theoretical as we see 'Total church' worked out in the lives of individuals.

Another pair of books, this time from Moody Publishers and reviewed for us by Carolyn Lacey from Woodgreen Evangelical Church, Worcester.

Lies Women Believe and the truth that sets them free

Nancy Leigh DeMoss ISBN-10: 0-8024-7296-6

As Christian women we live as part of a society in which we are constantly bombarded and deceived by lies. Consequently, we can be confused and disillusioned about our purpose, roles and responsibilities and often discontent with the lives that God has called us to live. But this is not only a 21st century problem: since Eve first listened to and was deceived by the serpent in the Garden of Eden, Satan has

persisted in seeking to undermine God's word to us and His work in us. In this challenging and inspiring book, the writer exposes the areas of deception most commonly believed by Christian women: lies about themselves; lies about sin; lies about their marriage; lies about their emotions and lies about their circumstances. She seeks to apply biblical truths to each of these areas and show how we can be free to live in God's grace and forgiveness, enjoying life to the full. She demonstrates an insightful and compassionate understanding of the issues that women struggle with and offers wise, scriptural advice for overcoming these struggles. Each chapter focuses on a particular set of lies and addresses the specific ones that contribute to a false set of beliefs, e.g. "my sin isn't really that bad"; "If my circumstances were different, I would be different"; "I don't have time to do everything I'm supposed to do". There are illustrations from the lives of women Nancy has spoken with, as well as many Bible verses that counter the lies discussed. At the end of each chapter there is a summary page which lists relevant Bible verses, and a "making it personal" section with questions to work through in order to apply the chapter's teaching. Overall, I found this book thought-provoking and helpful and am grateful to the author for her boldness in challenging the world-views that so easily work their way into and at times shape our thinking. I didn't agree entirely with all of her applications, in particular her views on family planning and children's education, but I appreciated her strong challenge and it was helpful to consider these issues from a counter-cultural starting point. I warmly recommend this book and am confident that most readers will find it helpful in addressing many areas of their Christian lives.

Lies Young Women Believe and the truth that sets them free

Nancy Leigh DeMoss & Dannah Gresh ISBN-10:0-8024-7294-X

In this book, the writers seek to expose 25 of the lies most commonly believed by teenage girls and the corresponding scriptural truths that can help to overcome the consequences of believing those lies and enable young women to live the lives God desires for them. The authors are direct and specific about some sensitive topics, such as sexual issues, eating disorders and occult activity. Because of this, they recommend that parents or youth leaders may want to read the book first before passing it on to their daughters or youth groups. My first thoughts were that due to the necessarily direct approach to these issues, I would recommend the book for older teens. However, my teaching experiences remind me that many girls become sexually active and very body conscious as early as year 8, and Christian girls need to have a biblical understanding of these issues in place to help them stand firm in their faith. So I cautiously recommend this book for girls aged 13 onwards, suggesting that it may be most helpful studied in groups with a female youth leader or other mature Christian woman. The structure and layout of the book is contemporary and will appeal to most teenage girls, although there are a few "Americanisms" which may need to be overlooked by a more critical reader. As well as the Biblical teaching, there are testimonies from young women who have been affected by believing the lies discussed, some who have found freedom by applying the truth, others who have not. The authors demonstrate a sincere understanding of the worldly pressures placed upon teenage girls and deliver their uncompromising teaching in a gentle and non-threatening way. Christian girls will find this book refreshing, liberating and inspiring. It will encourage the reader in her spiritual walk and will equip her to resist submission to the lies she is told about herself, God, sin, relationships, faith and her future.

The Vicar's Wife's Cookbook Elisa Beynon

Fourth Estate 2009 ISBN 978-0-00-727612-7 £18.99

Elisa Beynon, wife of Nigel (author of *Digging Deeper*) is now an author in her own right after winning a Waitrose Magazine competition! *The Vicar's Wife's Cookbook* is a lovely mix of 'enthusiasm, warmth and gentle humor' (quote Nigel Slater). She has a chatty way of describing recipes, such as the Great Chocolate Rescue Remedy for hormonal girls; a comforting hot-pot for the broken hearted and even a page on Funeral Fare! The sections of the book are divided up into: Sunday lunch; dinner for friends; weekday suppers; flexible food and crowd food. Her tongue in cheek writing style makes you feel like you are cooking with a good friend present. Sometimes the ingredients are a bit fancy - but overall it is a really good book! I've just bought one for a friend who is about to become a minister's wife. It's good for a laugh, but also jolly useful!

***Walking with Gay Friends:
A journey of informed
compassion***

Alex Tylee

Inter-Varsity Press

ISBN: 978-1-84474-212-7 £6.99

- ◆ What does the Bible say about homosexuality?
- ◆ Is it the worst kind of sin?
- ◆ Why are some people gay?
- ◆ If homosexuals become Christians, will they be 'healed'?
- ◆ How do we reach out to and share Christ with those who are gay?
- ◆ How can we support them after they have become Christians?

These are just some of the questions addressed in this book. While the biblical interpretation is both clear and uncompromising, the book is written with the sensitivity of one who her self struggles with her sexuality.

Alex Tylee and other contributors give candid and honest accounts of some of those personal struggles as they seek to live their lives for Christ.

I found this a very challenging and humbling book. These brothers and sisters truly know what it means to count the cost for Christ, giving up not only partners but often complete communities of friends. There is clearly a need then for us practice an informed and supportive compassion as they become part of God's community.

I Stand at The Door and Knock

Corrie Ten Boom

Zondervan

ISBN: 978-0-310-27154-3

This is the first publication containing transcripts of forty devotions that Corrie Ten Boom gave between 1966 and the early 70s for Trans World Radio.

The best thing for me about this book was the further insight into this godly and inspiring woman. You can almost see this little lady sitting there in the studio and hear her persuading the listener in her winsome way to trust the God who has proved so faithful to her through her long and eventful life. In some ways it might be deemed a little quaint but she still manages to connect with her listeners (and readers) through her direct approach and love for others.

She includes many personal experiences in which to illustrate the messages and yet remains characteristically unassuming.

Christ is always at the centre and I love the way she so clearly and simply explains the Gospel. This is a good book to read daily rather than in one sitting and is suitable for someone new to the faith.

*(Review previously published
in Evangelicals Now)*

CONFERENCE REPORTS

North West Pastors' Wives' Conference Saturday 7th February 2009

It was a joy to meet other pastors' wives for the 4th annual pastors' wives' day in Liverpool. As usual the programme was planned with prayer at its heart as we prayed for our fellowships, family and especially our husbands and church leaders. The day started with songs chosen by Jo Willis, and then Alison Elliot continued the tradition of bringing excellent teaching entitled this year "Walking with God".

Alison explored Colossians, encouraging us to bear fruit and grow (Col 1v6) and to ask God to fill us with the knowledge of his will from his word (Col 1v9). Alison exhorted us to live a life worthy of the Lord knowing that by so doing we may please him (Col 1v10). This is only possible through his grace and the power of his glorious might, which produces great endurance, patience and joy in us (Col 1v11).

As always the day was carefully planned and the attention to detail evident, with time allocated for sharing new reading materials, study books and songs which have helped and encouraged others.

After a lovely lunch and time to sit and chat, catching up with new and old friends, Jill Kilpatrick led us in an interactive session entitled "With Eagle's Wings".

During this time Jill drew on her own experiences as a pastor's wife for over 16 years to help us think about, amongst other topics, the pressures of family life and the ministry, balancing secular work and church commitments.

I can heartily recommend this day to all pastors' wives if they are free next year to join with us for fellowship and encouragement.

Janet Peel, Liverpool

Bristol Women's Conference Saturday 7th March 2009

On Saturday 7th March over 200 women came together for a day of Bible teaching and fellowship at Kensington Baptist Church in Bristol. The main ministry for the day was from Philippians chapter 3 as we focused on the theme of *Jesus our joy*. Barbara Sherwood unpacked this thrilling chapter by showing that we "rejoice in Jesus" as we glory in him, putting no confidence in our flesh, but rather seeking to grow as we press on to know him better! Furthermore, we were reminded that we must continue to "rejoice in Jesus' return", and as citizens of heaven, living lives that are being transformed as we wait for the hope that is ahead.

The programme included a variety of seminars in the morning on a range of subjects from 'money matters' to discovering why the lessons of Haggai should matter to us. Practical 'bite-size' sessions ran after lunch, giving opportunity for women to share ideas and encourage one another. Lunch was a feast for the eyes as well as the taste buds and along with the refreshment breaks gave plenty of opportunity to greet old friends and make new ones.

*Kath Paterson, Kensington Baptist Church,
Bristol*

(Next year's Bristol Women's Conference will be on Saturday 6th March

Main speaker: Susie Leafe

*www.bristolwomensconference.org -
booking on-line available later in 2009)*

Midlands Pastors' Wives' Conference Saturday 25th April 2009.

The Midlands Pastors' Wives' Conference – an enjoyable time of teaching and fellowship – took place at Bethel Evangelical Church, Leicester, on April 25.

Nearly 30 women took part in a day that was geared for edifying pastors' wives. Kath Paterson, from Bristol, was the guest speaker. She delivered three heart-warming and challenging messages on 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 "Be joyful always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus". It was a joy to be under the sound of biblically refreshing ministry sprinkled with anecdotes relevant to pastors' wives.

In the afternoon, a life issue seminar on eating disorders was given by Hazel Watts of Lower Ford Street Baptist Church. This stimulated fruitful discussion and many helpful comments were made. This was followed by a question time and then prayer in small groups, sharing each other's prayer requests.

Sharon Pomeroy, Arnold Road Evangelical Church, Nottingham.

(This review first appeared in Evangelicals Now)

South West Pastors' Wives' Conference Saturday 9th May 2009.

How do we look forward with confidence and look back without regret? Peter and Margaret Seccombe sought to answer that question from God's word as around 20 of us met this year for our South West Pastors' Wives' Conference at Kensington Baptist Church in Bristol on the 9th of May. Under the title of "Going the Distance" Peter spoke to us from 1 Tim 4 and challenged us to

fight the "good" fight in view of God's faithfulness. He urged us to finish the race by focusing on what God has given **us** to do and to guard against being driven or discouraged by comparing ourselves with others. He warned us that the devil is out to cause Christian leaders to stumble and addressed some of the possible pitfalls, then encouraged us to pray for our husbands to "keep the faith".

Margaret reminded us from Psalm 23 that God is sufficient for every area of our lives and especially in our times of doubt and discouragement we need to rely on the truths of God's Word rather than on our feelings. The overwhelming message was that we should keep our eyes on Jesus and lean hard on Him.

For our focus on overseas ministry this year Margaret gave us a very honest insight into the lives of Martin and Sam Seccombe and the many challenges they face as they seek to adapt to missionary life in Japan. It was a great day, with warm, open fellowship and was especially encouraging as a number of pastors' wives joined us for the first time and left having thoroughly enjoyed and benefited from the day.

If you live in the South West or Wales we would love you to join us for our conference on Saturday 8th May next year at Whiteshill Evangelical Church in Bristol. For more information contact Sarah Drury on 01934 834057 or e-mail: csdrury@tiscali.co.uk

Ruth Shaw, Emmanuel Evangelical Church, Chippenham

RESOURCES

The Good Book Company Women of Faith Guides

www.thegoodbook.co.uk

£3

There are two of these books- one of Old Testament Women and one of New. The questions are clear, challenging and practically applied. The Leader Guides which are included in the back are excellent so this is a great way of encouraging women who have never led a study before to do so.

How People Change - paperback book

£6.49 and

How People Change - participants workbook

Timothy Lane &

Paul Tripp

£16.97

Excellent resources from the CCEF (www.ccef.org) The authors say their goal for the course is *“that God will use the course to change people's lives as he transforms their hearts by his grace..that people will live more functionally Christ-like lives, even in the middle of life's hardest challenges.”*

Great for small group work with people who are willing to be open and honest about their spiritual lives.

Also available from the same CCEF curriculum series and by the same authors -

Helping Others Change

God's Design For Women

Sharon James has helpfully distilled her wisdom, understanding and historical grasp of biblical womanhood to create this extremely helpful and usable DVD course. The course has six sessions and an accompanying workbook, all produced to a high quality in a contemporary style. It's also great to have the back-up of Sharon's book of the same title as a help to discussion group leaders and to any who want to investigate the subjects covered more deeply.

She starts by setting a basis to work from, where the assumptions and expectations of society are challenged. This enables women to recognise the significance they have in God's sight and so gain a sense of dignity. The fact that men and women are equal in God's sight, yet differ in role and primary calling, is presented. The lie of the so-called freedom of the sexual revolution is laid bare and the need for purity highlighted.

From this base 'Marriage' is addressed so that women can live in marriages that glorify God with love, respect and faithfulness.

A positive view of 'Singleness' in a society that sees morality as a disease is presented. The ministry of spiritual mothering for all women is emphasised before the role of motherhood is affirmed as a high and godly calling. The last two sessions are about enabling and mobilising women to serve God by getting involved in varying spheres of ministry in the home, the community, the church and world-wide. Women are encouraged to recognise that all of life is ministry as we teach and model Jesus and live out our God-given roles.

This is a resource long overdue and will prove to be a great benefit in helping women to understand who they are from a biblical perspective, not hindered by traditions of the past or the expectations of an ungodly world.

Some personal responses from course participants:

I found the sessions really challenging especially hearing about the work that women have done for God over the centuries. It challenged me to think about the difference I can make with those around me.

Jen. Wife & Mum 20s

It encouraged me to try and live my life in a godly way.

Sammy. Recently restored Christian, wife of non-Christian husband and mother 30s

The course helped me to understand who I am as a woman in God's plan and the responsibilities I have in society, the church and my family.

Mary. Wife & Mum 40s

The course was very practical and related to day to day life. Helped me in encouraging friends and family.

Ruth. Wife of backslider, childless 50s

It was very encouraging, even as a pensioner I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Noreen. Widow with grandchildren, 80

God's Design for Women

DVD course (£29), book (£9.95) and workbook (£3.95) all available from

Clear Cut Media,
with discount for
buying all three

www.clearcutmedia.tv

Light for Life

www.fiec.org.uk

£3 + p&p

(discount for bulk purchases)

This 46 page booklet is a helpful commentary on the doctrinal basis of the FIEC. It devotes a separate chapter to each of the nine statements of faith covering:

- ◆ God
- ◆ The Bible
- ◆ The Human Race
- ◆ The Lord Jesus Christ
- ◆ Salvation
- ◆ The Church
- ◆ Baptism and the Lord's Supper
- ◆ The Future

and every chapter concludes with some thought-proving questions.

The booklet is clearly written in an easy to read style and firmly states and explains, with many references, the essential biblical truths which evangelical Christians believe. It is ideal for individual, one-to-one or group studies. Equally helpful for those who are seriously wanting to discover what we believe or for long-standing Christians whose hearts will be warmed by the reminder of the wonderful truths of our faith.

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

The Women's Ministry Guide to Open Theism

Open theism is all about what we believe about God and how he relates to the world he has made. It starts out as a kind of radical Arminianism. It says it's impossible for God to know the future with certainty because it depends on choices still to be made. God has voluntarily limited his power and attributes in order to create a 'free will zone' where human decisions are in no way coerced or determined by him. Then, as people make their choices, creating new situations, God improvises, constantly rethinking his actions. Like a great chess player, he can anticipate and make his plans. He may have lots of different plans depending on what moves are played, but the possibility always exists that he will be taken by surprise. His will evolves as time goes by and he is genuinely *influenced* by what people decide to do.

"...this idea originates within evangelicalism, from people 'within the family'. That's why it's so dangerous."

It's good to ask why open theism should have become so appealing. Which aspects of human nature and present day culture might make it so? Here are some thoughts:

- It makes human beings autonomous (our free will is sacred) – both modern and post-modern thought loves this idea;
- It makes God 'more like us' – less transcendent;
- In particular it limits the 'authority figure' view of God – very appealing to post-moderns;
- It makes God seem much more 'relational' if my choices really make a difference to him – contrast the forbidding, remote, impassive deity that some people

think we believe in;

- It seems to help with the problem of suffering – God *doesn't* intervene to stop suffering because he *can't!* (or chooses not to – more on this later);

- It seems to make sense of some difficult texts about God repenting, being sorry, wondering what he should do etc (Genesis 6:6, 18:17, 22:12, Exodus 32:14, 1 Samuel 11:11,35, Jeremiah 3:7, 32:35, Jonah 3:10 etc);

NB Clark Pinnock's comment 'We are making peace with the culture of modernity!' (*The Grace of God and the Will of Man*, p.27)

You can see there are *many* reasons why the time is right for this view to arise! So far, open theism has had much more impact in the USA – where it has caused divisions in denominations, among other things – but its influence can be seen here too. I want to emphasise that this idea originates within evangelicalism, from people 'within the family'. That's why it's so dangerous.

I'm now going to focus on two particularly important aspects of open theism, both of which are superficially very appealing.

1. Love is the only essential

Underlying open theism's outlook is the belief that the love of God is his 'only essential attribute'. Overriding all else is God's desire to enter into a rich and full relationship with his creatures. And in order for his creatures to have a proper relationship with him, our choices must be completely 'free'. Hence the need for a 'free will zone'. Open theism thus feeds into two major recent theological fads:

- (i) downplaying sin, judgement and hell; and

(ii) a very weak understanding of the atonement.

2. Suffering and a God of love

Open theism seems to help with the very difficult problem of God and suffering. This is a very real problem for all sorts of people. And there are two answers which might describe the God of the Scriptures:

God is real and powerful but *chooses to allow* various kinds of evil – it is not his will but they happen anyway

God is real and powerful and *ordains all things*, though he never does evil himself

When we look at the suffering in the world, in our own lives or the lives of people we know, we actually have to choose which of these we believe. Open theism goes very strongly for the first view.

Open theists say that God takes risks on the basis of the knowledge he has at any given moment. He does his best to minimise the suffering of his children, but sometimes things don't turn out as he has planned or hoped. Therefore some suffering, even for Christians, is *pointless and meaningless*. To quote one 'open theist' writer:

'In this view, "trusting in God" provides no assurance that everything that happens to us will reflect his divine purposes' (Greg Boyd, God of the Possible, p.153)

This view has some apparent advantages. It means we don't have to worry about blaming God when things go wrong: God regrets it as much as we do, but in a universe where everyone has

genuine free will, 'stuff happens'. The only assurance is that God is in there suffering with us.

So how are we to respond to open theism?
I am going to leave that to you! Here are some questions to get you started:

1. In what way is it true that 'prayer makes a difference'? Are 'open theists' right to say that theirs is the only view of prayer where this is true – because they think God waits for us to tell him what we think and feel before he makes decisions about the future? Try Isaiah 40:13-14, Matthew 6:10.

2. A student from your congregation has recently lost a friend in a horrible and apparently meaningless accident and is asking you questions about how a God of love could allow such things to happen. She is drawn to the idea that God was ultimately unable to prevent the accident, because that way at least she can go on believing in a God of love. Where do you point her and what do you say?

A final thought...

When Paul finishes grappling with God's providence, he finishes with an outbreak of praise to God – and we should do exactly the same. The right

"When Paul finishes grappling with God's providence, he finishes with an outbreak of praise to God – and we should do exactly the same. The right response to studying God's character and his dealings with us is worship!"

response to studying God's character and his dealings with us is worship! Romans 11:33-36.

Adapted from an article by Steve Wilmshurst, Bristol

FOR WOMEN IN MINISTRY

Interview with Karen Soole, Chair of the Northern Women's Convention.

Could you tell us a little about yourself and what you do with your time?

I am from the South of England but I have gradually moved further and further north currently living in the North West in Lancaster. My four children have an interesting combination of vowel sounds but the younger boys can easily pass off as true Lancastrians. With four children between the ages of eight and 14 I am kept busy, but also try to make the most of the spare time I have to be involved in gospel ministry. Currently, I work with women on the North West Ministry Training Course which is run on Thursdays as a one day course to help equip Christians in the region to learn how to handle the Word of God and be better able to communicate it to others. My other passion is children's work and I help run a Bible club in the local primary school that my children attend.

You are also the Chair of the Northern Women's Convention. That sounds like a big job. What does it entail?

I became involved in the Northern Women's Convention from its inception and now we are heading to our fifth year. I always find it strange that I do this role because I am not naturally what I would think of as a convention person. It was probably this that landed me the job! My role is made very easy because the others on the committee are very efficient, enthusiastic and godly.

Why are you committed to such a Convention. What do you feel is its purpose?

The Northern Women's Convention is designed to support Christian women in local churches in the North of England. Women who come are from a variety of backgrounds,

ages and nationalities, but all are seeking to live out their Christian lives faithfully in the communities in which they live. The convention serves several purposes; to build up and encourage Christian women through good Bible teaching, worship and praise, and to support women's ministry in the local church setting. I am always encouraged by those who bring a group of women along from their church for a great day out together, but also to utilise the teaching in the weeks that follow to continue to learn and pray together. Only last week someone told me that they had downloaded the talks from the website and were using them in their women's Bible study group. We want to help to support and encourage all Christian women in their various situations, whatever their roles, single, wives, mothers, by bringing a biblical perspective on a variety of issues.

Tell us something of how the Convention has developed since the first one.

We are beginning to feel less daunted by the event and clearer about our task. It is important to constantly evaluate the purpose of such events, whether or not they are valuable, or the best way to encourage and build up the church. Women have told us that they find the day helpful and have given us feedback as to what works and what does not. We try to respond to requests for seminar subjects as far as is possible because we really want to provide something for women that complements their local church teaching so they can return better equipped. We've had a lot of learning to do regarding the organising of coffee for 800 but last year even managed to stretch to donuts as well!

"We would love it if as a result of teaching at the convention women were more confident to share the gospel with others"

What is planned for this year's Convention?

Our speaker Di Warren from Australia will be speaking on the subject *Unashamed* - being unashamed before God and before the world. Women can go to two seminars, some designed to help us share the gospel, others dealing with issues such as our self image or living as a single person for Christ. The best thing to do is check our brochure or look online www.christianconventions.org.uk/nwc. We want to encourage women in their evangelism this year particularly in view of *Passion for Life 2010* and the opportunities that will bring to reach out with the gospel.

How can we pray for the Convention?

We would love it if as a result of teaching at the convention women were more confident to share the gospel with others and perhaps organise events in their churches and communities to reach out to other women. Pray for the speakers as they prepare - many have never taught such large groups. Please also pray that they will be faithful to God's Word and communicate it engagingly.

The Northern Women's Convention 10 October 2009
Armitage Centre, Manchester
Unashamed

Main Speaker: Di Warren, Chair of the Christian Women's Convention for New South Wales, Australia

Seminars:

Serving Christ as a Christian Parent - Liz Cox & friends

Unashamed to explore the gospel - Jodi Hinds

Serving Christ with confidence in my true identity - Anna McCracken

Unashamed to defend the gospel - Julia Marsden

Serving Christ as a single person - Andrea Trevenna

Unashamed in secular French-speaking Europe - Miriam Hely Hutchinson

Serving Christ amongst unbelieving family - Karen Soole & friends

Unashamed to tell your story - Zoe Earnshaw

Challenges

A woman who works in a paid ministry position is often employed in one of the following roles...

- Church leader
- Women's Worker for a local church
- Children's Worker for a local church

Then there are people like me! Those of us who work for

'para-church' organisations (PCO). This could involve working with any number of Christian charities such as UCCF. We are

a slightly different breed! Yet we face similar challenges to those mentioned above.

Ownership - A woman working in a church may often face the same 'goldfish bowl' issues that other pastoral workers face. They can be swamped by well-meaning people who feel that they have a right to comment on every part of their lives. Now that is a challenge! Those of us in a PCO can have this and

indeed the opposite problem – you are owned by 'everyone and no one'. This can lead to the common feeling of loneliness in ministry. I have found that one way to counteract this problem is the benefit of working in a team environment. We see from scripture that God is relational within the Godhead. Similarly, the

relational God has created us to be in relationship with one other. We are made in his image and our indwelling by Christ links us all to the body of Christ. This 'belonging' within a team can be a great place to work through some of these issues and give a sense of intimacy in a smaller context than the wider one we often find ourselves in. But what about those of us who find ourselves working largely on our own with no team to be part of? Are there any others near you who you can meet up with to share the load? Which leads me nicely on to...

Accountability - Most PCOs have accountability/pastoral partners set up for their workers, but these rarely stem from friendships and can be awkward, forced or irregular. I am blessed with three ladies who are a little older than I am, who are personal friends and have experienced ministry in different ways. There are no 'formal' agreements between us. However, we regularly meet (out of a natural friendship) to chat through personal and work issues. This also includes time to pray through the things discussed. This is such a blessing. It is Titus 2:3-4 in action. If you don't have this, I would encourage you to pray for the Lord to lead you to someone. Be open to his prompting.

Busyness - Laziness or, far more commonly, busyness is a frequent problem for those involved in paid ministry positions. There is always a need. Work is church and church equals work. It's hard to escape from it and switch off. Even those of us who don't work directly for a church find ourselves mainly talking about 'work' at church. The phrase: '*Beware of the barrenness of a busy life*', reminds us that busyness does not equal godliness. Again, accountability with a team, or with another person can be very helpful, but they need permission to ask the hard questions and challenge you!

Quiet days have been a huge encouragement to our team. One day per term at a local convent – with no distractions, no conversations and your Bible – have proved to be a highlight of our year and restorative to the soul! We found the first time rather odd but now look forward to them greatly. It provides time to reflect, rest, think and pray. '*Be still I know that I am God*', (Ps 46:10) - a challenge to us all. It is a necessary time so that we can carry on serving God and others in the place he has put us.

Heather Stephens has the privilege of serving the Lord alongside her colleagues and with countless volunteers in the schools of Kingston Upon Thames. See www.insightinkingston.com

NOTICEBOARD

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Forthcoming Conferences:

For Ministers' Wives:

Three Bridges Ministers' Wives' Conference

11-12 September 2009, Three Bridges Free Church, Crawley
Speaker: Deborah Woolley Contact: Chris Jones 01293 886388

London Ministers' Wives' Conference

Saturday 30 January 2010, Trinity Road Chapel, Tooting
Speaker: Sian Baker Contact: Jane McNabb 020 8317 0557

South West Pastors' Wives

Saturday 8 May 2010, Whiteshill Evangelical Church, Bristol
Speakers: Jonathan & Sheila Stephen
Contact: Sarah Drury 01934 834057 csdrury@tiscali.co.uk

For Women in Ministry:

Women in Ministry Conference

18-21 January 2010, Hothorpe Hall, Leicestershire
Speakers include Andrea Trevenna For details see: www.proctrust.org.uk

For all Women:

Females @ Fellowship, Bridgend, South Wales

Saturday 12 September 2009, Brackla Tabernacle, Bridgend
Main speaker: Barbara Isaac - *More to Life - Proverbs 31...Mission Impossible!*
Contact: Katherine Orchard, 01656 653403 or Janet Howells, 01656 663749

London Women's Convention

Saturday 3 October 2009, ExCeL, London E16
Main speakers: Di Warren and Rico Tice - *Unashamed* www.christianconventions.org.uk

Northern Women's Convention

Saturday 10 October 2009, Armitage Centre, Manchester
Main speaker: Di Warren - *Unashamed* www.christianconventions.org.uk

Coventry Women's Conference

Saturday 17 October 2009, Holbrooks Evangelical Church, Coventry
Speaker: Jane McNabb - *"Daylight at Midnight"*, Contact: Janet May 024 7664 4294

Grace Baptist Women's Association 2009 Weekend Conference

20 - 22 November 2009, High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon
Speaker: Jane McNabb - *The Three Wives of David*, See www.gbwa.org.uk for booking form

Bristol Women's Conference

Saturday 7 March 2010, Kensington Baptist Church, Bristol
Speaker: Susie Leafe, details available later in 2009 at www.bristolwomensconference.org

and some forthcoming conferences for women at Waverley House, Farnham:

Wednesday 14 October 2009 *Practical & Authentic Living* - Dotha Wood

30 October-1 November 2009 (weekend residential) *You prepare a table before me*

Wednesday 11 November 2009 *How to Make Space for God in the Chaos of Life* - Liz Babbs

15-19 March 2010 (week residential) *Woman to woman Equipping you to help women grow*

Full details on the above four conferences can be found at www.cwr.org.uk

AND FINALLY...

From the Daily Mail, 3 March 2009 - 'Why can't we love our bodies?'

Anonymous 15-year-old girl -

"I'll wake in the morning and do my make-up and hair and feel on top of the world. But when I walk into school and I see all the pretty, popular girls I feel like c**p again. I'll get home from school and go on Bebo, look at all my beautiful friends and see how many comments they have. And then look at mine. I'm not pretty. I get called fat by people a lot, and although 99 per cent of the time they are joking, it really hurts and I think, OK, I just won't eat, but then I'll over-eat because I'm depressed. My friends tell me things like this: 'You have to believe me when I tell you you're not fat OR ugly. AT ALL'; 'You are really beautiful and lovely. . .and I really mean that.' But then when it gets down to replying, because I don't like to show my feelings, I write poetry instead: How can you tell me that I'm pretty when we are inflicted with images of beautiful models? How can you tell me I'm not fat, because when I stand next to you I feel like an elephant. Why do you trick me into believing that I'm pretty? If you tell me I'm pretty, if you tell me I'm not fat. Why don't I get invited to parties? Why haven't I had numerous boyfriends along the years? Maybe it's because I'm not pretty or thin...At all."

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-1158706/Why-love-bodies-Nine-women-reveal-REALLY-feel-figures.html>

How do you respond to such an article? This speaks volumes of how we as a society have truly failed our young people. We have not managed to communicate the truth of the gospel: that they are created by God, in his image, to serve him, and have meaning and significance because of that. Each one of us can pray for these damaged young people and plead with the Lord to empower us to be more confident, clear, and faithful in reaching out with the Free Offer of the Gospel, the Good News that can bring transformation and joy to lives like this.

HELPLINE

We encourage pastors' wives and women in ministry to have prayer partners, ideally with someone in a similar position, so that difficult issues can be shared and prayed over. But if you feel there is no-one you can share with, and would value being put in touch (by phone) with an experienced pastor's wife or woman worker, you can contact Elisabeth Smyth at the FIEC office on 01793 619603, and she will do her best to help you.

Privacy will be respected.

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