



Seeing lives transformed

**PRISON FELLOWSHIP**

## Working together



Lesley Whelan –  
PF Trustee

There are times I feel overwhelmed and deeply burdened by the need I see in prisoners' lives.

Part of Paul's letter to the Ephesians (Eph 4:1-6) recently caught my attention. I particularly noticed it because I had been thinking about the work that Prison Fellowship volunteers do and their impact on prisoners and here is Paul, a prisoner himself, writing to a group of Christians. Of all the practical things he could have written about he chooses to talk about unity.

What a remarkable word unity is – *'oneness of mind or feeling, as among a number of persons; concord, harmony, or agreement.'* Conversely, the lack of unity amongst politicians and others who could make a profound difference in our prisons is depressing. We hear how politicians call for harsher sentences while others plead that sentences should be reduced in order to decrease overcrowding (I could think of better reasons for the numbers to be reduced). Churches cry out for victims to offer forgiveness but are then not always supportive when someone, trying to find their way after prison, turns up in their church.

In this cacophony of voices that scream for attention, how can Prison Fellowship's call for Restorative Justice be heard?

Maybe Paul's plea for unity needs to first be remembered by us, *"There is one Lord, one*

*faith, one baptism; one God and Father."* We are a diverse bunch of people with assorted skills. Whether we are a member of staff, a volunteer who prays or helps run Sycamore Tree, a Letter Writer, a financial supporter, a champion for Angel Tree, or a prison Chaplain, we are inspired by God to work together with a common desire to see Restorative Justice help heal wrecked lives. When we remember this and act together, in unity, what a powerful voice and movement we can be!

I believe that it is in the accumulation of all those small things each of us do together that we can make a profound difference in prisons and in prisoners' lives. We cannot change this world by ourselves. We need God's powerful guidance as well as each other's gifts, skills and talents working together in unity so that our voice can indeed be heard and make a difference for those who cannot, or do not know how to, speak up for themselves.

I am encouraged this month by the wonderful display of unity shown by prisoners working with our Angel Tree volunteers to bring some joy and hope to others. And then there is David's journey from volunteering with Prison Fellowship to Chaplaincy, where he continues to work in unity with our volunteers.

Katy's story of her international work is also exciting and heartwarming, showing that wherever we work together we achieve so much more. I hope you will be joining me

*Continued...*

when we have a chance to listen to more of her story at our March 2012 conference.

When I feel overwhelmed or burdened by the need I see in prisoners' lives, that is when I thank God for each of you. Please be

encouraged that your contribution is deeply valued and a vital part of our mission of 'seeing lives transformed'.

*Lesley Whelan – PF Trustee*

## Prison Fellowship to prison Chaplaincy

**David shares how he became involved with Prison Fellowship and how his work in prison has led to his position on the Chaplaincy team at HMP Wakefield:**

In 1995 I was appointed as Evangelism Deacon at my church. As I was looking into what we could potentially do, I was drawn to Matthew 25: 31-46. I realised that while most of us are very comfortable with feeding the hungry, clothing the poor and visiting the sick etc, when it comes to visiting prisoners we are less enthusiastic.

I then prayed earnestly and talked to the church as I felt that if we were to be Christ like then this included visiting prisoners. I shortly



contacted the Chaplaincy at HMP Wakefield to ask if it was possible for us to be visitors there.

Now HMP Wakefield is no run of the mill prison; it is a high-security prison for men and is a lifer centre. However, we were granted permission to go in and hold a worship service in the Chapel.

I prayerfully prepared the service and soon we were heading off; keyboard and songbooks to the fore. We all felt a little apprehensive on the journey there and our apprehension didn't subside when we arrived at the gate house. We headed through the security doors, one closing

behind before the other opened in front, and the walk to the Chapel took us through eight sets of locked iron gates, alongside high concrete walls topped with barbed wire and past barking Alsatians. However, the Chapel was bright and welcoming and we were warmly greeted. Soon, about twenty men came in all smiles and eager to shake our hands. At the end of the service we were encouraged by the men asking when we would return.

We continued to visit regularly for two years as a church group and then I received a call asking if we would take over PF Wakefield. I didn't hesitate in saying yes and in the fourteen years since then we have been involved in more than 432 services; 12 gospel choir concerts; 3 Emmaus courses; 2 Living with Loss courses and much much more!

In 2008 I felt called to train as a Reader in the Church of England and I started upon three years of study. As I approached the end of the course and prayed about where God wanted to use me, I felt lead to discuss it with the Coordinating Chaplain at the prison. He told me that my course qualified me to be a Prison Chaplain. Furthermore, he told me that there was a vacancy for a Sessional Chaplain.

And the result? Well, see for yourselves as the picture says it all! I have taken up the post of Christian Chaplain at HMP Wakefield and I have handed over the leadership of the PF group. Coincidentally, one of my first duties was to meet PF Wakefield to escort them to the Chapel! I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with PF and look forward to what ever God has in store for me here.

*David Greenwood-Haigh*

# PF Rwanda

**Prison Fellowship England and Wales is just one of over 118 PF organisations around the world. Each PF ministry is different depending on its country's needs, but together we are united in helping those affected by crime.**

**British graduate, Katy Lee, decided to take a voluntary placement with one of these ministries. During her studies she looked into how RJ has been used to heal Rwanda following the genocide in 1994 and came across the work of PF Rwanda (PFR). Upon completing her degree in international relations, Katy travelled from England to work with PFR. Here she tells us what she has been up to...**



*Katy with PFR youth*

I have been with PF Rwanda (PFR) for two months now and will be staying until the end of December 2011. Everything is going really well and I have been extremely busy! The main project I have been working on is creating a new Non Government Organisation as an offshoot of PFR.

We have over one hundred street children that PFR serve in the office three times a week.

We give them food, a place to wash, play, sing, dance and receive love and attention that they cannot get from home. PFR would like to create this children's group as a separate entity called the Association for the Assistance of Children, and, whilst it will eventually stand alone as its own charity, for the time-being it still falls under the PFR banner and is supported by some other groups that know PFR well.

I am currently creating a website ([www.associationfortheassistanceofchildrenword press.com](http://www.associationfortheassistanceofchildrenwordpress.com)) and getting a child sponsorship programme off the ground. I am also in contact with an architect in the UK who is willing to design a care-home for the children pro-bono, and I am contacting UK university RAG (raise and give) groups to raise money for this project (it is going to cost about £90,000 so it will definitely be a long-term project!)

If that wasn't enough there are also a couple of other projects going on! We have recently created a partnership between a farming co-operative in one of the reconciliation villages and the UK business 'The Co-operative'. Furthermore, we have partnered with a US wholesaler who will buy goods from our women's handicraft co-operative and help us to brainstorm new ideas.

My time here has been truly inspirational and having the opportunity to witness and participate in the healing of a nation has been incredibly rewarding. The staff of PFR are one of the most welcoming groups of people I have ever met, and every day at the office is filled with laughter. There have of course been challenges; as a small NGO PFR must work hard to promote their cause and to implement the many projects they undertake. However, just spending an afternoon with the children at the office makes you realise that it is all worthwhile. The youth of this beautiful country, thanks to organisations like PFR, can now look forward to a peaceful and prosperous future. It is wonderful to be able to make a contribution to this.

Katy will be attending our conference in March 2012 in order to share more about her time of volunteering with PF Rwanda, but to find out more about the PFR in the meantime please visit: [www.pfrwanda.org](http://www.pfrwanda.org)

# Prisoners support Angel Tree

A concert to launch this year's Angel Tree was recently held at HMP Featherstone. The concert was arranged by the prison Chaplain, Roger Howarth, and was performed entirely by prisoners. The event was a great success but there was one thing that made it extra special. To the surprise of PF volunteers and the Chaplaincy team, many prisoners in the audience came together to pledge a grand total of £140 towards the Angel Tree programme. Roger said: "I was flabbergasted at the response from the lads in the audience. Considering they only get £10 a week it was amazing to see them donate towards Angel Tree. The guys in the band also did a fantastic job."

**To hear of prisoners uniting with us in this way to support Angel Tree is encouraging and shows how valued the programme is to parents in prison. Please pray for all volunteers who are currently organising Angel Tree 2011, and pray that the uptake this year will be the highest yet.**

**Manchester** – 23rd November, 2.00pm – 4.00pm  
St Cuthberts Church, Oldham Road, Manchester, M40 7AQ

**Coventry** – 28th November 2011, 7:30pm – 9:30pm  
Meredith Road Baptist Church, Coventry, CV2 5JH

**London** – 8th December, 10.30am – 12.30pm  
77 Great Peter Street, Westminster, London, SW1P 2EZ

Please RSVP to Nicola Davey if you are interested in attending:  
**(T)** 020 7799 2500 **(E)** nicoladavey@prisonfellowship.org.uk

## Letter Writing Training



## PF Conference 2012

The 2012 Prison Fellowship conference will take place between **9th - 11th March 2012** at The Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick. Our theme is, 'Be strong and courageous - making extraordinary things happen' and we would love you to join us for a weekend full of inspiring testimonies, encouraging teaching and worship, and a variety of workshops.

The cost of the weekend will be **£125** if booked before **30th November 2011** (£150 thereafter) and this price includes meals and accommodation (Friday afternoon – Sunday lunchtime) and a delegate pack.

If individuals in your PF group are unable to meet the cost of the conference, please consider sending a representative from your

group by splitting the cost amongst your members. It would be fantastic if at least one person from each PF group could attend.

For more information or to book your place please contact:

**(T)** 020 7799 2500

**(E)** sashachipperfield@prisonfellowship.org.uk

### Confirmed Speakers:

Alexander Mclean  
*Director of African Prisons Project*

Bishop Humphrey Southern  
*Bishop of Repton*

Ian Telfer  
*Governor of HMP Kingston*

Prison Fellowship England and Wales, Po Box 68226, London, SW1P 9WR  
**(T) 020 7799 2500 (E) info@prisonfellowship.org.uk**