

News & Views...

to encourage and inform women involved in ministry

Issue 12 Spring 2010

2010 had just begun and almost immediately the campaigns started. I'm not talking about the advertising campaigns - just how many new sofas can really be needed? I'm talking political campaigns, all the policies and posturing in the run up to the presumed general election. When I heard that first news report this year about what the party leaders were saying, I confess my heart sank. The enthusiastic political correspondent said with glee that these campaigns would probably last for another 150 days or so - my gut reaction was to have a self-imposed total media ban! I do believe politics are important, but I can also anticipate the overkill we will experience. It's not the propounding of policies that gets me down so much, but the constant attacks by

one party against the other. Helpfully I have been reading William Hague's biography of William Wilberforce which has caused me to get a better perspective on politics and the privilege that we have in our democratic society. Obviously I've known for years that as a woman I am indebted to those women who fought for my right to vote. Yet I'd never considered that in Wilberforce's time in the 18th century, I'd have been unlikely to have a vote even if I were a man! Hague explains that when Wilberforce stood for election in Hull, only the "freemen" of the town had the right to vote. These were men who had been honoured by being given the freedom of the town at some point. To

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complicate matters, this was an inherited privilege, so several hundred of the voters were now residing in different places, London particularly. Wilberforce had to go to where they were, entertain them with suppers, where he would hope to persuade them to travel to Hull to vote, all expenses paid - by him!

It actually cost Wilberforce £8-9,000 for his election 'campaign', the modern day equivalent of more than £1 million. Tellingly, Hague states "*What was very much unnecessary was for a candidate to have policy positions, a manifesto or any kind of programme for government*". This somehow transforms what we will be hearing over the next few months into something to actually feel positive about as we all have that democratic right to vote for those we believe to have the policies that will be best for our society. So, I won't be switching off the news, or ignoring the newspaper after all! This is a campaign that will result in tangible effects in our society, hopefully with whoever is elected following through on their policies to improve life for individuals.

This year there is another campaign underway, which will also affect the lives of individuals, not just until the next election however, but for eternity. It's "*A Passion for Life*", I wonder if you and your church are involved in this nationwide project which is a Gospel Partnerships initiative. United by the clear evangelical statement of faith, here in Liverpool we have joined with several other churches in the city to hold joint events in

"...it's primarily about making connections with people in our local communities and helping them connect with Easter so that they can discover the glorious message of Christ's death and resurrection."

March. But just as the election is the culmination of months of planning, so is A

Passion for Life. As a group of churches we've met together to be taught and to worship as part of the equipping. As well as connecting with other churches it's primarily about making connections with people in our local

communities and helping them connect with Easter so that they can discover the glorious message of Christ's death and resurrection. We've been using materials to help prepare us over the past few months, looking at three areas; Pray! Engage! and Prepare! helping us to understand mission and be motivated in praying for people who we are wanting to invite along to the event. It's great being part of a city-wide grouping that is also part of a nationwide happening. It's not too late to get involved, check out the web site:

www.apassionforlife.org.uk
to discover what's happening in your area.

It was good to meet up with some of you for the first time at the FIEC Leaders' Conference in October. As always it's good to get to know each other, to hear what's happening in other places, to share ministry and to pray together. Inside *News & Views* you'll find information on other events and conferences where you can enjoy good teaching with other women as well as taking the opportunity to develop contacts with others in similar roles to yourself.

We hope you'll find this issue helpful and encouraging and as always we would love to hear any suggestions for articles to be included in future issues.

"This year there is another campaign underway, which will also affect the lives of individuals, not just until the next election however, but for eternity. It's "A Passion for Life"."

PASTORAL ISSUES

Christina Anderson is a Women's Worker at Monyhull Church in Birmingham and Clinical Tutor in Physiotherapy at the University of Birmingham

I was privileged to have the opportunity to spend the month of August 2009 in the country of Myanmar, working alongside friends from our church who are out there. As I am a physiotherapist and physiotherapy tutor, they had asked me to go and deliver training to the growing number of local physiotherapists who are part of their team. I was able to visit the country two years ago, but on that occasion there was a great deal of unrest there, with monks and citizens demonstrating in the streets, and the result was that travel and any form of physiotherapy training became impossible. Since then, Cyclone Nargis had devastated the Delta region of the country and my friends, working with people locally, have been able to set up Disability Teams to go and visit villages and towns taking livelihood advice and physiotherapy to disabled people in those places. The number of staff, including physiotherapists, who work with them has grown enormously, so that I was training a much bigger group of people than I would have done on the original trip.

It was therefore with some degree of apprehension matched by an equal amount of anticipation that I travelled to the country. Physiotherapists in Myanmar lack the career structure that we have here and so lack senior, experienced advice and support. The therapists had been instructed to bring to me the patients they were struggling with, both adults and children! More recently I have spent my time treating children, so adult treatment was a challenge in itself. As well as the training schedule being heavy, and there being the need to adapt quickly to the culture and the humidity, I was also having to assess complex patients in a short period of time,

think of simple ways to explain what I was doing, and why, so that it could be understood and/or translated, and also ensure that I was achieving some training goals. I felt unequal to the task! I was not convinced that I had the skills or the knowledge that was needed. God used this to teach me some valuable lessons in trusting Him. When we are taken out of our comfort zone, it is then

“When we are taken out of our comfort zone, it is then that we have to trust Him.”

that we have to trust Him. There were many times when I cried out to Him “I don't know what to do here” or “I really cannot face another day”. Those were the times when I knew a strength not from myself, or a thought prompted in my mind that led to an answer to the question. Psalm 37 came to be a chapter that I understood more deeply. Verse 3 says *“Trust in the Lord and do good”* – we are not asked to simply sit back and wait, but rather to trust Him and then get on with it.

I believe that God has given me the gift of singleness, enabling me to go and spend a month doing this kind of work. He has given me the gift of my professional skills, developed over a number of years, which I was able to use so that people in Myanmar will have appropriate and useful treatment. From two visits there I have made many new friends and have a deeper love for, and a slightly better understanding of, a very

PASTORAL ISSUES

different country from my own. I can pray more knowledgably, and encourage others to do so too. And I have learned lessons which are incredibly relevant for every day I live my life – not just in Myanmar, but here in the UK too. That is probably the greater challenge, but is no less essential.

I strongly believe that God has called me to serve Him here in the UK in the work he has given me to do in my church and in my week-day job. But it is also a fantastic opportunity to be able to use my skills to encourage church members overseas and to serve people in other countries around our world. Despite my initial doubts I really do believe I was able to make a difference and to show Christ's love and grace as I lived my life among these folks, albeit it for a short time. It is also great to be able to go and then come back and share a different perspective with those back home who are praying and giving.

I am increasingly discovering that God keeps His promise when he says *"Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart"* (Psalm 37:4).

"...God keeps His promise when he says "Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. (Psalm 37:4)."

INTERNATIONAL FOCUS

An international kitchen table!

*What is cotton wool?
How do I cook leeks?
What do I do about the foxes in my garden?
Do you tip the piano tuner?
Why do my neighbours ignore me?
Have I offended them?
Should I bribe the police?
What if I can't understand what the doctor means in the hospital?*

As a British national these are questions we would never think about. But if you are from overseas, they really could perplex you. In Matthew 28 Jesus gave his final command to his disciples (and us)...to *"go and make disciples of all nations"*. In the twenty-first century worldwide travel seems to have shrunk the globe. But cultural diversity is still huge. Instead of having to "go" to others to tell them of Christ, many have now come to us in GB instead. World Mission is on our doorsteps! It could be the Polish builder who comes to repair your home; a Filipino nurse who is treating you; the local Chinese Chip Shop or Curry House owner; the Czech au pair you meet at the park or an Iranian refugee. Whoever they are and wherever they are from, they still need to hear of the Lord Jesus.

Many of our friends from overseas find coming into a new culture and language totally bemusing and often isolating. The Bible gives clear commands in the Old Testament to welcome the alien and stranger in our midst. A bridge of friendship and trust can be built. Over that bridge the gospel can be walked and displayed practically at the same time.

Much of Gwyneth Hayden's work over the years has taken place in her home, around her kitchen table: through hospitality, teaching English as a foreign language or Bible Studies. Women sharing food from their cultures and exchanging recipes has been a regular and helpful way to get people to connect with each other. One of her most moving stories is of two women, one Korean and one Japanese. They were having a Bible study on forgiveness, when Gwyneth was called away to the phone. She returned to find them both in tears. The Japanese woman had apologised to the Korean (who nationally hate the Japanese due to war crimes), on behalf of her nation. There was a real sense of forgiveness between them. It was the gospel clearly breaking down barriers!

At a church level, International Ministry causes some questions. Often friends from overseas are hard to integrate in the church. The language and culture is "foreign" to them. The church is indeed one body. But how do you communicate at a "heart level" to those with a second language who cannot follow the sermons on Sundays? One of the greatest challenges is whether or not to segregate them. This helps build understanding and relationships but is often at the cost

of isolating them from being part of the main body of the church. Many churches wrestle with issues like this. But whether your church has an official "International Ministry" or not....we all have homes. Perhaps we just need to begin to ask the Lord to lead us to those from around the world who he wants us to befriend and share the reason for the hope we have within us.

Gwyneth Hayden began her ministry as a UCCF Staff Worker. She then married Peter and they became International Student Workers in Cardiff (1981-87). They left Cardiff to help establish Friends

"whether your church has an official "International Ministry" or not....we all have homes."

International and served there until 2004, when Peter joined the Ministry team at Chessington Evangelical Church. Gwyneth supports Peter in this and continues to teach English to international ladies and lead Bible studies with them around her kitchen table.

For further information on Friends International check out:
www.friendsinternational.org.uk

"The church is indeed one body. But how do you communicate at a "heart level" to those with a second language who cannot follow the sermons on Sundays?"

BOOK REVIEWS

This Momentary Marriage, A parable of permanence

John Piper

IVP ISBN: 978-1-84474-392-6

I've read a number of books on marriage, but none as inspiring as this one. With frank honesty Piper admits that his own marriage of 40 years has not been trouble-free, but it is something he delights in and thanks God for.

The whole premise of the book is based on Ephesians 5, that marriage is primarily an illustration of the relationship between Christ and his Church. Therefore, our marriages are momentary in the light of that eternal reality. As Piper says *"it lifts it (marriage) out of the sitcom sewer and elevates it into the bright, clear sky of God's glory where it is meant to be... places it firmly on the basis of grace..."*

profoundly shapes the way we understand headship and submission". To stay married, even in a troubled marriage, is to reflect God's covenant keeping.

There is much of practical help for married couples, as well as a chapter addressing singleness. Instead of the natural tendency to view marriage as "between the two of us", Piper helps us to see it in the light of our relationship with God. Interspersed with helpful quotes from Bonhoeffer, this is no ordinary book, rather one that helps us realise the place marriage has in God's covenant plan of grace.

Connect with the Heart of God: A Study Guide for the Letter to the Hebrews

Charles Price and Elizabeth McQuiod

Keswick Ministries and Authentic Media

ISBN: 978-1-85078-579-8

I have never heard Charles Price preach but it is obvious to me from reading this book that he's a man who knows how to communicate the gospel both simply and passionately.

Divided into 14 bite-sized chapters, these five sermons (preached at the Keswick Convention) are ideal for daily devotions. The style is warm and personable and Price has the ability to cast fresh light on familiar truths (the chapters on Rest and The New Covenant are pure gold).

The chapters were so engaging that I only glanced at the questions. They occasionally seemed a little ambiguous but the other chapter sections aimed at helping the reader to focus, reflect and respond seemed generally helpful.

I would have appreciated a little more explanation of Hebrews 6:4-6 but these are conference sermons. As Price explains in his introduction, deserving sections had *"to be passed over in the hope of hitting the high peaks"*.

Charles Price certainly connected with me as a reader spiritually, mentally and emotionally and in so doing helped me to enjoy those glorious high peaks of Hebrews!

Jane McNabb (Originally published in Evangelicals Now)

Instruments in The Redeemer's Hands

Paul David Tripp

P&R Publishing

ISBN: 978-0-87552-607-2

Sometimes in the presence of a hurting friend, we wonder what we can say to really help. We long to offer words of counsel that will open God's word in a powerful way and effect biblical change.

The book's subtitle is "People In Need Of Change, Helping People In Need Of Change" and this is an apt description of the journey this book will take you on. Before we can know what biblical change looks like in someone else's life, we have to experience firsthand what it looks like in our own. Paul Tripp will help you to ask searching questions about your own life and apply those truths personally. You can't take someone spiritually where you haven't been yourself. This book has blessed my own walk with the Lord and equipped me in my desire to help and encourage others.

It is not a quick read and I have made big claims for this book. But I think few will read it and be disappointed. For those in particular who are interested in the idea of mentoring, this book will equip them to be an instrument for biblical change in the lives of others. A number of people in our church have completed the video course *Changing Hearts Changing Lives* which is an expanded version of the teaching in this book.

Another very helpful book by the same author is *Lost in the Middle* subtitled *Mid-life and the grace of God*. Any pastor will readily tell you that those in mid-life are often in need of pastoral help and support. *Lost in the Middle* is a book for those who have at some point found themselves thinking that more of their life is behind them than in front.

You don't need to be having a mid-life crisis to read this book. However, those whose youthful dreams are now distant memories, will find help here, as will those seeking the Lord's direction for what lies before them. It is an encouragement for all who have lost their way in the midst of frenetic activity and now wonder what the future holds. This is again a very practical, encouraging and pastoral book which I can warmly commend.

Paul David Tripp is the Director of Changing Lives Ministries, for the Christian Counselling and Educational Foundation, and a faculty member of Westminster Theological Seminary.

His other titles include - *Age Of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide To Parenting Teens*; and *War Of Words: Getting To The Heart Of Your Communication Difficulties*.

Ruth Williams, Swindon Evangelical Church

Anne Boleyn:

One Short Life that changed the English speaking world.

Colin Hamer

Day One

ISBN: 978-1-84625-083-5

I have always been interested in Tudor times and have read many secular books about King Henry VIII and his six wives. I was

therefore really interested to read one about Anne Boleyn from a Christian perspective. The book seeks to show the influence one person can, and did, have on history.

I have always been generally aware of God's guiding hand during this period but the secular books of this era miss the huge

influence the Reformation had on many of the decisions of that time. I therefore enjoyed reading a very positive image of Queen Anne and the circumstances and influences which shaped her. The book is easy to read and covers questions about Anne's behavior which I have not seen adequately addressed in secular books before.

Abigail Gardner, Courland Grove Baptist, Clapham

Practical Theology For Women:

How Knowing God Makes a Difference in Our Daily Lives

Wendy Horger Alsup

Crossway Books

ISBN: 978-1-4335-0209-5

Small paperbacks always seem more readable. This one is even better as it has short chapters too! Wendy Alsup's own experience of hardship and pain made her realise that we can confess that God is good with our mouths, yet live our lives in anxiety as if God's goodness has no real bearing on our situations. Hence her book is called *Practical Theology*. In it, she encourages each of us to take, with God's help, what we know intellectually and make it a reality in our daily lives.

The book has three sections:

Part 1: What is Theology? Part 2: Who is our God? Part 3: Communicating with our God.

The second section reminds the reader of God's identity and his character - something we need to literally stop and remind ourselves of in tough situations. The final section practically discusses prayer and Bible study. Alsup writes in a factual no-nonsense kind of way, which in places I found difficult to warm to. And yet she is incredibly helpful. After grounding sections biblically, she gives practical suggestions. An example would be when she points out how the Israelites regularly forgot God's goodness to them, so he had them build markers at places where he had done something mighty for them. Alsup comments: "*Similarly in the light of my own forgetfulness, I find journaling to be a helpful tool for remembering God's work in my life*".

This book is accessible for newer or older Christians alike. We all need reminding of biblical truth. But the practical side Alsup brings to her subject is what makes this book worth reading.

I Once Was a Buddhist Nun

Esther Baker

IVP

ISBN: 978-1-84474-384-1

For those of us who may have become a little weary in sharing our faith or who have always felt inadequate in our evangelism this is the book for us.

Esther Baker, an ordinary British girl, records her journey in search of truth. She travels to Thailand where she is attracted into Buddhism through the devotion and order she witnesses in the temple worship. She is disarmingly open, without being critical, of the road she travels or the people she falls in with along the way. Esther brings you along with her, exposing her turmoil of spirit, while living in the temple commune, to a place of relief and contentment as she finds the Lord Jesus for herself and begins her life in obedience to him.

This book is a gentle reminder that for many people coming to faith is a long and arduous process and that God generally uses a variety of circumstances as he draws individuals to himself. The route may seem unconventional but God's work in the life of each of us is complete and perfect.

Working with Internationals, this book has been instrumental in broadening my own understanding of Buddhism and I trust it will help me to measure and handle scripture more effectively as a result.
Worth a read!

Maura Baldwin, Carey Baptist Church Reading

Our Father - Enjoying God in Prayer

Richard Coekin

IVP

ISBN: 978-1-84474-393-3

In this study of The Lord's Prayer, Richard Coekin digs beneath the surface of what some use as a formulaic prayer to focus on the wonder of our Father who is revealed in each phrase. He shows how an understanding and appreciation of his character will relate to how we respond in prayer. It's jam-packed with practical and clearly illustrated theology that places the prayer in the context of the rest of the Bible.

Each chapter concludes with a section called "*So how might we pray this in practice?*" These are basically prayer scenarios. I thought they would be cringingly twee yet I found them believable, helpful and even moving.

I have tended to keep away from using The Lord's Prayer in my devotional prayer life because it had become little more to me than meaningless repetition. Yet my prayer life had become stale and this study and subsequent use of it was just what I needed to refresh and help me.

John and Betty Stam: Missionary Martyrs

Vance Christie

Christian Focus Publications (History Makers Series)

ISBN: 978-1-84550-376-5

Nearly 75 years ago, on 6th December 1934, Communist bandit soldiers silently traversed rugged mountain passes and then ransacked the isolated Chinese city of Tsingteh (now called Jingdezhen). Almost immediately they broke into the home of a godly young CIM American missionary couple called John and Betty Stam who, with their three month old baby daughter, had begun a pioneering work alone there just two weeks before. All attempts to show kindness and courtesy were repulsed, and the Stams were driven out to the town of Miaosheo, 12 miles away. Early the next morning they were led to a small hill outside and brutally executed. They were just 27 and 28 years of age.

Their deeply moving story, and that of their little daughter Helen's miraculous escape, has been told a number of times since, most notably by Mrs Howard Taylor in the 1935 book *The Triumph of John and Betty Stam*. In the aftermath of their murders, thousands of Christians the world over were challenged through them to a deeper spiritual life and commitment to missionary service. It is wonderful therefore that we now have this new and well written retelling of their story for our own generation.

John and Betty were sacrificial in their zeal for the Lord's work. Their earnest prayers and deep love for the Chinese people, to see them saved above all other considerations, shine out from the pages of this book. We are given a picture of life in China as it was then, with its privations and spiritual darkness, and yet also of the courageous Chinese believers, some of whom would risk their own lives amidst appalling dangers for their brothers and sisters in Christ. John and Betty themselves knew nothing of half-hearted Christianity. It is clear throughout this book from their diary extracts, letters and testimonies from personal friends that for them, the Bible verse "For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain" applied utterly. They were both wholeheartedly consecrated to God in every area of their lives. This is the greatest challenge of this excellent book. I would urge all to read it who long to serve and love the Lord better.

Sarah Fuller, Mirfield Evangelical Church, West Yorkshire

AND FINALLY, A BOOK FOR TEENAGE GIRLS Cherished: Boys, bodies and becoming a girl of God

Rachel Gardner

IVP ISBN: 978-1-84474-389-6

As soon as I opened the book I knew I was going to enjoy it. The first page was warm, friendly and inviting.

It's not usually the case that I can read a Christian book like a novel which was why I was so impressed with its style of teaching. It was more like a good friend spurring me on or encouraging me.

Every bit of advice I took in gladly, and it seemed to apply to what I'm going through as a teenager. I'm sure I will never hesitate to refer back to it for a bit of wisdom to pick me up again. It taught me amazing things about God's love and the relationship he wants to have with me, and taught me many things about myself. It has changed the way I think about God and myself, and made me realise how happy I should be about the gifts God has given me!

Caitlin McNabb, Age 14, The Slade Evangelical Church, Plumstead

FOR MINISTERS' WIVES

Supporting a husband through ill-health

Tim started as an assistant minister to a large city church in 1991. Soon after starting, he developed glandular fever and he just didn't fully pick up, even after several months off. My husband who had previously seemed to be in "perpetual motion" could do much less with post-viral fatigue. I was angry with God and denied myself peace and strength to deal with the situation. Tim gradually improved and was able to resume ministry but at a slower pace.

After three years we moved to a smaller church in a rural town. Tim was ok, but eventually the demands due to a largely elderly congregation and few able to help with preaching and teaching started to take its toll. I felt I had "blown it" when Tim was first ill - I didn't want that painful lesson again.

For Tim to stay in the ministry he needed me to support him in any way I could, with the Lord helping me.

I tried to keep the home as "restful" and Tim as "rested" as possible. At this point we had two children and were expecting a third, so most of my time was taken up with the children and home. I had no formal roles in the church but attended things when I could. But freeing Tim up still seemed the most important thing I could do. We offered hospitality, but as Sundays were one of Tim's most tiring days and evenings weren't great either, a cup of coffee with another mum during the week was more realistic.

After eight years very happy years in the church Tim had pleurisy and he just didn't recover his strength. We had already decided it was time to move on to another church, but Tim wasn't well enough to take on

a new church. We were praying for wisdom: Tim really couldn't see what to do, but the Lord providentially showed me that Tim must resign and take a year out. It was a huge decision as it meant moving house, changing church, the children changing school and not knowing what we were going to live on or what would happen after that year. But the Lord immediately gave us peace that this was the right thing to do. It was one of the best years we have had as a family. We were wonderfully provided for and Tim's health improved greatly.

The church we joined while Tim was recovering then asked him to be their Pastor. They knew Tim's health situation and have loved and supported us through it. As the children are older I do more within

the church now, but primarily I still see my role as keeping Tim as healthy as I

can and being his "helper" in any way he needs. His health has been reasonable in the six years since the "year off", but there have been ups and downs.

At our wedding, the sermon text was Proverbs 3:5&6 "*Trust the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths*".

This may not have been the path I would have chosen, but I am sure it is the one God has chosen, so I am sure it is the better one. I am still very grateful when Tim gets up to that pulpit

Wendy Gill

"This may not have been the path I would have chosen, but I am sure it is the one God has chosen, so I am sure it is the better one."

FOR MINISTERS' WIVES

A PASSION FOR LIFE -

A Passion for Life is all about **God the Father** -
furthering his purpose of redeeming a great multi-cultural
people for life in his Son, by stirring up local churches
across the land to work together in numerous mission
initiatives that climax in March 2010 for his glory alone.

A Passion for Life is all about **God the Son** -
his marvellous death and resurrection for sinners
that can be celebrated at Easter by people of all
ages and backgrounds.

A Passion for Life is all about **God the Holy Spirit** -
who, through his Holy Word, is calling us to prayer
and transforming the way we think about our
churches, evangelism and the world around us.

A Passion for Life tract

Ideas for Mission
resource booklet

Luke's Gospel

God's PASSION for our LIFE in Christ

A PASSION FOR LIFE

Prepared for Mission
set of training DVDs

DVD exploring the real
meaning of Easter

For more information about:

- ♦ The vision of A Passion for Life
- ♦ Regional events
- ♦ Ways of getting involved
- ♦ What to pray for
- ♦ Available resources, including videos of testimonies, evangelistic talks and question & answer session
(all useful for any evangelistic occasion)
 - for downloading
 - for printing
 - for purchase

see www.apassionforlife.org.uk

**A PASSION FOR LIFE -
*Proclaiming Christ's PASSION for the
LIFE of the world in March 2010***

**How will you be involved in this national
mission initiative to get the good news
of the gospel of Jesus Christ
to the people of our nation?**

TRAINING & RESOURCES

The Bible Centred Youth Worker Conference. Good Book Company

This is an annual four day residential conference at High Leigh and takes place at the end of January. It is for youth and kids workers from employed apprentices to those in permanent roles.

It is thoroughly Bible centred but also very practical. The programme includes

- ◆ Bible teaching
- ◆ Seminars on practical, strategic and informative topics
- ◆ The opportunity to talk through issues and problems with experienced youth workers
- ◆ Fellowship groups consisting of others from the same sex and age group as you. This is a place where you can discuss issues that have come up over the conference, offload problems and pray for one another
- ◆ Know and Tell groups. There are different strands depending on the time spent in ministry and the age group that you minister to. These are practical sessions of interpreting a given passage and teaching it as you would to the young people you work with before receiving feedback

Over the six years I've attended this conference I've always found it invaluable. It's a time to reflect, enjoy shared experiences, learn from others and most importantly to have your eyes refocused on Jesus.

Tamar Pollard

Children's worker at Highfields Church, Cardiff

For use in evangelism...

Spirituality According to Jesus

Rebecca Manley Pippert

IVP

ISBN: 978-0-8308-2125-9

Described as eight seeker Bible discussions on the gospel of Luke, I have found this useful in 1to1 situations. It looks at who Jesus is and the need to respond personally to what is discovered about him.

The title is a useful hook for those who consider themselves spiritual. As it uses Luke's gospel, the seeker could easily move from this to Christianity Explored as that is based on Mark's gospel.

Some helpful websites and blogs:

Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood Gender Blog

The mission of The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood is to set forth the teachings of the Bible about the complementary differences between men and women, created equally in the image of God, because these teachings are essential for obedience to Scripture and for the health of the family and the church.

<http://www.cbmw.org/Blog>

Radical Womanhood blog

Carolyn McCulley (author of *Did I kiss marriage goodbye?* and *Radical Womanhood*)
 “Because being a biblical woman in a modern world is a radical act”

<http://solofemininity.blogs.com/posts/>

Girls Gone Wise

Mary Kassian, Dannah Gresh, Carolyn McCulley, Leslie Ludy

Mary Kassian is an award winning author, internationally renowned speaker, and a distinguished professor at Southern Baptist Seminary. She has published several books, Bible studies and videos.

Dannah Gresh, a best-selling author and captivating speaker, has long been at the forefront of the movement to encourage tweens and teens to be modest in their dress and to pursue vibrant lives of purity.

Leslie Ludy is a bestselling author and speaker with a passion for reaching today’s young women with the hope of Christ.

<http://www.marykassian.com/>

...and one especially for pastor’s wives:

Sovereign Grace Pastors’ Wives

The website states: *“This is a blog by and for the pastors’ wives of Sovereign Grace Ministries, but guests are welcome to listen in. Our desire is to encourage and equip you as you support your husband, care for your family and serve the women in your churches—all for the glory of our Savior, Jesus Christ.”*

<http://www.sovgracepastorswives.com>

For use in evangelism...

Mind the Gap

An evangelism course, with Rico Tice, to help us reach people in creative ways

Be Challenged - By thinking together about those you are trying to reach

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CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Assisted Suicide - a form of Euthanasia - a few thoughts.

Lyn Gilderdale:

*"I am too broken, you can't fix me anymore
- the only escape is to die."*

Kay Gilderdale, Lyn's mother who helped her daughter die said in the light of being prosecuted *"Whatever the outcome, I would do it again"*.

Baroness Campbell in response to assisted suicide said *"Killing is wrong - the consequences (of allowing assisted suicide to become law) are going to be far worse"*.

These three quotes were taken from the moving but difficult Panorama programme broadcast on February 1st 2010. My heart went out to Lyn's family. What a terrible situation to be in and much of me understood why Lyn's mother did what she did. Yet, despite those emotions, I was left feeling deeply uneasy about the whole situation. Can it really be right to assist in another person's death even if it is done out of a love for them? Can it really be right to aid someone's death so that they can be "free" from their suffering? Or is there another way?

These questions have been openly discussed over many years and feelings run high on both sides. Pro-euthanasia groups have lobbied parliament to change the laws on more than one occasion and will no doubt continue to do so. Not only this but public opinion is changing, aided by public figures such as Terry Pratchett. People, more than ever before, believe that assisted suicide is acceptable in the case of a terminally ill patient.

In the remainder of this article, I want to highlight two reasons we can give to our

friends when defending our concerns for assisted suicide, two gospel reasons and two outworkings.

A lesson from history – Euthanasia changes public conscience.

We are constantly being reminded of the six million Jews that were murdered in the gas chambers during Hitler's Nazi Germany and how this should never happen again. What some of us are less aware of is the link between these deaths and euthanasia that Dr Leo Alexander, a psychiatrist, made at the Nuremburg Trials as he described the process of moral decline of the German people, into accepting that there was such a thing as a life *"not worthy to be lived"*.

*"The beginnings" he said "at first were merely a subtle shift in emphasis in the basic attitude of the physicians. It started with the attitude, basic in the euthanasia movement, that there is such a thing as a life not worthy to be lived. This attitude in its early stages concerned itself merely with the severely and chronically sick. Gradually the sphere of those to be included in this category was enlarged to encompass the socially unproductive, the ideologically unwanted, the racially unwanted and finally all non-Germans."*¹

The gas chambers were the end of the slippery slope which began with very rational and plausible arguments in the early 1930s. You might be thinking at this stage, well, this might be good for everyone else, but what about the Lyn's of this world. What about her suffering, what about her Mother's suffering? And yes, it is dreadfully hard. And in many ways using Lyn's case, with all the emotions that it has generated, has made things complicated. But isn't that just the point? These situations are complicated and hard. Yet it is also true to say *"hard cases don't make good laws"*. With that in mind, I would like to add my second point.

Assisted suicide denies our humanness.

That to aid someone in taking their life is to deny both them and the carer precious moments that can bring families closer together and aid recovery for those left behind.

As a nurse caring for the terminally ill, I had the privilege of seeing this first hand. A precious moment with a dying relative, words spoken that healed a relationship, even a squeeze of a hand was something from which the relative afterwards drew great comfort. To insulate ourselves from suffering by hastening death is to deny an opportunity for true humanity to shine through the carer and the one being cared for.

Two Gospel reasons

With the tide changing and public opinion growing stronger in favour of assisted suicide, so the Christian voice will be increasingly out of step with current trends. So we need to be thinking about why it is the Bible says assisted suicide is wrong.

Here are two reasons:

Reason 1 - God says, we must not kill

Because we are created in God's image, we belong to him, and he has clearly stated that we should not take another life because it is not our right to do so.

Genesis 9:6 *"Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image"*.

Being made in God's image means that our worth is not tied up in what we do or can achieve but our worth is found in him. This means that there can never be a life that is not worthy to be lived.

And so, as we think about the difficult situations presented to us in the media or even closer to home, how are these words above going to help us? Are we going to be people who build our lives not on the sinking sand around us but on God's word?

Are we going to be people who believe that all people are precious to God, not because of what they do, but because of who they are – precious to God because they are made in his image? And are we going to obey God rather than man and say we must not kill? Are we going to say, that he is sovereign of all situations, and can each day give us wisdom to get through all the trials that he gives us? Will we be able to stand firm and graciously put across this truth when given an opportunity?

Reason 2 - God says we must care. The biblical ethic that flows through the Bible is that the strong look after the weak.

This is most obviously seen in the person of Jesus Christ. Here was the God of the universe, the all-powerful all-knowing God, stepping down into his world and experiencing the effects of sin - suffering and pain; illness and death. And what did Jesus (God in human flesh) do? Did he put everything right there and then? He could have, but it was never to be his way. Instead, our strong loving God Man went to the cross so that weak, helpless, sinful people could be forgiven and made whole again - starting in this life but being fully realised in heaven.

So as followers of Jesus how are we to apply this truth in the light of suicide and assisted suicide?

Well, surely we should also hold to the biblical principle of the strong caring for the weak. This means not getting rid of someone, not killing them, but rather being prepared to enter into their suffering with them. Drawing alongside them.

Yes, this will be demanding, and emotional and the load needs to be

FOR WOMEN IN MINISTRY

Reflections on being the first paid Women's Worker in a church

shared. But this is Jesus' way and he has given us each other to be partners in caring along the way and what grows out of this way of caring is beautiful. For as we daily ask Jesus for his help to reach into these difficult situations, so we will find that we will be changed and become more like our precious Jesus – we will become more human.

But there is more. If the person suffering is not a believer then through Christians caring for them they have an opportunity to hear of the life-saving words of the gospel, they have an opportunity to hear about a God who loves them, has died for them and is promising a great future for all who put their trust in him. How much better than being hurried to meet their maker unforgiven and facing a dreadful future beyond the grave. (Hebrews 10:31)

And what of Christians who are suffering? They need all the encouragement to hold to the truth, for the truth is they are facing Jesus and the best is truly to come, they have a wonderful future beyond the grave and so, for the present, they can wait for him to call them home.

So to conclude: What should we do now?

Two practical reasons

First of all, let's pray for Baroness Campbell and others as they continue to speak out against assisted suicide.

Secondly, we need to be praying for ourselves that wherever we are, whatever situations we are faced with, we will be people who are determined to hold to, and hold out to others, the truth of the gospel and that we will love others as we have been loved by Jesus. As we do this, let's pray that God might have mercy on many people across our land.

¹ Euthanasia booklet, published by the Christian Medical Fellowship, Chapter 2 "Thou shalt not kill" by Peter Saunders

Three years ago a church employed their first paid women's worker. Hanna Borsley who had previously worked in a similar position was appointed. Her other role had focussed on professional women. The new one involved women of all ages.

Initially, Hanna had to spend time getting to know the women and listen to their challenges and joys both in life's circumstances and spiritually. It was incredibly important to do this, but it was a difficult time for her as she was eager to start running groups. This was partly due to a fear of man. She felt she needed to account for her time specifically, rather than "just" drinking coffee and listening to ladies. This idol of wanting people's approval was intense. It was like being on a roller coaster: elated with a positive comment; or crushed with a discouragement. It was (and still is) a struggle for her to give this idol over to God. To fear him and not man. She needed to keep reminding herself that she was God's servant and it was only God who should get the glory! Hanna's involvement in a small Bible Study group, using World Harvest Mission's *Gospel Transformation* material, proved to be revolutionary for her. It helped her to realise her sinfulness and the necessity of preaching the gospel to herself on a daily basis, especially when dealing with the idolatry issues associated

"Initially, Hanna had to spend time getting to know the women and listen to their challenges and joys both in life's circumstances and spiritually."

with her ministry.

As for the role itself, each year has seen developments. Interest in the daytime Bible study groups grew. Many women on the fringes of the church became involved and the hunger for teaching increased. But much of Hanna's time was spent with women during the day. She wanted to find a way of supporting working women. So a book group, meeting termly, was developed. It included a mixture of women, so it was a great way to have fellowship with new people. Its aim was to help women to think issues through using a gospel framework with both Christian and secular books.

It's now Hanna's third year in post and a new aspect has been added to her role - training.

“This idol of wanting people's approval was intense. It was like being on a roller coaster: elated with a positive comment; or crushed with a discouragement.”

She had already trained the church's female apprentices, but she now trains women to lead Bible studies for peer-led purposes and for those working with teenagers. None of this could have happened in the first year of working. It took time to build trust on both sides. She is also now involved with a wider church initiative to encourage women to establish events, which intentionally build relationships as gospel bridges, with each other and non-Christian friends in non-threatening environments.

The Lord has also used Hanna's personal circumstances to help minister to the women in the church. During the past eighteen months Hanna's mother sadly battled with cancer. She tragically died in October 2009. Through Hanna's own pain she has been

able, and continues, to comfort others with the comfort she herself has received from the Lord. Of course the other side of that is the fact that it's not always easy to live your life in the

“Many women on the fringes of the church became involved and the hunger for teaching increased.”

“goldfish bowl” of a church. It can be overwhelming in a time of personal crisis particularly when feeling very vulnerable. Having the support of the Eldership, the Ministry Team and her husband have all been vitally important in helping Hanna to continue to serve the Lord in the place where he wants her.

Hanna Borsley is part of the Ministry Team serving the Lord in Chessington Evangelical Church, Surrey.

CONFERENCE REPORTS

North West Pastors' Wives' Conference Saturday 6 February 2010

On Saturday 6th February 27 pastors' wives met for a day of encouragement, fellowship and prayer at Calvary Church, Liverpool. We came from Cheshire, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Shropshire and the Wirral. Our guest speaker was Barbara Day (Grace Baptist Church, Southport).

In our first session Barbara reminded us that we are "jars of clay" but that the mighty God lives within us. We were encouraged to work out where our allegiance lies, then, as we rightly prioritise, we will be able to please God in each area of our lives.

We had two very helpful small group prayer sessions and an amazing lunch, provided by a lovely team of ladies. There was also opportunity to peruse the bookstalls and to read book reviews provided by attendees.

Our second session was entitled "Surviving Stress". Barbara gave us wise, biblical advice on how "not to conform to the pattern of this world" by "renewing our minds".

We also heard from Elizabeth El Mostain (Milnrow Evangelical Church) and Jane Casey (Speke Baptist Church). Elizabeth will be leaving us in the summer to move with her family to Carcassonne, where her husband, Hicham, has been called to work with a church in pastoral and evangelistic activities amongst ethnic minority groups. The Lord's leading is clearly evident in their lives in the gifts he has given them both. Jane told us of the amazing provision of their new church/community centre in Speke, a very challenging area of Liverpool. God enabled them to buy the Noah's Ark Pub which they hope to transform as both a resource and means of outreach in the community. It was another wonderful testimony to God's providence and sovereignty. This was my third North West Conference and I would highly recommend it to any other pastors' wives in the area - a great opportunity to take stock, learn, pray and have fellowship together.

Sharon Trainer, Hoylake Evangelical Church

Three Bridges Ministers' Wives' Conference 11-12 September 2009

Each September about 30 ladies meet for a Pastors' Wives' Conference at Three Bridges Free Church, Crawley.

The conference follows a similar pattern each year which includes three Bible teaching sessions plus times of prayer and share, walking, talking, fun, book reviews and a talk on a relevant topic. In 2009 the speaker was Deborah Woolley from Cardiff. Her titles for the Bible teaching were, Loving God, Loving our Neighbour and Loving Ourselves.

It is a real joy to be able to share with one another, to encourage and be encouraged. It is now over 30 years since I first began organising conferences especially for pastors' wives and over the years I have made many friends and received much blessing. For me one of the highlights is not just what I receive from the conference itself but also from the feedback. Generally speaking no one goes home without being met by the Lord but for some it is almost life saving. There are ladies who arrive feeling tired and despondent and discouraged by the work with which they are involved but through listening to God's Word and fellowship with others in similar situations they have returned home "a new woman" with a greater passion and a new vision for where the Lord has placed them. The times of sharing together are very precious.

The conference for 2010 will be held on 10 & 11 September starting on the Friday at 1pm for lunch and ending with tea at 4.30pm on the Saturday.

For further information contact Chris Jones
01293 886388

Chris Jones, Three Bridges Free Church

London Women's Convention Saturday 3 October 2009

It seems a while ago now but I still look back with thankfulness to God at being able to attend the London Women's Convention in October. The theme this year was about not being ashamed to testify about our Lord. God enabled Di Warren, the main speaker, to use her very winsome gifts to communicate the need to let the gospel sing out unashamedly without fearing the struggles that may well result from that.

I traveled to the convention with a group of ladies from our church. Throughout the day, one by one, each lady shared how they had been encouraged and re-energized to witness for Christ anew. Praise God!

Instead of the usual seminars, the committee decided to have a time of testimony, reflection and praise after lunch. I personally found this very refreshing, giving me space and time to reflect rather than rushing onto the next thing.

Jenny Hitchcock, Binscombe Church

Northern Women's Convention Saturday 10 October 2009

The Northern Women's Convention is a gathering of around 760 women for a day of Bible teaching, seminars, singing together and meeting up with friends. Many come in a group from their local church or student Christian Union. People travel to the day from all over the north of England and some join us from Wales and Scotland as well. It is a great day out together and a great day of teaching and encouragement for everyone from the newest Christian to the most mature believer.

This year the theme was "Unashamed" with the aim of encouraging us to be confident in Christ and his gospel of grace. We studied Romans 1 v 16 and parts of 2 Timothy in the main sessions and our speaker was Di Warren from Sydney, Australia.

As well as drinking coffee, having lunch

together, browsing the bookstalls and singing together with a great band, there were also eight seminar options running during the two seminar sessions. The seminar subjects this year focussed on the themes of living as a Christian and sharing our faith in Christ. Topics included Christian parenting, knowing my true identity in Christ, singleness, living with unbelieving family, how to answer questions, how to share my story and hearing about sharing Christ in French-speaking Europe.

"A brilliant day. Can't wait till next year!" was just one of the many positive comments about the day. Hope you can join us too in 2010 - Saturday 9th October. Do put the date in your diary.

Julia Marsden, Trinity Church, Buxton

Holbrooks Evangelical Church Ladies' Conference November 2009

On Saturday 22 November we once again held a Ladies' Conference at Holbrooks Evangelical Church, Coventry, and were very encouraged to welcome approximately 130 ladies from around the Midlands. We all look forward to these conferences each year and are very grateful to our speakers who give up so much of their time to prepare and who willingly come to speak to us. We were delighted to welcome as our guest speaker this year Jane McNabb from London and her topic was "Daylight at Midnight" - Lessons from Esther.

The day was divided into three sessions with the first session, entitled "Setting the Scene" covering the first three chapters of Esther and giving a vivid picture of Esther's background and all the

CONFERENCE REPORTS

Proclamation Trust Women in Ministry Conference 18-21 January 2010

circumstances leading up to her becoming Queen. The second session, entitled "*Rumours become reality*", dealt with the unfolding circumstances that the Jews found themselves in and Esther's response to these. The final session, entitled "*For such a time as this*", covered chapters 5-7 and Jane opened up to us the providential care of God in raising up and equipping Esther for such an important task.

The study of the life of Esther was a real eye opener to many ladies as Jane unfolded that through Esther's faithfulness and obedience in a less than ideal situation, God worked his sovereign purposes in unexpected ways. As the historical and political background was unfolded in this volatile period in the life of the Jews, God was setting the scene for a deliverance from a great disaster. Esther was set apart by God for this deliverance, an unknown girl who became the nation's Queen. Esther was willing and obedient in every situation thrust upon her. Her submissive spirit was made evident to us all, together with her commitment to prayer.

Each one attending the conference was challenged on a personal level and it was a very humbling thought that the Lord could even use and equip any one of us "*For such a time as this*".

Added to the very blessed ministry of Jane, the ladies all enjoyed fellowship together over an excellent buffet lunch prepared by the men of the church. We were also delighted to have a bookstall at the event provided by Bethel Evangelical Church, Wigston.

We are now planning our 2010 Conference and the date for your diary is Saturday 20 November, when Sian Owens from South Wales will be our guest speaker. Sian's subject is "*Ordinary women serving an extraordinary God*".

Janet May, Holbrooks Evangelical Church

In Mid January about 50+ women descended on Holthorpe Hall, a beautiful old country house. Who were all these women, you may be asking? Well, they were women from all round the country, and even some from Nigeria, who have been given an area of responsibility in their church either unpaid or paid, part time or full time, married or single. The purpose of the conference was to be encouraged and be further equipped to serve our churches faithfully.

During our time together we were given great teaching from Hugh Palmer who spoke on 2 Timothy and the importance of going against the grain and asking are we getting ready for our end by training the next generation. Andrea Travenna also spoke wonderfully on Habakkuk, helping us all to see that to live by faith was the best way to live! Our third main speaker was Vaughan Roberts who spoke on "*Keeping going in ministry*". In this session he was wonderfully honest about the pressures and challenges of ministry and how we can keep going. All very encouraging. There were also opportunities for catching up with old friends, making new ones, and having our own Bible teaching spurred on by small group work and helpful seminars that addressed issues that present themselves in women's ministry.

To finish. Did the conference fulfill its aim? Were we encouraged to keep going in ministry and be further equipped? I would want to say a resounding "yes!"

*Annie Leggett,
City Evangelical Church, Birmingham*

For details of forthcoming conferences
see page 23 opposite.

If you know of other conferences for
ministers' wives, women in ministry or
women in general please let us know by
e-mailing elisabeth@fiecc.org.uk

NOTICEBOARD

NOTICEBOARD

Forthcoming Conferences:

FOR MINISTERS' WIVES:

Spring Minister's Wives' Conference

1 - 4 March 2010

(for wives of ministers who have been in post for over 5 years)

See www.proctrust.org.uk

South West Pastors' Wives' Conference

Saturday 8 May 2010 10am - 5.15pm

Speakers: Jonathan and Sheila Stephen

Venue: Whiteshill Evangelical Church, North Bristol

for further details, contact Sarah Drury - 01934 834057 or csdrury@tiscali.co.uk

Summer Minister's Wives' Conference

5 - 8 July 2010

(for wives of ministers who have been in post for less than 5 years,
or those in training)

See www.proctrust.org.uk

FOR YOUNG WOMEN:

FIEC Young Women's Conference Liverpool

Saturday 13 March 2010 10am - 4:30pm (for 18-39 year olds)

Theme: "*Free to Live for God*" Speaker: Anna McCracken

Venue: Bethel Church, Green Lane, Liverpool.

For further details, contact Jenny Oliver jenoliver17@hotmail.com

or book online at www.fiecyoungwomen.co.uk

FOR ALL WOMEN:

Bristol Women's Conference

Saturday 7 March 2010, Kensington Baptist Church, Bristol

Speaker: Susie Leafe, details available at www.bristolwomensconference.org

Joint Men's and Women's Convention in support of the 'A Passion for Life' national mission

Saturday 13 March 2010 10:15am - 4:00pm

Theme: "*The God Confusion*"

Main Speakers: Tim Keller, Al Stewart, Rico Tice

Venue: ExCel, London Docklands

For further details see www.christianconventions.org.uk

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

Understanding and Helping those with Anxiety/Panic Attacks

Wednesday 21 April 2010

Infertility: Invisible Wounds and Unfulfilled Longings

Saturday 19 June 2010

Women to Women

Monday 15 - Friday 19 March 2010

For further details see www.cwr.org.uk or call 01252 784719

AND FINALLY...

Sovereign Grace Music

This Christmas I discovered the excellent music of Sovereign Grace Ministries. I was so impressed that I actually bought three CDs for my husband for presents. (I love buying presents that I'll enjoy too!)

Each CD they produce is themed, covering wonderful subjects such as “*Sons and Daughters*”, “*Come Weary Saints*” and “*Valley of Vision*” (based on the puritan book of prayers). The music is based on biblical truth and is contemporary in style with great reworkings of some old hymns. Not all of the songs are suitable for congregational singing but I've found many (if not most) have been inspirational for personal worship.

Despite being produced beautifully and professionally they are reasonably priced. They can be purchased through Emu Music UK's website and you can listen to samples before purchase. Free downloadable sheet music is available too.

Jane McNabb

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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