



CENTRAL/*Talk*

Winter/Spring 2015

The newsletter of the Central Baptist Association



Colin Pye was inducted on the evening of November 11th as the third Regional Minister in Central Baptist Association at an inspiring service at Mount Pleasant Baptist church, Northampton.

Drawn from all parts of the Association, about 150 people shared in the event, including a

coachload from Little Kingshill, where Colin had previously been in ministry. There was representation from the other major ecumenical partners and the Rt Revd Peter Doyle, Roman Catholic Bishop of Northampton, brought a warm welcome on behalf of the ecumenical visitors.

Worship was sensitively led by the Revd Paul Lavender of Mount Pleasant Baptist church and a worship band. The service blended formality and spontaneity. Graham Clarke and Carol Murray led the act of induction, which also included commitments from Colin, Geoff Colmer and Stephen Copson to work together as a team and to serve the churches as we all walk together in ministry and mission.

The Revd Ian Green of Amersham Free Church gave the address with wisdom, humour and insight, and concluded his sermon with these words:

“ you probably feel the task before you is a pretty big one. You would, of course, not be alone if that was your way of thinking this evening. After his enthronement as Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey reflected on the moment he was placed in the chair of St Augustine. If you’ve visited Canterbury Cathedral you’ll know it’s an

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enormous stone like throne and he said: I sat there and thought, there's room enough for two – and at that very moment I realised that God was there, sitting beside me in the chair – I wasn't alone.

Colin, you are not alone in the task for which we commission you this night – you have the love of Netty, the prayers of your friends and the sustaining presence of God – and we pray that you will be very conscious and encouraged by this support around you in coming days. And in the journey we share together may God go on surprising and thrilling us that – in the words of Jonah, he is a God of compassion, grace and mercy. So may the blessing, strengthening, peace and joy of God be yours this night in the name of The Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”

Remember in your prayers Colin and Annette as they settle into their new home in Yardley Gobion. Welcome him to your meetings and services. Invite him to share with you his enthusiasm and passions. Be a partner with him in sharing good news and supporting one another. And may we all be enriched in the service of God in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.



Science for
Ministers – An
Association Day
Workshop

12th May 2015
10am – 3.30pm

Loughton BC

How many Baptist Ministers do you know who are interested in things scientific? More than you might think! In a survey of ministers in the Hertfordshire Forum, a third had a degree in science and 95% percent thought that keeping up with science was important. And yet, only 10% felt they engaged with issues of science and faith during training for

ministry. Among those attending the Footsteps training, even more had a background in science – half!

So was birthed the idea of a day conference for ministers in the CBA to help them grow in confidence in engaging with areas of science that they might meet in everyday ministry and mission in the local church and beyond.

Held at Loughton Baptist Church in Milton Keynes, speakers come from among ministers in the Association along with others in the CBA churches with backgrounds in research, with topics ranging from how science works, to what makes us human, climate change and chaos.

More details will be posted out to ministers in the New Year, but to express early interest contact Dave Gregory (Croxley Green BC) on dave@croxleybaptist.co.uk. The cost is expected to be £10.

CENTRAL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION ASSEMBLY & AGM

at Whaddon Way Church,
Bletchley

JUNE 20th 2015

with Revd Lynn Green ,
General Secretary of the
Baptist Union of Great Britain



WERE YOU READY FOR CHRISTMAS?

At Sandy Baptist, just before Christmas, there was a Christmas Pudding Drive run by Arise Ministries. Basically a take on a 'Beetle Drive', each person rolls a dice and different numbers correspond to the different elements of the pudding, which they then have to draw. Whoever completes their pudding first wins that round. Simple.

Ed Jones of Arise noted, "*What was so encouraging was that those who came all had a connection with the church in one way or another, yet the majority of those connections were ones that currently would be described as 'fringe connections', for example people who come to the drop-in that the church run.*

It was in many ways a chaotic afternoon, with a constant noise filling the hall, but that said the atmosphere was brilliant and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves, plus it was a great opportunity for the church to build stronger links with those who came and something of the heart of the Christmas message to be shared throughout the afternoon".

On the Sunday morning, adults were banished to the foyer and children in the worship space were invited to head off on **The Journey to the Centre of the Christmas Pudding**. As Ed Jones said, "*I was just so excited by the willingness to turn things upside down and in a practical sense give the children the space they needed – something that from time to time at least would send such a powerful message in terms of the value we place upon the children in our midst.*"

Without a doubt it was a great weekend, totally exhausting, but encouraging in so

many ways. I'm excited to see how the church moves forward working amongst the children and with some brilliant ideas in the pipeline for 2015, am praying that God will continue to bless all involved and do amazing things".

If you'd like to know how Arise Ministries can support you in your ministry amongst children, particularly in terms of how to reach out to the community you are a part of <http://www.ariseministries.org.uk/>



NEW QUESTIONS? WHOSE ANSWERS?

Our world and our lives change at an ever faster pace, but how does church respond to this change? Are new ways of being church possible? If so, what might they look like?

mission shaped intro helps people to reconnect with the communities they are called to serve and to re-imagine the forms of church that are needed for the 21st century. It takes you on a creative and reflective journey looking at the need for new ways of being church.

Featuring six 90- or 120-minute sessions which include creative activities, film clips, presentations, discussion, worship and prayer, *msi* is ideal for those starting from scratch as well as those whose thinking is more developed or thinking about joining the Mission Shaped Ministry course.

msi is available with a free registration from

<http://course.missionshapedministry.org/login/index.php>

Films, faith and radio

My father was taken to the cinema twice a week by his mother when he was a small boy, and as soon as I was old enough, he took me too. Together with the family films of the sixties and seventies, I also grew up watching on television the black and white films of the thirties and forties that my Dad had watched at the cinema. From my early teens, I can remember reading *Superman* comics and noticing that comparisons could be made between the *Superman* story and the life of Jesus. Since then, parallels, analogies and symbols seem to have leapt out at me.

When I was in Oxford, I was a contributor to Radio Oxford where I got to talk about the spirituality of *Doctor Who* on a regular basis. Having moved to St Albans, the late Ian Pearce invited me on to *Melting Pot* – the Sunday morning religious programme on Three Counties Radio – to talk about spiritual themes at the cinema and, yes, *Doctor Who* again. Ian was sadly missed when he died suddenly a few years ago.

Peter Kerridge, the CEO of the Premier Radio Group and a colleague in ministry more than twenty years earlier, asked me to come on the Breakfast Show and review films from a Christian perspective. I've been doing this on a monthly basis now for five years and it's an enjoyable gig.

The preparation is mainly spending time watching films – a dirty job, but someone has to do it! I get to go to previews in London, although this is expensive in travel cost as well as time and so I try to review films that have just been released at the local cinemas.

Finding Biblical themes can be tricky, but some of the most common themes in film

plots – e.g. salvation, redemption and retribution – are themes that we can find in scripture. I find that this is a far more rewarding way of looking at films than watching films that are more obviously 'Christian'.

Radio work is generally live and this can be a daunting prospect. However, if you are offered the opportunity, do take it up. Presenters on local radio have hours of airtime to fill and willing interviewees are generally welcome. Most local presenters are not looking to catch you out and want you to feel comfortable as this will make for a better show for them. It is generally a good idea to have an idea of what you want to say and the odd note – names, dates etc – can be helpful. It's not a great idea to have a script – as this will sound stilted.

In a recent children's film one character says to another, "My Mom says I should just be myself". The other boy says, "That would be OK if you were someone else." So young and yet so cynical – but 'Mom' is probably right. Just be yourself.

Simon Carver, Dagnall Street BC, St Albans



Who are Christians Against Poverty? (CAP)

Our service literally saves lives. It keeps families together, relieves stress, restores health, keeps families in their homes, provides friendship and can connect people to church and to the God that loves them.

Combining CAP's expertise with the love and message of the church is a life transforming mix. Every year CAP helps over 27,000 people to get out of debt and see 700 people become Christians through our Debt Help work as well as 10,000 people benefiting from our CAP Money Course.



CAP at Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, Northampton

Eight years ago a group of us visited the Leicester Christians Against Poverty Centre, where we got a taste of what God was doing for people in debt. We saw how God was saving people through the work of CAP and we were enthused. However it wasn't until February 2014, when four of us went to London to a CAP partnership day, that God said yes, now was the time!

After a wonderfully miraculous gift of £9000 we believed this indeed was the time and after getting through my interview I was sent off to CAP headquarters to train as a Debt Coach.

On 2nd November the Northampton Centre was launched and in 5 weeks I had 5 clients.

I visit people in their own home, CAP headquarters negotiate with creditors and supports people right up until they are debt free. On top of this, the whole service is free of charge and available to anyone regardless of age, faith, gender or background.

My clients find it hard to believe that there is a way out of their money problems, but I can help offer them a solution that really works. There **is** hope and CAP **can** help them.

I have a wonderful team of pray-ers, visitors and befrienders for whom I thank God.

God is continuing to work His miracles in so many ways and I give Him the praise of my heart!

To find out more, call Christians Against Poverty's freephone number **0800 328 0006** or visit **www.capuk.org**

SAFEGUARDING

Central Baptist Association is organising a morning seminar on Safeguarding of children & young people for new workers & others interested on Saturday March 21st at Walsworth Road Baptist church, Hitchin



TWINNING

For the past thirteen years, our Association has twinned with the Association of Baptist Churches in Israel. During this time good relationships have developed with this small group of Arabic speaking churches. Situated mostly in northern Israel, they have links with Messianic Believers and with Palestinian churches in the West Bank. They live with the tough challenge of being "a minority within a minority within a minority" - as Evangelicals (5% within the traditional churches) as Arab Christians (10% within the Muslim Palestinian population) and as Palestinians (15% within the Jewish Israeli population). Our twinning partnership is a special opportunity to support their strategic witness in an increasingly divided land. We are delighted that over the past two years the South East Baptist Association has joined us in developing links with our brothers and sisters in Christ in Israel/Palestine.



A twinning story...

Amphill Baptist Church is hosting an event and meal on Sat January 17th to share their story of twinning with the Shafaamr church. They

invite folk from other churches to join them. For more information, contact:- andrew@amphillbaptist.org.uk

Evangelicals and Peacemaking is the theme of a conference organised by the Baptist-sponsored Nazareth Evangelical College. Formerly known as Nazareth Evangelical Theological Seminary, the college plays a key role in training men and women for church

leadership and ministry. They invite other Christians to join them in exploring ways of being peacemakers in their bitterly divided land. For details, www.nazarethseminary.org

Pastors' Tour October 14-21, Stuart Davison, (SEBA Team leader), is taking another small group of pastors to Israel. Whilst exploring some of the Biblical sites much time will be spent meeting pastors and churches. It is a unique opportunity to discover what the Lord is doing through his church there. Contact:- stuart@seba-baptist.org.uk

Holy Land Trip David Ronco (Hertford) is leading another Introductory Tour of Israel this November (4 -12). This is a wonderful opportunity for people to explore some amazing Biblical sites and meet local Christians in Nazareth and Bethlehem. <http://www.christian-travel.com/tours/detail/ronco-hl-15.html>



Treasurer wanted ! Our Twinning group needs to replace Dave Marchant, our long-serving treasurer. Not an arduous task - four meetings a year at Amphill - but a great opportunity to be involved in this exciting partnership. If you could help please contact David Ronco on dcronco@gmail.com

If your church would like to hear more about our exciting twinning story please contact David.

Material for the next
Association Newsletter
should be with Stephen
Copson by April 30th 2015

FOOTSTEPS

This broad based course organised by the Association & Regent's Park College, Oxford is held over 10 Saturdays and offers an introduction to Christian life and thought that will enhance your discipleship and sharpen your understandings of faith in the context of learning together.

The first year programme Footsteps 1 is being held for the third year and Footsteps 2 launched in 2014.

It is not too early to be thinking about whether you would like to be part of Footsteps in September 2015, either in Footsteps 1 or Footsteps 2 (you have to have attended the former to attend the latter!)

A training grant from the Central Baptist Association may be available for up to one third of the course cost. Want to know more? Contact Anne Lane on anne.lane@regents.ox.ac.uk



Resources for the General Election 2015

With less than five months until the Election, parties are ramping up the campaigning and churches starting to think about what they can do.

The ecumenical Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation group will be producing a number of resources for use in the run up to Polling Day. This will include a series of four short videos for use in worship or with

accompanying notes as discussion starters for small group sessions. There will also be '*Faith in Politics 2015*' - a briefing booklet outlining a number of the key issues. Watch out for these in the New Year.

CTBI will be producing a number of resources, including information for churches on running hustings events.

MOVEMENTS in MINISTRY

INTO & WITHIN ASSOCIATION

Sarah Crane to Chaplain, Milton Keynes Hospital

Malcolm Hazell from Chenies to Union, High Wycombe

Joel Mercer from Spurgeons College minister-in-training Potters Bar to Potters Bar

David Shaw into retirement, Northants

Frank Sherburn to Caddington, part-time

OUT OF ASSOCIATION

Norman Foster, formerly lay pastor at Braybrooke for 40 years has died.

Ian Greig from Speen

Philip Thomas from Broadway, Chesham into retirement

Pray for new beginnings and good farewells. Pray for those who feel the sadness of change and loss. Remember new challenges and opportunities.

GREENING THE CHURCH

I have always been a committed 'recycler' and have a very low tolerance for waste of any sort! In recent years these personality traits have led me on a faith journey that has opened up my world in exciting new ways. As I became convinced that churches should be doing and saying more about the big issues associated with resource depletion and climate change, I helped to form a small 'Green Group' at High Street Baptist Church in Tring. In 2009 we achieved our first Eco-Congregation award and, having succeeded in making further progress in raising awareness of green issues, as well as in collaborating with local environmental and other groups such as *Transition* and *Justice & Peace*, we achieved a second award in 2013. We face all the usual challenges associated with churches – lack of insulation in our building, a limited budget and a wealth of competing demands on time – but we have nevertheless been able to reduce the waste of energy and generally heighten awareness.

However, creation care is not simply an add-on to the usual 'business' of being church. Since 2012 I have been a board member of Operation Noah, 'an ecumenical Christian charity providing leadership, focus and inspiration in response to the growing threat of catastrophic climate change'. In April 2012 they launched the '*Ash Wednesday Declaration*', challenging the Church to realise that care for God's creation – and concern about climate change – is foundational to the Christian gospel and central to the Church's mission. To quote from that document, 'Loving our neighbour requires us to reduce our consumption of energy for the sake of Christ, who suffers with those who suffer. To live simply and sustainably contributes significantly to human flourishing.'



As a result of my involvement with the environmental movement, and having completed a theology degree in 2011, I have recently been involved in a 'sustainable faith' initiative at a large London church. This has resulted in the publication of a short book, which we very much hope will enable churchgoers to make the connection between faith and care for creation.

Sustainable Faith: A green gospel for the age of climate change can be used for personal study or by house groups, or as the basis of a sermon series. Details can be found and books ordered from www.lulu.com (UK store) or www.amazon.co.uk

Nicola L. Bull, High Street, Tring