

COR Newsletter – 16 January 2008

Dear all,

I have just returned from the UK and my post Christmas break but I have spoken to John and I hear that everything went very well last Sunday. As it happens I was on the same flight as the Niblett family - James Naomi and baby Daniel - and James told me on the flight that he wanted going to speak to the church about the hospice. We will pray for them and their excellent work.

Next Sunday

Holy Communion at 10am as usual. Frans will be teaching **Sunday school**. And there will be a mid- month **Produce sale** this Sunday as well. Please try and bring something to sell. We are holding the sale mid month because so many people were away at the start of January! I will be in Sofia - as long as I am not grounded due to snow or fog so you are again in the more than capable hands of Dr. John Barker.

Britannia Ball

15th February at 8pm - till late. Dancing to the band "Take 5" and a DJ !!. Dinner and drink are included in the entrance price of 95 Euros per person. Please see me at church or send me an email if you want to make a booking. I have attached the final version of the advertisement to this email - so print it off and display it! The room will be arranged in 25 tables of 10 people (maximum 12 people) so if you have enough for a whole table why not book one for the discounted price of 900 Euros!

Thought for the day

Going back to the U.K was an odd experience. After just 18 months away, in some ways I felt like a stranger. Their concerns were not my concerns. The things my family were getting really steamed up about, I either had no knowledge of whatsoever or from a wider perspective seemed quite parochial. The ins and outs of British politics seemed much less important than they used to. Great Britain is still my country and always will be of course but living away has changed the way I see things, changed my perspectives and changed my understanding of many things. I hope, of course that this is all to the good - that the wider perspective is a truer perspective. We have a thoroughly international congregation in our church. Do you feel the same when you go home?

Feeling out of step, and out of sorts with your home environment is probably what St. Peter meant when in his first letter (1Peter 2:11) he talked about Christians being like "strangers and aliens in the world". When you become a Christian, you remain the same person obviously, but your perspectives change. Things you used to worry about are replaced by different concerns. Different things drive you and you want to do different things than you used to want to do. The people you know may well remain your friends but in my experience a certain "distance" opens up between you because the new world view you are learning and growing into is not shared by them. Then you end up gravitating towards like minded people, but the danger in that, in Christian terms, is that we become just a *Holy huddle* and not the salt and light we are supposed to be.

I think Peter was talking about using these new insights to influence for good the people around us, in the same way as someone who has lived abroad could use their fresh insights to influence their environment. Not too close to home though. I

may be ordained a Priest but I am still treated as though I were 12 years old at home. (Ring any bells?) "No prophet is accepted in his home town" (Luke 4:24). I can just picture Amos, Jeremiah or Isaiah after a hard days calling Israel to repentance being castigated by their mums for not cleaning their sandals or combing their hair.

Prayer for today by Michael Botting

*Lord of all grace and truth
who came to dwell among men in the town of Nazareth
we pray you will give us grace to live in our local community
as salt to purify it and as light to reveal your truth.
May we not be ashamed to acknowledge you
and may we so love and honour all people
that peace and goodwill may prevail among us,
for your name's sake.
Amen.*

Love and Peace

Martin