

BAPTIST LIFE



Baptist Union
of Great Britain
Encouraging Missionary Disciples



Love your Local School



A Church
Reborn



Celebrating the
Seasons



Building Bridges
in Burnley

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JAN - MAR '10

INTRODUCTION

by Jonathan Edwards - BUGB General Secretary



WELCOME TO BAPTIST LIFE!

I am often asked to describe what a Baptist is! Sometimes I am asked the question by people of other denominations or of another religion, but on other occasions I will be asked by politicians who want to work out where we fit in society. To be honest, I love the challenge!

Of course the answer could be a very long one - but the short answer is that Baptists have always been committed to sharing the good news of Jesus, in word and action. Gaze throughout the four centuries of our history and you will see continual

reminders of Baptists' commitment to being a missionary people. This edition of *Baptist Life* gives some wonderful illustrations of that happening today and I hope that they will give you inspiration and encouragement.

I am full of hope as I look at 2010 because I believe that there is a huge commitment in our Baptist family to move forward in radical, costly and life-transforming ways.

With warmest Christian greetings.


Jonathan




BUGB DVD Update

Go...and work together on the BUGB DVD *Go!* tells the story of what happened when a group of churches in Bristol worked together in mission with the help of their Baptist association and funding from Home Mission. Here Sheila Cooper, minister at Lawrence Weston Baptist Church, gives an update on life since the film was made in March:

"Our work amongst the families that attend our toddler group, Jellie Tots, seems to be bearing fruit. We have had two services of infant presentation in recent months, one of which was attended by about 50 people from the estate who normally do not attend church. In September we held a community barbecue which about 100 people attended and we're told they're still talking about it locally. At the beginning of October we launched a new 'homework and chill' club called Boost. We have also made links with local secondary schools, in particular the Oasis Academy Brightstowe. Thanks to a BUGB Mission Grant, we now have a minister in training working part-time with me - Mary Clark - who started at Bristol Baptist College last September. Hey ho - we don't get bored!"

 For more information go to www.baptist.org.uk/dvdfollowup

In this feature, we focus on churches or ministries that have received a BUGB Mission Grant from Home Mission. All of the stories in *Baptist Life* benefit from Home Mission in some way. For more on Home Mission go to:  www.baptist.org.uk/homemission

A church reborn




'Our church is dying and no one wants to be here'. That was the generally held view of the nine remaining church members at Sandy Baptist Church, Bedfordshire (Central Baptist Association) in January 2006, after several years of decline. Philip Amos, minister at nearby King's Baptist Church in Stotfold, became the church's moderator and helped them move forward, encouraging them to pray

for the church's future. Bit by bit the congregation at Sandy Baptist grew to 25 people and in September 2008, thanks to financial support from a BUGB Mission Grant and King's Baptist, minister-in-training Beth Powney became their part-time minister. Since Beth has arrived, the growth has continued with five new Christians, two baptisms, a thriving children's work and a congregation of between 35-50 people. "I feel like I have walked into something that God is doing," says Beth. "God is doing an amazing work of rebirth."

Praising God en français



Laurent Mulumba was a minister in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) before fleeing the war there in 2002 to seek sanctuary in Britain. He joined New Park Road Baptist Church in Streatham (London Baptist Association) in early 2006 and by the end of the year had established a French-speaking congregation at the church which meets every Sunday afternoon, except once a month when they worship with the English-speaking congregation. When Laurent started the congregation it was just him, his wife and his children but since then it has grown through word of mouth to 40 people. Laurent is training to be a Baptist minister at Spurgeon's College and sees the BUGB Mission Grant the church receives as essential to his ministry. "Home Mission helps people like me to do God's work. I see Home Mission as a tool for advancing God's Kingdom."

 NEW online: See Laurent and the French-speaking congregation in our special video online at www.baptist.org.uk/baptistlife



Dome of the Rock



Interfaith Schools



Revd Andy Williams



Hamid Querishi

Building Bridges in Burnley

After a weekend of riots in June 2001, Andy Williams, minister of Sion Baptist Church in Burnley (North Western Baptist Association), went to see the burnt out cars and the boarded up Asian-owned properties in the town. He wanted to call someone in the Asian community and ask them if they were OK. "I then realised," says Andy, "that I did not have anyone to ring. I didn't know anybody in the Asian community."

A report on the Burnley riots concluded that Andy was not alone. The White and Asian communities were living parallel lives, with little evidence of friendships between them. The Bishop of Burnley called a meeting of both Christian and Muslim leaders to discuss how faith communities could respond to the disturbances. "Our response was that faith was something we had in common and we could use that as a building block to understand one another better," recalls Andy.

In June 2002, an interfaith project supported by Christian denominations and Muslim mosques, Building Bridges in Burnley (BBB), was launched at St Andrew's Church - at the heart of where the disturbances had taken place the previous year. Andy joined the project's management committee with Hamid Querishi becoming its coordinator in 2003. BBB has evolved since 2002 and has introduced many new initiatives. Sion

Baptist Church joined with other Christians and visited a local mosque where they were given a tour by the Iman, ate a meal and discussed faith and culture. A number of community feasts have been hosted in churches and mosques including Sion Baptist which attracted hundreds of people from both White and Asian communities. Muslim and Christian leaders have spent times away together at locations of religious and historic interest. Andy went on the trips to London and the Holy Land. "It was a really positive experience of building relationships" he says.

When five brand new secondary schools and a sixth form college replaced the existing schools in Burnley, BBB got involved in the planning and helped negotiate an interfaith presence in the new schools. A temporary Faith Centre was opened to serve the local schools in September 2006 followed by a permanent centre in September 2008 which is now being used by Christians, Muslims, Buddhists and the Bahai Community.

Andy believes the interfaith initiatives have benefited Burnley. "Because these events happen, because they are publicised, because it is seen that Christians and Muslims are working together, there is a really positive message going out and that makes a difference to the general atmosphere."

For more information go to www.bbburnley.co.uk

Love your neighbour - Be green!

What does the parable of the Good Samaritan say about caring for creation? This is one connection between climate change and the Christian life explored in *Hope in God's Future*, a new report from the BUGB, the Methodist and United Reformed Churches. "It's about being good neighbours to people and creation. 'Neighbours' on Pacific islands are being flooded by rising sea-levels, plant and animal extinction is growing, and both are linked to green-house gases emitted by rich nations like ours", says Dr David Gregory, minister of Loughton Baptist Church, one of the contributors to the report. "Stopping to recognise our connection with our 'neighbours' in a changing world begins our exploration of how we can live for God's future hope today."



For the full report (cost £5) visit the Social and Political section of www.baptist.org.uk/resources.html

Protecting the vulnerable

Do you feel strongly that people fleeing persecution in their country should be able to find sanctuary here in the UK? Citizens for Sanctuary, a campaign by the Independent Asylum Commission endorsed by the BUGB, are looking for volunteers from churches to encourage MPs and parliamentary candidates to sign a pledge to support the rights of those seeking sanctuary during the upcoming General Election campaign and beyond. "Asylum seekers coming to the UK should not become a political football like they did in the last General Election," says Rosemary Kidd from the BUGB's Faith and Unity Department. "Everybody needs to be treated with dignity and with justice, and these are the two underlying values of this campaign."



For more information go to www.citizensforsanctuary.org.uk

Getting the Baptist Basics

Is it important to know what Baptists believe any more? The popularity of the *Baptist Basics* series released last year by BUGB Publications seems to show that it is. At Clarence Park Baptist Church (West of England Baptist Association) before anyone becomes a church member (whether new or transferring membership) the minister, Steve Christian, leads them through what belonging to a Baptist church is all about. It is part of a 'Stepping Stones' discipleship course run by the church which caters for different stages of a person's faith journey. "It is important for people coming into church membership to understand how we reach decisions as a church, and understand their place and value within the church when they become a member," says Steve.



Steve Christian

To find out more visit www.cpbc.co.uk

LOVE YOUR LOCAL SCHOOL

For a long time the church was considered the centre of our local communities. Today, it is quite often replaced by the local school. On 4 March the BUGB Mission Department is holding a conference, Love your Local School, to help churches in their involvement with local schools. Here, Shelagh Garry, from Westgate Baptist Church, Newcastle (Northern Baptist Association) shares how they have developed a schools ministry over the last 15 years.



Kidz Klub



Kidz Klub



Kidz Klub



Caroline

I guess our schools work started to take off around 15 years ago when a child in our church was visiting churches with his infant school and he asked "Why can't people visit our church?" That led to his school contacting us and arranging a visit to our church. We have had nursery, primary and secondary schools visit the church ever since as part of their Christianity modules for Religious Education (RE).

For many years we have run a Kidz Klub inspired by Pastor Bill Wilson's Metro Ministries in New York. We regularly visit children in their homes and that led us to want to engage with them in other parts of their lives. Caroline Daly, a teacher who was part of the Kidz Klub team, gave up one day a week at her work to develop the church's engagement with schools. Having Caroline as our school's work coordinator led to a number of exciting opportunities. She arranged meetings with RE coordinators at local schools to find out more of what they needed. As a result, she brought together a team who went into schools to lead assemblies and RE lessons.


At one assembly, a cross section of people from our church went into the local primary school and we were given the opportunity to share our testimonies with all of the Year 6s. We told our story, how we had come to faith and what it meant to us and they were able to ask questions. At the end of that, the children were given a Scripture Union resource called It's your Move. That was one of the highlights for me. It was really good.

We also hosted meetings between parent link workers and local parents when our local secondary school was closing and the children moved to a large new build to join with others from other areas. Our venue was easier for parents to get to and they felt more familiar and comfortable here.

We had a head teacher from a local primary school come to church and share with us from her perspective some of the stresses and strains she was under. Having a better understanding of the issues at her school, we were then able to support her and the school in prayer.

There is so much more that we have done that I could share with you. Most schools are very happy to have some input from churches. We've found that if we 'drive' the input, things happen and the schools really appreciate it. If you have a competent, enthusiastic team, it is amazing to see the variety of ways you can engage with local schools.

The Love your Local School conference will be run by the BUGB Mission Department on 4 March in Didcot. It will be a challenging, informative and valuable day with presentations from David Skinner and Paul Haynes of RE:inspired (www.reinspired.org.uk) and Dare To Engage (www.dare2engage.org), and Martin Sweet of the Spinnaker Trust (www.spinnakertrust.org.uk).

 To find out more about please contact the Mission Department at mission@baptist.org.uk or call on 01235 517711

'Celebrating the Seasons'

By Myra Blyth, Tutor and Chaplain at Regent's Park College, Oxford

Diary management has always been something of a challenge for me. The hours, days, weeks and months blur into each other and time rushes forward in a hazardous and random fashion...or it would do, were it not for the seasons. The annual cycle of the seasons puts shape, order, and pace into the calendar in a way that transforms our planning and thinking. Society has traditionally organised itself around festivals in the Christian year and I have a hunch this pattern might be the saving of churches in the years to come, who currently take little or no notice of what the time of year is, other than Christmas and Easter.

The stark fact is that church-going people don't go to church every week any longer. The once steady core of members who could be relied upon to turn up every Sunday is fast disappearing. Diaries are full of competing arrangements. Once a month we need to go and see the parents, or the grandchildren. Weekend breaks are a pensioner's must and taking the children to sports is a growing pressure. All this says church is something else we fit into our diaries, not the event around which the rest of our lives evolve. So how do we tackle this mindset? We can condemn it or we can trump it. I for one opt for the second option.

We will soon be entering the season of Lent and I think this is a good time to reflect on our use of time and our ability as churches to plan our time, not according to our

schedule but according to the storyline of salvation that marks the Christian year. What if churches were to plan services to match the church seasons building up to feast days which celebrate key moments in the story of the life of Jesus and of the church? At the present time, people come when they can and for many people every week looks pretty much the same. Yes, we may celebrate Christmas and Easter but there is not a deep sense of expectation and of journeying together through the seasons. What difference might it make were we to draw the route to Easter, building expectation along the way? That sense of travelling with Christ through the wilderness and on towards the city of Jerusalem is a way of directly engaging with our calling and destiny in the here and now. What if we were to approach Advent and Pentecost in the same intentional fashion? These festivals are major moments which, if anticipated and celebrated, can radically impact the life of the church and inwardly transform our discipleship journey. Some churches do this automatically - I am not saying something new - but my point is that from a mission perspective it makes sense as Baptists for us to re-explore and reclaim the logic of God's timing. To plan worship according to the seasons helps to bring order not only to our diaries, but to our souls.



Dulcea's Diary

Diary Entry No 304

Happy New Year!

Goodbye 2009, hello 2010! Goodbye old diary, hello new diary! Praise the Lord! I'll be sad to say farewell to my old diary. There are so many good memories in there. But she'll go up on the shelves with all the others. Last year was not a bad year. I still have my little aches and pains but apart from that, thank the Lord, I can still get around. There's still plenty of life in the old girl yet and nobody's putting me on the shelf. Hallelujah!

I do love Pastor Steve but he does come up with some very fancy ideas. This year we had a Caribbean Christmas. We had jerk pork and curry-goat instead of turkey and the local school provided the steel pans. He even used the Patois version of the bible for the readings. What next - Jesus the Jamaican and the 12 Kastafarians? But he says we need to 'contextualise' our services. But Jesus didn't exactly come from Kingston did he!

Well, apart from these few fancy ideas, we are starting to see some new faces in the congregation and Pastor Steve has got some exciting plans to reach out to the community. At the watch-night service he urged us to take risks and not be afraid of trying something different. God is the God of new possibilities - we just need to open our hearts to what he wants us to do. Even the deacons seem a bit more confident these days. He is really encouraging them, even though secretly he'd like to get rid of most of them. But you have to use what God has given to you. It may be a New Year but we are still the same old people.



BUGB Communications Awards 2010

The BUGB Communications Awards are back for 2010!

This time, in collaboration with our media partner The Baptist Times, we are not only looking for excellent church websites but the best church magazines too!

Nominate your church from 12 January 2010 at

www.baptist.org.uk/commsawards2010

THE BAPTIST TIMES



Baptist Union
of Great Britain
Encouraging Missionary Disciples

Prayer Guide



Prayer of Thanksgiving and Trust

Lord of the ages,
you are our beginning and our end.

Everlasting God,
we place our days within your care.
We trust you and praise you
for your faithfulness in the past,
and for your constant care.

We put ourselves into your keeping,
to guard and guide us this day and every day;
and we offer our lives for your service,
through Jesus Christ,
your eternal Son, our Saviour.

Taken from *Gathering for Worship* available from BUGB Publications
(telephone 01235 517708 or go to www.baptist.org.uk/resources.html)

Welcome to the first quarter of the 2010 Prayer Guide. After printing extracts from last year's publication, the Prayer Guide from now on will be exclusively in *Baptist Life*.

✚ If you would like to access more prayer resources, contact your Baptist association or go to www.baptist.org.uk/prayer_worship.html where you will find a range of materials including monthly prayers of intercession.

January



3 - 9 January General Secretariat

Please pray for the General Secretary, Jonathan Edwards (and his PA, Monica), and the General Manager, Richard Nicholls (and his PA, Angie), as they lead the life of the Union. Jonathan's representative role and preaching ministry involves him in constant travelling and Richard's co-ordinating role involves him in organising and attending a large number of meetings.

www.baptist.org.uk/baptist_life/baptist_family/national/gensec.html



10 - 16 January Central Baptist Association (CBA)

The CBA serves Baptist churches in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Northamptonshire. Pray that the 'Making the most of the Church Meeting' roadshows the association is running in the region from 18 January to 22 February will inspire Baptists in this important aspect of church life.

www.centralba.org.uk



17 - 24 January Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

This year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is taking the resurrection of Jesus as its theme. Pray that churches of all denominations will be unified by their belief in Christ's resurrection and will share that good news with others. Pray for good relations between churches both locally and nationwide.

www.ctbi.org.uk/414



25 - 30 January Bristol Baptist College

Pray for the success of the new degrees in children's work and schools' work which are available for the first time this year. Pray for the new ministerial students as they continue to settle into their new routine of study and practical ministry, and for the students who are leaving and looking for their first churches.

www.bristol-baptist.ac.uk



31 January - 6 February Ministers' Conferences

Over the next few weeks there will be ministers' conferences in many of the Baptist associations. Pray for the association teams as they prepare and organise these events. Pray for the speakers, that they may be inspired in what they bring. Pray for the ministers that attend, that they will be challenged, refreshed and encouraged in their ministries.

February



7-13 February East Midlands Baptist Association (EMBA)

Pray for the regional team as they support and resource churches in Nottinghamshire, Rutland, Peterborough, Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire. Pray for the newly appointed ministers and newly accredited ministers, that they may know and follow God's will as they seek to lead in mission. Pray for churches engaging with the community and facing challenges of all kinds.

www.embaptists.co.uk



14 - 20 February Baptist Union Retreat Group

The Baptist Union Retreat Group encourages individuals and churches to explore prayer, silence and stillness. Pray for the group as they organise nationally run retreats and support local initiatives such as quiet days and spiritual accompaniment (Soul Friend). Pray that Christians will seek a still place in the midst of their busy lives this Lent.



21 - 27 February International Baptist Theological Seminary (IBTS)

The IBTS in Prague, Czech Republic has been a leading centre of post-graduate theological study for Baptist Christians and other evangelical believers over the last 60 years. IBTS has students from 40 nations studying at certificate, masters and doctoral level. Pray for the Rector, academic team and staff as they seek to faithfully serve Christ.

www.ibts.eu

**LOVE YOUR
LOCAL
SCHOOL**

28 February - 6 March Mission Department

The Mission Department aims to equip Baptist churches to fulfil their God-given mission to make Jesus known in a variety of ways. Pray for the 'Love your Local School' conference the department is organising this week. Pray for the team as they develop new projects, events and resources with Baptist and Christian organisations.

www.baptist.org.uk/baptist_life/baptist_family/national/mission.html

March



7 - 13 March Northern Baptist Association (NBA)

The NBA consists of churches from Northallerton to Berwick, and from the East Coast to the edge of Cumbria. Pray for the team as they encourage and support the churches, for the development of the mission partnerships with Baptists in Texas, and for the visit of BUGB President Kingsley Appiagyei to Darlington this weekend (7 March).

www.thenba.org.uk



14 - 20 March Baptist Union Council

The Baptist Union Council meets this week. The Council consists of some 200 members drawn from churches, associations, colleges and co-opted delegates. Pray for God's guidance on the decisions to be made at Council. Pray that discussions will be inclusive and accessible to all and that mission will be at the heart of them.



21 - 27 March Baptist Men's Movement (BMM)

The Baptist Men's Movement is holding Grasp the Vision - its annual Bigger Weekend conference - in Market Bosworth. Pray for BMM President Phil Creighton, and that the Movement will continue to grow as it helps churches cultivate fellowship among men and promote understanding and reconciliation among men of all nations.

www.baptistmen.org.uk/site



28 March - 3 April Easter

Pray for Baptist churches across the Union as they celebrate Easter this week. Pray that the acts of public witness that Christians will make together during Holy Week will inspire people who live in their communities to engage with the Easter message.

www.baptist.org.uk/baptist_life/baptist_family/national/mission.html

BAPTIST PORTRAITS

INTERVIEWS WITH PEOPLE FROM ACROSS
THE BAPTIST UNION OF GREAT BRITAIN.

THE BAPTIST UNION OF GREAT BRITAIN
100, WATERLOO ROAD, LONDON SE1 8UG



Jez

Jez Brown is Regional Minister Team Leader of the South West Baptist Association

Favourite bible verse: Romans 6:8: 'Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him!'

Favourite hymn or chorus: *The Lord's my Shepherd* - both the classic hymn and also the modern song.

What food do you find hard to resist?! Roast beef with all the trimmings or anything Indian.

Highlight of 2009: This would have to have been when our eldest son Matt, a Royal Engineer, returned safely from Afghanistan after a three month tour of duty in Helmand Province. We found his time away emotionally exhausting and so his homecoming was a very special moment for all of us.

What do you enjoy about being a Regional Minister? Good question! The most rewarding moments for me are when I sense that, as an association, we have been able to make a difference in the life of one of our ministers, or their family, or within the life of a local church. I also find being involved in the ministerial settlement process a hugely rewarding experience and an incredible privilege.

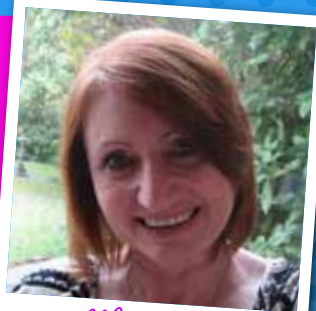
Mave Whitchurch is Youth Officer at the South Eastern Baptist Association (SEBA)

Favourite bible verse: Hebrews 1:3: 'the radiance of the Father's glory'... that's my Jesus.

Place you feel closest to God: I love to walk across the local South Downs during the sunrise.

Highlight of 2009: It has to be my son's wedding this summer, what a great day. Although seeing young people come to Christ at the events we have put on will always be completely humbling.

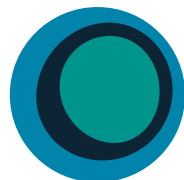
How are you helping churches in SEBA engage with young people? I love to be involved with the churches as they try to engage better with young people and run vision days where we see the leaders refreshed and going out envisioned, believing God for more. We are looking into doing some local missions this year which will open up opportunities for young people to get out and get doing! If the figures are correct and 85% of all types of revolutions have been spearheaded by young people, then a holy revolution across the South East is something I want to encourage SEBA churches to believe for.



Mave

ONE MISSION ONE WORLD

Baptist Assembly
30 April - 3 May 2010
Plymouth Pavillions
www.baptistassembly.org.uk



Baptist Assembly
www.baptistassembly.org.uk



LEADING EDGE BIBLE HOLIDAY FESTIVAL 2010

Come and be REFRESHED, RENEWED, RECHARGED

www.baptist.org.uk/leadingedge

WALKING THE WIRE



**following Jesus
in a confusing
world**

**9-15 August, 2010
The Warwick School
Warwick**

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