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News:

We are partners in the gospel

A new DVD focuses on individuals who have seen the benefits that have come to a community as a result of Home Mission support. By Ruth Whiter

I don't really know what this video is about," admits Debbie Main in one of the Home Mission videos we've produced as a partnership of Associations.

She doesn't know much about [Baptist Home Mission](#), but she does know that the minister whose church meets in her school, who is supported by a Home Mission grant, has made a huge difference to the life of the school.

In the South and West of England and Wales, we've been gradually learning to work together as four Association teams where that benefits our churches and God's mission through them.

Home Mission grants are now allocated regionally with each Association accountable to the others; new callings to ministry go through a process administered by the partnership; and we are working out how to collaborate in our communications with churches and individual disciples.

One aspect of this is sharing stories of how Home Mission money is being used regionally. We encourage all our churches to give at least five per cent of their income, so it's important to feed back the difference this money makes, whether it's spent on support via Regional or Specialist teams, or on direct grants to churches.

We got together as a partnership and started talking about this. In a world full of communication media, what would our churches find most helpful? We carried out a survey across all partnership churches, and received, helpfully, a really clear answer: almost 75 per cent thought that video on a physical DVD would be the most effective tool. So a small team from WEBA, SWBA, and SCBA set to work on a partnership Home Mission DVD.

We've called it *Partners in the gospel* – that's what we want to be as associations, and it's also what every church that gives to Home Mission already is. We decided to focus, where possible, on individuals who had seen the benefits that

had come to a community as a result of Home Mission support, but weren't necessarily the people who had applied for the grants.

The DVD contains six short films – in addition to Debbie the headteacher there are diners at the Sanctuary café in Watchet, the Revd James Neve talking about Frontline Debt Advice in Southampton, and Nick in Swindon who was eager to share her story of mental health healing.

The DVD also contains a shorter compilation video, *What difference are we making?*, and a short film - *Prophetic Harvesting* - reflecting on the mission challenges and opportunities presented as thousands of new homes are being built across our region.

If you've become used to viewing video content on youtube and Netflix you may find it a little surprising that most of our churches wanted a physical DVD – but of course this didn't stop us making the set of videos available online too. You can view and download them all at vimeo.com/channels/seventytwo.

DVDs will be distributed to churches in WEBA, SCBA, and SWBA, but we do have a few spare at the WEBA office – please contact Ruth Whiter at office@webassoc.org.uk if you would like one.

Ruth Whiter is Communications Co-ordinator at the West of England Baptist Association

Parliament lobby on climate change

Thousands of Christians will gather in Westminster next Wednesday to speak up for the things they love which could be lost as a result of climate change

The ecumenical service, organised by [Tearfund](#) and other Christian organisations, will take place ahead of the first mass lobby of the new government. Thousands of people are expected to arrive in Westminster for the mass lobby, brought together by more than 100 agencies through [The Climate Coalition](#).

They will demand that their new MPs take a stand in the global fight against climate change and save the things they love. Ahead of the global climate summit to be held in Paris in December, campaigners from all walks of life will call on our politicians to work together across the political parties to:

Support a global climate change agreement that will end carbon pollution from fossil fuels by the middle of the century – critical if we are to keep global temperature rises below 2 degrees.

Ensure that the Sustainable Development Goals to be agreed by the United

Nations this autumn reflect the need for ambitious action on climate change.

End climate pollution from coal use in the UK, on the way to phasing out carbon from our power system.

Invest in warm homes, sustainable transport, and clean energy.

Baptist minister the Revd Dave Matthews, 63, pastor of a church for surfers at Polzeath, North Cornwall, will be among them. He said, 'I'm passionate about surfing, especially on my favourite beaches in Cornwall, but climate change is damaging coastlines and causing the sea level to rise, threatening beaches and the communities near them all around the world. In Bangladesh, people's land and crops are being washed away, making survival extremely difficult.

'As a Christian, I believe the church has a moral imperative to speak up for the people most affected by climate change and to care for God's beautiful creation. That's why I campaign with Tearfund and why I'm going to lend my voice to many others calling our government to act.'

Baptists David Golding and Gareth Davies-Jones are leaders of the regional campaign on global poverty and climate change, North East Call to Action.

They are working together to mobilise support for the national lobby of Parliament on 17 June – and believe Baptist churches are ideally suited to make a significant contribution in ensuring all North East constituencies represented.

'Climate change is the greatest moral and humanitarian challenge facing humanity and it threatens all the things we love most,' they said. 'However, on 17 June, we have a great opportunity to help protect them, by meeting our newly elected MPs in Westminster to ask them to commit to strong action on climate change.

'We would like to see most, if not all, NE constituencies represented at this event, and feel that Baptist churches are ideally situated to make a significant contribution to achieving this! Not only are they widely distributed throughout the region, but they can share the cost of travel and thus minimise the burden on those who are willing to act as their 'delegates' at the event.

'Christian believers in general, and those in the North East in particular, have an enviable reputation for their support for action on global poverty.

'And our efforts have been blessed by God with, for example, massive debt cancellation and a reduction in child mortality of over 50 per cent - amazing! Now is not the time to let ourselves down – still less to betray the world's poor and our own children and grandchildren - by a failure to rise to this great challenge.'

[\(Listen to David Golding being interviewed on Premier Radio about the climate](#)

change lobby)

During the service, which will be held at St Margaret's, Parliament Square, people will have the opportunity to pray and worship together, while hearing from The Bishop of Salisbury, about the church's mandate to speak up about climate change, and the devastating effects climate change is already having on the world's most vulnerable people.

The Rt Revd Nicholas Holtam, the Bishop of Salisbury said, 'The changing climate is affecting all of us but is pressing hardest on those who are most vulnerable. As the church, we are called to serve the world's poorest people, that's why we need to speak up and call our government to act now.'

The Climate Coalition's combined membership totals more than 11 million people across the UK.

Marathon for Ella's Home

Two young women who are running from Edinburgh to London for Ella's Home, a place for women who have been trafficked and sexually exploited in the UK

'Ella's Homerun' is being undertaken by Emily Chalke, 32, and Rachel Price, 24, over 16 days. The duo will average between 20-30 miles a day.

Along the route the women will be giving talks to local communities to educate and raise awareness of the issues around sexual exploitation and trafficking here in the UK.

Ella's Home is a project of Kahaila, which runs a well loved café in London's Brick Lane, supports several community projects. Kahaila was the vision of Baptist minister Paul Unsworth.

Also supported by BMS World Mission, Ella's Home aims to empower women who have been affected by trafficking and/or sexual exploitation by offering safe accommodation and rehabilitative services, and is being set up to address the current challenge of the limited provision of aftercare services in the UK for women exiting trafficking and sexual exploitation. It is intended that the home opens in summer 2015.

Emily, Ella's Home Project Director, said, 'I've seen the devastating impact on women when support is unavailable to them, they've been through something horrific and then had to suffer all over again because there is nowhere safe for them to be and to recover.

'This tragically also includes several British women, such as one English woman who made contact with me a couple of months ago, having spent the last year on

the run trying to escape the gang who trafficked her. She feels she has nowhere safe in London.

'We are taking on the challenge of this run to ensure women have a place when they need it most.'

Funds are required to ensure that the home can operate and cater to the needs of the women. Emily, daughter of Baptist minister Steve Chalke, and Rachel, whose parents Ellen and Steve Price are East Midlands Baptist Association Regional Ministers, are aiming to raise £30,000.

They have been through rigorous training for the past nine months with physiotherapists and an endurance trainer to mentally and physically prepare them for the ultimate stamina test. They will eat hourly, and ensure a solid night's sleep for recovery, which AirBnB hosts have kindly sponsored throughout the entire trip, each night in a different location.

Their epic journey will reach its crescendo on Sunday 21 June where the women have invited local communities and running clubs to join their last 5 and 10km from North London to Shoreditch Park, East London.

See their route, follow their progress and find out more:

Website - <http://ellashomerun.com>

Twitter - <https://twitter.com/ellashomerun>

Instagram - #ellashomerun

To donate, visit: www.ellashomerun.com/donate

Nothing is impossible in Him

If you are a struggling small church do not despair, for our God is able to do far more than we can begin to imagine - like here in Birkenhead

Nothing is impossible with Him

If you are a small church too and are struggling then do not despair, for our God is able to do far more than we can begin to imagine - like here at Laird Street Baptist Church. By Cathy Buntin

Four years ago Laird Street Baptist Church in Birkenhead faced the difficulty of having to close our family centre due to lack of funding.

At the time the area surrounding the church was under regeneration and local families were being moved out, leaving the church standing in an increasingly barren place. Following this we then found ourselves without a minister.

It would be easy to think God's work in the community had come to an end - but

God had other plans.

After prayer God laid it on my heart to grow his church by using the gifts of the members, and with the support of the diaconate we began to encourage members to discover their God given gifts and to use them.

The deacons became a leadership team working together. When people use their God given gifts this enables the body to grow and this is what is happening now. New people joined the church and we had the pleasure of welcoming two new members into membership on a recent Sunday (24 May). Another person has since asked for membership.

Praise God we have a new community being built up around the church. It is very different and we now have the privilege of seeking God's wisdom as to how to interact with the local community.

People thought the church was closed so we placed new notices outside that would be relevant to their thinking and understanding. After prayer it was decided to open a coffee morning each Monday. After a very slow and discouraging start this has really taken off, and we have people coming in from the local community.

We are now starting a new venture with one of the local agencies in the area - The St James Centre - whereby on the first Tuesday of each month we are inviting the local community to join the church family for a 'bring and share tea'.

This started on Tuesday (2 June) and is an exciting time for us. Hopefully this will create space to interact and get to know the new residents in our community with opportunities for the Gospel to be shown in practical ways.

Planning ahead we aim to have a BBQ (British weather permitting) and hold a couple of concerts.

At our last service (Sunday 31 May) we had a visit from BMS Mission worker Judith Cook's parents, Peter and Gill Cook (Judith is serving with BMS in Thailand). This was a really encouraging service, after which I had the opportunity of leading someone to the Lord. What an amazing God we have! This is what mission is all about, serving God, sharing with people and telling the message simply.

If you are a small church too and are struggling then do not despair. Our God is able to do far more than we can begin to imagine, nothing is impossible with him. Remember it is his church we are his people and the sheep of his pasture. We are part of a great plan. God is awesome, amazing and very much in control of all that happens to us.

Everything that we faced as a church in the past God has been quietly and faithfully working out his good plans and purposes for us. Through all that we have been through together as a church family we have grown together and we

can only look forward to all the good things that God has in store for us and there is more to come. Be encouraged do not give up keep your eyes fixed on Jesus the Author and finisher of our salvation. All the glory and all the praise go to our mighty Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Cathy Buntin is the secretary of Laird Street Baptist Church, and has been pastoring the church for the last three years. She has completed four years at theological college, and has been recognised by the ministerial recognition committee for local recognised ministry

‘Stop Cuban Baptist Church being taken’

Global advocacy charity Christian Solidarity Worldwide is encouraging Christians to sign a petition against the confiscation of a Cuban Baptist church by its government

Maranatha First Baptist Church has been informed that the government is going to confiscate the church building and it will have to pay rent to the state. If this goes ahead, the government could dictate what does or doesn't happen in the building.

CSW has set up a petition to protest what's happening, encouraging Christians to 'tell the Cuban embassy you won't stand by silently while a church is taken.'

'With Cuba officially a Communist state, and the government doing everything it can to stamp out religion, it's not difficult to work out that this would be a disaster for Pastor Amado and his congregation,' CSW states.

'We'll deliver your signatures to the church to encourage them, and to the Cuban embassy in London, sending a strong message to the Cuban government that we won't stand by and allow them to confiscate churches.'

Although the church is facing hardship, there is nevertheless encouraging news among its congregation, as shared in a recent message to CSW from its leader Pastor Amado Oliveros.

'Cordial greetings to our brothers and sisters and friends who have stood alongside us in these days,' he wrote.

'I am writing to tell you that we are still in the same situation, in the sense that there has been no statement from the authorities. We trust in our God and we hope that the government officials in charge of our case are using these days of silence in order to find a viable alternative that will not in any way involve confiscation. In the meantime we continue with our regular programmes.

'We want to share some good news. Last Sunday, 30 May, in the evening 52 young people gave their lives to Jesus Christ. It was a glorious night.

'After many days of prayer and preparation, we held a special service designed for children and young people. The church was completely full and when we gave the call to come to God, the number mentioned above responded.

'God continues to show his mercy, removing children and adolescents from the fog of this world.'

Sign the petition here: <http://e-activist.com/ea-action/action?ea.client.id=88&ea.campaign.id=39218>

Baptisms:

Acre Mill Baptist, Bacup, Lancashire: Jason Heath, Louise Farrow

Burgh Baptist Church, Skegness: Jason and Corrine Elliott

Fleet Baptist Church, Fleet, Hampshire: Emelda Ushewokunze, Lydia Overton, Travis and Gill McCall

Mill End Baptist Church, Rickmansworth, Herts: Marcus Ling

Smethwick Baptist Church, West Midlands: Thomas Hylton

Streatham Baptist Church, London: Henry Conteh, Shelby Goss, Caleb Jebbison

Underwood Baptist Free Community Church, Newport, South Wales: Jessica Seddon

Walmer Baptist Church, Deal: Amy King

Baptism stories:

Nansen Road Baptist Church, Ipswich:

A brother and a sister, David and Angela Anand and a new visitor Brian Percy were baptised on the Pentecost Sunday morning on 24 May, 2015 by the Revd Peterson Anand at Nansen Road Baptist Church, Ipswich. It was a great time of celebration for the church.

Brian has been a long time Christian who received Christ as his personal Saviour and Lord through the preaching of a very famous English Evangelist, the Revd Dick Saunders. Brian moved to the area and regularly passing by the Nansen Road Baptist Church. Finally, he came to the united church service in the evening. He felt a warm welcome by everyone and he enjoyed his favourite song, "Light of the world, You step down into darkness." Since that day, he decided to join the church and expressed his desire to be baptised at his next birthday.

In a different way, Angela had given her heart to Jesus when she was only four years old. She saw the film Jesus on her dad's laptop and was moved by the suffering of Christ on the cross. She asked her Mum and Dad, "How can I give my heart to Jesus?" Her Mum and Dad were stunned and were wondering how this

little girl could ask such a question. They led her to commit her life to Jesus by a simple prayer. Since then in a Christian festival, she also committed her life to the Lord. Ever since, she has continued to love and follow the Lord. She serves the Lord in the church by leading the 'Kingdom Kidz' for the young children.

David went to a Christian festival in summer where he heard the message of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. He felt that he was a sinner and needed cleansing from his sins. He gave his life to Jesus, repented of his sins and accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour and Lord. He also received the Holy Spirit on that day.

Ever since, he had a desire to study God's word and follow the Lord with sincerity. Now, he helps the church by managing to display the power points in the services. He also plays guitar in the church for the praise and worship of his Lord. He chose the song, "Every one needs compassion (Mighty to save)" and played his guitar to lead the worship after his Baptism.

We pray and believe that as the festival of Pentecost is also a celebration of giving of the first fruits of the crops to the Lord and believe that a rich harvest will follow, so we believe that we will reap the rich harvest of souls in the coming days in our church. Please pray for these new lives in Christ that they may continue to grow in the knowledge of the love of Christ. That they may follow Him all the days of their lives with their total commitments.

This is just a beginning of their journey to follow Christ. Pray that they may be victorious in all their temptations and trials. Pray that the church may continue to witness Christ in the community and welcome the new visitors in the church with the love of Christ.

Deaths:

THOMPSON, David Michael died aged 76 died on 28 May in Winchester Hospital. He was brought up and baptised in Centenary Baptist Church March. He served God at Selsdon and New Malden Baptist Churches in various roles. He was Church Secretary for 17 years at Fleet Baptist Church where he also led Christmas music and church holidays. He was a much loved husband of Jane and Dad of Clare and John, loving father in law, Grandad, Brother and Uncle. More recently he played the piano for worship at Christchurch Winchester.

Jobs:

Children's and Youth Worker, Station Hill Baptist Church

For more information, visit <http://www.baptist.org.uk/jobs>

Events:

Digital Evangelism Training Webinar

29 June

Learn how to share your faith online and connect people to your church using

the internet. Hosted by the Revd Simon Goddard, Regional Minister Eastern Baptist Association; trainer is Baptist evangelist the Revd Jon Turner, UK Country Manager for Christian Vision

Register at www.bit.ly/digitalevangelism

Bi-Vocational Ministry Conference

Tuesday 14 - Wednesday 15 July

Bristol Baptist College,

You are invited to join a working consultation on the challenges and opportunities of bi-vocational ministry. Is the rise of bi-vocational ministry a response of despair in the face of falling congregations and church bank balances? Or does it reflect a new work of the Spirit as God equips the church in more flexible ways for ministry and mission in today's world?