Southampton City Mission

NEWSLETTER Summer 2009

Hello from the new Chair of Southampton City Mission

So, I have just taken over from Rev David Turner, as the chair of trustees. What a great time to do it! Quite honestly, right now it feels like one word sums it up - "Fruit". Stuff is just happening... more and more. It's crazy.

It seems that after years and years of plugging away and trying to be faithful and trying to serve the city, its "time". Doors are opening in schools like never before with opportunities beyond anything we've ever seen and people are becoming Christians in the Basics Bank on a regular basis. (The last I heard was every two weeks, on average). I feel amazed and excited because I really think that this thing is going to seriously change some lives. I feel as though we are at the place now where the only way to go is serious expansion and the only way to expand is through local churches and God seems to just keep setting things up...

So, its all good, I think.

Chris Davis was awarded an MBE in the Queen's New Years Honours List. He can be seen here with the medal that he received at the Palace on 28 May 2009.

Inside this issue:

Hello from the new Chair

Update on Basics Bank

MBE for City Missioner

What's happening in Schools

Finance

Prayer requests

Change of premises

News from the City Missioner

Opportunities to share the gospel at all sorts of levels, from conversations with clients at Basics Bank, to increased chances to work with children in schools across the region, to invitations to preach and teach in churches in the city and as far away as Milford Haven (South Wales) and Bristol, continue to pour in. Expansion of the team, in the summer of last year, from one to four when Duncan House joined me and SCM took back the running and management of Basics Bank, is only just able to keep pace with the increased work level. Basics Bank is seeing an increased number of clients, particularly families, due to the present financial climate and schools appear to be wide open to the possibilities of increased input from us as a Christian organisation. You can read more about what is going on in Basics Bank and in the schools elsewhere in the newsletter. The thing that prevents this expansion from continuing and being properly met is simply a lack of resources both financial and personnel.

There are a number of volunteering opportunities and if working with SCM is something that you feel you would like to be doing, please do not hesitate to contact us. The really exciting thing that we are seeing through the work of SCM is the number of people that we are seeing coming to Christ or re-committing their lives to Him.

Chris Davis MBE

BASICS BANK

Well it is that time of year again. The great stores of food from last year's harvest have long been used up and we scrape along on the generosity of the few as we look forward with longing and trepidation, through the barren months of the summer, towards September's coming bounty. Or to put it less poetically, "Come on chaps, shove us some more tins!"

Yes food is scarce but love and fun abound as always in the Basics Bank. We have been very pleased to add Katie Coles as a regular to our brilliant team of welcomers and befrienders.

The team were delighted to be able to come alongside a family recently who had lost everything in a house fire. In the midst of that tragedy it was a privilege to be able to be a sympathetic ear as well as a practical help with the necessities of life.

A further high point has been the baptism of a former client (now friend!) at James Street Church. It is lovely to see people come through very difficult situations to hope and life in Jesus. Many people have had quiet, sharing conversations on our sofas here over the last few months, and we have been able to pray, grieve, console, sympathise and cry with those broken by life's disasters, regardless of whether they count themselves as Christians or not.

The number of new families needing help in these difficult financial times gives us the chance to surprise people with the love and friendliness of our staff and volunteers of course, but also with the surprising nature of some of the donated food from our supermarket partners. As we get pretty much anything that is past its sell by date but not past its use by date, we have introduced people and ourselves to some exotic fruits and vegetables as well as some luxury treats. You never know what you are going to get at Basics Bank.

So it is business as usual at Basics. Those in need are being fed, clothed, loved, prayed for and shared with by ordinary Christians from the Churches in Southampton, and as usual we are short of food and money, but never hope, love or a sense of humour.

Duncan House

Following our desire for Southampton City Mission to equip the church to serve the city, an idea we are developing would be to see Churches take up the food side so that there is access to food everyday across the city. There could still be a central point containing a much smaller clothing outlet and sorting area. This would be a great opportunity for church volunteers to become involved - what a way to reach out to your communities! Please pray for us and our church partners as we think about future plans.

Schools Work

ASSEMBLIES

During Southampton City Missions last full year (ending March 2009) I visited and did assemblies in 30 schools on 67 separate occasions. If you take an average of 300 children per school that means that in the course of the year SCM was able to share something of the truth of the gospel with around 9,000 children. Time limitations within assemblies (about 10 minutes) means that there are restrictions on just how much can be said, but the relationship built up with schools in that context has opened the doors to much deeper work in the form of Question of Faith.

QUESTION OF FAITH

Question of Faith is a programme of whole day activities with a single year group in a school (approximately 90 to 100 children) where I can take in a team to deliver an element of the RE curriculum at the request of the Head Teacher / RE Co-ordinator. Since March last year we have visited 7 schools and delivered 8 what we call Question of Faith days on Pentecost, Angels and Miracles by the sea. The day will include Bible teaching, stories with the puppets, conjuring, games, treasure hunts, quiz and crafts. That in turn has led to the opportunity in one school to work at an even deeper level in the form of Leap in Faith weeks.

Art work during Miracles by the Sea

LEAP IN FAITH

At St Marks school in Shirley Southampton we have been given the opportunity working in partnership with the school, St Marks Church and Bridge Christian Fellowship to deliver three whole weeks of RE based activities. At Christmas we did a week called 'What's it all about'. At Easter we did a week called 'What's good about Friday?' Duncan was placed on trial by year 3 and 4 children having been falsely accused of stealing ginger biscuits from the staff room. This raised exciting questions from both children and staff about faith and what it means to be a Christian.

Duncan on trial

We have just finished a week focusing on Pentecost called 'Power to the People'. During this week, at a prayer club that members of Bridge Fellowship run at lunchtime one day a week, 2 children asked Jesus to come into their lives and members of staff reiterated again that these weeks had made them review completely what they believed.

Chris Davis MBE

Easter art work

COMMENTS FROM THE CHILDREN FOLLOWING WORK IN ST MARKS SCHOOL

WHAT FAITH MEANS TO ME: -

- Knowing that Jesus is real even though I can't see him (year 6)
- If you have faith you believe in something (year 5)
- If you believe in Jesus and God (year 3)
- Knowing that he is right next to me (year 2)

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING WE LEARNT: -

+ Jesus was innocent (year 6)
+ Easter is not all about chocolate (year 4)
+ Jesus saved us (year 3)

THE BEST THING ABOUT THE WEEK: -

* The children's behaviour, we all loved doing it. (year 6)
* Trial (year 5)
* The stories (year 4)
* Singing (year 3)

FURTHER QUESTIONS WE HAVE ABOUT OUR FAITH: -

- Who is God?
- Did Jesus choose if he wanted to do it?

The partnership between the City Missioner and his team is a remarkable example of what can be achieved over a relatively short time to create experiences for children and adults to make huge leaps forward in their understanding of faith.
The National Society of Statutory Inspections of Anglican Schools Report – April 09

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Wisdom as we look at the future development of Basics Bank provision across the city and the Schools ministry.
- For God's provision as the work continues to expand.
- Volunteers with the skills to work with SCM as part of the teams that go into schools.

FINANCE

To continue the work at the level it is at currently, in the existing premises, SCM needs to find just over £120,000 p.a. To further develop schools work, including training and additional team members that budget figure would need to rise considerably. At present SCM has a shortfall of approximately £2,000 per month. We are very grateful to all of those who support the work and are amazed at the ways that God has enabled the work to continue thus far. Please contact the SCM office if you can help in this way.

Southampton City Mission
2 James Street (Basics Bank),
St Mary's, Southampton, SO14 1PJ

Tel: 023 8063 3524
E-mail: chris@southamptoncitymission.co.uk

Registered Charity No. 251142