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September 2004

From the Branch Secretary:

It is about 12 months now since we reformed the force branch of CPA and we have all been encouraged and excited by the way God has been at work opening up opportunities for us. Our focus continues to be encouraging Christian colleagues to meet locally to pray for and encourage each other because we are convinced that if we merely ask God will do amazing things in our places of work.

I know Dave Thubron has been encouraged by the number of staff in Plymouth who are eager to meet together. If you would like to join the group there, contact Dave, or if you want to know more about fellowship in your area just e-mail the local CPA contact as listed on the back of this newsletter.

We would ask you to be patient with us, pray for us as we struggle to balance our ever present work and family commitments with our desire to encourage and serve you as our Christian colleagues. What would be fantastic is if more of you would be willing to help share the load and join the work of individual teams looking at specific projects. Such as:

Newsletter publication	Lead:	Phil Skedgell
Force Website	Lead:	Phil Skedgell
Crime to Christ Initiative	Lead:	Roger Bartlett
Annual retreats	Lead:	Steve White
Family Resource Initiative	Lead:	Dave Thubron
Force Celebrations	Lead:	Norman Amey

If you cannot but would like to know more about CPA membership, or if you know anyone who may like to receive information about the work of the branch just e-mail me and I will send some literature on.

Thanks particularly to Phil Skedgell and Dave Hodder for their work in setting up the new branch website which you can access on the internet at:

www.devonandcornwallcpa.co.uk

WANTED:

The site is still very much evolving so please send in your ideas and contributions including testimonies, book reviews etc to Phil. It would also be great to have some digital photos of Christian Staff at work to include on the site as well as in newsletters. So if you have any or would like to take some, please email them to

Phil or myself. May God bless you and use effectively wherever he has placed you. R.B.

CONTACT DETAILS:

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North & East Devon BCU
Tel: 01271 335207 Internal: 81207

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Bible Verse:

'We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do'.

Eph. 2 v 10

God never wastes anything. He would not give you abilities, interests, talents, gifts, personality and life experiences unless he intended to use them for his glory.

Prayer Corner:

- ◆ Thanks that the force has recognised the work of cpa and as part of its review of staff support groups and is considering allocating time and resources to the branch to carry out its work
- ◆ For help, time and guidance in planning events in November and February to encourage fellowship across the force
- ◆ That the family resource board would be well received and used and would provide opportunities for officers to share their faith
- ◆ Thanks for the 'support for the northern devon prayer event. That god may unite churches everywhere to pray and contribute to their communities.
- ◆ For god to work through each of us everyday in the way we undertake our tasks and how we interact with colleagues.



'Supporting Christians working within
the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary
and encouraging them to live out

their Christian lives in the
workplace'.

God is interested in you - all the time!

How many of you like me, go to work, get your head down and hardly have time to lift your head and think of God, let alone consider how we might be able to reach out to others and let him work through us? You get to the end of the day and think 'Where was God in all of that?' Whilst we may not be thinking of him, he is thinking about us all the time and longs to work out his purposes through us and that means through the work we do and how we do it.

God is not just interested in the 'spiritual bits' of our lives when we are praying, witnessing, reading the bible or at church, he takes pleasure in every activity when we do what he made us to do. Even when we are asleep, he smiles with delight at us! As a father of 3 little ones, I can really grasp that concept. We are all members of Devon and Cornwall Police staff for a reason. If we commit our time at work to him, then we can give God pleasure in what we do at work and he can work out his plans through us – be it administering justice, reducing crime, valuing people and treating them the way Jesus would and even sharing the good news of Jesus. This is building his kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

A couple of practical ideas that have recently helped me to keep that focus when I feel close to losing the will to live at work that may help you too. I read recently about 'breath prayers' which God hears just as audibly as any other. They are one liners that merely give glory to Him. Lines such as 'What is on your heart for me in the next hour Lord?' or 'Glorify yourself through me Lord', or simply 'I honour you my God'. I set my watch to bleep every hour and this prompts me to pray one of these prayers – whatever I am doing. This just helps keep 'in step with his Spirit' through the business of the day rather than leaving him at the office door from the beginning to the end of the shift.

The other idea is one from John Wimber who talks about asking God for 'divine appointments' each day. If you are like me I hate the thought of insensitively forcing my faith onto others and I believe that is the way God made me. But how many opportunities to share my faith do I miss because I do not ask. We have no idea in whose life God is at work. By praying that he will work in the lives of colleagues and then asking him to prompt a discussion with them, I have been amazed how many times someone else has raised the subject of my faith that I have merely responded to and be able to share quite naturally. Why not try it every day for a month, specifically asking for God to give you someone who wants to talk about spiritual things or who wishes to share something important with you. Keep a diary and see what God can do through you.

For me it is all about being ready for what God may have and willing to respond in love to those promptings. I would really love to hear from anyone who has taken up that challenge and the outcome of those prayers. I have no doubts that if everyone of us did this for one month together the impact would be dramatic. RB

Other News :

• Northern Devon Prayer Event - Update

In May, 150 local people turned out from many different denominations across the policing area of Northern Devon to an event organised by local officers and police chaplains creating a powerful sense of unity and worship. They heard the testimony of Shaun Harvey as featured in the last news letter and were encouraged to pray for God to break down the strong holds in peoples lives of drug addiction, binge drinking, hatred and rebellion. Prayer was focussed on four areas – drugs, violence, youth issues and general policing issues. People were encouraged to contribute practically to local needs by supporting the work of victim support and local homeless charities. The feedback was very positive, and it is hoped further events will take place. We used a powerpoint presentation which together with the programme for the evening can very easily be used as a template for events any where. Anyone who is thinking about the possibility of something similar in their locality can contact Roger Bartlett for more details.

• Family Resource Boards

Many of you will know of an organisation called Care for the Family. If you don't you can find out about them on their website www.care-for-family.co.uk. They offer some fantastic resources including books and videos dealing with parenting, work & home life balance, burnout, marriage and bereavement etc. as well as organising excellent events that suited for Christians and non Christians alike. Whilst not overtly Christian the principles are solidly biblical.

The branch locally acknowledges that family breakdown and issues of burnout are very relevant to the police context and so, there is a real opportunity for us to meet a need and offer positive support to colleagues. We have been in contact with CARE to discuss the possibility of having a resource board (similar to the PMAS boards) in a number of stations across our force to allow colleagues free access to their resources. These boards could be funded by us, Christian Officers and local churches. Please pray for this and

give us your feedback on the idea and in particular if you would be willing to be involved in such an initiative and/or contribute financially towards it. Contact Dave Thubron for more details.

- **Forthcoming attractions!**

Plans are afoot for a CPA family weekend retreat in February and a Force Celebration in November. Details will be sent via email.

Your local CPA contacts are:

Cornwall - D.I Simon Selley, Plymouth - PC Dave Thubron, West Devon - PC Mike Riley, Torbay
- PC Jon Wise,

Exeter & East Devon - PC Phil Skedgell, HQ - Dave McKenzie-Clarke, North Devon - PC Simon
Ogden.