

The Magazine of Church Army

share it!

45

Spring/Summer 2017



Faith Words Action

 ChurchArmy
www.churcharmy.org

Welcome from the Chief Executive

Dear friends,

2017 is a very special year for us. This year sees us celebrating 135 years since Church Army was founded, 75 years since the death of our founder, **Wilson Carlile**, and five years of being a Mission Community.

Church Army is an Acknowledged Mission Community within the Anglican Church. It currently has 448 members and is open to all Christians with a passion for evangelism.

Throughout our history, we have continually adapted to the shifting needs of society, yet we remain grounded in Wilson Carlile's original vision of enabling Christians to share their beliefs and bring men, women and children to a living faith in Jesus Christ.

We hope you will enjoy this special anniversary edition of *Shareit!* which connects our past and present with the common thread of helping the most broken and vulnerable. On page 4, you can read about our charismatic first leader, Wilson, and what led him to set up Church Army. You can also discover a brief history of our work with the homeless on page 8.

We then fast forward to the present, where you can find out how our Marylebone Project in London is helping women who are experiencing homelessness get back on their feet through its Women into Work programme (page 11) and sewing classes (page 13). On page 16, you can read Fatima's very personal account of how the project has empowered her to turn her life around.

As we celebrate well over a century of helping people know that God loves them, we are conscious of the fact that it would be impossible to do all this without your support. I thank God for you and pray that he will bless you abundantly in the year ahead.

Yours in Christ,



Canon **Mark Russell**
Chief Executive and Community Leader
www.churcharmy.org/ceo



Patron: HM The Queen

Church Army is a mission-focused community of people who are transforming lives and communities through the work of evangelists, staff and supporters. We are committed to sharing the Christian faith through words and action in a variety of contexts across the United Kingdom and Ireland.



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Shareit! is the magazine of Church Army and it is available free upon request. Please let us know if you would prefer not to receive further issues of *Shareit!* or other communications from Church Army. If you have a story for *Shareit!*, or suggestions on how we can improve this magazine, then please contact Michelle Pellegrino.

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Front cover: Some historic Church Army photos depicting our ministry in the nineteenth and twentieth century.

Is this the first time you've read a copy of Shareit!?
Would you like to receive your own edition regularly?
To sign up and to find out more about our other resources,
please visit www.churcharmy.org/res Alternatively
email info@churcharmy.org.uk, telephone 0300 123 2113
or write to Church Army, Wilson Carlile Centre,
50 Cavendish Street, Sheffield, S3 7RZ.



Wilson Carlile, the 'Archbishop of the Gutter'

This year we commemorate the 75th anniversary of the death of Church Army's founder and first leader, Wilson Carlile. We take a nostalgic look back at the life of a man with a vision of taking the gospel to the most downtrodden of his day





Wilson was passionate about music all his life

Early years

Wilson Carlile was born in Brixton, London, on 14 January 1847, the eldest of 12 children. At the age of 14, Wilson left school and followed in his grandfather's footsteps as a silk mercer. The youthful Wilson travelled regularly around the Continent for his trade, becoming proficient in several languages. He would later preach the gospel in French, German, Italian and English. He was also a gifted musician and played the trombone, piano and organ.

Although Wilson grew up in a middle class family, the Carliles could trace their origins to the Royal House of Scotland. They were also connected by marriage to the Royal Houses of England and France.

Godly encounter

Throughout his life, Wilson suffered from spinal weakness. "God threw me on my back so that I could look up to him more," he quipped.

It was during one of these bouts of poor health that the 26-year old Wilson began to read a book entitled *Grace and Truth* by Dr WP Mackay. He later described how he came to faith: "At the beginning of the chapter I was a rank outsider. Before I got to the end, I had thrown myself at the feet of Christ and cried 'My Lord and my God!'"

In 1870, Wilson married Flora Vickers, with whom he had five sons. He was ordained a deacon in 1880. Shortly after, he became curate at St Mary Abbots in Kensington, where he preached to one of the most fashionable congregations of Victorian London. By an ironic twist of fate, he would shortly become, as nicknamed by the then Bishop of London, the 'Archbishop of the Gutter'.

Church services were considered by the working people of the time as the exclusive preserve of the privileged. Since the working class refused to step foot inside a church, the enthusiastic young preacher began holding small, open air services at the time of day when coachmen, valets and grooms would be taking their evening stroll.

Open air campaigns

During these open air campaigns, Wilson came to a conclusion that would dominate his thinking for the rest of his life. He reflected that: "The humble testimonies of working people attracted quite as much as did my own preaching and, in fact, they seemed to produce even a deeper effect on their own class. So I felt I ought to go forth and try to train working men as church evangelists." ►

Left: Wilson with his beloved trombone

Wilson Carlile, the 'Archbishop of the Gutter'

continued



Wilson chatting with soldiers at a church club near London's Paddington Station. The club was completely wrecked by enemy action in 1941.

Wilson regularly suffered brutal physical assaults and even stonings during his open air missions. His outdoor work drew such huge crowds – and complaints – that he was ordered to stop. Wilson resigned his curacy to devote his time to slum missions. The fact his work in Kensington was brought to an early end was a great disappointment to Wilson. Despite this, he always saw his work as being for the greater glory of the Church.

Wilson's legacy

After leading Church Army for 60 years, Wilson died on 26 September 1942, aged 95. His remains lie in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral and a plaque in his honour can be seen outside his former home of 34 Sheffield Terrace in Kensington, London. His legacy of equipping Christians to reach outside church walls continues to be driven forward by Church Army today.



Mr and Mrs Carlile celebrating their golden wedding anniversary

Church Army is born

In 1882, Wilson Carlile establishes Church Army with a vision of training ordinary Christian men and women to reach those most in need with the Good News. In 1885, the organisation is officially recognised by the Church of England.

Wilson's ministry spanned horse-drawn mission caravans, prison outreach, beach and pioneer tent missions, recreation huts for the World War One armed forces and mission treks across England.

Wilson's younger sister, Marie, also joined him in Church Army's work, leaving behind her life of gentility in a Victorian household. She pioneered the women's work, ministering to prostitutes, thieves and alcoholics.



Wilson Carlile with his sister, Marie

Helping the homeless:

A brief history



Opening of a Church Army soup kitchen for the winter season

In the late 1800s, a staggering 30 percent of the population in the United Kingdom was living in or below the poverty line. The poor of these times associated religion with wealth, while few churches tolerated the presence of the underprivileged at their services.

Church Army was born during this time of great poverty and what was historically known as 'moral welfare' has always been at the heart of our work. Our founder, **Wilson Carlile**, understood that the struggling people he was trying to reach responded well to kindness and practical help, which then led to opportunities to talk about the deeper matters of faith.

To celebrate over a century of working with the homeless and marginalised, we've put together this timeline to highlight some of the key initiatives we've pioneered over the years:

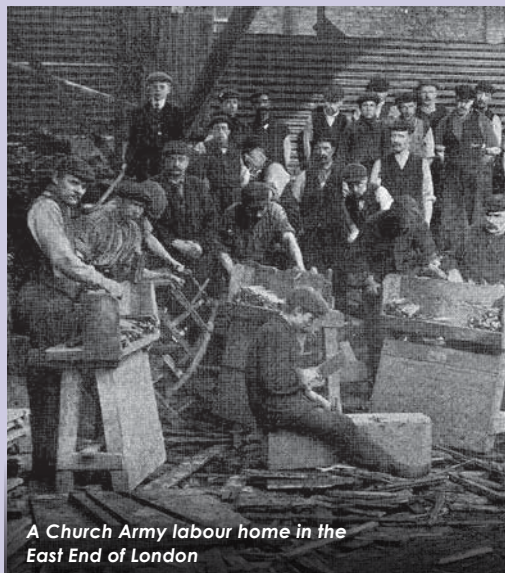
1890 Church Army opens its first homeless shelter in London, The Home for Tramps and Inebriates.

1891 Church Army sets up its first labour homes where poverty-stricken men could learn a trade, rather than just be given temporary relief. Wilson wanted to assist the unemployed not through charity – which would simply demoralise the men – but by giving them the opportunity to earn their food and lodging through doing work such as wood-chopping. Six labour homes were opened during the year, three in London, and another three in Bath, Derby and Stockport respectively. By the following year, the number of labour homes had increased to 12.

Early 1900s Church Army opens its first night shelters, providing men in need with soup and bread, accommodation and employment opportunities. At the turn of the century, many women living in dire poverty were forced to turn to prostitution in order to survive. Church Army establishes numerous shelters to help these women, as well as setting up homes for other marginalised groups, such as those suffering from alcoholism, drug addiction and venereal diseases.

1909 Church Army purchases the Yorkshire Stingo Brewery on London's Marylebone Road, converting it into a series of dormitories and workshops. By 1965, the premises had become Church Army's headquarters.

1919 Church Army opens several mother and baby homes, where single mothers shunned by society were offered a safe place to stay, support and a chance to start afresh. The women could make ends meet by taking part in domestic service work and training, while staff members looked after their infants.



A Church Army labour home in the East End of London

1920s In the years leading up to the Great Depression, Church Army introduces soup and bread canteens to assist the ever-growing numbers of the poor and unemployed.

1930s Many young men coming out of the education system during this period couldn't find work and ended up homeless. Church Army opens Wayside Lodges (on the outskirts of London) so that young men could be trained to become chefs and caterers. Many others are given work in the bakery located at the Wilson Carlile House in Stepney, east London, which housed 300 destitute men and supplied the bread to all the Church Army houses.

1937/38 For his 90th and 91st birthday, Wilson pleaded that people give donations towards Church Army's homeless work instead of giving him presents. The money raised was used to open Livingstone House in Willesden, north east London, in November 1938. The house was spacious enough to house 91 young men and boasted a games room and a quiet space for reading. ▶

Helping the homeless

continued



1940s Church Army launches numerous welfare hostels, providing cheap and comfortable accommodation for men of various ages, backgrounds and life circumstances, including former prisoners and mental health patients.

1945 Due to the introduction of the welfare state after World War Two, the emphasis of Church Army's work moves towards helping men who didn't fit into the state scheme and needed more care than either the state or other voluntary societies were able to offer. These men were helped through Church Army hostels across the country including in Birmingham, Bristol, Guildford, Leeds and Norwich.

The needs of society have continued to change over time, and we have consistently adapted our work to meet them.

Today, we remain committed to supporting people facing homelessness and with difficult life circumstances through the work of our Centres of Mission, individual evangelists and key projects such as:

- **Cardiff Residential Services:** Since opening its doors in 1984, the project has helped more than 1,600 homeless young people to live independently.
- **The Marylebone Project:** Through education, employment and training opportunities, the project gives homeless women the tools to empower them towards independent living. The project's drop-in centre offers essential facilities to women who sleep rough on the streets of London.

For more information about our history, visit our new website

www.churcharmy.org/churcharmylegacy

Q&A with Eni



The Marylebone Project's Women into Work (WiW) programme helps women with experience of homelessness to find a job, some of them for the very first time. Around 110 women a year are supported in their search for employment through WiW. Programme Leader, Eni Timi-Biu, tells us more...

Eni (standing) helps one of the women with her CV

How does WiW prepare women to enter the workforce?

Our one-to-one coaching sessions give us a chance to understand the career aspirations of each woman and to devise a plan of action together. We then work on making sure each woman continues to make practical and manageable steps towards her career goals. We also run a weekly job club, regular workshops led by professionals and organise external visits aimed at informing and inspiring the women about different career opportunities.

How does volunteering help the women to find a job?

The Marylebone Project makes excellent use of the many local businesses on its doorstep to find volunteering opportunities for the women. This is particularly useful for those who don't have any work experience. Around half of the women who found employment last year through the project started off as volunteers and learnt on-the-job, which allowed them to secure employment afterwards.

How long is the WiW course?

Every person is unique and has different needs, so the time spent with a woman trying to get into work has no limit. Our support doesn't end when a woman finds a job – we are here to help if they need support with time management, dealing with conflict at work or any other issues.

What do you love the most about your job?

Seeing a woman move forward in life and leave her traumatic experiences far behind her. It's wonderful to see them start believing in themselves and their abilities. It's also great to see the strong relationships being built within our group. The women are very supportive of each other and we all rejoice together when one of them gets a job or is accepted for a university course.



What is the biggest challenge you face in your job?

Managing expectations and keeping our ladies motivated after the disappointment of rejection emails or when a volunteer opportunity doesn't turn into paid employment. I'm a firm believer in the motto, 'What's for you won't pass you by', and reassure them that a job that's just right for them will come along.

Can you give us a peek into the 'power-dressing' wardrobe at the Marylebone Project?

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, we have a lovely collection of smart suits, handbags and shoes so the women can prepare for their job interview. The women are always very excited to dig around for the perfect outfit to 'dress for success'. Once they're all dressed up, and armed with the skills they have learnt, they can step into the job interview full of confidence and hope for the future.

- To find out more about the project, please visit www.maryleboneproject.org.uk

The programme helps the women through:

- One-to-one mentoring
- CV and cover letter writing
- Help with filling in job application forms
- Preparing for job interviews and other confidence-building skills
- Conducting online job searches
- Educational and training courses
- Volunteer placements
- Access to a business wear wardrobe
- Participating in other in-house courses to boost their career prospects e.g. English language lessons and computer literacy

A stitch in time



The room is an explosion of colour, with rolls of fabric and spools of thread scattered around. Some women are bent over their sewing machines, their faces intense with concentration.

One woman is cutting up a brightly patterned purple and white material to make an apron, another is making a fabric heart to be filled with fragrance and placed into a drawer.

The room is quiet, interrupted every now and then by the sounds of happy chatter and soft laughter over the purring of the sewing machines.

Betty (40) from Ethiopia has been attending the Marylebone Project's sewing classes for over a year. She's at her sewing machine and is busy working on a snugly patchwork blanket.

"Before I started the classes, I couldn't use a sewing machine at all," says Betty, "We are learning to knit, do needlework and embroidery, but what I enjoy the most is using the sewing machine."

"So far I've made a cushion cover, then an apron and now I'm working on this blanket. At first, I found sewing difficult, but now I think it's very relaxing! I'm grateful for the chance of learning this new skill."



A stitch in time

continued

Sewing and self-worth

The Marylebone Project's sewing classes were set up in 2014 by staff members, **Bethan Tribe** and **Ajebush Tesfazghi**, who are both keen sewers. Bethan has a degree in embroidery and previously worked as a clothing designer. Ajebush has been making clothes for herself and her friends for the past 10 years.

"A lot of the women who take part in our sewing classes comment on how relaxing they find it," says Bethan. **"Many of the participants have difficult lives and sewing helps them to forget about their worries for a while, because it's a detailed task, which requires focus."**

"I would say the main thing they take away from these classes is a sense of achievement – their handiwork is something they can show off and give as gifts to their family and friends," continues Bethan, "There is also a social aspect to the classes. It's a chance to chat with other women and so build a sense of community."

Studies have shown that learning new skills has a positive effect on how people feel about themselves. Gaining competency in a new hobby and successfully completing a task helps to boost our feelings of self-worth.

Dreaming of home

"All the women love making cushions and blankets, as they want to put them in their future home," explains Bethan.

It's easy to see why creating household items like these makes a formerly homeless woman feel a step closer towards their new, independent life. As the women work on their samples, they are also stitching the fabric of their lives back together.



Sara (33) from Eritrea said: "This is my third sewing lesson and I've just finished making a cushion cover. I felt so happy and proud of myself when I completed it."



Tsega (26) is originally from Eritrea. Only a short time ago, she was homeless and her future looked bleak. After taking part in the project's English course and Women into Work programme, Tsega is back on her feet and now has a full-time job. "My life has changed thanks to the help of the Marylebone Project. The sewing classes have got me dreaming of becoming a fashion designer one day," she says.





Medina (38) is a refugee from Eritrea and sleeps rough on the streets of London. She's been attending the Maylebone Project's sewing classes for two months.

Not only is the project empowering women through teaching them practical skills. It's helping women who have been through domestic violence, homelessness, war, rape, indifference and cruelty, to believe in themselves and dare to dream once more.

And perhaps these are the greatest gifts the project's sewing classes give to the women.

For information on how you can help the women at the Marylebone Project, please visit www.churcharmy.org/supportmarylebone

The far side of the



Fatima* (36) was born in Somalia and grew up in Holland. A year ago, she was a lonely and frightened woman, sleeping rough on the streets of London. Her life has taken a 180-degree flip. Fatima is now working, studying... and dreaming the big dream of walking on the moon.

When I look back on the period of my life when I was homeless, I can only be glad it's over. I was unemployed, suffering from depression and sofa surfing at my friend's house.

After six months, she asked me to leave, and I completely understand why: she has a husband and children, and I couldn't carry on sleeping in their lounge forever. I had nowhere else to go and ended up living on the streets, clutching my suitcase which comprised all my worldly belongings.

I slept outside a 24-hour McDonald's, where I felt safer. Everything about being homeless is horrible. You have no privacy. You sit in a corner, in the dark, surrounded by danger.

I felt scared all the time – what woman wouldn't be? Men would sometimes shout out to me: "Hey, baby, how are you doing?" I would put on my fiercest face, but inside I would be trembling with fear.

I was luckier than most homeless people as I could still knock on my friend's door, have a shower and a bite to eat. I tried hard to keep myself as clean and as presentable as possible. I never joined other groups of homeless people, as I didn't want to get mixed up in alcoholism, drug-taking and so on. I had no one to look out for me and no place to call home. I felt so alone. It still upsets me to talk about it.

moon

“Don’t tell me the sky’s the limit when there are footprints on the moon.”

*Paul Brandt
(Canadian country music artist)*

Eventually, I moved into a homeless hostel but I didn't feel at ease in my new surroundings. I spent all my time in my room. It was at this hostel that I first heard about the Marylebone Project.

As soon as I stepped through the project's door, I felt that things here were different. I was warmly greeted by the receptionist and there were no windows or barriers dividing us. It's all very open. The attitude of the staff here has been the same – they welcome you in with open arms.

Before coming to the Marylebone Project I didn't have a voice. I feel like a brand new person now, strong and self-confident. Both my written and spoken English has improved so much thanks to the project's English courses. I didn't know how to use a computer before joining their Women into Work programme. Being computer literate is so important if you want to get a good job.

I'm busy studying towards my GCSEs in English and maths and want to continue studying after that and get a degree. I also work as a care assistant. I look after an elderly couple and I have a good relationship with them.

**not her real name*



The staff members at the Marylebone Project are wonderful, they've been really supportive. One of them is always around if I need to talk, 24/7. We can also go and talk to one of the life coaches; mine has really helped me to create a life plan. I've done a lot of other activities here too – sewing, drama classes, Zumba... I'm friends with all the women here, from the first to the fifth floor! The Marylebone Project feels like home and I'm so happy here.

The most important things I've learnt at the Marylebone Project are the importance of setting goals in my life and believing in myself. There's no stopping me now! My biggest dream is to become an astronaut and walk on the moon.

God certainly works in mysterious ways – I'm a Muslim and I want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart to all the Christian people who have looked past my race and religion and helped me so much.

In one of the corridors here, there is a painting of Church Army's founder, **Wilson Carlile**. I often stop to look at him and whisper: "It's all thanks to you that I live in this building and have got my life back together. God bless your soul, you're a legend!"

Women have their say

Tehani: "Every time I walk past a homeless person, I feel the tears coming to my eyes. I remember how horrible it was to live on the streets and I pray for them. When I first arrived at the project, I couldn't speak English, use a computer and I didn't have any idea how to prepare for a job interview. My life is so different now. I have a full-time job in customer services, which I really enjoy. I also have my own place, which makes me so happy. I don't have family members here in the United Kingdom, but the Marylebone Project is my family. I thank God daily for having brought me to the project."

Marylebone
Project





Yordanos: "I attend Women into Work sessions once a week and this has really helped me to feel more confident. I have experience in working in hospitality in my country and, thanks to the training I did at the Marylebone Project, I now have a job at a coffee shop here in London. The project is helping me make many positive changes in my life."

"This amazing place serves hundreds of homeless women every week and helps them make a fresh start. I love how the project empowers women to make the changes to transform their own lives. I saw this for myself when I visited and was inspired by the stories of the women I met."

Ellie Goulding's comments on the Marylebone Project, in December 2015, shortly before becoming the project's Patron.



- More than **8,000** people slept rough on London's streets during 2015/16. The number has more than **doubled** over the last five years and has nearly **tripled** over the last 10 years.

(Source: *Streets of London*, a charity that supports people who are homeless in London)

Sara: "I left Eritrea because of the war – there is compulsory military service for women in my country of birth and I didn't want to leave my baby girl. Thanks to the Marylebone Project, I am now working and renting my own flat. I am full of plans for the future. Ever since I was a child, I've wanted to be a writer and that dream is still inside me. I often pop in to visit everyone at the project; the staff members are very caring towards me. I go to church every Sunday and thank the Lord for his goodness. I will never forget their kindness."



Church Army September

September: the air turns a little cooler, the days are shortening, the cricket season is drawing to a close and parents collectively breathe a sigh of relief as the new school term begins.

The leaves on our trees begin their journey of transformation through a kaleidoscope of colour before falling later in the season. Orchards are full of apples, hedgerows are bursting with fruit and golden fields are harvested. It really is a picture of beauty and will no doubt look a little bit different depending on where you live.

September is also a month of focused support and prayer for Church Army. We call it Church Army September. This September will be the 75th anniversary of the death of our founder, **Wilson Carlile**, and now more than ever we want to tell his story and the story of Church Army in churches across the British Isles and Ireland.

We'd love to come to your church – why not ask your church leader to book one of our speakers? Alternatively you can order our **Speaker's Pack** which will enable you to lead your own service with all the information you need about Church Army at your fingertips. You could have a Church Army display in your church or why not show one of our inspiring films about our work?

- For more information, please visit www.churcharmy.org/september



Please get involved in Church Army September!

You can do this by:

- **Praying with us and for us:** request our prayer resources
- **Fundraising for us:** every pound you raise goes directly to our frontline work – request a fundraising pack
- **Joining us on The Journey:** see page 22 for more information

Whatever you're planning to do, tell us, so we can pray for you and resource you in any way we can.

To send us your prayers, request one of our packs or to book one of our evangelists to speak at your church, please call **0300 123 2113** or email us at supportercare@churcharmy.org.uk

Join the journey



“Faith is not merely a journey for the feet, but it is also a journey for the heart.” US Christian pastor, A. W. Tozer

Church Army is well-known for stepping out of the four walls of the church to meet people where they are.

Will you join us on a special journey this year as we aim to raise money to help others on their own personal journey of faith and discovery of God?

Join a sponsored walk near you or start your own!

For more information, please visit:
www.churcharmy.org/thejourney

- Family-friendly
- Healthy
- Building community
- Developing friendships

THE
JOURNEY

Shiny, gritty people



“Not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another...” Hebrews 10:25

When I was young, I used to fall asleep to the noise of a rumbling clatter in the room below. My father's hobby was stone-polishing. He put stones, water and grit into a plastic barrel the size of a roll of kitchen towel. For six months, it turned on a roller so that the stones bashed against each other in the muddy water. They came out shining like gems. I remember walking on beaches, looking at the ugly exterior of pebbles and trying to imagine the jewels inside.

After 50 years of church-going, this strikes me as the perfect image to explain why God has not left us as solitary Christians, but has brought us together in congregations, or fresh expressions of Church, or whatever name best suits a group of people worshipping God together.

Churches have always been places where Christians are battered about a bit. We rattle and rub against others – enjoying and enraging, agreeing and disagreeing, but worshipping together so that God can smooth out our sharp edges and make us people who glimmer.

In a church, people go through all the stages of a relationship with our loving God. Some are on a thrilling first date, while others have wearied themselves into a habitual trudge. We need those extremes, and every spiritual stage between. Those who are on fire can encourage those who are exhausted. Those who are in pain or struggling keep those who are away with the angels earthed in reality.

Is it possible to be a follower of Jesus without going to church? It's tempting to say yes, because then you avoid the awkward truth that some Christians are grumpy, hypocritical or inflexible. But then you miss out on nearly all the benefits of being Christian.

Churches are there to be communities of precious support for people who are struggling. But the hotchpotch and grit are underrated gifts to us as well. They help people shine.



By **Peter Graystone**

Have you tried our resources?



Now a Christian

Join more than 3,000 people and sign up for a **FREE** email each day for five weeks that will help you to make your own decisions about the Christian faith.

This free email course includes daily emails, podcasts and the link to an interactive website.

www.nowachristian.org

Stepping into evangelism

This book is filled with practical advice and exercises to help you and your church reach out to others in words and action.

Stepping into evangelism is available to purchase from Church Army's website www.churcharmy.org/sie or by telephoning 0300 123 2113. Individual copies cost £3 each.



Faith Pictures

is a new downloadable free course to help you talk to friends, neighbours and colleagues about what you believe. At the heart of it is identifying an image that says something about your faith.

Features Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, comedian Milton Jones, broadcaster Pam Rhodes, writer Paula Gooder and many more... plus a couple who had tarantulas on their wedding cake.

For more information visit: www.faithpictures.org or telephone 0300 123 2113.

