

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

Dear Partners

It was the ancient of equivalent of the United States declaring war on Luxemburg. Imagine that the Americans had steam-rolled Canada, blitzed the UK, annihilated France and flattened Germany. And now they have turned their attention to insignificant little Luxemburg. Where *you* live.

How would you feel as you sit in your house in Luxemburg Town as you watch the tanks line up in their thousands and the armoured personnel carriers mass in their tens of thousands? How confident would you be for *your* future? Where would you put your trust? When the American general pours scorn on God's ability to rescue you and calls on you to surrender and go meekly into exile with your family, will you quietly capitulate? Or will you bar the city gates and face certain annihilation?

This was the position in which King Hezekiah of Judah and the people of Jerusalem found themselves. Assyria, the global superpower of the day, was at the gates of the city. Resist, and like the Daleks, the Assyrians will exterminate you. The gods of the surrounding nations had been of no use to *them* when the mighty and invincible Assyrians swept down and obliterated them. "Don't be a fool Hezekiah, capitulate and all will be well with you." "Deny your God's ability to rescue you Hezekiah, and we will let you live."

Well, against all logic Hezekiah put his trust in the Lord and asked for his merciful protection. Here are his words as he cried out to God:

"O Lord Almighty, God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are king of heaven and of earth. You have made heaven and earth..... Now, O Lord our God, deliver us all from Sennacherib's (the king of Assyria) hand, so that all kingdoms on earth may know that you alone, O Lord, are God." *Isaiah 37:16,20*

And against all possibilities, God intervened and miraculously wiped out 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night, thus saving Jerusalem. Isaiah records one of the more remarkable demonstrations of trust displayed by Israel's kings. Every piece of worldly logic said that Hezekiah was a fool of the first order, whose pious faith would land not only him but his people in the soup.

Hezekiah knew though that God is the only God and that He rules heaven and earth. Hezekiah realised that God alone is worthy of trust for our eternal future. Before this God, all peoples will have to stand and give an account of their lives. This is an important lesson for us today when faced by the juggernaut of the State (if you have not seem what legislation may be coming your way to oppress you, have a look at the report produced by the Lawyers Christian Fellowship on the Sexual Orientation Regulations on www.lawcf.org/lawreformdetail.php?ID=218). Equally frightening can be the pressure of our employers. (I spoke this week to a senior man in the City who explained that the workload and consequent hours required by his boss were so demanding that he felt he could not take 45 minutes out once a week to hear a talk.) In the crazy world in which we live today you can call for the death of a politician (so long you are from the right racial / faith group), but if you espouse orthodox biblical views you are at risk of arrest and prosecution.

Against this backdrop it is all the more imperative that the gospel is clearly proclaimed by men and women who are unafraid and unashamed. Christians need to be encouraged to stand firm. Unbelievers need to be introduced to the merciful God of Hezekiah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Thank you for your support of the work of GPT as we seek to train and equip the leaders of tomorrow's church, news of which is enclosed in our annual report and on the reverse of this letter. May we all stand firm in the face of Sennacherib, wherever he may be found.

Simon Pilcher
Chairman

Forthcoming presentations

Thursday 18 January 2007 6.30 for 7pm (location: The City)
Wednesday 31 January 2007 1pm (location: The City)

For further details and to reserve a place for yourself and/or your guests, please contact:
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NEWS FROM PEOPLE WE ARE PARTNERING

> Evangelism in the North East

Lee McMunn, Evangelist, Hull

Chris first walked through the front doors of our church building on New Year's Day 2006. Recent life issues had persuaded him that he should reconnect with his Christian upbringing. I was keen to find out more about Chris and so we decided to meet up for coffee.

During our conversation it became clear to me that although he knew something of the Christian faith he himself was not a Christian. I lent him a Christian book and encouraged him to come on our Christian Explored course. He read the book and in April he came along to the course. He was a keen participant and on

the last evening decided to become a Christian.

Chris has recently completed a basic discipleship course, is part of an evangelistic training course I run for men, and is planning to join our church's mission to Doncaster next Easter.

I am reminded of what Jesus says in Luke 16:9, "I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings."

Perhaps Chris will be there to welcome you when you arrive in eternity.

FOCUS ON APPRENTICESHIPS (Pre-college training)

Apprenticeships of one or two years provide hands-on training and ministry experience in a local church setting. Training is usually a mix of external training (like Cornhill or the North-West Partnership training course) and input and mentoring from the local church minister or (for larger churches) staff ministry team.

Investment in these schemes is a vital part of our vision to train and send out the next generation of gospel workers. Many people considering full-time ministry are in a catch-22 situation – they have not had enough training to teach the Bible full-time nor enough ministry experience to know whether to invest in formal theological training. Apprentice Schemes provide a realistic next step and as a result encourage more individuals into full-time ministry.

Apprenticeships keep training on the agenda of the local church and help prompt the congregation to identify and encourage people with Bible teaching gifts to consider full-time ministry. This personal encouragement is key to raising up the next generation of Christian workers, be they full-time, part-time or indeed spare time.

After a dip in the number of applications in 2005, we were pleased to receive a few more applications for Apprentice Schemes in 2006, but are keen for the number of people taking part in these schemes to increase. We're particularly interested in supporting churches or groups of churches which are setting up Apprentice Schemes.

> "Cornhill is proving to be quite outstanding and intense - in a good way!"

John Barker - Grace Church Hackney

> "Lots to learn and lots of people to get to know - but exciting and such a privilege."

Felicity Gardner – Moorlands Apprentice Scheme

> "St Mark's will give apprentices experience of a more urban setting than many conservative evangelical ministries, but with the support of strong local partnerships with evangelical churches nearby, trainees have a natural fellowship with other trainees from neighbouring parishes."

St Mark's New Ferry Ministry Training Scheme

PEOPLE AND PROJECTS WE HOPE TO PARTNER IN 2007

Pre-college	4 Apprentice Schemes	(Leicester, London, Stoke and the Wirral)
Theological College	12 students	(on average, couples with children have to raise £30,000 a year, and single students £13,000)
Ministry initiatives	3 church plants 8 workers	(including associate ministers, evangelists, women's workers and youth and children's workers)
Overseas	Student work in Brussels Church plant in South Africa 3 people training for ministry in Serbia and South Africa	£10,000 given in 2006 £5,000 given in December 06

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 Brian O'Donoghue (contact details overleaf).