

News & Views...

to encourage and inform women involved in ministry

In the last edition of 'News & Views' I thanked Sharon James for her work as editor in the past, however, I failed to introduce myself & have been asked to do so now. My name is Julia Jones, I was brought up in Yorkshire in a non-Christian home and was converted whilst at University through the witness of the Christian Union. Having taught for a few years I became a staff worker with UCCF. A couple of years after marrying Daryl he became a Pastor and I have worked alongside him in three churches for the past 19 years. We now live in Liverpool and serve in Bethel Church where I work amongst women seeking to reach un-churched women and encouraging believers to grow. I chair the FIEC Women's Ministry Team, speak at women's conferences and do a bit of writing. I am the mother of two teenagers,

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enjoy swimming, watching ballet, eating chocolate, and my challenge for this year is to complete a 'Times crossword'!

Just after Christmas a newspaper article with the following headline grabbed my attention, '*As an atheist, I truly believe Africa needs God*'. Matthew Parris had returned to Africa 45 years after having been brought up there as a boy. What he observed was the difference that Christians make, not just by giving practical help and being involved in relief work, but as lives are transformed. He wrote as a 'confirmed atheist' '*In Africa Christianity changes people's hearts. It brings a spiritual transformation. The*

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Delyth Corry reflects on Living with Leukaemia

rebirth is real. The change is good...faith appeared to have liberated and relaxed them. None of that is a surprise to us, but how good to read it in the words of someone who states that he would rather avoid this truth. At the beginning of the year my prayer has been that God would use me more and more in helping women to know, understand and live in the freedom of God's transforming grace. What a privilege it is to be involved in such work. Over the past year I've had the privilege of seeing this work active in women's lives. I'm involved in a women's Bible study group and it's been thrilling to see the women in this all-age group, from 20s to 80s, growing in their faith and understanding. Wonderful to see them grappling to understand and apply the truths of the Bible, to live this out in their families, their work-places, their struggles; to hear their first faltering prayers. But, at the beginning of a new year, my prayer is for more. It's so easy in the busyness of life to be taken up with so many different things, but the title of C.J.Mahaney's book helps give us the right focus 'The cross-centred life - Keeping the gospel the main thing'. I said somewhat flippantly earlier that my challenge was to complete a crossword, but more seriously our challenge is to live a life centred on the gospel, that God's transforming work would be seen in us and that he might use us to further that work in others.

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I distinctly remember the conversation with my husband when we were discussing why our lively healthy 3 year-old son lacked energy, looked pale and couldn't shake off illness. 'What causes anaemia in a child?' said I. My husband, a medic replied, 'Leukaemia, but it can't be that'. Oh how wrong we were! Soon we were plunged into the world of child cancer and facing awful decisions and complex emotions. What do we do? How do we cope? How will we live? What if Huw dies? I don't pretend to have any answers. What follows are some reflections from the last few years of our lives. The alliteration comes from a discussion with a close friend on the subject. Excuse all the 'f's - we had fun thinking of them!

Faith

Trust God. Trusting God sometimes seems hard to do when all around you life is hard; you don't know how to face tomorrow and your prayers seem to float away on the wind. But God is always there! He *is* your strength and help even if he seems far away. He does help you get through each hour and gives you strength to face all things. You live [excuse the Welsh] with 'dristwch a daioni', great sadness and great blessings. It is awful to watch your son suffer and allow drugs that could kill him into his system; to have to take him to hospital etc when he should be being a normal boy. However, you also know that God is very near and you daily see answers to prayer. It has also given us an insight of God our father's love for us. He sent his son to suffer for my sin. He could also have stopped it, but didn't - what amazing love!

Family

Child cancer has effects on the whole family; our daughter Nia was nine months old at the time of diagnosis. She has grown up being dropped off at friends' houses, going to hospital or dealing with the absence of her parents. It takes its toll. But at the end of the day you have to leave it with the Lord and try to spend time doing things she likes when you are able to. But it also puts pressure on your marriage, which leads to the next point...

Freedom

We all need time to rest and enjoy normal things. Living with child cancer can be exhausting, draining and stressful – leaving little time for anything else. We needed to spend time together as a couple resting or doing things we enjoy. We both found exercise helpful. It gives you time to think and pray. Friends who have taken the children to let us rest, or who have made us meals, have blessed us so much and we even have somebody who does the ironing!!!

Friends

It is important to have people to share and pray with. We have been blessed with such people who will help in any way. Also we have many people praying for us, which at times has made us really feel surrounded and upheld by prayer. Our Father in heaven is also always there, our closest friend. He knows all our needs and will always hear our darkest fears.

Forgiveness

People can say very unhelpful things. Huw's treatment lasts for three years. People forget that as a parent of such a child, it can be isolating and even people close to you can misunderstand and say hurtful things, whilst trying to be helpful. This can be frustrating. But we are told to love each other and forgive as Christ did for us. This is an issue with which the Lord has helped me in so many ways and is ongoing.

Future

We all like to be in control, but we are not. God is. Life for us is so uncertain. Many times I've prayed 'Ok Lord, it looks like I'll have to trust you, even if I don't understand'. I have learned daily as the Bible teaches, we are to take each day as it comes and God holds the future in his hands.

Finally

Would I change things? Of course! I wouldn't choose this, but I know that God will give me the grace and strength for the good days and the bad. We have had some dark times and I am sure there will be more ahead. But we know God is with us, and we cling to that. We have had so many blessings through friends, family and the medical staff and have had so many prayers answered. This whole experience has given us a glimpse of eternity where there will be no more sickness and tears...

Pictured here Delyth & Peter Corry live in Liverpool with their son Huw and daughter Nia.

PASTORAL ISSUES

Feeling depressed

If you are clinically depressed the feelings you experience are very different, sometimes in type and always in scale, from what most of us mean when we say “I feel a bit depressed today!” Using the same word for a common experience and a clinical experience makes it hard for bystanders to appreciate what is happening when someone they love is genuinely depressed

In my most recent experience of being clinically depressed I was finally confronted with a diagnosis that told me quite plainly what I had not wanted confirmed – my depression is recurrent and unlikely to be fully ‘cured’. I will be vulnerable to depression for the rest of my life.

So how would I describe my experience of being depressed? What, to me the patient, are the symptoms?

Common to all my episodes has been a disabling blackness of mood that interferes with many (all?) aspects of daily living. At its worst, for

example, I find myself unable to look in a mirror because what I see only

adds to my low self esteem.

There is a preoccupation with the things that distress me and an inability to focus on ‘facts’ rather than the feelings which seem overwhelming and to have a reality that can leave me unable to appreciate the reality that, to others, attaches to ‘facts’.

My ability to think is impaired – with a sluggishness of thinking which I describe as

‘thinking in treacle’. This makes it hard for me to maintain conversation, concentrate in church, or follow the plot when reading a book or watching a film. Even the most simple decisions (what shall I cook today? what shall I wear?) are hard to make. My life is characterised by continually ‘chopping and changing my mind’. What is particularly frustrating is that even if I manage to make a decision, I am weighed down with doubt and uncertainty even when the decision is being put into action.

My appetite is affected – sometimes eating very little but then sometimes ‘comfort eating’, and I have difficulty sleeping. At its worst, if I do manage to get to sleep I will often wake again thinking that I am about to die.

Sometimes I will ‘panic’ unnecessarily – even the ringing of the phone can trigger this and I ‘freeze’, the phone goes unanswered. My world shrinks to the extent that I will isolate myself from others, and I can feel isolated in a bubble even when in the midst of my family.

However well-meaning, asking someone to ‘snap out of it’ or to ‘pull yourself together’ will serve little useful purpose for them, even if it makes you feel better! In my

“...asking someone to ‘snap out of it’ or to ‘pull yourself together’ will serve little useful purpose...”

experience, ‘pulling oneself together’ is just what I would like to do but cannot. Stay alongside

the depressed person, believe that they can get better and gently assure them of that, turn your concern into prayer for their healing (whether through a miracle or professional intervention) and see what you can do to help with the problems of daily living that depression brings.

For reasons of sensitivity this article is anonymous.

INTERNATIONAL FOCUS

Rachel Fitch

Working at the Shayandima School of Tomorrow, Levubu, South Africa

After finishing college at the age of 18 I felt God's will for my next step in life was to take a gap year in missions. Through a school connection in England I heard about a Christian school in South Africa that also acts as a mission base. At first I had mixed feelings about serving in missions so far away from home but it quickly became obvious that God's hand was in everything. The people who work at the school and the mission base were extremely welcoming and it was so encouraging to meet such an enthusiastic team of people on fire for God.

The South African culture and way of life are clearly very different from England, especially as the place the school and mission base is in is a township. The high level of poverty immediately struck me and I was, and still am, amazed how the people continually serve God with real genuine joy.

Working at the school had its challenges, as the preschoolers could not speak a word of English and I could not speak a word of Venda (local African language). However, whatever challenges came they were definitely outweighed by the blessings both for the team and the students.

It is awesome to see how God works through us, his daughters, to touch the lives of others young and old. In the school the children get both an affordable education and a solid

biblical foundation. As a working mission base there were multiple opportunities to join some of the team members on outreaches and mission trips. At the base we collected clothes, shoes, school resources, tracts (in all the main national African languages) and very basic food parcels from churches in the cities, through donations and God's provision.

During mission trips we travel as a team through South Africa and other countries such as Mozambique, Botswana and

"In the school the children get both an affordable education and a solid biblical foundation."

Zimbabwe handing out tracts, parcels and other donations but most importantly talking to the people about the gospel of Christ. If there is any way we can help the people as we travel round God always seems to provide a way to make it possible for us. Just in the time I have been here we have helped build churches and everyday buildings, fixed and restored water systems, put up roofs and provided all the medical care possible. There is not a moment where we could have done any of this if it were not for God's help and His strength given.

When you live in a country where you have to live solely by faith it is absolutely amazing what God can do and how He can use you no matter who you are, what your age or

where you come from. Taking a gap year was the most awesome experience I've had so far in my life and I can't wait to see what God is going to do next.

I am currently spending my third year in Africa serving Christ, as I believe this is his will for me.

Hebrews 11 verse 1 - "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Rachel, seen here and on the previous page with children from the school, is a member of Swindon Evangelical Church.

The Shayandima School of Tomorrow is a ministry of Build the Nations, a non-denominational charity based in the UK.

There are approximately 180 pupils currently at the school, ranging from Preschool age to Grade 12

FOR MINISTERS' WIVES

Life after being a Pastor's wife.
Gill Kilpatrick reflects on her 16 years of being a Pastor's wife in London and life now.

We may be ministers' wives, but primarily we are children of the Living God and as such, stewards of God's grace. We are called to serve the Lord and bring glory to his name.

Our top priority is our relationship with God, essential for our wellbeing as a Christian; spending time alone with him, in prayer, study, meditation of his word and reading books about his word. Isaiah 40 tells us that those who wait on the Lord **will** renew their strength, they **will** mount up with wings as eagles, they **will** run and not be weary, they **will** walk and not faint.

Our tasks as Christian women in the church are many and varied – supporting other women, children's work, hospitality and outreach, to name but a few! But the Lord has promised to give us the strength we need for his service as we wait on him. Taking on his yoke will not be burdensome to us when we are able to submit to his control. As we work at balancing our various commitments, we must remember that whatever we are doing we are one person. All aspects of our lives are part of the whole and, as such, whatever we do we should do to the glory of God, be that

"Our top priority is our relationship with God, essential for our wellbeing as a Christian"

secular work, church work, family or housework. We should not think that we need to keep our energies in reserve to serve the Lord in some 'spiritual' venture, but do **all** to the glory of God.

Coping with the rebel is particularly challenging in a minister's family because you can feel as though so many eyes are looking on and judging: 'If they, as parents, had only done this...' or 'not done that.' We must do what we believe to be right before the Lord. We should not be judged or judge in this way. We know God is the one who saves and that by grace alone. There should be no guilt.

What have I learnt through my own experience? No blame: I had to stop blaming myself for my son's decision to walk

away from the faith. His life was not what I wanted for him. I prayed for him and I worried about him constantly, as he went out clubbing until the early hours. Lying awake in bed until he came home was not helping anyone, not him or me. Eventually I learnt to commit him to God and leave him there. We never stop loving and praying for him and are assured that the judge of all the earth will do right.

Coping with chronic illness in the family also has its challenges. For me the solution was a change of heart. Can I fight against the illness and win? No. I need to work with it and trust the Lord, the one who holds the future.

At present my husband is not in full time ministry, so how do I view my life just now? What lessons have I learnt?

We moved house and area and attend another church. Finding things to do is not difficult, the church is warm and welcoming and serving the Lord here is a joy. What a blessing my minister's wife has been. Not because she's a minister's wife but because of who she is herself; primarily her desire is to love and serve the Lord, to honour him as a

child of God. Her encouragement and gentle (and not so gentle) prodding, moving me along in my spiritual life, have been a blessing to me. It is good to have good sisters in the Lord.

I was concerned about visiting the church where we once served. There were issues I knew I might have a problem with and I had to sort these out before the Lord, before I went back. Would I be critical or look for praise? I could not let such sin reign in me; I

"Being fully reliant on God and whatever I do, to do all to the glory of God is where I want to be."

needed God's grace; I needed to be more holy; the image of Christ in me. I am finding a great release in not concerning myself with what others do and the various aspects of their giving: just to do what the Lord has called me to do. Slipping back into, 'What about them?' or 'What are they doing to help?' brings unnecessary anxiety. I will not consider what others are not doing because it could frustrate me and this can make me bitter towards them. This is not a virtue and I don't want to go there.

One thing that became more and more apparent to me during our 16 years of serving the Lord is that he is good all the time, in all situations.

Being fully reliant on God and whatever I do, to do all to the glory of God, is where I want to be.

Gill Kilpatrick, Liverpool

CONFERENCE REPORTS

Let your light shine – Coventry

On Saturday 22nd November we held a Ladies Conference at Holbrooks Evangelical Church. Our guest speaker was Julia Jones from Liverpool and her topic was “Let your light shine”. Julia, with the help of her excellent workbook, took us through all the different aspects of being a witness to others and sharing our faith.

The introduction encouraged us all to focus on our great God and his love for us in sending Jesus to die for our sins. There was then opportunity to go back to the time we became Christians and to share our testimony with one of the other ladies at the conference. As we went through the day we covered topics including “What is the gospel”, “Recognising your network”, “Preparing the ground”, “Ambassadors’ work”, “Ideas for bridge building” and we spent time in church groups planning outreach events. The conclusion focused on “This is our destiny” as we meditated on having a faith worth sharing, were given a glimpse of heaven and saw our responsibility and joy in being ambassadors. The event was attended by 70 ladies, approximately 30 from our own fellowship and 40 from nine other fellowships. The men of the church prepared an excellent buffet lunch. We were also delighted to have a bookstall at the event which was provided by Bethel Evangelical Church, Wigston.

The conference was designed to both motivate and equip women to share their faith. I am sure this aim was achieved as we were all encouraged, challenged and excited by this very practical and inspiring conference.

Janet May

My Sister’s Keeper - Reaching others for Jesus - Bridgend

When more than 200 ladies meet up on a sunny Saturday in September, (*the only sunny Saturday in September*), something good must be on. **Females @ Fellowship** ladies conference was held at Bridgend on September 13th. This

year’s theme was ‘My Sister’s Keeper - Reaching others for Jesus’. The speaker, Debbie Meroff, a journalist and photographer, has travelled to more than 100 countries with Operation Mobilisation.

Evangelism should be a way of life not just some thing we do on a particular day or evening and Debbie gave challenges from Exodus including: “who am I that I should go?”, “what shall I tell them?” and “tell them I AM has sent me to you” (have we ever said to God “here am I Lord, send her”!)

In reaching out to neighbours, home or away, we need to know ‘what we have in our hands’. Take a personal inventory - are you a leader, creative, calm, shy or kind? Next look at the talents and skills God has equipped you with. He won’t ask you to do anything you are not capable of (Eph 2v10). Finally, find your spiritual gift. It could be encouragement, administration, service, leadership or hospitality. God has given us gifts in order that they may be used.

Berenice Ducker works for SASRA and gave her testimony. If you think it’s tough witnessing to your neighbour, try walking on to an RAF base and telling those guys Christ loves them and died for them. Berenice showed us that the news we have to share is lifesaving.

As Edward Everett Hale wrote “I am only one, but I am one. I can’t do everything, but I can do something. The something I ought to do, I can do. And by the grace of God, I will”.

Karen Walsh

Pastors’ Wives Conference, Three Bridges

Attending the annual Pastor’s Wives’ Conference at Three Bridges Free Church, Crawley, is like going to a family reunion. There is always a warm welcome, hospitality, friendly smiles, a word of encouragement from your sisters in Christ and tasty meals (of course). At the end of all of this there is always a desire to come back next year.

This September was a really blessed time of fellowship, encouragement and prayer as 30 wives gathered together. God challenged and uplifted us through the ministry of Val Archer (Chessington Evangelical Church) as we considered what it is like to be real with God,

our husbands and our Churches. Val, relying on the Scriptures, pointed out that whatever role we are to fulfil in our daily lives, God should take the priority. The reality of having a close relationship with Christ has a direct impact on everything else and the 21st Century question “Do you love the Lord?” should be at the centre of our lives and ministries as we seek to do his will.

The theme of the conference naturally gave opportunities for open and honest sharing about blessings and joys as well as challenges and difficulties as we continue to serve the Lord in our churches. Times of testimony and prayer helped us to get to know each other better and prayerfully support each other in the future.

It was very encouraging to see that we all had something to share with each other during the book review session. Many good Christian books and authors were mentioned to help us with our walk with the Lord, with tackling personal problems and understanding better the world we live in .

All this and lots of personal conversations with my sisters enriched my soul, encouraged my heart, strengthened my spirit and gave me a good dose of enthusiasm and energy to go back to my church and continue to serve the Lord with greater passion. So if you have an opportunity to attend such a conference, I would encourage you to do so. I was so blessed and I am sure you would be too.

Tanya Jones

Treasure in Jars of Clay

Over 40 women joined together at the end of January at Trinity Road Chapel, Tooting, for the fourth London Ministers’ Wives’ Conference. It was so encouraging to see women of all ages, experience and church backgrounds engaging with one another, particularly during the discussion group and prayer times. There was also time for sharing both book recommendations and information on helpful courses, particularly for those in ministry. But the highlight of the day was the excellent ministry, entitled “Treasure in Jars of Clay”, provided by Ruth Williams from Swindon. Ruth spoke powerfully from 2 Corinthians 4, and many other passages from Paul’s letters,

encouraging us that, despite our felt weakness and inadequacies, we are to glorify Heaven’s King, by not losing heart or heavenly focus.

Despite the inevitability of suffering and sacrifice in the Christian life, our motivation is to live for Christ’s glory and love his Church. Ruth ended our excellent time together by reminding us of the incredible privilege and responsibility we have of praying for our husbands, as they seek to love and serve God.

Val Archer

North West Pastors’ Wives’ Conference

It was a joy to meet other pastor’s wives for the 4th annual pastors’ wives’ day in Liverpool recently. 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 worship, and then Alison Elliot continued the tradition of bringing excellent teaching, as she spoke on “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).

Time was 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, Gill Kilpatrick led us in an interactive session entitled “With Eagle’s Wings”. During this time Gill drew on her own experiences as a pastor’s wife for over 16 years to help us think about topics including - the pressures of family life and the ministry; balancing secular work and church commitments; and coping with life challenges.

It was a day of great fellowship and encouragement

Janet Peel

TRAINING

Training Opportunities for Women in Ministry

There is an increasing array of opportunities to equip women in ministry...both formal and informal. In this and future editions of News and Views, women share their experiences of the various resources available.

The Moore Theological Course

This is a course that is available to YOU! The Moore Course originates from Moore Theological College in Sydney, Australia, and provides theological training for lay people. It will give you the opportunity to dig deeper into the Bible and is a correspondence course that's been designed with flexibility in mind. There are no pre-requirements for taking part and you're able to work at your own pace with or without taking the exam. However, if you want to work towards gaining a Certificate in Theology you will need to complete a minimum of 18 Modules and take and pass the exam for each.

The course is studied in ten week terms beginning in September, January and April, but if you need an extension you can study over two terms (or longer if needed – it will just cost you more!) Time commitment is between 3 - 5 hours study each week and the module guide gives all the information needed as well as recommending books for further study. Subjects include a Bible Overview, Mark's Gospel, The Pentateuch, Doctrine, Romans, Reformation Church History, and Ephesians. The Moore Course will deepen your understanding of the 'big picture' of the Bible as well as giving you a greater understanding of individual books and doctrines.

My advice for getting the most out of this course is to opt for taking the exam to consolidate your learning. Also, I've found it so encouraging to work through the modules in parallel with another lady in my church. The times we've been able to meet together to study and share our learning have been invaluable and, at times, just the spur we've needed to keep going! The small number involved in the Moore Course at our church has now grown to around 20 people. We are especially grateful to one of our church leaders who acts as moderator and invigilator as well as making himself available to give guidance and help - or simply to chivvy us all along!!

For more information visit the UK link: www.admin@open-bible-institute.org.

Kath Paterson, Kensington Baptist Church, Bristol

Open Bible Institute - Pastoral Care Course

This is a ten session Bible-centred correspondence course. It is not a formal counselling qualification but rather a course for those who want to know more about pastoral care within the church community.

I decided to do this course as I was increasingly finding myself involved in pastoral issues at my church. It is a good course for those (perhaps most of us!) who are short of time as you can do it at your own pace. There are no deadlines although they do suggest that you complete it in 6 months (oh dear!). The only downside to this is that for those of us who are not well disciplined and need a deadline to get anything done, it can take a long time to finish. I have enjoyed the course so far and have learnt a lot. It has been very enlightening and is also practical as well as being theological.

www.open-bible-institute.org The course costs £30

Ruth Wilson, Christ Church, Sidcup

North West Partnership – Good News for the North of England!

The NWP training courses are a wonderful resource for any Christian with a teaching role. I first heard of NWP from a young woman who attended the evening course in Leyland. Over the next few months she became NWP's biggest advert. Her spiritual growth and passion to serve the Lord Jesus Christ was so marked that several others in our fellowship applied to attend the following year. I was among them!

The mission statement of NWP is Ephesians 4:11-13. The Partnership unashamedly promotes Word ministries as necessary for the spiritual growth of the church. This is not limited to the pulpit, but spreads through every department of the church. The aim is to equip people to be Word ministers, in whatever area, enabling them to teach God's Word accurately and relevantly.

In my year group the age span was from early 20s to late 70s and everything in between! Some were very new Christians, while others had been following Jesus for many years. We came from different churches and backgrounds, which was stimulating in itself, and between us wanted to better understand the Bible and teach it to our Sunday schools, youth groups, women's and men's Bible study groups, friends and families. For a few it might even be the first step towards full time gospel ministry or church leadership.

Over the year the class is taught an excellent Bible Overview called "Fitting it all Together". The second main strand of teaching is "Principles of Exposition", with practical guidelines on how to give a talk. This is outworked in preaching groups – not as scary as it sounds! Everyone is placed in a preaching group where from week four two people from each group are asked to give a 12 to 15 minute talk on a set passage assigned well in advance. After the two talks, given directly after one another, there is about twenty minutes for led group feedback. All of this contributes to learning and growing together. In spite of initial fears and nerves experienced by almost everyone, these preaching workshops are invaluable. Venues for the NWP courses are deliberately varied every year or two to allow greatest access to most people across the North West of England. The more demand there is from a particular area the more likely it is there will be a course there! At the time of writing, for 2009/10 the confirmed courses are :

Monday evenings – St. Johns, Knutsford

Thursday evenings – Ebenezer Chapel, Mold

Thursday daytime - St. Andrew's, Leyland

The daytime class also includes church history and a fuller outworking of all that the evening class offers. Evening classes are for one year; daytime class two years. A Tuesday evening class is also planned, possibly in Carlisle, but the venue is still to be confirmed.

Cost is £300 p/a for the evenings, £480 p/a for the daytime.

More information or application forms can be downloaded from www.northwestpartnership.com or contact Lou Hunter, administrator, on lou@northwestpartnership.com.

I wholeheartedly recommend these courses to you all!

Alison Elliott, Grace Church, Halewood, Liverpool.

BOOK REVIEWS

Over the last year or so, IVP have published three fantastic books that I would heartily recommend to every Christian woman in the country! Each one is practical, thought-provoking, deeply challenging and yet wonderfully liberating. Each author writes with honesty, enthusiasm, simplicity and a real passion for the Biblical truth on which their book is based. Reading them one after another, I found that they complimented one another perfectly. Although these books are not aimed specifically at women I've found them helpful both personally and as a mum who is seeking to raise pre-teen kids with a Biblical perspective of their Creator, themselves and the world around them.

Jane McNabb

Glory Days - Living the whole of your life for Jesus

(Now republished as *Maximum Life - all for the glory of God and including two additional chapters on family life and climate change*)

Julian Hardyman

ISBN: 978-1-844741533

Through focusing on Genesis, Julian highlights that all we do is important to God. Whether it's our home lives, secular jobs, Christian activities or our hobbies, skills or creativity - God is equally interested and wants us to enjoy, develop and use them for His glory.

In addition to this there is a thrilling chapter on the time when there will be *perfect* glory, a chapter I have returned to several times since first reading the book.

Mirror, Mirror - Discover your true identity in Christ

Graham Beynon

ISBN: 987-1-84474-325-4

Rather than judging ourselves in the warped reflection of our own mirror or that of those around us, Graham exhorts us to use God's Word. Although ideal for young adults, this book is useful for everyone who struggles with their own sense of worth (which is probably most of us!)

He asks some searching questions but does so with sensitivity and compassion and I found his principle of 'humble dignity' particularly helpful and balanced.

'L' is for Lifestyle-

Christian living that doesn't cost the earth

Ruth Valerio

ISBN: 978-1-84474-343-8

Ruth skilfully interweaves scripture with fascinating and shocking facts concerning the impact our lifestyle choices have on people and the environment across the world.

This is not a book I would recommend to be read in one sitting because although it is never preachy it is extremely hard-hitting. For me, reading the short chapters over days rather than hours, made the challenges slightly less overwhelming.

From Grief To Glory

James W Bruce III
 Banner of Truth
 ISBN: 978-0-851519968

A Book For The Stoic?

I picked up this book, eager to read it, hoping to gain wisdom or comfort. As a bereaved parent myself, I have read many books on the topic of grieving and as this particular book was focusing on the death of children it was very relevant. The author has compiled a comprehensive list of great Christians who have known the pain of bereavement and he chronicles their response to their personal tragedy. As I read, I became acutely aware of two things; firstly these people were so very different in their response to loss that it made me feel so unspiritual. Many were incredibly stoic and most were men. I wondered if their attitude was simply more of a male perspective, but my husband didn't really relate to their seemingly unemotional response either. The second thing I noticed was that most of these people were from a particular period of history (1500s - 1800s) and maybe my difficulty in understanding their grieving was born out of historical and cultural differences. What was evident though, was the love they had for their Lord and I was struck by how people saw their children go to heaven before they did. I found the author's personal comments more encouraging and it was good to dwell on heaven once again. I would recommend this book with the caveat that you read this book before you give it to parents who have lost a child. It's an invaluable and fascinating historical account but I personally would have found it painful to read as a newly bereaved parent.

For reasons of sensitivity this review is anonymous.

Here are some books that you might find helpful pastorally or to give to others who are hurting:

When Heaven Is Silent Ron Dunn

- his personal story of grief coupled with solid Bible teaching on suffering and loss.

Gone But Not Lost David Wiersbe

A really comforting book for parents who've lost children and also fairly suitable for sympathetic non-Christians.

Roses In December Marilyn Heavilin

A personal reflection of a mothers grief and how God led her through it.

Safe In The Arms Of God John MacArthur

A thorough and helpful commentary on what the Bible has to say on the death of a child and Heaven.

Ministering To The Mourning Warren Wiersbe & David Wiersbe

A great pastoral book with many helpful insights and practical advice.

***Audrey Featherstone I presume? -
The amazing story of a Congo Missionary***

Tim Shenton

Evangelical Press

ISBN: 9 780852 346785

Helen Roseveare in the November 2008 edition of *Evangelicals Now* wrote that she read this book in almost one sitting and couldn't put it down. Helen was in Congo at the same time as Audrey Featherstone and although they never met shared many common experiences.

This book does not simply give testimony to God's faithfulness to Audrey Featherstone in her years in the Congo but throughout the rest of her life as well- from a rather difficult childhood right through to retirement both as her husband's carer and as a widow.

There is also a helpful explanation of the political causes of the conflict that she and her husband courageously lived and worked through.

With the harrowing news of renewed conflict in DR Congo this timely publication is a good reminder for us to pray for the Congolese church.

***Tamar, Bathsheba and Tamar
Encountering three women with messed-up lives***

Julia Jones

Day One Publications

ISBN: 9781846251412

Here is a book for our messed-up, sexually-confused society. It is short, readable and totally absorbing. I wonder how many of us,

recalling the stories of these three damaged women, would be able to empathise with their situations and bring out the amazing

greatness of the grace and forgiveness of our Saviour and stand aside and marvel at the sovereignty of our God? Yet this is what the author does. Julia brings in relevant up to date examples, some personal others more widely experienced, and weaves them into the life experiences of these women. In each scenario I felt drawn into the experience and accompanied Julia as she sought to enter the emotions, temptations and hopelessness of the characters. This understanding is then challenged as Julia turns her attention to the reader and asks if we have experienced

similar temptations or been led down similar paths, and what our reaction was and what the Biblical answer is. At each point we are led back to the loving God who lifts His children and will restore and use each damaged person who surrenders to Him. The guilt and feeling of uselessness goes and it is exciting to reflect on how Tamar, Bathsheba and Tamar fit into God's sovereign purpose. He uses the most unlikely people.

Each chapter ends with poignant and challenging questions for discussion or meditation applying what we have learnt and directing us to further Scriptures.

I am sure we are all meeting folk in our ministry who have been or are in similar dark situations, sexually abused or from dysfunctional families and who are desperate to know the healing love of our Saviour. Some of us will have had similar experiences and may be more able to empathise with others. This book although not condoning sin, reminds us that there is hope and forgiveness with our merciful and Sovereign God. I strongly recommend this book believing it will be a help and encouragement to all who read it.

Jill Finnie, Lawshall Evangelical Church

Battles Christians Face

Vaughan Roberts

Authentic Lifestyle ISBN:9781850787280

Whether you are experiencing a time of peace in your

Christian life or feel that you are in the thick of the battle, this book is well worth reading.

It is divided into eight

easy-to-digest chapters, each one tackling in a very honest way a different challenge that

we as Christians face. As well

as timeless battles like those with pride and lust, the writer also tackles dilemmas that are all too often ignored such as those of depression, homosexuality and our modern obsession with image.

Written in a contemporary style but with sound biblically based arguments this book can easily be read as a whole, in short bursts, or dipped into in times of trial. It also lends itself to

discussion and we were able to use it ourselves in our young women's Bible study group.

We tackled a different 'battle' each week and were truly encouraged and thankful that

each chapter pointed us to Jesus and a greater understanding of his forgiveness and

mercy. Roberts gives courage and reassurance to sinners without excuse or platitudes

for sin.

The final chapter, which highlights the keynote of the book, is especially uplifting. It

reminds us that if we fight these battles then we must pray for and work at a deeper love

for Christ and a closer walk with him. Vaughan Roberts suggests some very helpful and

practical ways to help us in this in order to 'keep spiritually fresh' so that we might one day

say with Paul 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith'

(2 Tim 4v7). We would thoroughly recommend this book.

Stacy Eliti, Jo Ford

Young Women's Bible Study Group, Greenstead Evangelical Free Church, Colchester.

...AND WELL WORTH READING FROM THE SECULAR PRESS -

Escape

Carolyn Jessop

Penquin

ISBN: 978-0141031514

This is the remarkable true story of Carolyn Jessop who grew up in the Fundamentalist

Church of the Latter Day Saints.

At 18 she was forced into a marriage with a man more than thirty years her senior who al-

ready had three wives.

As Warren Jeffs rose to power within the cult, she

eventually escaped with her eight children.

This is both a compelling and moving read as well as being an informative and accurate

account of life within a cult. Also, with so many accounts in the Bible of polygamy and its

consequences, this book unwittingly gives extra insight into some of the tensions and

heartache that those Old Testament women and their children are likely to have experi-

enced.

The Shack

William P Young
Hodder & Stoughton
ISBN: 978-0-340979495

This is a book that has prompted mixed reviews in the Christian press, both in America and in the UK.

Here are a selection of reviews that can be read online:

www.christianitymagazine.co.uk/reviews/books/the%20shack.aspx

www.mathiasmedia.com.au/briefing/library/5395

www.e-n.org.uk/4392.The-Shack.htm

<http://wordsofgrace.wordpress.com/2008/12/31/book-review-the-shack/>

<http://www.whitbyforum.com/2008/09/shack.html>

You can hear what Mark Driscoll has to say about the book on the website of Mars Hill Church:

<http://www.marshillchurch.org/media/doctrine/trinity-god-is/the-shack>

FOR WOMEN IN MINISTRY

Interview with Kath Knapman, Women's Pastoral Worker, Christ Church, Liverpool

How did you get involved in working for a church?

I was a Relay Worker with UCCF for two years in Liverpool, and then continued as an Associate Staff Worker for nine years. Whilst doing my nurse training, and on qualifying, I co-ordinated the Student Ministry at Bridge Chapel. These things afforded opportunities for lots of 1-2-1 and pastoral ministry. Approximately 5 years ago Christ Church advertised the position I am now working in.

The short answer, is that from the age of 17 I've had a passion for evangelism (though have never been brilliant at it!) and nurturing young Christians – and I just sought informal and formal opportunities to do that.

What is your role?

I am the part time Women’s Pastoral Worker. My job is to equip women to handle the Bible well, and enable them to go on and teach others e.g. in a 1-2-1. Alongside this, I aim to meet with every woman in the church once a year (assuming they’d like to!), to see where they’re at, and give them an opportunity to raise any concerns. I usually have a couple of 1-2-1s that I lead myself. I co-lead our Women’s Bible Study on a Friday morning. I’m available to support women who are either struggling with specific issues or simply need someone to listen and to pray with. I assist with supervising our female members of staff, and with the general logistics of making church meetings etc happen.

How do you juggle nursing and ministry?

Inevitably, the nature of both jobs is that they have the potential to ‘mushroom’ into one another. There are also several overlaps. However, my supervisor is excellent at taking a holistic look at my life in supervision sessions, and helping me to work out gospel priorities.

What are the advantages?

Working for my church family, where I am treated/managed as a ‘person’, helps me as I work for the NHS, where I am a ‘human resource’.

Conversely, working in a highly pressured ward environment, helps me keep in perspective the various misunderstandings that can occur in church ministry. It means that as I’m learning about theological truths either personally or in 1-2-1, I’m always wrestling to think how that works out in our evangelism. Christ Church is committed to reaching the city of Liverpool with the good

“It means that as I’m learning about theological truths ... I’m always wrestling to think how that works out in our evangelism.”

news about Jesus and part of that is encouraging and equipping each other to live out the Gospel where we are. The combination of nursing and church ministry helps me as I seek to support others in this.

Furthermore, as a nurse, I routinely deal with some of the harsh elements of living in a fallen world, e.g. sickness, violence, addiction, death and dying, ageing and degeneration. These things are truly horrible, but they increase my longing for an eternity where there’ll be no more sickness, death or tears. Women at church have said that my being a nurse has helped them feel at ease sharing what is concerning them.

What are the disadvantages?

The disadvantages are largely trivial e.g. sometimes members of the congregation don’t understand that I have two jobs, and cannot always be available; remembering that I need to apply for annual leave in two jobs rather than one, if I need a week off!

“My job is to equip women to handle the Bible well, and enable them to go on and teach others...”

See Why CY! is a conference explaining the youth edition of the Christianity Explored course, CY. It is for anyone eager to share the gospel with young people in 7 sessions at church, home, school, anywhere!

Saturday, 7th March @ Christ Church Clifton, Bristol
Saturday, 21st March @ Christ Church Fulwood, Sheffield
Saturday, 4th April @ All Souls Church, Langham Place, London

All conferences are 10a.m. - 4p.m. Lunch is included in the cost.
Please see the Christianity Explored website for details:

WWW.CHRISTIANITYEXPLORED.ORG



Or e-mail:
jenny.cooke@christianityexplored.org

"CY is the evangelistic course for young people
in the 21st Century."

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Forthcoming Conferences:

For Ministers' Wives:

Spring Ministers' Wives' Conference

2-5 March 2009 (for wives of those in paid ministry for *more* than 5 years)

www.proctrust.org.uk

North West Ministers' Wives Conference

(Postponed from November 2008)

Saturday 7 March 2009, Calvary Baptist Church, Liverpool

Speakers: Alison Elliott & Gill Kilpatrick

Contact: Kay Kinnaird 0151 924 8246 kinnk60@aol.com

Midlands Pastors' Wives

Saturday 25 April 2009

Speaker: Kath Paterson

Contact: Hazel Watts, 02476 670 694

South West Pastors' Wives

Saturday 9 May 2009, Kensington Baptist Church, Bristol

Speakers: Peter & Margaret Seccombe "Going the distance"

Contact: Sarah Drury 01934 834057 cameron.drury@homecall.co.uk

Summer Ministers' Wives' Conference

6-9 July 2009 (for wives whose husbands are in training or in first 5 years of ministry)

www.proctrust.org.uk

For all Women:

Bristol Women's Conference

Saturday 7 March 2009, Kensington Baptist Church, Bristol

Speaker: Barbara Sherwood, plus various seminars

www.bristolwomensconference.org

New Wine Women's Day, London

Saturday 7 March 2009, Westminster Central Hall, London

Daughters of Destiny

www.new-wine.org

Liverpool Young Women's Conference

Saturday 7 March 2009, Bethel Church, Green Lane, Liverpool

Speaker: Val Unsworth

Contact: Jenny Oliver jenoliver17@hotmail.com

Females @ Fellowship, Bridgend, South Wales

Saturday 12 September 2009, Brackla Tabernacle, Bridgend

More to Life...Proverbs 31 - Mission Impossible

Speaker: Barbara Isaac. Testimony - Linda Lewis (formerly of Papua New Guinea)

Contact: Katherine Orchard, 01656 653403 or Janet Howells, 01656 663749

SEMINAR/CONFERENCE SUBJECTS

Are you thinking of hosting a women's conference or training day but need ideas about what subject(s) to focus on? We can contact potential speakers on your behalf who are willing to cover the following subjects (depending on geographical location):

- ◆ Purity – for younger women (14-21)
- ◆ How to help other women
- ◆ Discovering your spiritual gift
- ◆ Self-esteem
- ◆ Hospitality
- ◆ Evangelism
- ◆ Communication/listening skills
- ◆ Caring for carers
- ◆ Caring for the elderly
- ◆ Battle of the mind (overcoming doubt/fear)
- ◆ Helping sex workers
- ◆ Working with Muslim women
- ◆ Singleness
- ◆ Singleness – for young women
- ◆ Friendship
- ◆ Leading Bible studies
- ◆ Depression

If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Elisabeth Smyth at the FIEC office on 01793 619603 - elisabeth@fiec.org.uk

HELPLINE

We encourage pastor's 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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Andrew and Kath Paterson, Elisabeth Smyth, Heather Stephens
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