



## Ministry among Deaf and Deafblind People



**Did you know that 1 in 7 of the UK population is disabled in some way ?** The Reverend Charles Dixon is the Diocesan Chaplain among deaf and deafblind people. His talk to the November Board meeting began with some startling statistics. 8.7 million people in the UK experience deafness, ranging from mild to profound - the majority of these are over 60. 23,000 people are classed as deafblind. Deafness is nearly 9 times more common than blindness or partial sight. This means that in a congregation of 140 there would be 20 with hearing loss of over 30%, and 2 registered blind or partially sighted.

### Can you recognise the signs of hearing loss ?

One of the first signs is denial, often followed by withdrawal from social situations, feeling stupid, and an inability to carry on a normal conversation where there is background noise. Someone wearing a hearing aid may still need extra help.

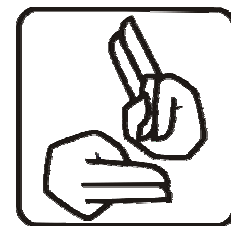


### How can we help ?

Be alert to the problem, look out for someone of mature years who seems to be withdrawing from normal social activities. When speaking, make an effort to stand facing the light and to speak clearly. Churches should install induction loop systems. Ideally learn sign language; of the three types BSL or British Sign Language is the best. Above all be patient !

### What does the chaplaincy do ?

Charles is the parish priest for the deaf and deafblind, combining practical help with friendship, advocacy and raising awareness through the Diocese. By the use of sign language, regular monthly worship (Cambridge, Godmanchester, March and Soham), Christian teaching, and support are organised. He leads an active team of lay and ordained people who can help and advise on all these matters.



BSL used here

### What special help is available to parishes ?

Sign language interpreters can be arranged for special services such as baptisms, weddings and funerals. Counselling, home and hospital visits can be provided. Workshops are held on 'Signs in Worship'. A Deaf Awareness video: 'The Invisible Church' is available for parish use.

### How to contact the Chaplain:

**Contact: Revd. Charles Dixon, 83 Wertheim Way, Huntingdon, PE29 6UH**

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**Mobile [SMS] 07749 702924.**

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\* See [www.johngrooms.org.uk](http://www.johngrooms.org.uk) for further information on disability and support

## A Year of Freedom – a Reflection from the Chairman

2007 has been an eventful year as we have not only celebrated the Abolition of Slavery, but proclaimed a new determination to tackle slavery and oppression in all its modern forms.

From Wisbech to Cambridge, and here at the Cathedral, lectures, exhibitions and events have reflected on history and made it clear that the job is far from over. Indeed, it is estimated that there are far more slaves held across the world now than in 1807 when Wilberforce's Bill was passed in Parliament.

One thing that has clearly emerged is that many issues are intertwined. Tackling slavery is not just about campaigning for changes in the law or supporting organisations such as Chaste. It is about lifestyle and the daily decisions we make. It is about where we shop and what we buy. It is about our individual lives, our churches, the communities we live in and about political involvement at every level.

The job is very far from done. The danger for us now is to say: 'Well, that was a very successful year on Anti-slavery. Now on to the next topic.' There are indeed many serious issues we also need to tackle. Climate change and the environment. The difficult path to justice and peace. Crime: its prevention, rehabilitation of offenders, caring for victims. Care of the elderly in an ageing population. Living in a multi-ethnic, interfaith society. The list is endless. It is exhausting, depressing even, just to think about it. Easy to throw up our hands and say: 'The problems are so massive. What can I do? What's the use of getting involved at all?'

I am reminded of the story of the couple walking along sea shore after a storm. There were thousands of starfish, washed up and dying on the beach. The young woman bent down every few steps to pick one up and throw it back. Her companion said to her: 'There are millions of them! You can't possibly throw them all back in. What difference does that make?' The woman bent down and picked up a starfish. 'It makes a difference to this one' she said, and threw it in.



As we think of Christ's coming over Christmas, let us remind ourselves of why he came, and of his continuing mission, of which we are a part.

**'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.**

**He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'** *Luke 4:18,19*

A very happy Christmas to you all

Alan Hargrave



## Bishop's Lent Appeal 2008

Supporting the work of the Leprosy Mission in Karigiri, Diocese of Vellore, South India

More than 1400 people per day were diagnosed with leprosy in 2005. This disease is acquired through airborne infection and has been curable for the last 20 years. Yet the stigma remains, and many of those who could be cured do not come forward for treatment for fear of shame and rejection. Often treatment is started too late to prevent permanent damage to hands and feet. Leprosy is found today in South America, Africa and Asia in areas of poverty.

The Schieffelin Institute of Health, Research and Leprosy Centre, a Christian foundation in Karigiri in the Diocese of Vellore, was a pioneer of the Multi Drug Therapy which now transforms the lives of leprosy sufferers, and of innovative surgery on tendon transfer to restore some use to damaged limbs. This is echoed in their vision:

'Transforming lives especially those affected by leprosy through holistic health and healing in the spirit of Christ'.

With the headquarters of the Leprosy Mission (England, Wales, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) situated in this diocese in Orton Goldhay, it is particularly fitting that the Bishop's Lent Appeal 2008 will be to support their international work in our linked diocese of Vellore.

£35 will pay a nurse's salary for one month  
£35 will pay for sight saving eye surgery  
£90 will pay for hand surgery and correct disability  
£120 will pay for the medical care of one patient

The Appeal will be launched by the Bishop of Ely at Orton Goldhay on Thursday 31 January 2008. Leaflets and special labels for collecting jars will be sent out to parishes via PCC secretaries during December.



Further details  
from Dr Bridget  
Nichols in the  
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## NOTICEBOARD

### **Film night at the Cathedral- 'An Inconvenient Truth' Sunday 24 February 2008 at 6pm. £3 entrance donation**

**'The most terrifying film you will ever see... not to be missed, your mind will be changed in a nano-second' or 'just political propaganda and hype ?'**

A chance to see Al Gore's Oscar winning film on climate change.



Note that the High Court ruled that there are 9 specific errors in this film and that guidance notes from the Department for Children, Schools and Families should accompany showings in UK secondary schools to which the film has been sent.



### **Fairtrade Fortnight 25 Feb – 9 March 2008**

**Fairtrade Fortnight will be launched in central London on Sunday 24 February with a Fairtrade Fairground.**



Visit [www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk) to download a complete **Action Guide to Fairtrade Fortnight 2008**. It has lots of suggestions for events and activities to be held in schools, workplaces, places of worship etc. Giant inflatable bananas can be ordered along with a wide selection of posters, mugs, postcards etc. On 7 February the 'Fairtrade Everyday Cookbook' with a foreword by Sophie Grigson will be launched, plus 'Fighting the Banana Wars' an account by Fairtrade Foundation's Executive Director Harriet Lamb of the battles to establish fairtrade products in supermarkets. Full details of how to order are on the website.

- For a further exploration of supermarkets and their effect on British farmers, read "Fairtrade begins at home" a report by the Church of England available online at [www.cofe.anglican.org/info/ethical/policystatements/fairtrade.pdf](http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/ethical/policystatements/fairtrade.pdf)

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