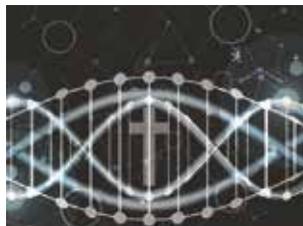


THE LINK



Glorifying
God as we:

Listen
to His Word

Pray
to Seek
His Will

Love
His People

Serve
His Kingdom

Welcome

to this latest edition of 'The Link'. Our sincere thanks go to the publication team.



William Shakespeare, in Romeo and Juliet, Act 2, Scene 2, wrote *"Parting is such sweet sorrow..."* and this is how we feel when we have to say farewell to our graduating students. We wish you God's richest blessing in your lives. Stay close to Jesus.

We look forward to the induction of Stuart Keir in August and we pray for Stuart, Karen and the family (and the church in Banchory) in this time of transition. We are also delighted at the pending appointment of Colin Watson as Children's and Families' Coordinator and we pray for the Watsons too. We are thrilled at the progress of the Elder and the Deacon Search Groups. We believe that God is strengthening our fellowship for his glory.

Let's redouble our prayerful engagement with the ministry of God in Central. What a privilege it is to serve the Lord. Let's do so with integrity and joy, **"God, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places."** Habakkuk 3:19

In Him,
Jim Turrent Lead Pastor

LOOK OUT for a new publication

coming the way
of Central!

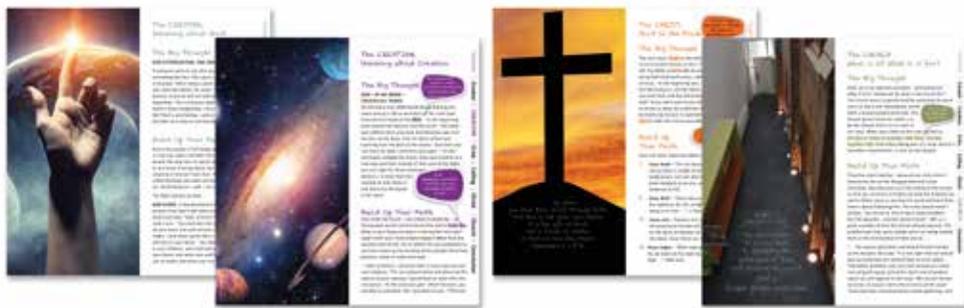


Clarity – getting gospel things clear in confusing days

Clarity is aimed at those in their early teens who are beginning to face some of the questions of life and faith in Jesus. It is designed to provide a framework for understanding the story of salvation and to give some short answers to questions that can trip young people up and cause them to doubt.

My sincere thanks to a number of proofreaders and advisors, but especially to my PA, Tegwen Wallace, for her attention to detail and to Ken Drysdale for his excellent design work. This book is something that has been on my heart for a number of years and I offer it to the church for the glory of God and the blessing of our young people.

In Him, **Jim Turrent** Lead Pastor



Our plan is to engage youth leaders and parents about this resource and how it may be used most effectively.

Central Baby & Toddler Group

By **Katherine Belford**



In August I became a mother for the first time, and I decided to resign from my job as an editor to look after Isla. I realised pretty quickly that it would be very easy for me not to have any interaction with non-Christians, as I was no longer in the workplace, and didn't feel that this was particularly healthy. This resulted in me joining quite a lot of groups! Through joining groups, I made friends with several non-Christian mums and realised that there was no group at Central that I could bring them to as an introduction to church and the Christian faith.

This played on my mind for a few months, and after chatting to several people and praying about it, I decided to put forward the idea of a baby and toddler group in which non-Christians could be invited in, to a relaxed environment, and build

up relationships with Christians to show that church isn't a scary place (and Christians aren't crazy people!). It would also be a way to share our faith with people who may not ordinarily come into a church and build on friendships.

We had the first group on 7 May and had six mums attend with their children, two of whom came from a non-church background. It was kept reasonably informal, the children played with toys while the mums chatted and had a cup of tea. Both the mums who came from outside of church are coming back, which is a real encouragement after the first session.



attendees (from both Christian and non-Christian backgrounds) would be valuable. Please pray that relationships would be formed and would grow, and that we have the opportunity to share the gospel with those who haven't heard it. Please also pray that God works in the hearts of those coming who don't know Him, and that He would use us to make Him known.

We'd really appreciate your prayers and support as this ministry develops. As with any new ministry, it's going to be trial and error for a while until we work out what format works best with the ages and number of children who are coming, and so prayer for regular

Central Baby and Toddler Group is on **Mondays at 10–11.30 a.m.**, and is open to anyone who is looking after children (mums, dads, grannies, childminders, etc.) to come along to let the children play while the adults have a cup of tea and a chat. If you'd like to get involved, please just let me know. 

CENTRAL+
BAPTIST CHURCH DUNDEE

CONFIDENT CHRISTIANITY CONFERENCE

Sharing the Gospel in an Age of Tough Questions

3rd November 2018

Central Baptist Church, 8 Ward Road, Dundee DD1 1LX

Jim Turrent, Andy Bannister, Sharon Dirckx, Mark Stirling & Ben Thomas

Tickets at: <https://goo.gl/FTLifN> or scan the code



Carnoustie Baptist Church update and prayer points

Called to be disciples of Jesus Christ; Sent to make disciples of Jesus Christ



By **John Toller**

We were delighted to have two baptisms on Easter Sunday and to have another in June, and to have a number of new members joining. God continues to build us up in faith and maturity. Our longing is for more people to come to faith from the community and recent public opposition to the Gospel has again highlighted the desperate need for the good news here. Evangelistic events in May/June, in conjunction with Christians in Sport, give a great opportunity for engaging with people, but we are praying that all of us would be galvanised in our witness, recognising the urgency. Please stand with us in this: rejoicing in what God is doing but seeking his equipping and boldness in our witness, and seeking his mercy for our community.

Some other things you can pray for:

- our kids' work is still very stretched, with a lot of pressure falling on a few individuals, and we're unsure if we'll have enough helpers to run a holiday club this summer;
- our building project, which we've still got on hold for the moment, with the fund growing very slowly; and our BUS grant has decreased further this year – we've been amazed with God's provision but please continue to pray for this.

Thank you for the support from Central both in finance and prayer, as we continue as partners in the Gospel.

News from Lochee Baptist Chapel

By **Andi Mathieson**

We have been encouraged to see our church family growing recently with a new family joining us, as well as an intern from Edinburgh. It was great to see so many of their believing and non-believing friends joining us for their baptism and then for lunch afterwards.

We are seeing a number of locals coming along to Sunday services and within our regular ministries. As time goes on, we are feeling more and more part of the community. We see a wide range of complex issues, notably relating to addictions and broken families – a desperate need for Jesus.



Prayer Points:

- Pray for fresh opportunity and wisdom in engaging with locals from our community through Bible study.
- Pray for those locals who are coming along to our Sunday services who don't yet know Jesus, that they will come to know him as Lord.
- Pray that we will grow together as a church family in our love for our Saviour and each other, that it will be a strong and faithful witness in our community.

Mums@Central – Helpers wanted



Mums@Central supports mums in our church to walk closely with God. They meet for Bible study and prayer on **Wednesdays at 9.30–11.30 a.m. and **Fridays at 1.00–3.00 p.m.** with a crèche provided for babies to preschool children.**

To support this ministry, they would really appreciate people to help with crèche. This would not have to be a weekly commitment but help would be a real blessing to the mums and children.

Please pray for this ministry and if you are interested in helping please speak to Sheena Lock, Karen Beattie, Sara Edwards or Alison Lee.

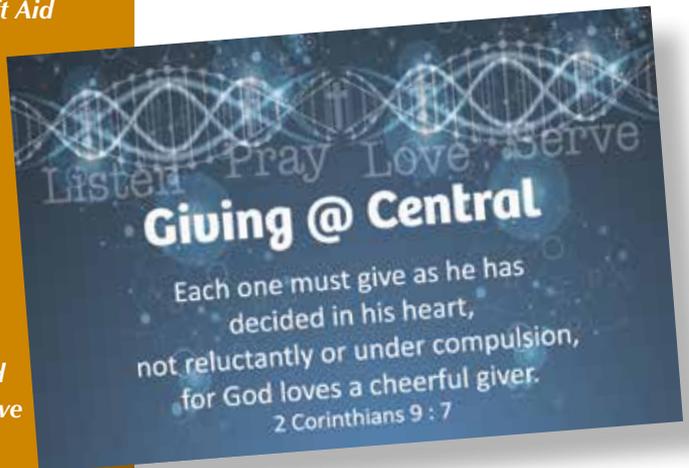
Ways to

By **Peter Inglis, Assistant Treasurer**

There are many ways to give to the Lord's work in Central. The four most common are:

- 1 *With cash through the freewill offering bag – this is completely anonymous.*
- 2 *With cheque through the freewill offering bag – this is recorded by the Finance team and is claimable for Gift Aid assuming that you have completed a Gift Aid Declaration and pay income tax.*
- 3 *By numbered envelope placed into the freewill offering bag – this is confidential and recorded only by the Finance team and is claimable for Gift Aid assuming that you have completed a Gift Aid Declaration and pay income tax.*
- 4 *By regular standing order paid directly into Central's bank account – this is confidential and recorded only by the Finance team and is claimable for Gift Aid assuming that you have completed a Gift Aid Declaration and pay income tax.*

Giving to the Lord's work is a part of every Christian's discipleship and we are all accountable to God for what we do with what He has given us. Most people anticipate an increase in income each year, but how many of us consider the amount we give to the Lord each year?



give at Central

Please be assured that only the Finance team have access to your giving details. This information is treated with the utmost respect and confidentiality. You will have heard or seen a lot of information recently about GDPR. Central, like many other organisations, has to comply with this and as such we are required to let you know that we do record the names, addresses and donation amounts whether you give by cheque, envelope or standing order. This data is required to be held for a 6-year period to comply with accounting and tax regulations.

Filling in a *Gift Aid Declaration* AND giving by one of the three recordable methods, described in column on left, means that Central can claim an additional 25% of your donation value from the UK Government. This makes a huge difference to our finances. Last year's claim has just been processed and was in excess of £50,000. This makes up approximately 15% of our budget – for free! But it could be more – if you do pay tax and give regularly to Central, please consider the Gift Aid scheme.

On a final note – if you have filled in a *Gift Aid Declaration*, you need to let either our treasurer Steve Latto or myself know if you change name or address, or if you no longer pay sufficient capital gains or income tax to cover the claim that we would be making on your donation.

If you would like to complete a *Gift Aid Declaration* or give by either confidential envelope or standing order, please get in touch with Steve Latto or myself.



Farewell & thank you to our student leavers

It's that time of year when some of our final year students are moving on as they take up employment or continue their studies away from Dundee. We thank God for the blessing they have been to us while they have worshipped and served in Central and pray God's blessing on them as they embark on a new stage of their lives. Three of our praise band members are among those who are leaving, and The Link magazine managed to have a quick word with them before they left!



'I have been coming to CBC since arriving as a fresher 5 years ago and I have been a member of the church for 4 of those years. Over this time, I have been challenged and encouraged in my faith, both from the teaching every Sunday and the example of fellow believers. Leaving home for the first time was pretty daunting but Central made this so

much easier as I have felt part of the church family here. I have also really enjoyed being able to serve in the praise band and will miss this!

After graduation in June I will be moving to Belfast to start work as a junior doctor. I will really miss CBC and everyone that I have met here, but you will be in my prayers and I hope to come back and visit!

I would very much appreciate your prayers as I move; that I would settle in quickly in Belfast and find a gospel-centred church as well as being able to cope with working life.

Thank you for all the support over the years and all the best for the future.'

Alison Thompson

'I came to Dundee in 2013 as a young Northern Irish Christian medical student and have been attending CBC ever since then. Over these years I personally have grown a lot in my relationship with Jesus, and I believe that the teaching here at CBC and the wisdom and examples of other older members of the church family have been instrumental in this. Last year I felt challenged to be baptised in church and I became a church member shortly afterwards.



During my time at CBC I have had the privilege to serve God through being part of the band, to praise Him through prayer meetings and to learn more about Him and my walk with Him through Home Groups and Iron Sharpens Iron.

Next year, I will be leaving Dundee to work as a Foundation Doctor in QEUH in Glasgow. This move is exciting, however leaving Dundee and CBC I know that this will be tinged with

sadness. I would really value prayer at this time with coping with the struggles of real life work (with no options for midday siestas), being able to be a witness to my colleagues and patients as well as being able to find a church where I can get plugged in and serve in Glasgow.

I have loved to praise God with all of you over the years and will continue to pray for my church family in Dundee.'

Marcus McClean



'I am going to Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen to study Midwifery and the course is 3 years long! I have loved my time at CBC, being involved with the band and student events, and will miss it very much!'

Hannah Adamson

Deacons' Digest

Items discussed at recent Elders' and Deacons' meetings.

Opening Devotions

Meetings are always opened with devotions and a time of prayer. The Elders and Deacons have been studying, 'What is the Mission of the Church?' by Kevin De Young and Greg Gilbert. There then followed a time of prayer.

Finance

- The financial report was highlighted and it was noted that the figures would not be exactly the same as the final audited accounts for 2017, as there are always transactions that are accrued at the end of each year.
- The Treasurer and an Elder would give a presentation on the church finances and our giving at a Sunday morning service. (This subsequently took place on Sunday 22 April 2018).
- It was reported that a generous legacy left to Central had now been received and this would enable the church to employ a Children's and Families' Ministry Coordinator for 2 years (as had been agreed at a church meeting).

Ministry Report on Faith and Friendship

- From time to time different ministries in Central are invited to give a report to the diaconate so that the Elders and Deacons can pray for them and provide any necessary support.

- Faith and Friendship is for all ages and excluding the leadership there are about 40 members. Format includes a two-course lunch, which is greatly appreciated, followed by various activities, finishing with a devotional time.
- During the 2017–18 session the theme had been 'Standing on the promises'.
- Faith and Friendship is an outreach ministry, so the Elders and Deacons were asked to pray that others would hear about the Lord Jesus in the devotional times and be drawn to Him.

Lochee Baptist Chapel

- Lochee Baptist Chapel (LBC) has made its submission to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) to become a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation. This is likely to take several months to complete.
- Andrew Mathieson provided an update on the work of the team indicating that everything was going very well and that they were greatly encouraged.
- To provide a context for the team's work Andrew shared some stark statistics on the number of deaths in Dundee due to drugs. He said Dundee's drug deaths were four times Scotland's average. This is a sharp reminder as to the urgency of the team's work.

- The Lochee team are encouraged by the amount of contacts they have built up and they are now well known by the professional services and are trusted.
- The children's work is going very well and attracting families. Also, the Mothers and Toddlers now has 40 so the team have lots of contacts. They are praying about how to turn these contacts into Gospel opportunities.

Central Baby and Toddler Group

- A request was made by a member to start a Baby and Toddler Group that would be an outreach ministry acting as a bridge to non-Christians. It would be unlike Mums@Central as there would be no Bible Study included.
- The request was accepted by the diaconate with the proviso that there would always be a 'Gospel Focus' in the ministry and that the outreach aspect would be obvious.

Science & Faith Q&A

Thanks were expressed by the diaconate to Professor Jacob George for the 'Science and Faith' Q&A session held on Wednesday 14 March. This was an excellent evening, and many were greatly blessed by the issues addressed that evening.

Deacon Search Committee

It was indicated that the standing Deacon Search Committee would be re-engaging so as to identify potential new deacons to stand for election at the church meeting in June and also to interview deacons who were now coming to the end of their term of service.

Retiral of Robert Hood

- Robert (Robin) Hood announced his retiral from the diaconate and in his retiral speech he quoted from Micah 6:8: *'And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God'*. Robin said there was nothing you could do as an individual without the Lord. He indicated that he would pray that the Lord would bless the work which was needed to be done in Central Baptist Church and in Lochee Baptist Chapel.
- Rev. Jim Turrent, Lead Pastor, thanked Robin for his service to the church and referred to 2 Corinthians 1:3–5, *'Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God'*. He then prayed for Robin and Isabelle, saying how grateful we were for Robin and for his exemplary faithful service, yielded to Christ, over decades of Christian ministry. Also, for Robin's Godly wisdom and the sense of fun he shares.

National Prayer Breakfast for Scotland 2018

- It was agreed that Central Baptist Church would again host the 'live stream' to the National Prayer Breakfast that would be taking place on Wednesday 6 June at Prestonfield House, Edinburgh.
- The Theme was *'Transforming Scotland'* and the key speaker would be Sir Brian Soutar.

The Link Family



Dear Church Family,

The first thing we want to say is a big thank you for the warm welcome we received since coming back to the church last year. We first came to Central back in 2008 when we moved up to Dundee from East Lothian. We went through a phase of going to a small church in Blairgowrie and are loving being back at our spiritual home at CBC. We are a rural family, living in Ruthven (near Alyth) with a dog (Max), cat (Midnight), guinea pig (Baby) and three hens (not named...but very friendly!).

Megan, Aimee and Alex go to school in Kirriemuir and enjoy being part of Hawkhill Harriers running club and Forfar Falcons swimming club. Gladys is a primary teacher in Angus and works across a number of schools including Cortachy, Glen Isla, Whitehills and Northmuir. Martyn works for Wood (formerly called Wood Group) in Aberdeen and commutes up and back four times a week. He helps the company develop their strategy and expand into new countries, sectors, technologies and services. He has been travelling up for the last 7 years and during this time has set up a charity along with three other Christian businessmen called The Business Connection. This ministry is aimed at encouraging, equipping and empowering people of faith or none to withstand the pressures of the Aberdeen professional workplace.

Martyn and Gladys grew up in Christian homes in West Yorkshire and Dumfries and Galloway, respectively, becoming Christians during childhood. We were heavily involved in our Christian Unions in Edinburgh (feels a long time ago now!), during this time Martyn attended Charlotte Chapel and Gladys attended Carrubbers Christian Centre. We met at Charlotte just as we were finishing our studies and once married were involved in Abbeyhill Baptist Church in Leith.

We would appreciate prayer for withstanding the challenges of primary and high school both as teacher and pupils. Gladys would appreciate prayer for wisdom and guidance in speaking into the lives of those friends and colleagues she interacts with in our rural community.

Martyn would ask for prayer in the midst of a high-pressured work environment, as well as a conference he is helping to organise in Aberdeen in spring 2019 to inspire and encourage Christians to see the workplace as a valued and important calling.

We would love to get to know you better – please drop in if you are passing by our neck of the woods.

The Link Family

Member file

Q&A with Central's
Church Secretary

Bryan Bennett



Tell us a little about your background and family life

I was born and raised in Liverpool – hence my devotion to LFC – but as I passed the 11+ exam I was educated in Widnes, where I met my childhood sweetheart Caren. We were married after graduating and I joined Michelin Tyres as a manager in 1978. We lived in a few different places over the next 10 years until we eventually moved to Dundee at the start of 1988 with our two young boys Iain and Chris.

How did you become a Christian and when did you join Central?

I came to faith only a few months prior to our move to Dundee thanks to the faithful witness of Caren, and others, over a number of years. Central Baptist was recommended to us before we even arrived in Dundee as a church that would welcome a young family and where the Gospel was faithfully preached. After a short spell in France we returned to Dundee and wee Katie came along to join the family while I continued to work for Michelin for almost my entire working life.

Why do you serve in the church?

I have always tried to be active in church life, first in youth work and then in church leadership as a Deacon, and for several years now as Church Secretary. There is a real blessing to be had by being involved in the life of the church. Yes, we have our challenges and difficulties as we struggle to be what God wants us to be, but we are invited to join God in His eternal plan and play our part; what a privilege that is. This eternal perspective helps me, even when I am completing the most mundane aspect of church administration. That reminds me – thank you for staying awake when I presented our GDPR policy during the last church meeting!

Tell us something about yourself that not many people know

I retired in September 2017 and I am currently in the process of making the transition into retirement. I am still trying to find the time to make some cheese, to paint a few watercolours and to write poetry – all things I believed I would spend hours doing once I retired! 

Music & Movie Review

By Jen Dunn

The Art of Celebration: The Rend Collective (2014)



The Rend Collective have quickly become a sensation in the modern praise and worship music world. The small band of Irish musicians have a folky twang similar to the secular band Mumford and Sons, but manage to combine catchy tunes and tight musicianship with theologically deep and heart-felt lyrics. Their album *'The Art of Celebration'* contains fine examples of radio-worthy toe-tappers such as *'Lighthouse'* and *'Joy'*, and more contemplative tracks that

wouldn't be out of place at a congregational worship session.

Excellent for blasting in the car or playing on low at a dinner party where you don't want to alarm your non-Christian friends too much with your 'Best of Mission Praise' CD. A hugely encouraging and enjoyable listen. As the title track affirms: *'This is the Art of Celebration: knowing we're free from condemnation!'*. Hallelujah.



Les Misérables (2012)



Let's face it, musicals are not everyone's cup of tea. However, the explicit themes of faith, redemption and

judgment make this retelling of a classic a must watch. Based on the 1862 novel by Victor Hugo, it follows the life of ex-convict Jean Valjean

against the backdrop of the June Rebellion in Paris. In contrast to many modern musicals, *Les Mis* is not afraid to explore more 'meaty' topics such as politics, deprivation and social isolation. What really sets it apart for a Christian audience, however, is the Christian conversion of the main character and the life of faith that then informs his actions throughout the rest of the film.

Played convincingly by a vocally able Hugh Jackman, Valjean declares – in

response to the underserved kindness of a monk near the start of the film – *'My life is claimed for God above... as I stare into the void, the whirlpool of my sin... another story must begin'*. Despite his conversion, his steps are haunted by his old jail keeper (a less vocally able Russell Crowe), who does not believe his transformation to be genuine. Interestingly, he claims a faith also, stating 'He knows his way

in the dark (Valjean), but mine is the way of the Lord, those who follow the path of the righteous shall find their reward'. And so, as an 'older brother' figure from the parable of the prodigal son, he becomes a complex 'baddie' for the piece, as well as posing an unsettling challenge to us as believers to avoid his judgmental mindset. All in all, well worth a watch, even if it's just for a chuckle at Crowe's singing.

Children's Corner

Recently Pastor Angus Morrison has been preaching on the Fruit of the Spirit. To tie in with that theme Kathryn Wright (one of our Link magazine team) has prepared this word search for the young and not so young to have a go at!

The Fruit of the Spirit

C	I	G	O	O	D	N	E	S	S	C	F
U	Q	B	C	G	J	C	S	S	E	J	V
W	U	G	A	A	N	E	E	V	O	L	F
Q	A	Y	I	E	N	N	A	Y	W	L	F
S	L	D	I	D	E	J	W	F	I	O	M
B	W	T	N	L	O	R	T	N	O	C	V
F	A	I	T	H	F	U	L	N	E	S	S
P	K	N	C	H	M	N	U	H	L	Z	L
J	E	C	A	E	P	K	R	W	T	H	C
G	P	V	N	H	O	Q	M	M	C	T	D
Y	P	B	E	C	R	J	Z	A	H	O	F

SELF
 PATIENCE
 CONTROL
 JOY
 GOODNESS
 PEACE
 LOVE
 KINDNESS
 FAITHFULNESS
 GENTLENESS

Your Church may not be as *gospel-centered* as you think

By Tony Merida

Acts 29: Churches Planting Churches



The book of Romans is about more than the “Romans Road.” It’s not just a book about individual salvation (though it certainly communicates this glorious message). It’s also about gospel-centered community and gospel-centered mission.

Michael Bird says Paul is “gospelizing” the believers in Rome. He wants every aspect of their lives to be shaped and empowered by the gospel. This is reflected especially in the latter half of the book. Therefore, Romans stands as a great book to consider, not only for theological clarity, but also for insights on gospel-centered leadership.

Before discussing the benefits of gospel-centrality, it’s important to understand how it differs from other approaches:

Gospel-Denying Churches

These shouldn’t be called churches. Various cults and extreme brands of liberalism would fit this category. They deny the essential truths of the gospel.

Gospel-Redefining Churches

Related to the previous category, these add to or subtract from the gospel. Examples include the prosperity gospel and the social gospel.

Gospel-Assuming Churches

These churches say they believe the gospel, but they rarely preach it plainly and deeply. It’s “Christianity-lite.” Leadership talks, therapeutic sermons, and practical-improvement messages fill the air.

Gospel-Affirming Churches

Like the previous group, these churches believe the gospel doctrinally, but the gospel is only meant for evangelism, and it is segmented out of the life of the church.

Gospel-Proclaiming Churches

These churches are known for preaching the gospel every week in corporate worship. But the gospel is still viewed as simply evangelistic. The gospel tips people into the kingdom, but it isn't taught as that which also shapes and empowers Christian living. Often what is communicated to believers is some form of post-conversion moralism.

Gospel-Centered Churches

These churches preach the gospel every week explicitly - but not just to the unbeliever. They also preach and apply the gospel to Christians, as Paul did for the Romans (Rom. 1:15). It shapes and empowers Christian ethics and the life of the Christian community.

For example, marriage is taught by looking at Christ's love for the church (Eph. 5:25); generosity is viewed through the lens of Christ's generosity (2 Cor. 8:9); the call to forgive is rooted in Christ's forgiveness of us (Col. 3:13); hospitality reflects the welcome of Christ (Rom. 15:7). Calls to social action - like caring for the orphan, the widow, the refugee, and the poor - are also made to believers with reference to their own identity in Christ.

Gospel Implications

We could give many reasons to pursue gospel centrality, but I'll limit it to five.

1. The gospel changes lives

If you are a church planter, pastor, missionary, or ministry leader of any kind, it's imperative that you have an unshakable confidence in the gospel. It is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). God loves to save sinners, and he does so when the gospel is proclaimed. Further, God loves to sanctify his people, and he does this as the gospel is applied.

2. The gospel leads us to worship

The gospel transforms us from the inside out. And when affections change, everything changes. If a person loves Jesus deeply, it will change his or her behavior dramatically. Paul's theology regularly leads him to doxology (Rom. 8:31-39; 11:33-36).

3. The gospel lifts us from despair

Sin, suffering, and death cause us to despair. The gospel lifts the saints from dark nights of the soul by reminding us that God's verdict has already been pronounced; that though we suffer now, we're still in the grip of the Father's grace. Even death cannot separate us from the love of Christ (Rom. 8:31-39).

4. The gospel unites diverse believers in community

In Romans 8, Paul is exulting in glorious gospel promises. It's important to see the plural language Paul uses: "us," "we," "brothers/sisters," and so on. Paul is seeking to unite both Jews and Gentiles in Christ, so he labors over the beauty of the gospel for several chapters in Romans. He wants to help them pursue unity in the gospel, and to consider how they should love one another practically (Rom. 12–14).

When we get to chapter 15, Paul's appeal to unity climaxes with this prayer: "May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 15:5–6). Paul is applying

his theology to build a unified, diverse people.

5. The gospel fuels our mission

You can endure opposition when you have promises like those in Romans 8. When you have a gospel this big, you'll want to take it to the nations. Many don't have a passion for the nations precisely because they don't have a gospel worth preaching.

When you have a gospel as big as the one in Romans, you'll want to take it to the nations. Many don't have a passion for the nations precisely because they don't have a gospel worth preaching.

So it's no surprise where Paul goes at the end of Romans. In chapter 15, you find that Romans is a missionary support letter. Paul wants to go to Spain with the gospel. Tom Schreiner says Paul could have been 60 years old at the time of writing! That's what a big vision of the gospel does: it fuels our global mission.



Pursue Gospel Centrality

So let's seek to create a gospel-centered culture in our churches and ministries. Exemplify gospel centrality in your personal life. Apply the gospel in your teaching. See the gospel in the church's ordinances. Pray the gospel. Sing the gospel. Saturate your groups

and classes with the gospel. Advance the gospel through evangelism and church planting. Celebrate the gospel as lives are changed. Evaluate your ministry by carefully noting how the gospel is being proclaimed and magnified.

May we follow Charles Spurgeon's counsel:

Keep to the gospel, then, more and more. Give the people Christ and nothing but Christ. Sate them, even though some should say that you also nauseate them, with the gospel... By the roadside, in the little room, in the theatre - anywhere, everywhere, let us preach Christ. Write books if you like and do anything else within your power; but whatever else you cannot do, preach Christ.

From the "roadside" to "the little room," in large worship centers to underground house churches, from cities to farmlands, from the urban poor to the suburban rich, from hard places to holiday places, let us keep what is of "first importance" (1 Cor. 15:3) the main thing in our lives, ministries, and churches. 

Tony Merida is pastor for preaching and vision of Imago Dei Church in Raleigh, North Carolina. He's also the content director for Acts 29, producing blogs, podcasts, and other resources on church planting. Tony has an extensive itinerant ministry and has written several books, including *The Christ-Centered Expositor, Ordinary, Orphanology*, and eight volumes in the *Christ-Centered Exposition commentary series*, of which he also serves as a general editor, along with Danny Akin and David Platt. He is happily married to Kimberly, and they have five adopted children. You can follow him on Twitter.

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Editor's note: The "other approaches" in this article are categories that originate from Femi Osunnuyi, who pastors an Acts 29 church Lagos, Nigeria.



BMS World Mission Birthday Scheme

By **Eva Stirling**

‘Baptist Missionary Society World Mission works among some of the most marginalised and least evangelised people, in some of the most fragile places on earth. Its aim is to bring life in all its fullness through seven key ministries: church, development, education, health, justice, leadership and relief. The highest goal in all they do is to bring people to faith in our Lord and Saviour.’

Central Baptist Church operates the **BMS Birthday Scheme**, which contributes towards the work of BMS World Mission. Each year around the time of their birthday, Scheme members receive a lovely card and newsletter. Also

included is an envelope in which the Scheme member can give a donation that can be gift aided if the person pays UK income tax.

The Scheme contributes to a variety of projects. These include supporting a hospital chaplain in Chad, giving women freed from the sex trade in Thailand a home, and supporting health ministries throughout the world.

You can be blessed and bless others by joining the **BMS Birthday Scheme**, of which I am secretary for Central Baptist Church. Just contact me at church, on **07595287384** or at **eva.stirling@gmail.com**.



More information on the **BMS Birthday Scheme** is online at **www.bmsworldmission.org/get-involved/fundraising/birthday-scheme/**

BMS website (quotation reproduced with permission) <https://www.bmsworldmission.org/about-us/>

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Any thoughts?

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