

" I thank my God...because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. " (Phil 1:3-5)

Dear Partners in God's glorious Gospel

*Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat
Please put a penny in the old man's hat
If you haven't got a penny, a ha' penny will do,
If you haven't got a ha' penny, then God bless you*

Christmas has so many associations. It's a time of celebration; a time when food and drink take a prominent position. It may not be a goose that is being fattened for your table, but whether it is turkey or something else, the net result is that most of us will be the fatter come January.

For the man on the mythical Clapham omnibus, Christmas can also be a time of giving. Soon carol singers will be in shopping malls and on concourses rattling their tins, collecting money for Crisis, the local Rotary Club and suchlike.

But Christmas is supremely a time when we are reminded of God's blessing. The creator of the universe left the splendour of heaven to be born in a stinking stable. The ruler of eternity came to earth in order to die in the place of his rebellious subjects. I find myself stunned afresh each time I think about it. I give thanks that there is still enough religious heritage in this country that many people are willing to come to carol services. There are so many opportunities for people to hear the Good News at this time of year.

One of the joys of being a Trustee of Gospel Partner's Trust is that we get to hear of many of the new initiatives being planned to enable people to hear the Christmas blessing. Some of the recent ventures are blossoming; 300 students are now regularly hearing the gospel at Christ Church, Durham; Christ Church, Liverpool has had to seek new premises given the growth of their congregation. There are bold new initiatives for church growth planned in as diverse a set of places as Loughborough, Tranmere, Pietermaritzburg, Barnet and Margate. And there are encouraging numbers of men and women wanting to be trained and equipped for gospel ministry.

The Christmas message has never been more relevant to our increasingly God-less society. Our prayer is that there will be ever more men and women involved and that the number of churches active in its proclamation will grow. Please prayerfully consider your partnership with these people and projects as you ponder the wonder of the one:

*Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death—
even death on a cross!*

With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year

Simon Pilcher
Chairman

Forthcoming presentations

Dinner presentations: Monday 6 February 2006 - 6.30 for 7pm
Thursday 23 February 2006 - 6.30 for 7pm

For further details and to reserve a place for yourself and/or your guests, please contact Brian O'Donoghue (contact details overleaf). It would help our administration and planning if you were able to book by early January.

NEW ADDITIONS TO OUR PORTFOLIO

> Theological Education and Training

Ros Clarke, PhD, Westminster Seminary

Currently at Oak Hill, Ros is off to Philadelphia next summer for PhD studies that will equip her as a theological educator. She hopes in the future to focus on training women for ministry.

Oak Hill Students

This November, Partners invested in an extra year's training for five more theological students. Oak Hill College in North London recommends a minimum of three years training, and encourages students to stay for four years where possible. Mike Ovey, on the staff at Oak Hill and a Trustee of GPT, says a fourth year means students can

- understand biblical truth more deeply and so teach it more clearly
- be better equipped to be life-long readers of the Word during their ministries
- refine skills in and become habitual users of the original biblical languages
- be better equipped to refute false teaching and protect God's flock

An additional year's study is invaluable, but costly both for Independent students and Church of England ordinands (who receive funding for three years at college, but only two if they are over 30 years old). The average budget for a family with children at college is £30,000.

So far GPT has provided funding for 12 students to study another year at college. We hope there'll be many more.

> Church Plants

Church on the Ridge, South Africa

In January 2006, a core team of 3 families (one of which will be a salaried pastor) start this new congregation to reach unchurched residents of Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg and the student population of KwaZulu-Natal.

> New Workers

Women and Children's worker, Holy Trinity Lyonsdown

Elf Baker was Holy Trinity's very first female apprentice. In September 2006 she'll become their first Women and Children's worker.

Evangelist, St James Westgate (Margate)

A full-time outreach worker dedicated to an area where the parish has so far struggled to make an impact with the gospel.

Youth project, St Catherine's Tranmere

An initiative in an evangelical Anglican church in the North West Partnership in an urban priority area to recruit a children's and youth worker to train volunteers for their growing Sunday ministry, expand work in local schools and set up midweek after-school clubs.

PEOPLE AND PROJECTS WE ALREADY PARTNER, WHO ARE LOOKING FOR ONGOING SUPPORT IN 2006

> Theological Education and Training

Oak Hill College, London

Independent students: Ken Campbell, Emma Desmond, Trevor Harris, Chris Thomson, Andy Martin, Dave Gobbett, Ross Gear, David Skull

Westminster Seminary, USA

Michael Francis; Matthew Roberts (PhD studies)

University of Aberdeen

Ro Mody (PhD studies)

George Whitfield, Cape Town

Chris and Sophie de Witt

> Apprentices Schemes

Hastings, London, Ipswich

> Ministry Initiatives

Evangelist in Hull
Youthworker in Leyton
Assistant Minister, Chorley
Assistant Minister in Ramsgate

> Church Plants

Moorlands, Lancaster
The Plant, Manchester
Christ Church, Durham

> Overseas Ministry

Tim and Emily Hay, IFES team leaders, Brussels

If you would like more information about any of the people and projects we currently partner, or would like to support them financially or be put in touch with them, please contact:

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