

The Way Newsletter - January 2005

So a new year is upon us and already we are 1/12th of the way through it! So did you indulge at Christmas? Are you in the now well recognised season: post Christmas blues? Are you now regretting that extra mince-pie or extra helping of Christmas pud?! What ever made us think that that extra helping would make us happy anyway? Did you make any resolutions? Are you still keeping them? One of mine was to run in the Reading half marathon, for which I am currently madly training. Will you support me financially? I am running to support the work of ISAAC (International Substance Abuse and Addiction Coalition) as they provide education and training in addiction, for those particularly in the third world.

How do you measure success? What are your guidelines? What could be a huge step for one person like cutting down their drinking or smoking might be a small step for someone else. Jeremiah in the Bible was a success. Not in the eyes of his people maybe. They probably saw him as a failure. He was presumably unpopular, had few friends, and his nation had been carted off into captivity. In God eyes he was a success however. Read the book - very interesting! Why do we need to worry what man says about us. It's only what God thinks of us that will have eternal significance.

In the news

The rumbling debate around the legalisation of drugs continues.

Interestingly enough on a recent debate on BBC tv one of the supporters actually said that this will increase drug use. Of course we knew that - but to actually hear it! Therefore naturally more people will become addicted. Causing not only harm to themselves and those around them, but a drain on their work place, health service, police and so on. We have the facts: the two most popular legal drugs; alcohol and tobacco cause the most deaths. Are we willing to just accept this without putting up a fight.

At the beginning of the first world war 'David Lloyd George was said to have remarked that Britain faced two enemies, the Kaiser and alcohol, and of the two he feared alcohol the most.' anon

Sadly the evidence of drug abuse is all around us: according to the annual report by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA): The UK has the worst drug abuse record in Europe. This relates to cocaine, ecstasy and amphetamine use. Sadly cannabis use (what we made acceptable last year) is on the rapid increase: 4 in 10 of 15 year old boys said they had used the drug, while 10% of these admitted to being heavy (more than 40x/year) users.* What have we done? As alcohol firms, such as UK largest brewer Scottish and Newcastle, plan to put health warnings on their drink bottles; the staggering reality is that 12 million(almost 1/4) of adults use alcohol as a crutch, according to Doctor Riccio at the Priory Hospital.* Talk about shutting the gate after the horse has bolted! It's quietly happening all around us and we haven't even noticed.

On a personal note

Apart from pounding the streets of Reading (are you going to sponsor me??) I am settling into my degree in theology at Moorlands College, near Bournemouth. Though I am quite enjoying (some of) it! obviously it involves a certain amount of sacrifice. I would appreciate and value your prayers and support. Naturally the extra workload means sacrifices in other areas - like here!

* Addiction Treatment Today Jan/Feb 2005 vol 16 No 92

We always appreciate and value your comments and feedback

C. of R.: Rev. Ron Ross (USA) Major Brian & Margaret Watters (Australia) Mark & Lara Shipperlee, Chris Cane (UK)