

A Reflection on 'Sharing God's Love, by Alan Crowle

Friends

The transformative work of Canal Ministries brings the news of Jesus along with practical demonstrations of his love to communities along the UK's inland waterways. The Canal Ministries team currently consists of 17 evangelists/volunteers crewing/living aboard 9 boats. Ephesians 4 v 16 He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love."

As boaters are generally cruising, Canal Ministries cannot necessarily provide ongoing, long-term support, but they are often the first link in the chain. The Canal Ministries will give immediate help wherever needed. In situations where ongoing assistance is required, the Ministry will ensure appropriate connections are made to relevant local agencies and organisations. The Canal Ministry is often well placed to get alongside other boaters in difficulties.

The Canal Ministry purpose is to reach out to people to tell them the good news that Jesus loves them. In addition is to relieve hardship for those in need as they are found within the inland waterways. Their work includes telling others of Jesus love, listening, helping, and praying, distributing bibles, linking with churches for mission. They are finding help of ongoing support, distribution of food, coal and basic necessities, and also providing some help with boat issues. Some members of the team are all-year-round Continuous Cruisers, some over-winter in a fixed location and some have a very localised ministry. Each works according to God's calling and the gifts with which they have been blessed. Every one of the team, no matter where their ministry or what their specific calling, has an important part to play.

People today still want to go their own way. But God still loves us and He still wants us to love and respect Him. That is why He sent His Son, Jesus to live a perfect life amongst us. Jesus willingly took the blame for everything bad that we have ever done, and He received our punishment by dying a terrible death on the cross. The Good News is that God accepted the sacrifice that Jesus made and raised Him to life again. The punishment has been paid for all our bad thoughts and deeds, and we can live in a good relationship with God once again. The Empty Tomb signifies Jesus' victory and our hope. All we have to do is to accept that this is true, admit our failings, and ask Jesus, through prayer, to help us to be the person that God wants us to be.

There is also the Boaters' Christian Fellowship who come from all walks of life and ages. Some just enjoy walking or sitting by the waterways. Some have sadly had to give up their boating life. Some enjoy hire boat holidays. Of course, a large percentage are currently boat owners or have a share in a boat.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. 1 Corinthians 12:4-6.

Please pray for the Christians on the Waterways. For the work of the ministry on the Inland Waterways. For the crews, as they go out and about. Pray for those boaters they have come across and worked with. Pray that God will nurture the seeds that have been sown.

God bless,
Alan