

# Happy New Year From Loughborough

January 5th 2010



Happy New Year may 2010 be all that you would wish for it to be.

As 2009 drew to a close it seemed all the news I received was bad news. We have spent much time in prayer for friends and brethren who are suffering serious illnesses that have come upon them.

The father of Mick Townsend passed away and I was asked to conduct the funeral. Mick's father had not accepted Christ and it was all Mick prayed for and tried to encourage his father to do over the last weeks of his dad's illness. So this was a very challenging time for him.

Our thoughts and prayers were with Trevor Ralph of Birmingham as his wife Irene passed away. In fact I received the news of her death on the Saturday and a Christmas card from her and Trevor arrived for me on Monday, quite a surreal moment. I have known both of them for many years and Trevor would always visit camp and help out. His one comfort is that she died in Christ.

## John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

## John 16:33 (KJV)

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

I attended the funeral of the father of one of our Gateway Club members between Christmas and the New Year a very sad event. He was in his 70's and had been ill for some time but always a very cheerful and friendly man. We hope at the club to help be a comfort to his son and wife.

Florence Jones who with her husband left the church many years ago also passed away. Known mainly to older members here many went and took the opportunity to encourage the children (who are middle aged) to return and visit. We hope this will be the first step in bringing them back to the Lord and only wish the parents would have done so.

## Psalms 1:24

Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD.

One of the young girls of our congregation is struggling with mental illness and has been trying to take her own life. Nothing about her would make you think there would be any reason for her to reach such depths however the state of her mind is such that she needs round the clock help. We feel so helpless in regard to being able to physically do anything to help but we call upon God in prayer regularly on her behalf.

So this was not the happiest December I can remember.



The encouraging times have been when we have sung in retirement homes with our young people. I was asked by another church group in town to be the speaker at a meeting they had organised at a retirement complex. So one week I was the oldest with our pre-teens and teens singing in a home the next week I was the youngest person amongst the group singing and giving a lesson in a home.



We hosted what we call our Winter Wonderland on Sunday 21st. We have many visitors come along to this for a meal, to have the children make presentations of drama, to sing together and hear a message. Family of members who do not attend our meetings, nor really want to know much about the gospel will come to this—why the difference? We don't know but we will keep doing it. I narrated our way through singing songs and having Bible readings that gave the story of Christ.



Our New Year Eve party was also a tremendous success. Many members were in attendance and again we had family and friends join us. This year we had a talent show where members could let us see them in a different light. "Single Ladies" was the name of one group who sang. "Hill's R Loud" was a hastily put together band who sang a song in tribute to the older members of the congregation. Paddy Boyns and his wife June joined us and we even managed to get him to do some of his famous magic tricks. Along with good food and games it made for a great way to see in the New Year. Jason Hardy who was immersed a number of years ago and would come along with his brother also came along with his girlfriend. He returned on Sunday and we are talking about how things have been and what he has learnt about life away from Christ and the church. I am hopeful we will see him return fully to the fold.



### **Proverbs 3:5-6**

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."

Thank you so much for your help which has enabled me to be involved with so many people and the various aspects of their lives. Not always easy or happy but always trying to point them to the cross. Thank you for your financial help and for your prayers and encouragement. I pray we will continue to serve God throughout this New Year in ways that will please him and increase His Kingdom.

Yours in Christ,

Mark

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