

Mission and Giving Group - St Andrew's, Chesterton

Update – November 2007

What is the Mission and Giving Group?

Earlier this year the PCC re-established a small sub-committee - the *Mission and Giving Group* - to consider how we might coordinate our giving to Christian work and other charitable causes during the year. Current members of the group are: Richard Collins, Margaret Hiley, Dorothy Peyton Jones, Mary Pountain, Nigel Taylor, Lynda Taylor, and Bridget Trump.

We met initially in July and August to review the church's giving in 2005-2006 and to prepare a discussion paper for the PCC. In September the PCC agreed some principles and proposals put forward by the group. From now on, the group will meet 3 times a year to monitor our existing church commitments, and to plan Giving Days (November/ May), arrange speakers/materials, etc.

What do we understand about Mission and Giving?

Mission is sometimes described as *'finding out what God's doing in the world and getting involved'*. Giving to others, whether through our time, abilities or money, has always been a mark of Christian commitment and discipleship. In essence, it's our response to God's self-giving in Jesus Christ and to Christ's call to minister to and share with others in the world. We are called to give willingly and cheerfully, according to our means (2 Corinthians 8 & 9; Luke 6:38).

Many in our church give to Christian work and other good causes according to personal commitment and interest. But it's also important to give as a church fellowship as part of our joint witness and involvement in the community and wider world. At St Andrew's we have a tradition of supporting both local and overseas projects, through specific 'giving days' and through one-off collections.

The five 'marks of mission'

The 1988 Lambeth Conference of the worldwide Anglican church identified five 'marks of mission'. We can use these five marks to guide the decisions we make about our priorities for giving as we seek a balance in our commitment to various aspects of mission:

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptize and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the earth

HERE ARE SOME OF OUR ESTABLISHED COMMITMENTS...

Ellie Howes – Transitions Co-ordinator, Romsey Mill

Several years ago the churches in North Cambridge started a Youth Worker Project in local schools. This project has developed into the Transitions Programme managed by Romsey Mill, a Cambridge charity that works with some of the most disadvantaged young people and families in the area. With an emphasis on building long-term relationships, Romsey Mill reaches around 1000 individuals each week, supporting them and creating opportunities for personal, social and spiritual transformation.

Ellie Howes is the current coordinator of the Transitions Programme. She helps 10-14 year-olds to increase their self-esteem and confidence, raise their aspirations, and develop their skills. She does this through out-of-school groups, outdoor activities, peer mentoring, 1:1 work across the primary-secondary transition, and a literacy support programme.

Through the North Cambridge Council of Churches, St Andrews donates £1,000 a year to support Ellie in her work. This month members of the Mission and Giving Group and one of the Youth ALMs invited Ellie for a meal to meet her and hear about her mission and ministry. We look forward to further contact with her in the coming year.

Azul Wasi (Blue House) Project in Peru

This is a project we've been supporting at St Andrew's for 18 months to help build a home for street children in Cusco, Peru. Mary and Chris Pountain revisited the project in August to see the latest progress. The electricity supply had been connected and pipes laid ready for supplying fresh water across several fields. Since August a 4.5m deep hole has been dug for the water tank and filtration plant. The sun will heat the water for the shower through a coiled hosepipe on the roof!

Beds are all made up ready for the children's arrival. Bathroom and kitchen equipment are installed. A group of Scottish volunteers have painted a large mural in the living room which includes the flag of St Andrew! Now the authorities just have to visit the site and give permission to open the house to the children (all boys) waiting to move in. Once they've moved into the Blue House, the boys will attend the local school; they'll learn to cook and look after themselves. Alcides, the Project Director, hopes to rent a field to grow potatoes - an important part of the Peruvian diet. On Saturdays a group of street children visit Azul Wasi to enjoy a day away from the city. The builder, Adrián, will live on the site with his family to look after maintenance, security and further building work.

The next plan is to build a fence around the site to make it more secure and to continue with work to drain the land. Alcides hopes to buy a secondhand minibus to make it easier to get in and out of the city. Once the children are settled in, Alcides intends to start the programme of training the children in various skills so they have a better chance of getting a job when they leave the house at the age of 18.

So far over £10,000 has been raised for this project – most of it at St Andrew's. Fundraising will continue over the coming year so the project can flourish and grow. You can make donations through St Andrew's Church, Chesterton, using one of the white envelopes in the pews. Label the envelope 'Blue House' and, if you can, Gift Aid your donation by completing the form on the envelope. You can find out more about Azul Wasi by contacting Mary and Chris on 01223 311055. Please continue to pray for this project and for the children whose home this will soon be.

Here are more examples of linking our previous giving to the five marks of mission:

Mark 1 - To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom

- *support for Wilson Gumede's ordination training in Zimbabwe (2002-2005)*
- *Mission to Seafarers Giving Day (Autumn 2005)*

Mark 3 - To respond to human need by loving service

- *Giving Day for Winter Comfort (Spring 2005)*
- *Harvest Giving: 2005 - Christian Aid, 2006 - Tear Fund*
- *Giving Day for Hospice at Home (Autumn 2006)*
- *Crib Service (2005 & 2006) – Christian Aid*
- *Christingle (2005 & 2006) – Children's Society*
- *Weekly fruit delivery for Winter Comfort (about £50 p.m.)*

Mark 4 - To seek to transform unjust structures of society

- *Anti-slavery collections linked to Vassa Day (every July)*

Two elements of mission that we would like to develop more in the future are:

Mark 2 - To teach, baptize and nurture new believers

- *Our support for the USPG project this November will take account of this (see p. 4)*

Mark 5 - To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the earth

- *We are currently considering support for a Christian environmental organisation called 'A Rocha' – working in the UK and in many other countries to promote care for God's world. You can find more information about A Rocha at: www.arocha.org*

STOP PRESS: The Junior Church Coffee Morning and Bring and Buy sale made £535 for the Peruvian Earthquake Fund, and this month's Beetle Drive raised £260 to go towards the rebuilding of homes there.

SOME OF OUR EMERGING COMMITMENTS...

USPG – Anglicans in World Mission

USPG works in direct partnership with Anglican churches in over 50 countries, enabling them to share God's love in practical, life-changing ways and to build communities.

As part of our Harvest Giving this year we were able to send £736.25 to their Harvest Campaign 2007 – 'Seeds of Hope' – to help support the Church of North India in its running of hostels for young people.

'Without the Ahmednagar hostels, children like Maya would have no chance of obtaining an education, which is their only hope for breaking out of the poverty trap.' Elizabeth Nirmal, Hostel manager.

As part of our plan to develop an ongoing and longer-term relationship with a mission-focused organisation, our Autumn 2007 Giving Day is focusing on the USPG project – 'Training for Tomorrow's Church'; this project supports the under-resourced theological colleges in Ghana and Madagascar who seek to provide leaders for the growing churches in those countries; their work can be linked to the first and second marks of mission.

An alternative way of giving at Christmas time?

Christmas is traditionally a time of giving gifts to our families and friends as a token of our love for them and in celebration of God's gift of Jesus Christ to the world. Many charity relief organisations now have their own Christmas catalogues offering a range of 'life-giving gifts' that will benefit those who have so much less than we do. You'll find a selection of catalogues full of imaginative ideas at the back of Church – including those from TearFund, USPG, Christian Aid and Oxfam. Why not use one as part of your giving this Christmas?

Finally...

The Mission and Giving Group plans to provide an update leaflet such as this one 3 times a year to keep the congregation in touch with our mission and giving commitments as a church. There will also be regular updates and displays on the church website and noticeboards. We welcome your suggestions and comments about what sort of information you find most helpful. Please take this leaflet away with you to remind you of how as a church we seek to respond to God's call to be generous in our giving towards support mission at home and abroad. You can use it as a basis for prayer, and you may even like to explore further involvement in some of the projects. Thank you for your support.

Nigel and Lynda Taylor, on behalf of the Mission and Giving Group (575172)