

# MOVE

THE  
MAGAZINE  
OF AGAPÉ

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL? | OXFORD LIFE | SUMMER 2013

SHARING  
YOUR  
FAITH

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Sharing Your Story

Agapé is a Christian charity dedicated to addressing the spiritual needs of the UK by helping people to see, hear, understand and be forever changed by the person and claims of Jesus.

OUR VISION IS BIG.

We dream of a day when everyone knows someone who truly follows Jesus. This vision extends beyond our national borders and beyond what we could ever hope to accomplish on our own.

OUR STRATEGY IS SIMPLE.

We believe that in order to see the growth of spiritual movements like Jesus did, we need to do what Jesus did: introduce people to his message, help them grow in their understanding of how to follow him with their whole lives, and challenge them to go out and do the same with others.

Agapé has been giving training in discipleship and evangelism in the UK since 1967. We are a part of Campus Crusade for Christ International and are members of the Evangelical Alliance and Global Connections.

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### NEW ADDRESS - HEAD OFFICE

Agapé, 167 Newhall Street  
Birmingham, B3 1SW  
Tel: 0121 765 4404  
Fax: 0121 765 4065  
E-mail: [info@agape.org.uk](mailto:info@agape.org.uk)  
Web-site: [www.agape.org.uk](http://www.agape.org.uk)

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Rev Nicholas Wynne-Jones (chair),  
Malcolm Franks, Javier Garcia, Ian Johnson,  
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MOVE MAGAZINE  
Editor: Danielle Wilson  
Design: Tom Glen  
Photography: Joel Wilson, Tuuli Platner,  
Nathan Kellum, Joshua Luetchford,  
Aaron Ku, Andrea Jenkins

# Sharing your faith

“As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’”

MATTHEW 10:7

I am not what you would call a ‘natural’ evangelist.

Though I’m convinced it’s every believer’s job to make Jesus known to others, it’s not easy for me. I’ve sometimes wondered, am I a hypocrite? How can I encourage others to share their faith when I find it difficult myself?

Perhaps my struggle in this area is precisely why God’s got me where I am.

Have you ever wondered why, when giving spiritual gifts, God doesn’t just give all Christians a whopping big dose of ‘evangelist’? There are some who seem like fish in water, naturally finding opportunities to share the love of Jesus with those around them. But most of us, at least at SOME point, experience doubt, guilt or fear in faith-sharing. God must want to use these struggles for his purposes.

The gospel of Jesus is not about guilt and obligation – it’s about grace, love and sacrifice, in the living AND the telling. We pray that, in some way, God uses this issue of Move to help you consider these things and to help you share Jesus’ life-giving message with others.

*Danielle Wilson*



Danielle Wilson, Editor



VISIT THE NEW AGAPÉ WEBSITE AT:  
[www.agape.org.uk](http://www.agape.org.uk)

**28%** are uneasy saying that Jesus is the only way

“ I find it difficult to know where to start the conversation ”

**87%** of Christians agree that they **LACK CONFIDENCE** in talking about their personal testimony

**74%** say **NONE** of their non-christian friends seem interested in talking about spiritual things

**48%** say they are just **TOO SCARED** to talk about their faith with non-christians

# WHY DO WE STRUGGLE TO SHARE OUR FAITH WITH OTHERS?

A recent survey by the Evangelical Alliance asked Christians in Britain how they find sharing their faith. We look at a selection of the results.

**47%** say Satan stops them from sharing the gospel

“ Commitment to anything, let alone Jesus, seems to be lacking in our society today ”

**57%** of christians feel they can share the gospel well **without needing WORDS**

Source: *Confidently Sharing the Gospel*, Winter 2012 survey of 1,242 participants by the Evangelical Alliance. [www.eauk.org](http://www.eauk.org)

# what do you struggle with most in sharing your faith?

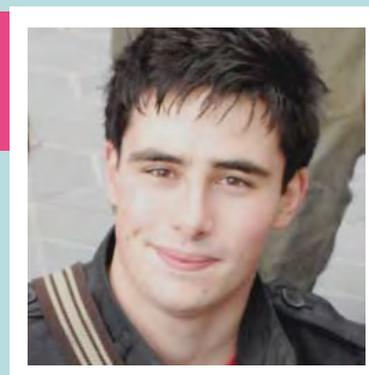
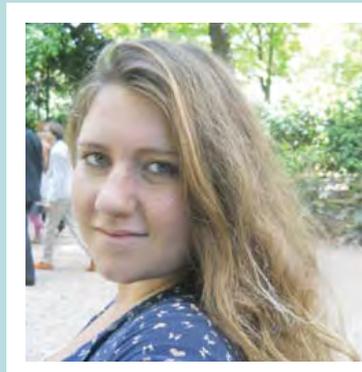


**PAUL REZKALLA**  
PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION & ETHICS, MA STUDENT,  
BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY

Sometimes I feel like I won't be able to articulate a sensitive truth with enough compassion and love. For example when talking about the problem of evil and suffering it's difficult to give a good answer and yet not come off as a jerk while doing so.

**EMMA MAITLAND**  
FRENCH & HISTORY, 4TH YEAR STUDENT, OXFORD UNIVERSITY

There is a massive social awkwardness in talking about God. There is a boundary you have to cross to talk about things that are personal or serious. But when you've taken that step of faith once, you can do it again and again. I have found it hardest talking with friends, but sharing the gospel hasn't jeopardised my friendships. It's been a bit challenging for people, but my fear hasn't come true.



**SIMON SANDFORD**  
ARCHITECTURE 3RD YEAR STUDENT, OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

I have worried that I don't know enough of the scripture ... that I only know the gist or message. I've felt like, if someone says 'well, what about suffering' or something like that and I don't have a brilliant retort, then I am not doing it properly. I dispute this now ... in fact, if you start parroting off Bible verses that's just the kind of thing that would cause some people to run a mile. It's okay not to know all the answers.

there is a massive social awkwardness in talking about God



**LESLEY CHEESMAN**  
AGAPÉ NATIONAL DIRECTOR

Recently, my hairdresser of 14 years said to me, "It's great because you're not like the 'god squad.'" I wasn't sure whether to be happy or sad by his observation! One of my struggles is consistently using opportunities to share my faith with some of the people I see regularly. With new people I have a more heightened awareness but intentionally speaking about my faith in on-going relationships is something I don't always do well.

i am very aware of how some people see Christians negatively

**MATT WALMSLEY**  
AGAPÉ STUDENT LIFE DIRECTOR

I struggle a little with the potential for awkwardness, but probably more so the idea that I might in some way make people less attracted to Jesus rather than more by my actions - I am very aware of how some people see Christians (or more often religiosity) negatively and don't want to be someone that puts others off.



# Moving Past Fear

Fear is nothing new... Just about everyone has experienced some apprehension when it comes to talking with others about Jesus.

The Bible makes it clear that this fear is normal, but it also promises that a kind of super-human boldness is available to us. Paul wrote to remind Timothy, "... God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord..." (2 Timothy 1:7-8)

For many of us, these words can feel inspiring but also somewhat intimidating. How DO we move past our fear and experience the power that Paul talks about?

In his book, *Re-imagining Evangelism*, Rick Richardson discusses how people today tend to express their fear and hesitancy about sharing their faith. "People often say to me some version of the following: 'I don't like to push things on people if they don't want them. I'm kind of introverted, I'm not good at arguing with people, I avoid conflict and I hate awkwardness in relationships. So evangelism is not for me. I feel guilty that I don't share my faith. But I feel inadequate, shut down and even inauthentic ...'"

Despite his clear calling, Paul also admitted to experiencing fear in his letter to the Corinthians: "I decided that while I was with you I would forget everything except Jesus Christ, the one who was crucified. I came to you in weakness—timid and trembling. And my message and my preaching were very plain. Rather than using clever and persuasive speeches, I relied only on the power of the Holy Spirit." (2 Corinthians 2:2-4)

Echoing Paul, Richardson goes on to say, "We can recover our confidence and excitement. We can look for God to be at work always and everywhere... If regular folks like us are filled with the Spirit and led by the Spirit and pursue conversations with spiritual companions, we may be used by God to change the face of the church and contribute much toward the redemption of people and the transformation of society."

At times it can feel like everything in us is rebelling against Jesus' call to be proclaimers of good news. Our culture tells us it's inappropriate, too deep or too personal to share what we believe with others. The Devil uses our (sometimes legitimate) concerns about sharing our faith and tries to make them unconquerable. Even as we battle with these fears, we CAN take steps to address them.

If you fear that you don't understand the message of the gospel fully enough to share it, get serious about deepening your understanding. Study John's gospel or read page 9 as a starting point. Build your confidence, but remember... God can use the understanding you have right now.

If you are worried that you don't know how to begin talking with others about Jesus, ask those you might know who regularly share their faith for help. Read the advice shared later in this magazine and look at the back cover for some resources that may help you.

But most importantly, submit your fear to the Lord. Ask God to grow your love for him and your compassion for the people around you. Your own love for Jesus needs to be the prime motivator for sharing his love with others. Tell God that you are willing to share what he has done in your life. Ask him to use you and he will.



## DANIELLE WILSON

Danielle is the Communications Director for Agapé in the UK. She lives in Birmingham with her husband Joel and daughter Evie.

## LEAST REACHED

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## THE WORKPLACE

### Developing Habits

Agapé Workplace Initiative's Habits of the Heart course is designed to help busy people stop and reflect deeply, helping them rediscover a sense of purpose and spiritual energy in life. In Birmingham, the Habits course is being tailored to be the core of a new personal leadership development programme for marginalised men who find themselves homeless and unemployed.

Course creator Phil Jackman says, "Everyone needs to regularly take stock of their lives. Often businesses pay big money for ineffective personal development courses for their staff. What makes the Habits course so distinctive is that people are encouraged to tackle heart issues that touch on their sense of identity and mission. The impact can be very deep as people form healthy work and life habits." JOEL WILSON

*To find out more about the course, go to [www.awi.org.uk/habits](http://www.awi.org.uk/habits).*

## THE FAMILY

### A Day Together In London

"Even after 36 years of marriage, one can always build a better relationship. 'A Day Together' has shown us what we can do right now to improve the most important relationship alongside our relationship with God," said a couple who recently attended FamilyLife's A Day Together at All Souls in London.

Thirty-six couples braved the snow to take part in the January event; most married, some engaged and a variety of ages, faith positions and ethnicities. People came from as far afield as Hampshire and the Midlands. One said, "The day was one of my best in my life!" Eight wanted to join a 'Together' small group, and five couples said they were interested in hosting A Day Together in their communities. The day also ignited interest in the Christian faith for three people. Many commented they would be happy to invite friends of all faiths and none. FamilyLife will run A Day Together at All Souls again on the 18th January 2014. CHRISTINE DANIEL

*To find out more, go to [www.agape.org.uk/familylife](http://www.agape.org.uk/familylife).*

## THE UNIVERSITY

### Fifty Shades of Grace

Teresa Carey worked in the porn industry, starring in hundreds of xxx-rated films. Then she had a vision of Jesus that dramatically changed her life. This term Teresa has been sharing her powerful story with Agapé Student Life societies across the UK.

Andy Atkins from Student Life in Cambridge heard about Teresa in a national newspaper and asked her if she would share her story on campus. And after hearing what Agapé Student Life was all about, Teresa agreed to speak at Anglia Ruskin University. The event proved so popular that some people had to be turned away at the door!

Students wanted to know, not just about Teresa's former life in the sex industry, but about her new life in Christ. This was the first time Teresa had spoken publicly about her life, but since then, has shared her story at events in Oxford, Newcastle and Birmingham, creating great opportunities for Student Life to follow up. ALLAN OOI





## Student Life at Anglia Ruskin

**I**n September 2012, Agapé staff member Andy Atkins strode onto the Anglia Ruskin campus in Cambridge with a wheelbarrow full of goodies.

Andy recalls, “It was just me, a wheelbarrow and a student called Boris from Bulgaria. He’d recently been fired up in his faith and baptised in the North Sea. Before he even began as a first year student, Boris, myself and my wife Tiffany started to pray and make a plan to start an Agapé Student Life society that would be a blessing to the university and share Jesus’ love with its 10,000 students.”

On that first day, Andy and Boris met a student called Carwyn. “I started chatting to him and the Holy Spirit told me, ‘You’ve got to pursue this guy’... It turns out that Carwyn is a networker and a natural leader. He was vice-president of the Student Union in his first year. He basically knows everybody. Christians like Carwyn are in the thick of it. That’s my kind of person.”

At the Fresher’s Fayre, the tiny Student Life team hoped for two things: to get 15 signatures in order to become an official society and to discover students interested in wrestling with life’s big questions. Within hours they not only had the necessary signatures but a bunch of people to meet up with. “I wasn’t sure where any of them were at spiritually,” Andy continues. “But I wasn’t bothered. As long as they were open to God, anything could happen.”

Andy was still hounding Carwyn, challenging him to get involved with Student Life. Carwyn jokes, “I realised that God was knocking on my door and when I opened it, it was Andy Atkins!”

As the new Student Life team gathered momentum, they started hosting a regular public meeting. Andy explains, “I thought, let’s start with a splash ... something winsome, but a bit radical. We invited an ex-porn star to share her story of faith in Jesus, some-

### THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL COMES THROUGH THESE INCREDIBLE PEOPLE AND THEIR LIFE STORIES.

thing she’d never done before. I was hoping we’d get 30 or 40 students along. We had about 140. The following week we had an ex-asylum seeker share his story and an ex-gangster the week after that. Every week we have a feedback form and essentially the ministry has grown from that. We’re seeing people come to faith.”

Carwyn adds, “The power of the gospel comes through these incredible people and their life stories. Students have left amazed, thinking, ‘Can God affect me?’”

After attending a few Student Life events, first-year student Naomi said to Andy, “I’ve been bringing my non-Christian mates, one who’s really close to coming to faith. In fact, I was going to set something up like Student Life until I met you guys.” It was the Friday that Fireseeds (Student Life’s national gathering in Newcastle) was starting, so Andy invited Naomi to come along. Less than three hours later Naomi was on the minibus and a part of the team.

In January the Student Life team helped the international students newly arriving in Cambridge, putting together welcome bags and getting minibuses to drive them where they needed to go. Richard, head of Student Union Societies says, “I’m not a religious person, but Student Life is definitely the best society that started up this year. I imagine it’s hard to tap into a group of students who are not that spiritually minded, yet Student Life manage to do that because of the subjects that they tackle and the fact that they’re just really helpful and welcoming.”

Andy says, “We’re now at a stage where we’re forming a student leadership team that I’ll be coaching. In the next six months the goal is for each of these guys is to be leading their own small group that is reaching out to others and helping students grow in their relationship with Jesus. That’s the whole heart of what we do.” JOEL WILSON

# what is the gospel?

**I**n its essence, the gospel is the good news of Jesus. No matter how it is presented, at its core is always “Who is Jesus and what has he done?”

The Gospel of **Mark** (which presents the gospel in a narrative form) can be understood by two movements: **Chapters 1-8:30**, which focuses on who Jesus is (climaxed by Peter’s confession “You are the Christ”) and **8:31-16:8** which moves steadily toward what he came to do – his saving death and resurrection (predicted in chapters 8, 9, 10, then fulfilled in 11 and following.) Essentially, the gospel is “Who is Jesus and what has he done?” with its implications being applied.

You cannot speak of the gospel’s essence without speaking of Jesus. Paul distilled the essence in 1 Corinthians 15:1-10 to these elements...

**Who is Jesus?** The Christ

**What has he done?** Died on the cross and rose from the dead

**Why did he do it?** For the forgiveness of sins

**How do we know?** According to the (Old Testament) Scriptures and eyewitnesses (resurrection appearances)

**How do we respond?** Our faith/belief

That parallels (loosely) Jesus’ summary in Luke 24:46-49...

**Who is Jesus?** The Christ

**What has done?** Suffer (die) and rise from the dead on the third day

**Why?** For the forgiveness of sins

**How do we know?** “This is what is written” (Old Testament) and “You are witnesses” (resurrection appearances plus)

**How do we respond?** Repentance (the other side of the “faith” coin)

But to say this is the essence of the gospel isn’t to say everything. In fact, the gospel in its fullness can be expressed with all its historical foundations (in Matthew, Mark, Luke or John) or its theological substance and implications (in Romans or Galatians, for instance).

It is through this gospel that you came to know and experience Jesus as your Saviour and Lord by faith (Romans 1:16, 17). But the Christian life doesn’t start with the gospel and then graduate to something else, to some deeper truth. No, you don’t move on; you go deeper and experience more.

The gospel, in its fullness, is the whole truth about Jesus and all that his salvation and kingdom has for us. It is like a vein of gold: the deeper you go the richer you become, not because you are finding something else, but because you are experiencing something more.

So, whether the gospel is summarised in its essence through a brief booklet like *Knowing God Personally* or expounded in its fullness through Paul’s theologically rich letter to the Romans, it is a transforming message through which we encounter Jesus Christ our Lord. In the gospel, we find Christ to be the only solution for our fallen condition—our brokenness, sin and shame. In the gospel, we discover Christ to be our life and, through his Spirit, to be the power we need to live that life. Jesus transforms us, and he does so with his gospel. Making disciples of Jesus means helping others to understand and experience this gospel.

*This article been reprinted from CruPressGreen.com and used with permission of Cru Press.*



## KEITH DAVY

Keith works with Cru (Agapé in the US). He began following Christ almost four decades ago, a journey that has taken him through university, seminary, three decades of campus ministry, leading, teaching, writing and plenty of mountain hikes with his beloved wife, Nanci.

### Further Reading:

As part of their national consultation on ‘Confidence in the Gospel’ the Evangelical Alliance has put together a series of videos that also address the question, “**What is the Gospel?**” from multiple perspectives. You can watch them here: <http://www.eauk.org/church/campaigns/confidence-in-the-gospel/videos>



Three people share the story of how Jesus has changed their lives



## I was a bit too clever for religion

I had always considered myself to be a scientist. A bit too clever for religion. But toward the end of my A-levels I found myself thinking a bit more about spirituality. I started to think that maybe science wasn't going to provide all the answers I was after, or explain the things I wanted explained.

When I arrived at Oxford University, I went along to the college Freshers Fayre. At the Agapé Student Life stall I met Luke. (Student Life was running the Goat vs. Ipod prize draw.) Luke was friendly and it sounded like an interesting society so I put my name down. Later, Luke rang me and invited me for coffee. We had an interesting conversation and Luke put me in touch with people in my college who were running a Connect group (a Bible study series for those exploring faith).

I had such big misconceptions about the Christian faith. Really, I was quite ignorant about it. I had always thought of Christianity as a 'you do good things, you get good things' kind of system, but it's such a stark reversal to that. Luke talked about it being a relationship with God based on faith, not on works but grace.

It took me many months of thinking and talking with people to understand this and come to terms with it. Then there was a moment when I was reading through the *Knowing God Personally* booklet with Luke in Starbucks that it just made sense to me. Faith is such a journey. Of course there are things I am still grappling with, but I feel a lot more secure. Each day it's great to know I have a purpose and someone to rely on.

Linford  
Oxford University

## I have always believed in God

I attended Sunday School when I was younger and learned about Religious Studies at school. When I moved to the area, I started attending the local church. My heart began to race and my body felt alive inside – I was no longer alone and was part of a family! How was this? What was different?

I have always believed in God but yet never had the relationship with him that I so craved. I did not understand how to do this. I did not understand what faith meant. I did not understand that there was unconditional love from God. I did not understand how to even get this knowledge.

Through the guidance of a wonderful lady named Ruth, Agapé's *Connect* studies helped me. I totally trusted Ruth and had faith in her to keep me on the right track. The simple sections within the *Connect* cards put into context swiftly what life was all about. Issues which crop up on a day-to-day basis began to make sense.

*Connect* helped me to understand my own feelings and I no longer feel lonely. Even in difficult times, I feel that God is with me and guiding me in a way that will help me in the long term. I do have a wonderful relationship with God that has made me very happy and has shown me that God has never ever let me down. I can trust him. He loves me.

Steph  
Dorridge



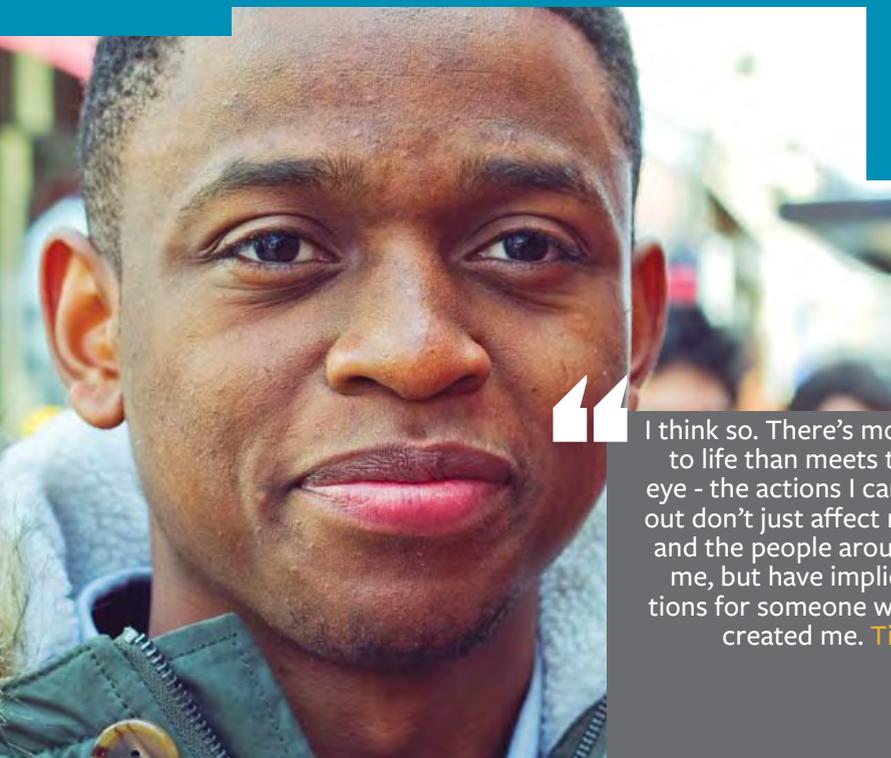
F\*\*\* it. Yes. You make the most out of life so you can die happy and make your soul happy. **Deeh**



Yes. My mum died, and that led me to making changes in my life. **Sue**

WORD ON THE STREET

# Do you think you're on a SPIRITUAL JOURNEY?

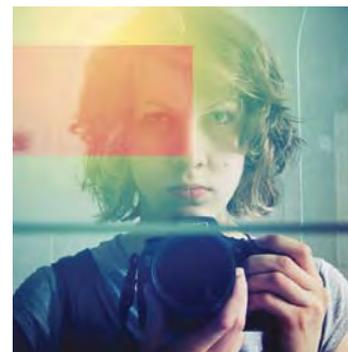


I think so. There's more to life than meets the eye - the actions I carry out don't just affect me and the people around me, but have implications for someone who created me. **Tino**

## QUESTION FOR THE PHOTOGRAPHER

**Does this question actually lead to spiritual conversations?**

**Tuuli:** Yes, for example Sue found it difficult at first to articulate exactly what she meant, but went on to say how circumstances (her mum's death) caused her to make more meaning out of life. She felt that there was a higher power - not necessarily God - but that something was guiding us along a path.





# OXFORD *LIFE*

**I**n 1 Thessalonians it says, ‘... We loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.’ I think this characterises the ministry at Oxford University,” explains Pam Robertshaw who co-leads the Oxford Student Life team with her husband Luke. “Oxford’s a very relational place. It’s lots of little colleges where most people know each other.”

Luke agrees, saying, “It’s the kind of place where you have to be aware of the doors God is opening for the gospel. You form relationships and then you meet other people through them.”

In addition to working at Oxford University, the Agapé Student Life team also work at Oxford Brookes University. There are major similarities in the way the team approach the two universities, but also some big differences. “Brookes is a traditional campus university,” says Aaron Ku who leads the initiative at Oxford Brookes with Lois McIntosh. “You see students hanging around on campus and you can approach them and ask questions. When

you share the gospel with someone you can’t expect them to immediately respond. Friendship is so important as we share our faith intentionally,” says Aaron.

Having two different campus movements running in one city has meant an environment of learning and experimentation has developed as students and staff try new things and swap ideas.

## STUDENTS LEADING STUDENTS

“Our hope is to develop students who are willing to be used by God,” says Aaron. “Even if I could talk to 10 people each day, in the entire year, I would only be able to connect with a third of the university. But if I take a student with me and they learn, and they take another student with them ... we can do it together.”

“Students here often have a lot of leadership ability. But a Student Leader in Student Life is someone who wants to lead others to Jesus,” says Pam. “We have a big emphasis on students being servant leaders in their uni. We want them to have an ‘anywhere, any place’ approach to sharing the gospel.”

“Student Life felt like a natural fit for me,” says Student Leader Rachel Wears, a third-year student at Oxford. “The society offered me the tools and the support to share my faith with my friends. Now as a Student Leader, I’m part of planning what’s going on in Student Life.”

Emma Maitland, now a fourth-year student, came to faith at 16 through a Christian friend. “When I arrived at Oxford I didn’t get involved with Student Life, I got involved with Pam Robertshaw!” laughs Emma. In her first months of uni, Pam encouraged Emma as she invited 15 people to her room for a ‘Soularium’ tea party, using a collection of photos and questions to talk with her friends about what they believed. “It’s a lifestyle really,” says Emma. “And asking yourself: Am I using my presence in college to be open to meeting new people? Are people open to hearing the gospel?”

“My first interaction with Student Life was unwittingly walking into them at the Freshers

Fayre,” remembers Simon Sandford, a third year Architecture student at Brookes.

After meeting at the stall, Simon started getting together with Luke to chat about life and faith. “I wasn’t even aware I was involved in Student Life. Not sure when the penny dropped that I was. I guess it is that kind of society really.” Simon would have called himself a Christian before uni, but was unsure about his relationship with God. He now wants to share his faith in Jesus with others.

“The training we received at Fireseeds (Student Life’s national gathering) has definitely made me more confident to talk with people ... to start the kinds of discussions that people started with me,” says Simon.

“We want our Student Leaders to have ownership of the movement and to introduce the people in their spheres of influence to Jesus. We want them to help shape what we’re doing and to feel some of the weight of responsibility,” says Pam. “We also want to

“YOU DON’T NECESSARILY EXPECT EVERYONE TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO THE GOSPEL. YOU ARE SAYING, ‘LOOK AT JESUS, ENGAGE WITH WHO HE IS AND WHAT HE CLAIMS, AND COME TO YOUR OWN CONCLUSION.’”



equip them to be spiritual leaders wherever in the world God sends them when they graduate.”

“One fantastic thing about Oxford is that there are lots of churches and organisations making a brilliant contribution to reaching people with the gospel,” says Luke. “This is a big part of our contribution.”

## WEEKLY MEETING

“Our Student Leaders currently run our weekly meeting,” says Luke. “It’s an opportunity for staff and students to invite people they meet throughout the week.”

“At Oxford Uni, our meeting is meant to be interesting and relaxed, allowing people to talk about the stuff that matters in life over nibbles and drinks. We always share an element of what it means to have a relationship with God.”

“The students’ talks are better than our talks!” comments Pam. “Recently, the subject was ‘What is easier? To forgive or be forgiven?’”

Student Life also run a weekly meeting at Brookes. “A few weeks ago we had an ex-porn star come and share her story,” says Aaron. “So to promote it we went around asking students, ‘What do you think about Porn?’”

## EVERY DAY

“The weekly meeting plays a role in taking people so far. But from that pool of people we encourage students to explore more who Jesus is,” says Luke. “At the moment I am meeting with a couple of guys to look more specifically at Jesus in the gospels.”

“Pam and I started a group called ‘What women want’ in my college,” shares Emma. “I gathered girls I knew and every week we go through a theme related to being a woman – success, identity, relationships, satisfaction. On the back of that we talk about an episode from Jesus’ life and his perspective on that theme.”

Pam continues, “In a group the other week, a girl said to me, ‘The rest of my week has been essays and deadlines ... this is the one time in my week when I have felt loved.’”

Lois, who works at Brookes alongside Aaron, shares

a recent experience. Despite feeling reluctant, she and nursing student Irene were looking for opportunities to share their faith in the Brookes cantine. “Finally, two girls agreed to talk through a few questions with us,” says Lois. “One girl was quite anti-God while the other was more open. Irene was gracious and bold as she responded to some of the girls’ objections, gently correcting misconceptions and pointing to Jesus and his grace.” Lois and Irene explained the basics of the gospel and gave them a Student Life zine.

“I think people respond really well to honesty. You don’t necessarily expect everyone to respond positively to the gospel,” says Luke. “You are saying, ‘Look at Jesus, engage with who he is and what he claims, and come to your own conclusion.’ You are not trying to force people to believe. Being honest about the things you don’t know or understand is very disarming.”

## BECOMING INSIDERS

“I’ve learned so much from the women in the Feminist Society. With the women I’ve got to know we’ve talked deeply about our lives and our spiritual beliefs. I think they’ve been surprised that Jesus cares about the issues they are really passionate about.”

Last term, Pam attended an event called ‘Can Oxford Women have it all’ run by the Student Union (debating society). She met the president of Oxford Women in Politics who was planning another event and looking for a leader from the Third Sector to come and speak. Pam suggested Agapé’s National Director, Lesley Cheesman.

“At the event, Lesley talked about leadership in a very honest, refreshing way, including how her faith impacts her leadership. When I chatted to women afterwards, they were struck by how Lesley’s leadership was not driven by money or status but because she believed passionately in what she was doing and wanted to serve. They said they had never heard someone speak like that in Oxford. It was a great witness.”

“I think we have ended up studying the Bible with people that you would have never thought would want to do that, based on the first meeting,” says Luke. “But through building trust and having real conversations, a number of people have got to that point. The gospel is different from what people expect it to be.” DANIELLE WILSON



# GETTING PRACTICAL

How do you talk about your faith in everyday life?

## LISTENING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT



When we are seeking to be a witness, there may be no other single thing we can do that will have greater impact than learning to listen to God... I regularly ask God these questions:

Jesus, where are you already at work? Lord, lead me to people who are receptive. Is there someone you want me to talk to, care for or pray with? Is there someone here who is hurting?

Rick Richardson,  
Author, Re-Imagining Evangelism

## ASKING GOOD QUESTIONS



One question that is so simple but I find completely opens up conversations is "Are you a person of faith?" Frequently people begin to talk about their religious background, their perspective. It's an open question. It doesn't pigeon-hole you into a religion, but it introduces the idea of faith. It's a gentle approach. That's the number one question I use. If they say "No," I ask, "So, what do you believe in?"

Andy Atkins,  
Agapé Student Life, Cambridge

## TALKING WITH PEOPLE NOT AT THEM



The majority of people (friends, acquaintances and strangers) I have significant conversations with are more than willing to talk about their spirituality or philosophy of life. Four times out of five I take the initiative, ask a question and simply listen. People can clearly see that I'm genuinely curious about their life stories and faith encounters. It's great to give someone time to explain their worldview. It will often lead to discussing the doubts, desires and decisions that shape our lives.

Joel Wilson, Agapé Workplace Initiative

## LIFE STORY



I think our personal life stories are great tools for helping people understand the gospel... When you share your life story in conversation, people can't deny it. I think as Christians we should always be ready to share our stories, to share how God has changed us and is changing us.

Aaron Ku  
Agapé Student Life, Oxford

## USING SOCIAL MEDIA



In Glasgow, we filmed each of our staff and students sharing the story of how Jesus was meeting one of the deepest cravings in their life - acceptance, security, respect, love... Sharing your story with a small group is one thing, but these students took the incredible leap of faith to post these films on Facebook. The response was powerful and immediate. Within a week, three of our students' films had been viewed 500 times or more via YouTube.

Ross McCall, Agapé Student Life, Glasgow



“If you are going through a tool without love you are like a clanging cymbal. People should experience someone being patient and kind.”

## INVITING PEOPLE TO EVENTS OR GATHERINGS



If I know there's a good quality Christian event coming up, my first action is to chat to God about who we'd really love to see there. Inviting the right person to the right event is critical. Then I have to do it in the right way. If I get that right then my guest, in my experience, is unlikely to say no. And I will always offer to take them there!

Tim Moyler,  
Agapé Associate, Devon

## PRAYING INTENTIONALLY



I pray for the people I know. I also make sure that people know I pray for them and that the Lord answers my prayers. I take every opportunity to pray with people, even over the phone. I say “Can I pray for you about that” and then do. I always pray with my eyes open, so I can smile and behave as if I am just talking. I notice when friends begin to change, who don't seem so sceptical, and I make more time for them. And I trust the Lord.

Fran Russell  
Agapé Italy

## USING TOOLS AND RESOURCES



When you have a tract or tool, there is the temptation to be mechanical... to think more about the tool than the person. I think about the verse in Corinthians, “Love is patient, love is kind, it's not self-seeking...” If you are going through a tool without love you are like a clanging cymbal. People should experience someone being patient and kind, not just someone thinking, I need to get this person from A to B. It's about being servant-hearted. The Holy Spirit leads us to share the gospel in a loving way, because he is love.

Pam Robertshaw  
Agapé Student Life, Oxford

## MAKING THE MOST OF OPPORTUNITIES



In my field, environmentalism, people who grasp the facts of what's happening can be quite down. The other day I ended up going to a lunchtime seminar by a guy who was overwhelmed by the size of the environmental problem. I didn't know him and didn't have much time but I asked him to go for a drink afterwards. I felt like I needed to give him some encouragement, so told him he was very inspiring. I talked with him about how God's love is the motivation out of which I can try to do good things and that I need to keep receiving from God in order to be able to give.

Jenny Love  
Agapé Graduate Movement, London

## 7 things you should know ...



### We are the Facebook Generation

Nearly one billion people use Facebook. 400,000,000 login daily and spend an average of 23 minutes each day sharing pictures, reading updates, and talking to friends. 47% of developed world teenagers check Facebook before they get out of bed.



### You are already telling a story

Look at your Facebook wall. If you're typical, most of your posts are stories of relationship – photos of friends, social events, check-ins, messages from family, funny anecdotes. We already use Facebook several times a day to tell the world about our relationships. We need to learn how to include Jesus, our number one love, in the stories we tell. It's really that simple.



### The Church has what users crave

The Facebook Generation is materially wealthy, but desperate for community and relationship. Nearly everything people post (especially younger users) has a sub-textual message: “please notice that I am witty, intelligent, beautiful, and worthy of love!” The family of God is uniquely ordained to provide community and affirm the value of each and every person. God can use likes, comments and messages as tools to meet emotional needs and to draw people into relationship first with his people and then with himself. We must learn to be intentional in affirming, speaking truth, and encouraging our friends on Facebook.



### Magic Photos

Inviting people to Christian gatherings is difficult for many people. Facebook Groups, Events and Photos can be a powerful way to make our friends aware of Christian events in a natural, unthreatening way. It is amazing how God can use photos of Christians sharing food and fellowship to draw people into Christian community. At university, a friend shared and tagged a photo of a giant sandwich that our fellowship group was going to eat. Lots of students wanted to EAT the sandwich so they came to the meeting. For many, it was their first interaction with Christian fellowship, and they discovered it through a Facebook photo.



### Less content, more relationship

Most churches and Christian organisations forming a digital strategy jump to creating new content - new websites, videos, articles, apps and tools. We assume that if we make great content, people will somehow see it. Unfortunately, this is largely untrue. 48 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute. Millions of articles are written every day. Most churches spend vast budgets creating content that no-one ever sees. Content creators are still important, and some are definitely called by God. Most of us, however, need to focus on relationship. Instead of re-creating content which others have already made, we need to spend our time, resources and energy teaching Christians how to love, pray, and witness to friends on Facebook (and off of it).



### Everything starts with prayer

Without prayer, we achieve nothing. With prayer, God achieves everything. We must discipline ourselves to pray regularly for our friends. The more we do this, the more we allow God to soften our hearts, and allow the Holy Spirit to prompt us to sensitively share our faith. A tool for doing precisely this is available at [mustard.org](http://mustard.org)



### God uses everything

When our hearts are in the right place, and we have disciplined ourselves in prayer, God can use mundane Facebook tools to change lives.



### Janakan Arulkumarasan

is the CEO of Onoko International, a social media company based in Hong Kong. Onoko has built Facebook apps with over 50 million users worldwide, and managed Facebook marketing campaigns for brands including Coca Cola, Starbucks, Disney, and Microsoft.

## FIVE ESSENTIAL WEBSITES

Jesus goes viral...

[exploregod.com/  
videos](http://exploregod.com/videos)

A fantastic collection of short films on life's biggest issues.

[bethinking.org](http://bethinking.org)

A nearly exhaustive resource that helps incite deep thinking and discussion about the Christian faith.

[yesheis.com](http://yesheis.com)

Jesus is all over the internet – ‘Yes He Is’ points you to where.

[christianityexplored.  
org](http://christianityexplored.org)

Through a brilliant guided study through the Gospel of Mark, seekers can discover who Jesus is, why he came, and what it means to follow him.

[fallingplates.com](http://fallingplates.com)

A short film that unpacks the human condition and the crux of gospel.



Photo courtesy of Hakan Dahlström

SPORT

## Athletes & Jesus

Agapé's Athletes in Action team in Northern Ireland has been pushing their discipleship of high level football players to the next level. 40 players are meeting together fortnightly (in four groups). These are men who want to develop as spiritual leaders within their areas of influence, growing in confidence and competence as they share their faith with other athletes.

The players discuss subjects deeply related to their sporting life, like "dealing with disappointment". They also gain practical skills for sharing their own faith stories, both one-to-one, within their sporting context and in a more public setting. Athletes in Action plan to run up to 20 community events in Northern Ireland this year with the hope of connecting as many as possible with Jesus. Many of these 40 key players will play a large part in fulfilling this goal. DANIELLE WILSON

# LEAVING A LEGACY TO AGAPÉ

***"Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal."***

**Matthew 6:20**

There's a wise old saying that "you can't take it with you". Very true – but for Christians who die having been obedient to the words of Jesus above, there is assurance that what you leave behind need not be wasted. Would you be willing to leave a portion of your estate to Agapé in your Will?

Leaving us a legacy will mean that long after your life here is completed, you can still play a vital part with Agapé and our partners in ushering in the Kingdom of God here on earth.

*To find out more or to request a legacy pack, go to [www.agape.org.uk/legacy](http://www.agape.org.uk/legacy), ring Agapé on 0121 765 4404 or email [info@agape.org.uk](mailto:info@agape.org.uk).*

THE WORKPLACE

## Agapé Graduate Movement in Oxford

Since their launch event in London this past October, the Agapé Graduate Movement has been growing. Led and run by volunteers, there are two groups in London and now a group in Oxford. "I feel excited to be part of the Graduate Movement in Oxford," says volunteer Jennifer Matthews. "My hope is that as a team we'd be able to encourage each other in the pressures of the workplace, get equipped, and that by God's power we'd see our places of work completely changed by the hope of Jesus." The Agapé Graduate Movement hopes to help young professionals around the country get into the habit of gospel witness during those first years after leaving university, before the growing pressures of life

make this a more difficult habit to start. "Through the development of the Agapé Graduate Movement in Oxford, God has reminded me of his vision to see the whole city transformed by him," says Pam Robertshaw, who works with Agapé Student Life in Oxford. "I'm in the trenches, quite focussed on the students I'm working with. But God wants to transform the whole city ... the gospel should be public property." DANIELLE WILSON

*If you believe that God wants to use you in your workplace and that you would benefit from connecting with others who feel the same, email [info@agapegraduatemovement.org.uk](mailto:info@agapegraduatemovement.org.uk).*



Preach the  
gospel at  
all times.  
When  
necessary,  
use  
actions.

**T**he recent national consultation conducted by the Evangelical Alliance on Christians' confidence in the gospel revealed that 57% of those surveyed feel they "can share the gospel well enough without needing to use words." I certainly hope that God has used this 57% to draw people to himself. However, I cannot help but be perplexed by this statistic. It not only says something about how Christians believe they are to share the gospel, but more seriously, it says something about what they believe the gospel itself to be.

Let's back up.

Famously attributed to Francis of Assisi, "Preach the gospel at all times. When necessary, use words" is perhaps one of the best known extra-Biblical Christian statements in western history (even though it's unlikely that Francis actually said it). It is both received and rejected as wisdom and compromise respectively, depending on who you ask.

Francis lived in a society where most of the population could not read or write. The role of public preaching played an essential role in spiritual formation. Spoken words were even more important to making Jesus known. History records that Francis was a prolific speaker, making the nuanced remark, "It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless our walking is our preaching." He might well have said, "Preaching is sadly empty if not accompanied by actions."

Of course, we know that the hypocrisy of contradictory words and deeds makes for poor witness. Furthermore, a concoction of British reservation, a bizarrely redefined view of tolerance, and the fashionable mistrust of words beckoned in by post-modernity means that the push towards silent Christianity is strong and increasingly convenient. Our culture would have us be nice but mute. I believe this is the real reason for the present emphasis on wordless witness - it certainly makes life easier. The emphasis on spoken, proclaimed, kerygmatic gospel communication is blood-soaked through the pages of the New Testament. People died because they spoke about Jesus. There was no debate over whether or not to use words.

The fact is, the gospel had to be proclaimed by words, and still must, by virtue of what it is. The gospel is not advice to follow but a message to hear. If the gospel was primarily about what we must do to be saved, it could be communicated as easily by actions (to be imitated) as by words. We would simply copy the good actions of others and demonstrate them. This would likely reap many positive things, but it would not in isolation be an expression of the gospel.

The gospel is primarily about what God has done to save us through Jesus, and how we can receive this through faith. Faith cannot come without "hearing". The Ephesian church "heard the message of truth" (Ephesians 1:14), the Colossian church was exhorted to continue with "the gospel that [they] heard" (Colossians 1:22-23) and the Romans were

reminded of the truism, "How can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?" (Romans 10:14). The gospel is a message which is to be articulated. The results and fruits of the gospel must not be con-

"THE PUSH TOWARDS  
SILENT CHRISTIANITY IS  
STRONG AND INCREASINGLY  
CONVENIENT."

fused with the gospel itself.

Francis Schaeffer called Christian community the final apologetic. It is vital for many reasons that Christians live in sacrificial community, invest in relationships, and practise hospitality, forgiveness, and love. But without verbal, explanatory narrative, without the actual content of the gospel finding expression, we fail to offer the world the thing it needs most.



**MATT WALMSLEY**

Matt leads Agapé Student Life. He lives in Nottingham with his wife Naomi.



# PRAY WITH AGAPÉ

## 5–11 MAY

Many university students are currently in the middle of their end of year exams. Please pray for God's peace during this period and for opportunities for students to witness.

## 12–18 MAY

Please pray for the partnership between Agapé Workplace Initiative, the NHS and St Martin's Church in Birmingham as they work on the 'Real Deal' project. Ask God to bless their working relationship and that it would bring hope and transformation to people affected by homelessness.

## 19–25 MAY

Please pray for those involved with the Agapé Graduate Movement in Oxford and London – that they would be centred around mission, united in purpose and committed to sharing the gospel. Pray too that God would raise up leaders to start movements in other cities.

## 26 MAY – 1 JUNE

Please pray for Agapé Student Life societies running "Project PETE" towards the end of the academic year (Post Exam Training in Evangelism). Ask God to bless these projects and equip students in witnessing to their friends and drawing non-believing students to Jesus.

## 2–8 JUNE

Agapé Ireland are celebrating the 40th anniversary of the launch of the movement, with an event on the 8th of June. Thank God with us for many years of changed lives, and pray for the growth of the movement in the future.

## 9–15 JUNE

During the first two weeks of June a number of American students are visiting London and join our Agapé Student Life team there for a concerted time of outreach. Please pray for fruitful conversations and changed lives as a result.

## 16–22 JUNE

Agapé Student Life is sending a team on a summer project to Spain for two weeks. They'll be sharing the gospel with pilgrims along the Camino de Santiago trail and running an English club for Spanish students. Pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit causing many to turn to Christ.

## 23–29 JUNE

Please pray for the National Prayer Breakfast held in London on 25 June for people in government posts. Please pray for this event – co-organised by our Christian Embassy ministry – to encourage and equip Christians serving in government to live lives dedicated to God.

## 30 JUNE – 6 JULY

Many of our staff will be developing their support teams over the summer – people who pray, encourage and give financially towards their work. Please pray that our staff would trust God wholeheartedly, be connected with the right people, and be a blessing to all they meet.

## 7–13 JULY

An Agapé Student Life summer project is currently in Kazan, Russia. Please pray for the team to be making good connections with students and for God to draw many to himself.

## 14–20 JULY

Please continue to pray for our Agapé Student Life project team in Russia. Ask God to strengthen the team and give them wisdom as they engage Russian students with the gospel. Pray too that they'd finish well and be able to pass on all the contacts they've made to the local team.

## 21–27 JULY

Please pray for our staff who normally take one or two weeks off during the summer – ask God to refresh them and give them good rest.



## 28 JULY – 3 AUGUST

Please pray for families during the school holidays – that families would spend quality time together and that relationships would be strengthened during this time.

## 4–10 AUGUST

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## 11–17 AUGUST

Ask God to give you an opportunity to show Christ to someone who doesn't yet know God – pray for boldness in taking the opportunity God gives you.

## 18–24 AUGUST

Our staff family are currently meeting together for our annual staff conference. Please pray that this would be a refreshing and encouraging time together as we study the Bible, pray and look forward to the year ahead.

## 25–31 AUGUST

Agapé UK has sent staff to five different continents – please pray that these staff would be daily strengthened by God's Spirit and that they'd continually seek his will for their future.

## 1–7 SEPTEMBER

Please pray for final preparations being made for Freshers' weeks which begin in a few weeks' time. Pray for Agapé Student Life teams to use our resources wisely and that God would be softening the hearts of students we'll meet at the start of term.

## 8–14 SEPTEMBER

Please pray for all those that have heard the gospel during the last month – ask that God would remind them of those conversations and challenge them to respond. Pray that God would reveal himself to them.

## 15–21 SEPTEMBER

Freshers' week begins this week at several of the universities where Agapé Student Life works. Please pray that Agapé Student Life societies would be able to make good connections with new students – both Christian and non-Christian – as they aim to make a difference on campus.

## 22–28 SEPTEMBER

More Freshers' weeks begin this week across the country. As Agapé Student Life societies try to make Jesus known on campus, please pray for God's leading and for many students to get involved with what we're doing.

## 29 SEPTEMBER – 5 OCTOBER

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## 6–12 OCTOBER

Freshers' week begins at the University of Oxford this week. Please pray that many students would have a positive encounter with Christianity that sparks their interest in finding out more about Jesus.

## 13–19 OCTOBER

Please pray that our FamilyLife ministry would continue to see fruit from their 'a day together' workshops as they teach Biblical principles for relationships to both Christians and non-Christians.

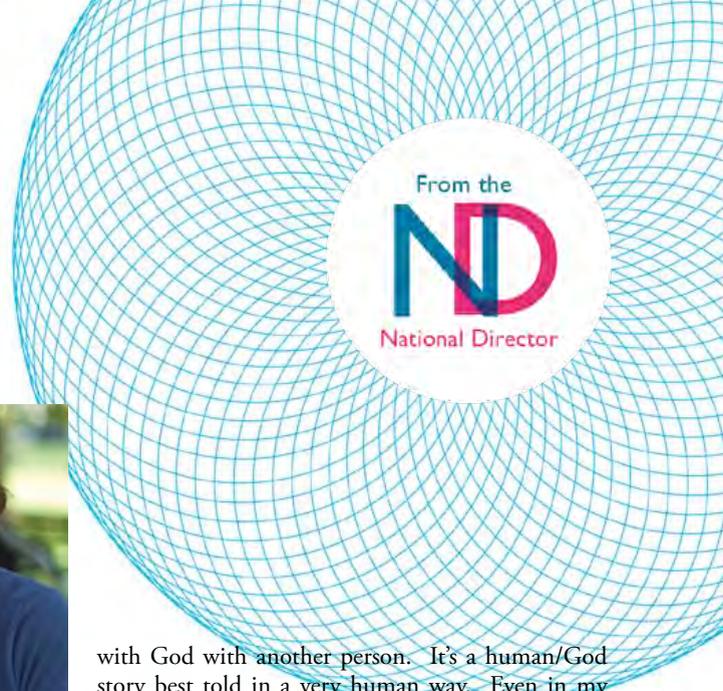
## 20–26 OCTOBER

From 23-27 October people will be joining together in London from across Europe to discuss how we can reach cities with the gospel. Please pray that this would be an exciting time led by the Holy Spirit.

## 27 OCTOBER – 2 NOVEMBER

Pray that your words and deeds would spark curiosity in those around you, and that you'd have opportunities to talk about Christ this week to someone who doesn't yet know him.

# Sharing Your Story



with God with another person. It's a human/God story best told in a very human way. Even in my most stumbling attempts at telling my story, people have responded in ways that still surprise me. In personal storytelling we engage each other and we encounter God.

“Stories make up more than 70 percent of the Bible, and it is in the stories of our lives that we can spot God’s handiwork.”

*Dan Allendar. Author, To Be Told: Know Your Story*

Each of us has a story and I believe we can all learn, with the help of some age-old principles, the art of storytelling.

The apostle Peter says, “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” “Giving an answer” can take a number of forms. Your story is one of the very best ways of relating to others the reason for the hope that you have.

## Knowing Your Story

**1. Take time to reflect on your life.** Construct a brief ‘life map’ or life story – focus on what, for you, are the significant moments. Consider these questions:

What have been the big turning points in my life?

What was my attitude before I knew Jesus?

Why did I choose to follow Jesus?

What difference has following Jesus made in my everyday life?

**2. Recognise your story’s one central truth.** Storytellers often make one of two mistakes. Either the story is devoid of any theme or it is overloaded with lessons. A great story doesn’t overtly advertise this truth. It is implicit.

**3. Your story continues.** Is your story about who you are today or just what happened in your history? How is the story of how you found faith in Jesus connected with what God is doing in your life right now?

## Telling Your Story

**1. Plan your first words.** You need to know how your story will begin. Don’t leave it to chance.

**2. Know how it ends.** It’s helpful to write out your exact words, even if it’s mainly to help you think through what you’re going to say. If you have to speed up your story or skip some details for whatever reason, you know you still have a strong, solid finish.

**3. Consider the details.** Which ones are compelling and which are tedious or a detour from the main storyline.

Remember, this is not about telling a slick factual account of your life but sharing your real encounters

## Your Challenge

A story only becomes a story when it is told! So here is your challenge – there are two options:

A. Over the next 30 days, find three people, offer to buy them a coffee and tell them your story. As you tell your story, pray that the Holy Spirit will help him or her see how God wants to be in their story, too.

B. If you are on Facebook, share your story in a ‘Note’. (Near the top of your profile page, hover over ‘More’ and you’ll find ‘Notes’ in the dropdown menu.) Tag some friends and share your ‘note’ on your profile page with an invitation to discuss it. Ask your friends what they think. Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead you to some fruitful conversations with friends, online and offline. If you take up the challenge, email me at [nd@agape.org.uk](mailto:nd@agape.org.uk) and let me know how it goes. I will be praying for you.



### LESLEY CHEESMAN

Lesley is the National Director of Agapé in the UK. She lives in Birmingham with her husband Paul, and their children Charis and Joel.

# resources

to help you share your faith



## Knowing God Personally

This short booklet explains the basic principles of what it means to be a Christian. It's ideal for sharing on a one-to-one level with Bible verses throughout to illustrate key points.



Cost: ..... £4.75 / pack of 25

## Soularium

Just as sunlight illuminates a solarium, Soularium opens a window to the soul. Fifty images help people explore their life, desires, God and spiritual journey on a deep level.



Cost: ..... £5

## Perspective Cards

This pack of cards helps participants share their perspective about five important topics: the Nature of God, Human Nature, the Meaning of Life, the Identity of Jesus, and the Source of Spiritual Truth. What do you believe and why?



Cost: ..... £5.40

## Connect

This is a six-session Bible study designed for those who want to find out more about Christianity. The six sessions use Bible passages to explore topics such as "What is God like?", "Why does it matter?", and "God's rescue plan".



Cost: ..... £4.50

Visit the Agapé Shop to purchase these resources and more

[shop.agape.org.uk](http://shop.agape.org.uk)

Bulk discounts may be available for some resources. Delivery charges apply for orders below £50.