



A Culture of Welcome

**REACHING
TWENTY
SOME-
THINGS**
ONE CHURCH'S STORY



**Enabling
Mission**



**Affirming
Women Leaders**



**Opinion
by David Coffey**

INTRODUCTION

by Jonathan Edwards - BUGB General Secretary



HOW WELCOMING IS YOUR CHURCH?

Have you ever attended an unwelcoming church? I certainly have! It's a painful experience. I've met people "on the door" (the title welcomer wouldn't work!) who have looked at me with the sort of pained curiosity which suggested that I was in the wrong place. I have been left to find a seat but without any guidance. The last time I did that I arrived earlier than most others and found that I was sitting in the place where the teenagers sat – clearly a fact well known to every regular worshipper. And then the language of the notices indicated that there was no desire to make anything understandable for a visitor. I could go on... but I have perhaps said enough to indicate that I have felt really hurt and sidelined by some churches – and one of those experiences was within the last year in a lively evangelical church. They happened not to be Baptist churches but I am sure that we are as a guilty as any at getting on with our own lives and neglecting the visitor.

Happily many Baptist churches are known for being welcoming. That's splendid - because that's the gospel. The good news of Jesus Christ has welcome at its heart. I have always loved Romans 15:7 which can be translated "Welcome one

another just as Christ welcomed you, in order to bring praise to God". Welcome is something we offer to other people in order to reflect the experience of welcome that we have received from the Lord Jesus Christ. He has welcomed us with open arms, offering us complete forgiveness and renewal. We deserved nothing from him apart from his judgement and rejection, but he has come to us with total acceptance and perfect love.

The fact of the matter is that offering a welcome is demanding. Your church won't give a warm welcome unless you work at it. Someone will need to draw up a rota of welcomers and someone else will need to offer training and support to ensure that welcomers know the right information and are encouraged in their crucial ministry. I am delighted that Back to Church Sunday has been such a huge success in our churches. The training for Back to Church Sunday helps us to reflect on how we can be welcoming churches as a way of life and not just in a short occasional burst.

Many of the stories in this edition of *Baptist Life* focus on welcome, and I hope that they will encourage your church to take a step forward in this crucial gospel ministry.

Jonathan

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

Enabling Mission



"Home Mission helps me to help others to do the work of ministry," says Sarah Harmsworth, minister of Wallsend Baptist Church in Newcastle (Northern Baptist Association) and supported by a Mission through Ministry Grant. "It supports me as I enable and encourage people to get involved in mission by identifying their interests, their gifting, what they are passionate about, and then releasing

them to do it." Over the last three years the church, in an area of high unemployment (only six church members have a job), has branched out into new activities like holding a family service, increasing its children's work and serving the community by litter picking in the local country park. The suggestion of one member to go for a walk one afternoon has led to a thriving walking group which has provided great evangelistic opportunities. "It is a fantastic way of making friends with people who don't necessarily want to go into church," says Sarah.

- Online film - check out Sarah and Wallsend Baptist Church's story as she walks you around the neighbourhood.
Go to www.baptist.org.uk/baptistlife

Portakabin Good News



"Home Mission has been completely essential," says Andy Thomas, minister of Patchway Baptist Church in Bristol (West of England Baptist Association) who is supported by a Mission through Ministry Grant. "Because of Home Mission I have been able to spend time as a full time minister equipping the church to change." Over the last two years Patchway Baptist has increased its community presence by running a community coffee bar and youth work supported by the local council and other partners. They have

modernised their children's work which has increased attendance to such an extent that they have had to purchase a portakabin (partly funded by a Mission Project Grant from Home Mission) to create more space. "Without the Home Mission grants, the work we have done in the church and community, the growth we have experienced – none of it would have taken place. We are immensely grateful to all those churches who contribute."

- For more info go to www.patchwaybaptist.com



Jane Day

Women in Leadership



Kate Coleman

The debate about women in leadership roles in other denominations is often in the news but we rarely read the same about Baptists. Does this mean it is not an issue for us? A debate on Women in Leadership at the Baptist Union Council in March confirmed that it is affecting women in our churches too.

Although women have been serving as pastors in Baptist churches since the 1920s, only 11.6% of currently serving Baptist ministers are women. Women at Council shared their stories of prejudice and of barriers that have held them back in their leadership. At the end of the debate a resolution was passed committing the Baptist Union of Great Britain to affirm the full inclusion of women in all areas of leadership in church life.

Many of the Baptist associations and colleges are taking a lead on this issue. There have been Baptist gatherings of women in Manchester, London, Bristol, Milton Keynes, Cambridge and Oxford. The Southern Counties Baptist Association is holding a 'Growing Women Leaders Day' at Thornhill Baptist Church in Southampton on 3 July.

Jane Day started to spearhead the topic of women in leadership in the Yorkshire Baptist Association (YBA) in 2007. "My passion was to see an event where women could network and be encouraged, and from which we could identify the next generation of leaders," she says. Jane organised a women's event with the full backing of the YBA at an Ikea store near Gildersome Baptist Church where she

was pastor at the time. The event which attracted 50 women included story telling from women leaders, a chance to network and biblical input from Lisa Holmes of Skipton Baptist Church.

Following the event a planning team was established to develop an overall vision and programme to support women as leaders. "The vision is not about seeing more women in Baptist ministry. It is about identifying new leaders and encouraging women in leadership to reach their full potential in whatever area they are in, the sacred or the secular," says Jane.

In November 2009, the YBA started a series of events called 'The Seven Deadly Sins of Women in Leadership' which has been written and is led by former BUGB President Kate Coleman. After the first event last year in Wakefield feedback from those who attended included comments saying it was "very encouraging and affirming" and that it "challenged me to look for opportunities to develop my gifting". The second event was held in May in Leeds with the third due to be held on 4 September.

Jane, who has been a regional minister at the YBA since September 2009, is planning to focus part of her sabbatical in 2011 on women in leadership. "Changing church culture is not going to happen overnight," she says. "However we are pioneering a way forward and we are really excited about what God is going to do."

For more information go to: www.baptist.org.uk/womenleaders

Carbon offset your summer holiday

Have you ever carbon offset your travel? Every time you travel by car, train or plane you emit CO² into the air which is one of the biggest threats of climate change. The Baptist Union of Great Britain and BMS World Mission are encouraging you to visit www.climatestewards.net, use the calculator to work out the size of your summer holiday carbon footprint and then pay the suggested donation. Climate Stewards, working to internationally accepted standards, will then invest that money to plant trees to offset your carbon use. £275 was raised by people attending the Baptist Assembly in May from them offsetting their journeys to Plymouth. Gareth Wilde from BMS World Mission (which now offsets all staff and volunteer travel within the UK), says "By renewing tropical forests we are protecting disadvantaged communities and vital eco-systems, as well as soaking up carbon dioxide."



Faiths unite to engage with politics

In Eastern England faith groups have united to engage with local and regional government. Paul Hills, Eastern Baptist Association Regional Minister Team Leader, is Chair of the executive of the East of England Faiths Council which carries out religious research and runs courses for local government staff on what different religions believe, and for faith groups on issues of public concern. They will be meeting soon with recently elected local MPs to give them a briefing on faith issues. Local government updates the Faiths Council on their work and policies enabling faith groups to give feedback. "Faith groups have to act together," says Paul. "I think in an overall sense that this is all about building community between faith groups and those in local and regional government who often do not have a clear understanding of what it means to have a faith."



Paul Hills

For more info go to www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk

The Big Welcome

Is yours a welcoming church for visitors? Is there room for improvement? Mark Hope-Urwin, Director of Hospitality and Welcome at Birmingham Cathedral, believes we can learn a lot about welcome from the world of retail. Mark was Customer Services Manager at the John Lewis department store in Solihull when the company was developing its highly successful customer service strategy. In his new job he now transfers those ideas to a church setting not only in Birmingham but also nationally through Back to Church Sunday, which is on 26 September this year and endorsed by the BUGB. Mark believes that a bottom-up approach, of every church member engaging in welcome, is the best way. "A culture of welcome should pervade the church," says Mark. "Creating a good impression is the responsibility of everyone."



Watch a film about Mark's Top Ten Tips for Welcome online. Go to: www.baptist.org.uk/baptistlife



TWENTY SOMETHINGS



BUGB Annual Return Statistics 2002 to 2008

Attendance - ↑ 3.5%
Membership - ↓ 7%
Baptisms - ↓ 23%

Number of children churches in contact with - ↑ 8%
Number of teenagers churches in contact with - ↑ 21%
Number of young adults (20 to 25s) in contact with - ↓ 16%



Every year each church in the Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB) is asked to fill in a four-page annual returns form. From the data gathered the Mission Department are able to see trends and understand the shape and size of the Baptist family. Analysis of the figures for people in BUGB churches between 2002 and 2008 were released earlier this year and showed some interesting trends, both encouraging and challenging (see opposite).

One of the more challenging trends was the decline in young adults. The numbers of teenagers attending our churches has risen by 9%, and those in contact with our churches by 21%, both exceeding the percentage rise in teenage population in the same period. However, the number of young adults (20 to 25s) in contact with our churches has declined by 16% whilst the general population of that age group has risen by the same percentage. So it appears that the teenagers are not remaining linked to a Baptist church as they make the transition into adulthood.

So what can be done to stop this trend? Testwood Baptist Church in Southampton may have hit on some possible ideas as the number of those in their twenties and thirties has risen over the last four years from 6 to well over 35. Neil and Laura Tuck, both in their twenties, explain what happened when they returned to the church after university:

“We had a vision from the outset to have a thriving group of twenty-somethings that would resource the church in every aspect of outreach and ministry that goes on. We have intentionally provided regular social activity that will appeal to guys of this age and we have also gone out of our way to grab anyone who comes through the church doors in their twenties. We have worked hard to establish lasting relationships with those who come to the church. It’s about going beyond the hand-shake and initial hello to remembering names and following

up with meal invitations, evenings out for drinks, providing a small group environment and a place where they are able to grow in their relationship with God. Although all these things play a part, the wider-church context is vital in realising growth amongst the twenties age group. We have been purposeful in targeting the twenties but the vision and purpose of the church as a whole needs to be in the right place.”

Other things Testwood have done to attract and retain twenty-somethings include making sure that someone from that age group is on the welcome desk, and giving those in their twenties and thirties opportunity to preach or get into leadership roles. A regular men’s games night featuring computer games, Scalextrix, pool and much more is attracting dads, sons and young men.

The minister at Testwood, Gordon Tuck, says the success has been part of a wider strategy. “We have been pretty intentional about making church accessible for everyone”, he says. “This included getting regular feedback from people new to the church so we can remove any ‘barriers’ or things that instantly exclude. We have worked across the board to make church somewhere it was OK to invite your friends, particularly those who have no previous church experience. We want it to have a ‘come as you are’ culture but with the challenge to live for God. The question we keep asking is “How can we make church accessible so people don’t say ‘this is not for me?’”



Neil & Laura Tuck

Gordon Tuck

 www.testwoodbaptist.org

Recommended reading: Gordon Tuck and Testwood Baptist Church have been greatly inspired by *No Perfect People Allowed: Creating a Come As You Are Culture in Church* by John Burke.

The world needs **smart** Baptists!

By David Coffey, President of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA)

It has been an immense privilege to serve as the BWA President for the past five years and I am grateful to British Baptists for sharing in the inspiring launch of my international ministry at the BWA Congress in Birmingham 2005 and supporting me with their prayers and encouragement during my world travels.

As I prepare to hand over to my successor John Upton at the BWA Congress in Hawaii (please note - I didn't choose the venue!) I have been reflecting on Jack Goldstone's four megatrends that he suggests could change the world over the next 40 years:

1. The declining population figures in the western world by nearly 25% will shift power and influence to the developing nations.
2. Higher life expectancy means the ageing of populations in the western world of North America and Europe.
3. In the same period Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and South East Asia will have exceptional growth in youthful populations. This 'youthful' factor will be most significant in the Muslim countries of Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey.
4. The world is urbanising to unprecedented levels. The year 2010 will likely be the first time in history that a majority of the world populations live in cities rather than rural regions.

These four global challenges (and there are many more besides) are the future context for the global mission of the church and the BWA has purposefully been reshaping its life under the leadership of BWA General Secretary Dr Neville Callam. It was agreed two years ago that the life and work of the BWA would be focused in five areas of action:

Standing together in unity worship and fellowship

Moving strategically in mission and evangelism

Acting justly to defend human rights and religious freedom

Responding to human need and engaging in sustainable development

To promote relevant theological reflection

Which provides helpfully the acronym SMART - and this changing world could benefit from a movement of 'smart' Baptists which is:

- Strong in the bedrock principle of a Christ-centered unity expressed in legitimate diversity
- Bold in mission strategy and employing its resources wisely
- Courageous in prophetic advocacy for religious freedom
- Generous in giving and partnering with the poorest of the world
- Creative in relevant theological reflection for counter-cultural disciples

You belong to a movement of 'smart' Baptists who are making a gospel difference in a changing world!



Resources

You can order *Gathering Around the Table* through the Resource section of the BUGB website www.baptist.org.uk or by calling Publications on 01235 517708.



Where is the child in our understanding of church and of communion? This series of six studies challenges us to explore what it means to be a community inclusive of the youngest amongst us.

Dulcea's Diary

Entry Number 401

My Dear Diary,

Hooray, hooray it's a holi, holiday! Dear diary, a two-week Caribbean cruise, taking in Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad with five of my closest friends! Hallelujah! Bring on the rum punch and steel pans! Mrs Williams from RSVP (Retired Service Veterans Project) has organised a team of us to go on this trip of a lifetime and I can't wait. To think I arrived in this country by boat from Jamaica and now I can sail back there on a luxury liner. When you get to my time of life you need these little treats. After all I have worked hard all my life, the kids have grown up and Bertram left a nice little pension. Even though this new government wants take the little hard-earned money I've saved up. Now that there are two of them in power they want to take twice as much. Why don't the politicians put something away for a rainy day like they tell the rest of us to do? And boy, is it raining now! But it won't be in Jamaica and nothing's gonna stop me from going on this cruise. Not even a volcano or cabin crew strike. I'm getting there even if I have to swim. But to tell you the truth this holiday's not a luxury it's a necessity. Since Pastor Steve arrived my feet haven't touched the ground. Every week we seem to be having leadership meetings, church meetings, prayer meetings, vision setting days and a constant stream of new mission initiatives. He says the Baptist Union wants to encourage missionary disciples. I can hardly keep up but it is exciting when you see the church getting involved in mission. The church was always here but it didn't really connect with the community. But that's changed, praise the Lord! But I could do with some Mary time. I'm feeling a bit 'Martha'd' out. Anyway I'm almost packed. I've got my sun hat, glasses, passport, tickets, reading book and of course, you. I couldn't leave you behind my dear diary. Now where did I put that bikini?

Prayer Guide



Harvest

God of creation,
we praise you.

Once there was nothing,
but now the world teems with life
and the cup of your provision overflows.

Once there was dark emptiness
but now there is sound and colour,
majestic mountains and intricate petals.

Beasts and birds gain their food from you,
and all humankind depends
on the fruitfulness of the earth you have made.

We praise you, faithful provider,
generous and gracious God.

Taken from *Gathering for Worship* (Code BU318) available from BUGB Publications
(telephone 01235 517708 or go to www.baptist.org.uk/resources.html)

Welcome to the third quarter of the 2010 Prayer Guide – your opportunity to pray for the wider Baptist family over the next three months.

✚ If you would like 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.

July



4-10 July London Baptist Assn (LBA)

Pray for plans to re-organise the staff team following the retirement of the Regional Minister (Team Leader) Pat Took (opposite) in September. Pray that congregations joining the LBA will quickly find their place in the life of the association. Thank God for Small Church Enabler, Hilary Taylor who is encouraging small congregations in London.

www.londonbaptist.org.uk



11-17 July BMS World Mission

At any one time BMS World Mission supports between 350 and 400 personnel working in over 35 countries, involved in many ministries. Pray for them and the people they are called to serve – that they may see more of Jesus. Pray too for individuals, couples and families training for overseas mission in Birmingham from this September.

www.bmsworldmission.org



18-24 July Communications Department

Pray that at a time when there are 'quantum leaps' in all areas of communications that the team will be inspired, equipped and creative as they develop resources for the BUGB and seek to serve churches and associations effectively. Pray that the team will have energy and vision as they lead on event management in 2011.

www.baptist.org.uk



25-31 July Baptist World Congress

The 20th Baptist World Congress is happening in Honolulu, Hawaii from 28 July to 1 August. Pray for the speakers as they finalise their messages. Pray for the thousands of delegates from across the globe who are preparing to come to the Congress, that they will be spiritually expectant and have safe travel to Hawaii.

www.bwacongress2010.org

August



1-7 August Yorkshire Baptist Assn (YBA)

The Yorkshire Baptist Association is committed to enabling and equipping Christians in churches across Yorkshire to be confident in the good news of Jesus Christ. Please pray for them as they seek to implement their strategy and commit their focus and energy to four key areas, confident evangelism, confident discipleship, confident leadership and confident spirituality.

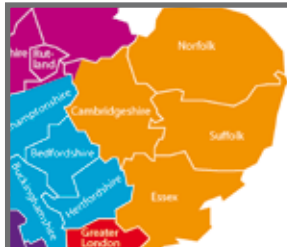
www.yba.org.uk



8-14 August Leading Edge

Leading Edge, the BUGB's summer family festival, is being held from 9 to 15 August at Warwick. This year's theme is 'Walking the wire – following Jesus in a confusing world'. Pray that God will use this week to refresh and renew the faith and sense of mission of those attending.

www.baptist.org.uk/leadingedge



15-21 August Eastern Baptist Assn (EBA)

Better care for ministers and more effective mission are two of the goals for the EBA. Recent Peer Supervision Training helps with the first goal and soundings about church planting with the second. Please pray for this work and for the EBA Council as it reviews the Association Task Groups.

www.easternbaptist.org.uk



22-28 August Heart of England Baptist Assn (HEBA)

Pray for those members of the regional team enjoying a summer break and for Keith Judson, returning refreshed and revitalised from sabbatical leave. Please thank God for all the hard-working volunteers who give their time and energy both locally and at regional level to encourage and support churches in their mission.

www.baptist-heartofengland.org

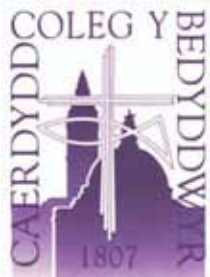


29 August – 4 September Ministry Department

Pray for wisdom for the Ministry Department as they explore developments in recognition and ongoing support of ministers, and as they seek to support churches with the implementation of the changes in safeguarding. Pray for all department staff, in their varied roles, that together they will enable ministers to be effective and faithful in service.

www.baptist.org.uk

September



5-11 September South Wales Baptist College

Pray for the college community at the start of a new academic year as it welcomes both new and continuing students. Pray for the existing staff, and also for the new staff appointments. Pray that the college's partnerships with both Cardiff University and local churches will reflect the college's participation in Christ's mission.

www.swbc.org.uk



12-18 September Racial Justice Sunday

The theme of Racial Justice Sunday this year is a response to Migration 2010, an initiative to show the church's commitment to welcoming strangers and building inclusive communities. Pray that churches across the BUGB will mark Racial Justice Sunday. Pray for Racial Justice Advisor Wale Hudson-Roberts and for the group auditing how multicultural the BUGB is.

www.ctbi.org.uk/490



19-25 September European Baptist Federation

The EBF is comprised of more than 800,000 Baptists in 51 Unions including the BUGB. Pray especially for Baptists in Europe and the Middle East who face pressure and even persecution for their faith; and for the General Secretary, Tony Peck, and the EBF staff. Pray for God's guidance as the EBF Council meets this week in Italy.

www.ebf.org



26 September - 2 October Back to Church Sunday

Today (26 September) is The Big Welcome (Back to Church Sunday.) Give thanks to God for the 6500 people who came back to Baptist churches last year. Research shows that over 2000 of these people have remained part of Baptist churches. Pray that those responding to an invitation will find hope.

www.baptist.org.uk/b2cs

BAPTIST PORTRAITS

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

THE BAPTIST UNION OF GREAT BRITAIN
100, Abchurch Lane, London EC4N 3DF



Andre

Andre Oliveira is pastor of two churches in Link Church (Brazilian congregation) in Williesden Green and Barking Baptist Church (London Baptist Association).

Favourite bible verse: 1 Timothy 1:18-19: Timothy, my son, I am giving you this command in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by recalling them you may fight the battle well, holding on to faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and so have suffered shipwreck with regard to the faith!

Favourite hymn or chorus: *Lord I give you my heart.*

Place where you feel/ have felt closest to God: Everywhere, every time, every moment is different and powerful!

Favourite film: *Jerry Maguire.*

You pastor two churches. Are they quite similar? What exciting things are happening in them?

Apart from being both Baptist they are quite different. The Brazilian church (Link Church) is made up of people in transit; when we meet them, we share the good news to get some saved and to develop strong disciples. Barking Baptist is a miracle church which survived 15 years without a pastor with faithful people serving there. Both churches are growing, reaching out, expanding their facilities and proclaiming the gospel. But the best is yet to come!

Andrew Gosden is a deacon and Music Director at Burlington Baptist Church in Ipswich (Eastern Baptist Association).

Favourite bible verse: Isaiah 43:1-2: 'Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.'

Favourite hymn or chorus: A hymn whose words mean a lot to me is *How firm a foundation you saints of the Lord.*

Place where you feel/ have felt closest to God: Those all too rare times when it's quiet and I am reading and the bible comes alive and God says something he really wants me to remember.

Favourite film: Probably *Wallace and Gromit's A Close Shave.*

How do you and your church approach worship? I think we have a good balance between sung worship, preaching and practical service - with preaching the priority, as it should be. Probably the most exciting thing we do is two or three times a year when we get an orchestra together - inviting anyone we can find (members and friends) who plays any instrument to take part. This turns the service into a fantastic celebration and witness to friends and family.



Andrew



BUGB Communications Awards 2010 The Winners!

The winners of the BUGB Communications Awards 2010 were announced at the Baptist Assembly. They are:

Websites:

Best Design - Westbury Avenue Baptist Church, London
www.westburyavenuebaptistchurch.org

Best Content - Minchinhampton Baptist Church, Gloucestershire
www.minchbc.org.uk

Best Church Magazine – *The Beeches*, Carshalton Beeches Baptist Church, Surrey

Thanks to all those who nominated websites and magazines for an award and those who took part in the online voting for the websites.

Christian events July to September

July

12 - **Sea Sunday** www.missiontoseafarers.org

18 - **The Big Lunch** www.thebiglunch.com/index.php

28 July – 1 August - **Baptist World Congress** in Honolulu, Hawaii <http://bwacongress2010.org>

August

9–15 - **Leading Edge**, Warwick (HEBA) www.baptist.org.uk/leadingedge

26–30 - **Gorsley Festival**, Herefordshire (HEBA) www.gorsleychapel.co.uk

27–30 - **Greenbelt Festival**, Cheltenham Racecourse (WEBA) www.greenbelt.org.uk

September

12 - **Racial Justice Sunday** www.ctbi.org.uk

21 - **International Day of Prayer for Peace** www.overcomingviolence.org

26 - **Back to Church Sunday** www.backtochurch.co.uk

THE BAPTIST TIMES

VISIT www.baptisttimes.co.uk

Subscribe now! Have *The Baptist Times* delivered direct to you or as a gift to a friend. Visit our website for more



Follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/BaptistTimes



The Gathering presents....

REACHING THE MARGINS

HELPING WHITE AND BLACK BAPTISTS REACH MARGINALISED
COMMUNITIES INCLUDING THE WHITE WORKING CLASS

DATE // 16 October 2010

TIME // 10:30 - 17:00

VENUE // Woodgrange Baptist Church,
Romford Road, Forest Gate E7 8AA

COST // £15

SPEAKERS // David Shosanya,
Di Blackler, Stuart Murray-Williams,
Ian Bunce, Rosemarie Davidson-Gotobed

Please send any comments or ideas for future editions to
Communications Baptist House PO Box 44 129 Broadway Didcot OX11 8RT
telephone 01235 517756 facsimile 01235 517715 email communications@baptist.org.uk
Website www.baptist.org.uk Registered Charity Number 1125912



printed on
recycled paper