

Secretary's Report April 2007

This year has been a year of consolidation where we have reviewed and updated our help line support and published our *Guidelines for Support*; given consideration to our name and publicity material and have carefully considered our position in relation to ecclesias and the support we offer.

We are currently making plans to "relaunch" the CCG to the brotherhood later this year.

We continue to provide support to Ecclesias: their pastoral committees and youth leaders through seminars, access to information, and the *Child Protection Guidelines*.

We are supporting brothers and sisters through the prayer line, conference, seminars and workshops and our regular fellowship weekends and holidays.

Following our strategy day last year and your input at recent AGM workshops we have reviewed our Help lines and First Contact support; we are working on the quality and presentation of our publications; and we are developing the area of support for young people.

In March 2007, Sue and I were privileged to be able to spend a few days with key members of the Australian New South Wales Caring Support Service when we shared information, experiences and resources. Our current plans for Awareness Days were reinforced by their success in this development.

The committee is planning to arrange Awareness Days in different areas of the UK on subjects Marriage enrichment, Addiction, Caring for the elderly, mental health and debt and finance. We are also considering a support day for sisters entitled "Women at the Well"

We are seeking support from our members actively to represent us in their own ecclesias and to help us organise these activities.

The Committee

The full committee is Jean and Bob Burr, Sue and Andrew Collinge, Norman Fitchett, Margaret Howarth, Margaret Monk, Mike Newbold, Janet and Lance Priest, Mary and Alan Proctor, Natalie and Peter Simpson and Andrew and Nicola Smith.

We welcome brother Andrew Smith to the committee. With Nicola their skills in graphic design are evident in our last conference publications.

We held eight committee meetings in the last year with a number of additional subcommittees covering working with young people, the support meetings and conference planning.

Support for young people is of particular interest to us and brother Peter and sister Natalie Simpson and brother Andrew and sister Nicola Smith organised a seminar at West Birmingham ecclesia entitled *Journeys06 - Following Christ Day by Day* covering Communication in relationships, practical Christian living and feeling lonely.

Members

We have 272 members, 88 with professional qualifications, in 123 ecclesias. A "member" is someone who has completed a confidentiality statement offering their help, which includes skilled professional assistance, caring and support from personal experience, support of the prayer line and - just being available to help in any way.

First Contact Phone Calls

Our national local call charge Help Line is manned by a rota of skilled brothers and sisters. Its aim is to complement the work of ecclesias providing confidential support and information.

Comments from our first contacts most frequently made are "the caller just needed someone to talk to in confidence," "just the sharing of the problem is a help", and "knowing there is someone there."

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	This year	Last year	Previous year
Number of first time calls received (including 11 Emails)	89	92	111
Types of calls as a percentage			
Marriage and relationships	21%	20%	14%
Families and children	18	12	11
Health and mental illness	11	14	13
Depression and Loneliness	12	20	17
Financial and Debt	10	8	5
Bereavement	6	6	4
Drug and Alcohol abuse	6	4	6
Ecclesial problems	4	8	7
Legal problems , stress, employment	12	8	22

In addition to these new calls, there are the repeat, follow up and ongoing calls.

Thanks to sister Mary Proctor for her detailed and thorough work on maintaining the database.

Once again, CCG details and National Help Line number have been printed in the ALS Diary.

In matters of individuals with financial problems we have continued to work with the Christadelphian Benevolent Fund and we appreciate their co-operation.

The Regions

A support day on the subject of Bereavement was held on June 3 2006 at Genfall House Cheltenham offering one to one skilled support. This was organised by South West committee.

Fellowship Weekends

South West Committee organised a weekend at Glenfall House, Cheltenham; East Midlands organised one at Shallowford House near Stafford and a Fellowship Holiday week based at the Wedgwood Memorial College, Staffordshire.

The committee is very appreciative of the hard work and commitment of brothers and sisters involved in this work.

Individual reports are available with booking forms.

All newly baptised brothers and sisters receive an information pack via the ecclesia recording brother. Thanks to Hilary Knight for this work.

Conference 2006

Held at the University of Derby on 14th October 2006, This year we changed the direction and structure of conference to a more practical theme. The title was "When Life Hurts" and there were eleven individual seminars led by skilled brothers and sisters dealing with specific subjects. 130 attended and the programme subjects and changed times were very well received.

Our Conference this year will again be at Derby University on October 13th God willing with the theme "Let's communicate" with individual seminars covering a variety of topics.

Publications

There has been a steady demand for the booklets on "Building a Marriage Booklet", "Supporting the Aged" and "Dealing with Depression".

We have had a newsletter and conference and seminar invitations professionally prepared and printed.

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Our Web site at www.chcg.org.uk is receiving an average of 180 visits a month and this report is available for downloading along with other literature and further information. We have included links to other web sites offering specific support in areas of need.

We are continuing to build up a resource database of articles and publications on subjects relative to Care including Internet Links.

We appreciate the assistance of the *Christadelphian Magazine* and the *Way Ahead Magazine* for publishing our notices and Simon Hodgson's Directory Email facility for advertising our activities.

And Finally...

As most of what is done is in confidence between callers, first and second contacts, and on the Prayer line, we only see the outline and structure of the CCG - and that is how it should be. The organisation is there to ensure that the caring part is able to proceed as effectively as possible.

On behalf of the Committee and all those brothers and sisters who have benefited so greatly from this work, we should like to thank everyone involved - whether in our promoted activities or listening at the end of a telephone or working behind the scenes. Without you, there would be no Christadelphian Care Group.

Even though you may not be called upon directly to help, your support in other ways is invaluable to us all. Your support at our activities and your willingness to tell others about the Care Group are helping us to become better known and more widely accepted in the brotherhood.

We value your suggestions and ideas, offers of help, attendance and feedback at CCG days. Most of all we thank you for being the Care Group, in responding to others with the eyes and ears of compassion, and in showing the love of Christ to those in need.

May our Heavenly Father continue to bless and guide the work of the CCG until Christ returns to wipe away all tears.

May the Lord bless you and keep you in His loving care.

Andrew and Sue Collinge

on behalf of the Committee.

Dates for your Diaries: Conference 13th October 2007, Development Day 12th April 2008 (provisional) God willing.