

IN BRIEF

Debt agency sees demand double

Debt-counselling charity Christians Against Poverty (CAP) has seen demand more than double since Christmas.

The charity revealed calls from people desperate for help with their finances have risen from 65 per week in December to 150 per week in March.

In an effort to meet the needs of people towards the brink of financial crisis by the recession, CAP aims to open 35 new centres in 2009, with 13 opening in May alone, taking the total beyond the 100 mark.

CAP's chief executive, Matt Barlow, said: "We are so excited to be opening our 100th centre, as this marks a significant milestone in our progress towards our vision of having a centre in every UK town or city by 2021. It is so exciting that the church will be recognised for holding the answers to one of the biggest problems in our society today, meeting people's practical needs as well as spiritual.

"We have a massive vision to see this nation transformed and we urge any churches interested in partnering with us to contact us immediately. The need for our service is massive, but I know we can respond to meet that need."

CAP offers a free, face-to-face professional debt counselling service through local churches to anyone struggling with unmanageable debt. The charity recently won the *Sunday Times* "Best Small Companies to Work For" award in March for the second year running.

Readers get quality champion

Sue Hart from the Diocese of Newcastle has been appointed as the Ministry Division's first National Advisor for Quality in Reader Education.

A Reader for eight years, Mrs Hart has spent the last 26 years of her working life at Newcastle College working with both higher and further education management systems that have achieved 'outstanding' QAA and Grade 1 OFSTED results.

Her new role will see her developing a coherent quality framework and advisory system for Reader education to replace the 'moderation' system that has operated for a number of years.

Having served in a lively, 200-strong church congregation at Monkseaton in Whitley Bay, she believes wholeheartedly in collaborative ministry and developing confidence in lay leadership.

MP backs Prayer Book

The veteran Labour MP Frank Field has spoken out in defence of the Prayer Book.

"The Prayer Book is a vital part of the DNA of the English language and to lose it would be to lose a whole tranche of Englishness", according to the Merseyside MP.

Mr Field is a Vice-President of the Prayer Book Society which campaigns for the continued use of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, the standard of worship and doctrine in the Church of England.

Selling St Mark's is 'blasphemous'

By Matt Cresswell

SELLING St Mark's, Mayfair, to a millionaire beauty magnate would be an act of blasphemy, shattering a 185-year-old covenant, Lady Sainsbury has claimed this week.

Speaking to *The Church of England Newspaper*, just weeks before a crucial meeting will decide the building's fate, Lady Sainsbury, who frequents the church, is determined that St Mark's should be saved.

The diocese is currently trying to negotiate a deal with George Hammer of Hammer Holdings, who owns The Sanctuary in London's Covent Garden. Hammer plans to turn the North Audley Street church into a 'wellness centre'. Last month he was refused planning permission but is still continuing his bid.

Defending her convictions, Lady Sainsbury said that in 1824 the Grosvenor family conveyed the land on which the church stands to the Church Commissioners;



Lady Sainsbury

it was stated that it should be a "place of ecclesiastical worship for life". Lady Sainsbury told the CEN: "That smacks to me of a covenant. It is a covenant and I feel it's broken at our peril."

She believes that if the church is turned into a health spa it would be a "deliberate and premeditated decision to breach this wonderful old contract".

She said: "I think it's quite blasphemous and he [Hammer] really should go somewhere else."

The Church was previously occupied by the Commonwealth Christian Fellowship which had used the space since 1994. However last October the diocese evicted the church, an act which Lady Sainsbury calls "shameful". She also expressed her great disappointment that the diocese was not more open to a substantial offer from Nicky Gumbel's church, Holy Trinity, Brompton. She fears the diocese is reluctant to accept an Anglican church

as it would have to pay another stipend.

She added: "But HTB have such a good track record. Within a very short time they have brought back to life 10 churches... They have the confidence to say 'yes we want to have another church as we are bursting at the seams'."

However the Archdeacon of Charing Cross, the Ven Dr William Jacob, is determined that the property will be sold for business. He argues that Mayfair is already served by three Anglican churches and that a new congregation is not needed. Meanwhile, Mr Hammer claims that God would be more honoured by his wellness centre, which he claims will treat cancer patients, than if it were used as a church.

Richard Dennis-Smith, a chartered surveyor who is involved with the Save St Mark's Campaign, said: "For 35 years the diocese has wanted to get rid of St Mark's and for 35 years the diocese has been stopped."

Welcome for new Roman Catholic leader

THE NEW Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, the Most Rev Vincent Nichols, has pledged to continue strengthening relations with the Church of England.

Archbishop Nichols was appointed as the new leader of England and Wales' 4.5 million Roman Catholics, to replace Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, 76, who will remain a cardinal until he is 80.

Archbishop Nichols said: "I feel a real need to acknowledge my openness to and dependence on God above all else. But in this I am not unique.

Everyone who seeks to follow the ways of God learns to depend on the truth, love and compassion of God more than on their own strength. I know that as I prepare to take on this new office in the Church many people will pray to take on this task - and that is what I definitely need.

"We often hear of the challenges facing our country in finding cohesion in the face of great diversity. Our churches are places where people are from a wide variety of different racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. They come

together, work together and contribute together to the wider good of our society. The Church has a great deal to offer and I hope to do my best to contribute to that project in this new role."

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, said: "I am delighted to welcome the news of Archbishop Vincent Nichols' appointment. He is a thoroughly experienced pastor, already well-known and much appreciated in the archdiocese, with a proven commitment to Christian education, ecumenical co-operation and shared Christian witness to our society."

New Anglican Fellowship 'will not be schismatic'

By Toby Cohen

THOUSANDS are expected to attend the July 6 launch of the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans, but organizers have emphasized that it is not schismatic.

The launch event, entitled 'Be Faithful! - Confessing Anglicans in Global and Local Mission' will be held at Westminster Central Hall, where 2,300 people are expected.

A statement from the organisers said: "The Fellowship is the outworking of last year's Gafcon conference in Jerusalem, at which 1,200 delegates signed up to the Jerusalem Statement. Those attending Gafcon 2008 represented some 40 million Anglicans worldwide, 70 per cent of the total active membership of 55 million."

The event chairman, the Rev Paul Perkin, emphasized that "this is not the start of a new Church. Everybody's determined to cast this as a separatist movement — this is not a separatist movement. We are not seceding, this is not schismatic.

"It is precisely the opposite of separation, the purpose is

unity and mission. The focus of the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans is of unity, solidarity, and support of the majority of the Anglican Communion."

Prominent traditionalist Anglicans will gather for the event from across the Communion. Speakers will include

the President of Forward in Faith North America, Bishop Keith Ackerman, the secretary of the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans, Archbishop Peter Jensen, and the Bishop of Rochester, the Rt Rev Michael Nazir-Ali.

The major goals of the Fellowship, supporting Anglicans suffering through poverty and discrimination around the world, are close to the priorities identified by Bishop Nazir-Ali when he announced his resignation last month. As to whether the Bishop would be taking a greater leading role with the Fellowship, Mr Perkin said: "We haven't gone that far with our planning."

The launch will feature seminars and workshops and reports on projects around the country. In the third week of May events will be taking place in Bath, Virginia Water, Manchester, Newcastle-under-Lyme, and Sheffield. For more information, email: befaihtfulanglicans@gmail.com.

Greenwich school of theology

in partnership with North-West University (South Africa)

EXCLUSIVELY DISTANCE LEARNING BACHELORS, MASTERS AND DOCTORAL DEGREES FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE WITH THE FOLLOWING ADVANTAGES

- Personal tutoring
- Study in your own time
- Moderate fees and flexible payment plans
- Students may begin at anytime

ACCREDITED IN THE UK BY THE DOL QUALITY COUNCIL

Please contact us: T. 0870 224 2004

email: contact@gschooltheol.com www.gschooltheol.com