

Dear brothers and sisters,

The news of January 2010 has contained many events, national and worldwide, that have got people talking, but in the space I have here, I'll mention just two. The devastating earthquake in Haiti wreaked appalling physical damage upon a nation that was already blighted by many evils – economic, political, social...the list could go on. The death toll is incalculably high and continues to rise, despite incredible individual instances of survival. The second incident is much closer to home, and although it resulted in no actual loss of life, it was in many ways no less distressing. At Edlington in South Yorkshire, two boys aged nine and eleven were subjected to ninety minutes of torture and humiliation by a pair of brothers about the same age.

Both events have, of course, been swamped by intensive media coverage. One of the features of our electronic age, in which news from every corner of the world is so instantly available, is that we cannot insulate ourselves from horrors of this kind. There has been no lack of editorial comment and no shortage of condemnation: the word 'toxic' has been widely used in a sinister new way to describe the domestic life of the two boys involved in the Edlington attack.

But however widely we scan the global and national media for reports and editorials, we will struggle to find analyses of these events that really get to the heart of the matter. In actual fact there is a link between these two events. Christians with a Biblical world-view are uniquely able to understand that the earth, with its earthquakes, famines, floods and other catastrophes, is under the curse that was pronounced by God when man fell from his original righteousness. Christians can also see that the premeditated sadistic attack in Edlington is a symptom of human sin, just as much as the attack that Cain mounted upon Abel.

The Bible is always contemporary and relevant. It describes things the way they are. Dangerous faults in the earth's crust, and no less dangerous faults in the human heart, are what the Bible teaches us to expect. The social, political or environmental expert who looks for a 'solution' to these problems outside the Bible will always end up frustrated. It is to the Creator and Redeemer alone that we are forced to look. At the very centre of the Bible we are told 'It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man (Psalm 118:8)'. Is that where *you* are going for refuge?

Your brother in the Lord Jesus,

Paul Yeulett

Missionary update

From Geoff and Shirley Townsend, Albania:

"We are just back from a short visit to Korca. It was a joy to stay with Niko and Monda and have some time re-connecting and sharing!! The "Canadian embassy" as my old room is still called, was open to visitors! Niko is doing very well following his operation and active in ministry. They have returned from Skopje and are living in Korca but not stopping serving the Lord. We have just heard that AEM is continuing to support them in the work. They will be serving in village evangelism in the Korca area as well as regular visits to Skopje to continue building relationships there. They both have such servant hearts! The two weeks before and after Christmas were busy times with evangelism with calendars and newspapers as well as the special meetings/activities. We were personally really encouraged by the openness we found as we went out. One lady came to us on the street shortly after receiving a calendar and said that this was the first one like this she had received with God's word and she assured us that she will put this one up in her home and not another. Another man in the

market area who has a shop (grinding coffee) has assured us that he has kept every Jehona paper and re-reads them! He eagerly waits for each issue. We took him also two books for him to read. Pray that this seed sown will bear fruit in due time. Pray for that!!

"The Christmas morning meeting went really well with many people coming. It was standing room only!! The programme was very well organised and a clear message given. The John Blanchard seminar in Tirana on the 20th December went very well with over 400 there. The booklet "Why on earth did Jesus come?" has been widely distributed free of charge in Albania. Geoff had the opportunity the next morning to spend time with John discussing the production of his books in Albania. We are involved in this side of the literature work in partnership with Will Niven and John Blanchard.

"Here in Gjirokaster the meetings are back to the regular schedule following the holiday period. Pray for the student work, which is moving slowly. At the Christmas meeting in the university a mature believer shared this comment with us ... "I am shocked at the apathy of the students and the total disinterest." This seems to be the case in general. We did lose a large number of believers last year so it was a new start in many ways. Pray for Alda and the leadership team with her to find new, creative ways to reach out with the gospel to students. "We are looking ahead into this new year with expectation of what God will do. Pray that we will be open to and flexible in the Lord's plans for us."

From Cyprus - Andrew, Daphne, James and Rachel Swanson:

Andrew has had flu which developed into bronchitis and he is still struggling. Please pray for his return to good health and strength. He was hoping to be able to preach again on 31st January, the 25th anniversary of their arrival in Cyprus. James' work permit is nearly ready and then Rachel will be granted a residence permit as the wife of a worker in the country. Andrew and Daphne have put in for the renewal of their permits. Although in the past these have always been granted, it is not something that can be guaranteed, so please remember this in prayer.

Student seminars are planned for 2nd-3rd of the month when Pastor Jeremy Walker hopes to be in Cyprus to address them. Please pray for a time of blessing for these students, most of whom have had no systematic teaching from God's Word.

James is to be officially recognised as pastor of the church in May. Andrew will continue to work alongside him for a while. Andrew and Daphne intend to continue living in Cyprus for as long as their health permits. They hope they may be able to spend time encouraging those Christians they know in Turkey. Please pray that this change in the church will go smoothly and that James, Rachel and family will settle well.

From Heather Cox, Bangkok, Thailand:

Heather is knowing a period of uncertainty regarding her work in Bangkok. She is to be working at the OMF Bangkok Home for three weeks of every month doing computer work and interacting with guests and staff but is seeking the Lord's guidance regarding whether her nursing skills should or could be used in Thailand. Language study is still proving to be a struggle for her so she covets prayer for that. Her UK flat is still without tenants, too. Heather continues to praise God for His care and provision for her and asks that her prayer supporters reiterate that praise to the Lord.

Emmanuel and Esther Durand, UFM Worldwide, France

On Wednesday 10th, Emmanuel is to address the midweek meeting regarding work that he, Esther and their two little boys are called to in the Guingamp area of Brittany. They have in

the recent past been working with international students in Cardiff and some may remember that Emmanuel took our services in August 2007. Esther is Ruth Yeulett's youngest sister.

Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

James 2:15-17