

# TOUGH TALK

## NEWSLETTER SPRING 2016

And Jesus said unto them” Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved but he that believeth not shall be damned” Mark 16: 15-16.

The team tried to obey this command of our Lord during 2016, at least in part, as they celebrated 20 years of Tough Talk’s ministry by fulfilling a number of international invitations to preach the gospel. Early in the year they visited the Hong Kong and the Philippines (mentioned in last year’s newsletter), followed by engagements in Germany, Romania, Lebanon, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The team flew to Guernsey and also completed several visits to prisons in Scotland. All these were in addition to a full programme of successful church events up and down the country and, of course, our busy schedule of prison visits. All this gave us a challenge as to what should be included in the 2016 Newsletter. What follows is just a selection of those events that particularly stood out.

In May, Arthur and Ian spent a few days with the British Army in Paderborn, Germany: Princess of Wales Royal Regiment



Arthur speaking to the soldiers



British Army of the Rhine



Paderborn

Following the visit, the team received a fantastic letter from Lieutenant Colonel M D Cornwell PWRR at Paderborn who said:

“Hopefully you will have sown some seeds of doubt in the minds of those who may be tempted to stray from the right path”

In August, Ian, Arthur and Joe visited Romania for a mission working with a local gypsy community and to share their testimonies and the gospel of Jesus Christ in two prisons. They had an incredible time there visiting Aiud prison and then a maximum security prison called Gherla together with Prison Fellowship Romania. The picture below shows the team and a few inmates in Aiud prison with some of the the weightlifting kit we were able to donate to the prison. We also provided Christian based literature in Romanian for all who participated as well as essentials such as toothpaste and soap.

HMP/YOI Feltham (England)

HMP Barlinnie (Scotland)

HMP Magilligan (N.Ireland)

The team were able to share their testimonies and to preach the gospel as well as to give out a lot of the Tough Talk testimony books. The weightlifting equipment they were able to donate to the prison was worth over £500 and was made possible following a successful appeal for money on our Facebook page.



The team with men from Aiud prison with the weights

The team were invited to take part in four New Wine events during the year: two in Shepton Mallett and one each in Leeds and London. Ian and Joe presented the gospel at these events and saw men coming to faith and receiving Jesus Christ as Saviour. They also had the opportunity to pray for several hurting men who needed Jesus.



Ian speaking at Shepton Mallett



Men receiving prayer

As in previous years, the team has been busy with regular visits to a large number of prisons in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, three of which are shown below:





For very many years now the team has been invited by Kensington Temple to be involved in this church's outreach programme during the Notting Hill Carnival .

This year, the team was called to be involved on both the Sunday and Bank Holiday Monday of the event. There were , as expected, great crowds of people on both days and many heard the gospel outside the church building and in the evening, inside the church. Many people responded to the gospel challenge at the evening events.

Outdoor meeting, Notting Hill Carnival

With so much going on throughout the year, by October, when the team had to fulfil an invitation to share the gospel in Beirut, Lebanon , they felt that they could only just keep up with all the Lord had entrusted them to do!



Ian and Arthur, accompanied by Luke Derbyshire, accepted the invitation from the Church of God Bourj Hammoud in Beirut to visit them and to share their testimonies and present the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The meetings were well attended and the guys were able to powerfully share the gospel. Among those responding to give their lives to Jesus Christ were Syrian muslim women, who were refugees from the troubles in their own country. Ian commented "it was an amazing sight to see these women wearing their hijabs coming to the Cross!"



The guys also visited a gymnasium in downtown Beirut in an area of the city which they later learnt was a "no – go " area for visitors! The visit went well and the guys in the gym were very enthusiastic about meeting the team. The team also visited a second gym in Beirut where they shared their stories and were also enthusiastically received.



Tough Talk was also involved in the production of the controversial video of the Lord's Prayer by the Church of England. Although the showing of the video in cinemas was banned, it created quite a stir in the media both here and on Fox News in the USA.

Filming part of the Lord's Prayer video in Bethnal Green Gym

This year, we welcomed the newest and youngest member of the team Kwaku Danso. Kwaku is an enthusiastic follower of Jesus Christ and his story can be read on the Team page of our website. The photo on the right shows Kwako giving a demonstration of powerlifting at the J28 church South Normanton.



A particularly amazing and encouraging development over the last year has been the number of people coming up to us at meetings across the country who want to share their stories of coming to faith at a Tough Talk event. Often, this had happened 5, 10 or even 15 years ago and they are still going on strongly with the Lord! Here is one such story we received only recently:

Because my Mum insisted, I reluctantly went to Notting Hill Carnival in 2003 when I was only 10 years old. We went in to a church building and after the praise and worship had finished, I was taken by surprise when a group of strong men known as Tough Talk came up on stage and began to lift heavy weights. They each shared their stories of how God had given them the strength to break free from the tough situations they were once in, including drug and alcohol addictions, crime and depression. However, what grabbed my attention was one of the leaders saying "you are not a Christian just because your family are Christians, nor because you go to church on a Sunday. Those things do not make you a Christian, you must make a personal choice to accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour and ask him personally to have a relationship with him. No one can do this for you, it's a choice you have to make from your own heart with your own mouth". I chose to make my own decision to be a Christian and know Jesus for myself. I am now 22 and Jesus is my friend when I'm in need, He is my healer when I am sick, He is the only person I seek to please, He is the one who shows me how to live and love. Jesus has continued to amaze me with his provision, grace and love. I am now a Youth Worker and Sunday school teacher, so I can teach other kids, who were like me, to seek their own relationship with Jesus. I'm very glad my mum forced me to go Notting Hill Carnival that day and very grateful for Tough Talk's unique demonstration of who Jesus really is.

Message from, Michael Steward, Chairman of Trustees:

At the time of writing this Newsletter, our diary for 2016 looks to be one of our busiest ever. This is very encouraging not least because Ian McDowall has recently felt the Lord leading him to dramatically reduce his business commitments and spend most of his time sharing the gospel. We are relying on the Lord for the financial implications! If you wish to book the team for an event or wish to support our ministry please visit our website [www.tough-talk.com](http://www.tough-talk.com) and our Facebook page will keep you up to date with our activities.

### **TOUGH TALK!**

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