

# THE LINK



## Welcome

### Look up, press on!

I've been gripped by Isaiah 40 recently:

*"Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom."*

God says to his tired people: 'Look up!' We ought to do the same, and when we do our perspective changes as we begin to understand God's greatness.

God has given us many wonderful challenges as a church this year. Each one of them holds the possibility for proving his strength and supply. So, let's give of ourselves to the work of Christ with joy, remembering that it is in the act of obedience that God's Spirit is most experienced and, therefore, God's best is found.

*"Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength."*

Look up, press on!

In Him,  
**Jim Turrent** Lead Pastor

Glorifying  
God as we:

Listen  
to His Word

Pray  
to Seek  
His Will

Love  
His People

Serve  
His Kingdom



## DISCIPLESHIP | EXPLORED



By **Stuart and Karen Keir**

It has been a real pleasure to have been able to welcome a large group of young adults (and some slightly older) to our home on a Monday night, for the past few weeks, to study Discipleship Explored.

The group is largely made up of senior school pupils, students and young working adults, and the evening consists of a time to catch up over refreshments and then watching a short DVD talk by Barry Cooper of the Christianity Explored Team, who has been taking us through the book of Philippians, followed by an opportunity to work through the passages in groups. It has been

great to see the high level of honest engagement with the passages as we work out together what it means for us to be in Christ and how that is worked out in our everyday contexts. So far, we have covered topics such as “*Confident in Christ*”, “*Living in Christ*”, “*One in Christ*”, “*Obedient in Christ*” and “*Righteous in Christ*”.

As we live a little way out of the city, we have relied on people to give

lifts to those without transport, so thank you to all who have sacrificially taken time to serve in this way. Thank you too to those who have provided the very much appreciated goodies for our refreshments! 





# Christians in the Workplace

By **Stephen Cranston**

When I told my careers advisor at school that I wanted to study law, he asked if that was a reaction to what my father did (he's a minister).

**S**imilarly, I also remember speaking to an international student at a CU event while I was studying who was very surprised when I told him I was studying law – he honestly didn't believe that you could be a lawyer and a Christian. If we were to see the portrayal of lawyers in film and television, that conclusion could be easy to come to. The practice of law is seen as one of greed, lies, revenge, manipulation etc.

Fortunately, my Monday to Friday 9–5 is nothing like the telly. I work at a small firm in Perth. My clients are generally people or business looking to buy, sell or lease property of one type

or another, or otherwise sort out their affairs.

So, how does being a Christian affect my job? First, I firmly believe that we are called to be witnesses in everything that we do. To work with integrity, humility and a Christ-like attitude, and have conversations about Christ and his Word with colleagues is part of our daily witness. The workplace is a key mission field – why else would our ability to discuss matters of faith in the workplace be under attack?

Second, although perhaps this is how my job affects my Christian service, I have been privileged over my career to assist churches and other Christian organisations and charities with various projects or difficulties. For example, I serve as Company Secretary of Out of the Box. Confidentiality (and the word count!) stops me saying more, but some of the pro bono work I have done and seeing the projects I have assisted flourish is one of the highlights of my career. 🙏

# Update

from our Children and Families Coordinator  
**Colin Watson**



**F**irst, let me say a huge thank you to the church family for support and encouragement in my first 6 months of being Children and Families Coordinator. Despite having, probably, the longest email address in cyber space, people have taken the time to contact me!

At a recent get-together for those working with our children, we were greatly encouraged by the many stories that were shared describing relationships being strengthened and spiritual growth in our children.

Much of my remit is teaching our young people, supporting/training leaders and partnership with parents. In my visits to families some topics have become quite familiar:

- the desire to build and strengthen relationships between children, families and the rest of the church family.
- the need to equip our youngsters to 'shine' for Jesus in a world that is increasingly negative or indifferent to Christ, His message and His followers.



*New Year Party at Central*

- an eagerness to reach out and tell friends and family about Jesus in a relevant and age-appropriate way.

Noted below are some ideas we hope will take place:

- training for those working with our children.
- ‘Teaching the Children’ – parent/carer discipleship workshops as part of the Big Night Out series.
- Easter outreach activities.
- cross-generation get togethers, e.g. Faith & Friendship for Toddlers!
- days out, e.g. BUS ‘150th Birthday BASH’, BIG Beach.

- summer holiday club – with input from our own Youth Fellowship.
- Who Let The Dads Out? – a get together for dads and their wee ones.
- study days for 4th, 5th and 6th years (with obligatory coffee and home baking).

We want to continue with and develop Club Central, our Prayer Partner Programme, Rewind/Relive and special events such as our New Year Party.

In everything we do, we want to ***‘Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.’*** 

## Central Baptist Church Women’s Conference

We are delighted to announce the date and speaker for our first Bible Conference for Women. The date will be

**Saturday 16 November 2019**

and the keynote speaker will be Helen Thorne. Helen is the Director of Training and Mentoring for London City Mission and a trustee of Biblical Counselling UK. She is also a well-known author, blogger and conference speaker. Do put the date in your diary and spread the word to others! Look out for more information coming soon.



# Mission Day

**A**t CBC we are part of a worldwide church family and so God calls us to be thinking and praying for what is happening in different countries of the world, especially for people who haven't yet heard or responded to the good news of Jesus.

Each year we take time over one weekend to focus on overseas mission to help the church understand more about the ways God is working through his people in different ministries across the globe. This year, at the end of January, we welcomed two missionaries with the Chinese Overseas Christian Mission (COCM), Lu Peng and her husband Zhe Li, to share with us their calling and ministry to Chinese



diaspora in the UK. Lu worshipped at CBC for a number of years and it was great to hear how God has worked in her life and brought her and Tim into ministry together.

To find out more about CBC's commitment to overseas mission and regular information to pray for our missionaries, or if you think God is calling you to short- or longer-term mission, please contact Matt Lock on [mslocks4@gmail.com](mailto:mslocks4@gmail.com).



# 2019

In the morning service Henry Lu, the Director of COCM, preached on Acts 8 and God's mission in the early church, and how we should ride the waves of life empowered by the Holy Spirit, following God's call to mission.

People spent time with Tim and Lu at the mission lunch after the service getting to know them better, investigating world mission through a table quiz and praying together for the missionaries we support as a church. 

**We are delighted that Laura-Lee Lovering, our Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) link missionary, will be visiting us on Sunday 2 June. Laura-Lee will be taking part in our evening service and there will also be the opportunity to meet her over tea and cake prior to the service. Look out for more details nearer the time.**

Laura-Lee works at a BMS-supported training centre in Nauta, Peru. The training provided at the centre covers theology and preaching, but also evangelism and mission, environmental care and small farming, small business and basic health care.



Find out more at: [www.bmsworldmission.org/people/laura-lee-lovering/](http://www.bmsworldmission.org/people/laura-lee-lovering/)

## Church website

Check out the Calendar on our church website, [www.centraldundee.com](http://www.centraldundee.com) for information about upcoming Sunday services and church events. Also, did you know you can download the Sunday sermons from our website? Go to *Sermons Online* on the home page.

# Central hosts Solas conference on



By Cate Brown

**At last year's Solas conference on 3 November, Central Baptist Church hosted around 300 people who gathered to consider how to share the gospel in our age of tough questions.**

**T**hey came from all over Scotland, the North of England (and one from Wales!) to explore 'Confident Christianity'. In this article we hear from one of the delegates who visited Central that day to attend the conference.

The Solas conference certainly delivered top-quality content about communicating the gospel in what can be hostile environments. The

speakers spoke knowledgeably, and with humour, about the difficulties we can face when we speak of Jesus or are asked about Him.

Andy Bannister gave the first talk and shared his approach to answering questions about his faith by seeking to open up conversations with people. To do this he advocated taking, what I would call, a 'curious stance' that involves asking

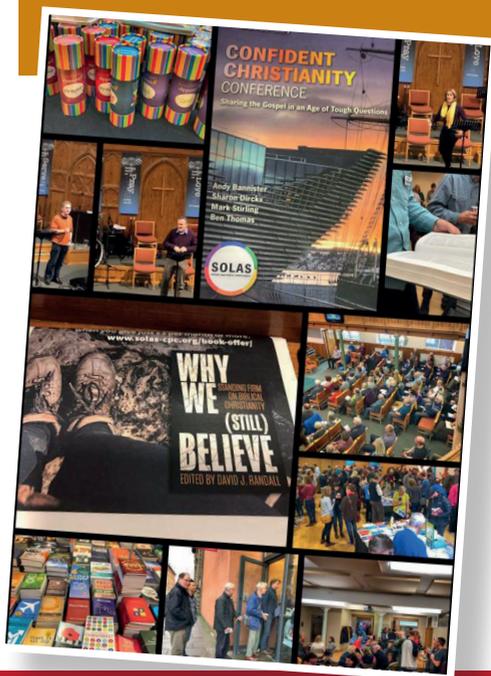
# Confident Christianity

questions about the person's own beliefs, assumptions and theories. All the speakers highlighted the need for us to represent Jesus well in how we respond to others. Mark Stirling shared how we need to be able to have discussions, which include areas of disagreement, without becoming defensive. It reminded me of the open discussions that are a key part of Christianity Explored, where explicit permission is given to guests to ask their questions.

Central Baptist Church has wonderful facilities with lots of space for the book stall, coffee and chatting with friends. The stewards were very welcoming and helpful, and we really enjoyed our day. 

## SAVE THE DATE

Next year we are partnering with SOLAS again to hold another day conference on Saturday 21 March 2020. Look out for more details.



To read a report on the conference and for more information on the Solas Centre for Public Christianity visit [www.solas-cpc.org/confident-christianity-conference-report/](http://www.solas-cpc.org/confident-christianity-conference-report/)

# The role of an Elder in our church

**As the work of mission progressed after Pentecost, churches were established. In each of the churches elders were appointed** (Acts 14:21–23).

There are different names applied to this function of leadership that highlight the different nuances of the role. In 1 Peter 5, in the space of three verses, the terms ‘elders’, ‘shepherds’ (or pastors) and ‘overseers’ (or bishops) are used as Peter addresses the same people. Their primary tasks were teaching and spiritual oversight. A church was considered incomplete where such leaders had not been appointed (Titus 1:5). Although Paul and the apostles appointed elders in a pioneer context, elders were normally recognised and appointed by the local church. This is self-evident in Paul’s instruction to Timothy (1 Timothy 3:1–7). Pastor/elders were seen as under-shepherds of the local flock of Christ (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter

5:2). The church does not belong to a group of elders – the elders belong to the church – of which Christ is Lord.

The qualifications for eldership are found in 1 Timothy 3:1–7. The spiritual leadership that is given at home qualifies or disqualifies a man from leadership in the church. An elder must be able to hold on to and communicate the ‘trustworthy message’ of apostolic truth (Titus 1:9) for the maturing and equipping of the church.

There are definite crossover areas in the offices of elder and deacon, but generally, the role of the elder is to teach/lead/shepherd and the role of the deacon is to administer in a spiritual and Christ-focused way. There is a bias in the New Testament



towards a plurality of elders. There is a need to have a setting within which the necessary administrative concerns of the church are regularly put to one side and the spiritual health and direction of the church is given priority. Our eldership provides support for the existing stipendiary elders (pastors) and a healthier accountability setting.

In a Baptist/congregational context the church meeting is the highest court under Christ; but a true understanding of the congregational model of church government does not deny the principle of leadership. Indeed, within the New Testament, we find what we might call a dynamic tension between the two. Clearly, there are those within the New Testament church who, having been recognised

by the church, were set apart by the church, for the purposes of leading and teaching. These men carried a servant-hearted authority in their ministries (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Timothy 5:17). But this authority (so far as we may discern) was set within the context of the local church, which also had a discerning/disciplining function (Matthew 18:15–19; 1 Corinthians 5; 1 Corinthians 6:1).

At Central Baptist Church our elders are:

- **Stipendiary elders** – Pastor Jim Turrent, Pastor Stuart Keir
- **Non-Stipendiary elders** – Iain Belford, Peter Brown, Gavin Callaghan, Jacob George, Angus Morrison (Pastor Emeritus), David Roworth, Colin Watson and Robert Whyte. 

# Easter@Central

## Easter Reflections

Monday 15th to Thursday 18th April, 7.45 p.m. in The Link (upper back hall)

### Easter Family Praise Event (with 'Out of the Box')

Friday 19th April, 6.15-7.30 p.m. in The Link

### Good Friday – Communion Service

Friday 19th April, 7.45 p.m. in the Sanctuary

### Easter Sunday – Baptismal Service

Sunday 21st April, Baptismal Service at 10.30 a.m.  
and Evening Service at 6.30 p.m.

# Walking with God

## a day with the Christian Medical fellowship

By **Dr Vivian Gunaratne**

**‘When you are healthy, you look out horizontally, but if you are sick and lying down, you look up vertically to God.’**

Francis Grim, Founder of Healthcare Christian Fellowship International

**T**hose of us in health care know that this is not necessarily true, our patients may not look towards God for hope, or even if they do, will we ever know?

If someone had suggested I attend a study day on being a witness for Christ in the clinical setting, even a year ago, I would have made an excuse to not engage. What has changed for me is my own walk with Christ. I see many a patient who looks at me thinking, my life has been easy and I have a well-paid job and no worries. Part of this is true but we are all fighting our own personal battles and this can lead us to very dark places, especially when you cannot see the hope.

Without my own faith, I would have given up a long time ago. With the news of hope, why would I not want to share this with my patients, my fellow man? As Christians are we not told to love? (Ephesians 3:16–17)

As a GP, I have the unique privilege to walk along those in their darkest and most helpless journeys. I have shared tears, I have hugged, I have shared faith, none of which is allowed in our GMC guidelines. Do I live in fear that I will be punished? No, because for me, being a disciple of Christ means more. I do not prey on the vulnerable, would I pray with them? The Saline solution course has given me the tools to help me be a more confident Christian and doctor. It has shown

me strategies for overcoming barriers of spiritual care and methods for encouraging patients to talk about their faith history. It has also given us a means of communicating hope to our patients.

(Romans 8:18)

I appreciate that it is not easy for all Christian health-care

workers to bring faith to work and there is not always the opportunity or the appropriate time to do this, but at the beginning there must be a willingness and some fearlessness.

(Acts 1:8; Philippians 4:13)

The day was filled with prayer for ourselves and for our patients, arming us with tools to bring hope and faith into our workplaces. Drs Pablo



Fernandez and Alex Bunn both answered our questions of fear with soothing words from Scripture.

There was no doubt, those of us who attended really wanted to share our genuine love for our brothers and sisters, bringing hope and joy where medicine cannot heal. So I end with a verse of hope for all of us. 🙏

**‘For we are his workmanship, one in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.’**

(Ephesians 2:10)

# Appreciating God in eSwatini

By **Elizabeth Heywood and Michael Crowe**

(5th year medical students at Dundee University)

In October 2018, we flew to eSwatini in Southern Africa, along with two others. Living in a small town called Siteki, we worked in the local Christian hospital for 6 weeks. We both agree it was an incredible experience, where God showed us more of the beauty of Christ, allowing us to enjoy and worship Him more fully. Here are five ways we were encouraged:

## 1. Creation

eSwatini is a beautiful, mountainous country, teeming with wildlife. We slept under majestic starry nights with an insect soundtrack, and witnessed elephants roam in their natural habitat. We were pointed towards the One by whom, through whom, and for whom all things were created and are held together (Colossians 1:16–17).

## 2. Joy

We were deeply encouraged in precious moments spent with believers who truly know Paul's secret when 'facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need' (Philippians 4:12). They have few possessions but know that in God's 'presence there is fullness of joy; at [His] right hand are pleasures forevermore' (Psalm 16:11).

## 3. He loves to use his people

We were reminded how God uses each one of his people, strengthening them in their weakness, including us, including you, to glorify his name and share in the mission of Christ; and He delights in it! Whatever career path we are on or circumstance we are in, we must seek do all things to the glory of Him (1 Corinthians 10:31).

## 4. Justice

God cares for 'the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, and the poor' (Zechariah 7:10) and graciously uses us, his workmanship, in this (Ephesians 2:10). It was amazing to work with people motivated by Christ's love for them (1 John 4:19) to provide care for the physically impoverished, but infinitely valuable,

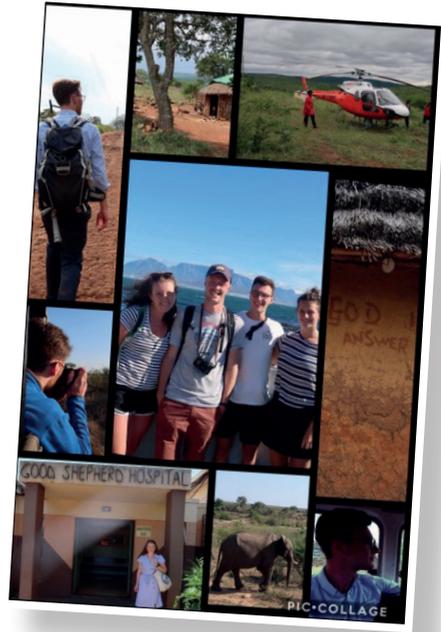
divine image-bearers throughout eSwatini.

## 5. Global Church

Worshiping with, and working alongside, faithful brothers and sisters in Christ from every corner of the earth was a glorious foretaste of Revelation 7.

We grew in our longing for that great day, when we will declare together: ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the lamb.’ 

**Central, thank you for your prayer and encouragement.**



# Dundee University Christian Union Events Week

**From 4–8 February, Dundee University Christian Union held a week-long series of events focusing on stories of lives impacted by faith.**

## Ninewells Lunch Bars

On Monday and Thursday, Dr John Ellis and Dr Lysa Owen, respectively, were interviewed about their stories and how Jesus makes a difference in everyday life.

Lunch Bars 12 & 1pm (free lunch and a chance to ask questions about life and Christianity!)

**Monday:** *“Fanciful and fantastic – can the story of Jesus be true and relevant in the modern world?”* with Lindsay Brown.

**Tuesday:** *“Many paths to God – aren’t Christians arrogant to claim only one?”* with Andy Mayo.

**Wednesday:** *“Has science disproved God?”* with James Kennedy. →

*Students attending lunch time event in marquee.*



**Thursday:** *“Why would a good God create evil?”* with David Robertson.

**Friday:** *“Aren’t Christians a bunch of hypocrites?”* With Susie Ford.

From 2–5pm each day, we kept the marquee open, and used the space as a drop-in café, with CU members serving tea, coffee and delicious traybakes; a chilled environment to pop in between lectures, rest and chat to other students.

### **International Meals 6–7:30pm**

What a wonderful opportunity these were to build friendships over food and give students from around the globe a taste of our loving God!

On Wednesday afternoon, we hosted a joint event with Dundee University Islamic Society; a discussion between Imam Zuber Karim (Al Maktoum Mosque, Dundee) and Rev. Duncan Peters (Glasgow).

### **Evening Events**

**Monday:** Acoustic Night with Andy Mayo – *‘MEANING – there must be more than this’.*

**Tuesday:** Quiz Night and pic’n’mix – *‘SUFFERING – Life’s tough’.*

**Waffle Wednesday:** *‘LOVE – fully known; still loved. What are the marks of true love?’.*

**Thursday:** Ice Cream Sundaes – *‘FREEDOM – rebel without a cause. Are we free to write our own story?’.*

**Friday:** Jazz Night, featuring Dundee Uni Big Band – *‘HOPE – the never-ending story, He lives!’.*

It is our prayer that God will work in their hearts of students here in Dundee.

**We want to extend a massive thank you to members of the church; we appreciate your practical and prayerful support. **

# Engage

By **Matt and Sheena Lock**

**Engage is a group for people in their 20s and 30s in CBC, who are not involved in the student ministry, to have a chance to get to know one another and also encourage each other to love God and live for Him.**



In a larger church it can sometimes be difficult to meet and get to know people who are at a similar age and stage, especially those who are new to Dundee or transitioning into work.

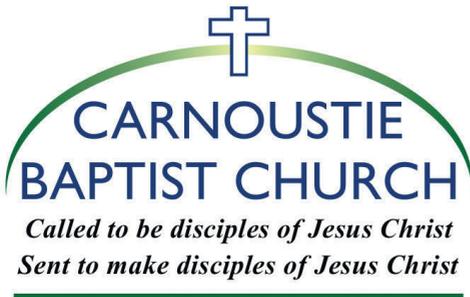
Engage meets four times a year and is for people in their 20s and 30s in CBC, who are not students, to have a chance to get to know one another in an informal context and also encourage each other to love God and live for Him.

A highlight of the Engage calendar is our Burns Supper. It was great to welcome some new people and share a meal of haggis, neeps and tatties, and Orkney cheesecake, and enjoy some good banter. Our devotion to start the year focused on Matthew 23 and challenged us to live for God in every part of our lives.

The next event will be around Easter, so please look out for a notice in the bulletin. For more information please join the Engage Facebook page or contact Matt and Sheena Lock on [mslocks4@gmail.com](mailto:mslocks4@gmail.com).

## Any thoughts?

Please send us an email if you would like to comment on any article in The Link magazine or if there is something you would like to see featured in a forthcoming issue. Email: [admin@centraldundee.com](mailto:admin@centraldundee.com)



# Update and prayer points

By **John Toller**

**J**anuary 27th was a very exciting day for us at Carnoustie Baptist Church, the culmination of over a year of study, prayer, discussion, preparation and teaching. For the first time we said our new church covenant together, expressing our commitment to our gospel work together as a local church and to one another, particularly in our growth as disciples and witnesses of Jesus.

As we've prepared, we've already seen the blessing of God bringing in new members and deepening our life together, as well as our faith, love and knowledge. Please pray with us that this growth would continue and would increasingly impact our wider community, that as a church family we would be living witnesses to the gospel.

We are thankful to God for many opportunities as individuals to witness to family, friends, etc., and



for growing boldness in this. Pray for continued wisdom as a church to know how we can support this witness. Pray also for our Knit & Natter group, the small Friday afternoon youth group run with other local evangelical churches, and our flourishing Toddler group, that relationships we are building would bring lasting fruit.

### *Please pray with us:*

We are very grateful for the continued prayer and financial support from Central; we have seen God's amazing provision through the last few years as our BUS grant has decreased, but are facing our biggest challenge yet in this coming financial year. Pray that we would not be discouraged but would continue to trust him and seek His kingdom and righteousness.

# Lochee Baptist Chapel Update and prayer points

By **Andi Mathieson**

**I have to start off this article with our news that we are expecting another baby; please pray for us as we prepare to be parents of three.**

I have recently finished writing my first book. In the summer I took on the responsibility of writing in the discipleship series for Church in Hard Places series, and the book is called 'Can I trust the Bible?'. **We pray that many people will be blessed through reading this book. I've also been just as busy teaching on a Sunday and at the Bible study through the week.**

Christmas saw our second anniversary. At the beginning **we had a verse that was at the heart of all our prayers: 'If the LORD doesn't build the house the labourers labour in vain'**. I always say that people don't plant churches, God does; that is exactly what has happened, He has built His house as He has promised.

We are really encouraged by the ministries in the church. Our children's club is going well, this term we made changes resulting in more families from the community coming along. This is really encouraging,

**please pray that the club will not just be a good thing to keep the kids entertained but that it has eternal significance for them.**

Bible study is always full, after just over a year we have finished Genesis and we began working through Exodus. Progressing Pilgrims is going well, Graeme MacIntosh has been teaching through Mark. **Please pray for fruit from this ministry that people would come to know Jesus.**

We have the same regulars who come to Friendship Group every week. They enjoy our company; **we pray they will respond to the Word, knowing that the gospel is their greatest need. Toddlers is a great place for first contact with people, but as our relationships grow we want to be able to speak the truth of the Gospel into lives.**

Thank you for your continued support and prayers.



# Member file

## Andrew Oliver



### **Tell us a little about your background and family**

I grew up in the country near the town of Castleterg in Northern Ireland. It was a great place to grow up with lots for a child to do such as climbing trees and swimming in the burn, and lots more besides. I started off my working life as a joiner and by the age of 25 was running my own construction business.

### **When did you become a Christian?**

As a child I remember vividly attending gospel meetings in our local Orange Hall. It is entirely possible that I was saved then at around the age of 6 or 7. My teenage years didn't reflect this, and it was when I was 25 years old that the Lord dovetailed several things together in my life. Most significantly, a young Christian man nervously told me about my need of Christ and 1001 questions, and 3 months later I confessed my sin and put my trust in Christ as my Saviour.

### **You are a Baptist minister. What has this involved over the years?**

The Lord called me into full-time ministry, which led me to Albania for

9 years where I was pastor of the Way of Peace Church in Tirana. It was there that I met Ela. Following our time in Albania we spent a short time leading the work in Upton-Upon-Severn and Worcester Baptist Churches, before entering the Royal Army Chaplains Department.

### **What brought you to Central?**

As an Army Chaplain we move around a lot. My work brought me to Leuchars Station and I found Central Baptist on Google and thought it looked like a place where things were happening and where my family would fit in. We are delighted with the warm welcome we have received here.

### **What do you like to do outside your work?**

I still enjoy using my carpentry skills and dabble in a lot of things including photography and playing the guitar, and there is always a book or two close to hand!



# Book Reviews

By Gavin Callaghan

**The cross is the epicentre of the Christian life, but sometimes as Christians we see that the cross is special, but we don't behold it. That can stem from not fully grasping the full significance of the cross, and what Jesus achieved for us there. This excellent book is a great place to start if you want to deepen your understanding of the cross.**

The book is divided into four parts: first, what happened at the cross, setting the cross in a wider scriptural context. Second, what difference does the cross make to me? Here, issues like justification and redemption are explained before moving into the third part: how can I live a cross-shaped life? Here, the practical implications for the

cross are clearly explained and applied. Finally, the resurrection factor – focusing on the actual, literal

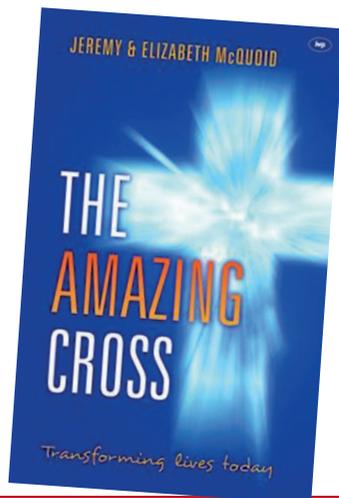
resurrection of Christ, and our own hope of what awaits beyond the grave.

We sometimes think of 'feel-good' books as being a bit light and

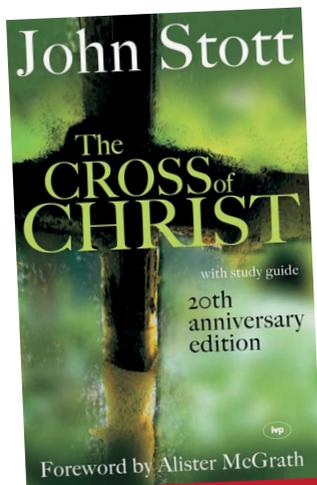
fluffy. This book conveys deep truth but in an accessible way – and I came away from it feeling encouraged and excited, with my understanding deepened, my gratitude enhanced and my appetite whetted for what lies ahead!

Easter would be a great time to take time to focus on the cross, and this book would be a great way to do that.

If you want to go deeper... If you would like a more detailed, comprehensive study, John Stott's magnificent book *'The Cross of Christ'* would be hard to beat. It's a deeper read – I abandoned it first time and came back to it years later – but I promise you it will reward the time and effort it demands.



**The Amazing Cross**  
by Jeremy and Elizabeth McQuoid



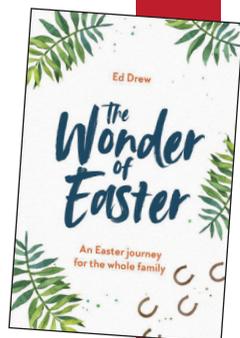
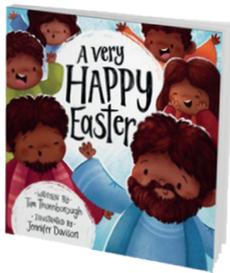
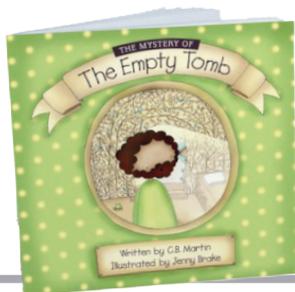
**The Cross of Christ**  
by John Stott

## For the family...

This year we are going to be trying out the family devotional **'The Wonder of Easter'** by Ed Drew, which is 34 10-minute devotions to focus on in the lead up to Easter with suggested

questions and some activities for ages 3–18. (There is a podcast to support parents and kids in this journey –

Faith in Kids). A couple of kids picture books to also look out for are 'The Mystery of the Empty Tomb' by CB Martin and **'A Very Happy Easter'** by Tim Thornborough.



# Children's Corner

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Psalm 119:105

F	P	Q	M	P	L	L	T
S	Q	D	S	I	F	A	E
Y	W	A	G	D	U	M	E
O	L	H	L	D	R	P	F
M	T	H	T	A	P	O	D
P	M	U	Z	Q	Q	N	W
M	C	K	B	N	I	G	L
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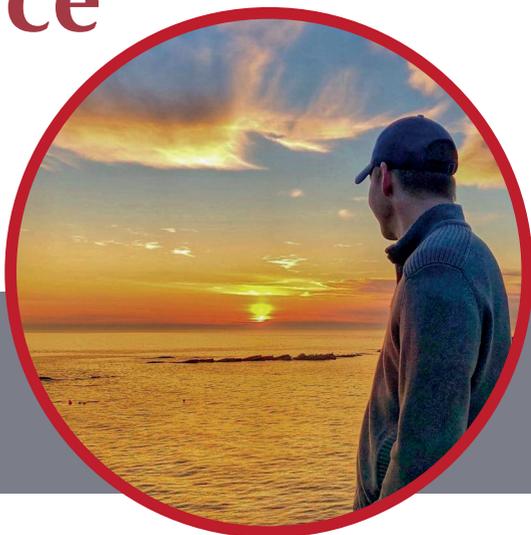
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# 8 Steps for Real Repentance

from Psalm 51

By Catherine Parks

My brother and I had a nightly childhood ritual of asking one another's forgiveness for a list of vague sins.



**Having been warned not to let the sun go down on our anger, we made sure to cover all possibilities of sins we may have committed during the day. “Aaron, I’m sorry for yelling at you, hitting you, being selfish with the Nintendo, and tattling on you today. Will you forgive me?” His answer, along with his own confession, came back to my room in return. Thus we slept in the peace of the slightly remorseful.**

When I read Psalm 51 (written by David after the prophet Nathan confronted him with his sin), I realize how lacking my childhood confessions were. Even many of my confessions in adulthood leave much to be desired.

Often we treat repentance as a statement—an “I’m sorry, please forgive me” that checks a box and (hopefully) alleviates our guilt. But if we look closely at Psalm 51, we see that repentance is a turning away from sin and a turning toward God—a process that doesn’t merely alleviate guilt but cultivates deep joy.

So how do we grow in a joy-giving habit of repentance? Here are eight steps.

## **1. Define the sin**

The first step to meaningful confession is understanding what sin is. David uses three different words for it in Psalm 51: “iniquity,” “sin,” and “transgressions” (vv. 1–3). Each term has been

deliberately chosen for its unique meaning. “Transgression” is rebellion against God’s authority and law, “iniquity” is a distortion of what should be, and “sin” is missing the mark. David also says his sin is deep—there is no minimizing or excusing it.

## **2. Appeal to God’s mercy**

The psalm begins: “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love” (v. 1). Here, David appeals for forgiveness based on what he knows about God’s character: that he is merciful. David knows God is committed to him in a relationship of “unfailing love”—and when we come before God in repentance, we do so because of his covenant with us through Christ.

## **3. Avoid defensiveness and see God rightly**

David’s sin hurt multiple people. He committed adultery, orchestrated a murder, and tried to cover it all up. And yet he says to God, “against you, you only, have I sinned” (v. 4). How can that be? Sin is missing the mark—God’s mark. Our sin does hurt others, and we must seek forgiveness from them, but all sin is ultimately against God.

## **4. Look to Jesus**

David writes, “Cleanse me with hyssop, and I shall be clean” (v. 7). He knows hyssop signifies purification with blood (see Ex. 24), and he knows that blood alone can make him clean. What he

doesn’t know is exactly how this will be done. But we do. We have the full revelation of Jesus, who “has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb. 9:26).

## **5. Ask God to break and heal you**

David prays, “Let the bones you have crushed rejoice” (v. 8). When God reveals our sin to us, it’s painful. It’s never pleasant to confront just how unholy we are. But like a doctor resetting a fractured bone, it is God who breaks, God who sets, and God who heals.

## **6. Be comforted by the Spirit**

Next David prays, “Do not . . . take your Holy Spirit from me” (v. 11). But the fact that David is grieved over his sin is a sign that the Spirit is at work in him. Have you ever been so discouraged by your sin that you’ve wondered, How can God love me? Surely I’m not really a Christian. Take comfort in knowing that the grief you’re experiencing is a sign that you have the Holy Spirit working in you, causing you to hate what God hates.

## **7. Rejoice and proclaim truth**

In verses 12–15, David asks God to make him so joyful about his salvation that he can’t help but proclaim the gospel to others: “Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise.” This is important, because so often we do the opposite—we

wallow in our sin and draw back from serving others because we think we're unworthy. But the joy of forgiveness should compel us to share the good news with friends, family, co-workers, and neighbours.

### **8. Resolve to obey**

We can do all the steps above, but if we're planning to sin in the same way again, then grace isn't truly taking root. What God desires is the mark of true repentance—a heart that is “broken” by sin and truly “contrite.”

As Puritan pastor Thomas Watson wrote, “Til sin be bitter, Christ will not be sweet.” If we come to God with a heart set on obedience, he “will not despise” it because of Christ's sacrifice on our behalf (v. 17).

Unlike my childhood bedtime apologies, practicing this kind of repentance has led to deep joy as

I learn to hate my sin and love my Saviour more. It has also led me to open up with others, not seeking to hide my sin, but enlisting others in praying for me and building a community of women who fight our sin together. Like David, it's my joy to tell others of God's grace and forgiveness, depending on Christ each step of the way. 🙏

**Catherine Parks loves to help women build friendships around Scripture and prayer. Along with her husband, Erik, and two children, she belongs to Redemption City Church in Franklin, Tennessee. She's the author of *Real: The Surprising Secret to Deeper Relationships* and a co-author of *A Christ-Centered Wedding*.**

**This article is adapted from Catherine Parks's new book, *Real: The Surprising Secret to Deeper Relationships* (The Good Book Company, 2018).**

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