

# churches advertising network

## NEWS RELEASE

Issued: 11.30am on Thursday 20th September 2007

# Christmas adverts venture into virtual world

A Christmas advertising campaign for the churches will take its publicity into the virtual world this month – inviting people to have a second go at life. The new adverts which follow a theme of second chances will invite people to visit an 'island' accessible through the on-line virtual world Second Life [www.secondlife.com](http://www.secondlife.com) on the internet where Christmas events will take place and spiritual questions will be discussed.

The new campaign was unveiled by the Churches Advertising Network (CAN) in London today (Thursday, September 20<sup>th</sup> 2007) and forms part of an integrated campaign which will include posters and radio for the real world as well as a Second Life presence in the virtual world. It will introduce people to an area in the virtual world of 'Second Life', where they can interact with people and discuss spiritual issues. The posters pose the question, 'Want a second go at life?' and invite people to go to [www.secondlifechance.co.uk](http://www.secondlifechance.co.uk) where they will be directed to CAN's own 'island' in the virtual world, as well as being offered links through to the Rejesus website, with information on the Christian faith. The 30 second radio adverts, also on the website, feature four individuals leaving brief messages about how they have found a second chance after various regrets in their lives.

CAN member and website author, Simon Jenkins, said: "This is an exciting development for us, we are really opening up the interactive side of our campaigns, building on the success we had last year with 'isthisjesus' on Myspace. Beyond the activities in the virtual world, the theme of people having a second chance at life is one that will hit home for a large number of people."

The island area in 'Second Life' is designed as a tongue in cheek first Century Palestine, with shops such as 'Zacchaeus' Bonsai Shop', cafes and a Roman amphitheatre with its own cinema. An animated nativity film will also be screened in the run up to Christmas for visitors to Second Life.

Chair of CAN, Francis Goodwin said: "The virtual world is a brand new departure for us and we can't predict how it will develop in the coming weeks. The posters and radio adverts are very much grounded in this life and we hope they will help people think again about God's free offer of a second chance at life."

CAN, the Churches Advertising Network, is an independent and ecumenical group of Church communicators which for the past ten years has produced a series of striking and often controversial poster and radio adverts. Past campaigns have included 'Bad Hair Day' and 'Meek ; Mild, As if'. Last year's poster campaign, featuring the face of

Jesus in an empty beer glass, sparked international media interest and thousands of people signed up to be friends of 'isthisjesus' through the Myspace blogging site which attracted more than 60,000 visitors. Some 62,313 unique views were recorded on 'isthisjesus' between September and January, with 2,235 friends signed up.

Previous radio campaigns, have won several national awards. Last year's radio commercials were carried on more than 35 radio stations including the Galaxy network and London's Kiss 100FM in the run up to Christmas 2005. Production for this year's radio adverts continue to be sponsored by Jerusalem Productions.

From September 20<sup>th</sup>, the poster and radio adverts, will be available on-line and can be downloaded at [www.churchads.org.uk](http://www.churchads.org.uk). The posters are available for churches to use free of charge in the weeks before Christmas and the radio adverts can also be placed on local radio stations with the sponsorship of local Christian groups.

ends

- For more information / interviews contact Rachel Farmer  
Phone:01636 817218; Mobile 077 121 96381; email:  
[rachel@southwell.anglican.org](mailto:rachel@southwell.anglican.org)  
Or Francis Goodwin, mobile 07733 001781; email:  
[francis.goodwin@googlemail.com](mailto:francis.goodwin@googlemail.com)
- CAN website [www.churchads.org.uk](http://www.churchads.org.uk) All ads can be downloaded from this site.
- CAN, the Churches Advertising Network, is an independent ecumenical group of Christian communicators providing high quality Christian advertising campaigns linked to major festivals. Chairman, Francis Goodwin (Corporate Development Director for Maiden Group plc) 020 7838 4048.

Additional information:

#### Production

The CAN Christmas posters have been designed and produced by Christians in the Media (CIM) a group of media professionals, who give their creative time freely.

The space in Second Life has been produced by Andrew Down (known in his Second Life as Lewis Nerd) of Pocket Protector Projects, which provides building and consultancy in Second Life.

The radio adverts have been sponsored by Jerusalem Productions and produced by Denise Robinson, with the grateful support of Wave Studios, London.