

# connect

**“To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable, because God has forgiven the inexcusable to you.”**

Inside this issue:

**The challenge of forgiving others**

**Future events**

**Thoughts on possessions**

**Central employs an evangelist**

**Faith in the workplace**

**Backing the Basics in Bangladesh**

**Family events**

---

**Central Baptist Church,**

Victoria Road South,  
Chelmsford, Essex,  
CM1 1LN.

## THE CHALLENGE OF FORGIVING OTHERS

**T**here is nothing more difficult than forgiving those who have deeply hurt us. Yet Jesus taught his disciples to pray “Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us”.

Not without reason St Augustine described this second petition in the Lord’s Prayer as ‘the terrible petition’. It is terrible, because if we are not careful, we may be so bitter that we end up asking God not to forgive others.

General Oglethorpe, to whom the young John Wesley was chaplain in the American colony of Georgia, once said to Wesley with great pride: “I never forgive”. Wesley replied: “Then I hope, sir, you never sin”.

To experience God’s forgiveness, we ourselves must first forgive. What a challenge that is!

Forgiving is not easy. However, I find it helpful to realise that to forgive is not to excuse. God, for instance, has forgiven us, but has never excused us. God could not and did not shut his eyes to our faults and failings.

Instead he took our sin so seriously, that he sent his Son to die for us.

---

*To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable, because God has forgiven the inexcusable to you.*

---

The fact is that forgiving others does not minimise the wrong they have done. In the words of CS Lewis: “Many people seem to think that if you ask them to forgive someone who has cheated or bullied them, you are trying to make out that there was really no cheating or no bullying. But if that were so, there would be nothing to forgive. ... To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable, because God has forgiven the inexcusable to you”.

I find it significant that the Greek word for ‘to forgive’ literally means to ‘let go, to allow to depart, to dismiss’. In other words, forgiving others never means saying ‘It doesn’t matter’. Rather it means looking at injustice in the face, allowing all our anger and pain to surface, and only then letting go.

Sometimes it takes guts as well as grace to forgive. I think of Robin Oake, a good friend of mine, who was one of my deacons when I was a minister of Altrincham Baptist Church, but who then moved on to the Isle of Man where he became the Chief Police Constable. Robin’s only son, Stephen, a Special Branch officer in Manchester, was killed by a terrorist in a police raid which went wrong. At a press conference the next day a journalist asked: ‘Mr Oake, what do you think about the man who killed your son?’ and received a startling reply: ‘I don’t know the man or the circumstances but from my heart I forgive him’.

Forgiving others can be a real challenge. To learn more, do make sure you are at the morning service on Sunday 4th October at which Robin will be speaking about forgiveness. (See page 2 for more details.)

*Paul Beasley-Murray*

---

## Harvest Services

### 20th September

Harvest Services at 10:00am and 6pm. The morning service will take the form of all-age worship, while our new minister Nicholas Tuohy will be preaching at the evening service. Harvest offerings will be going to Backing the Basics in Bangladesh. (See article on page 6.)



## connect to future events

### Three events led by guest speakers are coming up in the autumn. Read on...

**“Awesome. I hear some of the songs and I get goose bumps” – Rick Easter, Premier Radio**

Songwriting lecturer by day and acoustic-guitar-wielding singer songwriter by night, **Danny Cope** has been writing, recording and performing his own songs for 15 years now. With four solo albums under his belt, he plays to anyone who'll have him anywhere they want him! With a passion for writing 'real' songs that communicate his faith in an everyday way, he writes jazz-tinged, acoustic-guitar-led songs that have been described as 'worship songs for the car.' He has been likened to Jack Johnson, John Mayer and James Taylor on more than a few occasions. Here's what various people have said about him:



A breath of fresh air – Youthwork Magazine

All the tracks ooze a highly infectious joy on a par with lazing on a tropical beach without a care in the world. 5/5 – Cross Rhythms

[www.dannycoppe.com](http://www.dannycoppe.com)

**“I don't know the man...but from my heart I forgive him”**

These were the words spoken at a press conference by retired police chief Robin Oake, when asked “What do you think about the man who killed your son?” Stephen Oake, a Special Branch detective, was stabbed to death by a terrorist in 2003. His killer, Kamel Bourgass, was jailed for life in June 2004. Robin later said about the press conference: "It took an awful long time to answer [that question], I know the silence probably seemed longer to me than others, but I was praying ... 'Lord, give me the right words here' and that's why I said I forgive him."



Former chief constable of the Isle of Man and author of ***Father, Forgive*** and ***Gilbert Was Wrong***, Robin will be sharing his experience of forgiving his son's killer at a Sunday morning guest service. He will also be reflecting on his long, eventful career and sharing stories, from the inspiring to the bizarre, at a special dinner on the Saturday night.

***Father, Forgive*** (2008) and ***Gilbert Was Wrong*** (2009) are both published by Authentic Media.

**An evening with Danny Cope**, Sunday 27th September, 6:00pm.

**Dinner with Robin Oake: A policeman's lot is a happy one**, Saturday 3rd October, 7:00pm.

**Guest service with Robin Oake: Father, Forgive**, Sunday 4th October, 10:00am.

All events take place at Central Baptist Church, Victoria Road South. For more details or to book tickets, contact Emma Maggs in the church office or email: [emmamaggs@centralbaptist.f9.co.uk](mailto:emmamaggs@centralbaptist.f9.co.uk).

# connect to possessions

In September Nicholas and Amanda Tuohy will be leaving their home in Australia and joining Central Baptist Church - Nicholas will be our Associate Minister for the next year. Nicholas and Amanda share some thoughts on the prospect of moving.

## Possessions...

**M**oving house is a challenge. It gives you a rare moment of clarity on the place of possessions in one's life. We are definitely not hoarders and probably travel pretty light in regards to the average Australian.

However, Amanda and I have concluded: we have too many things! The subtle thing is that you only bring in one to two items at a time into your house over a long period of time. But when you have to get the whole lot out in a few weeks - then you discover things like that Chinese tea set in the back of the cupboard you won at a Kris Kringle party in 1995. You have never used it, but kept it just in case you had an unexpected visit from a high ranking official from Beijing.

And why do we need 30 cups and mugs? Yes, there are a couple of times a year we may need that many. But can't we just hire them or provide paper ones? And then there are the many thoughtful and kind gifts such as pungently scented candles, obscure board games, and a matching set of hand-painted 'somethings' which have been in the cupboard gathering dust.

So, there was only one course of action: a Garage Sale (actually, e-bay came in pretty handy too!) We are not sure what the UK equivalent is, but you must have them. You haul out all your excess and unwanted items, place prices on them, advertise, open the doors, and in they flock.

It was a big success. But why wouldn't it be? Who could resist a CD of Gregorian chanting for \$1 or go past a set of outdated cooking books for \$5? Scented candle for \$.50c? Sold! Someone wanted to pay \$5 for a lamp that was held together by sticky tape, but I couldn't do it. I threw it in free with the \$2 Royal Doulton plate (not the one with hand-painted periwinkles).

In this rare moment of heightened awareness about living simply and scaling down possessions we have promised each other to change our ways



**A couple of locals in our backyard**

(easier said than done!). And did not Jesus, that very light traveller himself, have some pertinent words to say on such a subject:

***"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."***

***Matthew 6:19-21***

Another time he said to a man who was fearful of not getting his equal share in an inheritance:

***Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." Luke 12:15***

It does feel good to downsize and take stock of one's possessions. We hope and pray it lasts! We look forward to meeting you soon. By the way, when you do come over for a cup of tea, you may need to bring your own cup. And please, no scented candles for house warming gifts!

*Nicholas and Amanda*

## Central Baptist employs an evangelist

At the church meeting in July, the members voted to employ Emma Maggs for one year as a part-time evangelist. In this article Emma writes about her sense of calling and how God has guided her over the last two years.

When I became a Christian at 23, with no previous church background, my life changed dramatically. Suddenly I was forced to re-evaluate all the beliefs and attitudes I'd had for years, and get used to a new church culture, with unfamiliar language, rituals and assumptions.

I struggled for a long time with doubts – was I really a 'proper' Christian? When would I be 'found out' and chucked out of the church for asking too many awkward questions? Gradually my faith deepened and matured, and I started to see that my background and my questioning attitude made me ideally suited to helping people exploring the Christian faith, and challenging the assumptions of people who had rejected belief in God.

In other words, I realised I was an evangelist. Ever since my very early days as a Christian I have had a sense of being drawn to some kind of Christian leadership, and in the last two years I have had the opportunity to test out this feeling, first as church intern, and then as a volunteer working for a number of outreach projects in east London.

Figuring out where and how God wants me to work as an evangelist has proved very difficult, however. Unfortunately the job in east London didn't work out - I found most of the work unfulfilling and didn't feel that God was in what I was doing. As a result, I left in

February this year, and my confidence took a huge knock.

It has been a confusing, frustrating and very painful time. I have found myself thinking about the Israelites wandering in the wilderness for forty years, and these words from Deuteronomy:

***Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. Deuteronomy 8:2***

I wondered whether it had all been so hard because God was testing me, preparing me in some way. Of course, God already knows what is in my heart - but do I know? My experiences in London taught me a lot about myself and my calling, not least the fact that I

can fail, and that God loves me anyway, and will pick me up, dust me off, and use me again.

As I reflected at length on my experiences, I felt more and more that working as a church-based evangelist would probably be the best fit for me. Then the church leadership came to me and said they were looking for a part-timer to focus on evangelism, and would I be interested? The job description they showed me was right up my street - running the Alpha course, developing opportunities for young families and older people to learn about Jesus and trying to make the church more accessible for people who wouldn't usually come along. I felt that this job was a gift from God as it suited both me and the church so well. I'm really looking forward to getting stuck in, and I'm excited about the future.

Emma Maggs

## What's it all about?

If you would like to find out more about being a Christian why not join our next Alpha course, which 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.

Our next Alpha course starts on **5th October** with an Introductory Supper at 7pm. Register now with Emma Maggs [emmamaggs@centralbaptist.f9.co.uk](mailto:emmamaggs@centralbaptist.f9.co.uk) to ensure you have a place.



## Faith in the workplace

**Connect asked Ruth Felgate, one of the church's members, to tell us about her work and how her Christian faith is relevant to it.**

I qualified as an art therapist in 2001. Art therapy encourages clients to express emotion and explore their problems using a wide range of art materials, enabling positive change and personal growth. The intention is not a focus on the artistic skills of the client or diagnostic assessment of the client's image, but their engagement in a creative personal process to effect change and growth on a personal level through the use of art materials in a safe and facilitating environment. The relationship between the therapist and the client is of central importance, but art therapy differs from other psychological therapies in that it is a three way process between the client, the therapist and the image or artefact. Thus it offers the opportunity for expression and communication and can be particularly helpful to people who find it hard to express their thoughts and feelings verbally. A registered art therapist or art psychotherapist (these titles can be interchangeable), has undertaken approved training at postgraduate level, and is registered with the Health Professionals Council in order to practice in the UK.

I began my journey as an art therapist initially on a freelance basis in Reading, Berks, in mainstream Primary and Secondary schools, with children experiencing difficulties functioning in school and others with emotional problems. At that time I was also working in a pupil referral unit for children who had been excluded from school, whilst doing individual pieces of work for social services.

After moving to Essex in 2002 I began working as an art therapist for the Child and Family Consultation Service, which is an NHS service offering assessment and treatment services within a multidisciplinary team. Services address a range of significant behavioural, emotional and developmental difficulties experienced by children and young people.

In 2003 I found my present position at Foster Care Associates, a private fostering agency. Its aim is to provide quality foster care, placing the needs of the 'looked after child' firmly at the centre. Foster



**Under pressure - by Ruth Felgate**

carers play a vital role in supporting and nurturing these children. I am the Principal Therapist and manage the therapy service over Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk and Peterborough; I supervise the therapists that work in these offices. Our focus as therapists is to make foster placements more successful and to help young people have positive relationships and experiences. We work within a 'Team Parenting' model where all of the multidisciplinary team support both child and carer, reinforcing the role of the carer and encouraging other professionals to work together in the child's best interests. We offer consultations to carers and other professionals, we facilitate workshops on particular issues and run supportive groups and deliver individual therapy where appropriate.

I have always felt this type of work to be my mission and God always gives me the strength to tolerate the difficult nature of this work; working with children that have endured abuse and experienced neglect. This job can be stressful and demoralising at times necessitating the need for good external supervision and I have found that my faith gives me hope for a better outcome for the children placed in foster care. However it is always enjoyable and rewarding because of the amazing children I encounter on a daily basis.

*Ruth Felgate*

# connect to Bangladesh

## Backing the Basics in Bangladesh

**B**angladesh, the land of the Bangla people, is a relatively young country, gaining independence from Pakistan only in 1971. Its population is 162 million, many of whom are very poor. Bangladesh is 90% Muslim, but Baptists have been there for over 200 years, since William Carey came to India as the pioneer Baptist missionary, working in Dinjapur which is now in north Bangladesh. Operation Agri was established by the Baptist Men's Movement (BMM) in 1961 and supports rural and urban development projects in three continents, attacking the basic causes of poverty amongst some of the least fortunate people in the world.



Painted green and contaminated ones are painted red, and deeper wells are drilled to provide safe water for cooking and drinking.

Another project supported by Operation Agri is to run pre-schools, as even though the government has greatly increased primary schooling, many of the poorest children do not attend school or drop out. The pre-schools are for children aged 4-6 and they teach basic numeracy, the alphabet in both Bangla and English, songs,

games and health education. Children who attend are then well prepared for government primary schools and more likely to attend.

We will be looking at some of the projects that they support on Harvest Sunday. One project supports the drilling of wells, bringing clean water and reducing sickness. However, many of the wells that have been dug have now been discovered to draw water from layers containing arsenic, and one project tests such wells: arsenic-free wells are

This is just a snapshot of the work that Operation Agri is doing in Bangladesh. To find out more and to support their work through our Harvest Thank Offering, come to one of our Harvest services on Sunday 20th September.

# connect to family events

### **Treasure Trail**

Sat 12th September

4 - 6pm

Meet on the Green at Writtle - finishing back on the Green for fish & chips!

### **Fireworks Fun**

Sat 7th November

Traditional fun with a bonfire, sparklers & food.

(venue to be confirmed)

### **Christmas Party**

Sun 13th December

Children's party with craft & games, followed by a Carol Service for the whole family, with food afterwards.

If you are interested in any of the events please contact:

Sue Parrotte, Children's Worker

01245 264163 option 5

[sueparrotte@centralbaptist.f9.co.uk](mailto:sueparrotte@centralbaptist.f9.co.uk)

## Bangladesh

Sheikh Hasina and the Awami League were elected to government at the beginning of the year following some years of military rule in Bangladesh.

They have an opportunity to demonstrate wisdom, honesty and a fair government for all the peoples of Bangladesh, regardless of ethnicity or religion.

### Pray for :

Government leaders to work for the good of all, taking the long-term view of what is needed to improve everyday life for the people.

The Bangladesh Baptist Church Union, working hard in outreach to previously untouched groups through evangelism and development work.

## Guinea

The role of the medical work in the forest region of eastern Guinea is vital as it is the regional centre for the national leprosy and TB prevention and treatment programme.

There is also a vitally important role in addressing the challenges of those affected by HIV and Aids. The Christian Church is at the forefront of this work in the community.

### Pray for :

Guinean churches and pastors as they worship today in what is often a hostile environment to Christianity.

The development of small projects in the villages as relatively little practical help can go a long way in making a real difference in a family's life.



(Extracts from BMS prayer diary  
[www.bmsworldmission.org](http://www.bmsworldmission.org))

## Church Diary ~ Main Events

### Key dates to put in your diary for 2009

Sat 12th & Sun 13th Sept

Visit of Arthur & Louise Brown

Sun 20th Sept Harvest Services

Sun 27th Sept Baptismal Service at 10:00am  
Guest service with Danny Cope at 6:00pm

Sun 4th Oct Guest service with Robin Oake

Fri 30th Oct to Sun 1st Nov

Encounter Weekend Away

Sat 31st Oct

Alternative Halloween Party

Sun 1st Nov

Thanksgiving service for loved ones at 10:00am

Fri 13th to Sun 15th Nov

Youth Weekend Away

Sun 22 Nov

International Evening with Kingsley Appiaygei at 6:00pm

## Band of Brothers

### A series of evening events for men:

15th Oct Bowling

12th Nov Snooker

10th Dec Tramp Supper

## Events for Ladies

Monday evenings at 8pm for circuit training at the church with a qualified fitness instructor.

## We'd love to hear from you.

To get in touch you can email us at [info@centralbaptist.f9.co.uk](mailto:info@centralbaptist.f9.co.uk), call us on 01245 264163 or pop in and see us at Central Baptist Church, Victoria Road South, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1LN. [www.centralbaptistchelmsford.org.uk](http://www.centralbaptistchelmsford.org.uk)

