

# partners

the SGP magazine



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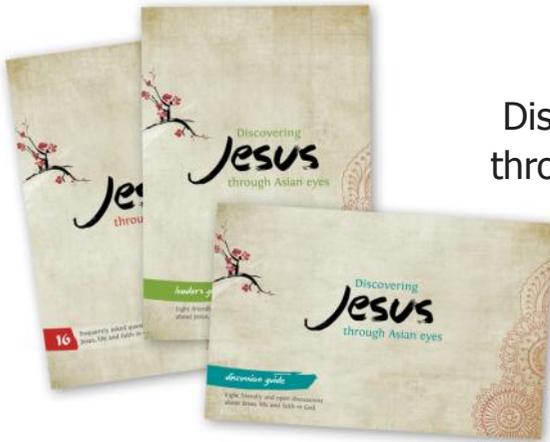
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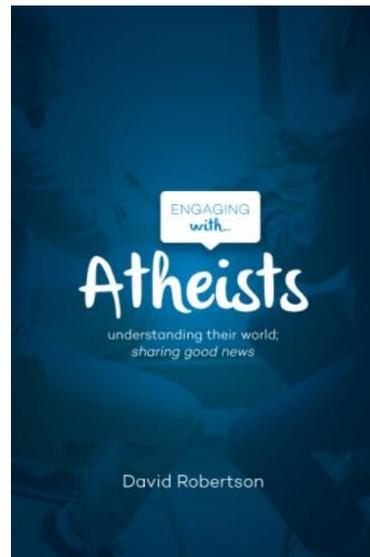
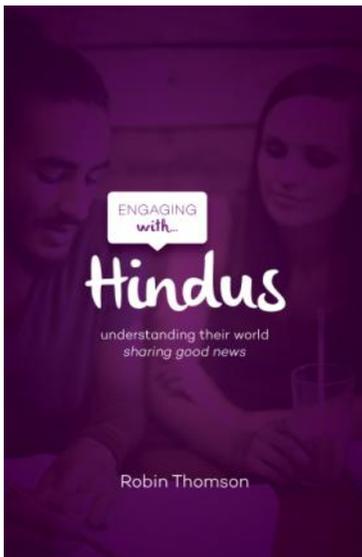
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In this edition of **Partners**, our theme is proclaiming the good news of Christ. *Graham Nicholls* (chair of the SGP's evangelism task group) begins with some reflections on 1 Corinthians 1:18.



People have always been scandalised by the *real* gospel, but by God's grace some are also saved by it.

### **THE REAL GOSPEL...**

#### ***...is the message of the Cross***

For Paul, Christ crucified was the message that changed everything. He knew that people who are perishing need the good news that Christ has died for their sin, been buried, and raised to life again. Paul's preaching didn't simply land at the cross – Paul's entire message was Jesus' life, death and resurrection, and its application to every listener.

#### ***...seems foolish to the perishing***

Paul knew this message seems ridiculous to many people. Jewish listeners couldn't imagine God in the flesh, much less as a weak servant King. Greeks served and appeased their gods to get what they wanted. They couldn't believe God came to serve them and reconcile the world to

himself through the offering of Christ on the cross.

#### ***...is the powerful wisdom of God to those being saved***

No, the message of the cross didn't meet with popular expectations of divine activity. But to those humble enough to accept it, the cross is both a message of great power and all-surpassing wisdom that renders the best the world has to offer defective and inadequate. It is through the message of the cross that God saves sinners from death, destruction and despair, and builds his church.

#### ***...means preaching the cross***

In and through our churches we must preach about Christ and the wisdom and power of God; we must also explain the cross. A gospel without Christ crucified isn't good news. If we marginalise the message of the cross, only to preach our own wisdom and power to save, we are fools. And worse, we allow people to perish forever.

#### ***...means we should expect some people to believe***

Paul had a hard time in Corinth, but God was faithful and his ministry was fruitful. He told people the God-given truth and although many mocked and sneered, some were saved. It's always been like this: don't be surprised that some people will reject your message. Some miss the grave-shattering power of the cross, and others think it foolish. But some will believe and be saved. Pray for that. Be so thankful when it happens and give God all the glory – the gospel really is the power and wisdom of God.

# Cuckfield Baptist Church - building for the Gospel



It has been over ten years in the pipeline, but at last work is beginning on new premises for Cuckfield Baptist Church! It is an exciting new era in the life of the church, which dates back to the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the first chapel built in 1772.

## *"over ten years in the pipeline"*

The history is one of ebb and flow; by the 1950s the church had shrunk to just one member but was re-launched through the enthusiastic support of Montpelier Place Baptist Church in Brighton. A group moved into the area, renovated the chapel and restarted regular services. The church grew, a pastor was called in 1962 and an extension to the chapel built in 1967. Over the years since, there has been continued growth and there is now a membership of over 80 and a Sunday morning congregation of just

under 100. Currently we have four elders, one of whom, David Sprouse, is full-time.

Cuckfield is a large, idyllic village near Haywards Heath with a population of around 5,000; predominantly white middle-class, with an attitude of self-sufficiency which makes gospel work challenging. It is a busy village with a strong appearance of community, served by a medium-sized primary school and a large secondary school. It is therefore easy to meet and get to know people but often hard to get beyond superficial relationships. As in any community, we regularly meet people who, underneath their veneer of togetherness and respectability, are lonely, broken, empty and restless. We continue to work hard to bring the good news about Jesus to those around us of all ages. We are thankful

that year by year God has saved among us a steady trickle of people of all ages from both unchurched and churched backgrounds.

*"people who, underneath their veneer of togetherness and respectability, are lonely, broken, empty and restless"*

This summer two ladies professed faith, following a Christianity Explored course. One of them, named Jill, started coming last autumn following the death of her husband, Mark, aged only 57. Understandably she was hurt and angry with God, but as a way of saying 'thank you' to the church for their kindness, she attended a Sunday meeting, previously only ever having attended a couple of coffee mornings. Jill ended up coming every Sunday! Hours were spent with different members working through many questions, some very painful, and this led to her joining a Christianity Explored course. Having never really read the Bible, or understood about the person and work of Christ, Jill found this helpful, not least learning about the conversion of Saul and the discovery of God's grace in the gospel. In the mercy of God the loss of her husband has been used by God to bring her to understand and, through faith, be embraced in the kindness of God.

We have been grateful to God for each living stone that he has built into his church and this past year we have baptised young people like Abi who is 14 and Eileen who is in her eighties. We are also thankful for believers who have moved and settled among us.

Although we have a gap of young families with children under 11, we have the encouragement of a good-sized group aged 18-25, including Luke who is doing his second year on the Cornhill Ministry Training Course in London.

So, one by one, the building work goes on and yet we are well aware of the huge need that remains. One means to support our ministry is the building of new premises on what, until recently, had been our car park. Construction is just commencing; it has been a long road to get to this point, but through it we have been thrilled and surprised at God's guidance and provision. Earlier this year we seriously doubted if we would be able to go ahead but, spurred afresh to seek God, saw encouraging answers to prayer. The old chapel was sold and the buyer has leased it back to us for our use during the building project. God also provided financially through his people and we have been able to go ahead. The build is likely to take a year and we are still looking to God to provide so that we can complete the whole scheme in a single phase rather than having to delay building the second hall until a future date.

*"spurred afresh to seek God"*

Please join us in praying for God's provision and help as we proceed with this exciting but daunting venture but, more importantly, in the real building work of the church which will not be completed until the Day of Christ.

# A revolution of strategy for evangelistic missions

**All Saints Crowborough** has a long history of holding a week of evangelistic events, every two years, to explain the Christian message clearly so that those who are not yet Christians have the opportunity to give their life to Christ. We call it a 'Christian Festival' rather than 'Mission'. Over the years the church family has grown better at inviting friends to events in this special week.

With a different team each time, looking to build on the strengths of the Festival before, the events were made increasingly attractive to draw people in. Although people were always invited to an event with a Christian talk, the reason they came would often be to see a magic show, take part in a Murder Mystery, or hear some quality music. The brief for the speaker would be to give a short gospel talk at the end of the evening.

**Real Life**  
live interviews

A week of interviews & talks at All Saints Church, Crowborough

Marcus Nodder &

**Jonathan Aitken**



*Cabinet Minister  
to Convicted  
Prisoner*

Politician + author who went from  
disgrace to amazing grace

*Monday 17 November 7.30pm*

Marcus Nodder &

**Gaby Doherty**



Marcus Nodder &

**Sir Jeremy Cooke**



*True Justice*

High Court Judge who knows that  
Jesus is the true Judge of all

*Tuesday 18 November 7.30pm*

Marcus Nodder &

**Janet Macklin**



God has used these Festivals to bring people to Christ, and some signed up each time for *Christianity Explored* where they would get a fuller explanation and grasp of the gospel. But for our last Festival, in 2012, evangelist Roger Carswell challenged us to make the gospel message itself the main focus of every event.

For this year's Festival, which takes place during November, each evening will feature an interview with someone with an interesting story whose life has been changed by Christ. This will be followed by a thorough explanation of the Good News in a way that follows on relevantly. We have reduced the amount of food and diverse entertainment on offer, and dispensed with the need for tickets. The church family is encouraged to invite people to any or all events, and we are praying it will be effective as people hear about real lives changed by Jesus.

There's space for lots of people. So if you know someone who needs to hear the gospel, bring them to **Real Life**.

*Jonty Frith, Associate Vicar, All Saints Crowborough*

*Free events: includes wine, soft drinks, snacks and music*

Need transport? Ring the Church Office 01892 652081

*Marcus Nodder &*

**Henry Olonga**

## *Not a Gay Marriage*

Can Gaby's marriage to Sean, a man who experiences same sex attractions, really work?

*Wednesday 19 November 7.30pm*



## *Blood, Sweat + Treason*

Former International test cricketer, who was charged with treason by Robert Mugabe, tells us how his faith in Jesus is of first importance.

*Friday 21 November 7.30pm*

*Marcus Nodder &*

**John Lawson**

## *Disaster, Courage + Eternal Hope*

Stranded at sea, when her husband collapsed and died, how could Janet's faith in God grow through such trauma?

*Thursday 20 November 7.30pm*



## *Violence + Villainy*

Hear how the power of the Gospel transformed the life of a gangster's enforcer.

*Saturday 22 November 7.30pm*



## Interview with Martin Povey

"...And pray for us too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ..." Colossians 4:3

For the past three years I've been working as an Evangelist with the Association of Evangelists (A of E, Roger Carswell et al). Being the token southerner the vision has been for me both to share Christ and help others in their evangelism across Sussex and the South East.

It has been an amazing privilege to speak in a whole bunch of different settings and churches, including many in the SGP. There have been mission weekends, retired folks' lunches, cream teas in village halls, 'A Passion for Life' events and much more. Here's a snapshot of what I've been involved in recently...

### **Pimm's & Puds at Hailsham**

I was invited to speak at an evangelistic event for women at St Mary's, Hailsham. Talk about Daniel in the Lions' den! It was a somewhat intimidating atmosphere. Around 30 ladies gathered at the vicarage and I was invited to speak on the evidence for Jesus. After the talk a Q&A session ensued and the questions about Jesus seemed genuine and thoughtful. Gospel seeds are continuing to be sown and watered. Please pray for the witness of St Mary's, Hailsham.

### **Lancing College**

Picturesque views of the Sussex countryside, blue skies, and meat BBQ'd by a South African – this was the setting for Lancing College CU's 'God and suffering' event. At least 50 students showed up and listened really well and there were some meaningful chats with students at the end. Praise God for teenagers like Matt who have been highly influential and passionate about sharing Jesus at Lancing!

### **Mission to Sixth Formers**

My wife Claire has been working on a

book for Sixth Formers to give to their non-Christian mates before they go to Uni. In conjunction with [festive.org.uk](http://festive.org.uk) and [10ofthose.com](http://10ofthose.com) it's packed with recipes (approved by a Michelin star chef), punchy tips for heading off to Uni, and testimonies of students who received Jesus at Uni. It's called 'Beyond Baked Beans' and will be released in February 2015.

### **New Life in Jesus**

Peacehaven Evangelical Church has been running Christianity Explored courses for the last couple of years, seeing many seeds sown. One chap on the course said to me "*I want to believe, but I've got questions.*" We met up for a coffee. In a nutshell his issue was this: '*I'm not good enough for God.*' I was able to share how Jesus said, "*It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*" (Luke 5:31-32). A couple of weeks later he answered Jesus' call, repented and trusted Jesus!

### **Offering Jesus not products**

At one of the Association of Evangelist away-days recently, we were talking about how easy it is for an evangelist to simply *go through the motions*. Please pray that I would not fall into the trap of '*pushing a product*' but would always offer people Jesus.

To book Martin to speak, or for help with training, email:

[martinpovey@gmail.com](mailto:martinpovey@gmail.com)



## Reflections on A Passion for Life

from Marc Lloyd

Vicar of Warbleton Parish Church



In the run-up to Easter this year, the parish churches of Warbleton, Bodle Street Green and Dallington welcomed a team of students from Oak Hill Theological College in North London. They arrived to help us with a series of 'A Passion for Life' outreach events.

The churches serve rural communities with a total population of fewer than 2,000 people, but we went to town in planning events. In addition to our church services, we had about 20 events including a quiz, film night, bowling for teenagers, children's holiday club, pub lunches and breakfasts.

With so much going on, numbers were small at some events but there were at least some people at each event who weren't part of the committed core of church members. Some people came back to more than one thing, so there was some sense of momentum throughout the week.

**We learnt some helpful tips:** some of the easiest to organise events were amongst the most effective. The 'Grill A Christian'/'Any Questions' type of event required little organisation and seemed to be really beneficial. And some events can work well without a

great crowd.

Part of the aim of the week was to give the Oak Hill team opportunities for hands-on experience of evangelism. They were charming, energetic and a great encouragement to the committed church members. They had a commendably flexible can-do approach and people were impressed that capable and pleasant young people wanted to commit their lives to Christian ministry. It was also helpful to us to have them ask questions, and look with fresh pairs of eyes at the parishes we've become used to.

The excitement of the evangelistic events needed to be faithfully followed up and we ran a small Christianity Explored course.

Being involved in 'A Passion for Life' has borne fruit in other ways; it was good for us! A more concentrated period of evangelism has helped us to see what can be done. For some in the churches this was probably their first taste of evangelism. We're praying they develop an appetite for sharing Jesus with their friends and neighbours. Please pray with us.



**The Oakhill team**

# Exposed to the Gospel

## Raphael's testimony



My name is Raphael and I was born in Spain some 50 years ago; though now I consider myself a citizen of the kingdom of God. My childhood was nurtured in a loving environment

where I was the eldest of 5 siblings.

In my early teenage years I began to experiment with drugs in a recreational way: cannabis, alcohol, LSD, amphetamines, etc. For a while I was enjoying my lifestyle, this being very mechanistic.

*"My life from the moment I woke up was driven by drugs and the ways and means of acquiring them."*

However, soon after I turned 17, I was introduced to heroin and cocaine and eventually to crack cocaine. Suddenly my life became controlled by and centred on drugs, and from smoking them occasionally went on to inject daily as much as I could. My life from the moment I woke up was driven by drugs and the ways and means of acquiring them.

As my addiction progressed I started to commit crime; at times, violent crimes, which in turn led to several years of imprisonment in different countries. After 27 years of addiction I became drug-free by completing successfully residential rehab. Whilst in rehab I was introduced to a spiritual philosophy. However, following careful examination, I realised that it was flawed, since no matter how much



I thought of my 'higher power' I could not escape a sense of guilt.

*"I was then exposed to the Gospel and many of my unanswered questions were solved by looking at Scripture."*

Then I met Derek Fortnam, Pastor of Park Hill Church, who invited me to attend their Friday night evangelistic meetings to explore the saving power of Christ. I was then exposed to the Gospel and many of my unanswered questions were solved by looking at Scripture. I subsequently began to



spend time reading the Bible and praying for spiritual discernment. The text became alive and I realised that the physical world did not come to pass by chance, that I was beautifully created in God's image and I saw my accountability to Him. Also, I saw that I am a sinner in need of repentance, as well as confessing Jesus as my Lord and Saviour. What is more, I began to understand, as much as my finite heart and mind is capable of, the

mystery of God's salvation plan - the indescribable price Jesus paid to set me free. Since that day God has poured upon me blessing after blessing. I am no longer enslaved to sin. His transforming power in my heart has made me a new person. I now work as a Drug and Alcohol Recovery Worker. I have restored my relationship with my family and many people I hurt in the past. I have experienced healing that passes human understanding, making Paul's words mine, "But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord." (Philippians 3:7-8a)

*Raphael Montes Mates  
Park Hill Church*

Raphael's wife, Miriam, came to saving faith at the same time as her husband and together their lives have been a demonstration of God's saving power. Raphael has completed the SGP's Saturday Morning Bible Training Course and is often preaching at Park Hill with evidence of God's enabling. Amazing Grace! We are very conscious of God's sovereignty as He continues to bring people with drug and alcohol problems to us, and it is awesome to see His redeeming work in broken lives.

*Derek Fortnam  
Pastor  
Park Hill Church*



## **Musicians' Meal & Masterclass - past and future...**

On a Friday night in October, about 40 musicians and children's workers from SGP churches gathered in Eastbourne to think about 'Music Ministry for Kids'.

After a great curry, we opened the Bible at Deuteronomy 31 to see how, in Moses' day, God used a song to preserve His message through to the next generation. We were challenged that our children's songs must have sound lyrics that are capable of doing this. Then we looked at the Palm Sunday narrative to remind ourselves how useful and valuable the praise of children is in God's eyes.

This led on to a practical session where we learnt several top-quality songs, and saw ways that we could

lead them in a variety of different settings, and on a range of different instruments. Through group discussion and Q&A we were able to touch on other important issues relating to all-age services, the use of actions, schools ministry, etc. All in all, it was a tremendously encouraging night.

**The vision** of our "Musicians' Meal and Masterclass" sessions is to provide:

- opportunities for different SGP musicians to meet together.
- biblical input to help us understand why and how we should use music in church.
- practical training.

## Two further Musicians' events are planned for March 2015:

**On the evening of Friday 13 March** we will be gathering musicians in Chichester, to look at 'Leading a congregation in song'. There'll be a strong emphasis on how members of a band can work well together to do this, whatever size your group may be.

**On the morning of Saturday 14 March** we'll be in Haywards Heath for a brunch session, and the subject will be 'hymns'. Hymns have had something of a revival in the evangelical church over the past 15 years, and we'll be exploring some of the best new tunes to old hymns and some of the best brand new hymns too. We'll be thinking about the benefits of singing hymns, how to lead them with a range of instrumental groups, and how to make them accessible.



Our guest leader for these March events will be Peter Turnbull, Music Co-ordinator of Christ Church Fulwood in Sheffield.

Do look out for more details, or get in touch with:



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### Magazine Editor Chris Bulled

Pastor of Hurstpierpoint  
Evangelical Church

Our next magazine will be issued in May/June.

Chris is always keen to receive news from SGP partners, for possible inclusion. Do contact him!

01273 832 369



### SGP Administrator Wendy Sands



**Bible by the Beach 1 - 4 May 2015**  
**The Congress Theatre, Eastbourne**  
Book before 30 November for early bird ticket prices. Group discounts available.  
More info at [biblebythebeach.org](http://biblebythebeach.org)

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