

1. INTRODUCTION

SLIDE 1

Gordon Connell and his wife, Pauline.

Gordon and Pauline attend a church in Selly Oak, south Birmingham.

2. CAP

I'd like to speak to you about Christian's Against Poverty, or CAP as it's more widely known.

Pauline and I have day jobs, so we volunteer for CAP in a number of ways, volunteering is simply our way of responding to what God has placed on our hearts.

As we get nearer to what is hopefully the end of the pandemic, government protections that have been in place to support those in need, have now been taken away... furlough payments have stopped... the top up to universal credit payments ended in October... utility bills have increased significantly and are set to increase further... however, many of the challenges faced by our communities, both during and before the pandemic... still exist or have sadly got worse.

The issues around poverty and debt are often as a result of change to our life circumstances... changes that can happen to many of us... and changes that many of us have little or no control over.

Our heart is to work with churches like yours, to help those in need in your communities.

Christians Against Poverty partners with churches to equip and empower them to serve those who might otherwise be overlooked.

3. UK POVERTY RIGHT NOW

Many of us have experienced isolation and challenges from the events of the last two years.

I realise that, for many of those in poverty, this isolation was often their everyday experience before the pandemic.

SLIDE 2

The Church of the Good Shepherd, Castlecroft

and Christ Church, Tettenhall Wood.

Sunday 27 February 2022

A recent survey of those helped by CAP found that, before receiving help, 75% had experienced loneliness or social isolation due to their circumstances.

I see this routinely in the people we meet via our own church debt centre.

But one of the things I love about CAP is that it enables local churches, churches like yours and mine, to provide life-changing, practical support to those in need... as well as offering an invitation into their local church community.

CAP has a vision to see transformed lives, thriving churches, and an end to UK poverty.

4. SIMON'S STORY

SLIDE 3 – introducing Simon

So, what does the work we do look like in practice for those we help?

To show you a little of that, I'd like to introduce you to Simon, via this short video.

Simon is an amazing guy who turned his life around with the support of CAP, and he's going to tell you a little of his story.

SLIDE 4 [...PLAY Simon's story here.]

SLIDE 5

I think what strikes me most about Simon's Story is the transformation, he went from living in fear... to living with a sense of purpose, without fear.

SLIDE 6

Transformed Lives; Thriving Churches, an End to UK Poverty

So, how does CAP work when someone makes that call?

A friendly team, from a local church just like yours, visits the client at home.

And just to be clear, we never pay people debts for them, but we do help to empower them to access an appropriate debt solution... we journey with them for however long it takes... to see them become debt free.

Transformed Lives

For people like Simon, their debt situation before seeking help can seem hopeless. But in those situations, the combination of expert debt advice from specialist teams at CAP's head office and personal support from the local church can be truly life transforming.

CAP doesn't just provide debt help. We also partner with churches to run money management courses, we help people who are seeking employment, and run support groups for people living on a low income.

We're passionate about seeing lives transformed in every way, not just financially but physically, emotionally, and spiritually through a relationship with Jesus.

Thriving Churches

Not only is Simon's story about an inspiring picture of a transformed life, it's a wonderful vision of a thriving church.

Local churches are God's hands and feet on earth, and CAP is simply here to support and empower them as they strive to be all that God has called them to be.

An End to UK Poverty

Simon's story provides a compelling reminder of why UK poverty needs to end.

When CAP partners with churches, like yours and mine, and with people like you and me, we are a powerful force for change and we do create a more just and compassionate society here in the UK.

I'm often asked... how can we help... what can we do... and my answer is often the same... trust and follow what God has placed on your heart... and respond to His prompting.

SLIDE 7

If Simon's story resonates with your own circumstances, or someone close to you, then please take a note of the free-phone number on the screen... (0800 328 0006) or pick up some information from Pauline and I afterwards.

For Simon, contacting CAP was the moment his story changed.

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5. LIFE CHANGER ASK

SLIDE 8

At the heart of Christians Against Poverty there are around 30,000 people who give a regular financial gift.

We call them Life Changers because their generosity is quite literally changing people's lives.

Without our Life Changers, none of what I've just shared would be possible.

The generosity of our Life Changers is what drives the work of CAP forward, it's what enables churches like yours and mine to reach out to those in need.

I'd like to ask you if you would like to become a Life Changer today with a gift of just £5 a month, or whatever amount is on your heart?

Just £5 a month will help provide people like Simon with the community and practical help they need to rebuild their lives... and the opportunity to discover the life-changing love of Jesus.

You can use the Web-link on the screen to give to CAP... or you can become a Life Changer right now by completing the leaflet on your seat... it's really straightforward.

Don't worry if you don't have all your details to hand right now – just fill in what you can, hand it to Pauline and I, and CAP will contact you to sort out the rest.

Please make sure you tick 'yes' to the relevant consent boxes, as without this CAP may not be able to contact you using the details you've given.

We'll give you a few minutes to do that, and we'll leave that weblink on the screen for now.

And if you're able to help... thank you for your generosity... and to thank you for signing up, we'd like to give you a book called Nevertheless, which tells the remarkable story of the origins of CAP, and how God has impacted so many lives over the last 25 years.

Pauline and I would love to talk to you after the service... and answer any questions you may have.

So, please do come and talk to us after the service.

6. CLOSE IN PRAYER