

## Open Learning Newsletter December 2011

### Open Learning Administration

We said 'goodbye and thank you' to **Nicola Willcocks**, who has worked with David on Open Learning for one day a week for the past year. Nicola will be taking over responsibility for the whole of **Admissions at Trinity College**.

At the same time we said 'hello and welcome' to **Sarah Yates**. Sarah is a primary school teacher, whose recent jobs include co-ordinating a project for Bristol City Council for under-confident children and another role supporting the transfer of children from primary school to secondary school.

Sarah will be working at Trinity College on **Tuesdays, Thursdays and part of Fridays**. She also works for Woodlands Group of Churches in Bristol.



### Open Learning Courses in 2012

In the **New Year** we hope to have **new courses** starting in:

Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire, Bedford, Bishopston in Bristol, Trinity Church in Brentwood, Colney Heath in Hertfordshire, Leamington Spa, Nailsea near Bristol, Preston in Hertfordshire, Spirit of Life Church in St Pauls in Bristol, Thornbury near Bristol.

**Courses continuing in January** are in Earley in Berkshire, Hertford, Lincoln, Sea Mills in Bristol, Stoke Bishop in Bristol, at Trinity College and in Welwyn in Hertfordshire.

### Open Learning Developments

**Spirit of Life Church in Bristol** have completed a year using the programme in their weekly Bible study. The pastor states that this is the most significant thing that has happened in his church, where people are learning to study the Bible in a disciplined way and discuss what

they have learnt in weekly group meetings. After Christmas, they will be going on to study **Discover Christian Living 2**, which is the second course on the Letters of Paul.

Beginning with **Discover Christian Living 1**, **Trinity Church Brentwood** have started using the courses in a similar way in their weekly Bible studies and are hoping that some of their home groups may start using the materials on a regular basis.

**St Alban's Diocese** has agreed to recognise our Open Learning Programme as one of the providers for its new **Equipping God's People programme** beginning next year. This is in addition to the Diocese continuing to use the programme as part of the discernment process for those who are thinking about the possibility of full-time ordained ministry in the Church of England.

**The South Gloucester and Bristol Circuit of the Methodist Church** is entering into a partnership with us to offer discipleship training in and around Bristol. We hope to have five Methodist 'hubs' offering the Foundations programme in this Circuit after Easter next year.

### Open Learning in the Far East

**David Ball** spent some time in November visiting **Singapore and Malaysia**, exploring possibilities of how Open Learning courses may be used there. As a result, **Rev Wai Mang, Vicar of St Paul's Church, Serangoon in Singapore** is planning to run a pilot group in his church beginning in May. **The Diocese of Sabah in East Malaysia** is planning to use our Foundations courses as part of their comprehensive training programme, which 'aims to train pastors and members to be effective in building strong local churches throughout Sabah and beyond that are passionate in worship, powerful in preaching and prepared for effective mission and evangelism.'

**Rev Khee Vun**, who studied at Trinity College last year has been appointed to oversee theological training in the Diocese. This programme will also start in May 2012.



Meta Reeves our long standing tutor from Preston in Hertfordshire sent in this lovely prayer which her 90 year student Nancy used at the start of a tutorial recently:

### The Prayer of Saint Ephraim

O Lord, who of us can grasp all the wealth of your words?

What we understand in the Bible is much less than we leave behind, like thirsty people who drink at a fountain.

Your word has many shades of meaning just as those who study it have many different points of view.

You have hidden many treasures in your word. Help each of us to be enriched as we study it.

Amen

St Ephraim was born early in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century at Nisibis (the modern Turkish town of Nusaybin, on the border with Syria) when it was under Roman rule and died in 373 AD. He was a pagan but was baptised as a young man. Ephraim was a prolific writer: over 400 of his hymns have survived and many sermons which he wrote in verse.

## Tutor News

Gay Carpenter, who has run many courses for Open Learning moved from Kimpton to Welwyn in August this year and has moved into her new home this month.

Mike Butterworth, who was Director of ICES and involved in writing many of the courses, has recently retired as vicar in Aylesbury and moved to Cheddington. Mike sent us this news:

For the past four to five years I have run ICES groups (now *Trinity Open Learning* groups) in Aylesbury and we have done all seven of the biblical modules and ethics. It has been a wonderful time of learning, sharing together, growing in faith and fun. Some significant reconciliations have taken place between our members and people in their own church, motivated and encouraged by the group. At least three people have explored their calling to some form of accredited ministry: one is awaiting the results of a BAP and one is already well into Reader training. She has been given credit for her ICES studies – rightly so because all our students have done far more first hand study of the text of the Bible than can be given these days even on a full time residential theological course!

## Welcome .....

We are pleased to welcome some new tutors to Open Learning:

Angie Ball at Trinity College, Bristol  
Cath Mackrell from Trinity Church Earley in Reading  
Helen Paynter in Stoke Bishop, Bristol  
Ian Silk in Lincoln  
Joseph Bilal in Sea Mills, Bristol  
Meirdre Cleminson and Carolyn Linnecar both at Trinity Church, Brentwood in Essex

## ..... And Welcome Back!

We are pleased to welcome back Rosa Wain who has just moved to Leamington Spa and Lynda Klimas who will be tutoring a course in Bedford.

Thank you all for all your hard work. We couldn't do any Open Learning Courses without you!

We'd like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Very Happy New Year.

