

## December 2009

This will be our final prayer e-mail of 2009. We are thankful to God for the way that he has led us through 2009 in this work, and excited to see what 2010 will hold. Thank you for your faithful support and encouragement during the year.

We are aware that the epidemic of violence against women continues unabated in so many countries around the world. Please pray over the Christmas period for people, situations and countries that are particularly on your heart. But we are also encouraged by the growing sense in both secular and Christian organisations that such violence is intolerable and should be opposed and ended. Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary General of the UN, is giving strong personal leadership on the UN's Unite to end VAW campaign. Please pray for him. There were numerous events around the International Day for the Elimination of VAW on 25 November, including a photo exhibition on the role of men in ending VAW at the UK government's Department for International Development.

Closer to home, the meeting on 13 October here at Tearfund gave us a strong mandate and momentum to take the work forward with a view to launching a new alliance in 2010. Tearfund has agreed to "incubate" the work here at the offices in Teddington. We are hugely encouraged by having Natalie Collins coming to work with us one day a week. She is organising a conference in Essex on 26 June 2010 on engaging Christians in ending domestic abuse. This will provide an opportunity to present our work to a wider community, and possibly to launch the alliance publicly. On 25 November we spoke in Staff Prayers at Tearfund, handed out white ribbons to the men and held a lunch time session to highlight the issues. We continue to get strong personal and prayer support from staff colleagues here.

Our most urgent prayers over Christmas are for wisdom as to how to go forward. Mandy and Peter and his wife, Stella, will be praying about Mandy's and Peter's future roles in the work. Please support us in praying that God will make this clear. Linked to this, we are starting to look for potential funding for this work. Please pray that God will provide the necessary resources, and also that we will discern what is genuinely required and be open to whatever strategy God has to take this work forward.

We have had some great sessions with our creative teams here in Tearfund. They have confirmed the strength of the approach and the underlying ideas of "Christians Ending Violence Against Women" based on a "restored relationships" approach. In terms of executing these concepts, the key creative idea has been "together". We were keen to have "Standing Together" as a title for the alliance, but this has already been taken by an organisation working on VAW. Please pray for clarity and for a rapid decision. We would love to get a website up and running soon, and this is strongly linked to the choice of name and the availability of internet domain names.

If you have any ideas on names then please let us know!!

We had a great day of prayer on 16 November. These are the prayer points from that day that remain highly relevant:

- That we, as a community of believers and pray-ers, hear the heartbeat of God and move in step with it
- Spiritual wisdom for moving forward – strategic links, funding, relationships, alliances
- Protection – it is a spiritual battle we enter into against power and authorities. We need protection from anything that might seek to destroy, frustrate and damage this work

- Breakthroughs in areas such as DRC, Darfur, Afghanistan, Pakistan where the grip of violence against women is becoming normalised
- Wisdom for the nations states, UN, Police and military to provide effective solutions, protection frameworks and operational justices systems that work and work for women
- For Godly men to make a stand in the UK and internationally over this issue
- For each of us in our own relationships with God to remain strong and be strengthened as we rely on God to bring breakthroughs
- God to change hearts and minds and restore a vision of how healthy, positive relationships should be

We know that it is essential to hear from God and keep in step with his heart for this issue. We also know that we can only move forward within the context of a community of believers praying fervently for change. Many thanks for your continued partnership in prayer for this issue. We look forward to receiving more feedback from your prayers.

Have a wonderful Christmas and New Year.

Peter Grant

Mandy Marshall

Background:

We propose a radical biblical approach based on restored relationships that challenges patriarchy and promotes behaviour change. There must be zero tolerance for all forms of violence against women.

The goal of this work is communities based on restored relationships where women live free from violence and the fear of violence by men.

The purpose of our project is to change the culture and practice in churches and communities to make violence against women unacceptable.

Prayer forms a key part of the strategic approach acknowledging that this is a spiritual battle where strongholds have taken control. We want to reclaim places that have darkness and bring God's light and love in. We recognise we are in a battle and need to advance under the cover of prayer.