

Don't look at me in that tone of voice

Tim Lee, CMS co-ordinator for Kent and Sussex, shares an article with us

"Contrary to every travel book written about Hong Kong, it is absolutely freezing!"

It may sound a little odd that Steve and Kate Cartwright are most concerned about the temperature when they've just arrived at the new home they're to share with 40 drug addicts, many of them members of Hong Kong's notorious criminal gangs, the Triads.

As part of the CMS Make a Difference programme, they are spending a year working with St Stephen's Society, set up by Jackie Pullinger. Kate and Steve have clearly learned a tremendous amount in their first week, such as how to get to grips with Chinese food including "meat and fish balls, dim sum, hairy oysters, pig skin, chicken foot (skin, bones and toenails!), and Brussels sprouts and noodles for breakfast."

Most of the men in the house don't speak any English, so Kate and Steve are having to pick up Cantonese as quickly as possible. This is made more complicated by the fact that the men also speak Triad and prison slang, and that one Cantonese word can have several different meanings depending on the tone you use. "Of course there have been some embarrassing moments," says Kate; "asking 'When did you get arrested?' when you meant to say 'How old are you?'. Steve said to one Triad member 'Please get undressed!'"

In the middle of this steep learning curve, they have been discovering how Jesus has affected the lives of these hardened addicts.

"All the guys have horrific stories of childhood abuse, violence, Triad membership or prison sentences," says Steve. "It takes three days for heroin to leave your body but it takes a lot longer to heal the reasons they took it in the first place." But he says that the residents are now "friendly and loving".

"It's amazing to see what Jesus has done in them. How else could ex-rival Triad members live together like this? They are all so passionate about Jesus and so grateful for the new life and hope they have."

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CMS in cash crisis

The Church Mission Society (CMS) faced a cash crisis last year when its legacy income dropped from £2.5million to just over £1 million, and its investments on the UK stock market dropped steeply. But its income rose in the second half of the year, when people heard of the CMS's crisis, and increased their giving.

All the same, the lack of finance has meant the closure of the CMS's training college, Crowther Hall, in Birmingham, and the curtailing of various projects.

**What makes life dreary is absence of motive.
What makes life complicated is multiplicity of motive.
What makes life victorious is singleness of motive.**

George Eliot