



# VOICES FROM BAPTIST ASSEMBLY 2022

This year's Baptist Assembly had the theme of connection and conversation, and there was a range of ways delegates could voice their thoughts. This is a flavour of what was shared and heard

## LISTENING BOARD

Those in Bournemouth, where the Assembly was held, could contribute to a listening board stationed in the network zone. Erica Bowler, a Baptist minister and missional listener in Purfleet, served as an intentional listener at the stand. She collated the notes and grouped them into different themes:

### Mission

*'Engaging with people 'in the world' who don't see the need for God'*

*'How can we effectively share Jesus and see more people following him?'*

*'Thank you for funding pioneer work - please use any spare monies to forward pioneering'*

*'How do you enable gifted people in the congregation to be released to where the unchurched are and not be over burdened by internal roles?'*

'Mission was the biggest topic people wanted to discuss,' Erica writes. 'There were fundamental questions about mission and how to do it, alongside practical questions about how to finance mission, how pioneers and emerging projects can feel supported, and how churches can act together to create strategy and support.'

### Same sex marriage and same sex relationships

*'How do we hold authentic and open conversation around LGTB+ inclusion without weighting either side and honouring different views/outcomes?'*

'Many people were just confused,' writes Erica. 'Everyone knows someone who is affected, but

they don't know how to have the conversation as a church. Most people who hold a traditional view of marriage didn't want to put it on the board and were feeling silenced at the Assembly. By contrast there was pain from the 2016 Council statement 'humbly urging' those who want to affirm LGBTQ relationships not to do so.

'As well as the pastoral issue there's a missional issue. Some are concerned that we are having these conversations at the expense of mission. But others are wondering how our conversations might affect those we seek to reach.'

### Other messages:

**Baptist life:** *'How can BUGB listen to its component parts meaningfully?'*

*'How can we more properly recognise our union in everyday church activities and services?'*

**Diversity and unity:** *'How much diversity can our unity embrace? If Jesus is in the middle - lots! If we are in the middle, not much.'*

