

## Minister discusses social care with Salvation Army leader

MISSIONER Marianne Adams (left) and Helen Cameron of The Salvation Army discussed the social care of the organisation with Minister of State for Care and Support Norman Foster, when they met the MP during the Liberal Democrat Conference in London.



GARETH WALLACE

## Labour MP John Spellar visits Salvation Army employment scheme and learns about e-learning



**LABOUR MP John Spellar visited a Salvation Army project which helps unemployed people find work. At the Oldbury Salvation Army's Employment Plus scheme, the MP for Warley, Oldbury and Smethwick (right) spoke with the team which assists people with job searches and e-learning opportunities. He also met Stacey Bryce (seated centre), who found a job with the help of the team and stays in touch to gain more tips and training.**

## Parents' choice of faith schools is academic

PARENTS send their children to faith schools because they believe they offer high academic standards and not because of religion. According to a YouGov survey carried out for the Westminster Faith Debates, 77 per cent of respondents put academic achievement as their reason for choice, while 23 per cent named ethical values and only 5 per cent the grounding of pupils in a faith tradition.

Professor Linda Woodhead of Lancaster University, which runs the Westminster Faith Debates, says: 'In abstract debates about faith schools, people talk about religion. Secular activists oppose faith schools on grounds of religious indoctrination and discrimination, while religious people support them because of the faith element. But our poll shows that when choosing a school, most parents aren't concerned with religion. They are concerned with academic standards.'

'So long as parents want their children to get the best qualifications, so long as politicians of left and right support parental choice and high academic standards and so long as faith schools maintain these standards, the debate can rage but faith schools are not going away.'

The survey also found that less than a third (32 per cent) of the population believe the Government should provide funding for faith schools, while 45 per cent were opposed and 23 per cent were unsure.

However, young people are more in favour of State funding for faith schools than older people.

The survey found that, 43 per cent of people aged 18-25 supported State funding compared with 36 per cent who were opposed. For the 60-plus group, the figures were 50 per cent against and 32 per cent in favour.

Of all the types of faith school identified in the survey, only Church of England schools had a margin of support for State funding.

### Becoming a Christian

There is no set formula to becoming a Christian, but many people have found saying this prayer a helpful first step to a relationship with Jesus Christ,

**I am truly sorry for the things I have done wrong in my life. Please forgive me. I now turn from my life and from everything that I know is wrong.**

**Thank you that you died on the cross for me so that I could be forgiven and set free.**

**Thank you that you offer me forgiveness and the gift of your Holy Spirit.**

**Please come into my life by your Holy Spirit to live with me for ever.**

**Thank you, Jesus.**

## Visitor centre to honour Bible impact in Wales

BIBLE Society has gained planning permission to create a visitor centre in Bala to tell the story of the impact that the Bible has had on Wales and the rest of the world.

The centre will be located in a deconsecrated church at Llanycil in Bala which has strong links with Bible Society.

In 1800, a 15-year-old girl named Mary Jones walked 25 miles from Llanfihangel-y-Pennant to Bala to buy a Bible from the Rev Thomas Charles. The story goes that she had saved for six years to afford it. Thomas Charles was touched by her determination and began wondering what he could do to make the Bible more easily available. In 1804 he helped to establish Bible Society.

The visitor centre is due to be officially opened next year, the bicentenary of Thomas Charles's death.