



news

Our role is to...

- provide a central point of contact for information on Jesus Christ
- respond to each enquiry individually, in confidence and free of charge
- enable and encourage enquirers to take further steps of faith.

...on behalf of the churches

- Working in partnership with local churches, the denominations and mission agencies.
- An Agency of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.
- A registered charity no. 297393.

People contact us

by freepost, email or text through:

websites	leaflets
postcards	posters
booklets	radio
newspapers	DVDs

We send, free of charge

A personal letter with high quality materials that explain the story and significance of Jesus Christ.

Steps of faith

Help and ideas for the next step:

- prayer offered
- questions answered
- local Alpha or other Christian course
- telephone helpline
- contact with a local Christian
- websites and books

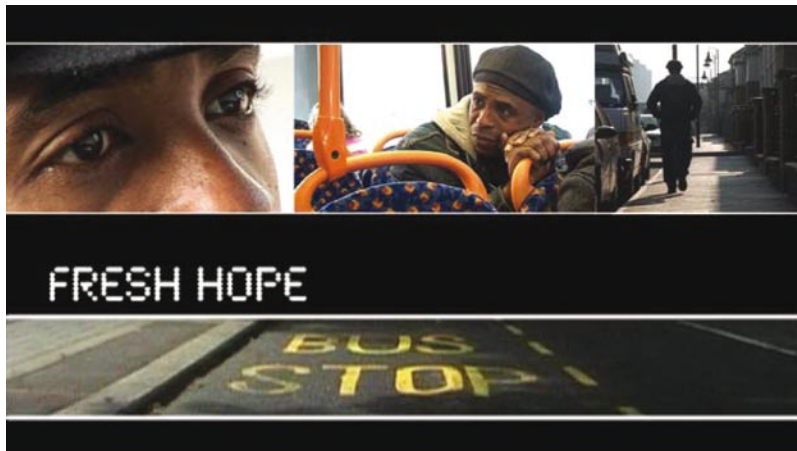
in partnership with other organisations.

Success!

More than 44,250 people have contacted the Christian Enquiry Agency so far.

Many are those who don't seem to connect with church, such as men aged 20-40.

Hopeinfo.co.uk: faith conversations for 2008



A still from the opening sequence of *Fresh Hope*, the first of five films exploring what it means to live hopefully today.

BUILDING ON THE VISION of the project's founders, the Christian Enquiry Agency has teamed up with Church Army and Deo Gloria to create a credible, contemporary public face for Hope 2008 (see www.Hope08.com). Hopeinfo.co.uk is an innovative extension to the Agency's customary enquiry and contact service, and has the enthusiastic blessing of the Hope 2008 leadership team.

At its heart is a website featuring five short films, each one released to coincide with one of five high-points of the Hope '08 campaign. The films, produced by WateringCanMedia, encourage people to explore different aspects of hope and to respond to what they've seen. Site users are invited to submit their reactions to the films, tell their own stories, and send in pictures and messages of hope. They can even submit films they've made via the YouTube website (www.youtube.com/hopeinfo).

The HopeInfo site also offers a poem about Jesus and hope, and the chance to develop more hopefulness through a series of weekly emails. The site has a rich spread of culturally-sensitive content designed to engage people, whatever their background, who have little or no contact with the church. There are also links to other resources such as Scripture

HOPE info.co.uk

Union's innovative Wise Traveller series and rejesus.co.uk/hope.

David Coleman, communications manager, Church Army says "Hopeinfo.co.uk is very much about starting where most people are and not making assumptions about prior knowledge about the Christian faith. It's about listening as much as telling.

"We're encouraging local churches and groups doing Hope '08 activities in the community to enhance the effectiveness of their own outreach by referring to Hopeinfo.co.uk in their publicity materials" he says, "And if they register with us, we can also refer enquirers back to them." (See christianity.org.uk/hope)

“HOPE '08 is so grateful to the Christian Enquiry Agency and to Church Army for providing a quality, credible site. We can, with confidence, direct people to this site.” Steve Clifford, Chair of Hope '08.



The buzz gets going

THE UK HAS around 3000 homes located in a Hope Street. To help get the Hopeinfo.co.uk project under way, all these households have been contacted, inviting their members to think about what makes people

hopeful. We've asked them to share their 2008 hopes, for themselves, their families or communities, by sending in photos, short films, drawings, poems, or paintings – in fact, any creative expression.



Unlocking some secrets of hope

LIFE COACH Bruce Stanley, who is also co-editor of rejesus.co.uk, is contributing a module to the website that helps people develop a more hopeful attitude to life and to begin to explore its spiritual side. Studies have shown that those with high hopes have a longer life span, are healthier, deal with setbacks quicker and are more creative. It is also evident that for many people a hopeful attitude does not come naturally – but it can be learnt.

Bruce's programme focuses on understanding how our belief systems affect the way we respond to events and circumstances, rather than starting with looking at the resulting behaviour. After assessing their level of hopefulness by taking the *Hope Test*, visitors receive weekly emails that combine Scripture with psychological insights to help them grow in their understanding of themselves, their beliefs, and the way they interpret events.

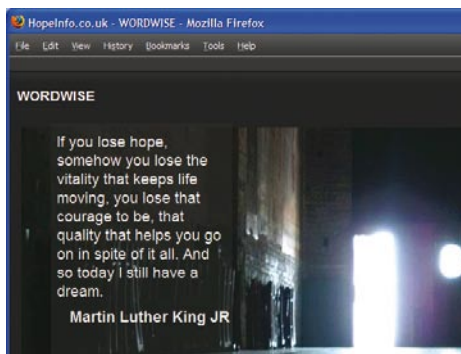
Wise words on hope

THERE ARE MANY perspectives on hope, from the Christian hope articulated by the apostle Paul in his magnificent vision of the mortal being replaced

by the immortal, to the feisty or feint hopes of people just getting through daily life. Wordwise presents pithy ideas about living in hope that thoughtful people

(Christian or otherwise) have expressed over the years.

On the same page, site users can sign up to receive weekly emails containing further insights into hope written from the perspective of a follower of Jesus.



Five films set the scene

CENTRAL TO THE Hopeinfo.co.uk website are five short films dealing with different aspects of hope. At an early stage, the CEA-Church Army partnership felt that a visual medium would be the best place to engage the public. But, with the success of the idea depending on the quality of the films' message, the search was on for the right production company. David Coleman, Church Army, says "We soon tracked down Nick Turner and Ben Harvey of WateringCanMedia, whose client list includes Audi, O2, Vodafone,

Channel Four, and Faithworks. Nick and Ben readily became committed to the project, and even started to broaden our vision of what could be achieved."

The first film, launched on 1 December, features people voicing their hopes, some profound, some simple, in the context of a bus journey. The films will also be showing on YouTube, Premier.TV, and will be broadcast in Second Life, a virtual alternative world in cyberspace. The films are jointly funded by CEA, Church Army and Deo Gloria.

Provoking a reaction

THE WHOLE POINT of Hope 'o8 and HopeInfo.co.uk is to provoke a dialogue, and so the website needs to provide space for visitors to respond. The Reaction page does just that – it's a place to ask questions, tell stories, submit

pictures and to have conversations about living hopefully.

There are also polls, where people can see how their responses to (sometimes tricky) questions about what it means to live in hope match up with others' answers.



A journey into deeper hope

SO WHERE DOES THIS all lead? Well, a central objective of the project is of course to encourage and enable people to take next steps of faith. As well as direct contact with the Christian Enquiry Agency and services it provides, such as contact with a local Christian, there are a number of

ways users can go deeper. Visits to sites such as Scripture Union's excellent Wise Traveller site and rejesus.co.uk are recommended, and visitors to the site can request a free Hope Pack so they can continue exploring 'off line'. The same pack is being sent to all Hope 2008 enquirers.

Jude speaks to the broken, the hopeless and those left behind

JUDE SIMPSON is a unique writer, entertainer, and slam poet. If, like us, you're not sure what the latter means, read on. Slamming is competitive poetry with an emphasis on live performance and warmth of audience response.

Jude has written a new poem on the theme of hope for the Hopeinfo.co.uk website. Those familiar with Jude's work (she regularly appears at the Edinburgh Fringe and poetry events around the country) know how she can use her 'energetic word-juggling' to plumb depths



of truth and reality, and very likely simultaneously have your sides splitting.

Gareth Squire, director of the Christian Enquiry Agency said: "Jude has added another dimension to the site with this work. She speaks from her heart, but this is not introverted musing. Jude reaches out, urgently, to the broken and the messed up. She expresses the heart of Jesus here and it's extremely powerful. We're very grateful to her, and to WateringCanMedia who have filmed Jude performing the poem specially for the site. Both have contributed their work on this free of charge.

Connecting with tourists in places of worship

LIFEWORDS have developed a new range of contact cards designed primarily for the increasing number of tourists visiting the UK's historic cathedrals and churches. Four cards carry prayers for direction, rest, faith and peace, and provide opportunity to enquire further about the Christian faith using a CEA-addressed tear-off section.

According to Jeremy Williams at Lifeworlds, the project started with "some in-depth research into how many people are visiting places of worship, why they do so, and their responses to the buildings when they're there".

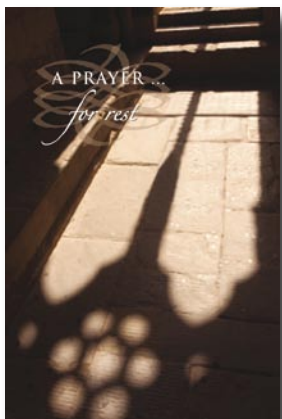
Tourism accounts for the lowest proportion of visits by non-regular churchgoers (many more visit to go to weddings and funerals for instance), nevertheless millions of tourists visit annually.

Some buildings are visited more than others. The main cathedrals are favourites, while other places have become celebrities as a result of associations with events or stories. At Scotland's Rosslyn Chapel, visits jumped from 9,500 a year to 117,000 after being named in the Da Vinci Code film as the resting place for the Holy Grail – prompting the minister

to resign from what he said had become a 'Disneyland' for Da Vinci Code fans.

Tourist visits to churches are, in the main, motivated by an interest in history and architecture.

"However," Jeremy says, "when asked what factors are actually important about churches, visitors speak about spaces to reflect, beauty, or a chance to light a candle and pray. This is where these cards are designed to connect, and provide a sensitive encouragement for exploring faith further." More details about the cards are at www.lifeworlds.info/uk (or call 020 7730 2155).



Looking at, but then beyond the architecture...

The Agency is continually sending materials to enquirers. Here are some comments received in response.

"my daily strength"

"Brilliant, awesome, wonderful, encouraging really my daily strength." 'A' from Enfield responded to *Daily Strength* offer in *Challenge* newspaper.

"enjoyed reading"

"I am happy for those people that have found (Jesus). I enjoyed reading about their encounters." 'D' from Winchester responded to the *Passion of the Christ* prison cards and received *More to Life* magazine.

"getting confused"

"I was getting confused with fact/fiction – the booklet helped immensely – thank you." 'J' from Surrey responded to *Cracking the Da Vinci Code* booklet.

"I need Jesus"

"I am just realizing I need Jesus in my life. I know there is more to life than just wealth and possessions." 'P' from W Midlands commenting on *John's Gospel* following the *Spirit of Life* exhibition.

"feeling depressed"

"Extremely helpful, was feeling depressed and down. However, the film on Jesus gave me hope in world of so much despair." 'C' from London responded to the *So who is this Jesus?* DVD and *No Ordinary Man* booklet.

"finding faith"

"Very useful, I will enjoy my journey to finding faith." 'S' from London responded to *No Ordinary Man* booklet.

Contact with a local Christian is arranged mainly through Contact for Christ and also the Catholic Enquiry Office and Prison Fellowship.

/we want to help the Christian Enquiry Agency communicate the Christian faith imaginatively:

Here is a gift of £75 £50 £25 £
(payable to Christian Enquiry Agency)

/we wish to give regularly, please send details
(other)

I want the government to add to my gift!
Please treat the enclosed gift as Gift Aid. I pay tax in the UK on my income/pension or capital gains at least equal to the tax reclaimed on this gift. Date: day month year

Keep me informed about your developing work

Send me details of creative outreach materials

Name and address PLEASE WRITE IN BLOCK CAPITALS

Name:

Street:

Town:

County:

Postcode:

Email:

Some thoughts from the 'back room'

It's been just over a year now since the Ven Robert Freeman became chair of Christian Enquiry Agency. We asked him about the job and started with what drew him to it: "I'm passionate about finding ways in which people not connected with church can hear about the Gospel, and was impressed by the creative and intriguing way the Agency works. I was struck, too, by its interdenominational reach – it's important that we do jobs right, but also so important that we do them together."

Robert sees his role very much as doing unglamorous 'back room work': "I want to help CEA do its job, not in a slick way, but accessibly, effectively, and in diverse ways. And I want to help ensure that there is the prayer and finance to back it up. I'm also chair of rejesus.co.uk, which shares a roughly overlapping role. It's my job to help to make sure the two organisations are complimentary."

On the objectives of the Agency, Robert asserts that in communicating the message of

Jesus, "nothing is better than face to face communication." However, he says, "there is a need in our individualised society to provide those who don't have a Christian friend at work or elsewhere with alternative ways to explore faith."



Robert Freeman: the CEA "has a prophetic advocacy role to remind the church that our business is always making 'Jesus known!'"

We are required in evangelism to start where people are, and the reality is that we have a society that emphasises consumer-based choices, the individual and private

belief. And this is where the Agency is focused."

What would he identify as challenges for the future of the Agency? "CEA is traditionally print-based," he says, "and nothing can beat the piece of literature that you can put in your pocket. But we must explore the growing digital media opportunities. At the same time, we have to diversify our approach. Challenging people with the Four Spiritual Laws may be okay for some, but encouraging people to take some steps on a spiritual journey towards Jesus will probably connect better in our contemporary culture."

"Our big challenge is the same challenge that the church has: to keep evangelism at the centre of our being, as a core priority. There is always the danger of drifting from the original passion." Robert notes that some churches do evangelism "now and then" rather than *be* evangelism. The Agency, he says, "has a prophetic advocacy role to remind the church that our main business is always 'making Jesus known'."

rejesus.co.uk wins at first ever Christian blog awards

rejesus.co.uk won "most successful evangelistic blog" at Premier's recent Christian Blog Awards. The rejesus blog is staffed by five volunteer bloggers from around the country, who share their personal perspectives on Christian faith and how it works itself out in their daily lives.

Poppy, one of the rejesus.co.uk blog contributors, described the impact this had made: "Jesus said 'go' and we have responded by going out into cyberspace and sharing our lives and thoughts with the world on-line. And judging by the thousands of people that visit the blog each month,



those thoughts really seem to be resonating with people."

Commenting on this latest award, the Venerable Robert Freeman, chair of rejesus.co.uk, said: "We are truly excited by this latest commendation for the site. It is a real encouragement for us and an endorsement of our efforts to continue to stretch our thinking to find new ways to communicate Christian faith effectively."

Please pray each week for:

- those who enquire about Jesus
- new opportunities to reach people
- the finance needed.

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