

CONVERSATION STARTERS



A range of people representing different aspects of Baptist life were invited to give short presentations at this year's Baptist Assembly on the question "What is the conversation you would like the Baptist family to have together over the coming year?"

The presentations were powered by Pecha Kucha, an engaging, visual format where a presenter shows 20 slides for 20 seconds of commentary each. They are all available on the Baptist Assembly website and YouTube channel.

We would encourage you to reflect on each presentation and, if you sense appropriate to your context, share it with your church or home group, along with the accompanying questions to discuss.

Children, Young People and Families

Amie Buhari, CEO and founder of Hebe Foundation, represented the Children, Young People and Families Round Table (CYF).

Highlighting the case of Child Q, the 15 year old schoolgirl strip searched by police while she was on her period, she explained how the scales in society are tipped against black and brown young people. Young people are in a fight for their rights, Amie said, and asked churches to journey with them on the road to equality.

Amie's question was:

How will my/our church be intentional in breaking our silence and complicity concerning racism, particularly in connection with children and young people?





Pioneering

John Good is a pioneer minister in Hamworthy, Poole. He spoke about new ideas for church and kingdom when money and people are running out. There are lots of new ideas that could become as reliable as our old ways, if only they were given a try.

John's questions were:

Churches, and regional teams, would you be prepared to send more people into more 'ball ponds' so together we can find brand new reliable ideas for church and kingdom, into the future?

How are we going to develop new ministries to reflect Christ in the new world we are always moving into?

Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT)

Steve Tinning, Public Issues Enabler spoke on hospitality and welcoming the stranger.



He explained how his previous church had welcomed a family from Syria, and how transformative that had been. He highlighted the six hopes that underpin the work of JPIT, which include welcoming the stranger, working for justice and peace.

Hospitality is a choice, Steve said, a divine privilege, a defining characteristic of God's coming Kingdom.

Steve's question for discussion with your church is:

How are we explicitly and intentionally embodying hospitality in this church?

Another way to phrase it is this:

Do you consider the striving for such a just, peaceful and hospitable society a fundamental part of the church's mission?

Hospital Chaplaincy



Sarah Crane leads the chaplaincy team at Milton Keynes Hospital. She spoke about ministering to those whose beliefs were different from her own, and of seeing "the love of God mediated to me through them as the guest in their space."

Sarah's questions were:

Is what we give up, in responding to people in a person-centred way, worth it?

In other words, can we as individuals and communities cherish our own identities and yet open up to others with different beliefs as bearers of the divine image, who regardless of their beliefs can teach us something about the love of God?

Racial Justice

Margaret Gibbs, minister of Perry Rise Baptist Church in south east London, was joined by Karen Campbell of the United Reformed Church in representing the National Racial Justice Hub.

Their talk highlighted the slave trade, the involvement of Christians in it and the colossal profits made in Britain. While compensation was paid to slave owners when slavery was abolished in 1834 (a debt only cleared in 2015), none was ever paid to enslaved people. But in the present day reparations for historical injustices are becoming a defining issue, with some institutions committing to it.

“Can we afford it?” Margaret asked. “Of course not. But we can’t afford not to.”

Margaret and Karen’s question was:

When and how shall we make reparation?



Disability Justice

Craig Millward of the Baptists Together Disability Justice Group spoke about how different we all are - yet how we often act to fit in.

Jesus didn’t do this - he refused to play the social games that would have endeared him to others. Fear of being different paralyses, Craig said, yet Jesus calls us to choose ‘different’ like he was.

“People who accept their difference can be a gift,” said Craig.

Craig asked a series of questions, which included:

Do you hide your differences - or might they be a gift to the world?

Do the social settings you live in or the institutions you’ve built have a place for different people?



Baptist Union Environment Network

Joe Egan represented BUEN, the Baptist Union Environment Network. Joe is one of the ministers of High Street Baptist Church, Tring, the first Baptist church to achieve the gold Eco Church award.

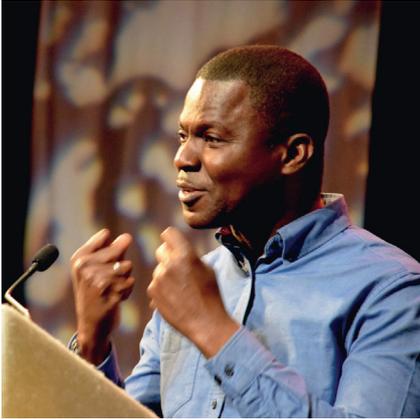
He shared a conversation BUEN would like Baptists Together to have ‘around the place of creation care in the gospel - and therefore its place in the ministry of our churches’.

Joe’s question was:

How can my church take a bigger view of creation care and live out the gospel truth that God so loves the world?



Making Disciples



Kwame Adzam is a pastor at Trinity Baptist Church and the evangelism and discipleship lead at BMS World Mission. He explained that making disciples the Jesus way is about investing in the life of one disciple at a time, which may lead to the multiplication of disciples over time.

He highlighted the story of Ben Francis, the Big Life/Disciple Making Movement, and their desire to share what they learn about Jesus. Making disciples is not a silver bullet to all the church's challenges, Kwame said, but it is a missional lifestyle.

Kwame's question was:

What would happen in the church if making disciples becomes the lifestyle of being church?

The Digital Revolution



Hayley Young and Carl Smethurst spoke about the Digital Revolution, a core priority for Baptists Together as discerned by Baptist Union Council in 2018.

There are several digital missionaries in associations helping us explore how we might share our faith in word and deed in the digital spaces. Engaging people in the digital world is a valid form of ministry and mission. If we choose to acknowledge the reality of the digital space, there are opportunities.

Hayley and Carl's questions were:

What does the digital revolution look like to you and your church?

In your context how does the Kingdom of God influence and impact the digital world you inhabit?

Young Adults / Emerging Leaders



Isabella Senior is Baptists Together Young Leaders' Development Coordinator, and Claude Halm is the pastor of International Praise Centre Baptist Church, a church pioneered 10 years ago for young black British millennials in east London.

Their address focused on developing an active mission agenda to reach the younger generations to be our future leaders, one of our priorities identified by Council in 2018. While 16.1 percent of the UK population are young adults, only 7.2 percent of our Baptist church attendance is made up of this group.

Isabella and Claude's questions were:

What are we willing to invest?

If the young adults are not in our churches, where are they and what will my church do to engage with them?

Hong Kong Response Project

Sharon Shek, the Baptists Together Hong Kong Response Co-ordinator, highlighted how almost 100,000 Hong Kongers have been granted British National (Overseas) visas. Following the implementation of a new security law on 1 July 2020, a wave of mass migration is happening of people with broken hearts and forsaken careers, and who have limited knowledge and information about the UK.

Sharon explained that their needs and limitations have made a gap in their hearts and lives, and encouraged Baptist churches to offer support.

Sharon's questions were:

Our Baptist family - are you ready to welcome people from Hong Kong and fill the gap?

What can we do to help them?

[Unfortunately, a traffic accident prevented Sharon from delivering this presentation at the Assembly.]



To view all the Pecha Kucha 'Conversation Starters' as well as the other areas of Baptist Assembly 2022 scan this QR code, and it will take you to the YouTube Playlist

