



“Every good gift and every perfect present comes from heaven, it comes down from God, the creator of the **heavenly lights,**”

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Orange the World – UniTE to end Violence Against Women & Girls

"Break the Silence. When you witness violence against women and girls, do not sit back. Act"
Ban-ki moon.

25th November marked International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and the start of the 16 Days of Activism campaign which ran until 10th December, Human Rights Day.

Violence against women remains a disturbing reality throughout the world: 1 in 3 women experience violence in their lifetime, often at the hands of someone they know, love and trust. Of all women who were murdered in 2012, almost half were killed by intimate partners or family members.

Countless others have their lives destroyed, enduring physical, psychological and emotional damage. The economic cost is staggering: in 2009 in the UK the cost of domestic violence amounted to £16 billion! [Including service related costs, loss of economic output and human and emotional costs.]

That violence and abuse can be committed within the most intimate of **relationships and in the 'safety' of the home, reflects just how broken the world is. Let's be clear, this is not a** disturbing fact happening in some distant society, but here.

The shocking reality is that 7% of women and 5% of men experienced



domestic violence in England and Wales in the last year. However, these figures do not tell the full story as those suffering often do not, or cannot break their silence.

Some are not able to identify their experience as abuse, or even **unacceptable or not 'deserved'**. Often they have normalised and rationalised the situation, a common coping mechanism.

There is also the stigma within society and lack of understanding of the complexity of the issue and its impact. We can address this by educating ourselves and being open to talk about it.

So, how encouraging that BBC4's the Archers had the courage to create the Helen Titchener storyline. This was introduced following the creation in 2015 of the new offence of coercive control, culminating with Helen's acquittal for attempted murder of her

husband. The BBC were criticised by some fans for allowing a plot they deemed more suitable for Eastenders to infiltrate rural Ambridge, but I applaud them for challenging such stereotypes. The uncomfortable truth is that domestic violence and abuse can happen to anyone, male or female, and regardless of social, cultural and economic backgrounds.

It happened to me.

I am not an expert and can only speak from my own experience, however, the refusal to admit that domestic violence and abuse does **happen to 'people like us' contributes** to the problem. By dismissing our experience, it further isolates survivors from the help they need and can add to their feelings of guilt and shame. Often it requires someone or something outside the situation to break through.

I did not realise I had endured an abusive relationship until years after it had ended. For me, it was a poster in the toilet of a City law firm. It **described a 'good' day. The** realisation hit me hard and I almost broke down as I read. It was a pivotal moment for me, having **identified my 'hurt', slowly, step by step,** I was able to reach out and get the specialist help I needed.

I was fortunate enough to have strong, loving friends and family, who were, and continue to be, a lifeline to me. My sister in particular was always there for me, in ways beyond my comprehension at the time. No matter the drama, nor the miles between us, she was always there to listen, counsel and to love me. What

she did was to gently and patiently love me to a better place, never judging, but encouraging me to take small steps. I would wonder where she found her never-ending patience, love and wisdom. The answer was, and is, in Jesus.

I encourage you to commit similar acts of love, compassion and kindness to people you know who may be in difficulty, or even enduring abuse. Guide them to confide in someone or help them to get informed, or just be there for them in whatever way they need. Be patient, it takes time and perseverance.

The help I have received has varied over time as I faced the impact my experience has had on my life and relationships.

Domestic violence and abuse is a complex issue and impacts people differently, and not just the person enduring. Wider family members, the perpetrator, friends and the wider community also suffer. The economic impact is also significant, particularly the impact on public services.

Women's Aid's 'Change that Lasts' campaign seeks to address this, advocating a needs-based intervention at an early stage, comparing such costs (in the low thousands) to the current system (between tens of thousands to millions). The people working in our public services, schools, courts and government need more training and resources so that they are in a position to help, even when the individual may outwardly not want help.

(Continued on page 3)

Indeed, despite escalation and intervention, survivors are often unlikely to want to see someone they love arrested or punished. Other times, they just need to get on with rebuilding their lives and not endure further trauma of reliving their experience through the criminal justice system. As a result, justice is **not 'seen to be done'**. Consequently, a key role of the criminal justice system, in sending a strong message to society that domestic violence is unacceptable, is missing.

So, if not us, then who will take **action? Let's UNITE to put an end to violence against women and girls. Let's create a culture in which abuse and violence are not tolerated.**

Brothers and sisters in Christ, please also pray for everyone who is impacted by violence and abuse, for a community which does not tolerate violence and abuse but respects human life and basic human rights, and for national and local governments and authorities to prioritise resources and strategies to enable people to get help at an early stage.

If you, or someone you know, is or

has experienced domestic violence and abuse, do reach out. Confide in someone or connect with others via helplines/websites and know you are not alone.

I also encourage you to reach out to Jesus, rest secure in His loving embrace, and find peace and joy in Him. I did. Only when I came to know Jesus, did I truly started to heal; Jesus healed my hurt and my broken heart and soul.

I pray that He will protect you, guide you to safety, heal your hurt and mend your broken heart and soul. I pray that you will know Jesus, that you will lay your fears and your shame at His feet and find comfort in His love, His forgiveness and His grace.

He heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds (Psalm 147:3)

Sara Hamilton (volunteer ambassador for the Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence and Abuse, a charity that advises companies in addressing and mitigating the risk domestic violence poses to their company and employees.)

For more details:

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/take-action/16-days-of-activism>

For support:

Women's Aid: www.womensaid.org.uk

Refuge: refuge.org.uk

Respect: respect.uk.net

Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence and Abuse:
thecorporatealliance.co.uk

Central Baptist Church Football Club continues on

There are some changes to the squad this year as some regular faces have moved away, whilst new faces have quickly settled into the team.

Also, moving to Moulsham School's 3g pitch on a Monday night has certainly provided a bit more space for training, and moving to Melbourne for our home matches provides the opportunity to mix with other teams, rather than just the opposition on match day.

The bunch of individuals is now well and truly a team. It's a small squad and the majority of each starting 11 has been playing together for four years. The club provides a solid social group which is in many ways like church. It has a purpose. The management would like to make it more than just a bunch of friends, and over time we hope that the relationships deepen in the same way that those at church do.

I think we've successfully shown that having faith doesn't have to preclude passionate enjoyment of life and football, and that the differences in culture that we strive for are not merely to tick the box of playing in a church league, but something borne out in who we are. My hope is that we the church players will now be able to show that church is not just a

hobby, but closely related to how we act and how we view the world. I think that realisation is beginning to happen.

We don't choose exactly who we get to minister to, and it's by no means a walk in the park, especially if you lose by six goals! (Fortunately we won by six the last time).

In footballing terms it is never, ever, a dull match. In relationship terms, it feels like it's just the start and is also never, absolutely ever, dull.

If you like the sound of this, then please remember us in your prayers. If you want to get involved with the journey, or just get a bit of fitness, come along on a Monday night.

Our first match in the second round of the National Christian Cup is on Saturday 3rd December. Venue to be confirmed.

Why not come and see some of our church players in action?

Tim Acton



Christmas Past and Present

How traditional is our Christmas? According to the traditional song there are 12 days of Christmas and indeed our ancestors did celebrate Christmas for 12 days beginning on Christmas Day and ending on January 6th which became known as Twelfth Night. It was not all one long continuous party though. The main celebrations centred on Christmas Day, New Year's Day and Twelfth Night. The plot of Shakespeare's play "Twelfth Night" has nothing to do with Christmas at all and simply takes its title from the fact that it was written to be performed on the last day of the Christmas festivities.

In practice our Christmas celebrations follow a different timetable. Christmas Past started with Christmas Day. In some ways Christmas Present actually ends with Christmas Day which is the climax of weeks of preparations with shopping, cooking, putting up decorations, singing carols and going to parties. After Christmas Day everything starts to wind down. In fact, someone I know dashed to a big supermarket late on Christmas Eve for some last minute Christmas supplies only to be told that as far as the shop was concerned Christmas was already over. It had ended on December 24th!

Many of our traditions are much more recent than we think. In times past Advent, the weeks preceding Christmas Day, was seen as a sombre period. It was a time for soul searching and penitence. Christmas Eve in particular was a solemn fast day when no-one was allowed to eat meat, eggs or dairy produce.

Yet, there is one point at which the celebrations of Christmas Past meet Christmas Present and that is the growing

importance of the New Year as a significant date. When I was young (which is rather a long time ago now) New Year's Day wasn't even a bank holiday except in Scotland where the Presbyterian Church has encouraged Hogmanay because it viewed Christmas as a Popish festival. New Year only became a bank holiday in England on 1st January 1974. It is now hard to imagine life without it and even if you sneak off to bed early on New Year's Eve you will be woken up at midnight by a cacophony of fireworks, car horns and general celebration.

On one level it is of course quite arbitrary to decide that the New Year should begin on 1st January. In fact, for many centuries the official year did not begin until Lady Day, which is March 25th, nine months before Christmas Day when the Church celebrated the conception of Jesus.

This practice still affects us now; for when the calendar was adjusted in 1750 and eleven days were omitted, this way of calculating the start of the year moved into April which is why the tax year now begins on April 6th. It was the ancient Romans who began the year on 1st January and people continued to celebrate on this day even after the fall of the Roman Empire because it fitted well with the Christmas celebrations. So ultimately January 1st

triumphed as the accepted start of the year.

Now the Roman God Janus, who gives his name to January, had two faces, one looking forward and one looking backwards. Quite appropriate for New Year.

On the one hand, it is a time for looking back with its stress on "auld lang syne" On the other hand, it is a time for looking to the future and so we have developed a tradition of making New Year's Resolutions. Each year no doubt there are many of us who resolve to make some improvement in their lives - no smoking, less alcohol, more exercise, a better diet. It would be interesting to know how many resolutions last to the end of the month - let alone the end of the year. Old habits die hard.

However, there is one New Year's Resolution which can have a dramatic effect not only



on our lives but on the lives of other people that we will never even meet. Did you know that small-scale farmers produce 70% of the world's food but make up 50% of the world's hungriest people? When you see the Fairtrade Mark on a product, this is a guarantee

that the producer has received a fair price for his work which enables him to feed his family as well as an extra payment called the Social Premium which benefits his whole community. Yet Fairtrade products currently make up only 1% of the food sold in the UK.

If you make a New Year's Resolution to buy Fairtrade products wherever you see them, this has the potential to change the lives of millions of producers and their communities. This can play a vital role in ending the scandal of world hunger. It is a small change that can make a big difference. So please make it your New Year's Resolution to buy Fairtrade and make the world a fairer place.

Gill Parker

The Fairtrade stall at Central Baptist Church stocks many Fairtrade products that are not available on the High St. It is open on the third Sunday of each month after the morning and evening services and also on Tuesdays in term-time between 10:30am and 2:00pm.

You can also order Traidcraft products direct from traidcraft.co.uk

Fairtrade Walnut and Apricot Chocolate Slices



250g shortcrust pastry	50g unsalted butter (melted)
125g Fairtrade smooth apricot jam	75g plain flour
100g Fairtrade walnuts	150g Fairtrade dried apricots (soaked)
3 large free range eggs	250g Fairtrade 70% dark chocolate
175g Fairtrade soft brown sugar	

Preheat oven to 180/gas mark 4 and line a 20 x 30 cm cake tin with baking parchment

Roll out the pastry just a little bit bigger than the cake tin to allow for some shrinkage as the pastry cooks and use it to line the base of the tin. Bake the pastry for 15 - 20 mins or until it is golden brown. When cooked, leave it to cool in the tin, then spread the jam over the pastry.

Chop the walnuts finely in a food processor. Whisk the eggs and sugar until light and fluffy, then fold in the melted butter along with the sifted flour. Blend in the walnuts.

Pour this mixture over the pastry and spread out evenly. Return to the oven and bake for 25 - 30 mins until firm. Remove and leave to cool. Distribute the chopped apricots over the cake.

Melt the chocolate in a microwave or heatproof bowl over a pan of barely simmering water making sure the bowl doesn't touch the water. Using a large spoon, cover the cake with an even layer of melted chocolate.

Allow the chocolate to set before removing the cake from the tin and cutting into 12 slices with a sharp serrated knife.

This recipe is just one of those which can be found in the Green & Black's Ultimate Cookbook. All Green and Black's chocolate carries the Fairtrade Mark. All the ingredients are on sale at the church Fairtrade stall along with the Green and Black Cookbook.

Celebrate Christmas



Jesus, God's Gift

Why not join us for one of our special Christmas services?

Sunday 11th December

2:00 pm Children's Party for 2 - 11 year olds

(under 5s must be accompanied by an adult)

4:00 pm Carol Service for young families

Sunday 18th December

3:00 pm Christmas Outlook

A 45 minute celebration for seniors followed by Christmas tea

7:00 pm Carols by Candlelight for everybody

Enjoy a glass of mulled wine and a mince pie with us after the service

Christmas Eve Celebration

11:15 pm Midnight Service

A 50 minute service with Communion taking us into Christmas morning

Christmas Day Praise

10:00 am A 45 minute service celebrating the true meaning of Christmas

(children are invited to bring a present to show us)

Strictly!



Dazzling Days

Strictly Come Dancing is a sparkling sensation! I wonder what makes the show so sensationally successful. Perhaps it is the timing of the show? As winter approaches and we long to hibernate from the dark days and chilling weather, a television show emerges which lights up our screen with an extravagant amount of light, glitter and sparkle; dazzling away the dark nights. Strictly Come Dancing is a light discovered in winter which makes the sudden shift in seasons seem almost appealing.

I wonder, too, if the fact that we can fully immerse in the world of Strictly, accessing it daily with two mesmerising weekend shows in addition to weekday bites in the form of the joyful and uplifting world of Strictly: It Takes Two, makes the entire concept more engaging. Wonderfully, the show is also

accessible for all; whether you are six or 96 – it is easy for everyone to fall in love with Strictly Come Dancing. It certainly provides light and joy in the dark winter months, is available every day, and accessible to everyone. **That's a set of pretty perfect ingredients for a television show.**

When we think of light, it's easy to be reminded of the words of Jesus: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8: 12 (NIV)

Jesus is indeed the light of the world; He is the light that shines into the darkness within our lives. He is waiting for each one of us; to guide us and to light our path every single day.

The majority of lights are extinguished or diminished at some point - Strictly Come Dancing, for example, will be gone by the new

year; yet dark days will remain. We will have to seek a new light in our lives and there is only ever one who will truly sustain us through the remainder of winter and for all the seasons to come – the one light that is always on, shining brightly - the guiding light to us all. Thankfully, **Jesus' light and promise is for now and always.**

Shining Stars

Like the Strictly stars, we too can be shown our true light – our ability to shine, to learn and grow and step out of our comfort zone, confidently emerging to dazzle all those around us. Many fans of Strictly love to see people grow and develop as individuals and performers. One is often left wondering, as the show progresses, why some of these **celebrities haven't performed in this way before** – some of them seem born to dance and perform as they light up the stage they have been given. An evident growth of confidence is confirmed week on week as they allow their light to stream into our homes and hearts.

The inspiration they radiate is

mirrored in the direct teaching that Jesus gave

"...let your light shine before others..." *Matthew 5:16 (NIV).*

Jesus truly longs to switch the light within each of us on when we accept His loving invite to begin a lifelong friendship with Him.

As the contestants on Strictly respond **to the 'strictly experience'** – the light and joy around them - they develop in understanding and confidence; ready to perform to the world and show them who they are. This is exactly what Jesus wants for us. He wants us to engage with the light and joy He provides; develop in our understanding and relationship with Him to become confident Christians who can let our own light shine before others – showing them who we are in Christ.

"For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ." *2 Corinthians 4:6.*

Naomi Rowlands

Want to find out more about Christianity?

If you would like to find out more why not join our next Alpha course?

This is an opportunity for anyone to explore **the Christian faith. It's relaxed, low-key, friendly and fun. It's a place where no question is too simple or too difficult.**

To find out more email alpha@centralbaptistchelmsford.org



Jokes in the Bible?

To many people the Bible is a rather forbidding volume, large and not easy to understand, and an unlikely place to find humour, but there's a surprising amount if you know where to look.

As a start, the Book of Proverbs is good for making us smile and think at the same time. For instance:

"Those who are sure of themselves do not talk all the time; after all, even a fool may be thought wise and intelligent if he stays quiet..." [17:27-28]

"Why is a clever person wise? Because he knows what to do. Why is a stupid person foolish? Because he only thinks he knows." [14:8]

"Watch out for people who grin and wink at you; they have thought of something evil." [16:30]

"The first to speak in court always seems right until his opponent begins to question him." [18:17]

"Better to eat vegetables with people you love than to eat the finest meat where there is hate." [15:17]

"The customer always complains that the price is too high, but then he goes off and brags about the bargain he got." [20:14]

"If you answer a silly question, you are just as silly as the person who asked it; give a silly answer to a silly question, and the one who asked it will realise that he's not as clever as he thinks." [26:4-5]

"Getting involved in an argument that is none of your business is like going down the street and grabbing a dog by the ears." [26:17]

"Someone who misleads someone else and then claims that he was only joking is like a mad person playing with a deadly weapon." [26:18-19]

"You might as well curse your friends as wake them up early in the morning with a loud greeting." [27:14]

"A man can inherit a house and money from his parents, but only the Lord can give him a sensible wife." [19:14]

And my favourite:

"An honest answer is a sign of true friendship." [24:26] -- If somebody criticises or disagrees with you, they may be trying to help you.

The Bible also has some moments of very black humour. For instance, during Jesus's time, the religious authorities want to get rid of him as they see him as a threat; they can't just fix this themselves so they need to persuade the ruling Romans that he's a criminal and eliminate him (this is where Pontius Pilate came in). Some representatives of the religious authorities take Jesus to the Roman governor's palace, but won't actually go in themselves as entering an unfamiliar building would make them 'ritually unclean' and thus unable to

perform their duties, which would have been particularly awkward as there was a major religious festival under way at the time. So... they want to have a man put to death illegally, but still stick, er, religiously to their own laws... [John 18:28]

As ever, the Bible includes little comments like this to tell us something: don't get hung up on rituals, it's reasons and motivation which matter. And then when Jesus is put to death, Roman soldiers throw dice to see who gets his clothes [John 19:23-24]. Seems too trivial to mention, but it actually fulfils a prediction made earlier in the Bible, back in a psalm: "they gamble for my clothes" [Ps 22:18].

The Bible also includes some wonderful turns of phrase, such as: "Heroes of the wine bottle! Brave and fearless when it comes to mixing drinks!" -- this was part of a warning against debauchery. [Isaiah 5:22] (Wine features prominently in the Bible, with grapes and vineyards often used as metaphors for growth and harvesting, and 'binge drinking' is obviously not a modern invention.)

If the Bible does seem forbidding, a decent modern translation can help if you don't want to grapple with Ye Olde text like "I will give thanks to Thee, O Lord, for though Thou wast angry with me, Thy anger turned away, and Thou didst comfort

me" [Isaiah 12:1, RSV].

The examples above are from the Good News Bible [© American Bible Society] which offers a lively read; there's quite a choice of versions to suit all tastes.

The Bible contains eternal truths, but language can change a lot in a few decades, while historical research is constantly improving our knowledge. On the other hand, human nature is much the same over the centuries, as the examples above show.

A final thought: "For we fix our attention, not on things that are seen, but on things that are unseen. What can be seen lasts only for a time, but what cannot be seen lasts forever." [2Cor 4:18]

Chris Drewe

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GOOD THING I FOUND YOU GIDEON ... IT SEEMS SOMEONE HAS BEEN HIDING ALL YOUR BIBLES IN HOTEL ROOMS

Our fascination with history never wanes. Colossal amounts of books, television programmes, films and days out are dedicated to the remarkable events of the past. Opportunities to step back into history seem to be becoming more commonplace as our fascination with the past persists in its prominence. There have indeed been many opportunities over the past year to step back in time with events held by Wintershall.

They are the amazing charitable trust behind the mesmerising The Passion of Jesus production which took place again this year on Good Friday in Trafalgar Square. Later in the year, they performed The Life of Christ at their own estate during the summer. Their dramatic performances which engage their audiences with events from history shall continue this Christmas as they offer the chance to experience a nativity performance at the Wintershall estate!

In fact, all over the country groups are preparing for action as they too shall be representing the historical events of over 2000 years ago to bring history to life for you. Groups plan to present the events of and **surrounding Jesus' birth with carefully** chosen actors, costumes, and sets. Excitedly, some performances will even be incorporating actual animals! **It's the perfect opportunity to step** back in time and witness events

described in the historical accounts of **Jesus' life in the gospels of Matthew** and Luke.



Searching for live nativities online provides an eclectic and exciting range of choices so all of us can have the opportunity to become as close as we will ever be to this life changing historical event. As we travel around the country visiting relatives this December, we can be sure of finding plenty of options to engage with **the events of Christ's** birth. These events will surely be loved by the whole family.

Get online now and discover **what's happening near you or your** relatives this December.

Naomi Rowlands

A selection of traditional and modern Christmas prayers

Father,
We contemplate the birth of your Son.
He was born of the Virgin Mary
and came to live among us.
May we receive forgiveness and mercy
Through Our Lord Jesus Christ, your
Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the
Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen

God of love and mercy,
help us to follow the example of Mary,
always ready to do your will.
At the message of an angel
she welcomed your eternal Son
and, filled with the light of your Spirit,
she became the temple of your Word,
who lives and reigns with you and the
Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen

We worship the birth of a baby,
and in doing so acknowledge
God reaching down to touch the earth
and bless it once again;
to walk within the garden
as once he did in Eden.
We worship the birth of a Saviour,
an infant in whose fragility
lay all the signs of sacrifice;
born in humility,
growing into his kingdom
as Scripture's Promised One.
We worship Jesus, Saviour and King.
Amen

You gave your all to the world
in the bleakness of that stable.
Love was born that day
Pure love
Undiluted
Poured out for all
who call on Your name
Such Grace
Undeserved
deserves a response
in the life that we lead.
Forgive our ingratitude
for all you have done,
draw us to your Word,
give us a new song to sing,
that will resonate throughout this world.
And begin with us today. Amen

John Birch 2016 (faithandworship.com)

John Birch 2016 (faithandworship.com)

Loving Father, Help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children, and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

(A Christmas Prayer by Robert Louis Stevenson)

Church Diary ~ Main Events

Key dates to put in your diary

<i>Sun 11th Dec</i>	Carols for Young Families 4:00pm
<i>Sun 18th Dec</i>	Carols by Candlelight 7:00pm
<i>Sat 24th Dec</i>	Christmas Eve Midnight Service 11:15pm
<i>Sun 25th Dec</i>	Christmas Day Praise 10:00am
<i>Sun 1st Jan</i>	New Year's Day Service 10:00am
<i>Mon 16th Jan</i>	Alpha Course starts

Regular Events

<i>Monday</i>	Ladies Circuit Training 8:00pm Badminton Club 8:00pm
<i>Tuesday</i>	Baby & Toddler Group 10:00am JUNCTION: CLUB - youth club for any young person in school years 7-13 7:00 - 9:00pm
<i>Thursday</i>	Girls' & Boys' Brigades

Check our website for latest details.

We'd love to hear from you.

To get in touch you can email us at: info@centralbaptistchelmsford.org, call us on 01245 264163 or pop in and see us at: Central Baptist Church, Victoria Road South, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1LN

If you'd like to contribute to Connect or have any comments then you can email us at: connect@centralbaptistchelmsford.org

