

CGSC Executive Committee:

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 Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 3ES

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

Churches Together AGM

Our umbrella organisation, Churches Together in Sevenoaks & District has its Annual Meeting on Thursday 8th November at 7.30 for 8.00pm, at St John's URC.
 Proposed panel discussion involving views from Mental Health, the District Council, and the Bridge Trust
 Please note this in your diaries as everybody is invited.

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.

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you?
 To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.
 Micah 6 v 8



Compassion

The Sevenoaks Churches Group for Social Concern Newsletter

Issue 11, July 2007

Community Interaction

Community Action Day

On Monday 28th May, serious rainfall caused most projects to be cancelled or postponed. One team however was in the dry, painting 2 rooms for a young family where both parents are partially sighted. "We're over the moon and totally grateful", was their delighted response.
 Fortunately some other projects were able to be carried out in the following weeks.



Photo: Courier Newspapers

Divorce Recovery

Local churches are networking to help facilitate the provision of a Christian Divorce Recovery course that was devised by the Aquila Care Trust in Crowborough.
 We aim to offer the 8 week course in the Sevenoaks area, beginning at the end of September, being led by local Christians who have themselves been helped by the course and have then been trained to lead it.
 Contact the course administrator on 01732 452062.

Debt Recovery

With the UK's personal debt having exceeded a trillion pounds, the number of people finding themselves unable to repay their debts is growing.
 Around the country, groups of Christians are working together to provide debt counselling and put schemes in place to help people become free of debt.
 If you would like to be part of such a group here in the Sevenoaks area, contact us on 01732 452062.

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"He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour"
 Luke 4 v 18b-19

Ethical and Moral Issues

In our January issue, we reported on the controversy and concern being expressed by sections of the church about the government's introduction of **Sexual Orientation legislation**. There are however, other Christians who hold different views and we quote some of their response below:

"The belief that homosexuality is neither wrong, sinful, nor contrary to Gospel principles, is just as deeply and conscientiously held, as the beliefs of those who oppose homosexuality. It rests on the conviction that God is concerned primarily with the quality of our relationships – that they produce the fruits of love, joy, peace etc – rather than with the gender of the people in those relationships. Those of us who hold this view are often very aware of the discrimination our loving, faithful and generous gay friends face in simply living their lives – never able openly to demonstrate the simple affection and mutual belonging that straight couples take for granted. A gay Christian friend of mine once said, with real pain, that what he really longed for was to be able to walk around the supermarket holding his long-term partner's hand, just as he saw me do with my husband."

Extract from an email response to our last Newsletter.

Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit"

John 15 v 5

Christian **Action Research** & **Education: CARE**

www.care.org.uk



Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed Churches working together...
joint public issues team
...to live out the gospel of Christ in church and society

www.jointpublicissues.org.uk

There are so many Bioethics issues being decided under the current government, that there's insufficient space to describe them here. We therefore recommend the websites above, that have discussion and links that help inform us all.

Abortion

The BMA has voted to remove the requirement for 2 doctors to approve abortion requests.

Euthanasia

Though Lord Joffe's Assisted Dying bill was not passed, there is still a strong lobby to legalise assisted suicide in this country.

Cloning

The creation of human clones is currently illegal in the UK, but applications may soon be approved to clone human/animal hybrid embryos for medical research

Fertility treatment

There are discussions about scrapping the requirement for clinics to consider the need for a father when deciding on IVF treatment.

Keep informed so that when changes to legislation are being considered, you can give your opinion

Befrienders

Our local Christian Befriending Scheme - **Befrienders** - goes from strength to strength, thanks to the desire of individual Christians from 9 local churches to "Do What Jesus Would Do".

Jesus responded to the needs of hurting people; the sick, marginalised and disabled, with compassion and love . . . and we have the privilege of doing likewise.

Befrienders was launched in October 2005 with 15 team members. In the summer of 2006 another 8 were added and this summer 7 more are being trained.

We continue to receive referrals from local agencies, which gives the opportunity for Christians to come along-side and support local people through a difficult period in their lives.

Margaret, the coordinator says, "It's a real privilege to be able to demonstrate God's love in such practical ways"

Any financial contributions to support Befrienders would be most welcome.



Current Issues:

Stop the Traffik is a growing global coalition of organisations from more than 50



countries, working together to fight against people trafficking.

TEARFUND is a founder member.

People trafficking is the fastest growing global crime.

It is second only to the arms trade as the most lucrative crime and equal to drugs.

- Almost half the world's chocolate is made from cocoa grown in Cote D'Ivoire, Africa. 12,000 children have been trafficked into cocoa farms in Cote D'Ivoire.

- 600,000 women and children are sold into the sex trade every year

- People are trafficked across borders at the rate of one every minute of every day.

Celebrate Racial Justice Sunday on 9th September.

The human instinct to judge, criticise, scapegoat and stigmatise the other on racial and cultural grounds is a danger that cannot be ignored. Racial Justice Sunday is an opportunity for all churches to stress that unity in Christ is not about everyone being the same but about seeking reconciliation and celebrating diversity in its widest sense.

Revd Myra Blyth, Churches' Commission for Racial Justice