

COR Newsletter – 13 August 2008

Dear all,

Last Sunday

After a dip last week, our numbers bounced back to the mid forties and we are looking forward to a host of returnees over the next few weeks. We warmly welcome some new American members, Jeff, Kayla and the children and James - who only arrived in Bucharest on Tuesday - to the fold. Our American contingent rises and falls, sometimes having quite a lot and sometimes just a few - but the contribution made by all our American members to the COR over the years has always been immense in proportion to their numbers, and long may that continue.

Thank you to those who commented favourably on the sermon. The phrase "still small voice of God" from 1 Kings is actually a translation of difficult Hebrew that more correctly means "a kind of silence so intense you can hear it" - which for me is a far more enigmatic and profound phrase.

Next Sunday

Holy Communion at 10am. The Sunday school is still in suspension until the end of the school holidays. I will be in Sofia celebrating with the Sofia congregation this week. The service in Bucharest will be led by a new face.....Dr. John Barker! (Remember him?)

Tonight

Church council members please remember that there is a council meeting at 7pm in church

Money!!!!

A number of people over the last two weeks have greeted with astonishment the news - when they found out - that the local church here in Bucharest has to be entirely self-supporting. The local congregation right here in Bucharest, not London, has to raise my salary, provide my accommodation, pay my pension contributions, and pay the running costs of the church!

With the high turnover of people here I forget that what was once a well known fact soon passes from common knowledge. So I am prompted to raise this important issue again - because although our fundraising efforts through set piece events has seen extraordinary results over the past year we cannot allow this to mask the fact that these are not luxuries but they are an absolute necessity because the amount raised through the Sunday plate is so low. If one of these events flops for any reason we would be in dire straits.

The remedy for this situation is simple and in our own hands!

Because so many of our people are so internationally mobile and for obvious reasons cannot be in church very often or only for parts of the year, why not take out a standing order to support your church? What we need is **steady and regular, monthly** income.

If you want to take out a monthly standing order into our account, our account details are on our website of course <http://www.churchoftheresurrection.eu> but I reproduce them here for your convenience.

Royal Bank of Scotland. Holt's Farnborough branch, Lawrie House, Victoria Road, Farnborough GU14 7NR

Name of Account: Church of the Resurrection Bucharest External Account

Account number: 11860184 Sort-code: 16-1926

IBAN Number: GB42 RBOS 1619 2611 8601 84 BIC Code: RBOS GB 2L

Please be generous - your church really does need your money. There is also information on "Gift aid" for UK tax payers and IRS information for US tax payers on our website.

Prayer

In case any newcomers think us entirely mercenary, I follow money talk with a call to prayer. For electronically tuned in, busy people the best bet might be an **on-line prayer** site. There are probably lots of them but one I look at occasionally is at <http://www.sacredspace.ie> Why not take a look? For the time conscious it takes about ten minutes start to finish.

Also, For people who enjoyed the various bible studies that we have held in church I would like to remind people that the one I have in mind for after the holidays is a "**Study and prayer**" group in which each will inform the other.

Whilst in study mode please also bear in mind that I will be calling a meeting in September of all parents and children who are interested in their children taking a course of instruction which could lead to **confirmation**.

Your easy step by step guide to international politics

Q. When is your separatist struggle, just, inevitable and in accordance with international law (like Kosovo)?

A. When you are backed by the USA

Q. When is your separatist struggle illegal, genocidal and completely unjustified (like South Ossetia)?

A. When you are backed by Russia

You see, it's easier than you think. Armed with this simple knowledge you can now skip easily through all the world's trouble spots knowing instantly who to love and who to hate. Happy hunting!

Congratulations

To our daughter Claire who gained two A grades and one B grade in her A levels. I thought that people who have known Claire over these past two years and are now spread all over the globe would like to know. This also seems to be the appropriate time to thank the FIBSB and all of Claire's teachers over the last two years. Education was a major concern when we came here, but the standard of teaching has proved to be first rate. Claire will now return to the UK to attend university studying psychology.

Thought for the day - Down to earth Christianity

My mum and Dad, my sister and my brother were only dimly aware that the Lambeth conference was even taking place. And I am sure that the men I used to work with on

the factory floor some years ago (I spent nine years on the night shift) couldn't care less one way or the other about Lambeth. They only knew two things about the church - the first thing was that it abused children - the second thing was me!! (A pretty tough first base)

This is now normal - the vast majority of people in Western Europe have no connection to the church any more so that "second thing" assumes huge importance - that they knew "me". In the work place, or in school, to be a believer (at least openly) is such an oddity nowadays that you will sometimes be the only one and therefore, whether you like it or not, you bear most of the responsibility of representing the faith in its most tangible form to your workmates.

Unfortunately, you are also in the firing line because when the church does or says something that makes the news, good or bad, you will be the one that they question (or more likely tease) because they almost certainly don't know anyone else that goes to church. In such circumstances it is no surprise that many Christians choose to hide their faith. They can feel put upon, under prepared, and often severely embarrassed. The responsibility of representing Christianity to your peers is something that many people feel they can do without. The weight of having to speak cogently about things they themselves are very unsure of is a nightmare. I speak from experience - not out of the back of my head.

I did "come out" as a Christian on the shop floor, and although I can attest that at first there was plenty of derision, there was also, in quiet times a fair bit of one to one sharing of experiences and airing of beliefs that otherwise rarely saw the light of day. Having just one person acknowledged as "religious" on the shift meant that it gave others permission to share thoughts in private that they wouldn't dream of sharing in a wider forum. If a window on to another perspective wasn't fully opened then at least it was pushed ajar. It is remarkable how the news spread to other shifts as well. Most of the ribbing was fairly good humoured but not always.

You need confidence. Your faith needs to be realistic and directly applicable; otherwise you will be dismissed as merely gullible. And it needs to make a difference to you. If it doesn't, why on earth would anyone else want to know?

What did I learn from all this? Well if you can summon up the courage it is definitely worth being more open and pro-active. In doing so, you will invariably give confidence and courage to someone else to do the same. Never parrot church doctrines - no-one cares. It is what those doctrines mean to you in reality and how they are played out that matters. Don't set yourself apart or judge anyone - you are no better than they are. Be wise. In my position I had to obviously filter out all the laughable middle class stuff (Talk to a man who has just done a 12 hour shift of mind numbingly boring labour for a pittance, about their job being a "vocation" or the "spirituality of work" and see what you get). Be yourself, don't be ashamed, and be honest. And for goodness sake if you don't know something or aren't sure, just say so. The only one expecting you to be the fount of all wisdom and knowledge is probably you!! Integrity is attractive. Integrity is what people respond to and respect.

As an openly Christian person, you will almost certainly have more influence on your peers to influence for good or ill than the Archbishop of Canterbury. They probably don't even know his name, but they will know yours. They won't know what he said last Sunday, but they will know what you told them yesterday. With a little courage, you can be God's mouthpiece.

This short but powerful little **prayer for today** is from the Episcopal church of the USA.

*Jesus Christ, Son of God,
make yourself known through me.
Jesus Christ, Son of the living God,
speak through me to others.
Amen*

Love and peace

Martin