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Churches Group for Social Concern - Aims:

To encourage the people of the churches in the application of their faith to everyday life in the community.

To draw the attention of member churches to current local needs and work in partnership with other agencies in an attempt to meet them.

To assist in thinking about ethical and moral issues, by initiating appropriate study projects and conferences.

When necessary it will arrange fundraising events.

Future plans and events

Spring Group Meeting

Monday 19th February, 7.45 pm at Kippington Church Hall

All church representatives, leaders and other interested parties are invited to hear about the progress of **Befrienders**, from the Coordinator and participate in discussions about the way forward for the **Community Action Day** and other potential initiatives.

²Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12 v 2

Gifts and Donations

Gifts from churches or individuals to support the work of Befrienders or resource the magazine costs should be made payable to:

Sevenoaks Churches Group for Social Concern, and sent to the Treasurer:

81a Bradbourne Park Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 3LQ

Please indicate the intended purpose of the gift, so that it can be appropriately applied.



Compassion

The Sevenoaks Churches Group for Social Concern Newsletter

Issue 10, Jan 2007

Faith without deeds is dead

James chapter 2 v 26 says, "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead."

The body of Christ must demonstrate both faith and deeds . . . We must be Word workers . . . We must walk the talk.

Is the Good News, the Gospel being demonstrated in our communities? Does our light shine so that people see our good deeds and praise our Father in heaven?

If Christianity is being marginalised in our society today, whose responsibility is it to do something about it?

The response so far to the following ideas has been very limited . . . What's holding us back?

- 1) A "Welcome" pack for new housing association residents . . . In Hand
- 2) An "Action Team" to help with anything from house moving to minor maintenance . . . No Response
- 3) A network of local employers, willing to offer part time supported employment . . . No Response
- 4) An Organic Café - and more, offering supported voluntary employment . . . Two people interested
- 5) Has God laid something else on your heart . . . Come to the meeting on 19th Feb and let us know.

Jesus modelled a style of ministry that involved sacrifice, submission and service. He went to people - the poor, infirm and sinful, expressing love without judgement, bringing good news of freedom, healing and release.

What's holding us back?

faithworks

Inside this issue:

Values & Beliefs	2
Community . . .	3
Future events	4

"We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

Ephesians 2 : 10

Values and Beliefs under attack

The government's plans to introduce new Sexual Orientation Regulations (SORs) in the UK in October, were put on hold, following the unprecedented response from Christians and others.

Then the government decided to introduce them on 1st Jan 2007 in Northern Ireland through direct rule, instead.

A torch-lit protest was staged outside parliament on Tuesday, January 9th, set to coincide with a retrospective debate in the House of Lords on the SORs, but they were upheld by 198 votes to 68.

A High Court judicial review against the SORs in Northern Ireland, brought by the "Christian Institute" pressure group, will now be heard in March 2007.

All is not yet lost . . . CARE is encouraging Christians to write to Tony Blair, Ruth Kelly or Ms Munn at the Dept. for Communities & Local Government, Eland House, Bressenden Place, London SW1E 5DU. See their web site for more information (www.care.org.uk) or (www.christianconcernforournation.co.uk)

Christian lawyers are petitioning the Queen as Defender of the Faith, to prevent this discrimination against Christians.

The SORs are now due to be introduced in GB, in April 2007

In December 2005, Helen and Joe Roberts were reported to the Lancashire Constabulary after they asked the

Wyre Borough Council to display literature promoting Christianity in addition to their literature promoting homosexuality.

When the Council refused to do this, Mrs Roberts complained by telephone, saying in the course of her call that homosexual practices were morally wrong. As a result, two police officers visited the Roberts at their home and interviewed them for an hour and twenty minutes about their beliefs.

Supported by the "Christian Institute", the couple sued the Council and the Police, and were due a hearing in the High Court in January 2007. The Council and the Police have since both settled out of court (£10,000 plus costs) and issued public apologies.

The money will be donated to a Christian charity.

It's not just Christmas carols and Christian symbols that are being banned in order to be politically correct these days. The government is now meddling in the personal expression of our faith.



Community Interaction

By Tony Cornfield

For about a year now, I have represented "Churches Together" on the Community Planning Partnership at Sevenoaks District Council.

The following areas on the 2007-2010 Action plan are now recognised as involving the "Faith Sector":

- Enabling people to feel safe . . .
By working with young people, and involvement in the Domestic Abuse Task Group.
- Working with children and young people . . .
By running youth clubs and detached youth work
- Supporting people to live independently in their own homes . . .
Through the Befriending Scheme and various clubs
- Working in partnership with the Council to aid communication . . .
By making information available through web site links
- Support Community provision of healthy lifestyle programmes . . .
By making premises available, running a Breakfast Club and disseminating information
- Improving access to health and other services, particularly through the Christian Counselling Service and Advocacy.

- Work to reduce homelessness . . .
Through involvement of Bridge Trust, YMCA, etc.

The Community Plan seeks to identify, quantify, and promote the delivery of community services in partnership. So from time to time I will be asking for information, like the number of young people in your youth clubs, in order to feed back to our partners at these meetings.

If there are issues that you would like me to raise or provide feedback on, please contact me by phone or email as shown on the back page.

My aim in serving on this partnership is to demonstrate and promote the church's continuing role at the heart of our communities, when all around, the church's image and role is being marginalised and sometimes undermined.

Don't forget that the Council runs a Community Grant Scheme that might help with some of your compassion outreach.



Jesus said, "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me."

John 10: 27