



27 May, 2015

News:

Daring Greatly - new President's message

Baptists have been challenged to be people of courage to bring about transformation. That was the message from new President the Revd Jenni Entrican as she unpacked the Daring Greatly theme of her Presidency.

'To Dare Greatly is both an invitation and a challenge for us all,' she explained 'as God's people, as individuals, groups of Jesus' followers, churches, as a Union. It's a challenge to dare to do something and to dare to do it, not half-heartedly, but greatly.'

The phrase 'Daring Greatly' is taken from a book by Brené Brown about the value and importance of vulnerability, the subtitle of which is 'How the courage to be vulnerable transforms the way we live, love, parent and lead'.

It is not a challenge to become a great fearsome warrior brandishing a sword, and nor a challenge to do more, she explained. It is a challenge "to be different and to do differently."

There are three aspects to this challenge, she continued:

The courage to be real: 'In a nutshell, being willing to show up with your uncertainties and weaknesses'.

The courage to step outside the box: 'We need to have the courage to step away from what is comfortable for us, to enable us to see God at work beyond our comfort zones.'

And the courage to follow Jesus: 'The challenge that requires courage from us, is to look afresh at Jesus - whom he hung out with, what he said about religious law-keeping, and how his 'kingdom' was so significantly different from any 'kingdom' we still try to build.'

She said that the Bible is full of people who knew that God was asking them to be and do differently. 'Most were people like us - neither a world leader nor a wimp. And when, if, they picked up their specific challenge from God, they found that amazing things happened in them, to them and through them.'

Daring Greatly, not surprisingly given the upside-down nature of God's kingdom, is about 'giving up something to find something greater', Jenni said, before leading to a general challenge for all Baptists: 'I invite you to join me this year to unpack what Daring Greatly and these three aspects might mean for you.'

Those present were able to engage immediately with the theme, with each delegate pack containing a footprint, with the words: "The courage to...."

They were then invited to write something on the footprint and stick it on a wall in the atrium of the Kingsgate Centre.

Other ways of engaging include the Daring Greatly website www.daringgreatly.org.uk, which will be updated with Jenni's reflections, photos from her travels to meet people around our Union, and blogs from friends who will be sharing their own thoughts on the 'Daring Greatly' theme.

There is also a [Daring Greatly Facebook page](#).

Baptist Union Market Place sessions

The vision and culture of our Baptist Union was highlighted during two sessions in the afternoon's Market Place activities, which also included the Annual General Meeting

Vision, culture and priorities

At the start of both sessions General Secretary the Revd Lynn Green outlined our vision, culture and priorities as a Union. Our vision as a whole movement is **"Growing healthy churches in relationship for God's mission"** she explained, which means we want to see all our churches "healthy, spiritually vibrant and growing in discipleship."

The best way we can do this is "together, in relationship.... praying for each other, supporting and challenging each other, and pooling our resources and expertise for the sake of the Kingdom."

Our vision also means that we want to see every church being the best it can be at being and sharing the Good News of Jesus, she continued. We also want to see new churches and missional communities planted – "not because we don't care about existing congregations, but because we care passionately about the 94 per cent of the population who don't yet follow Jesus!"

In order to enable this vision, Lynn added, we believe that we need to intentionally develop a renewed culture among us. She outlined the following areas:

- We want to be a movement of Spirit-led communities with Christ at the centre – attentive to the Lord and obedient to His call
- We want to feel like one team – as our forebears said, “To walk together and watch over each other”.
- Our emphasis on the local church is both our strength and also our weakness. We need to harness the power of true interdependence if we are to be faithful to Christ.
- We want to embrace adventure. We recognise we have a tendency to be cautious and sometimes play it safe. But we want to learn more about taking risks and having the humility to fail well. We want to pioneer and move beyond our comfort zones in order to engage with people who are spiritually hungry.
- We want to inspire others – speaking well of each other, blessing one another and encouraging each other. That whenever anyone comes across a Baptist or a Baptist church they leave that encounter inspired to be what God created them to be.
- We want to have a deep desire to share a hunger for God’s coming Kingdom in the way that we are and in the things that we do – challenging evil and injustice and the structures of wealth and power both within and beyond Baptists Together.

Lynn added that since we last met at Assembly, our Union’s Council has been prayerfully considering our priorities as Baptists Together. Two key priorities have emerged: strengthening our focus on mission, and on how we are going to equip and support the sort of leaders that can enable mission to happen.

Ignite Project

The Revd Dr Rob Ellis introduced the Ignite Project, which he said will be looking carefully at the work of the Ministries Team based in Didcot. How can these resources be most effectively engaged to support ministry and mission among Baptists?

He said in asking that, further questions arise:

- What kind of ministries and leadership will we need to meet the challenges of the next decade or two?
- What kind of balance will we need between pioneering and inherited patterns of ministry and mission?
- How can we help those in ministry to develop their gifts in a world that might be very different from how it was when they were first called into ministry?
- How will colleges and associations best play their roles in enabling and resourcing ministries in the 21st century?
- How does the essential and effective ministry of those who are not BUGB accredited fit in, and how can these people be equipped and enabled?

- How will we pay for it all?

The Ignite Project will be headed up by the Revd Phil Jump, Regional Minister Regional Minister Team Leader of the North Western Baptist Association. It will be consulting “widely but speedily with a huge range of people within the Baptist family” over the next few months on the questions of ‘what ministries’ we need, and how we can together as the Baptist Union of Great Britain best support, develop and release all these ministries.

[Click here for a review of the Ignite Session at the Assembly Marketplace](#)

Fit for Mission

The Revd Stuart Davison, Regional Minister Team Leader of the South Eastern Baptist Association and a member of the Baptist Steering Group, spoke on the mission element of the priorities, introducing a major piece of research about mission in and through the local church.

Called Fit for Mission, churches are invited to fill in an online survey.

‘If our task is making Jesus known, we need to know if we are fit for mission? And if we need to get fit, then how?’ he asked.

The research is not a one-off piece of work; through it our Union aims to gain on-going knowledge to advance the mission of our churches.

The survey will be sent to churches via their Associations, and Stuart expressed his hope that every church will embrace it “enthusiastically”.

‘If we do not know where we are working, or where we are struggling, how can we move forward?’ said. The survey will take around 20 minutes.

AGM

The AGM was part of the first session. Malcolm Broad was re-elected as treasurer of our Union.

The Revd Rupert Lazar was elected as Baptist Union Vice-President, having been nominated earlier this year by Baptist Union Council. Both were passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

Malcolm also explained our Union’s 2014 consolidated accounts through a short presentation, which showed that our overall income was £9.2m, and expenditure £7.4m. This income includes exceptional income items such as legacies in the form of houses donated to the Retired Baptist Ministers Housing Society. When these are excluded it was encouraging to note that in 2014 all of the financial entities of our Union had operationally “balanced the books” in line with budget.

The Home Mission Appeal reached £3.9m, and more than 92p in every pound is now spent on charitable activities. Churches were asked to prayerfully consider giving five per cent of their income to Home Mission.

Thanks was given to God as this represents a major financial turnaround over the last two years compared with the deficit position our Union had been in. Malcolm paid tribute to the staff team behind the scenes for their hard work in overseeing and managing a major restructuring to deliver this breakthrough.

Thanks were also expressed for Malcolm's work, as well as Jenny Royal (outgoing moderator of Baptist Union trustees), David Locke (outgoing Finance Director and Team Leader Support Services), the Revd Dr Chris Ellis (President of our Union 2014-15) and Robert Ashurst (outgoing moderator for the Baptist Pension Scheme trustees).

Same-Sex-Marriage

The second session gave an update on our ongoing conversation as Baptists to Same Sex Marriage (SSM), which came into law in the last Parliament.

Lynn reminded delegates that an "expression of the reality that we are seeing and hearing from across Baptists Together" was offered at the 2014 Assembly.

The vast majority of Baptist churches affirm the traditional understanding of Christian marriage as being between a man and a woman, she continued (adding, "this is a view I wholeheartedly support").

She then invited the Revd Richard Lewis, Regional Minister in the Eastern Baptist Association, to explain why the Baptist Steering Group doesn't just "issue an edict banning Same Sex Marriages in our churches."

'It's because we see the local church as primary,' he explained. 'Our Declaration of Principle says that Christ, as revealed in the Scriptures, is our sole and absolute authority in matters of faith and practice and that the local church has liberty, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to interpret and administer His laws.'

'It's not that churches can do what they like,' he noted. 'But they do have the freedom to seek the mind of Christ as Spirit-led communities.'

Lynn then invited the Revd Geoff Andrews, Regional Minister Team Leader at the London Baptist Association (LBA), and the Revd Dianne Tidball, Regional Minister Team Leader at the East Midlands Baptist Association, to share key concerns they have heard as they have consulted among their churches.

Geoff spoke of the concern that "we are simply following culture and not being true to Scripture". There was also a concern that some churches feel they must

leave our Union if another registers to conduct Same Sex Marriages. 'Clearly, our desire is to nurture our unity as Baptists Together as we seek to be faithful in His mission,' he said, 'and there would be sadness if any church felt that it needed to leave our Union over this issue.'

He added that as he has listened to churches in the London Baptist Association, everyone who holds passionate views does so "as a result of reading the Bible".

'It sounds contradictory, but different people draw on Scripture in different ways. For us as Baptists, this is not a matter of reading the Bible or binning the Bible, it is about how we read and interpret the Bible,' he said.

Dianne spoke of the complexity of the area. Some have a fear of being marginalised for their interpretation of the Bible, she said. Additionally, we are not just having to think about this biblically, "as churches we also want to be engaging with people pastorally and missionally in our own context."

She warmly commended the Evangelical Alliance resource [Biblical and Pastoral Responses to Homosexuality](#), which offer help in working out practical responses to real people.

The Revd Stephen Keyworth, Faith and Society Team Leader, then spoke of the next phase of the conversation, which included the need to ask deeper questions about how we faithfully seek the mind of Christ together, and also to prayerfully consider "what we do when churches in different contexts embrace different responses to the majority".

He added he was aware there is still a need for conversation and consultation, and opportunities for this will continue.

'I hope churches will engage in church meetings, in ministers gatherings, in associations and colleges,' said Stephen, 'in many and varied networks of Baptists Together.'

The email address talkingtontogether@mail.com is still in use. Every email is read and informs the ongoing reflection in the Baptist Steering Group and later Council.

'All these conversations will inform the discussion,' continued Stephen, 'think – pray – talk together and listen to God.'

Loaves and Fishes

David Locke gave an update on the Loaves and Fishes project, an initiative to explore whether there are ways to release more financial resources for mission and led by the Revd Rich Webb, minister of Scunthorpe Baptist Church and new moderator of Trustees, and Anne Bishop, a charity consultant married to a Baptist minister.

'We have been consulting with the Baptist family and have been absolutely thrilled with the feedback,' said David. 'We are excited by how God is going to work in the year ahead.'

For more on Loaves and Fishes visit
<http://www.baptist.org.uk/Publisher/Article.aspx?ID=434841>

Contact: fivebarleyloaves@gmail.com

Investing in the future

The Revd Dave Ellis, who became a Regional Minister in the Heart of England Baptist Association took up the theme by speaking on investing for the future.

'As Lynn shared, our vision is growing healthy churches in relationship for God's mission. To enable that to happen we want to invest in equipping local churches for mission, to see 400 new pioneers being trained and released; we want to invest in developing our virtual connectedness and communications and we want to invest in equipping and inspiring missional leaders throughout Baptists Together.

'This demands our prayer, our energy and our finances. All that you give through Home Mission helps us invest in God's future.'

Faith groups' social support measured at £3bn

New research from the Cinnamon Network documents large scale social impact and economic value faith-based groups are having in their communities

The report from the Christian charity the Cinnamon Network is the most comprehensive analysis yet of the current level of commitment of local churches and other faith groups in supporting their communities.

Gathered in 57 "Faith Action Audits" and then extrapolated across the UK, it estimated that nearly two million volunteers and 125,000 paid staff are involved in almost 220,000 social action projects each year.

The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby was the keynote speaker at the report's launch in front of 400 delegates at the Emmanuel Centre in London on Wednesday (20 May).

Quoting Einstein when he said, "It is extraordinary what can be achieved by

people who don't care whether they get the credit for it or not", he emphasised that the true work of the church was not done by Archbishops and senior leaders, but by every local church community.

'Faith communities have risen to the challenges of the past seven or eight years in the most extraordinary way,' he said, 'As they have done before and will continue to do, whatever happens in the future with the economy, because there will always be people in need.'

The data was gathered in Faith Action Audits, conducted by 57 "Local Champions" who invited all types of faith groups who meet a wide range of social needs to participate.

More than 4,440 groups were contacted; with 2,110 responding. The results showed they were mobilising 139,000 volunteers and 9,177 paid staff to support 3,494,634 beneficiaries each year. The time given by these church and other faith groups was worth more than £200m, the report stated.

It went on to highlight that if there are around 60,761 faith groups in the UK and only 47.5 per cent of them (the same percentage that completed the survey) delivered what the Cinnamon Faith Action Audits' average group did, this would mean that collectively the faith sector annually delivers 220,000 social action projects, by approximately 125,000 paid staff and 1,910,500 volunteers. Nationally this puts the time given by churches and other faith groups into their communities through social action projects at more than £3billion a year.

The findings were gathered in early 2015, across 57 cities, towns, and villages in both urban and rural areas.

Matt Bird, Founder of Cinnamon Network said, 'The Audit findings were extremely revealing and leave us in no doubt about the crucial role faith groups in the UK play in delivering key social action projects in their cities or towns.'

'As Cinnamon Network our vision is to see local churches and other faith groups more empowered and encouraged to take up their place as they serve at the heart of their community.'

'We also want to see their work externally recognised and properly resourced as part of the overall picture of provision in any given community.'

The report added that there is likely to be widening gaps in services due to statutory provision being increasingly limited.

'Into these gaps the Cinnamon Network wants to see local churches and other faith groups grow in confidence and capacity in their role at the heart of the community,' it stated.

Comedy final for Baptist minister

The Revd Allan Finnegan, minister of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Netherton, was one of eight finalists of the New Comedian of the Year 2015 at the Backyard Comedy Club in Bethnal Green

And although he didn't win once at the final in London, he's not unhappy with how things panned out. He made it to Bethnal Green after winning a heat in Wales and progressing through the northern final in Leeds.

'I'm told that 300 people entered the competition,' he says. 'I don't know where I finished, but I guess I was in the last eight. I did ok on the night. I was on after someone who didn't do too well, which always makes it harder, but it was ok. The heats went really well, particularly the first one. I didn't even realize I was in a competition – I only went down for a gig.'

Allan has been doing stand-up for around three years and is now gigging several times a week.

Comedy clubs are among the most atheistic places he's been to, he explains where evangelical Christians, even Jesus, are ridiculed. But by being there Allan hopes to change perceptions of Christianity. His act focuses on his life as a minister.

'The most common question I get asked is if I'm really a minister,' he says. 'I want to reach a different audience, one that doesn't come to church. 'It's not evangelistic, it's very low level, but hopefully I will leave some questions.'

'There is an interest in faith,' he continues. 'They still know some of the big stories in the Bible; the Good Samaritan, Jesus feeding the 5,000. I find a lot of them have left church over some fall out or disagreement. There is a lot of searching. Lots of people are hungry for something.'

He became interested in the similarities between preaching and stand-up while a student at Northern Baptist College. In one seminar he was told that the days of traditional preaching were over.

'A few days before I'd been at a gig with Peter Kay and an audience of 1,500 people. This is not a cultural oddity. It's the way we do it. I challenged the thinking.'

As part of the course he asked to go on a comedy course so he could analyse the preaching and comedy, and found there was a lot of similarities.

He has been gigging ever since, with bookings increasing after a supportive tweet from up and coming comedian Joe Lycett.

There are several Christian comics on the circuit, but none to his knowledge who draw their material from being in a pastorate. He believes more ministers could

try it.

'I know it's not for everyone, but preachers have all the tools to do this.'

Baptisms:

Colchester Baptist Church, Essex: Olalekan Tunde Oloyede, Leslie Hoffman
Comberton Baptist Church, Cambridgeshire: Janek Trace-Kleeberg, Ishka Trace-Kleeberg, Sophie Smith, Amanda Brown, Mica Trace-Kleeberg
Delves Baptist Community Church, Walsall: Sophie Pittaway and Norma Smith
Dereham Baptist Church, Norfolk: Olinda Simoes & Silvina Silva
Earlsfield Baptist Church, London: Joyce Wright
Farnworth Baptist Church, Lancashire: Caron Woods and Mark Ham
Lockwood Baptist Church, Huddersfield: Sav Singh
Maghull Baptist Church, Liverpool: Jess Shallcross and Alice Howarth
Nansen Road Baptist Church, Ipswich: Brian Percy, Angela Anand and David Anand
Thatcham Baptist Church, Berkshire: Eloise Collis
West Wickham and Shirley Baptist Church, London: Tanya Mack
Woodstock Baptist Church, Oxfordshire: Tom and Gloria Silvestre, Nana Forson (Witney Baptist Church) Previously unreported – Perrie nheta

Baptism stories:

Delves Community Baptist Church

We had a wonderful service as Sophie shared how attending Soul Survivor events had brought her to faith, and Norma told of a lifelong commitment to Christ brought to completion by this act of obedience to Him. It was especially moving to see all the young people who had been at Soul Survivor gathering around Sophie to lay hands on her and pray for her – the Revd Ruth Wood

Lockwood Baptist Church

I'd like to inform you of our Baptism service on Easter Sunday of Sav Singh, who found his way to Christ after studying the Guru Grant Saheeb and the Koran, and in both finding that they pointed him to find out more about Christ. He brought 30 Sikh and Muslim friends from school and work to hear his testimony and see the Baptism – the Revd Brian Davison

Deaths:

STEPHENS, The Revd C Alan

Died 26th May 2015 at the Darent Valley Hospital, Dartford, Kent at the age of 90 as a result of the illnesses associated with old age. He was in Methodist Ministry from 1951 to 1963. From 1963 to 1974 he was an itinerant evangelist (often

working with the Billy Graham Association) though from 1969 to 1974 he was based in Harefield Baptist church as their pastor. From 1974 to 1992 he was minister at East Hill Baptist Church, Wandsworth, London. He retired in 1992 but then from 1994 to 1999 he came out of retirement and pastored the Baptist church at East Worthing, Sussex. He leaves behind him his wife Joy and their two children Pam and Peter.

TUCKER, the Revd Brian

Beloved father and grandfather , formerly minister at Trinity Manchester, Fordhouses Wolverhampton, Saffron Waldon, and Girdlington Bradford: Tutor Northern Baptist College; Chairman of BMS and BMS Mission worker in Zaire, died on 8 May 2015 at the Hospice of St Francis Hertfordshire.

A Service of Thanksgiving was held at Marshalswick Baptist Free Church Sherwood Avenue St Albans AL4 9QL on Wednesday 27 May

PRIOR Sue

Mother of Rachel and Sarah, grandma to Zac and wife of Dick, Minister of Quinton Park Baptist Church, died suddenly on May 6th. A service of thanksgiving was held at Quinton Park on Wednesday 27th at 1pm. Gifts to Macmillan Cancer Charity.

Jobs:

Non-Executive Directors, Baptist Insurance

Finance Director / Team Leader Support Services, Baptists Together

Children's and Youth Worker, Station Hill Baptist Church

For more on all these positions, visit www.baptist.org.uk/jobs

Events:

Bicentenary Celebration

12 July, Tabernacle Baptist Church, Wolverhampton

The final Bicentenary celebration – marking the 200 year relationship between British and Jamaican Baptists - will take place at Tabernacle Baptist Church Wolverhampton on Sunday 12 July from 6.30pm. The General Secretary of the Jamaican Baptist Union, Revd Karl Johnson, will be preaching at the event.

Other:

A message from **Baptist Insurance:**

As a Christian insurance organisation, Baptist Insurance believes that God is honoured when we provide truly excellent services to individuals, churches, and businesses. Baptist Insurance strives to steward its financial resources with the highest levels of professionalism and Christian integrity.

Looking ahead to its future needs and long-term vision for its business objectives and grant-giving aspirations, Baptist Insurance is seeking to appoint three new non-executive members to its Board of Directors:

- A Grants Advisor, bringing insight to the diverse expressions of Baptist

Mission and Evangelism

- A General Insurance Expert
- A Financial Expert, able to work alongside the Deputy Chairman and take responsibility for aspects of financial and risk oversight for the organisation

Baptist Insurance has always been committed to providing more than just insurance services. The Baptist Insurance Board is passionate about supporting people and organisations who really make a difference by enriching the lives of others through Christian mission, in word and deed. Therefore, all distributable profits are invested back into the Baptist community and evangelistic projects chosen by the Baptist Insurance Board.

Baptist Insurance is working with Macaulay Search to conduct this critical appointment process. For more information please visit

<http://www.macaulaysearch.com/candidate/>

For more visit www.baptisttimes.co.uk