

# FULFILLING JESUS' GREAT COMMANDMENT & GREAT COMMISSION IN OUR PLACES

There is no secret formula, writes General Secretary Lynn Green, but here are some important aspects when it comes to participating in God's mission

Paul's letter to the Colossians reminds us, 'All over the world this gospel is producing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth.' [1:6]

Echoing this we hear and celebrate stories of amazing Kingdom growth and vibrancy from the global church. In the past year or so I had the privilege of worshipping at a Baptist Church in Nigeria and being inspired by their heart for equipping and sending out church planters. In Jordan I learned more about reaching the Arab world for Christ and that in the midst of all the complexities and challenges of that context the believers testify to the fact that the more troubles they face, the more ministry opportunities they have. Joining the graduation service at the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Lebanon was a moving reminder of the cost of discipleship as I witnessed men

and women pursuing theological education to equip them for ministry in deeply challenging places. A preacher in Beirut called us to radical discipleship, 'God is not there to help you achieve your purpose, you are there to achieve God's purposes.' Whilst attending a global Baptist gathering, a brother from South Africa reminded us of their testimony, 'God is able – when it looked most impossible to defeat apartheid we fell to our knees with renewed fervour.' Surrounded by such a great, global, cloud of witnesses we are inspired in our own worship, discipleship and mission. With them we also give thanks and praise to the Lord that we are seeing fruitfulness and growth here in the UK as well.

Our vision as Baptists Together is 'Growing healthy churches in relationship for God's mission' and we are certainly seeing growth across our family. The data from our 2024 Annual Returns demonstrates that attendance is growing in 57%

of our churches and that all our metrics for Children, Youth and Young Adults showed an increase too. Add to this the fact that we celebrated over 800 more baptisms in 2024 than the previous year, we can definitely say, with the Apostle Paul, that the gospel is producing and bearing fruit right here, amongst us.

What is encouraging me so much is that all sorts of churches are growing in all sorts of different ways. This is because each church has its own unique missional fingerprint as each gathering of believers is called to worship and share Jesus in their own context. And I think this makes for a wonderful, beautiful and varied Baptist movement. Some churches are seeing growth through their Renew Wellbeing ministry, others through Messy

Church, schools ministry and Uniformed organisations. Some churches are doing life with those on the margins and Jesus loving disciples are being born along the way. Others are offering Alpha or Christianity Explored as a way for people to discover Jesus. Some are out on the streets evangelising and others are out there praying for healing. Some are making a Kingdom impact through foodbanks and community kitchens. Other churches are planting new churches and others are seeking to pioneer and discover God and His Kingdom in unreached spaces. And all of this makes it clear that there is no 'secret formula' and no single approach to mission that is the right one. What is important is that we are all seeking to fulfil Jesus' Great Commandment and Great Commission in the places and contexts where God has put

us. This is true for us as disciples, leaders, churches and pioneer communities. As we do this, we are creating thousands of different connection points that can connect with the wonderfully diverse array of people living in communities up and down the UK.

It is one of the brilliant aspects of my role that I get to see and meet so many different churches and leaders across Baptists Together and hear your stories. I am inspired and encouraged about what God is doing in and through Baptists and I give thanks for you in prayer. My vantage point also enables me to reflect on what I am seeing and so here are things that I am noticing are important particularly when it comes to participating in God's mission.

## P R A Y E R

As I said earlier, our brothers and sisters from South Africa remind us that with God all things are possible. We need to continue and deepen our prayers as we intercede for our communities, pray for the Lord to touch people's hearts and seek God's Kingdom. Following our 2025 United in Mission Conference and Baptist

Assembly and my challenge to be ready for baptisms one church sent me an update about what happened next. Not having had a baptism at the church for six years, a Newly Accredited Minister went back to their church with the challenge, and they began to pray that they would have a baptism.

They continued to pray and in faith they set a date for a baptismal service for October! This is the message I received on Sunday 19 October, "Today we baptised 26 year old Peter with a packed church, amazing testimony and the Spirit moving in our midst." Praise the Lord!

## B U I L D I N G R E L A T I O N S H I P S S O W I N G S E E D S

Community engagement is one of our strengths as a Baptist family. We are often at the heart of our communities and people trust us. This is precious and not to be taken for granted. We love to bless and serve our communities, embodying and sharing Jesus to those around us, and we have been doing this for years in many cases. We love to be 'out there' not just 'in here';

we are 24:7 disciples on location. I really noticed the power of this during the Covid pandemic. In that time of crisis, the community relationships that had already been forged became vital channels of hope and connection as churches became vaccination centres, foodbank hubs, and early adopters of virtual worship and gathering.

Nowadays I see the fruit of all our relationship building and seed sowing through what has become known as the Quiet Revival. Churches that have faithfully run toddler groups, schools ministry and youth work are now seeing young people and 18-35s turning up to find out more about Jesus. Seeds sown are beginning to grow. Praise the Lord!

# DISCIPLESHIP

The Great Commission challenges us clearly to make disciples and so the need for discipleship cannot be over-estimated. This is even more vital, however, in our current context. The rise in interest in spirituality among 18-35 year olds that has been highlighted by the Quiet Revival report means that many of those we are connecting with often have little or no understanding of Jesus and the Christian faith. Being able to walk alongside them in faith is a tremendous privilege

and hugely exciting, but it is also a long and probably messy journey too. Nurturing Christlike, fully rounded Jesus followers is God's call to us now and it will require much love, faith, patience, discernment, perseverance and Holy Spirit wisdom. But, of course, discipleship is vital for all of us. We live in rapidly changing, deeply troubling times and global instability is going to exacerbate that even further. Christian nationalism, social and political polarisation, growing inequality,

war and climate crisis will all increasingly affect us and our discipleship will be sifted. How will we be the people of God in these days and what will it mean to be faithful Jesus followers? Do our roots go down deep enough so that we can shine Jesus' love and light in our communities and also have the courage to be the prophetic, dissenting voices that will speak truth to power and resist the prevailing popular rhetoric?

So, my question to you is this, which of these areas do you need to strengthen in your own discipleship and in your church or missional community? Where is God calling you to go deeper? And as we each reflect on this, we pray for one another as Paul encourages us:

Lynn Green is the  
General Secretary of  
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*“So we have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. Then the way you live will always honour and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better.*

*We also pray that you will be strengthened with all his glorious power so you will have all the endurance and patience you need. May you be filled with joy, always thanking the Father. He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light.”*

COLOSSIANS 1:9-12