



CENTRAL/*Talk*

Summer 2009

The newsletter of the Central Baptist Association

Walking together in Ministry and Mission



From Graham Clarke,
Moderator of CBA

Saturdays in June are somewhat unpredictable! They are either seriously sunny and hot or they are cloudy, cold and miserable. To prove the point, June 6th 2009 was cold, wet, warm and sunny all in the space of a few hours! But that was outside!

Inside Loughton Baptist Church, Milton Keynes, the atmosphere was consistently warm and sunny as CBA met for the AGM and Annual Assembly with about 180 Baptists gathering from across the CBA to share in worship, to thank God for his provision and to be challenged in our thinking about our approach to mission by Rev David Shosanya and workshop leaders.

But not only was the atmosphere good, so was the forecast! The presentation of the new draft association strategy showed us that the CBA should be looking forward to more sunny days and even when they are interrupted by storms or showers, there will be adequate shade and protection.

Our new strapline is '***Walking together in Ministry and Mission***'. We are walking together along a path which has been set out before us by Jesus as he calls us to fulfil his Great Commission to go out into all the world to make disciples. As we travel, we accompany one another as churches and as individual church members and we are

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joined by other partners like BMS World Mission, BUGB and our ecumenical partners.

As we walk together, we will encourage one another in every member ministry through training and support, celebration, encouragement and the sharing of creative ideas.

When the path becomes challenging, we will support one another through the work of our Regional Ministry Team and the availability of practical and financial help. When the storms hit or when we need to take some rest and recuperation, we shall help one another to a safe place and tend to one another's needs before emerging once again to continue along this pathway that Jesus has set us upon.

It is my hope and prayer that you and your church will be part of this adventure and that we will see churches revitalised and lives changed across the CBA area and throughout God's Kingdom as we **walk together in ministry and mission.**

Graham Clarke



THE CATHEDRAL AND
ABBEY CHURCH OF
SAINT ALBAN

**You are invited to attend a Free
Church Service in the Lady Chapel**

Wednesday 1st July 2009 at 11a.m.
The Reverend Geoff Colmer, Team
Leader of Central Baptist Association.

Wednesday 5th August 2009 at 11a.m.
The Reverend Jane Weedon, URC
Minister of the Welwyn Garden City
Free Church.

At Noon join a Fellowship Lunch in the
Cathedral Café.



Please pray

A prayer card to prompt you to pray for the life of the Central Baptist Association can be obtained from Colin Pye 01494 864734.

Pray

- ✓ for the Moderator, Treasurer and members of Council
- ✓ for the Regional Ministers
- ✓ for the churches of our Association
- ✓ for Jorge and Hermelinda Damasceno, mission enablers working with Portuguese speakers
- ✓ Gareth Wilde, our BMS World Mission contact

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

If your church is nearing a significant milestone or you just feel it is time to tell the story of your fellowship, the Baptist Historical Society provides a guide to writing a local church history.

For a copy (cost £1), please send a stamped addressed envelope to
Stephen Copson
60 Strathmore Avenue, Hitchin. Herts
SG5 1ST

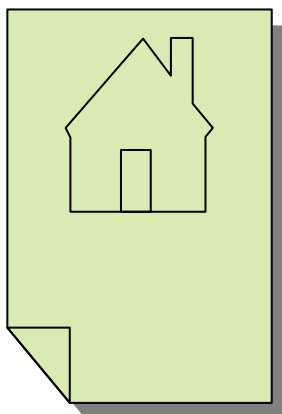
Little Stanion Community Church in Corby – coming soon!

A new village is under construction in North Northamptonshire, adjacent to the town of Corby. Despite the current economic slowdown, Little Stanion has grown from nothing to 25 occupied homes in last six months and is expected to become 970 homes within 5 years. There is already a temporary community centre and a new school is to be started in July this year together with a shop and pub that are to be built soon.

So it seems right that there should be a church too!

To this end, on 29th March 2009, the Rev Helen Wordsworth and her equivalent from the East Midland Synod of the United Reformed Church, the Rev Terry Oakley signed “A Declaration of Intent” from the two denominations to plant a church in the new village. The declaration was also signed by the URC/Baptist Danesholme Community Church and the Rowlett Road Baptist Church together with draft heads of agreement for the practical steps of purchasing a manse in the village and calling a minister to work with the three “churches”.

The service was also shared by other members of “Churches Together in Corby” with special support and encouragement coming from the Methodists and the Church of Scotland, as well as the local Anglicans.



This is an exciting venture, which will involve capital sums from the URC and a significant grant from Baptist Home Mission for this exciting and pioneering ministry. It is also hoped that

this will help the churches of all denominations cope with the rapid population growth that is expected in North Northamptonshire when the recession comes to an end. The infrastructures for at least five other local communities of 500-6,000 dwellings are already at an advanced stage and so Little Stanion is very much leading the thinking and praying of the local community of churches in what has been for the last couple of generations a static, stable and traditional community.

Peter Strong

BAPTIST UNION MISSION RESOURCES

The Mission Department of BUGB started producing a bi-monthly Department Newsletter earlier this year and the hope is to get it into every Baptist Church and to those who have a responsibility for or interest in the local mission of the church.

Mission Department has now settled on simply sending out a hyperlink to the BUGB website so that large email attachments do not need to be sent around.

The June Newsletter has just been produced

http://www.baptist.org.uk/news_media/docs/mission0509.pdf

You will need to have Acrobat Reader installed on your computer in order to view the newsletter. This can be downloaded free of charge from www.adobe.com

Take a look and see whether there are any resources that will help you and your church's. And don't forget to go back from time to time to get the latest update

LIVING HOSPITALITY

“Amjad and Nina invited Pastor Fred and his wife, Jo, for a meal. Pastor Fred and Jo were bemused when a number of people made impromptu visits and when their Amjad kept answering the phone. They were also taken back by variety and volume of food that they were served, as neither were high earners. When pastor Fred and wife Jo, left after visiting Amjad and Nina, they accompanied Fred and Jo to their car, and stood waving goodbye until they turned the corner.

Amjad and Nina visit pastor Fred White British for a meal. When they left Fred and his wife said goodbye and closed the door. Amjad and Nina stood in the driveway looking at the door that had shut behind them, then slowly walked away shaking their heads.”

How many cultural assumptions can you spot in this story?

In April CBA organised a day conference at Luton Central Baptist on how our churches can be welcoming communities to Christians from all sorts of ethnic backgrounds.

The day was led by Kumar Rajogopalan and David Shosanya from the London Baptist Association and Sonia Barron, an Anglican.



The day mixed input with a lot of interaction (the example above was used) and conversation. The leaders used personal experience, questions and discussion to

help us think about how people from different cultural backgrounds encountered church and what things appeared strange or even unwelcoming.

Kumar and David used story, video of the “Goodness Gracious Me”, Bible study of the attitude of Jesus and practical exercises to explore issues of hospitality and welcome.

Around twenty people attended from various churches. We were asked to think about how we express our culture in our church and how the culture of others may be sidelined in what we do and our decision-making.

The day ended with an invitation to move beyond hospitality to include one another in the church fellowship as “There is neither guest nor host for you are one in Christ Jesus.”
Stephen Copson

BUNYAN MEETING, BEDFORD



MAKING CONTACT.....

After an initial church meeting in February 2008 with Helen Wordsworth speaking about the concept of community chaplains, six people volunteered to attend the Christian Listener Training Course “Just Listen” in September 2008.

In November 2008 we had a further meeting with Helen to plan the way forward. It was decided we would be known as Church Link person rather than Community Chaplains

Five of our church fellowship are now involved, liaising with the groups which meet on church premises – Craft Club (parents & children), Storytime (toddlers and carers), Sight Concern and Civil Service Retirement Fellowship.

Each of the link persons has attended a few meetings so far. The consensus is that it is early days yet and more time is needed to get to know people in order to be effective in the role we have taken on – to listen, sympathise and pray if requested.

We are grateful for a £400 grant from Home Mission. This has enabled us to buy pastoral cards and copies of “No Ordinary Man”. These are already being put to good use.

Peter Ormerod



CENTRAL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION ASSEMBLY 09

'God's heart for people and places' was the theme of the keynote address at the Central Baptist Association Assembly, which took place on Saturday 6 June at Loughton Baptist Church. About 180 people gathered for a day of worship, teaching and inspiration, and our Annual General Meeting.

The Revd David Shosanya, Regional Minister (Mission) in the London Baptist Association, spoke passionately, and using a judicious mix of humour and personal stories, issued a compelling challenge to engage with our communities with particularity, presence and passion.

The Revd Colin Pye (Regional Minister) led worship with musicians from across the Association with accustomed creativity and flair, blending the familiar with the new.

A large number of new ministers were welcomed to the Association, and those who had died over the last year were remembered with affection and sadness. The Revd David Wheatley, Minister of King's Community Church, Letchworth, supported by Home Mission, spoke of the joy and challenge of working on a needy estate.

Prior to the AGM, the Revd Graham Clarke (Moderator) presented the new Association Strategy. This is a work in progress with an emphasis upon the journey together as an association of churches. Using the strap-line, 'Walking Together in Ministry and Mission' we were encouraged to enjoy the journey but to be prepared for surprise as God works among us!

The afternoon session consisted of a choice between two seminars, 'How can the church help people in debt?' led by Richard Talbot of Stewardship Money, and 'Mission opportunities with BMS World Mission for people with unexpected time on their hands', led by Ruth Robinson, Manager for Mission Programmes, BMS World Mission. Both were informative and challenging, providing a valuable resource for individuals and churches, and were very well received.

The Revd Geoff Colmer (Regional Minister/Team Leader) was greatly encouraged by the day, 'This annual event continues to be a day which both informs and inspires, and with a building filled almost to capacity, the atmosphere was very positive with a great buzz.'

For pictures of the day, go to

www.centralba.org.uk

Settlements

Into the Association

Andrew Hemmens to Christchurch, Welwyn Garden City

Chris Johnson to Hoddesdon

Charlie Keenan to North Corby

John Lockley to Bushey, Chalk Hill

Vanessa Rackham p/t Family Worker Tilehouse Street, Hitchin

David Skinner to Houghton Regis

Marilyn Webb to Kislingbury

Louise Webber (Walton LEP, M. Keynes)

Out of the Association

Sam Abramian (formerly High St, Rickmansworth) to Walton-on-Thames

Richard Pool (Cotton End) to Upminster

Within the Association

Ruth Bottoms is no longer Beds Ecumenical Development Officer



COMMUNICATING GOOD NEWS

This report appeared in the Watford Observer 17th April 2009

"Church hosts artistic talent"

A collection of photographs, sketches and sculptures, all on the subject of peace and reconciliation, went on display last week to showcase some of the town's (*Watford's*) hidden talents.

Thirteen artists and community groups from Watford contributed to the 60 works of art which made up the Easter exhibition at **Beechen Grove Baptist Church**.

The exhibition, which included works from organisations such as DRUM and Hertsreach went on display on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.

Matt Penny, Manager of house and community at the Clarendon Road church, said: " It came together really well. We had a good selection of work from local artists and community groups. As a church, we tried to bring different groups in from the community in order to highlight some of the good work going on in Watford. It was giving that chance to showcase groups who are doing something positive and to give

opportunities to those artists who haven't had a chance to exhibit previously."

All the proceeds from the exhibition will be donated to the DEC (Disasters Emergency Committee)

So, is there someone in your church who is responsible to make your good news stories (with pictures) known to the local press or radio station?

If you would like help with communication and your church is in Bedfordshire or Hertfordshire, contact the ecumenical Beds & Herts Media Trust for information and help on how best to make the life of your church known in the community. Contact www.commskit.org.uk or write to *Holywell Lodge, 41 Holywell Hill, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 1HE*

And remember that you can advertise events at your church through the CBA website

www.centralba.org.uk

or contact Colin Pye on 01494 864734 if you need assistance with this.

BAPTISTS FOR HEALING

A newsletter and CD of resources are available from the Secretary, the Revd Elsie Howell, 60 Andrew Allan Road, Rockwell Green, Wellington. Somerset TA21 9DY or email revshowell@waitrose.com

Copy for the next Newsletter should be given to Stephen Copson by October 30th and the next issue will be available in November

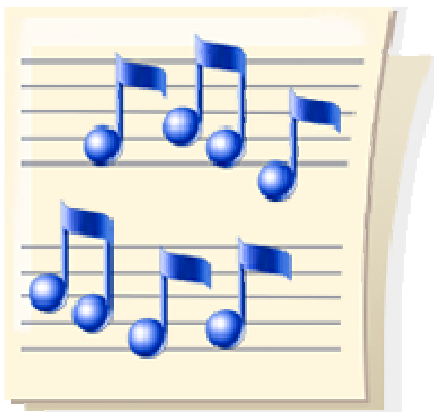


This hasn't happened here before

Party politics and performance singing. I am not naturally drawn to taking part in either. But events in South Oxhey where I live and minister have given me a new perspective on both of these.

To our collective shame 'we' have allowed a BNP candidate receiving under 800 votes to become our council representative. Low turnout, close margin, labour slump: I know the factors. I also feel the conviction: 'Evil prospers when good men (people) do nothing' or not enough!

But something really good has been happening in South Oxhey over the last 9 months. Twenty Twenty Television, working for the BBC has been making another series of the BAFTA award winning TV programme, "The Choir".



Choir master Gareth Malone goes into an unlikely environment and forms a choir. In the past it's been schools, this time it was to be an area: forming a children's choir and an adult choir, with them coming together as part of the final performance.

South Oxhey was chosen after a letter from the Vicar in South Oxhey to Gareth and his team. Amazingly out of many applications they chose us: the not-normally-chosen-ones of South Oxhey. Word went around. I thought my wife,

Clare, would enjoy it, but I'm not much of a singer, so I would encourage others.

Anyway, the first rehearsal came and over 200 of us were there: Me included. With opportunities to meet people from all over the community, to do something inspiring together, to learn how to sing. Was God in this? I think so!

There have been 170 of us at weekly rehearsals ever since. We have sung in the shopping precinct at South Oxhey to friends and family. We have performed guest appearances in other choir's concerts at the Watford Colosseum and at St Alban's Abbey. The latter involving performing Samuel Barber's Agnus Dei – the journey to performing a Latin choral piece of this complexity with many people who had neither knowingly come across Latin before nor sung in a choir was wonderful.

We recorded a CD of a Beatles' song at Abbey Road and we became the catalyst and main act in a festival on South Oxhey playing fields that attracted a crowd of around 5–7,000 people.

The TV crew have now moved on, but we asked Gareth to stay and lead the choir: He has! Relationships are being built, unity in diversity is being expressed, some lovely music is being made. South Oxhey has something to be proud of. And God hasn't finished with this yet.

And the BNP? God encouraged me when we had more African and Caribbean people at church this week than ever before. Our welcome, our prayers and our words and actions in the community are important – thank God for unity in diversity, especially unity in diversity in Christ. We know the end of the story.

Steve Hobbis



BETWEEN THE POSTS

I held my breath as the fly-half placed the ball on the tee and took a few steps backwards, concentrating hard. Stepping forwards he struck the ball....which sailed between the posts! It was the first game in my new role as The Bedford Blues' Chaplain and, unfortunately, it was also the first game of the season that the Blues lost, Exeter Chiefs stealing victory with that penalty in the 80th minute last November!

It made for a bit of gentle ribbing in the changing rooms afterwards but, looking back, it's been a great season and the Club have really welcomed me into the set-up under the auspices of the SCORE organisation: *Sport Chaplains Offering Resources and Encouragement*.



few wide eyes!

In all of this, I've really appreciated the strong support and encouragement that the members of Ampthill Baptist Church have given me. This season has really opened my eyes to the opportunities of chaplaincy and, though I always thought it was a good thing, I'm a passionate advocate of it now!

An increasing number of rugby clubs are appreciating the benefits of chaplaincy in a high-pressure environment, being there to be a listening ear and offering support in a number of ways. It's been a real privilege to spend time with the players and full-time staff, but I've also enjoyed becoming part of the Bedford Followers' (supporters) set-up too.

As the President said to me on the way back from the Coventry game, "Of course, you're our Chaplain too!" Earlier she'd threatened to make me walk back down the M1 if Bedford lost – I used to play for Coventry at U19 level. Fortunately, The Blues won!

Other experiences have included joining the players in growing a moustache for 'Movember' (ugh!) and suggesting and promoting a successful collection of lingerie for a charity in Zimbabwe, which caused a

Steve Plummer (Ampthill Baptist church)