

## **Churches Criminal Justice Forum – meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2008**

In the past few months, members of this forum were invited to answer a questionnaire on what they considered should be the aims and practice of this group. Sixty-eight people replied and the majority saw the forum as an important network for people working formally and informally in the criminal justice world. It was a pity, therefore, that this meeting in Nottingham was attended by merely a handful of those members which made this aim of networking less effective than it could have been.

There is no doubt that the sharing of views and experiences has always been valuable and interesting and it is inspirational to hear of the different initiatives which are to be found. At this meeting, we heard about the community chaplaincy in Nottingham as well as some of the changes which have happened this year in the world of criminal justice. Community chaplaincies are to be found in only 14 places but as they depend upon a prison being more or less local, they are not the solution for all prisons and specially not for women's prisons since the small number of prisons for women are in no way local prisons.

The next meeting of this forum will be in London in March and the committee are hoping for an increased attendance so that more people can give more time to thinking about the purpose and aims of this specifically Christian group whose brief it is to walk alongside people in prison. I am praying this will happen.