

BAPTIST LIFE



Baptist Union
of Great Britain
Encouraging Missionary Disciples

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Three Cheers for Church Meetings!



Baptist Assembly
2011 Review



Opinion:
Pat Took



Supporting
Youth

THREE CHEERS FOR CHURCH MEETINGS!

by Jonathan Edwards - BUGB General Secretary



I have come to a conclusion - where two or three Baptists meet together they will soon end up talking about church meetings! Although we have been holding them for four centuries nobody would want to claim that we have mastered the art. Church meetings continue to be both an amazing opportunity for the church truly to live as the body of Christ, and a source of enormous frustration.

There is no question that church meetings can be agonising occasions. But our bad experiences should not obscure the fact that time and again God speaks clearly and powerfully through our gatherings together. Church meetings give us the opportunity to listen for the voice of the Spirit, knowing that he will want to speak through the timid and the reticent just as much as through the articulate and confident.

The question is this – are we willing to change our church meetings so that they truly give us the opportunity to listen to God? The traditional way of holding church meetings (with lines of chairs facing a group of leaders behind a small table) often makes it difficult for quiet and retiring people to say anything at all. We clearly need to use small groups and possibly cafe-style meetings to enable everyone to share what God is saying to them.

But above all church meetings must be times when we get to know God better. A brief

prayer and a quick song at the beginning of the meeting is hardly an appropriate start for an occasion when we are inviting the Holy Spirit to lead the church forward in the mission of Christ to the world. We need to worship God with the confident expectation that our gracious God will meet with us and will lead us deeper into his truth.

Many people tell me that things would improve if we handed all the power into the hands of the leaders. I have no doubt that that would enable swifter decisions to be made, but I am firmly persuaded that that approach undermines the body of Christ. It doesn't give an opportunity for the church to gain ownership of new ideas and denies people the opportunity to shape the decisions that are made.

Church members meetings will never be perfect in this life, because of the presence of sinful human beings. But they are an exciting and dynamic way of involving ourselves in God's mission – and there is nothing more important or more wonderful in this life than that.

So, whatever your present experience of church meetings, I trust that you will attend them, pray for them and confidently expect that the Holy Spirit will use them to lead your church forward in God's mission of love to the world.

Jonathan

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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 in some way from your church giving to Home Mission – Thank you. For more on Home Mission go to:


 www.baptist.org.uk/home-mission.html

Giving Hope



When Sam Owoo became minister of Hivings Free Church (Central Baptist Association) in September 2009 he immediately saw a need amongst the young people on the estate in a deprived area of Chesham, Buckinghamshire where the church is located. Anti-social behaviour was rife with nothing for the young people to do. Within two months Sam had successfully applied for a Mission Project grant to get some games equipment

and a Nintendo Wii so they could start a youth club. The youth club now has been running over a year and has over 30 young people attending. Thirty-four teenagers attend a separate football academy run by the church that is recognised by the Football Association. The church has received praise from the police as anti-social behaviour has been reduced on the estate as a result. "Our aim is to provide these youngsters with something to give them motivation, confidence, to give them hope," says Sam.

 Find out more about this story in a *Baptist Life* film now online at www.baptist.org.uk/baptistlife

Bearing fruit



David Alderson, minister of Desford Baptist Church in Leicestershire (East Midlands Baptist Association), has been supported by a BUGB Mission Grant since 2008. The church has been active in the village through its growing youth work which has led to some baptisms, a midweek club for older people and encouraging more local organisations to hire out the church premises for events. David believes that the support of Home Mission has enabled him to build long term relationships that are starting to bear fruit. "Home Mission support has given me an opportunity to make long term contact with

families in the village. These links are leading to people asking to be married, to have their children dedicated or hold a family funeral at the church. It is all about building relationships and standing alongside people in their joyful and sad times. Home Mission allows me to do that."

 www.desfordfreechurch.btck.co.uk

Healthy church meetings

The words 'Church Meeting' evoke differing responses, mostly negative! How do we change those perceptions and make them a productive and inspiring experience?



Over the last few years Baptist associations have been trying to help churches in this important part of Baptist life. In 2010 the Central Baptist Association (CBA) put on a training event in five locations across the association. "We called it 'Making the Most of the Church Meeting' and the purpose was to take another look and ask whether it might be renewed," says Geoff Colmer, CBA Regional Team Leader.

"Each event consisted of teaching, conversation in small groups, and discussion together. As we asked the question, 'What might the Church Meeting be?', good practice was shared. The challenge remains: 'Believe in the Church Meeting!' and 'Don't apologise for it, unless you really have to!' Of prime importance was the exploration of how we engage in the process of decision making in our churches, with an emphasis on 'discernment'.

"Interesting facts that emerged over the five evenings were that most churches have bi-monthly church meetings, on average 30% of the membership attend and there is a growing practice of inviting non-church members but without the privilege of voting.

"The outcome of the events is that some churches have taken up ideas and suggestions. But there remains more to be done to make the most of this important aspect of our life together."

Phil Jump, Regional Team Leader for the North Western Baptist Association (NWBA)

has written a guide called *Healthy Church Meetings* to help churches to have church meetings that are 'healthy and positive experiences for all those that participate in them'. Phil argues in the booklet that having the right approach to the meeting, that members are there to 'discern the mind of Christ' for their church, is key. "To be able to conclude a particular set of proceedings believing that certain decisions have been made or that a particular course of action will be embarked upon not simply because it represents the sum total of our human wisdom, or the best compromise that a group of disparate individuals can manage but because we believe it to be the will of God, can have a transformational impact on our view of events."



Andrew Rollinson, Ministry Advisor at the Baptist Union of Scotland, wrote a sabbatical study on church meetings and believes that what they represent is truly inspiring. "At the heart of our life as Baptists is the concept of the gathered and gathering church where each member, however weak or marginal in the eyes of society, is a child of God, loved, important, gifted and drawn by the grace of God into a new gospel community. In this community the rule of Jesus Christ is all important and it is the joyful privilege of every member, through the Spirit, to have access both to the mind of King Jesus and to his enabling grace. Thus in a typical congregation the young convert still struggling with a dysfunctional lifestyle and the elderly widow, quiet and often ignored, are equally capable of hearing the voice of the risen Christ and contributing to the attentive community as are the energetic elder and dynamic deacon."

For more information and resources on church meetings go to www.baptist.org.uk/baptistlife

RETAIL THERAPY

If you saw your minister at the shops you would think they were having a break but for Graham and Pat Wigley it's work! Graham and Pat work for New Life Baptist Church in Birmingham (Heart of England Baptist Association) as retail chaplains, visiting traders along King's Heath High Street discovering how life is for them, listening to their concerns and offering support. "It's both scary and exciting!" says Graham. "It can be quite daunting walking into a shop and starting a conversation as 'strangers' on their territory. It often leaves us feeling very vulnerable. That's the 'scary' bit. The 'exciting' bit is that we've now joined so many other chaplains - in industry, education, leisure, sport and emergency services - simply being and bringing the presence of God to ordinary people in the workplace."

Read more at www.baptist.org.uk/baptistlife



A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

Can we learn from Baptists in Europe on how to share the gospel in words and action? Ian Bunce, Head of BUGB's Mission Department, thinks we can. He is on the core group of the European Baptist Federation Mission Division which had their annual meeting in Germany in June to discuss Christian-Muslim engagement, where they compared and contrasted different approaches from Europe and beyond. During the year different Baptist Unions will seek advice from each other on a range of mission issues – a delegation from Germany for instance will visit the UK in the autumn to learn more about some of our mission initiatives. "In our communities are people from every nation in Europe. We need to learn about their culture and their background to inform us how we can do mission more effectively," says Ian.



BUGB COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS 2011: THE WINNERS

Back in January we started our search for the best church websites, best church magazines and best church notice sheets. The winners were announced on 30 April by Mark Woods, Editor of The Baptist Times, at the Baptist Assembly in Blackpool. Best Church Website was decided by a public online vote whilst Best Church Magazine and Best Church Notice Sheet were decided by a panel of judges. Best Church Website went to Tabernacle Baptist Church, Penarth (South Wales Baptist Association), Best Church Magazine was Fellowship produced by Holland Road Baptist Church in Hove (South Eastern Baptist Association) and Best Church Notice Sheet went to Romford Baptist Church (Eastern Baptist Association).

Go to www.baptist.org.uk/baptistlife to view the winning entries. Thanks to everyone who nominated churches for an award and voted for the Best Church Website.





Baptist Assembly
www.baptistassembly.org.uk

A Celebration of Baptist Life



The Baptist Assembly, the annual gathering of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and BMS World Mission, happened back in late April. Tim Edworthy, minister of Park Road Baptist Church in Peterborough, reviews what it was like for him and his family:



From 30 April to 2 May, my family and I attended the Baptist Assembly in sunny Blackpool, along with about 2000 others.

What is the Baptist Assembly? Well, it is best described as a celebration of Baptist life, especially for churches in England and Wales. It includes the Annual General Meetings of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, and of BMS World Mission.

Who can go? Anyone! Each local church can send its minister and delegates (two for our church), who are entitled to vote at the AGMs. But any Baptist Christian (or others, should they choose) can sign up. You might want to go next year! We can (almost) guarantee you will enjoy it and be blessed.

So what else did we do? We went to morning and evening meetings in the main auditorium at the Norbreck Castle Hotel. This year's theme was 'Your Kingdom Come.' The main evening speakers were this year's BUGB President Pat Took, Jeff Lucas and Julie Pennington-Russell, an American Baptist minister. All were inspiring with Pat giving depth, Jeff providing humour, and Julie combining the two! In addition, I went to two afternoon seminars delivered by Jeff, one of which looked at 'The Power of Creative Kingdom Leadership' and the other which explored lessons drawn especially from Jeff's own church setting in Timberline, Colorado.

Worship was led by Andy Scarcliffe from the Baptist Union of Scotland. Andy led with grace and diversity. He is not averse to giving a few surprises. For example, *Majesty* (not the old one we know) was followed by *Silent Night* (well, why not?)!

Our celebration of communion was fantastic – perhaps the best large-scale Lord's Supper I have shared in. Music was provided by a jazz ensemble, playing sensitively and with beauty. Questions asked by two children formed a framework that opened up the mystery of the bread and wine (although other children were not present – perhaps they should have been?). Our friend, Lynn Green, spoke powerfully on the need for churches not to exclude but to include people in the Kingdom.

Other highlights, which happen every year at the Assembly, were the recognition of new ministers in the BUGB and the commissioning of new missionaries for BMS. At the 2009 Assembly there was a call for us to pray for God to raise up many more people for missionary service. Well, God has answered in a mighty way with around 20 being sent out this year, and a similar number due to enter training next September!

We came away feeling that it is great to be a part of God's family, the Church. It is great, too, to have a home in the Baptist denomination. God has much for us to do as a denomination, and as the local Baptist church at Park Road, Peterborough, in bringing the Kingdom to earth 'as it is in heaven'!

🕊 For more on Park Road Baptist Church go to parkroad.org.uk. To read Tim's blog go to atoeinthewateruk.blogspot.com

The 2012 Baptist Assembly takes place from 4 to 6 May at Westminster Central Hall, London. There will be more information at www.baptistassembly.org.uk from October. You can also get updates by being a 'friend' of the Baptist Assembly on Facebook or follow @baptistassembly on Twitter.



For over 10 years now the Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB) has followed Five Core Values, declarations about the sort of Christ-centred people we ought to be. The Opinion section of *Baptist Life* is looking at these core values over the next few issues. This time Pat Took looks at what it means to be a worshipping community.

WORSHIP

The Revd Dr Pat Took is former Regional Minister Team Leader at the London Baptist Association and is currently President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain for 2011/12. Read her President's blog at baptist.org.uk/news/blogs/a-different-view.html



There are times when it is difficult to resist the temptation to join the Grumpy Olds. The invitation to write an Opinion about worship could be one of those times. We certainly have some problems. Out of an honourable desire to open our worship to the freedom and spontaneity of the Spirit, an honourable concern to escape the ministerial monologue, and an entirely honourable wish to be contemporary, our churches have almost universally abandoned the patterns of previous generations.

Unfortunately the Spirit continues to show a marked disinclination to blow at our bidding, so genuine spontaneity is rare. And those who have replaced ministers do not always know what they are doing. And "contemporary" got stuck in the 1960s.

But I think there are now signs of hope that something new, something thoughtful and creative is happening. Intercession has returned in most services – I think of a splendid service at Peckham Rye when the whole congregation engaged for an extended period of time in praying for the world. Confession sometimes finds a place, as does lament, together with the delight of testimonies. Sermons seem to me to be generally thoughtful and engaged. And fresh input has come from other traditions and cultures.

Most of all, there seems to be an increased seriousness about the whole endeavour, and a willingness to think it through and try new things.

A beautiful example was given us in the Jazz Communion prepared by Prism at the Baptist Assembly. Someone suggested to me afterwards that it raised more questions than it answered. How excellent is that?

Here was a service that was deeply thought through, coherent, devoid of anything meaningless. We sang when it was appropriate to sing, and we sang words worth singing. Children shared their wisdom. The music was musical (exceptionally so!). Silence was celebrated.

If this was a straw in the wind, something good is on its way. It will not be a return to the past, but it might require us to go back to first base.

We need to encourage our congregations, which are so diverse in age, history, culture and ethnicity, to think afresh about what it is that they come together for – what should have a place in their common worship, and how they, in that particular congregation, would most naturally and freely give expression to those things. Hopefully we may then be on our way to worship that is authentic, vibrant and life giving. May it be so.

You are invited to write

Bible messages for today

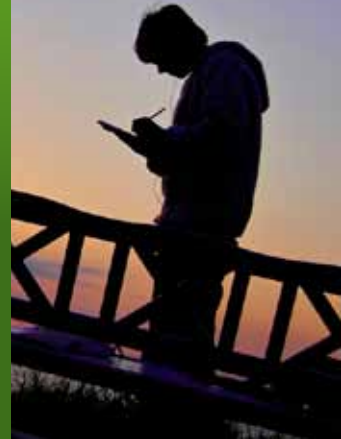
2011 is the 400th anniversary of the publication of the King James Version of the Bible. Baptists believe that the Bible is just as significant and relevant today.

You and others in your church and home group are invited to write modern day messages in two biblical styles and submit them before the end of August for inclusion in a publication *bible messages for today* that will be made available in the autumn.

Use your own experiences of God and observations of the world to write either:

- a modern-day parable (max 150 words)
- a modern-day psalm (max 300 words)
- or both!

Send your parables and psalms by the end of August to: **mission@baptist.org.uk** giving your name, church, and age (up to 12, 12-18, over 18). Selected contributions will be compiled for publication later in 2011.



Dulcea's Diary

Entry Number 696

Dear Diary

Do you think Jesus is Jamaican? I mean I know where he was born and all that but there is something Jamaican about him. He told us two thousand years ago that he was coming and we're still waiting for him! Like they say in Jamaica 'soon come'. He certainly doesn't seem to be in any rush. Well he can't be English or he would have been early. I'm only joking of course but all this talk of the end of the world stuff has got me thinking. You know at my age and stage in life, sometimes tomorrow can feel like the 'last day'. When you're young you think you've got forever, that time will never run out. It's like being immortal. But now I often go to bed and close my eyes and think is this it, is this my last day? The next time I open my eyes will I see God, his angels and the pearly gates? I've even woken up some mornings and thought, still here, still another day. I suppose I should be grateful but I've done most things that people do in a lifetime - worked, got married, had children but what's next? Like Paul in the Bible I'm torn between wanting be here or be with my Lord. And then Jesus keeps giving me these new days. It's like extra time. I guess he still he wants me to score some more goals. And you know what, Diary, when I think about it, there's so much I haven't done, lessons I've never learnt, places I've never been, food I've never tasted. I could never do all I want to do in my life time. I suppose that's why he's promised us eternity. Now that's a lot of time to fill. But in the meantime I'm not going to sit around in God's waiting room. This fat lady hasn't stopped singing yet. Hallelujah! Praise his name!



Prayer Guide



Pink Lemonade

God of the summer sun and cool breezes
we thank you and praise you
for the warmth of summer
for rustling leaves and creaking branches
for the chink of glasses and smokiness of BBQs
for fish-shaped ice cubes bobbing in pink lemondade
and for t-shirts dancing on the washing line
for umbrellared tables outside cafes
for chattering birds swooping in to roost
for children squealing in the playground
and adults passing the time of day on park benches
God of the summer sun and cool breezes
We thank and praise you

Abridged version of *Pink Lemonade* taken from *Crumbs of Hope* by Claire McBeath and Tim Presswood from Openshaw Baptist Church, Manchester (North Western Baptist Association), available from BUGB Publications www.baptist.org.uk

Welcome to the third quarter of the 2011 Prayer Guide – your opportunity to pray for the wider Baptist family over the next three months.

✚ 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.

July



3-9 July Northern Baptist Association (NBA)

The association is passionate to see God's Kingdom come in power to touch people's lives and shape our society. Pray that this may find good expression in the forthcoming training 'Mission in an Increasingly Diverse Society' (9 July), in the mission visits of teams from Texas and in the appointment of a new NBA Youth Specialist.

www.thenba.org.uk



10-16 July Faith and Unity Department

The Department seeks to reflect on what we as Baptists believe, to nurture our life of prayer and worship, to encourage relations with other Christians, and to promote campaigning and action on issues of justice and equality. Pray for the team, the Executive and its Moderator, Sian Murray-Williams.

www.baptist.org.uk

THE BAPTIST TIMES

17-23 July The Baptist Times

The Baptist Times has seen major changes in the way staff work, some of which have been quite stressful. Pray that the newspaper will be able to thrive in a fast changing media landscape. Pray for the staff, that God will use them for the work of the gospel among Baptist churches and further afield.

www.baptisttimes.co.uk



24-30 July West of England Baptist Association (WEBA)

Encouraging Missionary Disciples is WEBA's two year theme, focusing churches on the call of Matthew 28:19 and 'multiplying' the 3 in 1 Events; four this year, hopefully 10 in 2012. Pray that WEBA churches will catch the vision. Please pray also for the WEBA office during this period of major staff changes.

www.webassoc.org.uk

August



31 July - 6 August **Leading Edge**

Leading Edge, the BUGB's summer family festival, is being held from 2 - 7 August at Warwick School. This year's theme is Step out of the traffic – Refuelling for Living. Pray that God will use this week to refresh and renew the faith and sense of mission of those attending.

www.baptist.org.uk/crossingplaces/church-health-and-growth/leading-edge.html



7-13 August **South West Baptist Association**

Church planting is high on the association's agenda at the moment. The association have already appointed and placed a church planter in the market town of Newton Abbot in Devon and are currently looking to appoint a second church planter to work in Cornwall. Please pray for these two projects.

www.swbaptists.org.uk



14-20 August **BMS World Mission**

As the 250th anniversary of William Carey's birth is celebrated this week, praise God for those who have followed after him. Pray for BMS partners reaching unreached villages in the same part of India where Carey tirelessly worked, and for fresh initiatives in Chad and China. Pray too for those beginning mission training with BMS.

www.bmsworldmission.org



21-27 August **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 62 years. IBTS has students from 36 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

BAPTIST PORTRAITS

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



Amanda

Amanda Caygill is a Home Mission representative at Owton Manor Baptist Church, Hartlepool) which receives a BUGB Mission Grant

Favourite Bible verse

Philippians 1:6: 'being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.' This verse was given to me when I was baptised at 13. Also Psalm 46:10: 'Be still and know that I am God' because as I've got older and busier God calls me to be still from time to time and he then leads me in another direction or gives me another task.

Favourite hymn or chorus

In Christ alone my hope is found

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

Spare time...what spare time? When I eventually get it I enjoy reading, writing, and walking.

Any plans for the summer?

Leading Edge (see back page) - my husband, daughter, niece and I usually go. We all felt led to take two hyperactive young nephews this year. God has a funny sense of humour!

What do you do to raise money and the profile of Home Mission in your church?

We hold an annual Home Mission weekend which includes a coffee morning and stall sale which we advertise in the Churches Together bulletin and in the local newspaper. It's a chance to meet new people, spread God's Word (you never know who you might meet), as well as telling people of what Home Mission does for our church. We have gift boxes and envelopes, and people give generously.

Alison Southall is a musician and songwriter from Worcester. Her husband David is a Baptist chaplain at Worcester Royal Hospital.

Favourite Bible verse

Romans 8:38-9: 'For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

Favourite hymn or chorus

Faithful One, so unchanging

Any plans for the summer?

Generally keeping my sanity during the school holidays! I will be marking Open University assignments before going with my family to Disneyland Paris.

How long have you been a songwriter? What got you into it?

I have been a musician for years but only started writing Christian songs last year. My first song was written as a thank you to God for bringing me back to him after I had lost my way. Then it became my way of reflecting on all the things that God was teaching me.

You have a CD out with proceeds going to Home Mission. Tell us more!

I recorded *Reflections* at the end of 2010 and the CD includes songs entitled *Living Water*, *Engraved on the palms of your hands* and *Like a child*. So far I have raised over £200 plus Gift Aid for Home Mission... but I would like to raise more!!!

To purchase *Reflections* (£8 plus £1 p&p) email alisonsouthall@aol.com. A sample track as an MP3 file is also available.



Alison

Christian events – July to September

July

- 10 **Sea Sunday** www.seasunday.org
- 13 **Wellsprings Evening**, Kislingsbury Baptist Church
www.baptist.org.uk/events.html
- 16 **Keswick Convention** begins www.keswickministries.org
- 23 **New Wine** begins www.new-wine.org/summer
- 29 **Week A of Soul Survivor** begins www.soulsurvivor.com/uk/ss2011/

August

- 2-7 **Leading Edge** www.baptist.org.uk/leadingedge
- 6-12 **Creation Fest** www.creationfest.org.uk
- 14-21 **Celebrations of the 250th anniversary of William Carey's birth**
www.bmsworldmission.org/careysunday
- 19-23 **Momentum** www.soulsurvivor.com/uk/momentum/
- 25-29 **Gorsley Festival** www.gorsleyfestival.co.uk/festival
- 26-29 **Greenbelt Festival** www.greenbelt.org.uk

September

- 11 **Racial Justice Sunday** www.ctbi.org.uk
- 21 **International Day of Prayer for Peace**
www.baptist.org.uk/prayer-download.html
- 25 **The Big Welcome** www.baptist.org.uk/thebigwelcome



2 - 7 August 2011
Warwick School
Warwick

Speakers include:
Krish Kandiah
Pat Took
Chris Duffett
Jonathan Edwards
Luke Hamlyn
Joy and Andy Clarke
Ed Jones

For more info, visit
www.baptist.org.uk/leadingedge



STEP
OUT
OF THE
TRAFFIC
RECYCLING FOR LIVING

SHAPING OUR FUTURE

what does it mean to be men
and women working together

The Gathering 2011

Date: 15 October Registration from 09:00
Venue: Brixton Baptist Church, Solon Road,
London SW2 5UY (Nearest tube: Brixton)
Main speakers: Pat Took (BUGB President)
Anthony Reddie (Author of *Is God Colour Blind?*)
Cost: £15 to include a Caribbean meal
Register and see the programme on line: www.baptist.org.uk/events.html



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