

THE BAPTIST TIMES



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Endings and beginnings

MORE THAN 500 people flocked to a service marking the end of the Revd Ernie Whalley's tenure as team leader of the Yorkshire Baptist Association (YBA).

The venue had to be changed three times to accommodate all those who wished to say goodbye to Ernie, who joined the Association in 1998 (when he was appointed Superintendent for the North Eastern Area, comprising both the Yorkshire and Northern regions) and commission the next phase of his ministry. Ernie will become president-elect of the Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB) at this year's Assembly, with his presidential term starting the following year.

BUGB and BMS World Mission representatives joined ecumenical partners and friends and colleagues who have walked alongside Ernie in his long career. His first pastorate was at Central Bradford Baptist Fellowship in 1974, where he served for 12 years, after which he was appointed as a tutor at Northern Baptist College.

People representing Ernie's life and ministry gave short messages at the service at Huddersfield Parish Church. His successor at the YBA the Revd Graham Ensor led the prayers, while his colleague the Revd Jane Day,



Ernie Whalley

the YBA's regional minister for mission, led the service.

Ernie himself preached, on Kingdom treasure (Matthew 13: 43-44), emphasising the importance of working together to discover new ways of sharing the Kingdom. He recalled how Charles Haddon Spurgeon was inspired to found the London Baptist Association following a visit to Yorkshire, and told those present, 'What we are called to do is venture in new ways of working with God to build Kingdom and new expressions of "being church".'

'This will mean having to let go of some of our cherished ways and independence – that's painful, costly – but essential if the treasure is to be shared.'

Ernie described the service as 'an amazing event', adding, 'It's been a joy and a privilege to be part of the YBA for the last 13 years. As I lay down my role I'm confident that Jane Day and Graham Ensor will continue to serve Christ in the Yorkshire Baptist Association with passion, creativity and deep commitment.

'I look forward to serving the wider Baptist family as president next year, following on from the stimulating ministry of Pat Took and the evangelistic challenge offered by Chris Duffett.'

Jane added, 'Ernie's leaving service was a brilliant occasion to give thanks to God for his ministry.

'I have personally been grateful to have had the opportunity to serve alongside Ernie and have learnt much about regional ministry through him.

'We welcome the Revd Graham Ensor to the role and I am really looking forward to working with Graham as my new colleague, as we both seek to continue to serve the churches of Yorkshire.'

- The induction of the Revd Graham Ensor as YBA regional minister team leader will take place at South Parade Baptist Church, Leeds on February 18

From the editor

FOR THE recent Commemorative issue of *The Baptist Times* we attempted to give a flavour of how the publication covered landmark events in its 156 year history. It was a fascinating window on the concerns of the day.

Some were particular to the period; others could translate to a modern context with little need for interpretation. Temperance movement reports, a mainstay for many a year well into the 20th century, were an example of the former.

The movement – which had much Free Church support – recognised people took to the bottle to numb the squalor in which they lived; its calls for limiting alcohol were often accompanied by those advocating better housing. As conditions improved and drinking became more of a cultural choice, so the contributions of the movement began to fall off the pages of *The Baptist Times*.

But people have continued to drink, and as the figures show, increasingly so in recent years, at great cost to their health and that of society. Such a rise has coincided with cheaper alcohol. A return to calls to the days of teetotalism would have no modern currency; a call to raise prices per unit is an eminently sensible step for the Free Churches of today.

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'Raise alcohol cost'

CAN Christians play a role in reducing alcohol misuse in the UK?

A new campaign supported by the Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB) alongside several denominations and Christian agencies is calling on church members to do just that.

2011 saw the number of hospital admissions due to alcohol abuse top one million for the first time, while alcohol is judged to cost the NHS £2.7bn each year.

Measure for Measure is a new campaign led by the Joint Public Issues team, of which BUGB is a member. The campaign is calling on the Government, which is

currently looking at its alcohol strategy, to link the price of a drink to the alcohol it contains.

It has already written to David Cameron and is now calling on churches to write to their MPs, stating that a per unit minimum price of about 50p would affect the price of very little alcohol sold – but could save 3,000 lives per year and save £1.37 billion in healthcare costs.

Lots of resources are available on the website, including house group studies and newsletter articles. Other ideas range from finding what's happening locally at Primary Care Trusts to involving local media. Visit <http://bit.ly/xbAGrT>

Day of blessing

CHURCH members have been encouraged to set out to bless others with acts and words on this year's bonus day, Wednesday, February 29 – traditionally a day where women were granted permission to propose.

It's an opportunity to 'express something of our Father's heart to his children who haven't connected yet with what you and I have in Jesus,' explained Chris Duffett, BUGB president elect. Visit <http://bit.ly/zXPQSt>

SBC landmark

HISTORIC changes are afoot at the Southern Baptist Convention in the US, which could have its first black leader.

The Revd Fred Luter of New Orleans has offered his nomination for the convention's presidency, and is said to be the 'prohibitive favourite' for the post.

The SBC has a chequered history, resisting the civil rights movement before committing itself to racial reconciliation in 1995.

BAPTISMS

Bristol (Shirehampton): David Pearce and Robert Durrant	2
Cambridge (Cherry Hinton): Norman Braddick and Jenny Wing	2
Horsham (Upper Beeding): Amy Backwell	1
Hereford: Laura McFiggans and Liam Pola	2
Hucknall (Watnall Road): Phil Wayte, James Hatcher, and Sarah Witherden	3
Lingfield (Dormansland): Sandy Norton, Ruth Woodrow, and Lachlan McLachlan	3
South Shields (Westoe Road): Lianne Douglas	1
Winchester: Janet Jones	1
Total	15