

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

Dear Partners

For those of us who work in the City the last several months have been stressful times. The credit crunch sparked off by concerns about investments in US sub-prime mortgages has swept down on us like a chill wind from the mountains. Tens of billions of pounds have been written off banks' balance sheets, hundreds of billions have been erased from share values and not a few jobs have been lost. The magnitude and speed of the unfolding of the drama has surprised most of us. Even though we are many weeks into the problem, you can still smell the fear on those that are well informed. Is this the end of the financial system as we know it? Is a major recession around the corner? (For what it's worth, my answers to these two questions are; probably not, and quite possibly, at least in the United States.)

Uncertainty is very much the order of the day. Will other banks go the way of Northern Rock? Will the broader stock market crack in the way that banks shares have? And what will it mean for my employer; for my bonus prospects; for my job?

It is healthy to be reminded that we are not in control of our destiny. Savings can evaporate and careers that were looking golden can crumble. Our health or the well-being of a loved one can suddenly deteriorate. We live in a fallen world and bad things happen to God-fearing people just as they do to the godless.

At times like this it is a particular joy to know the certainty that is the Christian's privilege. We have the security of knowing that our destiny is to enjoy the splendour of the New Creation and the joy of knowing that we shall be with Christ for all eternity. We have no guarantee that our job is any more certain than that of the next man or woman. Indeed we know that everything in this world is going to come to an end. But the danger that we **all** face is that we take our eyes off eternity and are lulled into the false perspective that this world is all-important.

When we are enjoying the good times it is all too easy to be swept along by the enjoyment of the moment. Not that enjoying all that God gives us is wrong; far from it! But we can so enjoy the good things God gives us that we lose sight of eternal realities. We can be so engaged in planning our "success" (however we define success) that we have no thought for God's kingdom. We can be like the farmer (Luke 12: 13-21) who had enjoyed such a bumper harvest that his barns could not contain it all, and so he made plans to build bigger and better barns. He looked forward to a long and contented retirement, but God called to him *"You fool! This very night his life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?"* This was Jesus' way of illustrating the warning of verse 15 in the passage *"Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."*

The New Testament is wonderfully balanced (as is the OT!) for the very next section sees Jesus encouraging his disciples not to worry with the words *"how much more valuable you are than birds!"* and (speaking of clothing and food and drink) *"your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well."*

Whether you are worried about your near-term future, or about where you are going to store the great crop that you have just grown, or just wonderfully contented with your lot, I pray that your energies and efforts and prayers are directed towards eternity. And to this end I want to thank you for your support of the work of GPT. *The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.* (Matthew 9:38) We have listed some the workers who are keen to work overleaf. Will you work with them in God's harvest field?

Simon Pilcher
Chairman

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> Ministry Initiatives

Average grant in 2007 - £4,500

- **Church Plants**

Six new churches - in Cambridgeshire, Wales, East London, Nottingham, Camden and Leyland - will be seeking “pump-priming” funds in 2008.

- **Co-workers**

Seven co-workers (evangelists, assistant ministers, women’s workers, youth and children’s workers) will need our help for the second or third years of their ministry in the crucial time before their costs can be fully met by their churches.



Summer picnic in the Park, Gracechurch, Wanstead

“It’s a spiritually needy area of 25,000 people where less than 1% of the population go to Bible-centred churches”

“Praise God for our first adult baptism.”

> Theological Students (academic year 08/09)

Average grant in 2007 - £3,500

The average budget for a couple with children is £30,000, and single students £13,000

“It’s a real privilege to study God’s word and learn how to apply it in today’s society. It’s been hard and rewarding work and we trust God is using it to prepare us for ministry.”

- **Independent Students**

15 independent students supported by GPT in 2007 are expected to need funding to continue their studies in the 2008/09 academic year

- **PhD Students**

4 individuals studying for PhDs to equip them as future theological educators will require funding for their next year of studies

- **Church of England Ordinands**

Ordinands aged over 30 only receive funding for 2 years of theological study from their sending Dioceses. In 2007 GPT Partners enabled 11 ordinands to train for an additional year. Four have already applied for the 2008/09 academic year, and we have every indication that the number of applications from ordinands will rise in 2008.

> Apprentices / Pre-college training

Average grant in 2007 - £3,000

- **Apprentice Schemes** in Liverpool and Stoke on Trent which started in the past couple of years with GPT funding will need repeat funding in 2008.

“Your gift is a powerful testimony to my family and friends. May God bear eternal fruit from your gift to me for years to come.”

- Five **apprentices** will need funding for the second year of their apprenticeships

> Overseas

Grants in 2007 ranged from £2,000 - £7,500

Church plants and ministry among students in South Africa, workers in French-speaking Europe, workers training to work in Japan, Latvia, Cuba, and among Muslim people.



Farewell breakfast “Student Y”, Cape Town

“We held a farewell breakfast for students from our Bible study who are graduating this year. I was so encouraged by their testimonies of how central God’s Word has been in their experience of the student ministry. It was truly heart-warming to hear their earnest desire to find a Christian community where the Word is taught and lived out day to day in their new situations.”

Vuyi, Student Worker, Cape Town