

## **The John Newton International Center**

The official opening of the John Newton Center took place on 11 January 2003, attended by Elizabeth and Charles Knight representing the Museum. A full report of this event will appear in the next issue of the Bulletin. Tom Martin, one of the founders of the Center, has kindly provided the following account of the inspiration behind it, its goals, and the nature of its work.

The John Newton International Center for Christian Studies, 201 S. College Street, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, is intended to provide a witness to the faith of eighteenth century English evangelicalism in our modern world. It hopes to accomplish this goal by providing a suitable residence for scholars dedicated to research and publication, a forum for lectures open to the region's academic community, and a setting for local university students to escape the routine of their campuses and find edifying fellowship, printed resources, and a setting for prayer, Bible study, and singing.

Because John Newton had such influence on the abolition of the African slave trade by mentoring William Wilberforce, M.P., we hope to study lingering aspects of racism and social injustice in society and the answer which the Christian faith offers to such evils. Because Newton had such an influence on poet William Cowper, the relationship of Christianity with the literary arts will be a focus of study and teaching as well. Because Newton was a clerical leader, making disciples of such Established Church leaders as Rev. Thomas Scott but also having a profound influence on Presbyterians, Baptists, and others, the Center will attempt long-range to challenge and encourage theological students for the Christian ministry, regardless of their denominational affiliation, to know and to serve the Eternal God whom John Newton served, who is Jesus Christ the Lord.

No area of truth is divorced from God's agenda, so the Center hopes to lead in an exploration and analysis of the Bible's important place in study of the physical sciences and technology, as well as history, music, cinema and theatre, law, and even military science!

Dr. John Bombaro is the founding executive director of the Center. He took his Ph.D. from the University of London and presently is employed as an author/editor for a British publisher. He and his family will reside at the Center, which includes a separate apartment for guest residents and scholars. Part of his commission is to develop friendships with students, faculty, and administrators at nearby Dickinson College (founded 1773) and the Pennsylvania State University Dickinson School of Law (oldest law school in Pennsylvania) and to encourage Christian believers there, while intellectually confronting non-Christians in love with the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Center will be available to the wider Christian community in Carlisle for similar friendly yet challenging studies. Visiting scholars will be offered free use of the apartment to conduct research, and to develop instructional tools in the Christian gospel.

The Center is honoured to be affiliated with the Cowper and Newton Museum in Olney, England. The affiliation is not a legal connection, but a fraternal mutual concern that the legacy of Newton and Cowper not be lost. The American Center hopes to promote tourism to Olney, England, visits and support by Americans to the Cowper and Newton Museum, an exchange of mutual encouragement through possible joint sponsorship of publications and lectures, and dedication to the work to which God called Rev. John Newton. The Christian message transcends national boundaries and ethnic differences, and the God of the eighteenth century United Kingdom is the God who governs in the affairs of men today, around the world. As Johann Sebastian Bach frequently wrote, *Soli Deo Gloria!*