



**a**ction by

**C**hristians

**a**gainst

**t**orture

**August 2008 / September 2008**

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## From the Committee

This year Torture Victim's Day fell at Pentecost in the Anglican Church. The time when traditionally Priests are ordained. The set readings for this season are Zechariah 4 v1, Acts 12 v 1-11, and Matthew 16 v 13-19. Look them up.

When the angel appeared to Peter, he thought it was a vision, although the chains holding him fell off he was not looking for the obvious reason which was God's intervention through prayer. It took a while for him to realise what had happened to him. Going back some years earlier, Peter was not so hesitant when Jesus asked him "Who do you say I am?" Not a very fair question in some respects, Peter was demonstrating just by being there with Jesus what he had given up and what he believed about Jesus. His reply came straight back. "You are the Messiah, the Christ, the son of the Living God".

On the basis of that statement Peter is made the rock on which the church is built. Peter's sole qualification appears to be that he could recognize the activity of God when he sees it.

Peter put what he saw and felt into action.

The ACAT UK Committee has been looking back over all that has happened over the last year in preparation for the AGM and Conference in October. It has been a busy year. The catholic campaign where new members have been recruited, the Christmas card campaign was very profitable this year in terms of getting ACAT publicised. The Conference in Lungern attended by Richard Dent and Margaret Russell gave us useful contacts and much food for thought. A Prayer Vigil for Torture Victims Day was held in many places and many names were sent to ACAT France. Finally the Death Penalty/China campaign has been fruitful.

It is good to be active in this way, but the Committee is small and some could say 'aged'!! We desperately need new blood to help us plan and lead the Charity into the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the signing of the UN Declaration of Human Rights and beyond into new campaigns. Please give this matter your urgent prayers and consider if you feel able to help us in this way.

Peter recognized the power of prayer and it is not for nothing that our 'Slogan' is ACAT - a Powerhouse of Prayer- This is one of the most important aspects of our Charity. We may not all be able to write the letters but we can all undertake to pray for the victims of torture. And, for each other to give us the strength in His name to undertake this work.

May God give us the love and commitment to each other and all victims of Torture so that we may work together to fight the evil side of Humankind.

With every blessing

*Your ACAT Committee*



## PRAYER VIGIL

This was held on 28/29 June to mark United Nations Torture Victims Day

This was the first year that ACAT (UK), its members, groups, and churches took part. In previous years ACAT (UK) has provided materials, and a sample service for its members to use on Torture Victims Day. ACAT (France) initiated the Vigil in 2006 and asked that those taking part put details on a web site. This was not easy and caused some problems, especially when first using it. The web site was set up so that only name(s), times during the 12 hour period, place, could be entered. Unfortunately, many of our entries did not fit the slots!

In the end, after a considerable amount of publicity, phone calls etc members took part, together with one or two groups and also a respectable number of churches. Prayers at Sunday services included the tortured and in some instances, ACAT prayers were used. Materials were produced including a Service of Prayer and Meditation, Prayer and Intercession, Prayers for Individuals and Groups and a simple A5 sheet which included 3 prayers and the names of those requiring prayer. A number of members handed out A5 sheets at services on Sunday.

**At Our Lady of the Wayside, Solihull**, prayers were said at two masses on Saturday and also on Sunday and at services during the week leading up to the Vigil. Prayers were said at 'Broadmead Baptist Church and A5 prayer leaflets handed out there and at Our Lady of the Wayside. St John's, Widnes put the words of an ACAT prayer on the overhead projector so that the members of the congregation could all say it. Members at Grange Road Baptist church took part and prayer sheets were handed out at their Sunday morning service. Sister Catherine, Sisters of Mercy, Westcliffe on Sea involved her community. A number of members and their friends took part in the Vigil in their homes.

### **From Bonnyrigg, Rosemary Garrod writes:**

Today (25th June) I attended our midweek Communion Service at 10.00 am and was asked to lead intercessions for UN Torture Victims Day on the 26th. 6 were at the service. We gather round a table covered with a white cloth, in the church hall and sing to the Rector's guitar playing, take it in turns to light the candles, pass the bread and wine round the circle. We use a Celtic form of service. It is a prayerful meditative gathering often with a tangible feeling of God's presence with us. I used the service of Prayer and Meditation for Group and Individual use. We took it in turns to read a prayer or a page aloud as the Spirit moved each individual. It was very moving and some were near to tears. We felt very near to some of those we were praying for. (Several of us write to prisoners and/or send campaign letters).

### **From Saltash**

10 people attended a service of Prayer and Meditation in a side chapel at St Stephens Church on the Saturday evening, with Lesley Margetts, lay reader and ACAT Saltash chairperson as the leader. Those present took part in what was a moving service, with the first verse of "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord", sung at intervals. At the end candles were lit on a foil cross for individuals mentioned during the readings. The candles were lit again for the Sunday morning service at the request of the minister, who explained why they had been lit and finished his sermon by reading the prayer that had ended the service on the Saturday evening. Prayer leaflets were handed out.

Thank you to everyone who took part in the Vigil. Do let us have your experiences of the Vigil or how you marked UN Torture Victims Day.



## **APPEALS FOR AUGUST/SEPTEMBER**

**APPEALS ARE AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS OF ACAT UK**

**PLEASE CONTACT US SHOULD YOU WISH TO JOIN US**

### **INFORMATION**

**Vasily Aleksanyan**, Russian Federation (April/May Newsletter) - a number of replies have been received from the Procurator's Office - a translator has now been found, through Ken Watson so we should soon know exactly what the various letters say.

**Moudud Ahmed**, Bangladesh (April/May Newsletter) - a small number of members have received long replies from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office providing information that other charges are likely to be brought against this prisoner; there was no mention that the Office was prepared to make representations on his behalf on humanitarian grounds.

**Onsy Zachary**, Egypt/USA, imminent deportation - there is no further information; there has been no contact with niece from the ACAT office for some time, despite phone calls and emails.

## FOR YOUR PRAYERS

ABDERRAHMANE MEHALLI, ALGERIA, has been imprisoned and tortured on several occasions; was arrested again in December 2006 on terrorism charges and sentenced to 20 years imprisonment after an unfair trial; he has been severely tortured once more; his health is very poor.

FATHER ALEJANDRO SOLALINDE, MEXICO Co-ordinator of the Catholic Pastoral Care Centre for Migrants and director of migrants shelter in Ixtepec; mayor, municipal officials and residents broke into centre and threatened to burn it down; he has been threatened in the past because of his work for the marginalised.

MAO HENGFENG, CHINA, Shanghai housing rights activist, opposing evictions, sentenced in 2007 for two and a half years imprisonment, in unfair trial; has suffered greatly in prison in the past and also now from solitary confinement, beatings etc and also in Nanhui prison hospital, where she has been subjected to beatings, force feeding, forcible injections, being tied tightly to a bed for many days.

JAYAPRAKASH SITTAMPALAM TISSAINAYAGAM, SRI LANKA, journalist, held under the Emergency Regulations by the Terrorist Investigation Division without charge; he has been tortured; has now been given a further 3 months detention and it is likely he will be tortured again.

EZZAT HAJLI, ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES, 10, subjected to beatings, slappings, punches in the stomach, forced into stress positions, over a period of at least two and a half hours on June 11, by Israeli soldiers at the family shop and also at his home; one soldier pointed his cocked gun at him and threatened to kill him; the family were also threatened.

WOMEN OF ZIMBABWE ARISE (WOSA) - for those who have been arrested or live in fear of arrest; for those members and leaders of the Movement for Democratic Change, beaten and seriously injured, held incommunicado without treatment or medication in Ward 3 at Gokwe general hospital.

### PRAYER

*We stand before you, Lord,  
with hands wide open,  
ready to receive you.  
We bring before you, Lord,  
our modest gifts,  
like tiny seeds,  
not knowing what fruits  
you may bring out of them.*

*We wait before you, Lord,  
asking that our hands and gifts,  
offered in your service  
will make a difference to the world  
beyond our imaginings.  
In the name of Jesus,  
who once was weak  
and now is exalted. **Amen***

### (Christian Aid)

*Grant, Lord,  
that each of us may fully understand that the appeals we write  
and the letters and cards we send to prisoners  
do make a difference even if there is total silence,  
sometimes a difference between life and death  
between years in prison and life with family and friends  
between dying in prison and living long enough to feel again  
the warmth of the sun, the feel of the breeze in one's hair  
and of the rain on one's face.  
Lord, you have called us to do this work.  
Give us the certainty that what we do for the tortured,  
we do in your name, who was tortured, died and rose again  
for each one of us. **Amen***

**NOMINATION FORM - ACAT COMMITTEE 2008/9**

**CURRENT COMMITTEE AND OFFICERS**

**Chairman - VACANT**

- Eleanor Newland - **Hon Secretary/Information Officer**
- Ray Dunnett - **Hon. Treasurer**
- Margaret Russell - **Membership Officer**
- Brother Anselm - **SOS Torture Co-ordinator**
- Ken Watson - **Deputy Treasurer & Prisoner Support Co-ordinator.**
- Terry Newland - **Information Officer**
- Rev Richard Dent -
- Kevin Burr - **Representing Peace and Justice, RC Church** - (Ex-officio - does not have to be elected)

**All are willing to stand again.**

POSITION	NAME	ADDRESS	TEL-NUMBER
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**CHAIRMAN**

NOMINATED BY \_\_\_\_\_

SECONDED BY \_\_\_\_\_

**TREASURER**

NOMINATED BY \_\_\_\_\_

SECONDED BY \_\_\_\_\_

**SECRETARY**

NOMINATED BY \_\_\_\_\_

SECONDED BY \_\_\_\_\_

**COMMITTEE - UP TO SIX MEMBERS**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

NOMINATED BY \_\_\_\_\_

SECONDED BY \_\_\_\_\_

Please ensure that you have the consent of the person before you nominate. Nominations should be received by **20<sup>th</sup> September 2008.**  
 Nominations to be sent to:- ACAT Office, 8 Southfield, Saltash, Cornwall PL12 4LX

## CONFERENCE AND AGM

The Conference and AGM will be held at Broadmead Baptist Church in Bristol on Saturday, 11th October from 10.30 am (Registration/ Coffee) until 4.30p.m. It is a chance for members to meet with the Committee and to share with other like minded people similar views on human rights and especially on torture. So please come if you can - it will be good to meet you. It should be a rewarding day.

As in other years the Annual Report will be presented in the morning session together with the Annual Accounts; there will also be a time of worship. The speakers in the afternoon will include Sara Hall, Amnesty International Country Co-ordinator - Russian Federation, and Professor Matthew Pringle of the Association for the Prevention of Torture, Geneva.

The Committee has decided that there will be no charge for the day, although donations will be welcome. There is disabled access - a lift is available. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be provided but those attending should bring their own lunches.

Please note that a nomination form for elections to the Committee is enclosed. At present the Committee is small and therefore very limited in what it can do. It is very important that we recruit other members willing to join the Committee. There is so much that ACAT (UK) could do if only it had more active members willing to devote more time to it. This would enable it to work more effectively against the evil of torture. New Committee members do not need years of experience of human rights etc - information can be provided. What is needed is commitment and devotion to the battle against torture. The Committee meets every two months for an afternoon session currently in Guildford United Reformed Church. Travelling expenses are paid and we all take a packed lunch.

Any resolutions to be presented at the AGM should be sent to Eleanor Newland, Hon. Sec. 8 Southfield, Saltash, Cornwall PL12 4LX by 20th September. Resolutions should have a nominator and a seconder, both of whom should be individual members, Nomination forms should also be sent in by 20th September.

***Please give careful consideration to standing for the committee. We are in urgent need of more members. You do not need to have expertise or experience - just an active concern for human rights, particularly an abhorrence of torture. Some knowledge of Amnesty group work would be great.***

***We are also in great need of a new chairman***



## **60th ANNIVERSARY OF THE UN UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

December 10th will mark the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This is a very significant event. It came into being on a great wave of optimism and hope after the appalling devastation and loss of human life of the Second World War. The leaders of the world said "Never Again!" Many of the clauses have been reinforced by international statutes, covenants and conventions over the years. The International Criminal Court has been established and is the means of enforcing various of these measures.

Since 9/11 a number of countries have adopted various anti-terrorist measures at variance with the rights and safeguards enshrined in international laws. It is important that we, as ACAT, give thanks for what has been achieved over the past 60 years and remain vigilant to oppose the withdrawal of these rights in many parts of the world.

Prayer and service materials will be available from the beginning of October. For more information please contact : Eleanor Newland, ACAT (UK) office, 8 Southfield, Saltash, Cornwall PL12 4LX Tel: 0172 843417  
email: uk.acat@gmail.com

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## **CHRISTMAS CARD LIST**

It is expected that the Christmas Card List will be available to members in early November. It will be sent out as a separate mailing. It is hoped that as in other years members will ask their friends and their churches to take part. As well as giving Christians a chance to send greetings to prisoners, human rights groups etc, it is also an opportunity to publicise ACAT and its campaigning work.

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On 31<sup>st</sup> October 2007 **Cardinal Renato Raffaele Martino** chairman of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace said "Christians are called upon to co-operate in the defence of Human Rights and in the abolition of the death penalty and of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading punishments or treatment, whether in time of peace or war. Such practices constitute serious crimes against the human person created in the image of God and a scandal for the human family in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Christians are called together to commit themselves to the campaign for the victims of torture and, more than ever, to proclaim again and again the supreme dignity of each human being, preparing the ground ready for the return of our King and His Kingdom on earth.



## SOS TORTURE

I'm looking forward to the AGM - it only seems about a week since the last one - and I'm hoping to meet some of the SOS writers of appeals. There are one or two committee members in the ranks, but I'd so much like to have a few more faces to add to the email addresses!

Otherwise, there's little to report - appealing continues, so alas does the need for action by Christians against torture. There continues an ominous number of news items about "rendition" with the suggestion of complicity on the part of our government. The Sunday gospel "The wheat and the tares" is a message of hope!

*Anselm SSF*

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## PRISONER SUPPORT NOTES

I am pleased to confirm that the funds that were sent to me for prisoners held in the two prisons in Kabwe were duly distributed by Father Bohan before he left Zambia for his summer break.

For various reasons, it has become necessary for us to make alternative arrangements for the transmission of funds to prisoners held outside Kabwe. As far as I am aware financial support is being provided to men in prisons in Lusaka, Kitwe and Luanshya. We are in the process of trying to make contact with either one or two reliable persons to receive funds for men being held in the latter two prisons. They seem to be fairly near to one another and it may perhaps be that one person will be able to visit both establishments. I hope to be able to provide further news in this respect in the next Newsletter.

So far as donations intended for men held in the Central Prison in Lusaka are concerned, our member, Margaret Turner has agreed to forward these via Western Union to a contact known to her there, Pastor Mvulu, who has, I believe, received and distributed funds in the past. Any members who wish to take up Margaret's offer, should please contact her directly at the following address:-

Mrs Margaret Turner  
29 Darvell Drive  
Chesham  
Buckinghamshire HP5 2QL

I would like to mention that donations sent through Margaret are quite independent of ACAT and we would not, for example, be able to claim gift aid where this would otherwise apply.

I am about to send Margaret a cheque to cover the donations for men in Lusaka that were received up to the end of May; the donations intended for men in Kitwe and Luanshya remain in our No 2 account. Any cheques that members might send to Margaret should be drawn in her favour and NOT made payable to ACAT.

If anyone has any questions to raise concerning the distribution of funds or any other matters relating to our Prisoner Support work, I should be glad to hear from them.

**Kenneth Watson** 34 Wantage Road, Reading RG30 2SF  
E-mail: ken335@btinternet.com'

### **From Barry Wilson, Hove - a prisoner supporter**

It was around September 2007 that I started to try and raise money through family and Hove Methodist Church for an operation for Comfort Chisunka, the daughter of Lucky, who is a prisoner in Kabwe. This would enable her to live a normal life. It was an operation which in Zambia had to be

paid for. Through a youth leader I learned the cost would come to about £400 and by February 2007 it had been raised and deposited in the hospital account.

Some time went by and there was no news. Eventually the youth worker, (Kebby) told us through an email that while Comfort lived with her grandparents, her mother had remarried. Her consent was needed for the operation and for reasons of fear and superstition she would not consent. While Lucky had become a Christian in prison, she was not a Christian. All through the summer, with Lucky's father travelling to speak to the ex-wife and inquiries being made to government departments to try and see if she could be "circumvented" (it seemed not!) we suddenly heard she had given consent and the operation finally took place on October 30 - so after many problems and travails - a good ending. It seems there is some money left over after the operation and we are hoping it can be spent on some education for Comfort.

Also, we are hoping Lucky will be able, through a lawyer to appeal against his sentence of 25 years as there appears to be grounds for appeal. Money was raised through the sale of hand painted cards made by Lucky which I sold here, mostly at the church.

### **From the editor**

This is just one instance of how a committed member of ACAT, with the support of his church has changed the life of one little girl and given her the chance of a future. We are always looking for items from members and groups for inclusion in the Newsletters. Why not send in your contributions!

### **From a member - the importance of prayer**

Dear privileged members and friends

We all like to receive interesting mail through the post (excluding bills and junk mail!) because we have a hard copy of information, letters, cards etc from family, friends or relevant organisations

This mailing gets to many of you through a generally reliable postal service at reasonable cost and without interference. We can then write letters freely to those in positions of authority without fear and with a power that probably belies our "ordinariness". We can also, from time to time, write cards and messages to those who are languishing in jails/institutions in many countries, bringing encouragement and an uplift of spirit in the midst of trauma.

We can gather in groups, have services, organise fundraising without having to request permission, get a licence, give a bribe, be fearful for ourselves, etc. Hence the use of the word "privileged" at the start.

However, up until now, we have omitted an even greater privilege that we, as ACAT, can enjoy, make use of and be empowered by. Christians equal communion with the Lord Jesus, and communion equals prayer. On our front cover, the headline states "A Powerhouse of Prayer", and that is right as long as we use the power. We pray but do we pray believing?

There is much prayer material throughout this mailing and we have limitless power at our disposal; in fact, if we neglect to pray then we could be any secular organisation. We may be numerically small but God doesn't work by numbers, but by our faith and our prayers.

Be encouraged to pray for those mentioned in this mailing (1 Thessalonians 4 v 17 says "Pray without ceasing") It WILL make a difference which we probably will never know about.

Pray also for each other and for ACAT's work to expand, together with new personnel for that challenge. We do this work because we oppose torture and for our concern for human rights; even more so because we love our Lord, who created the human race in His image.

## **PRAYER AND MEDITATION**

### **Beginning**

Show me, Lord, how to be QUIET,  
to receive your love for me;  
to get to know and love you, to pray,  
And to be of use in your world.

***Mark Gibbard***

Prayer is an offering, particularly in PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING,  
In WAITING on God in silence.  
Our offering in prayer is to be linked to the offering of Jesus,  
By which we are reconciled to God,  
And so may offer ourselves as sons and daughters to their Father.

***Robert Llewelyn***

### **Middle**

O Lord Jesus, open my eyes  
That I may see the need of others,  
Open my ears that I may hear their cries,  
Open my heart that they need not be without help.

Let me not be afraid to defend the weak  
Because of the anger of the strong,  
Let me not be afraid to defend the poor  
Because of the anger of the rich.

Show me where love and hope and faith are needed,  
And use me to bring them to these places.  
Open my eyes and ears that I may, this coming day,  
Be able to do some work of peace for You.

***Alan Paton***

### **Ending**

We shall not cease from exploration.  
And the end of our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And to know the place for the first time.

***T.S. Eliot***

May the love of the Lord Jesus draw us to himself;  
May the power of the Lord Jesus strengthen us in His Service;  
May the joy of the Lord Jesus fill our hearts and fill our homes.

**Amen**

# A Final Thought

“No exceptional circumstances whatsoever, whether state of war, threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency may be invoked as a justification of torture”

**Article 2** UN Convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, 1984.

We hope you have found this newsletter interesting and challenging. Contributions from members ( and others )are always welcome – particularly your activities for ACAT.

Please send any material hand written, typed, or e-mail

To:-

**Margaret Russell**  
**47 Stoneleigh Rd**  
**Knowle Park**  
**BRISTOL BS4 2RH.**

e-mail: -

[uk.acat@gmail.com](mailto:uk.acat@gmail.com)

(who is doing the next  
newsletter)

**Please send material for the  
Oct./Nov. 2008 mailing to  
reach us by  
15th September 2008**

Contact Address:-

Terry and Eleanor Newland,  
ACAT(UK) Tel. 01752 843417  
8 Southfield  
SALTASH  
Cornwall PL12 4LX

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