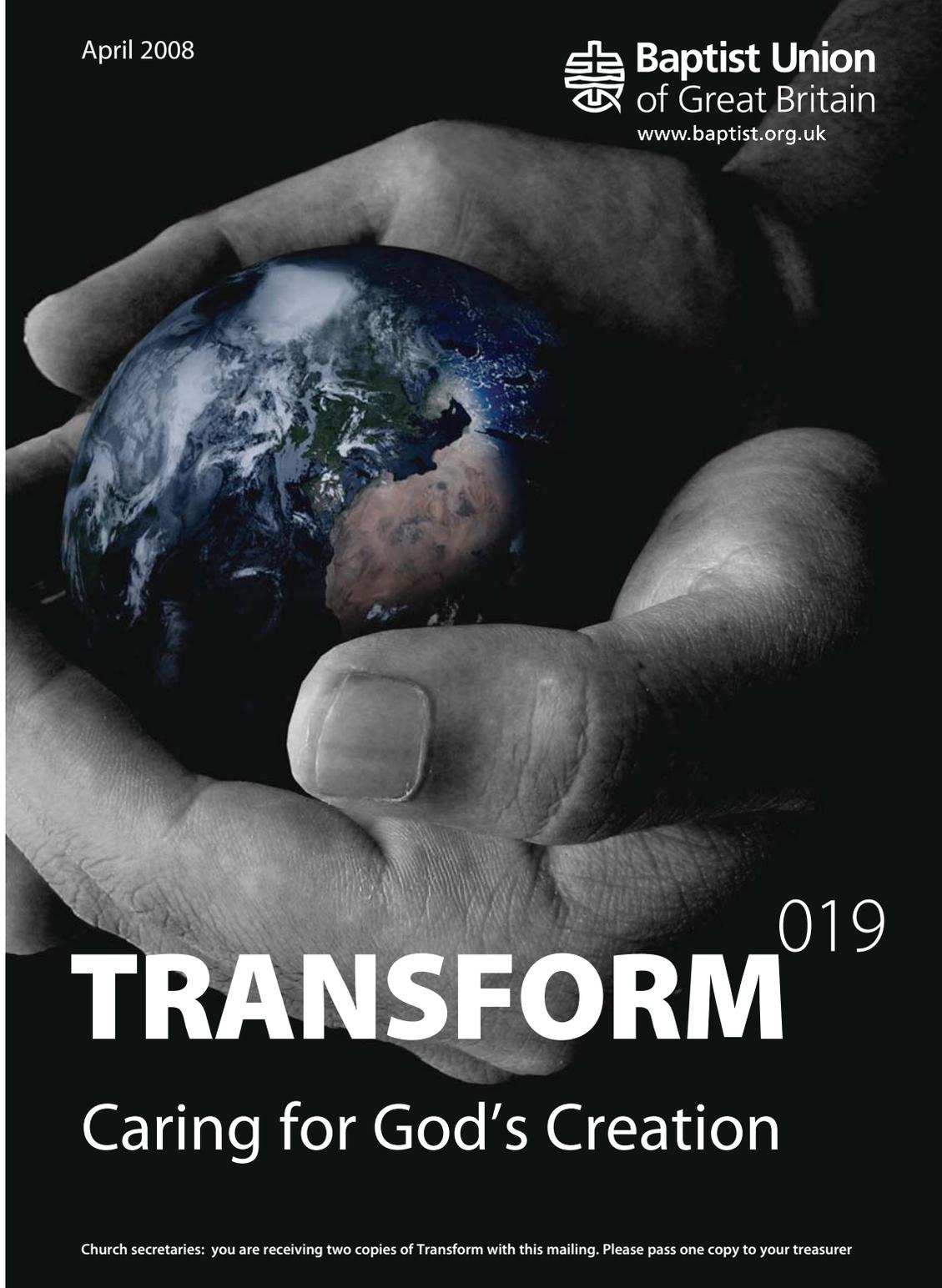


April 2008

 **Baptist Union**  
of Great Britain  
[www.baptist.org.uk](http://www.baptist.org.uk)



# TRANSFORM<sup>019</sup>

Caring for God's Creation

Church secretaries: you are receiving two copies of Transform with this mailing. Please pass one copy to your treasurer

Back to Church Sunday is an exciting initiative offered to every Baptist church.

Research shows that many people who no longer attend church would respond to an invitation back. Back to Church Sunday is on 28 September, and is a chance to invite them.

BUGB Mission and Communications Depts, with *The Baptist Times*, are offering resources for churches to help them prepare, and welcome packs for visitors. For more information email [b2cs@baptist.org.uk](mailto:b2cs@baptist.org.uk)

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## Caring for God's creation

Everyone is talking about caring for the planet these days - so it is hardly a surprise to find it in the new Baptist Union strategy! But most of the talk about creation care is rooted in self interest. We are told by scientists and politicians alike that we have got to care for creation or we won't survive. This is a pretty strong reason for considering the subject, but as Christians we need to make sure that we are rooting our thinking in the right place - in the nature of God.

Our calling to care for the planet must focus on the fact that the God whom we worship is our Creator. Our care for creation is therefore a fundamental expression of our love for him and our desire to live in partnership with him. There is a terrible danger that we could jump on the bandwagon of caring for the planet for no other reason than it's the trendy thing to do these days. To do so would be to miss the crucial point that caring for creation needs to be an integral part of our worship and our stewardship. We believe that the God whom we worship will, quite rightly, call us to account for the way in which we have looked after his creation.

I am increasingly excited about the Baptist Union Strategy. Under the title Encouraging Missionary Disciples the strategy is seeking to encourage us to explore what it means to be radical



disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have so often been horribly guilty of making it look as if the Lord is only interested in one tiny slice of our lives. But it cannot possibly be so. To be a disciple of Jesus Christ is to commit ourselves to living in a way that honours God in every way. Caring for creation is one vital aspect of that and as a Baptist Union we need to encourage one another to move forward in this challenging area.

This year's Baptist Assembly will spend a significant amount of time considering how we can care for our planet. We are delighted that Sir John Houghton, who is one of the world's leading authorities on climate change and also a Baptist, will be with us. As radical disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ we must give the best of our minds and the best of our effort to this vital subject.

May God bless you and your fellowship as you continue to encourage missionary disciples.

Yours, in Christ,

*Jonathan Edwards*  
Jonathan Edwards  
BUGB General Secretary

11-17 August 2008  
Warwick School, Warwick  
**TRAVELLING LIGHT**  
LIVING IN THE LIGHT OF ETERNITY

Special Guest: Philip Yancey  
(Author of 'What's So Amazing About Grace?')



LeadingEdge

[www.baptist.org.uk/leadingedge](http://www.baptist.org.uk/leadingedge)



# Mission



## Money Advice Days

17 June, 18 September 2008

It is no secret that debt, with all its attendant shame, guilt, misery and fear, ranks in the mega-league of present day social problems. It accounts for around 70% of all marriage breakdowns, causes more rows and division than any other subject and hovers over our nation and society as a veil of hopelessness and despair almost without equal. Every single day the Citizen's Advice Bureau deal with over 6,000 enquiries about debt, with the average amount being over £13,000. Debt is of course no respecter of persons or of faith and invades church as well as the wider society.

In response to the growing need for advice and practical help, the Mission Department has joined together with Stewardship and Community Money Advice to produce a Mission File on debt and money management and also a series of training days at Baptist House. Whilst these days will deal with the basic requirements of setting up a money management and debt response centre they will also be pointers to further training opportunities.

Richard Talbot and Heather Keates will facilitate the days with Terry Jones from the

Mission Department.

Cost for the day is £20 which includes refreshments and lunch in the restaurant.

Registration details from Carole Alder:  
calder@baptist.org.uk 01235 517713

Mission File link:  
[http://www.baptist.org.uk/resources/resource\\_downloads/265.pdf](http://www.baptist.org.uk/resources/resource_downloads/265.pdf)

## Fresh Horizons PowerPoint and National Tour

*Fresh Horizons PowerPoint*

Following an extensive period of reading and research, the Mission Department is now able to follow the Mission File 'Fresh Horizons' with two further substantial resources. The Fresh Horizons PowerPoint features testimonies from eight seniors who have found new challenges at home and abroad. There is advocacy on seniors 'third-age' mission and ministry from Jonathan Edwards (BUGB General Secretary) and Kathryn Morgan (Southern Counties Regional Minister) as well as guidance on working with vulnerable adults - Safe to Belong - from Alan Elson (Ministry Department). The PowerPoint contains a wealth of quotes, biblical reflection and resource information for further study and practical action. As well as the primary section, which extends over ninety minutes, there are two further sections which offer 'home' and 'abroad' options and run to

sixty minutes. Any one of the testimonies can be used as a five-seven minute feature within a worship service or cell group.

Copies of the PowerPoint are available from the Mission Department priced at £3.50 which includes postage and packing.

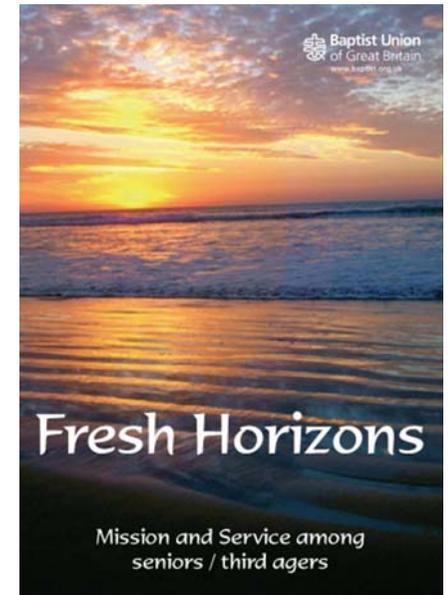
Contact Carole Alder: 01235 517713  
[calder@baptist.org.uk](mailto:calder@baptist.org.uk)

Mission File link:  
[http://www.baptist.org.uk/resources/resource\\_downloads/383.pdf](http://www.baptist.org.uk/resources/resource_downloads/383.pdf)

*Fresh Horizons National Tour*

Days run from 1000 – 1500 including either a hot lunch provided by the host church or packed lunch brought by delegates. The day includes worship, biblical reflection, humour, testimony and challenging opportunities for third-age seniors.

19 April	Fuller BC, Kettering (Central Baptist Association)
26 April	Leigh Park BC, Havant (Southern Counties Baptist Association)
31 May	Streatham BC, London (London Baptist Association)
14 June	Chelmsford BC (Eastern Baptist Association)
19 July	Horsham BC (Trafalgar Road) (South Eastern Baptist Association)



20 Sept	Station Road BC, Ashford, Kent (South Eastern Baptist Association)
17 Oct	Cemetery Road Baptist Church Sheffield (Yorkshire Baptist Association)
18 Oct	Moortown Baptist Church Leeds (Yorkshire Baptist Association)
1 Nov	Bloomsbury BC (London Baptist Association)

Details of registration and cost for these strategic days from:

Carole Alder: 01235 517713  
[calder@baptist.org.uk](mailto:calder@baptist.org.uk)

# Ministry



## Support Your Local School

There are a huge number of opportunities for getting involved in the life of a school, both for pastors and for members of churches. These include chaplaincy and leading assemblies, but far more besides – from helping in classes to serving as a governor. A Special Interest Group on this theme at the 2008 Assembly is being arranged by the Educational Chaplaincy Working Group, on behalf of the Sector Ministries Committee, offering at least twenty ways to get involved, and ideas and resources to help. By building a good relationship over a period of time, this opportunity to serve can turn into an opportunity to make the love of God known in action and, with proper sensitivity to the context, in word as well.

After the meeting at the Assembly, the lists of ideas and resources can be obtained from the Ministry Department.



## Off to University!

Once again this summer, after the anxious wait for A-level results, many of our churches' young people will be heading for

University. There they will meet people of all faiths and none, encounter challenging ideas and lifestyles, and perhaps find their own faith questioned. At many Universities there is a Baptist chaplain, ready to make contact and to help them settle in and find a spiritual home that can nourish and support them in this adventure, as most are away from home for the first time. It can be a real act of pastoral care for our young people to send their names and contact details (with their permission, of course) to the chaplain. The list of chaplains is published in the *Baptist Times* in August, in the week of A-level results, and is also in the BU Directory. Information is also available from the Ministry Department.

## Ministry Refresher Conference

Every September around 150 ministers gather at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, for a forty-eight hour conference with Bible Study, addresses, workshops and worship, as well as fellowship. Invitations are sent to all serving ministers on a five year rotation, normally in such a way that you can get together with those with whom you trained, as it's based on when you were enrolled as a minister.

The Conference this year, from 22 - 24 September, is for those enrolled in years ending in 3 or 8. Invitations were sent last Autumn, and if you haven't booked yet and would like to do so, contact Ian Millgate in the Ministry Department.



## Conference for Volunteers in Prison Ministry

The third conference for Baptists ministering in a voluntary capacity in the criminal justice system is to take place on Saturday, 11 October. This includes those who go in to lead worship, to help in education, as prison visitors or volunteer chaplains – or any other way in which care can be shown to those in prison (or recently released). Among the topics to be looked at are 'What does the Governor expect of a volunteer?', and we hope a governor or senior staff member will be able to join us.

Full details will be available later in the year, and will be sent to those who have attended before. To add your name to the list and receive information about this and future events, please contact Ian Millgate – 01235 517705 or [imillgate@baptist.org.uk](mailto:imillgate@baptist.org.uk).

## Training for Lay Pastors and Preachers

The ministry of **lay preachers** is valued by many churches, especially smaller ones without regular ministry, and we want to assist those called to this itinerant preaching ministry to develop their gifts and understanding through the training offered by the consortium of the Baptist colleges. A scheme is up and running to

offer courses that prepare lay preachers for both preaching effectively and also the leading of worship. It comprises eight modules of which six are compulsory, including introductions to Old and New Testaments, leading worship and spirituality. Successful completion of this course enables lay preachers to be considered for the Baptist Union's recognition (Recognised Lay Preachers). Further information can be gained from the nearest college (see the Baptist Union website for links to contact details).

These courses will also be of value to those who do not wish to become itinerant lay preachers, but do preach regularly in their home church. Others might wish to join those studying courses on the leadership of worship, and take that course as a stand-alone course if they regularly lead services.

The ministry of **lay pastors** is also invaluable amongst us, and in a similar fashion to the course leading to recognition as a lay preacher, the colleges provide a series of modules that, taken together, equip those seeking to minister as a lay pastor. Often such pastors offer non-stipendiary ministry in their 'free time' after a busy working week elsewhere. They are men and women of extraordinary dedication, and the courses offered are aimed to support their learning and formation as pastors. The full course for recognition requires a portfolio of a minimum of twelve modules. They include

# Ministry

the courses that lead to recognition as a lay preacher, of course, since much of a lay pastor's work is the leading of worship and preaching, but there are also courses that equip a lay pastor for those elements of the role that involve pastoral leadership and care of a congregation, including Doing Theology, Pastoral Care, Leadership Skills and Baptist Belief and Practice.

The courses offered are often delivered in a local church, drawing in others from surrounding churches to build a large enough class to warrant a course being offered. Perhaps you have a few already in your congregation who wish to study, say, an introduction to the New Testament, leading worship, or engaging with the modern world. It might be possible to build upon this group by invitations to others in churches close to yours and then the course could be delivered locally to you (particularly helpful if your church is a distance from the local college provider).

Encouraging a team of gifted, well-trained and enthusiastic pastors, preachers and elders or deacons is amongst most ministers' dream wish-list. It may well be that through these pathways of training, churches might get closer to the realisation of that dream, and thus become more effective in fulfilling their role in encouraging missionary disciples, the overall strategic goal of the Baptist Union.

## Encountering Other Faiths

There can be no doubt that we live in a much more diverse religious landscape than ever before. Most large cities, certainly the great metropolises of Britain, will have substantial Islamic communities, and probably Sikh, Hindu and Jewish communities as well. Chinese communities and ancestor worship, Persian Zoroastrians and, if the last census is to be believed, Jedi Knights (concentrated in Norfolk, I seem to remember) all bring rich variety to the religious landscape, ranging from animists to Zen Buddhists. These communities do not always live in peaceful co-existence, but generally we have been blessed with a distinct lack of inter-religious tension, not least due to the way in which Christianity has offered a generous hospitality to others here in ways which elsewhere has been completely absent.

It raises the question of how we should respond to those of other faiths. Are they just objects of our evangelistic endeavours, or people of faith to be respected as such, with evangelism forbidden? Should we support the building of a mosque or oppose it (or indeed the broadcasting by tannoy of the call to prayer) and how should we build relationships with our Moslem, Jewish and Sikh neighbours?

One of the key strategic goals of the Baptist Union is to *'Develop and provide resources to churches and Ministers to encourage a deeper*

*understanding of other religions within our society and to find more effective ways of supporting ministry in multi-faith areas.'* This does not mean that the BU is suddenly endorsing multi-faith worship or proclaiming that all religions are varieties of one universal spirituality. Most would continue to preach Christ crucified as the one name under heaven by which we are saved! However, ignorance of another's religion neither assists us in our witness, nor builds that common ground upon which good civil society can be maintained. Our mission requires of us a depth of understanding of other religious beliefs and practices if we are to build the ground upon which we might stand and explain the gospel.

One resource available to us is The St Philips' Centre, rooted in the multi-faith context of Leicester and a national ecumenical training centre under the Presence and Engagement initiative. It provides training for Christians, those of other faiths and civic partners. It enables Christians and churches to be a confident presence in a multi-faith world, prepared to share their own faith and learn from others. Good working relationships and dialogue with people of other faiths serve to promote the common good. The Centre is being developed by the Anglican Diocese of Leicester, St Philip's Church, the Methodist, United Reformed, Roman Catholic and Baptist churches. More

information can be found at [www.stphilips-centre.co.uk/](http://www.stphilips-centre.co.uk/) and the courses offered can be partly supported from Minister's In-service Training Grants, (details available from [imillgate@baptist.org.uk](mailto:imillgate@baptist.org.uk)).

Another resource is a recent revision of *The New Lion Handbook of World Religions*, General Editor: Christopher Partridge, Oxford, Lion, Third paperback edition, 2007 (ISBN: 978-0-7459-5266-6). With 495 pages. complete with full colour illustrations, at £14.99 it has to be one of the bargains of the Christian book world (and it's even cheaper on Amazon!) Every church library should have a copy, as well as those ministers who lack the information required to understand those of other faiths.

Meanwhile, ministerial students are encouraged to take the courses on offer at our colleges to deepen their understanding and equip themselves for this strategic mission goal. Maybe understanding another religious group amongst the neighbours of your local church could be a sabbatical theme, or a course devised and offered by the minister of a church to its members.

St Paul in his sermon at the Areopagus of Athens demonstrated a knowledge of the faith of those Athenians that enabled him to proclaim the unchanging gospel message in such a way as to resonate with their interests (Acts 17:16-34) so that some

# Ministry

said 'We will hear you again about this,' (verse 33). Let's equip ourselves to do likewise in our complex and rainbow-coloured religious world.

## Ordination Certificates

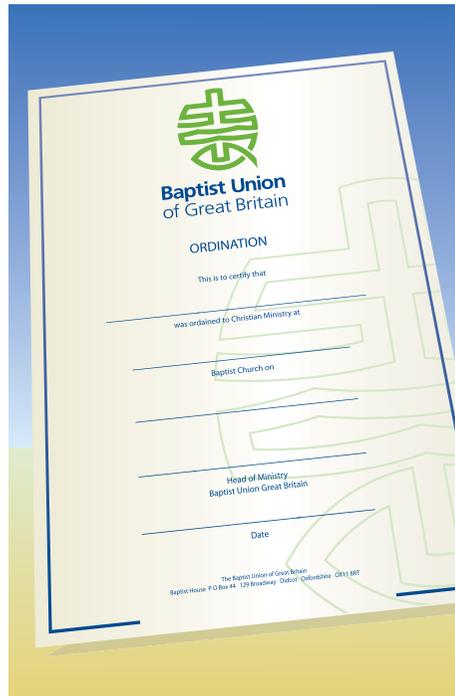
All accredited ministers receive a certificate that declares them to be accredited by the Baptist Union.

This is given to them at the Assembly when they are presented to the President of the Union on the stage. While one or two have been known to lose theirs, (shame!) most value this record of their accreditation, and some even frame it for their study wall!

However, the wider civic authorities often want to see 'an ordination certificate', especially the Home Office (or its new department, The Border and Immigration Authority,) and following a request from the London Baptist Association, we are now able to issue a certificate that declares that a minister has been ordained.

While this will not replace the Ministerial Accreditation Certificate presented at Assembly, it will help some of our ministers who are required to present some form of credentials understood by the wider community (who understand 'ordination' but struggle with 'accreditation!') and especially those coming from overseas who have trained here and been ordained here.

We can supply an Ordination Certificate to any accredited minister who has



undergone an ordination, provided we have the date and place of ordination. Please apply in the first instance to Sally Hall at shall@baptist.org.uk with those details and we shall be happy to oblige. I am afraid we can only offer this facility to those who are either accredited by us, or who, as unaccredited ministers in pastoral charge of a Baptist Union church, can provide evidence of their ordination.

### Note:

An ordination certificate cannot in itself confer or confirm accreditation by the Baptist Union.

# Faith & Unity



## Joint Public Issues Team

The Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) works together to monitor and respond to the fast-moving political scene. We come from the three major Free-church churches: Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed. Much of this involves 'keeping and ear' on the pulse of political ideas and initiatives, to discern when and where our denominations can comment and attempt to influence the public scene for the better:

Climate change, of course, is increasingly affecting many people's lives at home and abroad. Whenever natural disaster strikes, it is always the poorest people who suffer the most. As the earth heats up, we can be sure of God's passionate concern for those whose lives have been devastated, and we anticipate God's wrath if the more affluent countries fail to respond to certain knowledge of impending disaster.

There is no hope for us unless we are prepared to act together. JPIT is monitoring the passing of the Current Climate Change Bill, as it passes through Westminster. We all have an opportunity to influence this UK contribution to saving the planet!

This Bill aims to make five improvements to our current national commitments. Firstly there is a plan to set a reduction in *statutory*

*targets for carbon emissions.* Secondly, the Government proposes that there should be a five-yearly national review of emission levels, with *Carbon Budget* proposals to keep us on track. Thirdly there are plans to create an *Independent Committee on Climate Change*, to monitor these processes. Fourthly, the Bill will establish a carbon credit system, so that emission reduction actions overseas will count towards UK targets. Lastly, the Government proposes that the various aspects of *associated risk to the UK population* should be carefully analysed.

We immediately think of the severe flooding of summer 2007, the system failures associated with disrupted transport, and the overwhelming pressure on local authorities and emergency services. The protection of housing and vital industry and services, and the decisions about what proportion of the land should be set aside for bio fuels all require urgent management.

Discover the JPIT summary of the important aspects of the Climate Change Bill, our shared concerns about its possible shortcomings, and what Baptist Christians can do now to register their views, on the JPIT website:

[www.jointpublicissues.org.uk](http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk)

## Engaging Spirituality @theGathering

Churches Together in England are organising another of their popular 'gathering' weekends from Friday 30 May – Sunday 1 June 2008.

Engaging Spirituality @theGathering aims to help us:

- engage with our own spirituality
- engage with the spiritual journey of our Christian brothers and sisters
- engage with the spiritual interest of people outside the churches.

Engaging Spirituality @theGathering will look at the implications for local churches and local groups of churches together, as they seek to respond to the needs and opportunities of their congregations and neighbourhood. For more information and a booking form, see the website [www.churches-together.net](http://www.churches-together.net) or contact 020 7529 8133. Everyone is welcome to attend this event.

## Baptists and Ecumenism

'A united church is no optional extra,' said Desmond Tutu at the World Council of Churches Assembly at Porto Alegre, Brazil in 2006. Rather it is 'indispensable for the salvation of God's world.'

A new paper has been prepared looking at the involvement of the Baptist Union of Great Britain in the ecumenical journey, discussing some of the current challenges facing the ecumenical movement and the

unique contribution that Baptists can make; and suggesting some ways forward for the future. The paper is available for download from the BUGB website, or you can get a copy by contacting Graham Sparkes on 01235 517728.

## Moving Together: A personal perspective

New from Churches Together in England comes this 'Re-view' – a fresh look at the past decade. Written by David Spriggs, a Baptist minister currently working for the Bible Society, this book takes a step back and looks at how the churches in England are engaging with one another in the ecumenical journey. It is a 'stock-taking', ten years on from the Called To Be One process that had asked what was meant by the 'visible unity of the Church'.

It is not a review or audit of Churches Together in England. It is meant to be much wider, reflecting the deep and broad realities of the way in which Christians of different denominations, nations, ethnicities, histories and social contexts are part of the overall ecumenical journey.

Both the full report, and a shorter summary, are available to download from the CTE website [www.churches-together.net](http://www.churches-together.net) (look under 'Our Work') or phone 020 7529 8131 to order a hard copy.

**Faith and Unity** Council received reports and updates on a number of areas of work, including the Covenant partnership with the Independent Methodist Connection, a paper on 'Baptists and Ecumenism', and details of work by the Joint Public Issues Team.

Later in the year, work on justice issues will become part of the remit of the Department, including developing 'The Journey'. The guidance given by Council will form part of the discussions at the Executive in June, as the detailed programme is developed for Council to consider in November.

**Finance** Council agreed changes to the system of Home Mission Grants intended to make the scheme more flexible and more suitable for current fresh expressions of church to receive funding. The grants are renamed BUGB Mission Grants, and will now incorporate grants previously made under the Against the Stream and Green Shoots schemes.

Council agreed changes to the BUGB Constitution which will be proposed and voted on at Assembly 2008. They also adopted new Bye Laws which complete and complement the Constitutional changes made in recent years. Council was advised that there had been a shortfall on the 2007 Home Mission Appeal of over £200,000 which had led to a deficit in the Management Accounts of £91,000. Concern was expressed that the Union was

not able to sustain continuing deficits without facing a reduction in the services provided to churches.

**Mission** The Mission department began "The Journey" a root and branch audit of the life of the Union in relationship to Racial Justice. This report will return to council in November and is expected to inform our work over the next few years. The department also did presentations from the Small Churches Implementation Group, with recommendations on how smaller churches, those less than 40 members, could be better supported. The ongoing work of the children's strategy was discussed with a desire to increase training for those who work with Children. "Back to Church" and "Fresh Horizon's" initiatives were launched at the council and details can be found from the Unions website.

**Ministry Exec** The major item for discussion was the recognition of Children's Workers. Council proposed to seek a means of offering recognition later in the light of a review of the categories on the Register of Covenanted Persons Accredited for Ministry, to be undertaken later in 2009. Amongst the other items discussed were issues of women in ministry and their equality of opportunity with men and the reporting of deletions from the Register to Council. Council also received the reports from those in United Board military chaplaincy.

# Around the Union



## Central

Administrative contact: Stephen Copson  
01462 442548

[stephen.copson@dsl.pipex.co.uk](mailto:stephen.copson@dsl.pipex.co.uk)

Over recent months a lot of effort has been invested in our electronic communications. John Smith, our BMS World Mission Area Co-ordinator, has given the association website a make-over, Colin Pye has created a social network for CBA ministers, and this adds to the forum discussion available on Jon Bishop's CBA Youth web pages.



## Eastern

Administrative contact: Eleanor Reed  
01371 831463

[secretary@easternbaptist.org.uk](mailto:secretary@easternbaptist.org.uk)

In recent weeks the association has been pleased to welcome Jonathan Edwards and Roger Standing to speak at our Ministers' Conference. We have also enjoyed a visit from Rachel Tole who came to share some training with our Home Mission visitors.

The latest edition of the Evangelism Training Course, run in partnership with Viz-a-Viz has been completed and we are looking at ways to make the material more widely available. Ongoing conversations

about how to change our structures might seem like a dull thing to report! However, the aim is to have practical structures which will enable the association to resource healthy churches for effective mission.



## East Midland

Administrative contact: Rebecca Nicholls

[administrator@embaptists.co.uk](mailto:administrator@embaptists.co.uk)

Exciting times ahead for the EMBA!

In March we had our Association Day and AGM which was held at Lincoln Baptist Church. At this event we said farewell to the Revd John Bayes who retires at the end of April following eight years as our Mission Enabler. We also welcomed the Revd Dianne Tidball our new Regional Minister. We had the pleasure of being joined by the Revd Jonathan Edwards who commissioned the newly established EMBA Team and provided a keynote address on Church in the twenty-first century.



## Heart of England

Administrative contact: Karen Martindale  
0121 212 4842

[mailbox@baptist-heartofengland.org](mailto:mailbox@baptist-heartofengland.org)

We have been encouraged by reports that our new Regional Ministry Team is working

well in developing relationships across the association. Please pray that this core task will stay at the heart of all we do. A new-style Strategic Forum will focus on each of our key aims: (1) equipping ministers and leaders, (2) enabling churches in mission, (3) encouraging spiritual growth and discipleship. We are also beginning to link area representatives with these strategic goals. Our annual Ministers' Conference was again well-received (and over-subscribed!). Speakers on 'Creating communities of grace' included BUGB General Secretary, Jonathan Edwards and former BUGB President Brian Haymes.



## London

Administrative contact: Paul Martin  
020 7692 5592

[paul@londonbaptist.org.uk](mailto:paul@londonbaptist.org.uk)



## North Western

Administrative contact: Andrew Funnell  
01942 221595

[efunnell@aol.com](mailto:efunnell@aol.com)

Two events stand out for NWBA this last year. The first was our Forum Meeting in April. By bringing together three events

into one, we sought to establish a major celebration and focal point for North West Baptists and Independent Methodists. Southport Floral Hall provided an impressive venue, guests in our seminar stream included Viz-a-Viz and the evening speaker was the Revd Dr Nigel Wright. Another significant event was Back to Church Sunday. Whereas the Forum expressed Baptist identity through coming together, Back to Church was an expression of our common commitment to mission in the local community. Over fifty churches signed up to take part and we estimate that around 600 visitors were welcomed to North West Baptist churches through the scheme. Working at a common agenda was a particular encouragement for smaller churches who participated.



## Northern

Administrative contact: David Lennox  
0191 413 2205

[david.lennox@northern.org.uk](mailto:david.lennox@northern.org.uk)

In February our ministers enjoyed a very stimulating conference led by the Revd Alasdair Black of Stirling Baptist Church on the subject of 'The Spirituality of Leadership'. Alasdair focussed on John 15 and the secrets of the vine for fruitfulness. As with others throughout our nation, many of our churches are gearing up to

# Around the Union

share in Hope 08. In addition, and in keeping with this, there is to be a ten week mission in the area led by the evangelist, J John, and entitled Just 10. Beginning just after Easter it will be located in two venues, in Gateshead and Middlesbrough, with a total capacity of around 7,000. At the end of April we shall be holding our Spring Assembly which will be addressed by the Revd Steve Brady, the principal of Moorlands College. Our theme for the day is 'Starting Well: Finishing Strong' focusing on discipleship.



## South Eastern

Administrative contact: Steph Tidy  
01444 233431  
[admin.sba@tiscali.net](mailto:admin.sba@tiscali.net)

This year, the association is focusing on an overall strategy for its work. Currently we are encouraging developments within the nine geographical networks and it is hoped that by the end of the year an SEBA Annual Celebration will have been held in each one. In addition, networks are beginning to meet regularly and support between individual churches is gradually evolving. Hazel Mitchell has stood down after more than twenty years involvement in Baptist life in the south east, most recently as the executive member representing the north-west Kent network. The SEBA team met for

a two-day training event in February in addition to their regular meetings and the Youth Officer has been leading courses on child protection and first aid at a number of locations across the whole area.



## South Wales

Administrative contact: Mark Thomas  
02920 491366  
[mark@southwalesbaptistassociation.org.uk](mailto:mark@southwalesbaptistassociation.org.uk)

*Mainstream Wales* - In January, Rob White spoke on *Maintaining your Passion* in Ministry at the fifth Mainstream Wales event. By engaging with church leaders from across the association and the Baptist Union of Wales, these events are bridging the perceived divide between BUGB and BUW, whilst also providing quality input from proven church leaders.

*A Gift for Small Churches* - Getting appropriate resources to our churches: That's why all our small (ie under forty members) churches have received a copy of *A Toolbox for Small Churches* – a practical guide to small church life.

*Capital Grants* - Enabling local mission to take place: That's why we are inviting mission-minded churches to apply for an Association Capital Grant. Forms are available from the association office. Qualifying criteria apply.



## South West

Administrative contact: Chris Wooding  
01392 433533  
[chris@swbaptists.org.uk](mailto:chris@swbaptists.org.uk)

Our Ministers' Conference in February was full to capacity and we had a fantastic time together, with thought-provoking input from Adrian Plass and George Kovoor (plus a lot of laughs and excellent food). United Sunday evening worship services were held in our Torbay, Exeter and Wessex Districts (plus a breakfast in Plymouth), and each of these was a warm and uplifting occasion with opportunities to share news, encouragements and challenges. An event in the North Devon District will follow in the autumn. April sees the launch of our new website [www.swbaptists.org.uk](http://www.swbaptists.org.uk) along with our new-look association logo. The driving force behind the new site is to make key information and resources easily accessible, so we hope all our churches will make a visit before too long and have a look around.



## Southern Counties

Administrative contact: Keith Hawton  
0238 047 4501  
[k.hawton@scba.org.uk](mailto:k.hawton@scba.org.uk)



## West of England

Administrative contact: Geoff Starling  
0117 965 8828  
[office@webassoc.org.uk](mailto:office@webassoc.org.uk)



## Yorkshire

Administrative contact: Deborah Gamble  
0113 278 4954  
[debbie.gamble@yba.org.uk](mailto:debbie.gamble@yba.org.uk)

In March we held a stimulating 'Growing and Developing Leaders' day at Blackley, Huddersfield. Leadership teams came together to consider: how we grow in different Christian leadership roles and how we turn vision to action. We have recently reviewed the YBA Executive in order to broaden the range of people, expertise and ways of working in this group. We held four affirming events for Children's Workers as part of our Commissioned Ministry with Marcus Bull (minister of Trinity, Rawdon). The programme looks at how faith connects with children. 120 people attended with prayer, conversation, a commissioning service, input on children and faith with a voucher to spend at the bookstall. Three 'MOT' training days for Children's workers follow in June and July.

## Central

In April we were sorry to lose the services of Jon Bishop, our Youth Development Worker who had been funded for three years by a Department for Education and Science grant. A new moderator has been appointed for the association – the Revd Graham Clarke of St.Albans.

## North West

John Logan has been working for the association as a part time administrator, covering a number of bases over the hectic Christmas and New Year period.

## East Midland

The Revd John Bayes retires at the end of this month after serving the EMBA as Mission Enabler for eight years. We thank John for his enthusiasm and commitment to our churches during this time and wish him well in his retirement.

The Revd Dianne Tidball has been appointed as Regional Minister. Dianne will work alongside the Revd Steve Mantle, Regional Minister Team Leader for the association. Dianne joins the EMBA following two pastorates in Middlesex and Hertfordshire and is very much looking forward to becoming a part of the EMBA team.

The Revd Anthony Walker, moderator of the EMBA Board of Directors, said that the board was delighted with the appointment. "Dianne's enthusiasm, passion and

commitment to mission and pastoral care will make her a valuable member of the team in what is an exciting and challenging future for the Association."

## Eastern

At our AGM in June our Association Treasurer, Brian Montague, will step down. We will miss his input into the life of the association and wish him well in his second retirement.

## Yorkshire

Allen Holmes has retired as our YBA Trust Officer and we record our thanks for his service amongst us. Responsibility for the YBA Trust Work is being transferred to the Baptist Union Corporation.

## National Resource Centre –

We welcome *James Stamp* to the Communications Department as Graphic Designer. After living in Birmingham for nine years, working as a youth worker and graphic designer, James moved to Abingdon nearer his family in October 2006 and set up a graphic design business, working mainly with churches and charities around the UK. When his bedroom office became too isolated for his creative flair, James applied for the position as Communications Graphic Designer within BUGB. Outside of the office, James enjoys travelling to new places, cycling and relaxing at home by creating new illustrations.

## BUGB DVD 2008/9 *A Baptist People – transforming communities*

During the past few months we have been busy filming the new exciting BUGB DVD. 'A Baptist People – transforming communities'.

This is the third in a trilogy:

06/07 – *A Baptist People – living the life,*

07/08 – *A Baptist People – united in mission*

and in this DVD we get to the heart of how God is transforming communities through a range of creative initiatives and ministries. Nearly all of these are only able to happen because of your generous giving to Home Mission. All of the people you see and hear are ordinary folk like you and me and all have responded to serve God where they are.

Your Home Mission Rep will be sent a copy at the end of April/early May. Do encourage them to use this in the church. It is ideal for services, meetings (great material to use in a Church Meeting to vary the Agenda!), house groups... If you want another copy (whilst stocks last) please email [pmould@baptist.org.uk](mailto:pmould@baptist.org.uk). In the early summer we will be writing to churches to ask for feedback on the DVDs. This will help the team as we develop further audio-visual resources.

## Home Mission Reps...new developments!

You might also like to know that the Head of Communications (Amanda Allchorn) and Home Mission Grants Manager (Rachel

Tole) are working on the redevelopment and refreshing of these roles at association and local church levels. Look out for the September *Transform* for more details.

## Web awards

Since January we have been looking for the best Baptist Union church website. Our quest is almost over. By the time you read this, every association will have its winning website to go to the final vote. Go to <http://www.baptist.org.uk/webawards> from 28 April to 3 May to vote

for the website you think deserves to be the overall winner. For those going to the Baptist Assembly in Blackpool you will be able to vote on the BUGB

Exhibition stand too. The winner will be announced at the BUGB AGM on Sunday 4 May and then on our website.

## Top tips

Every month we are continuing to post 'top tips' on the Resources section of the website giving you advice on communication at your church. In April our website series comes to an end with a look at writing for the web and in May we will start looking at dealing with the media and press releases. Go to <http://www.baptist.org.uk/resources> and then look for the 'Communications' section.





## 2008 Stipend

The Trustees have fixed the Home Mission Stipend for 2008 at £18,400. Treasurers should also note that the value of a Manse for Pension Fund purposes is £5,540 per annum as from 1 January 2008. This increases the amounts that churches and ministers pay as pension scheme contributions, and significantly increases the benefits which will be received in due course from the fund.

## 2009 Stipend

The Trustees have issued the Guideline Stipend for 2009 at £19,100 which is an increase of 3.8%. This will not be finalised until July 2008, and the Trustees will at that point consider the figure in the light of the Government's pay guidelines and the shortfall in the Home Mission Appeal for 2007.

## Loan rates

The Baptist Union Corporation is willing to lend at 6.80% (from 1 March 2008) to churches buying, extending or renovating buildings or manses, subject to suitable repayment arrangements being in place. This rate is also subject to change in line with national interest rates. The current rate is advertised each week in the *Baptist Times*.



## Deposit rates

The Baptist Union Corporation currently (from 1 March 2008) pays interest at 4.10% on money deposited by churches in the Baptist Union Loan Fund. This rate is subject to change in line with changes in national interest rates. The current rate is advertised each week in the *Baptist Times*. The deposits assist the provision of loans to churches, and are welcomed by the Corporation.



*Compiled by Philip Cooke FCA., Honorary Taxation Adviser to the Baptist Union*

## Tax status of Baptist churches and Gift Aid relief claims:

Whilst, because of its charitable status, a church is generally exempt from charge to tax on most sources of its income and capital gains, there are exceptional situations (eg the carrying on of a trading activity) where a tax liability could arise and for this purpose churches are required from time to time (usually on a random basis) to submit a tax return. In the past such returns have usually been of the corporation tax

kind, though in a few cases the more complex trust tax return has been issued. When HM Revenue & Customs decided a year or so ago to change the basis of claim for *Gift Aid* relief for unincorporated associations (including societies and clubs etc) from a 'tax year' to an 'accounts year' basis, the question arose as to how Baptist churches should be treated.

Because most churches owe their origin to a foundation trust deed, the Revenue took the view that they should be treated as *trusts*, and so *Gift Aid* relief claims were allowed to continue on a 'tax year' basis. However, this decision had the further consequence of requiring churches to complete, when required, the trust type of tax return which was not quite such good news! It is pleasing now to report that following discussions with the Revenue it has been agreed that Baptist churches will be treated as unincorporated associations, because whilst they may historically have been founded by trust deed most, if not all, will subsequently have adopted a form of constitution which clearly establishes the church as an unincorporated association. Furthermore, as part of the process for registration under the 2006 Charities Act (churches with annual income in excess of £100,000 being required to register from 1 October 2008 and other churches from a date yet to be announced), churches are being encouraged by the Baptist Union to adopt an updated form of constitution

based on a model agreed with the Charity Commission.

Where a tax return is issued in future it will therefore be of the corporation tax kind (form CT600 along with a supplementary form CT600E relating to charities), and treasurers are reminded that guidance notes on the completion of these forms are available upon request. The Revenue have also stated that they, too, are ready to provide assistance with the completion of such returns. In the event that a trust tax return is inadvertently issued by the Revenue, it should be returned uncompleted to the issuing office with an explanation that form CT600 should have been issued.

A consequence of the treatment of churches as unincorporated associations is that, after the claim for the year to 5 April 2008, future *Gift Aid* relief claims will need to be submitted on an 'accounts year' basis, rather than in respect of a tax year. HMRC has kindly provided some helpful guidance in this area, which appears as a supplement to this column.

## Welcome 'Budget' amendment affecting Gift Aid relief:

The Government has heeded representations from the charity sector to soften the blow which would otherwise have impacted claims for *Gift Aid* relief as a result of the reduction, from 6 April 2008, in the basic rate of tax from 22% to 20%. A

transitional relief supplement of 2% will be available on qualifying donations received during the three year period from 6 April 2008 to 5 April 2011. The effect, therefore, will be to continue Gift Aid relief at an effective rate of just over 28p in the £ for every £1 given until 5 April 2011. Claims will actually be made by reference to the new basic rate of 20% but the tax repayable will be increased by the amount of the transitional supplement. The guidance note which appears at the end of this column (provided by HMRC ahead of the Budget) and referred to in the previous paragraph obviously needs to be read in the light of this Budget announcement.

## **Manse annual value for pension fund purposes where a property is leased to a church by a minister:**

It should be noted that where a property owned by a minister (and spouse if jointly owned) is leased to a church for use as a manse then the *manse annual value* for stipend declaration purposes will be the standard manse annual value (£5,540 for 2008) and not the actual rental paid by the church.

## **Taxable benefits:**

The Revenue recently announced that it was consulting with interested bodies on the question of whether taxable benefits should be taxed through the PAYE system in the same manner as ordinary pay rather than, as at present, by direct assessment or

adjustment of PAYE codings. One of the consequences of this would be to render completion of forms P11d unnecessary and this, along with other simplifications in procedures would, according to the Revenue, lead to substantial administrative savings on the part of employers and the Revenue. Upon seeking clarification from the Revenue, it was confirmed that whilst, because of the disappearance of form P11d, there would therefore be no place for a 'P11d dispensation', there would still be a procedure for exempting certain 'allowable expenses' from the taxing process. Watch this space for any further news!

## **And talking of expenses.....**

We shall soon be reaching the season for completion of personal tax returns. Ministers are reminded that guidance is available on the completion of tax returns and the claiming of allowable expenses in the form of the publications *Self Assessment and the Minister* (F13) and *Taxation Guidance Notes for Churches & Ministers* (F5 - section 14.) which can be downloaded from the BU website. It is possible that the long awaited simplified M pages for ministers might make an appearance this year, in which event the F13 document will be revised.

## **Motor mileage allowance:**

By the time of publication it will also be known whether the Chancellor has finally been persuaded to do something about the approved rate of mileage allowance

which has languished at 40p for the first 10,000 business miles since 2002. It is widely expected that any change is likely to involve differential rates based on car emissions. *[Alas! No change was announced in the Budget to the rates of motor mileage allowance]*

## **Entitlement to domestic rate of VAT on church power supplies:**

A consequence of switching energy suppliers is that a church will find it necessary to provide a new certificate that any 'non-qualifying' use of power does not exceed 40% of the total supply if advantage is to be taken of the lower 5% rate of VAT. Energy suppliers often assume that the standard 17.5% rate applies in the case of a church, so it will usually be necessary for the church to take the initiative.

## **Rent a Room relief and manse leases:**

A question has been asked as to whether rent received in respect of the lease to a church of a minister-owned property might qualify for *Rent a Room* relief. The answer is that it does not so qualify because the entire property has been leased in order to constitute it as a church manse. The rental income is therefore taxable as income from property, subject to deduction of any allowable expenses such as property maintenance costs borne by the minister (as landlord) and finance charges.

## **Non-charitable expenditure:**

The question continues to be raised from time to time as to whether a church is able to support individuals engaged in a missionary or allied situation, often working overseas. A church, like any other charity, has a duty to ensure that it applies its funds and resources only in furtherance of its declared charitable objectives, and it can be difficult to demonstrate that gifts to individuals have been so applied, especially at a great distance. The wisest course, therefore, is to channel such gifts through an appropriate sponsoring charitable body. Quite apart from possibly giving rise to difficulties with the Charity Commission, it needs to be borne in mind that the Revenue have powers to restrict tax relief (by clawing back gift aid relief or treating otherwise exempt income as taxable) where a charity is deemed to have incurred non-charitable expenditure.

\* \* \*

*The foregoing notes are issued for general guidance only. The author or publisher cannot accept responsibility for loss occasioned to any person acting or refraining from action as a result of material contained herein. If you are in any doubt about the correct treatment of any matter you should seek further advice. I am prepared to respond to enquiries of a general nature, but would appreciate a SAE if the enquiry is by mail. My address is Hollyoak, 1 White House Drive, Barnt Green, Birmingham B45 8HF. My e-mail address is: philipjcooke@aol.com and it would be helpful in distinguishing any such messages from the inevitable 'spam' if the subject heading could indicate that it is a church tax enquiry.*

## Changes in Gift Aid - A note prepared by H M Revenue & Customs (before the Budget)\*

As from 6 April 2008 there will be two important changes affecting *Gift Aid* claims submitted by Baptist churches. The first change actually applies to all claimants and arises because the basic rate of income tax will be reduced from 22% to 20% from that date. The second change arises because, as explained in Philip Cooke's notes, HMRC will from that date regard Baptist churches as unincorporated associations, like most other churches, societies and clubs.

Most churches will have been used to making claims by tax year, but because churches are now to be treated as unincorporated associations, in future this will mean making claims based on the church's financial year-end. However, claims in respect of gifts received by churches **not later than 5 April 2008** should be included in a claim for the **tax year** ending on that date. This will involve completing the R68 claim form for that year together with the accompanying R68 Gift Aid Schedule. If a claim also includes gifts received prior to 6 April 2007 then you should complete separate Gift Aid schedules for each tax year involved, though one R68 claim form will suffice. We will repay tax to the church on the basis of the 22% basic tax rate in respect of all gifts received up to and including 5 April 2008, which means that you will receive just over 28p for each £

donated. It would help HMRC if claims for the period to 5 April 2008 could be made by the end of September 2008.

Subsequent claims will be made in respect of periods ending with the church's **financial year-end**. If, for example, your year-end is 31 December then your next period of claim will be from 6 April 2008 to 31 December 2008 and, thereafter, for each year ending 31 December. As previously, HMRC are prepared to receive interim claims for shorter periods within the financial year, if required for cash flow purposes. The tax rate applicable to post-6 April 2008 gifts will be 20%, giving rise to a repayment of 25p in the £ for each £ donated. Again, if a claim covers a period which extends over more than one financial year then a separate R68 Gift Aid Schedule should be completed for each period. Church treasurers will need to remain aware of any subsequent changes in the basic rate of income tax.

If you have any questions on these changes, please call Joan Dempster on 0151 472 6417. For general Gift Aid queries please use our Helpline – 08453 02 02 03.

*[\*This note was prepared before the Budget announcement relating to transitional Gift Aid relief referred to earlier in this column and should therefore be read accordingly.]*



## Charity Registration

From 1 October 2008 churches are required to register with the Charity Commission if their annual income exceeds £100,000. The process will require an online application and the submission of a governing document and church accounts in the appropriate format. Further information about the format can be found in guideline leaflet F7 Charity Accounts over £100,000.

The Commission will begin the registration process from 1 October but they will not want all of the applications at once. Churches should not be concerned if they will not be ready to register by October. The C16 leaflet Churches and Charity Registration will be updated as more information becomes available.

## Remuneration of Trustees Providing Services

Legal provisions which allow a church to pay a managing trustee for providing a service are now in force. This means that churches are entitled to pay managing trustees who provide them with a one-off service, such as plumbing, without the need to seek permission from the Charity Commission.

This permission extends to payments made to people who are related to a managing

trustee. However, a church that wants to enter into a contract of employment with a managing trustee or someone related to them must still obtain permission from the Commission if their current constitution does not provide the appropriate legal power to do so.



## Water Charges

Before privatisation, Water Authorities levied water rates based on the rateable value of the property, regardless of the amount of water consumed. Churches tended to escape liability altogether because they were charities. Since privatisation, Water Companies have had discretion to determine their own methods of charging and some churches have found that they are now subject to higher charges based on small business or commercial user tariffs.

Representations have been made to the Government through Churches Main Committee, of which the Baptist Union is a member. Water Authorities do have discretion in charging decisions and it is sometimes helpful to draw their attention to Government guidance issued in the report 'Delivering the Government's Objectives' which urges a proportionate approach towards low volume users.



## Independent Safeguarding Authority

The Independent Safeguarding Authority has published a new list of half day seminars – for details see [www.isa-gov.org](http://www.isa-gov.org). These seminars are free and are for those who hold key responsibility in administering the CRB system. They will help you to understand the new system.

At the time of writing (Feb 08) we have no clear idea of the start date of the new scheme. In the meantime, ensure that all your workers and ministers have current CRB Disclosures – we recommend that these are refreshed every five years. When the new scheme starts, time slots for entry will be set by the ISA; it will not be like the start of the CRB when a 'free for all' developed. These time slots will relate to the age of a Disclosure and must be adhered to.

**Do you think you understand the internet, mobile phones, social networks?** Many adults don't fully understand IT and its uses. If you want to know more, turn to [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk).

This is a website of the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP); it offers useful material for parents and teachers as well as young people. It includes video clips that can be used to raise awareness.

**Keeping parents / carers informed.** In

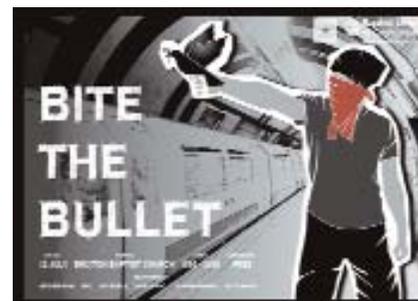
*Safe To Grow* we have drawn attention to the importance of ensuring that parents or carers of children are informed about the activities in which their children may be involved. We have said that care must be taken in those instances where custody of a child has been given to only one parent following family break down. This is important because failure to engage the right adult in decisions may lead to legal problems.

**Charity commissioners and the CRB.** The Charity Commissioners have been asking to see evidence of Disclosures held by trustees. In October 2007, they changed their procedure from trustees being asked to complete an enhanced declaration form to

- declare that they are not disqualified from acting as a trustee;
- declare whether they are legally required or legally entitled to carry out a CRB check and, if so, whether the check has been carried out

The Commission require trustees that are obliged to hold Disclosures to do so. The Commission's website gives further information about this.

**Money.** The fees for the CRB are to remain unchanged for yet another year - £36 for an Enhanced Disclosure. If your church uses the Churches' Agency for Safeguarding – please remember to make cheques payable to them not the Methodist Church, as before.



## Bite the Bullet

Violent crime is on the increase. Hardly a week goes by without news of another person being killed as a result of knife or gun crime on the streets of our country, and recent statistics indicate that this is not limited to a single ethnic group or city.

It is within this context that the Baptist Union of Great Britain and the Ascension Trust are organising a conference entitled 'Bite the Bullet' (helping young people in a violent world). The conference will take place on **Saturday 12 July 2008** at Brixton Baptist Church (Kenyon). It will aim to:

increase awareness around factors that lead to knife and gun crime;

help young people to resist the lure of 'glamorous crime';

equip church leaders to support young people in an increasingly violent world;

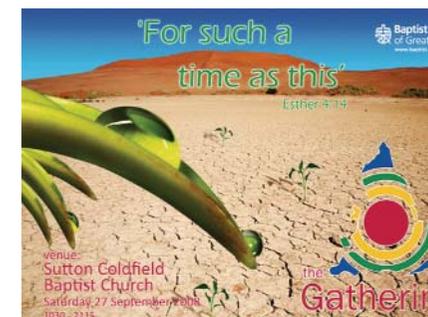
provide delegates with networking opportunities.

The day will include workshops to

encourage the telling of stories and help facilitate varied discussions around gun and knife crime, with input from people who have been personally affected by violent crime. The day will conclude with a concert by an array of Gospel artists, previously caught up in crime.

For more information about this timely event, please contact Wale Hudson-Roberts on 01235 517753 or email

[whudson-roberts@baptist.org.uk](mailto:whudson-roberts@baptist.org.uk)  
[www.bitethebullet.info](http://www.bitethebullet.info)



## The Gathering

Following on from the last event in October 2006, the next 'Gathering' conference will be hosted at Sutton Coldfield Baptist Church on **Saturday 27 September 2008**.

The theme for the day will be 'for such a time is this' (Esther 4:14). Speakers will include Elaine Storkey, Ram Gidoomal, Sandra Thomas and Kumar Rajagopalan.

The aim of the conference is to enjoy God and each other in a space that is intrinsically multicultural, and to equip Baptist Christians to do Gospel work in a

that context, and in a multicultural way.

The day is being organised in partnership with the Heart of England and London Baptist Associations and will cost £20, including evening meal and refreshments. For bookings received before 30 June, there is a discounted price of £15 per person. For more information about The Gathering, and to book your place, please contact the Heart of England Baptist Association on 0121 212 4842 or email:

[mailbox@baptist-heartofengland.org](mailto:mailbox@baptist-heartofengland.org)  
[www.baptist.org.uk/thegathering](http://www.baptist.org.uk/thegathering)



## Leading Edge 11-17 August 2008, Warwick School

Leading Edge, our Summer Family Festival is gearing up to be an exciting week with more programme developments being announced and registrations flooding in faster than ever before. We are pleased to announce that speakers in the programme for adults, in addition to well known author, **Philip Yancey**, will include: **Jonathan Edwards** (BUGB General Secretary), **Dennis Pethers** (Viz-A-Viz Ministries General Director); **Alistair Brown** (BMS World Mission General Director); **Pat Took** and **David Shosanya** (Regional Ministers London Baptist Association); **Carl Beech** (Christian Vision for Men), **Sheila Martin**

(Regional Minister Eastern Baptist Association) and **Kathryn Morgan** (Regional Minister Southern Counties Baptist Association). Each of these speakers, and others, will help unpack the theme for 2008: *Travelling Light - living in the light of eternity*, exploring the kind of lives that God wants his people to live now in the light of his promise of eternity.

This year for adults, there will be the Parallel Universe (for those in their 20's - back after its hugely popular 2007 debut), five seminar streams to choose from as well as the usual Bible studies, celebrations, communion services and entertainment. For children, there will be the exciting Club L:Edge programme, this year in its special village setting, every morning for everyone and evenings for those aged 8 years and up. For teenagers, the excellent Innovation programme continues with many old favourites involved in leading the sessions and activities.

For those who 'don't camp' - historic Warwick has many reasonably priced hotels, guest houses and B&B's.

With bookings coming in so fast, don't delay and miss out on a place at this year's event - BOOK NOW. Come as a group of fifteen or more paying guests and get a 5% discount.

[www.baptist.org.uk/leadingedge](http://www.baptist.org.uk/leadingedge)

## Central

On 19 April we host an event at Kettering in the BUGB Fresh Horizons national tour. Then on 10 May Mark Green of the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity leads a day seminar on engaging with modern culture and in May Roy Searle visits the Bucks Forum of churches. On 7 June our annual Assembly meets at Stopsley Baptist church in Luton. The main speaker is the Revd Dr John Weaver, President of the Baptist Union, who considers the interface of church and culture - 'Outside In, Inside Out'.

## Eastern

Saturday 7 June, EBA Assembly at Cottenham Village College. Main speaker: the Revd Dr Nigel Wright.  
Saturday 14 June, Fresh Horizons tour coming to Central Baptist Church, Chelmsford.

## East Midlands

The EMBA Team is touring the Association, back with another series of Roadshows for 2008: *Street Wise - re-imagining Church in a confusing world*.

The Team continues to actively support and promote the work of the Lincolnshire Churches, building on the success of our Lincolnshire Vision Day held at the end of last year. The EMBA *Safe to Grow* Implementation Group will be leading a National STG Event in London at the end of

April - the hope being for Associations to be able to share experiences/practice and learn from one another.

## Heart of England

Friday 6 June - The Revd Peter Burns of Castle Hill, Warwick has again organised a Leaders Quiet Day. Current BUGB President Revd Dr John Weaver will be leading this.

Saturday 7 June, sees our annual Family Day (and AGM) at Gorsley Baptist Church. Keynote speaker is The Revd Dr Alistair Brown, General Director of BMS World Mission. The theme, 'Beyond hope?' aims to encourage churches to build on the Hope 2008 initiative. It promises to be an exciting occasion with something for everyone. Please pray for us!

## Northern

26 April NBA Spring Assembly: "Starting Well: Finishing Strong". At Stockton Baptist Tabernacle 10.00am to 3.30pm. Speaker Rev Steve Brady Principal of Moorlands College.

19 June "Preach The Word" Preacher Training Evening. See NBA website for details. [www.thenba.org.uk/diary.htm](http://www.thenba.org.uk/diary.htm)

## North West

19 April - NWBA Forum and AGM. 0930 - 1300 at the Maritime Museum, Albert Docks, Liverpool.  
Following up the BU Apology for Slavery with Guest Speaker Jonathan Edwards.  
2 - 5 May - The Baptist Assembly comes to

# Association Events

Blackpool this year, and will be facilitated by NWBA to give the Assembly a North West feel.

28 September - 'Back to Church Sunday'

4 October - NWBA Forum. Afternoon and Evening celebration. More details to follow

## South Eastern

Saturday 29 March at Emmanuel Baptist Church, Gravesend.

Induction of the Revd Penny Marsh as Mission Enabler for the Kent Thameside Church Project.

Tuesday and Wednesday 17 and 18 June at Ashburnham Place.

Ministers and Church Leaders Conference.

Saturday 19 July at Trafalgar Road Baptist Church, Horsham and Saturday 20 September at Station Road Baptist Church, Ashford. Fresh Horizons (mission and service among seniors/third agers)

## South West

SWBA Annual Assembly Day, Saturday 7 June at the Palace Theatre, Paignton. Our theme will be '2020 Vision' – exploring the future for the ministry and mission of our churches. The day will start with a roundup of the year (incorporating the Association AGM), move through presentations, drama and seminars, and end with our usual worship celebration. Fun activities for children will be provided throughout the day so why not come as a family – more information and booking forms

downloadable from [www.swbaptists.org.uk](http://www.swbaptists.org.uk)

## South Wales

Saturday 7 June will be the 2008 Association Assembly, incorporating the AGM. *Doing it in Hope* will gather people from across the whole region to celebrate what God is doing in the region. Held at Gilgal Baptist Church (Porthcawl), it will be an opportunity to hear from experienced church leaders and enjoy an ice-cream on the promenade – so plan a day out for you and your church.

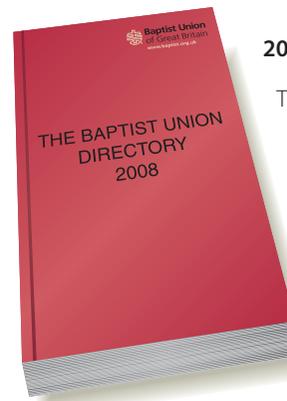
Saturday 21 June: Valedictory Service of the South Wales Baptist College with guest speaker the Revd Keith Jones (Rector of IBTS). Venue to be confirmed. More information from Martyn Moss, College Resource Manager on 029 2025 6066

## Yorkshire

'Hospitality without Borders' is the title of our YBA Assembly on 21 June at Morley Town Hall, Leeds. We will be exploring and celebrating ways of being more inclusive church communities. Graeme Dodds, our incoming president and many of the people from his church at Harehills Lane, Leeds will help to stimulate and challenge us in 'pushing out the boundaries' in our thinking and practice alongside stories from different parts of Yorkshire.

Details of all Association events on [www.yba.org.uk](http://www.yba.org.uk) or from [ali.mitchell@yba.org.uk](mailto:ali.mitchell@yba.org.uk)

# Publications



## 2008 BUGB Directory

The 2008 BUGB Directory is now available from the publications department for £15.50 plus 20% postage & packing.

Contact [shopmanager@baptist.org.uk](mailto:shopmanager@baptist.org.uk) or call 01235 517 708 for your copy.

## 2008 Whitley lecture

Also available is the 2008 Whitley Lecture - How can we sing the Lord's song? Music can help us bridge the gap between life in church on Sunday and life in the world on Monday. This is the claim of this year's Whitley lecturer, Craig Gardiner. "One of the greatest attributes of music", he says, "is its ability to transcend the separation of sacred and secular in a language all of its own". This was an insight of that great Christian prophet of the twentieth century, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, whose love for both music and theology helped him to respond to the political crisis in Germany under the Nazis. Craig, minister of Calvary Baptist Church in Cardiff, has been chosen to be this year's lecturer because of his groundbreaking research into the spiritual significance of music. He believes that polyphony, in which different melodies are interweaved to create a beautiful and

united whole, is a powerful metaphor for Christian living inside and outside the church, and that music is a rich source of inspiration and understanding for the worship and growth of the 'symphonic' people of God. Craig's book *Melodies of Community* will soon be published by Paternoster Press.



Craig will speak at various locations in Wales, England and Scotland, beginning in his home city of Cardiff. Other venues are in Glasgow (29 April) and Oxford (10 June). He will also be speaking at the Baptist Assembly in Blackpool on 3 May. Anyone who would like to hear him and to share in discussion on this theme should contact the Baptist colleges in these places.

The Whitley lecture, named after a leading Baptist historian of the last century, is an important annual event. Lecturers are chosen by a committee that represents different strands of Baptist life because it is believed they have something important and relevant to say to Baptists today. The published version of the lecture is available for £3 plus 20% postage & packing from the Publications Department



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