

BAPTISTS

Spring 2018

# TOGETHER

Photo: SafakOguz | iStockphoto.com

## MANY CULTURES, ONE CHURCH

**'I want you to be woven into a tapestry of love'**  
Colossians 2:2 | The Message

News / Interviews / Prayer / Comment / Events  
The magazine for the Baptist Union of Great Britain

 **BAPTISTS  
TOGETHER**





# Baptists Together Loan Fund

**Baptist Union member churches can apply to our loan fund for help with a variety of projects.**

We are able to help churches who are looking to enlarge, improve or redevelop their existing church premises – or who are wanting to buy new premises. We can also help churches to buy a new Manse or other residential property for a church worker. The Loan Fund is also able to help churches faced with paying off their debt to the Baptist Pension Scheme. In addition we can offer bridging finance which is at a higher rate of interest.

We are here to help Baptist Churches with their mission and we also understand the way Baptist Churches work. Having been around for many years we have helped hundreds of our churches in this way.

**For more information visit**

[www.baptist.org.uk/loans](http://www.baptist.org.uk/loans)

## New for 2018

**Loans available above  
£25,000**

**Variable Interest Rate**  
currently 3% above base rate

**Loan repayments  
between 10 and 20 years**  
available depending on loan  
amount

**Fee free**  
subject to certain conditions

The BUC is only able to enter into a loan that is a relevant credit agreement (as defined by the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (Financial Promotion) Order 2005) as lender for the purposes of the business of a church (or if the church is unincorporated, the business of the church trustees) and not for any other purpose.

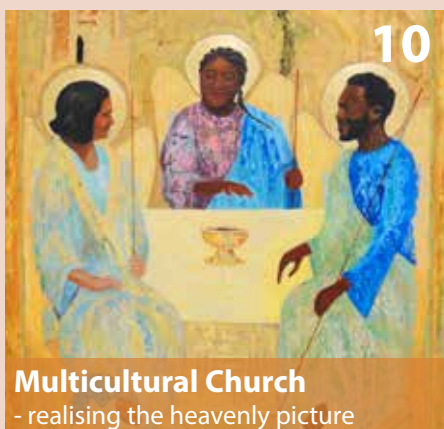


# FEATURES

- 13 A complex issue**  
Tracing society's troubled response to multiculturalism
- 15 Responding to immigration**  
Helen Paynter explores why Christians should respond
- 16 Multicultural Congregations:**
- 17 Greenford Baptist Church**
- 19 Anderson Baptist Church**
- 21 Six Ways Baptist Church**
- 22 Stockton Baptist Church**
- 24 Cemetery Road Baptist Church**
- 27 Spurgeon's**  
A multicultural College
- 28 Pastoring a multicultural church**  
Insights from Justice Enabler, Wale Hudson-Roberts
- 30 Asking what really matters**  
The value of conversation
- 35 Black millennials**  
Finding that spiritual connection



6



10

**Multicultural Church**  
- realising the heavenly picture



39

**Many cultures, many tastes**  
Sharing a meal helps to break down barriers

# REGULARS

- 32 European Baptist Federation (EBF)**  
Pentecost all over again
- 33 BMS World Mission**  
Get equipped for cross-cultural mission
- 34 Baptist People**  
Claude Halm, senior minister of Alperton Baptist Church
- 36 Prayer and Worship**  
Many ways of praying
- 37 Events**  
Special events for your church
- 38 Resources**  
Books and other resources
- 42 News**  
News from around our Union

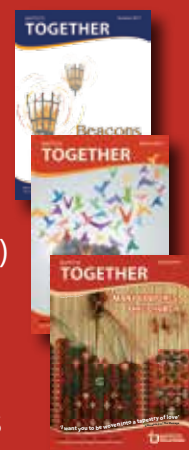
# SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

Order your own copy of this magazine via annual subscription - starting with the current or next edition.

Single copy subscription: £8.00 for three editions (Spring, Summer and Autumn)

Multi copy subscription: £70.00 for ten copies of each of the three editions (Spring, Summer and Autumn)

See [www.baptist.org.uk/shop](http://www.baptist.org.uk/shop) to order your subscription, or buy individual copies







# If you're not an expert in church insurance - don't worry we are

**You can find all you need on our website to help you to protect your church and its users**

- Handy risk management guides including events and church activities
- Straightforward risk assessment templates
- Simple checklists for common risks such as working at height

**[www.baptist-insurance.co.uk/guidance](http://www.baptist-insurance.co.uk/guidance)**

**0345 070 2223\***

\*Lines open 8am - 6pm Monday to Friday (except bank holidays).



**BaptistInsurance**

Experts in home and church insurance



# Many cultures, one church

The latest *Blue Planet* series is a reminder of the incredible diversity within the vast marine environment that covers much of the earth. New technology has enabled parts of our oceans to be filmed for the first time, capturing previously unknown creatures and behaviours. Like its sister series *Planet Earth*, it is jaw-dropping television, and it seems the public can't get enough: *Blue Planet* was the most watched TV show of 2017.

As Christians we believe God created the earth and all in it, and celebrate such diversity as being a sign of the Lord's creative ingenuity. We also recognise that sin is in the world, and humanity has the capacity to misuse and abuse this wonderful God-given diversity. Alongside its amazing sequences, *Blue Planet* carries warnings of our impact on the oceans and its marine life.

The *Apology* was a significant moment in our Union, a collective calling out of racism and our propensity to divide. It resulted in a commitment to 'work with God to see the kingdom come and God's will be done in a manner that reflects the heavenly picture of every nation, tribe, people and language living and worshipping together, on earth as in heaven.' (*The Journey*)



Photo: SafakOguz | iStockphoto.com

This edition of the magazine takes the 10th anniversary of the *Apology* as the context in which to explore our multicultural Union, highlighting just some of the places where we are recognising and respecting the contributions that can be made by different cultures to each other. One thread that connects the stories is just how difficult and complex this is; *Journeying to Justice*, the title of the recent publication marking the *Apology* 10 year anniversary, certainly suggests we are not there yet.

But another thread is the joy it can bring. One of the churches we feature uses tapestry as a key metaphor (p18), based on Colossians 2:2 (*The Message*). In a tapestry the picture is revealed only by the distinctiveness of the threads. Looking too at John 13:34-35, the church explains that it's only through the acceptance and development of difference that an image of God is revealed.

We hope this magazine gives a glimpse of where that's happening.

## The Editorial Group

### EDITORIAL GROUP:

Stephen Keyworth  
Sarah Fegredo  
Colin Pye  
Jonathan Somerville  
Ruth Whiter

### PRODUCTION TEAM:

Paul Hobson  
Mike Lowe  
Mary Parker  
Tracey Vallance

### Baptists Together

is produced three times per year by:

The Baptist Union of Great Britain  
Baptist House, PO Box 44, 129 Broadway,  
Didcot, OX11 8RT

Tel: 01235 517700

Email: [together@baptist.org.uk](mailto:together@baptist.org.uk)

Website: [www.baptist.org.uk](http://www.baptist.org.uk)

Registered Charity Number: 1125912

### Further copies

For additional copies and subscriptions, see

[www.baptist.org.uk/shop](http://www.baptist.org.uk/shop)

For an electronic copy, see

[www.baptist.org.uk/baptiststogether](http://www.baptist.org.uk/baptiststogether)

### To advertise in future editions

Please contact Tracey on 01235 517711 or

email [advert@baptist.org.uk](mailto:advert@baptist.org.uk)

Printed and distributed by Verité CM Ltd

[www.veritecm.com](http://www.veritecm.com)

Contact [together@baptist.org.uk](mailto:together@baptist.org.uk) for a plain text version of any articles.

### LETTERS:

We welcome your views and ideas for future editions of *Baptists Together*.

Write to the Editorial Group at: [together@baptist.org.uk](mailto:together@baptist.org.uk)  
or using the Baptist House address

The views of individual writers expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editorial Group or Baptists Together.

**Photo credits:** Unless otherwise stated, photos are taken from Baptist Union archives



[www.facebook.com/baptistuniongb](http://www.facebook.com/baptistuniongb)



[uk.pinterest.com/baptistunionGB](http://uk.pinterest.com/baptistunionGB)



[@baptistuniongb](https://twitter.com/baptistuniongb)







# 'Saying sorry is not enough'

## Lynn Green on the Apology

**General Secretary Lynn Green was a member of Baptist Union Council that offered an *Apology for Slavery* ten years ago. She reflects on the journey our Union has made since**

The well-known expression, "saying sorry is not enough" conveys much truth. It is, of course, not telling us we don't need to bother with apologies. Rather it is reminding us that words alone cannot heal hurt and fractured relationships. For healing and restoration, a sincere apology is needed that is also embodied in renewed attitudes and actions in the present and for the future. And, as believers, we understand this through the biblical concept of repentance. The Greek word used in the New Testament is 'metanoia' and points to a complete turnaround. Saying sorry, repentance, involves words which lead to us changing as a result.

Ten years on from the historic *Apology for Slavery* offered by Baptist Union Council it is important that we ask ourselves searching questions about whether we have put our words into action and demonstrated the changed lives called for by our repentance.

I was there at Baptist Union Council in November 2007 when we were moved by God's Spirit to offer the *Apology for Slavery*. Like many others, I arrived wondering how on earth I could apologise for something that

someone else did so many years ago. But through prayer and deep listening, our friends David Shosanya, Joe Kapolyo, Richard Kidd and Graham Sparkes enabled us to come to a place where we began to see differently and understand our share in, and benefit from, our nation's participation in the transatlantic slave trade. We talk a lot as Baptists about discerning the mind of Christ through the guidance of the Holy

Spirit when we come together, but this was the most profound experience of that that I have ever had. I was changed at that Council, and although I am still growing into that change in many ways, it remains a decisive moment for me. Some months later, a delegation of British Baptists travelled to Jamaica to offer *The Apology* to the Jamaica Baptist Union (JBU), where it was graciously received.



**Representatives of BMS World Mission and the Baptist Union of Great Britain present the statement of Apology to representatives of the Jamaica Baptist Union - Spring 2008**

*Left to Right: Wale Hudson-Roberts (BUGB), Karl Henlin (JBU), Jonathan Edwards (BUGB), Stephen Jennings (JBU), Karl Johnson (JBU), Pat White (BUGB) and Alistair Brown (BMS)*



## THE APOLOGY FOR SLAVERY COUNCIL RESOLUTION NOVEMBER 2007

As a Council we have listened to one another, we have heard the pain of hurting sisters and brothers, and we have heard God speaking to us.

In a spirit of weakness, humility and vulnerability, we acknowledge that we are only at the start of a journey, but we are agreed that this must not prevent us speaking and acting at a Kairos moment.

Therefore, we acknowledge our share in and benefit from our nation's participation in the transatlantic slave trade.

We acknowledge that we speak as those who have shared in and suffered from the legacy of slavery and its appalling consequences for God's world.

We offer our apology to God and to our brothers and sisters for all that has created and still perpetuates the hurt which originated from the horror of slavery.

We repent of the hurt we have caused, the divisions we have created, our reluctance to face up to the sin of the past, our unwillingness to listen to the pain of our black sisters and brothers, and our silence in the face of racism and injustice today.

We commit ourselves, in a true spirit of repentance, to take what we have learned from God in the Council and to share it widely in our Baptist community and beyond, looking for gospel ways by which we can turn the words and feelings we have expressed today into concrete actions and contribute to the prophetic work of God's coming Kingdom.

*The Resolution was agreed unanimously, and each member of Council bowed in silent prayer and personal commitment.*

*It was then proposed:*

In the light of our discussions concerning the transatlantic slave trade and the statement that arises from the discussions, Council asks the Mission Executive, Trustee Board and other appropriate bodies to continue to develop ways of promoting racial justice within BUGB and wherever possible in the world beyond.

*The amended Resolution was approved unanimously*



In March 2011, our Racial Justice Group enabled Baptist Union Council to identify what it would mean to embody *The Apology* in practical ways amongst us and a number of recommendations were agreed. These became known as *The Journey* and can be summarised as:

- » Building multicultural congregations
- » Developing the leadership skills of black and minority ethnic youth
- » Training of ministers and church members for culturally inclusive ministry and mission
- » Multicultural events that strengthen the participation of black and minority ethnic individuals and celebrate the cultural diversity within our Union
- » Establishing culturally inclusive Union structures (Including Baptist House)

I want to celebrate all the steps that we have taken on this *Journey* – telling the stories of multicultural churches, Racial Justice awareness training, the development of Justice Hubs in some Associations, the Inspiring Leadership initiative, the Justification and Justice Symposium and the Sharpe Sharpe Project and its Annual Lecture. There have been a range of resources: the *Pentecost People* resource and the outworking of this in Assembly worship; *Lest We Forget* study guide which focuses on the *Apology*, and *Moving Stories* aimed at helping individuals and groups to reflect theologically about the refugee crisis. The recently published *Journeying to Justice* book gives a much fuller picture of where we are on this *Journey*.

We established in our culture values that speak into the spirit of *The Apology*: we want to feel like one team, celebrating diversity; we share a hunger for God's coming Kingdom; a holy discontent. These values are reflected in our intentional commitment to seeing at least 20 per cent BME members of Baptist Union Council, as well as the desire to see more ethnic diversity in leadership right across the board. I want to pay tribute to the ongoing work of Wale Hudson-Roberts, our Justice Enabler, and the significant contribution of the Racial Justice Working Group over the years.

## Apology timeline

### November 2007

Apology for Slavery offered by BU Council

### 2008

*Bite the Bullet* conference, tackling the issue of gangs and gang violence

*We Belong* racial justice training offered to accredited ministers

### 2009

*The Gathering* conference encouraging us to discover the richness that can be found in cultural diversity

### 2010

DVD exploring the *Apology* sent to churches

### 2011

*Journey* recommendations adopted by BU Council

### 2012

Sam Sharpe Project and annual lecture launched

### 2013

*I have a Dream* tour: events marking the 50th anniversary of Dr Martin Luther King's famous speech

### 2014

Celebrations to mark the bicentenary of the relationship between Jamaican and British Baptists

Two multicultural Jamaican/English BMS Action teams

BME Women Ministers' network launched

### 2017

First *Inspiring Leadership* programme

First Justice Hub meets (YBA)

*Justification and Justice* symposium

*Pentecost People* resource launched

*Lest We Forget* and *Moving Stories* resources produced

*Journeying to Justice* book launched

JBU General Secretary Karl Johnson gives sixth annual Sam Sharpe lecture

### 2018

Second *Inspiring Leadership* programme candidate to travel to Jamaica

*Wonderful Youth* resource to be launched



I also would like to express our deep appreciation to our brothers and sisters from the JBU who have journeyed with us with great grace and patience. When invited to engage on matters of racial justice, their insights have made for insightful, if at times uncomfortable, listening. We are thankful that our friends are walking with us to continue to help us see differently and help us to become more like Christ. Through this valued relationship, I believe that together we will discover new depths of being in Christ for us all.

But no amount of resolutions and recommendations are going to make us the 'all nations' Union that is in God's heart, though. What it needs is people like you and me to keep making it a priority to build relationships, create spaces where everyone can flourish and feel welcome and speak out in the face of racism and injustice today. Saying sorry is not enough, and words alone don't change things. Our hearts need to change. It's about repentance, turning around and walking in another direction.

Just because we said something in 2007, we need to live it in 2018 and beyond. We need to create together a genuinely new space for us all to live in; build Christlike relationships with all people and continue to embody *The Apology* in our attitudes and actions.

I really wish that, ten years on, we were further along in our *Journey* as a Union, but I take heart from the words of Martin Luther King Jr and encourage myself and us all to press on...

"Lord, we ain't what we oughta be; we ain't what we want to be; we ain't what we gonna be. But thank God we ain't what we was."<sup>1</sup>

Lynn Green is  
General Secretary  
of our Baptist Union



<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther King quoting a slave preacher in his 'A promise unfulfilled' speech in 1962.



## Praying Together

George Ayoma, minister of *Fleetwood Baptist Church* led Council in the following prayer - November 2017

### *Return to us once again...*

Reclaiming God, with your own outstretched arm you led your once-enslaved people through the mighty Red Sea, and named them as your very own.

In acts of miraculous generosity, you fed them with fresh bread from heaven, and they were sustained; by looking only to you.

At your word, both the strong and the weak were equally renewed and refreshed, though they did not know nor understand how.

Reclaiming Father, return to us once again.

***To Renew and Refresh us!***

Redeeming God, by your own stretched-out arms you are still calling nations once excluded from the covenant, to be joined together into one people through grace in the baptismal regeneration.

In an act of self-sacrifice you brought an end to our despair, and opened the door to jubilant celebration; as the hope-filled new creation, so that all who were once-enslaved to traditions of men and separated by sin might become one, though we might not fully understand how.

Redeeming Saviour, return to us once again.

***To Renew and Refresh us!***

Renewing God, through the purity of your baptismal fire you still open the hearts of all who are lost in ignorance and oppression.

You have shown us incomparable favour, by turning our gaze from introspection to your profound majesty and beauty.

Having shone your light into the darkened corners of our hearts, you have revealed what is false.

And, turning over artificial forms of our preferred images, you have revealed our true selves in the mirror of the word of truth, though we still do not understand how.

Renewing Spirit, return to us once again.

***To Renew and Refresh us!***

***Righteous God, who still journeys on to create the one new people; for all the pain we have caused in the past, and experienced through wilful neglect to do what we know and understand to be right - we repent, and plead for spiritual renewal with fresh showers of blessing.***

***We renew covenant with you and with our brothers and sisters, by affirming our call to do what is right.***

***Acknowledging the sins committed in our name in the past through failure, so that we may walk with one another in watchfulness and joyful celebration from our shared baptismal story.***

***Once again Lord, renew and refresh us your people, to live in the fullness of your glory. Amen***









# Multicultural church: realising the heavenly picture

What's the difference between a multiethnic church and a genuinely multicultural one – and how do we work towards the latter? Begin by understanding it as part of God's salvation history, writes **Kumar Rajagopalan**

For some time multiculturalism has been blamed for the radicalisation of sections of the Muslim community and the growth of homogenous communities. In 2011 David Cameron said: "Under the doctrine of state multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives... We've failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong."<sup>1</sup> As Christians we have God's eternal vision in which 'every nation, tribe, people and language' stand before him, and we are called to pray and act to realise God's kingdom and will 'on earth as it is in heaven' (Revelation 7:9 and Matthew 6:10). We have God's vision and empowering to build multicultural integrated communities.

## Multiethnic to Multicultural Churches

Multiethnic churches are those where different ethnicities co-exist, with one culture – often, white British – being the *modus operandi*.<sup>2</sup> The journey from multiethnic to multicultural can be richly rewarding as God's people together journey into his plans and purposes. However it can also be difficult, painful and laborious, requiring tenacious commitment to keep to the task. Therefore, what disciplines are required for this journey?

1 [www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference](http://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference), Accessed 16 October 2017

2 Of course, cultural difference is wider than ethnicity, but that is the scope of this article.

Illustration opposite:

'Trinity - after Rublev' by Meg Wroe  
([www.megwroe.com](http://www.megwroe.com))

## Spiritual Discipline: Rooted in God

The Lord our God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - models unity in diversity. Godhead's oneness in being and purpose with diverse functions, model for the church who and how we should be. Our quest to become multicultural churches must be seen as part of God's salvation history; consequently we should root ourselves in the story, struggles, breakthroughs and joys of the early church, as a Jewish sect became a global faith, to learn and find inspiration.

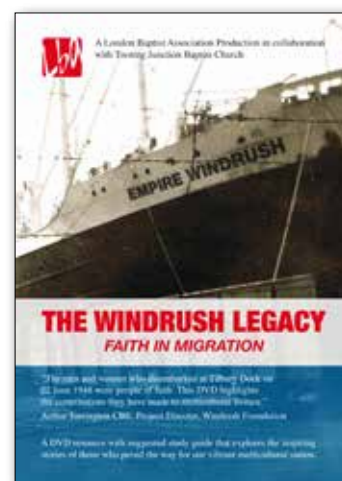
## Disciplines to Multiculturalism: Lessons from the Early Church

The first interethnic issue is a dispute between Grecian and Hebraic Jews (Acts 6:1). In addressing it the apostles demonstrate pastoral sensitivity, hearing people's concerns, proposing and acting on a solution, which led to missionary success within Jerusalem (Acts 6:7). This and similar events demonstrate a key discipline: regard difference and conflict as opportunities to find new ways to do things and grow together as God's people. Difficulties led one white British pastor to convene special meetings at which Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) congregants were able to share their experience of exclusion. The voicing of difficulties and pain, and a commitment to genuinely listen and address the issues led to change. This was a painful process for the pastor. *The Windrush Legacy - Faith in Migration* DVD is a helpful resource to understand how the Christian faith helped migrants live through the pain of racist exclusion within church and society.<sup>3</sup>

3 The resource can be obtained from the London Baptist Association Office.

In Acts 10 Peter is led by the Spirit to enter Cornelius' home, where he confesses his religious prejudice, affirms and dignifies Cornelius, preaches the gospel, witnesses the Holy Spirit fall on the uncircumcised, and is reconciled and brought into relationship with Gentiles as brothers and sisters in Christ. Peter is open to the Spirit's conviction of his sin, and shows humility in confessing his sin. A very small number of pastors have faced and spoken of their racism, but it would be helpful if all pastors and leaders could own and constructively confess their racism.

Undoubtedly the most far-reaching incident is the Holy Spirit inspired decision to set aside the covenant of circumcision so that it was not 'difficult for Gentiles who [were] turning to God' (Acts 15:19). This episode, Peter entering Cornelius' home, Peter preaching at Pentecost, Peter's release from prison, and other incidents occur through the leading of the Holy Spirit, and as the early church devoted themselves to prayer and fasting. The discipline of prayer, fasting and the Holy Spirit's leading are indispensable in the journey to build multicultural churches.





The Acts 15 high point stands in sharp contrast to the practice of Western mission and its elephantine consequences, which must be named, owned and addressed to build multicultural churches.

### The Elephant in the Room: Western Cultural Hegemony

Western Christian mission's imposition of its cultural practices on the global church now encumbers efforts to build multicultural churches. Sunday worship is an obvious arena. One pastor describes having to admonish a Nigerian believer to be true to his culture in leading worship.

I encountered an Asian believer who was scandalised by the use of sitar and tabla in Christian worship. Some have so imbibed western expressions of Christianity that they don't know how to be true to their culture. BME believers must be encouraged, empowered and given opportunities to meaningfully share cultural expressions of their faith, with British believers participating and not being an audience. One minister encouraged different cultures to lead the service through advent. A balance between prayers of intercession for the Majority World (MW), and prayers of thanksgiving for good stories from the MW, will build up everyone. Is there space for multi-lingual prayer? All Nations Christian College offers one day and one week training on multicultural worship.<sup>4</sup>

With respect to preaching and teaching different cultural readings of the text is in its infancy. Furthermore monocultural Western readings have led to MW cultures being maligned for centuries, and this was my experience as a new believer of Asian origin. Thankfully, in the early 1990s I attended a support group for young Asian-background believers and we undertook a study series to consider what the Bible taught about our culture. We learnt that the Bible affirmed aspects of Asian culture, such as: honouring parents, care for the elderly, importance of community, respect for leaders and sacrificial hospitality.

<sup>4</sup> [www.allnations.ac.uk/events/music-and-global-worship-week](http://www.allnations.ac.uk/events/music-and-global-worship-week) <https://www.allnations.ac.uk/events/multicultural-worship-day>

We also learnt that the Bible teaches us to reject our idolatrous adherence to honour culture, status and materialism. I cannot recall hearing an exposition of biblical and unbiblical aspects of white British culture. Again a balanced cultural reading and exposition of the text will build up the whole body of Christ.

The multicultural mindset needs to extend to other areas of church life, particularly leadership and church government, where Western hegemony can nullify the multicultural journey.

### Leadership

In Acts 6 seven Grecian men are appointed to serve the Grecian widows. Stephen's powerful ministry led to his martyrdom and Philip was an evangelist in Samaria and to the Ethiopian eunuch. Neither Stephen nor Philip were under the tutelage and direction of the Twelve, rather they were released to exercise their call and gifting. Critical to becoming multicultural is the appointment of an ethnically diverse leadership. Within churches and institution, alongside the need for oversight and accountability, there must also be a willingness to release and encourage those 'full of faith and the Holy Spirit' to exercise their ministry (Acts 6:5).

This requires a light-touch, relational, rather than controlled programmatic approach.

### Church Government

The Holy Spirit-led decision to dispense with circumcision, sets aside an almost 2000 year marker of power, privilege and holiness/exclusion of the Jewish nation over their Gentile neighbours. Through the setting aside of power, privilege, and preferred ways of being and functioning, the church's mission grew among the Gentiles. Among Baptists and other long-established denominations, the ways in which we function and make decisions at local church and institutional level favours the power, privilege and preferred ways of the white middle-class.

The Revd Dr Michael Jagessar states:

"I think... we are failing at fully enabling participation of all. [...] the... white male... are dominating the conversation. If you are... part of a marginalized group, [you] can join this conversation if you're

able, but you're not enabled to participate in a way that would do business differently."<sup>5</sup>

To enable participation of all, those with power and privilege must make greater sacrifices of their preferred ways.

Tim Chester advocates for 'Imbalanced Mutual Adaptation', stating:

*"The dominant culture within wider society needs to adapt more - in this case middle-class Christians. Without this intentionality, the dominant culture in society will dominate the church."*<sup>6</sup>

The Revd Eric Law's work outlines some practical steps to enable greater participation of all.<sup>7</sup>

### Over to you...

Having reached the end, how do you feel? Without doubt this is an emotionally charged subject, touching on who we are and how we function, and this was also so for the early church. In the midst of their tensions, questions and struggles what looms large is their commitment to prayer, fasting and waiting on the Spirit, through which they were able to take revolutionary steps for the gospel, and glorify God. So I encourage you to fast, pray and seek the Spirit in order to know what the Lord would want you to do to become multicultural, even if you are in wholly monoethnic contexts.

Kumar Rajagopalan has been a Regional Minister at the **London Baptist Association** since 2003, holding a specialism of Racial Justice and Inter-Faith issues. Previously he was the Minister of **Westbury Avenue Baptist Church** in Wood Green.



<sup>5</sup> The Revd Dr Michael Jagessar, *The Windrush Legacy – Faith in Migration*, DVD Resource, Chapter 7. Rev Jagessar leads Global and Intercultural Ministries (Mission) for the United Reformed Church

<sup>6</sup> Chester, Tim, *Unreached – Growing Churches in Working-Class and Deprived Areas*, p35 Italics are in the text.

<sup>7</sup> Law, Eric, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb – A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community*, Chalice Press, 1993



Photo: PeopleImages | iStockphoto.com

## A complex issue

**Paul Walker** traces society's troubled response to multiculturalism in Britain

Over the past 20 years awareness of the history of non-white people in Britain has grown. We now know people of other races and cultures have been in Britain for thousands of years. It is, however, true that the increase in ethnic minorities occurred after WW2 as people were invited to come and help re-build post-war Britain. They brought different cultures, languages and religions and thus the growth of multiculturalism began, although the term was not widely used until the 1970s.

Multiculturalism, in one sense, refers to the fact of different cultures in society. More precisely multiculturalism is the term for groups co-existing without giving up their identities, in contrast to social integration, where different cultures are assimilated into mainstream culture. This is where difficulties begin. Keeping diverse cultures separate appeals to those who desire to keep their own culture whilst in a foreign land. Others, however, are afraid that this leads to cultures not integrating, eg speaking no English or not understanding British democracy.

Cultures existing together becomes more difficult when the economy is weak and jobs scarce. In the post WW2 period there were plenty of jobs and so

people were less concerned about competition from immigrants, although tensions did result in race riots during the 1950s and anti-immigration politics during the 1960s. Competition for jobs resulted in, on the one hand, 'foreigners' supposedly taking jobs from indigenous people and on the other, unemployed immigrants 'scrounging off' the state. These discontents also focused on education, the NHS and the dilution of indigenous people's culture.

After a period in the 1950s and early 60s when some churches rejected Caribbean Baptists attending worship because it would drive English people away, the situation in the churches became less fraught as accommodation was reached. Where it wasn't, black people formed their own churches.

Although it took a long time, the Church in Britain was enriched by different styles of worship, preaching and music. There are now a great variety of expressions of faith and worship, and the contribution of other cultures in the Churches is largely honoured and respected. For instance, in **Highgate Baptist Church** in Birmingham, not only do we have a congregation made up largely of Caribbean people, we also have three other churches which use the church building each Sunday: a church of Nigerian heritage, one with origins in Zimbabwe and one a Caribbean group.



Unfortunately attitudes against multiculturalism have hardened as people have come not only from Europe but all over the world. This has resulted in claims that Britain is being 'swamped', the NHS exploited by 'health tourism' and that immigrants are better served by the welfare state than British people. Add to this the business of terrorism, 'Brexit' and we are now in a situation where opinion is seriously divided and some people's attitudes are turning nasty.

Two examples: a deacon is returning from a shopping trip when someone sits next to her on the bus and tells her she has overstayed her welcome in this country. A Muslim woman attending an English class at the church reports that a car mounted the pavement and was driven at her with the driver and passenger laughing!

Multiculturalism is a complex issue, so it is impossible to do it justice in a brief article. But the growth in the belief that 'foreigners' are a problem is, in part, the result of the growth of nationalism, which set some searching for a definition of Englishness. This, compounded with the growth in 'Identity Politics' (the idea that to achieve justice for minorities they need to claim separate identity, and demand legislation in their favour) has slowly entered mainstream thought. Thus many people now believe that unless you can claim some form of 'special identity' then no one will listen to you. Thus many people are now claiming that multiculturalism has resulted in the English being prejudiced against in their own country!

It is important to counter these attitudes, because the attitudes of some people and politics towards people who are different is poisonous and dangerous. There is a growing sense, expressed by some political parties either very directly (UKip and other rightwing groups) or more subtly (parts of the Conservative party), that foreigners are the enemy, the English are superior, racially distinctive and being 'done down' by foreigners. This attitude can lead, through negative attitudes towards and hatred of others who are different, into violence against such people and in the extreme to ethnic cleansing.

Such attitudes and action that may follow from them are not Christian. Jesus teaches that we must give up self assertion and belief in our own righteousness and move towards love for, care about and solidarity with all people, especially the less fortunate. Nationalism is basically the last refuge of people who are fearful, blinkered, conservative and have little vision and I'd be interested to know where nationalism ever had a positive outcome? As Baptist Christians we are called to be in solidarity with all people, no matter what their race, faith or culture. We are all human, we are all a mixture of various heritages and there is no such thing as racial, ethnic or national purity.

Sadly negative attitudes to people who are different is becoming acceptable in popular culture and, as Christians, we need to speak out against these bad attitudes and tell of the love of God in Jesus for all people no matter where they are from, their colour or faith.



**Paul Walker** is minister of *Highgate Baptist Church, Birmingham*, where African American ex-slave Peter T Stanford, Birmingham's first Black pastor, was minister. His research into



Stanford led to the re-discovery of many other Black activists who were in Britain from the late 18th to early 20th century.

Paul is a recognised supervisor in the Department of Philosophy, Theology and Religion at the University of Birmingham.

# Exploring why Christians should respond to immigration

By Helen Paynter

Elsewhere in this magazine churches are invited to share how they have responded to the issue of immigration. But the prior question of why they should is not necessarily as easy as we might think. And while there are people in our churches who would throw open the borders tomorrow, there are also those who – for equally well-considered reasons – would take a more cautious approach to our sense of national responsibility and local engagement.

Nailing my colours to the mast: I lean towards the first category. But I cannot deny that the issue is knotty and ambiguous. Here are a few thoughts on the complexities of loving my neighbour.

I begin here: the assumption that Old Testament laws of hospitality provide a paradigm for Christian behaviour should not be accepted unthinkingly. After all, these same Old Testament texts also prescribe the annihilation of foreigners.

In the Old Testament, a surprising amount of hospitality is commanded towards the 'alien' living in the land. They were under the protection of the law (eg Num 35:15); they were to benefit from Sabbath regulations (eg Ex 20:10); and the way was open for them to become part of the covenant community (eg Num 15:15-16). The roots of this ethic of hospitality lie in three things: the people's memory of their own time as aliens; their recollection of the prior hospitality of God towards them; and their self-identity as his people, called to be like him. This rudimentary virtue ethic (an ethic derived from one's historical narrative, one's virtuous goal, and one's self-identity) is reflected in places

within the Pauline corpus, where the imperative of how to live emerges from the indicative of what God has done for us (eg Col 3:12). As those who have received much, we should mirror our heavenly Father's generosity to those around us.

However, hospitality cannot be unconditional. In the Old Testament it is also seen as a threat to holiness, because of the risk that the pagan peoples around might lead God's people astray (eg Deut 7:1-6). So the ethic of hospitality is held in tension with the need for ethical purity. In the New Testament this tension is partially resolved by the example of Jesus, who shows that hospitality is not a danger to holiness, but a means of it (eg Matt 25:37-40). Nonetheless, the threat which a guest might represent remains clear (compare 3 John 5-8 with 2 John 9-11). Hospitality always has limits. Further, modern theorists of hospitality point out that the very offer of welcome simultaneously asserts one's ownership of what is being shared. Surely only divine hospitality can be entirely unconditional.

The other striking tension in the Old Testament is the ambiguity between the role of guest and host. Consider Abraham's reception of the three men under the tree at Mamre (Gen 18). Initially the host, he soon finds himself the recipient of the hospitality of the Lord. The writer to Hebrews picks up on this (13:2), and the life of Jesus is characterised by encounters where he inverts the guest-host relationship. Welcome is never a one-way phenomenon: hospitality enriches the host as well as the guest. But even this is problematic, for there is a danger that we pursue hospitality for our own benefit. Multiculturalism

enriches us, but we must take care not to cheapen our guests' cultures to a theme park for our amusement.

Finally, who is my neighbour? In the global village in which we live, it is hard to determine our prime areas of responsibility. Here the words of Augustine might help us: 'Since you cannot do good to all, you are to pay special regard to those who, by the accidents of time, or place, or circumstance, are brought into closer connection with you.' This would include those on our streets and living in camps on our borders, perhaps. May we learn to navigate our way through the paradoxes of hospitality, and the tensions in our churches and our society.

Helen Paynter is Research Fellow and Co-ordinator of Community Learning at **Bristol Baptist College**.



She is the author of *Immigration and the Church: Reflecting Faithfully in our Generation* (Grove) and will be delivering the 2018 Whitley Lecture

She has also written the following papers on this area:

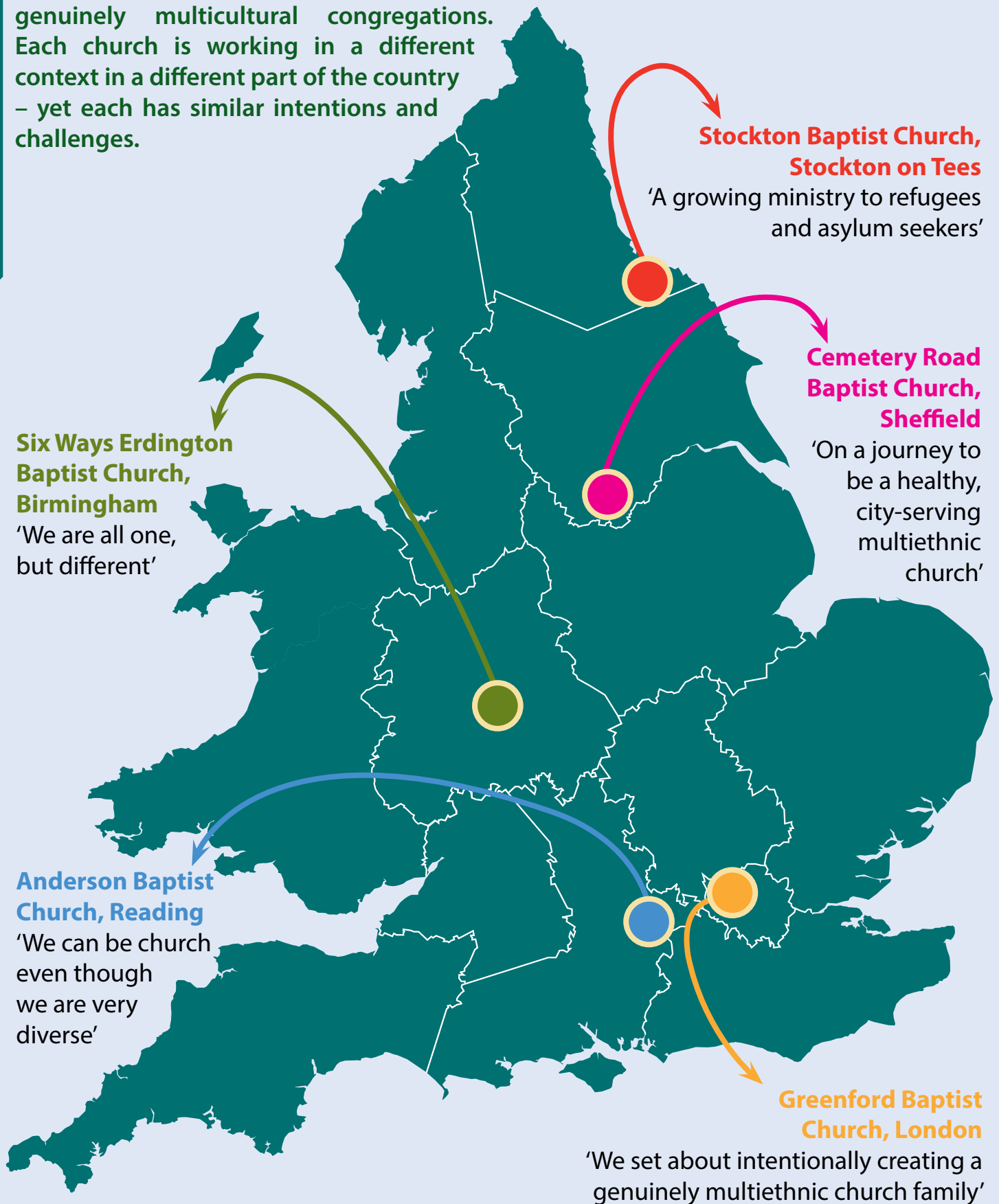
- » 'Love the Sojourner: The Old Testament ethic of hospitality'. *Baptist Ministers' Journal*, October 2016
- » 'Jubilee Ethics and the Refugee Crisis'. *Ministry Today*, Summer 2016
- » 'The Ethics of Jubilee in Leviticus 25'. *Ministry Today*, Spring 2016
- » 'Make yourself at home: Tensions and Paradoxes of hospitality in dialogue with the Bible'. *Bible and Critical Theory* (forthcoming).





# MULTICULTURAL CONGREGATIONS

Across the following pages several Baptist churches share how they are striving to be genuinely multicultural congregations. Each church is working in a different context in a different part of the country – yet each has similar intentions and challenges.



## Greenford Baptist Church, London

We set about intentionally creating a genuinely multiethnic church family, writes pastor **David Wise**

In 1987 when I became the pastor of Greenford Baptist Church (GBC) the congregation was almost entirely white British with just a handful of Caribbean teenagers attending the church, this did not reflect the make-up of the local area. Today the majority of the adults who attend were born outside of the UK; we have people from around 45 nationalities within our congregation, with no single nationality dominating.

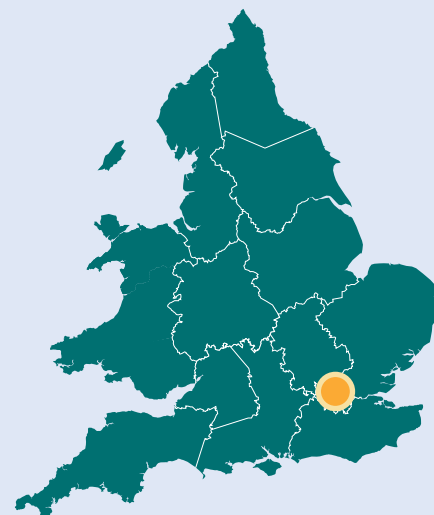
So how did this change happen? I think that the catalyst for the first adult Caribbeans attending was the evangelistic activities of one of the Caribbean teenagers. Her parents were from Dominica and they were the first black people to move into the road in Greenford where I live. Those already living in the road did not welcome their arrival; on the evening of their first day a group gathered outside their house and smashed all their front windows. This teenager's first job was working in a hairdresser's very close to our church building. Doing Caribbean hair can take all day, so while she had this 'captive' audience she would tell them about Jesus and invite them to come to the church. The second Caribbean person I baptised at GBC came via this hairdresser (the first, baptised a couple of weeks earlier, was the son-in-law of a church member).



Photo: Andy Wilson / Greenford Baptist

Those attending GBC were not free from the racist attitudes that were present in our community; some were on the receiving end of racism and others demonstrated racist attitudes. From those days I vividly recall Caribbeans, in the course of pastoral visits, telling me of the hurt they felt at the way they were being treated in the UK and within GBC. In essence they felt that their blackness was not welcome. So around 25 years ago I set up what was one of the most painful leaders' meetings I have ever attended. I asked two Caribbean men, who were members of GBC, to share with our all-white leaders how they felt as a part of GBC. They bared their souls; they talked about their pain not just as recipients of racial prejudice on a daily basis from non-Christian people and structures around them but also in church. During the meeting some of the church leaders were in tears confessing their own racial prejudice, most of it previously unconscious. Following this meeting the leadership intentionally set out to tackle racism, conscious and unconscious, within the church family using Bible teaching, testimony and most effectively one to one encounters.

A second key point in the process of GBC facing up to the reality of racism (which was still often denied by white members) came after an Asian family in membership of the church suffered a series of racially motivated attacks. These culminated in an assault in the middle of the night which left three of the four family members in hospital with serious injuries. Our collective church outrage at what took place galvanised our church family, exposing all of its members to the ugly realities of our racist society.



From this time we set about intentionally creating a genuinely multiethnic church family. This process had a number of strands - developing multiethnic leadership and ministry, developing multiethnic worship and prayer, developing hermeneutics for a multiethnic context and the enjoyment of food and cultural experiences from a variety of ethnicities.

It is generally accepted that the development of genuinely culturally diverse leadership is essential for the development of a multiethnic congregation. At GBC we have invested a lot of time in leadership training and development. Most of those in our ethnically diverse leadership have been through one of our 18 month courses.

Developing worship that reflects different cultures has been hard. It was very difficult to persuade people who were not white British to join our all-white British singers and musicians. When people from other ethnicities did join it was initially unsuccessful as the worship leaders had a Western view of what constituted worship, good vocal practice and good musical skill.



Photo: Andy Wilson / Greenford Baptist Church



## Tapestry as a metaphor for the local church

We all use pictures or metaphors to describe the church. Popular ones are 'body' or 'bride of Christ'. At GBC we have used 'tapestry' as a key metaphor for our congregation for over 25 years. It originates from Colossians 2:2; 'I want you to be woven into a tapestry of love' (*Message* version). One of the most significant features of this metaphor is that in a tapestry the picture is revealed only by the *distinctiveness* of the threads. These distinctives arise from the different ethnicities and cultures represented within the congregation. From Ephesians 2:8-10 and Romans 1:19-20 the phrases 'masterpiece' and 'everything God made' (the same Greek noun) make clear that it is the church that makes known to the world something of what God is like. John 13:34-35 makes plain that it is through our relationships with one another that God is made known.

Using the tapestry metaphor we see that it is through the juxtaposition, acceptance and development of *difference* that an image of God is revealed. In a tapestry the colour that there is most of, usually the background colour, is the least significant.



Photo: drbimages | iStockphoto.com

Colours that stand out because they only occur occasionally often indicate the most significant detail. This means that cultures or ethnicities that there are least of within the congregation can be the most significant (see 1 Cor 12:12, 22). An implication of this for GBC is that we have tried to ensure that the ethnic and cultural uniqueness of each ethnicity is expressed within GBC so that we can all be enriched.

Always guiding us has been our destiny as pictured in Revelation 7:9-12 an image of heaven. It seems from this image that distinctiveness of ethnicity both in physical appearance and language is something that lasts into heaven. There is something about our joining together as one, but with our differing ethnicities, that is reflective of the nature of God. There is a real sense that living this out on earth is an anticipation of heaven.

It was not until the entire singers and musicians' leadership resigned from the church that we were able to really see people from our other cultures become involved. Today some of our West Africans and Caribbeans regularly lead worship using their own styles. We now also every week include songs from other cultures, singing them in their original language and style. So, for example, when we sing a song in Hindi the singers will sit on the floor and we will use just a tabla style drum and bells for accompaniment with the addition of a sitar drone sound from a mobile phone app.

We are still on a journey towards genuinely multiethnic prayer. This is not just about using a mixture of languages, but also about the fact that people pray differently in different cultural contexts. When people are asked to lead public prayer they are usually given the option of using their first language. Increasingly in small groups people will simply use their first language without any explanation or justification. Our prayer ministry team on Sundays are encouraged to use their first language.

I am convinced that eating together food that reflects the diversity of our origins is very important. As, also, is sharing together in entertainment that originates in a variety of cultures. This can be poetry, art, music, dance, storytelling. We regularly have events that draw on the richness of the cultures we have with a wonderful array of food and/or entertainment.

We are still on a journey at GBC, however every Sunday when we come together we are privileged to have a little taste of heaven (Rev 7:9).



Photo: Andy Wilson / Greenford Baptist Church

### Further study:

#### *Multiethnic worship*

2015 article for *Ministry Today* that goes into more detail on the development of multiethnic worship at GBC. This may be particularly of interest as GBC has been asked to lead the worship at the 2018 Baptist Assembly, drawing on the material that it uses on Sundays. <http://bit.ly/greenfordworship>



Photo: Andy Wilson / Greenford Baptist Church

## Anderson Baptist Church, Reading

‘We can be church even though we are very diverse’ says minister **Judith Wheatley**

With half of its congregation Nepali speakers, Anderson Baptist Church in Reading has been learning what it means to be God’s family in a multicultural and bi-lingual context. The journey began in earnest around a decade ago. For many years the church had a heart for Nepal through the work of BMS, sabbatical visits and other friends. In 2005 it was part of a Baptist cluster which hosted a visiting team from Nepal who were attending the **Baptist World Congress** in Birmingham. Pastor Tula Rai and wife Chandra were part of the visiting team.

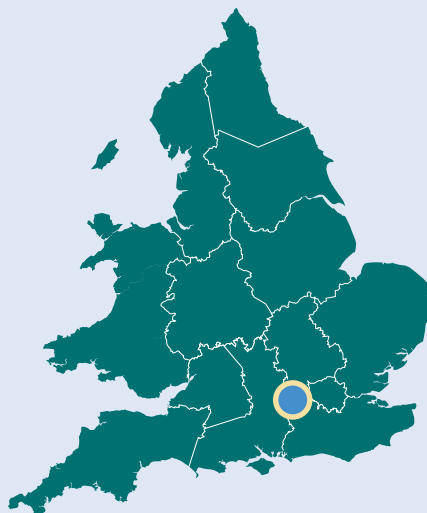
During the Congress Tula believed God was calling him to come and work among the Nepali people settling in the UK, and in 2007 he approached the congregation at Anderson to receive him and his family.



Pastor Tula Rai and his wife Chandra

The church was open to the call. Tula’s ministry among the Nepali people settling in and around Reading has led to a strong Nepali group forming around him. In turn it has led the church to “an amazing and unique ministry,” says minister Judith Wheatley. “God has used the openness to transform us as a community.”

From the outset Anderson decided it wanted to be a church where everyone was an equal, not easy when there is a natural deference from one culture to another, particularly those with a Gurkha heritage. It has preached on Galatians 3 on numerous occasions, emphasising that neither ‘Jew nor Greek’ also meant ‘neither English nor Nepali’.



This desire for equality, or a Christ culture, has impacted all aspects of life – leadership, worship, songs, prayers, seating arrangements, church meetings, finances, social gatherings and outreach activities.

As the church developed its pattern for worshipping together, it recognised the need to include Nepali language into its services to be inclusive. This started with the Lord’s prayer and a few songs that were easy to learn. Different scripts, musical styles, and having non-readers in the congregation means this is always a challenge, but the church has persevered. “Certainly If you come to our church now, you’d need to want to enjoy worship in a different way,” says Judith. “It is different.”

The default pattern for a Sunday service is all-age, both languages in the first half, before dividing into youth, children, Nepali speakers and English speakers for the second half. One Sunday a month both language groups are kept together for the whole service for Communion. The model is to be like “a family who does what it can together, and then to bless each other to do the other things apart.”

The church has worked to have Nepali representation on the diaconate to make sure all voices are heard in church life. It has actively encouraged Nepali leaders, which led to Tula being recognised as a Sessional Minister for the Nepali congregation, and supported his daughter Alina as she explored a call to ministry.

Including everyone in the church’s decision making process has involved making meetings accessible in both languages, and helping everyone understand the importance of offering their own thinking as they discerned God’s will together.

Indeed, one of the biggest barriers is language. A number of the elderly members of the Nepali Christians do not speak English (it says much that they have remained rather seeking Nepali-only congregations elsewhere.) English language and discussion classes have been offered, and this has been reciprocated. There continues to be a Nepali language class, and some of the Nepali women are now helping teach Judith and a couple of other native English speakers learn Nepali.



Anderson Baptist Church ministers Judith Wheatley and Alina Rai







Photo: Anderson Baptist Church

“In England there is an expectation that others adjust,” notes Alina. “I can see people so happy that Judith is learning Nepali. It’s a lot about willingness. The willingness only comes if you want to love people.”

Art is another area where the congregation has worked creatively to explore what it means to be a congregation seeking Christ together. The sanctuary is decorated with these creations; the latest, a stunning mural, combines Christian imagery with Nepali and Reading landmarks.

A decade into its cross-cultural journey and Anderson is now embarking on a new chapter. Tula and Chandra have sensed a call to return to Nepal. Alina became an ordained Baptist minister in October, just before the departure of her parents. She is reflecting on how God wants to use her, and how she communicates that. Her parents effectively offered 24-hour pastoral care to the Nepali community which Alina, with a young family, cannot; what’s more, the church now wants to build its outreach to the wider community, not just to English and Nepali people. “Alina is a Baptist minister to the whole church, not just one part of it,” says Judith. “While we are very reliant on her translation skills, it is important



she preaches regularly to our English-speaking congregation, for instance.”

While much progress has been made, the church is honest in saying there have been many challenges and difficulties, and there continues to be so. However, it says its loving relational ethos, learning to listen well and commitment to prayer has kept the congregation travelling together.

“We are trying to model something for the wider church and community: we can be church even though we are very diverse,” says Judith.

“We stand together and support one another; then look out to the community, and be Christ to that community together.”

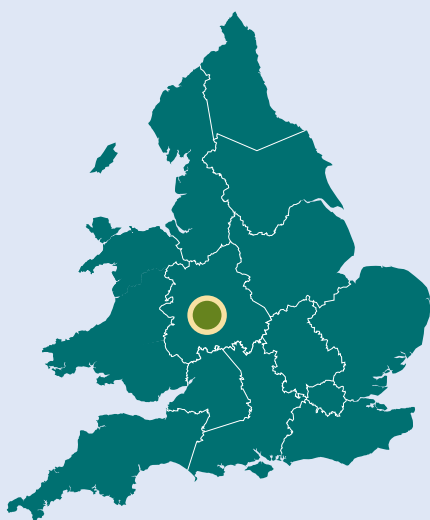


## Six Ways Erdington Baptist Church, Birmingham

'We are all one, but different' says minister **Gerard Goshawk**

Six Ways Erdington Baptist Church in Birmingham has long been on a journey towards genuine inclusion. For much of the 20th century it was a church for 'well-to-do' white people, but has changed over the years to reflect the community in which it is based. Birmingham itself grew from a village to the mighty industrial place it is today because of migration, from across Britain and the world. Erdington, a suburb three miles from the city centre, reflects the city's diversity.

The church welcomed people from the Caribbean in the 1960s, and has continued to be a spiritual home for those around the world ever since. Today's congregation features people from African countries such as Ghana, Sierra Leone and Nigeria; there are a dozen or so Bengali people and a growing number of Iranian people too.



"I'm standing on the shoulders of what's gone before," says Gerard Goshawk, the church's minister of 10 years.

"I inherited an openness, a desire among the congregation to be inclusive and welcoming to all and have tried to build on that. If we are truly doing it the Jesus way, having a genuinely welcoming outlook is the bottom line."

The ethnic diversity among the people who make up the church is celebrated in different ways.



Photo: Six Ways Erdington Baptist Church

In each service the church seeks to involve different people from different, cultural, racial and generational backgrounds. As far as possible it seeks to achieve a mix of styles reflecting these backgrounds. A popular activity is to have a roving-mike opportunity for people to share a relevant phrase in their home language, such as welcome, or thank you Jesus. There are different expectations and experiences of how meetings are conducted, so in its church meetings Six Ways seeks to combine formal and informal and create spaces where people can contribute in different ways.

Three or four times a year Six Ways hosts bring and share lunches called 'Around the World in Eighty Dishes', where individuals are encouraged to bring a favourite dish reflecting their culture.

"Food helps bring people together," says Gerard. "You can see people thinking 'Your food is alright, maybe you are!'"

He continues, "There is still much more we can do, but we have at least achieved a point where the people of the church buy into the idea that we are all one, but different, where there are no favourites and no outsiders."

The difficulty is in going beyond recognition and celebration of ethnic diversity, to something deeper, where the decision making and direction of the church are concerned. There is a danger that it stays at a certain level. Gerard says the church has tried to "push through and change the power dynamic."

Key to progressing towards this has been seizing opportunities from the church calendar and as they've arisen. Gerard recalls a Pentecost service around seven years ago, when instead of a sermon, the congregation looked at Acts 2 together.

Significant chunks of the service, such as prayers and reflections, were in a language other than English. "Many people were challenged on hearing people's voices they'd not listened to before. And realised what a delight it was to hear those voices."

For many years it has celebrated Black History Month, which has helped the congregation learn together and live side by side with better understanding. The congregation understands that the diaconate needs to reflect the diversity of the people, while over the past couple of years Erdington has called a Black British woman as Associate Minister.

These are just a couple of markers on a long journey to have impacted the life of the church. There has not been a revolution, but celebrating diversity and challenging racial and other injustice run through all areas of church life.

"It's important not to talk about it all the time, as people 'switch off', but equally we are intentional about it and have tried to give our values prominence in all areas of church life," says Gerard.

"The change is good and the change is continual. Sometimes it can be exhausting, but it is also beautiful! It's a matter of great joy for people at Six Ways that we like being a multicultural church. We see that as being who we are... a little glimpse of heaven."





## Stockton Baptist Church, Stockton on Tees

'A growing ministry to refugees and asylum seekers' - church secretary **Peter Chapman** shares the story

In the past five years Stockton Baptist Church (formerly Stockton Baptist Tabernacle) has become much more international. This is largely down to its ministry to refugees and asylum seekers (RAS), which has grown considerably after setting up a drop-in centre in 2014 and has seen the church help people from more than 30 countries. This ministry has complemented the increasing number of international folk who have joined the fellowship by virtue of taking jobs (especially medics in the NHS) in the area, and others coming to study locally.

The presence of a diverse range of people from many countries has naturally influenced changes within the church fellowship.

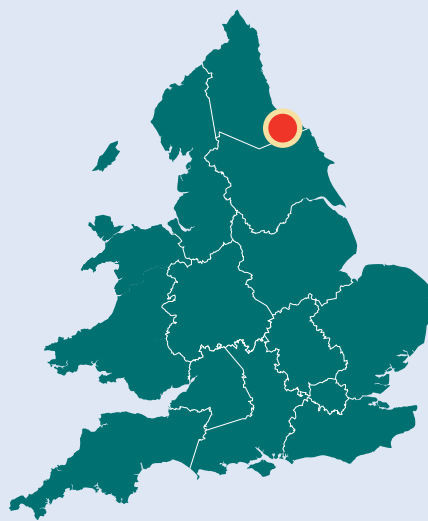
"We are constantly looking for opportunities around our church's activities to involve our international friends," explains church secretary Peter Chapman.

These opportunities are both individual and collective.

For instance, one refugee works part time in the church bookshop on a paid basis. One Iranian studying business studies with an accountancy background is joining the treasurer's finance team.



Photo: John Hesford



A couple of Iranians translate the Sunday morning messages into Farsi. At communion services Stockton has adopted the practice of having two prayers - one in English, the other in a different language. It also always has international folk as part of the team that serves communion.

Many RAS folk (mainly Iranians and Kurds and some from Eritrea) attend *Alpha*, *Growing in Christ* and *Freedom in Christ* courses. Entirely separate courses are run in Farsi and English. There is a core who are very committed and helpful to the leaders in both practical terms - helping with catering and in doing translation. One of the Farsi courses is presented in Farsi by an Iranian. A course may start in Kurdish.

One refugee is part of the church's RAS management group, and makes an 'excellent contribution', notes Peter.

No one from the RAS community has as yet been invited to stand for election to Oversight, Stockton's group of deacons and elders, (essentially its charity trustees). However, having identified a couple of people with leadership potential, there may be developments in the next year or so. One of our elders is a Nigerian who is a consultant in a local hospital.

There are a number of factors which have influenced the pace of genuine inclusion. One, simply, is the language barrier.

"Their ability in English may not have developed sufficiently to integrate them fully into all that our church engages in," says Peter. "For instance, there is some thinking about how to draw them into our House Groups - this depends on a willingness from such groups to welcome RAS folk - but a lack of good English still inhibits this development from reaching its full potential. Language is definitely the biggest barrier."



Photo: John Hesford



Photo: John Hesford

Secondly, many are young Christians and have found faith at the church and need to continue their development as Christians. "They have come a long way, but need to grow."

Thirdly, the RAS are generally with Stockton for a temporary period. Many believe their chance of employment is greater in big cities, or have relatives elsewhere and are under pressure to move.

This creates a conundrum for the church, Peter explains: "We put a lot of time into their lives, and are very happy to do so. But there is therefore a tension between giving our time to support and befriend these folk during their time with us - which is an unpredictable length of time - and the pastoral care of our local residents who are mainly permanent. A tension between doing things in a way that our faithful locals expect and appreciate, and responding to the relatively large numbers of RAS folk who are with us temporarily, and come with significant need of friendship and support."

The church continues to explore ways of helping the folk it serves settle, not just in the church, but the town. One idea is to approach local businesses to make them aware of the skills they bring. "There is real gold among these

people, many of whom are professional and educated to a high standard", says Peter. As their English improves, they become very employable.

"The refugee work has been just amazing, and continues to develop,"

Peter continues. "It's all about understanding what we can and should do. It's an ongoing learning curve.

"We haven't yet achieved a level playing field, but we are making progress."



  
**RETIRED BAPTIST MINISTERS  
HOUSING SOCIETY**

*Providing Baptist Ministers with a peaceful and secure retirement in their own home.*

If a retiring minister does not have access to, or any other means of providing accommodation themselves, RBMHS may be able to help. We also help BMS missionaries who have primarily served abroad and spouses of ministers who have died whilst in service.

**WE NEED YOUR HELP**

We are an independent registered charity, which receives no central funding from the Union. Our work is only made possible by the generosity of Baptist Churches, their fellowships and individual friends who make donations, bequeath properties or leave legacies.

If you need further information about our work or are able to make a donation please contact us on **01202 548890** or email **admin@rbmhs.org.uk**

An exempt charity registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Society Act 2014 - No. 21462R

**rbmhs.org.uk**





## Cemetery Road Baptist Church, Sheffield

'On a journey to be a healthy, city-serving multiethnic church' writes minister **James Chapman**

Cemetery Road Baptist Church has always celebrated its multi-racial identity. The Sheffield church has had Jamaican links since early in the last century, which contributed to the growth of the West Indies Fellowship post war. The warm welcome given to immigrants was in stark contrast to other churches, and subsequently people from other nations and backgrounds have joined the fellowship. Ten years ago the church was invited to host Baptist refugees from the Karen community in Burma. They now have their own church, but a strong link remains.

More recently a Congolese prayer meeting has grown into a fellowship of good size who are starting to integrate into the membership more fully. The church also began to receive people from Iran who were, in the main, seeking asylum.

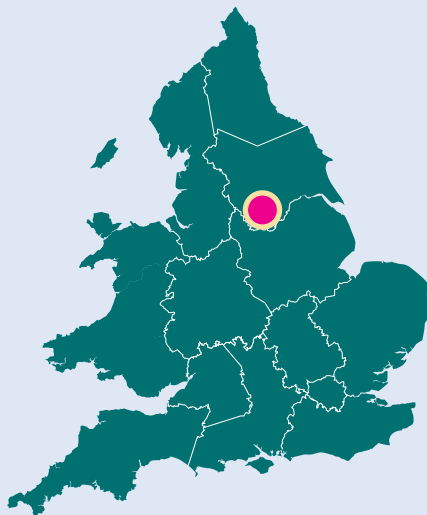
That fellowship now includes many from other Middle Eastern nations, and baptisms are commonplace.



"Universally, people have felt welcomed and encouraged by the church," says lead minister James Chapman.

Currently two dozen nationalities are represented, and the church has been exploring, in study groups and away days, the importance of cross-cultural engagement and competence, empowering diversity in leadership, and a common identity in Christ. It has been working at bringing people into membership and leadership from the fringe "so as to represent more fully our racial diversity, and provide a broader perspective on being Baptist."

Within the past two years the church has tried to widen the experience of leadership for the congregation by having a female minister-in-training, a Ghanaian minister-in-training, a Farsi project worker, and an increased diversity at the front in the services.



The diaconate has for many years included those from Jamaica or children of Jamaicans. Challenges of broadening the leadership demographic emerge, but there is a 'keenness' for that to happen. Deacons' away days and breakfasts are important to explore issues of being a multiethnic church.

The style of Sunday worship is recognisably British. With up to two dozen different languages spoken in the church, interpreting cannot be easily personalised (though interpreters are commonly used during the large number of baptisms the church now has, and for testimonies).

The church is also conscious of tokenism, although occasional music and material from the world church is appreciated. The Congolese and Farsi speakers have a separate time in the week for worship and teaching.

"We have elements of worship from other cultures, but for multiethnic church to work, there is a need to be fairly mono-cultural in our worship," says James.

Language accessibility means church meetings rarely reflect the make-up of the church. "Power dynamics are most at play in this forum," James continues. "We have tried to do things a bit differently, such as meeting over Sunday lunch, but it has not really worked so far." However, the meeting is conscious of its responsibility to represent a diverse church in decisions, and more members are being added from other cultures, as people want to be included more into the life of the church.

"As a church we have been looking at what it really means to be a healthy multiethnic congregation, and not only be a place of welcome, but a place where those joining can find significant purpose," says James.

"The journey is not easy - there are occasional tensions and prejudices that surface, particularly over ethical cultural understandings, but we seek to be intentional in accommodating a love for all people. Cemetery Road Baptist Church in Sheffield is on a journey to be a healthy, city-serving multiethnic church, to truly be a house of prayer for all nations."

Adapted from the *Pentecost People* resource, available to download from [www.baptist.org.uk/pentecostpeople](http://www.baptist.org.uk/pentecostpeople)



Photo: Cemetery Road Baptist Church

# Websites for Baptist Churches and Ministries

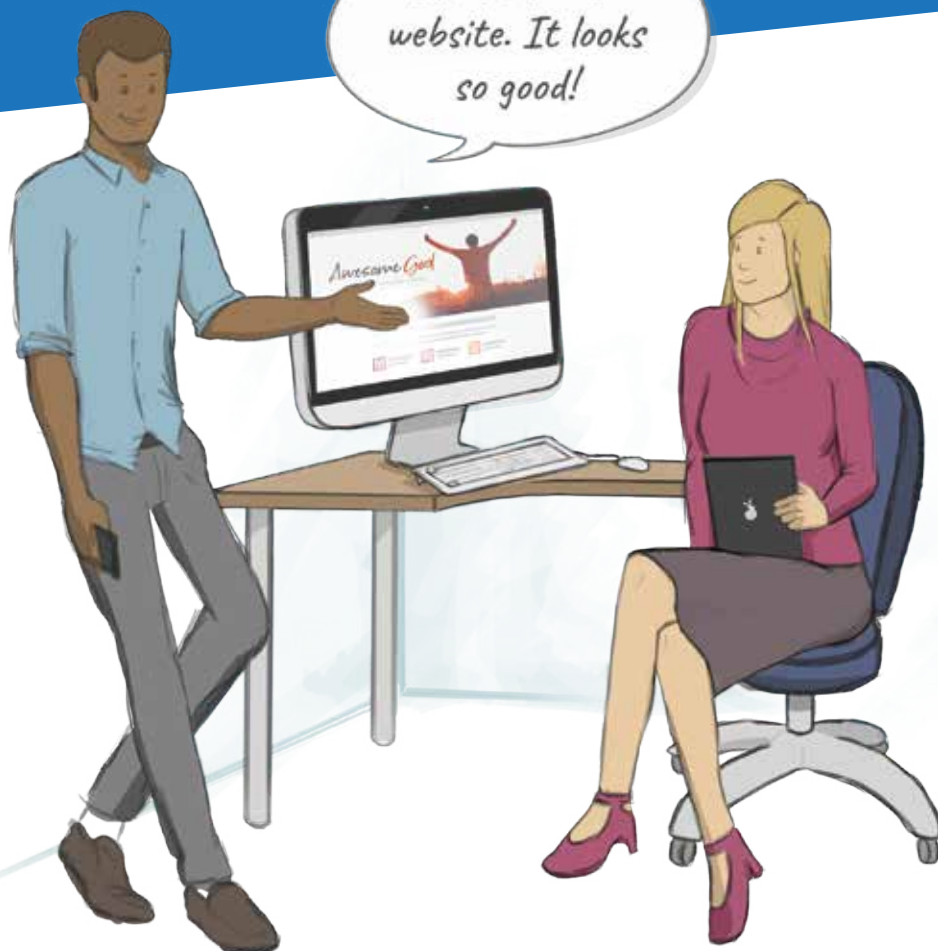
Get a great looking website plus a powerful Church Management System all-in-one.

ChurchInsight has been developed specifically for churches and ministries. It is packed with clever features designed to make church management easier.



All websites come responsive, so they work well across all devices including laptops, tablets and smartphones.

*I love our new website. It looks so good!*



## Special Offer for Baptist Churches

Baptist affiliated churches\* get **50% off** their first 24 months of using ChurchInsight and **£195 off** any of our church website templates.

Get in touch for more details.

Call **01223 790 222**  
or email us at  
[hello@churchinsight.com](mailto:hello@churchinsight.com)

\*Offer applies to new customers only



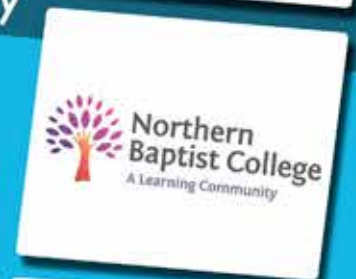


preparing God's people for mission and ministry

Belong to a community of disciples,  
equipping men and women for  
effective ministry and mission  
in a changing world

We have courses for:

- Ministerial students
- Open option students
- Ministers seeking in-service training
- Leaders and members of local churches
- Postgraduate students



[www.baptist.org.uk/colleges](http://www.baptist.org.uk/colleges)



Photo: Spurgeon's College

## Spurgeon's: a multicultural college

**“We are blessed to have a very multicultural community of staff and students, and it influences all we do.”**



“A day at Spurgeon's is a day encountering a global community,” notes principal, Philip McCormack MBE. “This is a daily lived experience.”

Situated in South Norwood, itself a diverse area of London, Spurgeon's has long attracted students far and wide.

The college has trained more than 3000 ministers since its foundation in 1856, and currently has active ministers in 35 countries worldwide. Not only do its students represent a wide range of ethnicities, its staff do too.

“In very meaningful ways the college staff and student body reflect the diversity of London, one of the great world cities,” Philip continues.

Philip, a former army chaplain whose term as principal began in September 2017, explains that the college has a three-fold vision. There is a local dimension: it exists to meet the needs of the church in London, which includes, but is broader than, the Baptist family. Secondly, the college has a national role: it is one of the leading theological colleges in the UK, and one of our five Baptist colleges. It trains men and women for ministry across the UK, and strives to be a living emblem of a diverse community in the 21st century.

The third dimension is its global reach. As well as the men and women it trains who return to minister in their own countries, the college is seeking to develop relationships around the world and build on the partnerships it already enjoys.

This vision is connected to the aims of its founder, Philip says. “One of the significant features of the life and ministry of Charles Spurgeon was his ability to understand the needs of his generation.

“Today we are the inheritors of the vision of the simple need to train men and women to speak to their generation in a way that is meaningful.”

This means reflecting the diverse world in its teaching.

“Our Christian identity is to maintain unity in different cultures, so we make an intentional effort to make sure the multicultural aspect is pervasive,” explains Seidel Abel Boanerges, Tutor in Christian Mission and Theology. Practitioners from multicultural churches are regularly invited to train the students.



“Moreover, due to the richness of our diverse multicultural community, space is given to the students to learn from each other. We discuss and share people's experiences,” Seidel continues. “It adds so much to the teaching process.”

In addition, opportunities are provided for students to put their theology into practice by going on multicultural mission trips.

“We want the students to learn about the challenges. We want to equip them with everything we can. We give them a lot of practical information, for reflection, to see what works or does not work in their own contexts.”

There are the theological differences, but Jesus is central, and spreading the gospel in appropriate ways is the priority.

“We're not saying there are no challenges,” Seidel adds. “But making a deeper effort is part of our teaching. One of Spurgeon's values is to celebrate and recognise diversity and cultivate community. We are blessed to have a very multicultural community of staff and students, and it influences all we do.”







Photo: FatCamera | iStockphoto.com

## What I learned from pastoring a multicultural church

By **Wale Hudson-Roberts**

It only seems like yesterday that I accepted the call to a culturally diverse church in London. Now with the benefit of hindsight I am fully aware of the many mistakes I made while attempting to transition the church to become a healthy multicultural church family. My first experience of racism in the church was when a member of the church refused to continue to worship at the church, the reason behind her continued absence from regular Sunday worship was 'the colour of my skin'.

Some months later a Christian family made it clear that I could not conduct their deceased mother's funeral service, again for the same reason. I would be exaggerating if I said that these stories were a regular feature of pastoral life.

They were not. But even their irregularity exposed the unpalatable side of pastoral life; racist attitudes and behaviour lurked within the underbelly of the church and from time to time reared their head above the parapet.

One of the things I failed to do while attempting to address these issues, was to 'out' each of the racist incidences. There were times when I did, for example when a couple told me that they were uncomfortable worshipping in a church with me as their black pastor. But there were times, be them few, when I decided that I would say nothing at all in fear of further dividing the church.

Silence was my mistake. I realise now that a prerequisite behind developing a multicultural church is for the church collectively to name its discrimination and repent of it. Not to do so is to collude with the racial activity and give permission for its tentacles to take root in the church's culture. At the very least this can curtail the transition from a multiethnic to a multicultural church, and at worst it might even prevent the transition from even beginning.

The route to reconciliation, and ultimately justice, includes acknowledgement and ownership of practices that disadvantage others. Failing to carefully challenge and 'out' these issues sustains an unjust environment and perpetuates the continued assault on the image of God.

I also wish that I was more sensitive to the impact of 'internalised racism.' For centuries, Black and minority ethnic people have lived with the narrative that has declared them as inferior to others. Divesting self of such negative rhetoric is challenging - made even more difficult when it has straddled generations. In church life, internalised racism can present itself, for example, as disengagement from leadership when, in actual fact, the underlying issue is not the absence of commitment to leadership, or even to the church, but the constant questioning of our ability to deliver. I regret that, when I was a pastor, I did not sufficiently contextualise my pastoral care to help all those impacted by this indoctrination to address this deeply located perennial issue. If I had, I am sure the church I was serving would have been able to develop a creative multicultural leadership team.

Not spending much quality time reflecting on a theology underpinning multicultural church was yet another of my slip-ups. The term 'multicultural' recognises the inherent worth in human diversity and challenges the inequality of worth so often attached to human constructed hierarchies. I am more aware now than ever before that the Apostle Paul understood the meaning of the term 'multicultural' and the necessity for racial justice to be inextricably attached to all truly multicultural Christian communities. Paul's dramatic conversion helped him appreciate that God's purpose in Jesus was to break down the distinctions between Jews and Gentiles, thereby creating one single humanity. For Paul, a multicultural ecclesia has nothing to do with a smattering of cultures in a space. The Gospel imperative for the multicultural community is demonstrated in his imagery of the

Body of Christ where 'one's humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in what is yours' - described by Desmond Tutu as 'Ubuntu'.

This is powerful stuff. I regret that this was not massaged into the church's culture. That we did not regularly theologise on the meaning and implications of multicultural church was my blunder.

It is fact - creating multicultural church is laden with many obstacles. It is incredibly hard and complex work, requiring buckets of patience and, with the number of mistakes that will be made, we can't afford to take ourselves too seriously all of the time. For despite who we are, and sometimes even what we do, God's church is what it is - God's church.

**Wale Hudson-Roberts** is the Baptist Union's Justice Enabler





# ASKING WHAT REALLY MATTERS



Photo: RawPixel | iStockphoto.com

Conversations between Christians of different ethnic cultures may well be the key to learning to be a church that becomes meaningful to those we have traditionally alienated, writes **Phil Jump**

If I told you that I had been to a 'multicultural church' I wonder what you might expect me to have encountered. At the very least, I guess, a congregation that comprises different races and nationalities, seeking in some way or other to express a common identity as the Body of Christ. And there are good reasons to celebrate such ideals; the Church was born as a multicultural community. We are told that on the day of Pentecost, people from a variety of nationalities and language groups were miraculously engaged with the message of the risen Christ in words that they could understand. This is perceived as more than simple pragmatics, but a powerful symbol of a Gospel that is intended to engage and unite people from across traditional racial, ethnic and political divides.

More recently we have particularly recognised that it is not enough for the Church of Jesus Christ to simply comprise the diversity of our human race, but that people need to be included, valued and respected equally within it. For inherited churches in the UK, this has required some serious self-examination and an intentional

commitment to throw off the prejudices and assumptions of our own culture and accept other perspectives and traditions as being of equal worth to our own. As we reflect on some of the contemporary trends in our society, we might well argue that there has never been a more important time to seek to be a prophetic presence that challenges the narratives of division, prejudice and what is commonly described as 'othering'.

As I reflect on this, I do not want in any way to detract from these important concerns, but I sense that there are other benefits to be gleaned from seeking to be a truly multicultural church. In fact I would argue that this has the potential to be one of the most beneficial contributors to effective mission and evangelism of our contemporary age.

There is of course the obvious reality that many of our towns and cities are becoming increasingly multiethnic, and if people do not find within them churches that reflect the diversity of the local communities that they seek to serve, they will simply be seen as increasingly irrelevant to them.

But of course we also recognise that the changing demographic of our society brings its own tensions and challenges, and some of the more unhelpful reactions of the statutory sector, such as the alleged banning of Christmas, serves more than anything to show how ill-equipped certain elements of that sector are to deal with these changes. In such contexts, the Church has some very real opportunities and responsibilities to be a true beacon of hope. Not only by modelling wholesome community, but by offering itself as a catalyst for community building in wider society. This of course requires us to have recognised, embraced and worked through these issues for ourselves – and that is not something that any of us can immediately claim to have adequately done. This is why, as Baptists Together, we should continue to invest in this important agenda.

This is a journey that I cannot engage in without asking some very significant questions about my own cultural prejudices and preferences. When I attend and participate in the life of my local church – how much of what I do has its roots in my cultural identity

rather than who I am as a follower of Jesus? This is more than simply the language of the services, but the way the chairs are put out; the style and décor of the building; the images we choose to display or not to display; the type of music we use; the themes and nuances of our songs; the way we communicate, engage, dress, sit, stand, pray... and so I could go on.

But this is where I have to embrace another cultural reality. I might be a white, British-born, middle-aged, northern bloke, but in many respects I am quite different to a lot of the other white, British-born, middle-aged, northern blokes that I know. And the simple reason for this is that I grew up in a church culture. I know when to sing the songs, when to sit, stand, be quiet or join in – and I have of course, over the years, cultivated that art of appearing utterly absorbed by that hour and a quarter of Sunday morning cultural fix, even when I am bored rigid by it.

Being a multicultural church forces us to strip away the accepted cultural behaviours of local church and ask what really matters. It is not simply a matter of abandoning one cultural approach and replacing it with another – it is by bringing these different cultures

and traditions together that we distil from them the common threads of true discipleship, shared encounter with the living God, Gospel living and seeking the Kingdom of God. As we rediscover these underlying realities of our faith, rather than the traditions they have spawned in previous centuries and contexts, we can then begin that exciting journey of exploring how we can express and experience them in the light of our contemporary experience. This has important implications for me as a disciple of Jesus. It is all too easy for me to confuse genuine discipleship with routine participation in a raft of rituals and experiences that provide me with an inevitable sense of comfort and familiarity. If these things are taken from me, it forces me to ask important questions about what really defines me as a follower of Jesus, and it seems that all this can result in is the local church becoming an ever more authentic expression of true Christlikeness. This is not only the kind of church we are called to be – it is the kind of church that true seekers find irresistible and faith generating.

But if they are to engage with such churches, they need to see something within them that feels relevant to them. There are many people in my community, whose skin colour and

ethnicity may well be the same as mine, but who find traditional practices and behaviours of local church no less alien than those of any other culture or people group that is different to their own. The internal conversations between Christians of different ethnic cultures may well be the key to learning to be a church that becomes meaningful to those that we have traditionally alienated.

In a conversation with local leaders recently, we were drawn on to the issue of what we called ‘accessible church’. This was not a matter of looking at wheelchair ramps, stairs, signs and space (important as these things are) but recognising that many people struggle to ‘access’ what is happening in our churches because it simply makes no sense to them. Learning to ask one another why we do what we do (whatever ethnic background it comes from) might just be the first step to offering an increasingly disaffected generation, a vision of Christian faith that inspires, attracts and includes them. This is another reason to keep these vital conversations alive.

**Phil Jump** is the Regional Minister Team Leader for the *North Western Baptist Association*



Photo: RawPixel | iStockphoto.com





# 'Pentecost all over again'

Baptists across Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia are seeing their life and mission transformed by welcoming the 'different other'. By **Tony Peck**

The overall sense I have from these past years serving the Baptists of Europe, Middle East and Central Asia is that I have been part of a time of transition, or perhaps more accurately, a series of connected 'transitions'.

In Central and Eastern Europe there is the transition, still being played out, from a past shaped by communism to a future that is not so influenced by or dependent on the West as once seemed the case.

Only now there is emerging leadership among Baptists in this region who cannot remember the communist era. There is a slow but perceptible shift from an primary emphasis on the internal 'purity' of the church, to a more missional indigenous church taking the more risky strategy to engage as salt and light in society.

Two years ago I visited eastern Ukraine, almost up to the frontline of the tragic conflict between Ukraine and Russia that has resulted in more than a million people becoming internally displaced (IDPs). I sat with a group of pastors in the city of Kharkiv who openly confessed that their churches had lived for themselves and their own 'holiness' until refugees from the conflict began appearing at their doors in great need. They spoke movingly about the way that, beginning with providing some of the basic human needs of these displaced people, it had gradually changed the scope of their vision of the whole life and mission of their churches.

And this is the second and perhaps most significant transition taking place at the moment, prompted by

the response of churches to migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. What those pastors told me has been repeated in one way or another over the past few years all over the region served by the EBF. When I visited the Baptist church at Zahle, next to the Syrian border in Lebanon, I heard of a church whose life had been transformed when, through prayer and with God's help, they were enabled to overcome their initial reluctance to reach out to their traditional 'enemy', the Syrians who were fleeing from the civil war in their country.

Today that church is serving hundreds of families in need and provides schools for some of the children. The aid is given for its own sake, accompanied only by the love and prayers of God's people. But God is at work and the Holy Spirit's answering response has been to draw some of the refugees to the church and to Christ through dreams and through the loving friendship they have encountered.

Last year I heard one of the pastors of a Baptist church in Berlin, Germany say that with so many migrants and refugees she felt that it was 'Pentecost all over again' and that the church had started to talk about a refugee 'blessing' rather than the media-fuelled refugee 'crisis'. I heard a similar story from the tiny Swedish-speaking Baptist Union in Finland. Some of their churches, in tentatively opening their settled life to people of a very different, language, culture and religion, have been almost overwhelmed by the response.

What has emerged from all this is

that there is an experiential transition and change in the mission outlook of many churches. It begins with the desire to truly embrace the 'different other' in the name of Christ. It is then being underpinned by some searching biblical and theological reflection. Of course it is not happening everywhere. In a few cases the nationalist rhetoric that has closed borders and erected fences has the support of the churches among whom an exclusive 'Christendom' mentality still lingers. But the overall direction is clear.

The third element to this time of transition is perhaps the most challenging. It is that as European and Middle Eastern Baptists we support the formation and growth of a new generation of leaders. These are leaders who can respond to this new day, embrace the totality of the mission of God, develop that prophetic 'cutting edge' to speak the Word of God to society, and who are comfortable crossing borders of all kinds.

In this respect one of the most significant developments in the life of the EBF has been our younger leaders' programme, TRANSFORM, that began earlier this year. From the time we first gathered the participants - five women and six men from all parts of the EBF, amongst whom are pastors, teachers, an architect, a lawyer, and a translator - we realised that God is indeed raising up gifted young leaders who are passionate about being disciples, being church and being missional, 'for such a time as this'.

It is the witness of those eleven young leaders from Europe and the Middle East that fills me with hope and convinces me that we need not fear the challenges and the uncertainties of a time of transition; but rather, as Lynn Green reminded us in the last edition of *Baptists Together*, 'devote ourselves to prayer, being attentive and obedient to the call of Christ in this present moment and take seriously the invitation to participate in the life of God's kingdom here and now'.

**Tony Peck** is General Secretary of the *European Baptist Federation*



Church members in Flensburg, Germany, meeting with refugees



Photo: German Baptist Union



## Get equipped for cross-cultural mission

**BMS World Mission is launching a brand new course to help Christians in the UK effectively engage in mission right where they are**

God calls all of us to mission – but he doesn't call all of us overseas. At BMS, we realise that the majority of Christians won't be asked to move to another country in order to live out their mission call. We also know that witnessing to Christ at home in the UK is tough.

That's why we are launching a new course called ***Mission Where You Are***. For the first time ever, every Christian in the UK has the opportunity to come and train with us in cross-cultural mission.

We're distilling our 225 years of mission experience into a six-weekend course for people who are committed to, or exploring, mission where they are, here in the UK. We have learnt so much about cross-cultural mission over the last two centuries – lessons from our own experiences, from the experiences of our brothers and sisters around the world and from the people we've sought to serve on four continents, and from our mistakes.

As well as using these experiences to more effectively serve overseas, we want to use them to help cross-cultural mission in the UK thrive.

If you feel called to serve God in mission in the UK – whether that's in your workplace, through your local church, or in your community – *Mission Where You Are* is for you!

Mark Ord, Co-Director of our training centre in Birmingham and one of those spearheading this course, believes that this training is much-needed and that many Christians could really benefit from it as they seek to reach their neighbours and communities.

"I'm really excited about this course because there are lots of Christians who feel called to mission, in their workplaces or other parts of their lives, and who really would love to get the training that we offer to our mission personnel," says Mark.

"Britain is a challenging place when it comes to mission; secularism has got into our bones, even in church, and it is crucial that ordinary Christians recapture a vision and confidence, as well as developing capacity, for witnessing to God's goodness where they are."

*Mission Where You Are* will run over six weekends, spread over two years, and will challenge your thinking, resource your imagination and energise your engagement in mission. You will learn from experienced practitioners and trainers, reflect on your own practices, and share experiences and stories of how God is at work where you are.

Each weekend costs just £150 per person, including food and accommodation, and will take place at our mission training centre in Birmingham. For more information, dates and a breakdown of topics for the six weekends visit: <http://bit.ly/missionwhereyouare>

The first weekend is 19-20 January

### **The Bible and mission:**

This weekend examines the big story of the Bible, from creation through to reconciliation, and explores how we discern God's activity in the world and what it means to get caught up in God's mission.





An interview with

# Claude Halm

Senior minister at Alperton Baptist Church, Wembley, and founding pastor of International Praise Centre (IPC), a post-migration youth church in East London

## You're the minister of two congregations which sound very different. Is that the case?

Yes, they are. Alperton is a growing multicultural church with over 30 different nationalities. The congregation is different in age to IPC. For instance, recently at Alperton we were talking about Facebook use, and discovered there are only five people in the congregation who use it! IPC is for the millennial generation, so it's a very different demographic. IPC meets on Sunday afternoon, which suits people in their 20s and 30s.

## How did this come about?

Previously I was the Executive Pastor at Trinity Baptist Church in West Norwood, having studied at Spurgeon's College, but I felt called to a new challenge. I wanted to experience something more multicultural. That's how I was called to Alperton. Interestingly at Alperton while there are many different nationalities, there's currently no one from Ghana, which is where I'm originally from.

I'd also sensed there was a missing generation in black majority churches, the second generation black millennial. Those raised in their parents' church had been lost already. This was an opportunity to explore that.

## So how was IPC founded?

I was temporarily working as a teacher in East London in the time between leaving Trinity and starting at Alperton. I got to know some young people there through a prayer and study group.

A huge issue for them was the question of identity. They knew they did not empathise with a black majority church. They didn't want to go to their parents' church. But even though they were born here, or lived most of their lives here, they identify themselves as Africans, not white English. So they couldn't identify with a black majority church, or a host church.

An average second generation black millennial has a faith in God; in private they practise their faith – reading, events, the way they live – but they are not in church.

I wanted to create a church for them, a church with a new identity. So I launched the International Praise Centre in Dagenham in 2012.



## What does it look like?

They wanted to maintain their cultural heritage – the noise the colour, the energy. Music features a lot. But they wanted something different. It's an afternoon church. It's a good time to for young people and families.

The building is also important: we're in a former pub, a listed building near the old West Ham football ground. From a Black African background, the church is a sacred space, so this is not a typical place.

It's a lifestyle service, geared towards what they're facing in everyday life: finding a life partner; dealing with change etc. We pray for issues like gun crime and knife crime. It's very interactive.

We give them much more room, space to grow. I see myself as a facilitator. We're working on a transition where they take over the entire service. An adult-initiated, young people-led church.

My role is to make sure the gathering remains a church. It's a church and nothing else. They worship God in Spirit and truth. It's not a social club.

## What's the response?

Many are from East London: it just happened to be there because that was my connection. But others come from Kent, South London - they come from all over.

They are primarily second generation black millennials – the countries include Zimbabwe, Zambia, Kenya, Gambia, Nigeria and Congo.

It's challenging – we've had to consciously repudiate some of the black African background, had to consciously let go so that it becomes a young people-led church. But the young people are finding a sense of purpose and belonging, they appreciate our counsel and their faith is growing.

As well as his pastor roles, Claude currently serves on the Council of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the apostolic team of the Kingdom Advancement Fellowship of Churches International in USA and two different Community Reference Groups of the London Metropolitan Police. He is currently completing a second Doctoral Research thesis on 'Inculturation and Barriers to Reverse Mission in post-migration ethnic churches' at the School of Advanced Study, University of London.



## “It’s finding that spiritual connection”

On the opposite page we heard from Baptist pastor Claude Halm and how he founded a new congregation for second generation black millennials. Now Minofa Nsinguna, Oyin Williams and Jeremiah Morrison, share something of how that ministry has reached them

### What issues have you encountered in finding a church?

**Minofa:** I think for me it’s finding that spiritual connection. Unfortunately I personally haven’t found it every church I’ve been to. So, I’m very grateful I’ve come to a place surrounded by friends and also people that I can call family that help me in finding that spiritual connection I long for in a church.

**Oyin:** When I have gone to different churches and thought “This may not be the right one for me,” one thing I realised is that I didn’t feel (Pause)... I don’t know, maybe the bond wasn’t there. I think that even though our church is quite small and intimate, it’s better to be intimate because I feel like I know the people here, and everyone knows me by name.

### In what ways has International Praise Centre met your spiritual needs?

**Jeremiah:** I think for me IPC has met my spiritual needs because it has urged me to go deeper into the word. It has also urged me to look at certain situations in life in a different perspective from a more faith perspective. And, it’s kind of enabled me to go on to do things that I wouldn’t have expected myself to do because of the teachings and preaching from Revd Claude.

**Minofa:** It’s just having BASIC in general. (BASIC is an acronym for “Brothers and Sisters in Christ”, which is a Bible study and conversation forum for the young people in the church.)

It’s being with a group of young people who are all like-minded and are all going through the same sort of journey. We’re all relatable, which has helped a lot. I think it’s helped my spiritual need because I have become more confident and less afraid to talk about things when it comes to God. It’s helped me pray a lot better. I also think that because we are like-minded, we get to do things like the BASIC service and invite other like-minded people to be around us.

**Oyin:** in terms of spiritual growth, the church has definitely been there for me when I have been down. I know that coming to church usually sets the tone for my week ahead. When I’ve gone astray or am a bit confused, the church has assured me that there is something or someone that I could come back to. And like Minofa said, with all of us being so relatable, it’s easy to understand that none of us are perfect. It means it’s easy for us to share our stories and whatever we’re going through.

### Describe your spiritual faith transition from when you first started IPC to now

**Jeremiah:** I think for me I have seen my faith grow tremendously. There was a point two years ago where I literally did not see the purpose of doing anything for God. I was in a place where I didn’t know what I was doing. But being here has developed my purpose and given me a reason as to why I do things in church, which is to serve God and make him pleased.

Knowing that has subsequently given me such an urgency to build, not only my own ministry in worship but also to build the house of God at IPC as a perfect place for God to dwell and for his people to be blessed. I aim to be one of those pillars that lay the foundations of this church, and continue to build it and build it. ■







Photo: iStockphoto.com



Photo: iStockphoto.com



## Many ways of praying

**Ideas that could help your church community think more about ways in which to increase variety and cultural diversity in its worship.**

### Encourage prayer in first languages

There is nothing more liberating than someone being free to pray in their first language – this brings a release of passion and connection that, even though others may not understand the words, certainly fires the Spirit.

### Posture

When we laugh, when we cry, when we relax, when we show respect, when we listen, when we watch sport, we change our posture. When we pray, posture and physicality should feature. Posture in prayer is hugely important in many cultural contexts, and so it is important we allow space for this. Kneeling, standing, bowing, sitting, laying – all have significance as we pray, and are featured regularly in scripture.

### Praying together out loud

This is an incredibly powerful way for a community of believers to pray, and yet for some it is a real challenge. It's a very natural way to pray for many, yet for others (especially some white British people) it's an alien concept. Worth persevering with – God's people crying out together in anger, desperation, passion, is inspiring and faith-building.

### Creative arts

For some, spoken words are not an easy way to express, so making space for creativity and expression in prayer using art, craft, written word, and music in prayer is very important, and often opens up a whole new world of prayer for many.



### Visual meditation

There is a wealth of Christian art that helps us to focus on God and informs our praying. Meditation on a piece of art, guided by thoughts and questions allows a different level of thought and prayer. Using art drawn from a variety of cultures also allows us to develop an understanding of how scripture is interpreted in other cultural settings.

### Youth and children

As we know, children pray in ways that are free from over-analysis, cynicism and embarrassment. We should allow our children opportunities to teach us how to pray, how to be honest in our prayers. Our young people will often bring musical/artistic styles in prayer and worship that are culturally important to them, and although validating these in our community gatherings can be challenging to some, it is very important if we want to engage and be inclusive across cultures. Being aware of the diversity of approaches to prayer within our communities, and then allowing time and space to utilise and play with these forms, will enrich us, challenge us and bless us as we look to pray and worship in power and unity. ■

# Events



## Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

18-25 January

The theme for 2018 is 'That All May Be Free', based around Exodus 15, and materials have been prepared by churches in the Caribbean

[www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer](http://www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer)



## Homeless Sunday

28 January

An opportunity to listen to God about homelessness, and consider the action we are called to take

[www.housingjustice.org.uk/Event/homeless-sunday-2018](http://www.housingjustice.org.uk/Event/homeless-sunday-2018)



## BMS World Mission Day of Prayer

4 February

A day to pray for the work of mission, with the BMS staff in the UK and around the world

[www.bmsworldmission.org/dayofprayer](http://www.bmsworldmission.org/dayofprayer)



## Church Action on Poverty Sunday

11 February

A day to focus on working together to close the gap between rich and poor

[www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday](http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday)



## Racial Justice Sunday

11 February

[www.ctbi.org.uk](http://www.ctbi.org.uk)



## Lent

14 February - 31 March



## Fairtrade Fortnight

26 February – 11 March

Events and promotions to make sure the message of Fairtrade is getting a national voice

[www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk)



## Women's World Day of Prayer

2 March

The theme for 2018 is 'All God's Creation is Very Good', written by women from Suriname

[www.wwdp.org.uk/resources](http://www.wwdp.org.uk/resources)



## Baptist Union Council

14-15 March

The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick

[www.baptist.org.uk/council](http://www.baptist.org.uk/council)



## Joint Public Issues Team conference

17 March

Brave new world? Faithful living in a time of change

[www.jointpublicissues.org.uk](http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk)



## Easter Sunday

1 April



## Pray for Schools Fortnight

6-20 May

Bringing together people from local churches and others involved in education, to pray for schools

[www.prayforschools.org](http://www.prayforschools.org)



## Baptist Assembly

12 May

Join us with a group from your church at the 2018 Baptist Assembly in Peterborough

[www.baptistassembly.org.uk](http://www.baptistassembly.org.uk)



## Christian Aid Week

13 - 19 May

Support and pray for the work of Christian Aid

[www.caweek.org](http://www.caweek.org)

For more, visit  
[www.baptist.org.uk/events](http://www.baptist.org.uk/events)



Supplying notice boards and signage to Baptist churches across the UK









[www.greenbarnes.co.uk/churches/](http://www.greenbarnes.co.uk/churches/)  
Call today on **01280 701093**





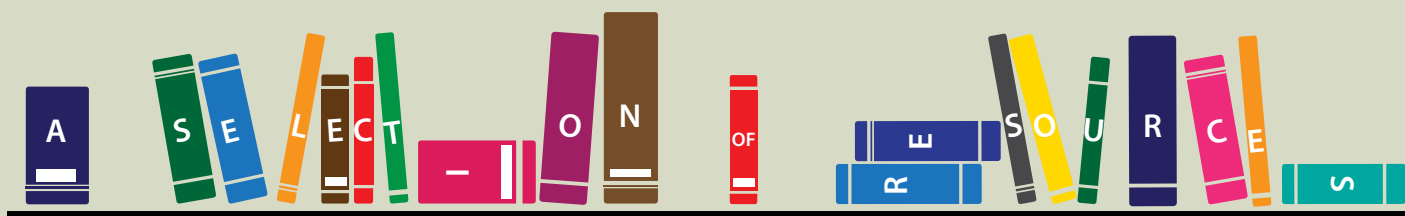


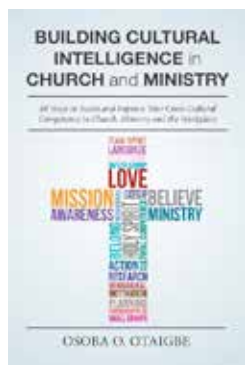
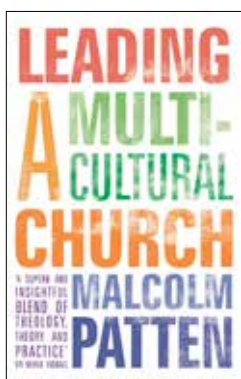
Illustration: freepik.com

### Leading a Multicultural Church

By Malcolm Patten (SPCK, 2016)

A handbook for developing a healthy multicultural church community. Malcolm Patten, Senior Pastor of **Blackhorse Road Baptist Church** in Walthamstow, east London, draws on his many years' experience as a leader of multicultural congregations to equip ministers with a vision for unlocking the potential of such communities.

*'There is no greater joy or greater challenge in ministry than leading a multicultural church... Malcolm Patten offers well researched wisdom and insightful reflection from his own experience on this challenge, which create signposts that can only enhance our leadership, whatever the diverse context.'* - The Rt Revd Peter Hill, Bishop of Barking



### Building Cultural Intelligence in Church and Ministry

By Osoba O Otaigbe (Author House UK, 2016)

Osoba Otaigbe's comprehensive guide for helping the church more effectively relate and serve across cultural borders. Whether you're welcoming a community of refugees, travelling on a short-term mission experience, befriending an expat family, or simply interacting with an increasingly diverse society, this guide will help you love your neighbour. Osoba is the minister of **Tooting Junction Baptist Church**.

*'A welcome resource for ministerial/missional formation and both denominational and local church leadership'* - The Revd Dr Michael N Jagessar, Global and Intercultural Ministries, United Reformed Church

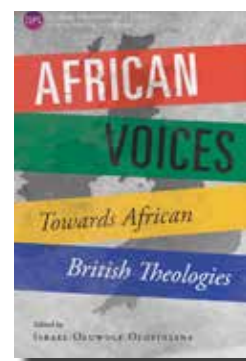
### African Voices: Towards African British Theologies

By Israel Olofinjana (Langham Global Library 2017)

Explores the significant presence of African Christianity in Britain by giving voice to African pastor-scholars operating in a British context. Israel Olofinjana is pastor of **Woolwich Central Baptist Church** and founding director of Centre for Missionaries from the Majority World.

*'This is an important book on the journey towards developing African theologies in Britain... offers insights into how African Christians can effectively engage with contemporary British culture as well as posing missiological challenges to white British churches.'*

- Cathy Ross, PhD Contextual Theology MTh Director, Ripon College Cuddesdon, UK



## Online resources

### Multiethnic Church

A six week course for small groups to help develop healthy, integrated churches. [www.baptist.org.uk/multiethnicchurch](http://www.baptist.org.uk/multiethnicchurch)

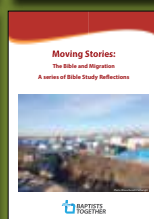


### Lest We Forget

Study reflections for small groups to provide further reflection and interpretation on our Union's *Apology for Slavery* and its practical outworking. [www.baptist.org.uk/lest](http://www.baptist.org.uk/lest)

### Pentecost People

Four video-based study sessions filmed in British Baptist churches, to help churches embrace the different cultures within them, to learn hospitality in a new way and to experience multicultural worship and prayer. [www.baptist.org.uk/pentecostpeople](http://www.baptist.org.uk/pentecostpeople)



### Moving Stories

Nine studies blending the biblical, historical and contemporary aspects of migration, from people whose lives have been impacted by people movement. [www.baptist.org.uk/movingstories](http://www.baptist.org.uk/movingstories)

The church family at Houghton Regis Baptist Church sharing a meal together



Photo: Houghton Regis Baptist Church

**Food matters. Our churches have consistently discovered how the sharing of meals has broken down barriers and encouraged vibrant cultural expression. In that spirit, we have sourced the following recipes from around our Union. Enjoy!**

### A RECIPE FOR RICE AND PEAS

(Serves 4 depending on your appetite!)

#### *You will need:*

410g can red kidney beans  
*or*, even better, an equivalent of dried red kidney beans  
 400ml coconut milk  
 2 cups of long grain rice  
 1 onion, diced  
 1 clove garlic, chopped  
 1/4 tsp dried thyme  
 1 tsp salt



Photo: Paul\_Brighton | iStockphoto.com

#### *How to make it:*

- » If you are using dried kidney beans you will need to soak these in water overnight and then boil them until cooked.
- » Add the cooked or tinned kidney beans, including the liquid they are in, and the coconut milk to a large saucepan with the onion, garlic, thyme and salt.
- » Add 2 cups of water, stir through and then bring to the boil.
- » Meanwhile rinse the rice in a sieve until the water runs clear. Once the other mixture has reached boiling point add the rice, stir, reduce the heat and simmer over low heat for 30 minutes or until the rice is cooked.
- » Season with some black pepper and salt to taste.

Recipe submitted by *Six Ways Baptist Church, Erdington*



## DORO WAT (Ethiopian Chicken Stew)

(Serves 6)

### You will need:

Juice of 1 small lemon  
800g of chicken thighs and drumsticks  
6 tbsp vegetable oil or niter kibbeh (fragrant butter)  
6 tsp berbere spice mix (see additional instructions)  
6 large red onions  
2 to 3 garlic cloves  
1 inch of fresh ginger  
Salt as desired  
450ml of water or chicken stock, add as required  
1 tbsp garam masala  
6 eggs

### How to make it:

- » Marinade the chicken pieces in the lemon juice. In the meantime, finely chop the onions, garlic and ginger by hand or blend into a paste in a food processor or hand held chopper. To make Doro Wat in its most authentic form, add the onions into a thick-based pan and cook gently for an hour until the onions have cooked and reduced into a sweet paste.
- » Add the niter kibbeh, or vegetable oil (olive oil is not typically used, as this has a strong flavour which may take away from the authentic spices used in Doro Wat).
- » Add the berbere spice, followed by the ginger and garlic and fry until fragrant. More berbere spice can be added depending on how much heat is desired from the dish.
- » Add the chicken pieces into the pan. Simmer on a low heat for 40 minutes until the chicken is cooked. Halfway through, sprinkle the garam masala over the Wat. You may need to top up with a little water as required and stir occasionally to avoid sticking to the base of the pan. While this is simmering away, boil your eggs.
- » After 40 minutes of simmering, add the boiled, shelled eggs to the Wat. Serve the Doro Wat on top of Injera to enjoy it the traditional way. Alternatively, this can be enjoyed with Indian flat bread.



## Berberere Spice Mix

### You will need:

8 tsp pure chilli powder (ground dried red hot peppers)  
or 2 tbsp cayenne pepper - *or less, according to taste*  
5 tsp sweet paprika  
1 tsp salt  
1 tsp ground coriander  
1/2 tsp ground ginger  
3/8 tsp ground cardamom  
3/8 tsp ground fenugreek  
1/4 tsp ground nutmeg  
1/4 tsp ground allspice  
1/8 tsp ground cloves

### How to make it:

Simply mix all the spices together until well blended.

## INJERA FLATBREAD

(Serves 6)

### You will need:

1 1/2 cups ground teff (180g)  
2 cups water  
salt, to taste  
vegetable oil, for the skillet

### How to make it:

- » Mix ground teff with the water and let stand in a bowl covered with a dishcloth at room temperature until it bubbles and has turned sour (this may take as long as three days). The fermenting mixture should be the consistency of a very thin pancake batter.
- » Stir in the salt, a little at a time, until you can just detect its taste.
- » Lightly oil an 8 or 9 inch skillet (or a larger one if you like); heat over medium heat.
- » Pour in enough batter to cover the bottom of the skillet (a thin pancake).
- » Cook briefly, until holes form in the Injera and the edges lift from the pan; do not let it brown, and don't flip it over as it is only supposed to be cooked on one side.
- » Remove and let cool. Place plastic wrap or foil between successive pieces so they don't stick together.
- » To serve, lay one Injera on a plate and ladle Doro Wat on top. Serve additional Injera on the side. Guests can be instructed to eat their meal without utensils, instead using the Injera to scoop up their food.

Recipe submitted by *Birmingham Central Baptist Church*



## DAL (Lentil soup)

(Serves 4)

### You will need:

3 tbsp oil  
2 tsp ground coriander  
2 tsp ground cumin  
1 tsp turmeric  
1 onion  
1 chilli  
150g tomatoes  
100g dal lentils (use either red lentils, split black (Urad) or Toor dal)  
500ml water  
Coriander

### How to make it:

- » Heat the oil. Add the spices and stir for about 30 seconds to lightly toast. Turn heat down, stir in the onion and chilli (finely chopped), and sweat for around 10 minutes.
- » Add the chopped tomatoes and stir. A couple of minutes later, stir in the dal and water, and season with salt and pepper.
- » Turn up heat, bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for about 20-25 minutes (for red lentils) or 45 minutes (if using the others – check packet for specific instructions). Serve with chopped coriander.
- » Blend for a smooth consistency (optional).



## TARKARI (Vegetable curry)

(Serves 4)

### You will need:

3 tbsp oil  
2 onions  
2 cloves of garlic (finely chopped)  
4 cm piece of ginger (finely chopped)  
1 tsp ground cumin  
2 tsp ground coriander  
1 tsp turmeric  
Pinch asafotedia (optional)  
150g tomatoes  
400g mixed vegetables (cauliflower, potatoes, carrots, peas etc)

### How to make it:

- » Heat oil. Fry onion until translucent. Add garlic and ginger. Cook for a few minutes without allowing to go brown.
- » Add spices and a drop of water. Fry for a couple of minutes.
- » Add vegetables and when coated with spice mixture, a couple of minutes or so, add tomatoes and season.
- » Bring to boil then reduce to low heat, stirring occasionally and adding a little water to stop it sticking.
- » The vegetables will be cooked in around 20-30 minutes. Garnish and fresh coriander.
- » Serve with rice, poppadum or bread (chapati, naan), pickle and salad, preferably on a thali dish (metal serving platter).



Photo: Alina Rai





## Baptist Union Council: November 2017



### Mission and pioneering

Three key sessions devoted to mission and pioneering, led by our Union's pioneer co-ordinators Roy Searle and Simon Goddard. They challenged us to be 'bucket-list Baptists', to have a bigger vision and be willing to do things differently in changing times.

### Apology

This was the 10th anniversary of Baptist Union Council offering an Apology for the transatlantic slave trade. General Secretary Lynn Green was a council member at the time, and reflected on what happened (see more on p6).

### Baptist Assembly

Council members approved a proposal to commit to up to three two-day Assemblies from 2019. They heard what's really valued is the opportunity to meet friends and colleagues with similar interests, and that something had been lost in the experiment with one-day Assemblies.

### New churches welcomed

Eight new churches joining our Union were welcomed and affirmed by Council. The churches are:

- 1 New Growth Ministries (EBA)
- 2 Lighthouse Community Church (SEBA)
- 3 Genesis Baptist Church (LBA)
- 4 International Praise Centre (LBA)
- 5 Pentecost Baptist Church (LBA)
- 6 Betel Romanian Baptist Church, Croydon (LBA)
- 7 London Chinese Baptist Church, Bow (LBA)
- 8 Darlington Baptist Church (NBA)

### Directory

A proposal for a new Baptists Together Online Directory was approved. The online directory contains lists of Baptist Union churches and Baptist Union accredited ministers, both not previously on the website.

[baptist.org.uk/directory](http://baptist.org.uk/directory)

### Pensions

The idea of a series of proposals across Baptists Together to significantly reduce the pension debt and ensure that church deficit payments don't rise, had been introduced at the last Council. Malcolm Broad, moderator of the Baptist Pension Scheme Employers Group (EG), said there is tangible evidence that a family solution can work – and could reduce the deficit by half.

### Prayer

The two days were wrapped in prayer and acknowledgement of God's presence. The Thursday evening prayer session was live streamed on Facebook. Churches were encouraged to join in, and add their prayers and reflections in the comments. The video has been viewed more than 2500 times.

For a complete report visit: [baptist.org.uk/councilnov17](http://baptist.org.uk/councilnov17)

## Responding to modern slavery

Three regional anti-slavery summits have been organised in Baptist churches in early 2018.

The summits in Cambridge, Chelmsford and Norwich will explore how Baptists can play their part in responding to modern slavery. The National Crime Agency (NCA) estimates there are well over 13,000 people being kept in modern slavery in the UK today.

The summits have been organised by the **Eastern Baptist Association** (EBA) in partnership with the Clewer Initiative, the Church of England's response to Modern Slavery.

Baptist minister Dan Pratt is the EBA Antislavery Co-ordinator, and attended the launch of the Clewer Initiative in October.

He said it is imperative the church responds to the injustice of modern slavery, and outlined three ways in which Baptists can respond:

- » Firstly, we need to see our communities and streets with new eyes. Do we see those being kept in slavery around us? Do our churches know how to spot the signs of someone in slavery? Are individuals isolated? Is their story scripted? Are they being controlled?
- » Secondly, we should act. If we suspect someone is being kept as a slave, phone the Modern Slavery National Helpline (08000 121700).  
[www.modernslaveryhelpline.org](http://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org)
- » Thirdly, we need to partner together and consult. We are stronger when we work together to fight this injustice. How can we as Baptists Together, within our churches, associations and national networks work together in setting the captives free?

For more, visit: [baptist.org.uk/slavery](http://baptist.org.uk/slavery)

## New refugee resources for churches

It has been described as the 'most comprehensive resource for churches yet produced on refugee and asylum issues'.

The Refugee Resource Centre for Churches, or R2C2, is a partnership between Jubilee+ and the Boaz Trust. Its initial expression is an interactive website.

"The website aims to plug the yawning gap in provision that has existed for many years, by raising awareness, providing information through a library of resources, linking Christians to existing projects and encouraging new projects across the UK", explained Dave Smith, Boaz Trust founder.

"We have a website that is going to make a huge difference to the ability of the Church

to step up and become what Christ has called it to be – a voice for the voiceless, a source of hope for the hopeless and a beacon on a hill for all to see."

Visit the R2C2 website:

[www.refugeeresourcecentreforchurches.org.uk](http://www.refugeeresourcecentreforchurches.org.uk)



## Honours recognition for Baptists

### Hilary Terry

A Baptist who has had a transformative effect on the lives of thousands of children has received a British Empire Medal (BEM).

Hilary Terry, a member of **Sutcliff Baptist Church**, has co-ordinated a Holiday Bible Club for more than 20 years in Olney, Buckinghamshire.

The club is an ecumenical event, held over five mornings and one evening barbecue one week in August.

It was originally a venture between four churches, attended then by 50 children. Hilary saw the potential to benefit the wider community by expanding and growing it to help others too.

As the club grew so did the number of leaders and helpers. Holiday Bible Club is now a significant community project with a task force of well over 100 adults, and over the years thousands of children, young people and their families have benefitted.

'Hilary has had a positive impact on the life path of many, many people,' the citation recommending her for the award stated.



Hilary at Arctica  
- the 2016 Holiday Bible Club

Hilary was awarded the BEM in the Queen's Birthday Honours in June for services to the community, and was presented with it on Thursday, 26 October, by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire, Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher.

### Rayleigh Baptist Church (RBC)

A team from a Baptist church that supports carers received the highest award given to local volunteer groups.

The Carers Ministries Team at Rayleigh Baptist Church (RBC), Essex, were presented with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Services (QAVS), the MBE for volunteer groups in September.

The Queen's Award is given to recognise outstanding contributions to local communities by groups of volunteers. The RBC Carers Ministries Team was one of 224 charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups to receive the prestigious award in 2017.

Carers can access help on the telephone, as well as attending three different sessions throughout the month. The café started 12 years ago with small local beginnings, but has steadily grown in numbers, both in volunteers and those who have registered for support.

Team leader Georgina Biggs, said, "Being awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service is a great encouragement to the team and gives credibility to the work we do, enabling carers to come forward with confidence."

## Urban Life: the journey so far

### A new report charting the work of Urban Life has been released

Urban Life is a network of people exploring and researching new approaches to mission and Christian presence in deprived and marginalised neighbourhoods. It was founded in 2014 as a partnership between Baptists Together, Urban Expression, Bristol Baptist College, BMS World Mission and Trinity College Bristol.

*Urban Life: The Journey So Far* charts its work and impact.

It has developed a 'particular approach' to enabling learning, and lists six principles - learning in community; rigorous theological reflection; being context-based; inclusive; attentive to everyday life; and interdisciplinary (drawing on different fields such as



Practical Theology, Social Science and Urban Theory).

The report also breaks down the different groups Urban Life has worked with: 12 per cent were undertaking ministerial training, 39 per cent were

ordained; while the largest group has been lay people (49 per cent). The majority of participants were engaged in their mission as full-time employees (52 per cent). One hundred and sixty-three people have engaged in face-to-face learning experiences through Urban Life.

The report concludes, 'Having begun with a concern for urban places experiencing marginalisation, we have found ourselves engaging with mission at all kinds of margins: urban, international, rural and suburban.

'We intend to continue to engage with the complexity and breadth of marginalised communities in our society.'

For more about Urban Life, visit: [urbanlife.org](http://urbanlife.org)





# *baptist assembly*

***Saturday 12 May 2018***

*KingsGate Conference Centre  
Peterborough, 10.30-18.30*

More information available at  
**[baptistassembly.org.uk](http://baptistassembly.org.uk)**

