

As one of the great thinkers of Christianity, Karl Barth said: “We’ve got to read the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other.” So we need to talk about things that matter. Welcoming immigrants. Caring for the homeless. Living responsibly on the earth. Interrupting the patterns of violence.

For too long Christians have used our faith as a ticket into heaven and an excuse to ignore the world we live in. We have promised people life after death, when many of them are wondering if there is life before death. They need to see Christians who care about the world we live in as much as the next one.

Just as Jesus put flesh on the gospel, the desire for Red Letter Christians is to make Jesus’ love real and public and prophetically relevant.

What does the gospel look like in Manchester? It looks like a bunch of clergy, civic leaders and social activists gathered in Piccadilly Gardens, one of the most criminalized spaces in the UK, where white supremacists have gathered under the banner of hatred and fear. But we are reclaiming the space for love and community — sharing food, games, stories, and hope donning t-shirts that say, “Love over fear.”

That’s what Red Letter Christians is about. We want to see people commit their lives to Jesus and to justice. We want to build up a generation of Christians who don’t just want to escape this world, but who want to transform it. We want to create a web of subversive friends committed to the upside-down Kingdom where the last are first and the first are last.

Will you join us?

Will you live for Jesus and justice?

Sign up at [www.redletterchristians.org.uk](http://www.redletterchristians.org.uk)

With my continuing prayers for everyone involved with Greater Manchester Community Chaplaincy and so thankful for our partnership in the Gospel,

God bless

Ian

Rev. Ian Rutherford

City Centre Minister at Methodist Central Hall, Manchester

Contact us at: GMCC Methodist Central Buildings Oldham Street M1 1JQ

Telephone: 0161 236 2462 Email: [chaplain@gmcconline.org](mailto:chaplain@gmcconline.org)

Please make cheques payable to: **GM Prison Prayer**

and state if you would like to **Gift Aid it**

**Check out our Facebook Page or [www.gmccsupport.org](http://www.gmccsupport.org)**

**HMP MANCHESTER; HMP FOREST BANK; HMP BUCKLEY HALL;  
HMP & YOI STYAL; HMP YOI THORN CROSS & HMP HINDLEY**

**GREATER MANCHESTER COMMUNITY CHAPLAINCY**

**PRISON PRAYER LETTER September 2019**

On 19 June this year I was pleased to host the launch of **Red Letter Christians UK** at Methodist Central Hall, Manchester.

In the morning we joined with colleagues from Mosaic Justice Network (Greater Manchester Community Chaplaincy and Befrienders are both members of the Network and I am one of the Associates). We discussed our local response to the issues of Homelessness, Addictions, Hate Crime and Climate Change, heard some stirring words of challenge and inspiration from Tony Campolo and Shane Claiborne from the USA and then in the afternoon moved across to Piccadilly Gardens to pray, engage with people and share the love of Jesus.

The name **Red Letter Christians** comes from the old Bibles that have the words of Jesus illuminated in red. For us, Jesus is the lens through which we interpret the Bible — and the lens through which we interpret the world we live in. As you read



those red letters, you get the sense that Jesus did not just come to prepare us to die. Jesus came to teach us how to live and how to love and how to transform the world.

This is not just pontificating in conference centres and talking theology in churches. We have to get into the neighbourhoods, places and streets where the action happens. Red Letter Christians is not a think tank. It’s a revolution.

Nearly every time He opens his mouth in the gospels, Jesus talks about the “Kingdom of God.” The word “Kingdom” was the same word used for “empire.” And the Kingdom of God that Jesus talks about is not just something we go up to when we die, but something we are to bring down while we live “on earth as it is in heaven.” We are to bring God’s dream to earth. The Kingdom of God is not just an abstract theological idea, but it is something that needs to be demonstrated. Our faith is not just taught — it is caught. Love is contagious. The world will know that we are Christians not by our doctrinal statements but by our love. Love has to be seen and felt and experienced, and our church communities are meant to be demonstration plots for the Kingdom of God. There are lots of theologians who talk about reading the Bible in the context in which it was written and listen with first century ears. But we also believe in considering what it means to live out the gospel in the time and place in which we find ourselves.

## MONTH YEAR

- 1 Pray for A, released recently with opportunity to join a local church and fellowship group
- 2 B whose brother died unexpectedly and he is struggling to come to terms with it.
- 3 N who is an IPP prisoner feeling trapped and frustrated by the system
- 4 P with upcoming parole, to hold firm in his anxiety
- 5 Ongoing Bible studies at HMP Buckley Hall
- 6 Pray for A who has recently arrived at GMCC
- 7 N who is waiting to hear the outcome of a family court hearing and their decision regarding his children.
- 8 I, who was released recently
- 9 E whose dad died recently
- 10 That I. who has attended the chapel for years will grow in the Faith
- 11 For A who is in a hospice at the moment
- 12 I who is to be moved to Cat D prison but is very anxious about it
- 13 P whose dad is dying.
- 14 Outcomes of current HMIP inspection to be received carefully
- 15 Anna, the new Chaplain is she learns in her new role
- 16 E who is facing a long trial and feels full of remorse for what he has done.

## MONTH YEAR

- 17 For S who has recently been diagnosed as a functioning alcoholic. Pray that he gets the support he needs
- 18 T who feels he has nothing to live for.
- 19 For F who has been ill recently and needs to be moved into suitable accommodation
- 20 D who got made a Cat D and is keen to move to a Cat D prison.
- 21 Pray for the staff and inmates and HMP Styal
- 22 For the visit of Gus Eyre on 22<sup>nd</sup> September that the men will be inspired as they listen to his amazing stories and songs.
- 23 That prisoners will understand & live by the principles on the Just 10 course at Buckley Hall that will finish in October.
- 24 Pray for the Message in Prisons Team
- 25 C and D whose behaviour is becoming more unpredictable and destructive.
- 26 J who is an IPP prisoner feeling trapped and frustrated by the system.
- 27 For P who sent his "sorry" letter to his brother who is now coming to see him on a visit for the first time.
- 28 Pray for the prisoners and team at HMP Thorn cross
- 29 For our harvest service & supper on the 29<sup>th</sup> September. As the guys bring what they have to share with the poor in Rochdale.
- 30 A who is feeling very paranoid and constantly under threat.
- 31 Praise God for C who was released recently and is attending church regularly and said his faith was renewed in Buckley Hall.