

Beyond our walls

'IT is time for churches to ask a new question... How do we join in with the mission of Jesus and reach out to people beyond the walls of our church?'

That's the challenge posed by a new Baptist-led ministry which launched this week.

The Rooftop aims to equip and enable Christians

to share the gospel confidently with those who are beyond the walls of their church buildings.

It has been developed by Dennis Pethers, an accredited Baptist minister and founder of Viz-a-Viz ministries, and is being co-ordinated in the UK by Amanda Allchorn, the former Communications Director of our Baptist Union of Great Britain.

Based on Acts 10 and 11, it finds its origin in the story of Peter on the rooftop: Peter receives a fresh vision from God that was to challenge everything he had ever known, which resulted him in going beyond the walls of the temple and the Jewish tradition.

While many churches are actively involved in outward facing mission programmes such as mums and toddlers, Street

Pastors and foodbanks, Dennis said that many church members lack confidence in knowing how to share their faith when the opportunity arises.



The Rooftop offers a '3-step journey' to overcome this challenge. It has already been pioneered in 17 states across the US.

'The sad truth is that the number of people who don't know Jesus and his transforming love for them is growing rapidly,' said Dennis. 'As culture and the world changes at breakneck speed this is resulting in a whole new reality, and in fact, a new question for churches to ask.'

'It's not 'How do we get people into church' but 'How do we join in with the mission of Jesus and reach out to people beyond the walls of our church?'

The resources and website <http://www.therooftop.org.uk> have been funded through the generous support of the Baptist Insurance Company.

The launch comes as witnessing your faith in Jesus is increasingly in the spotlight. On Tuesday the Archbishop of York the Revd John Sentamu spoke on the subject when introducing a debate on evangelism in the General Synod.

'Next to worship, witness is the primary and urgent task of the Church,' he said.

He said that while not everyone is an evangelist, every Christian is a 'witness'. 'Witnesses are empowered by the Holy Spirit simply to tell the story of their encounter with Jesus Christ; to share what they have experienced.'

Elsewhere veteran evangelist and Baptist minister Billy Graham marked his 95th birthday earlier this month by sharing a message on the Fox network, alongside stories of people whose lives were changed when they rediscovered faith. According to the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, several thousand people made commitments to Christ after watching the programme *My Hope America with Billy Graham*. A UK version is planned for next year.

Regional ministers appointed in NWBA and SWBA

A NUMBER of new regional ministers have been appointed across our Baptist Union of Great Britain recently.

In the North Western Baptist Association the Revd Tim Presswood will become the Transitional Regional Minister on a full-time basis from January. He will take responsibility for overseeing church and ministry support within the Association, with a particular emphasis on implementing and developing the outcomes of the Baptist Futures Process.

Tim (pictured) has been minister of Openshaw Baptist Tabernacle in East Manchester for over 20 years, and brings a wealth of experience of working in a variety of community projects and initiatives. He has held high profile roles in a number of community and statutory organisations, including chair of Manchester Credit Union which has grown to be one of the largest and most successful in Europe. Tim is also part of the Urban Expression Church Planters Network.

Alongside the Revd Dr Clare



McBeath Tim is co-author of *Crumbs of Hope: Prayers from the City*, a collection of prayers and reflections inspired by their experiences of Urban Ministry.

They maintain a website of worship resources at www.dancingscarecrow.org.uk

As part of his appointment process, Tim prepared and presented a poem/prayer - through it he offers 'an inspiring vision for our Association and our common engagement in the mission of God'

You can download and read it by visiting <http://nwba.org.uk/trm.php> and following the link.

Elsewhere the Revd Nigel Manges has been appointed as the new Regional Minister for the South West Baptist Association.

Nigel is an experienced minister who has led Cemetery

Road Baptist Church in Sheffield since 2001.

One of his key responsibilities in his new role, which is part-funded by Home Mission, will be finding ways to support and encourage those of the SWBA churches who are without a pastor long-term.

A growing number of smaller churches are finding themselves in this position, and one of Nigel's tasks will be to find strategic and creative ways in which the Association can help such fellowships not to slip into 'maintenance mode' but to have confidence, vision, and find ways of being an effective Christian presence in their community.

'Put simply,' said SWBA in a statement, 'in a rapidly changing world, we are looking to encourage our churches to become part of a missional movement.'

Regional Minister/Team Leader the Revd Jez Brown said, 'I am delighted that Nigel has accepted the invitation to join the SWBA staff team. He is a gifted and experienced minister who will offer much to our churches, our ministers and their families.'

Award for Baptist minister and web designer

A BI-VOCATIONAL Baptist minister has recently created an award winning website for Kick London, a Christian charity using sport to transform young people's lives with God's love.

The Revd Tim Hyde is the minister of West View Baptist Church in Hartlepool and also founder of LIVINGOS, a web design studio which helps businesses, charities and churches

share their story on-line (www.livingos.com).

The Kick London website was chosen from over 100 entries in the Best Christian Organisation Website category at the Christian New Media Awards last week. The awards, run by Premier Christian media, celebrate and encourage excellence in Christian engagement online.

Jo Bradbury, Project Manager

for Kick London said, 'We were both a little shocked to win as there was a lot of good competition from big Christian organisations, but we are thrilled to have gained the award and that we have a website which provides us with an excellent platform to help us reach more young people for God.'

For more visit www.kicklondon.org.uk

New-style Council meets for first time

The first new-style Baptist Union Council, deliberately designed to be more visionary and reflective, will take place on Friday and Saturday.

Council is the body which exercises spiritual and strategic oversight of our Union, and is representative of our churches through their Associations and colleges.

As part of the Futures process changes were made to enable Council to perform its role more effectively, and this weekend is the first time these will be put into action.

The new-style Council comprises 83 members, much reduced from the figure of around 200, and the small group which has planned the gathering has tried to ensure there will be plenty of time for reflection and prayer to fulfill its visionary role.



There will be just one report, from the Trustees, a café-style feel, and a theme of the seasons will be used throughout, to help members pray and listen.

The first day will be spent looking at how Council has reached this point, sharing thoughts members have brought, listening to what God is saying to us at this time and discerning strategic priorities.

The Baptist Steering Group, which will replace the Transitional Steering Group in

January, will be commissioned.

'By spending time listening to the Lord we are seeking his guidance and priorities for this next stage in our journey together,' wrote General Secretary the Revd Lynn Green in a letter to Council members.

'We come together to exercise spiritual and strategic oversight of the affairs of our Union, and as we begin this new chapter of our life together we pray that God will guide us as we seek to achieve this.'

PROPOSALS that will pave the way for female bishops in the Church of England have been welcomed.

The General Synod voted overwhelmingly on Wednesday (378 to eight, with 25 abstentions) in favour of the draft legislation which could allow the ordination of female bishops next year.

The Revd Stephen Keyworth, Faith and Society team leader of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, said he was 'delighted' to hear of the decision.

'This is very good news for the Church of England, as well as being a clear validation of women in ministry.'

The package was created after Synod narrowly rejected similar legislation last year. The new legislation includes the creation of an ombudsman who would rule on disputes.

It will now lead to legislation to ordain women bishops, which could come to Synod as early as November next year.

From the www. baptisttimes.co.uk

Recent stories and comment pieces on *The Baptist Times* website

> An open letter to churches: Dear Church, you have no idea how incredible you can be if

you allow His Spirit to lead you, shape you, empower you
<http://bit.ly/1h2MXb5>

> Want to have a go at writing for the Baptist Times, but something is stopping you? Me too, says Rachel Lewis
<http://bit.ly/13nMXo>

> When one part suffers – the chances are there is someone

at your church struggling with infertility
<http://bit.ly/18nWyeQ>

> Stand in the light: churches across England and Wales are being invited to get to know their local prison
<http://bit.ly/1dhuJ5d>

March gathering for Incarnate

THE Incarnate Network, the pioneering and church planting network of our Baptist Union of Great Britain, is partnering with BMS World Mission for a conference in Derbyshire in March 2014.

The theme of the three-day event is 'Pioneering in Conext'. It will comprise a mix of workshops, interactive sessions, talks, coaching and reflection to explore the theme.

Contributors include: Peter Dominey, Juliet Kilpin, Tim Shelley Duncan Peters, Rob Schellert and the Incarnate Network team.

The Revd Peter Dominey one of the Incarnate Network leaders commented, 'If you come you will learn from stories of pioneering in different contexts and exploring together what principles you can apply to your own context.'

'Based on previous years there will also be great times of relaxing and enjoying each others' company.'

The annual gathering is open to all. It takes place between Tuesday 4 March and Thursday 6 March.

Incarnate acts as the pioneering and church planting network of Baptist Union of Great Britain.

To find out more and book online visit:
<http://bit.ly/1gbJW0>

New Angus website

A NEW website for The Angus Library and Archive went live this week.

The website, part of the new outreach project funded by Heritage Lottery Fund and our Baptist Union of Great Britain, will provide information about using The Angus as well as being a portal to the many resources and activities that are being developed as part of the project.

Visitors will be able to, through the website:

- Search for details of Baptist missionaries in Family History

- Book tickets for the seminars, training days and exhibitions

- Download Archive lists of church records and histories held in The Angus.

- Search the library catalogue

From January visitors will be able to start downloading the school resources from the website, and later in 2014 search the Archive catalogue.

Visit www.theangus.org.uk to find out more.

Youth workers gathering

CALLING all Baptist church youth ministers and workers!

If you are going to be at Youthwork the Conference at Eastbourne this weekend then why not come along to the Baptist reception in the boardroom from 17:15 - 18:15 on Saturday evening.

There will be the opportunity to meet others who are doing similar ministry to you and as well as hearing about some initiatives that might be of interest to you.

Free refreshments for all. Hosted by Maeve Whitchurch (SEBA) and Bob Morris (WEBA).

The Bible airs on Channel 5

A TV mini-series which brings to life the dramatic tales of faith and courage in the Bible will air on Channel 5 at the end of the month.

The first episode of *The Bible* will be shown at 9pm on Saturday 30 November.

Big budget and glossy, *The Bible* was a surprise hit when aired in the US earlier this year, attracting 13 million viewers to the History Channel.

A 10 hour mini-series, it is equally divided between the Old Testament and New Testament.

A website with resources for churches has been created. Visit www.thebibleuk.org

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Send notifications of baptisms, ministerial changes, deaths and testimonies to phobson@baptist.org.uk