
A table of contents for *The Fraternal / Baptist Ministers* Journal can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bmj-06.php

the baptist ministers' journal

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From the Editor

Of committees and competitions

First, we welcome new members to the BMF Committee: Beth Allison-Glenny (who serves on the JPIT team) and Leigh Greenwood (minister of Stoneygate Baptist Church, Leicester, from September 2018), have just joined us and we look forward to their contributions, especially in developing our online work and access. Thank you, Beth and Leigh, for bringing your particular skills to serve BMF.

As a Committee we are again delighted that this year's *bmj* Essay Competition, the second we have held, has elicited some excellent entries from readers. We congratulate Rosa Hunt for her elegant essay, *Speaking Fluent Christian*, which won first prize, and also Andrew Mumford, whose essay on J. H. Shakespeare came second. Both these essays are printed in this issue for you to enjoy.

It is always a delight to see work of such quality, and is indicative of the presence of a theologically informed and active group of ministers in our denomination, equipped to meet the challenges of a new generation. In October we will be advertising next year's competition—do think about entering, or encouraging someone else to try.

Thinking of the future of ministry, Laura Staves challenges us to reconsider what we mean by 'lay' leaders, in a denomination that has been known for its egalitarianism. What distinguishes one category of ministry from another, when the tasks undertaken are the same? This is far from a semantic debate, since many of our smaller churches, now under very serious financial pressure, simply cannot support stipended nationally accredited ministry any longer.

The remaining article in this issue is on the nature of 'hello' and 'goodbye' (written by Peter Shepherd)—a fascinating reflection on these apparently simple greetings and on the assumptions and expectations that might lie behind them.

In all, this issue is one that shows theological reflection at its best: not just an exercise conducted in college, but a powerful exploration of the gospel at work, in the service of mission and ministry, and for the glory of Christ.

The *bmj* is always interested to hear your responses and contributions: it is BY ministers and FOR ministers, as you serve and live within the body of Christ. *SN*

Speaking fluent Christian: language learning and the grammar of faith

by Rosa Hunt

There was outrage in our Welsh class last November. A new drama had just been launched on national Welsh television, and our tutor was showing the class a video interview with the starring actress, who had learned Welsh to play the part. 'It was easy', she assured the interviewer. 'I just started by learning the alphabet, and then everything else followed from there'. To those of us who had been learning Welsh for years and still struggled with the language, this was a bitter pill to swallow. Her achievement was a truly impressive one. But that was not the cause of our outrage. We were so angry because the second half of her statement was blatantly untrue. Logical as it may sound to someone who has never tried it, the fact remains that you cannot learn to communicate in a living language simply by extrapolating outwards from the alphabet. Why had she come out with this extraordinary statement?

I will return to this Welsh actress before I am done, but for now I want to say that in this essay I intend to explore the parallels between the grammar of a living language, and the orthodoxy of a living faith. And my starting point comes from another interview, this time one which the philosopher James K.A. Smith gave to Jonathan Langley: 'Orthodoxy, I would say, is a way of distilling the grammar of the belief of the community that is following Jesus on [a] practical level'.[1]

I would like to unpack this idea of 'the grammar of belief of a community' a little further. What exactly is a grammar, anyway, and how does it function? David Crystal has given us a way to think about grammar by talking about six potential types of grammar.[2] In this essay, I would like to consider Crystal's first three categories.

The first of these is a descriptive grammar, which observes and describes the patterns of spoken or written language, 'without making any evaluative judgements about their standing in society'.[3] The 'belief' equivalent of this would perhaps be an anthropologist visiting a faith community and observing and recording their actions and words to infer their underlying beliefs. Our son was shown just such a documentary about an 'evangelical' church in America as part of his Religious Studies GCSE course. Such a dispassionate stance is not usually available to those within the faith community.

Next, a pedagogical grammar, a book which contains the rules of a language and sets them out in such a way that they can be easily acquired by those unfamiliar with the language, or those wishing to develop an awareness of the structure of their own mother tongue. Perhaps a 'belief' equivalent here would be the creeds, such as those developed by the early church. Frances Young tells us that by the middle of the 4th century, converts to Christianity had to undergo a very serious preparation for baptism. They would spend three years as 'hearers of the word', and then after that they would be allowed to attend the local bishop's lectures in the run up to their baptism on Easter Sunday. These lectures seem to have been a commentary on the creeds, and during the process 'the candidates apparently had to memorise the creed, so as to recite it back before being accepted and baptised'.[4] So here we see the creeds functioning as a pedagogical grammar, formulating orthodox belief in such a way that it can be understood, memorised and retained by those unfamiliar with the Christian faith, and perhaps also its Jewish ancestry.

Crystal's third category of grammar is a prescriptive grammar, or 'one which focusses on constructions where usage is divided, and lays down rules governing the socially correct use of language'.[5] In a similar way, the Académie Française 'is a body charged with defining the French language for the elaboration of its dictionary, which fixes the usage of French'.[6] This is what prescriptive grammars do: they 'fix' the current accepted usage, especially in cases where 'usage is divided'. In the same way, creeds and other belief equivalents 'fix' current beliefs, setting them in stone. And so when belief is divided, as it was, for instance, over the divinity of Christ in the 4th century, new creeds are developed. But now the creeds have become weaponised - they have moved from being pedagogical to being prescriptive, weapons in a theological war against heresy. In a pedagogical 'grammar', oversimplification and rigid rules may be necessary to help learners. But in a prescriptive 'grammar', oversimplification and rigidity exist to define the boundaries between who's in and who's out. 'In theory', writes Frances Young, 'Christianity is homogeneous, and its homogeneity lies in orthodox belief. Despite the ecumenical movement, Christian groups still claim that their truth is the truth, betraying that this is something they all have in common: namely a distinction between true belief and false belief. There may in practice be a number of different orthodoxies, but 'orthodoxy' seems characteristic of Christianity'.[7] And so, to regulate this orthodoxy, creeds moved from being pedagogic grammars to being prescriptive ones, to prescribe the bounds of accepted dogmas and doctrines.

Now that we have some mental categories for thinking about grammar, it is the time to ask the question: where does the Bible fit into all this? Does it fit into any of these three categories? Is the Bible a 'grammar' book for the Christian faith?

I think that I would like to start addressing this question by stating what the Bible is not. It is certainly not a neutral and dispassionate record of beliefs. I would also want to argue that the Bible was never intended to be a prescriptive grammar, and that to treat it as such is to make a category mistake. Certainly, the Bible does sometimes focus on cases where

usage is divided, promoting one view over others. There are some 'points of grammar' about which the Bible is prescriptive: that God is good, that he made a good universe, that men and women are the high point of his creation and made in his image. That he sent his Son to take flesh and live among us, and that this Son was the very image of the Father. That his Son died and on the third day came back to life. That he sent his Spirit to be with us always. This is the basis syntax of our faith language, and thus far, the Bible prescribes. But when we start to tread further, even though we may be utterly 'orthodox' in our utterances, we start to tread on decidedly marshy territory.

Take, for instance, the affirmation that God is one. Quite apart from the scattered references to other gods in the Old Testament and the mysterious plural of the Elohim, the Bible is not terribly prescriptive on how God can be one and yet three. Quiz three average church members on the Trinity, and one will turn out to be a Modalist, the other a Sabellian, and the third a blatant Arian. And yet they would all three be horrified to know that their views are heretical, and rightly so, for such an assertion is absurd. As we have seen in every generation, not least on same-sex marriage and transgender issues in our own, treating the Bible as a prescriptive grammar often leads to schism, and deep, deep wounds.

Perhaps the Bible is more like a pedagogical grammar, with the Holy Spirit acting in each generation as the skilled teacher to help us learn and understand what a faith in Jesus Christ looks like now, in this generation, with these people and in this place. The Bible can do this for those who are new to the Christian faith, but it can also do this for those who have been brought up as Christians, and now want to delve deeper into their mother tongue, to understand why they say and do the things their parents taught them to. In the same way that I had to have recourse to a grammar book to explain to my son why I say 'if I were to do that...' rather than 'if I was to do that…', so we 'fluent' Christians need to keep returning to the first principles in the Bible to understand and articulate why our churches say and do the things we say and do.

And this brings me back to the Welsh actress who opened this paper, and who distressed our Welsh class so deeply by her assertion that she had learned to speak Welsh in a short space of time by memorising the alphabet and proceeding from there. The question to ask here is this: for what did this actress use her Welsh? And it turns out that the level of Welsh she needed was that sufficient to be able to memorise, understand and then deliver a pre-written script. This is very important. Whereas it seemed to her television audience that she was articulating her emotions in appropriate utterances in Welsh, in fact she was merely repeating sentences which someone else had crafted. I would argue that we cannot claim to be fluent in a language until we can create our own original utterances in it. For this to happen, we need far more than to memorise the phonetic rules for the alphabet. We need to grasp all the complex syntactical rules of a language as it is spoken and written around us—and then we need to know when it is appropriate to break those rules to communicate even more effectively!

Let me give you two examples of the language learner who demonstrates her proficiency by knowing when to break the linguistic rules. The first is that of a child learning how English verbs work by listening to his parents. First, he might say 'Yesterday I run fast!' But then, something really interesting happens with many children: they learn the rule that many English verbs add an -ed to convey a past action. He then says 'Yesterday I runned fast!' He has probably never heard anyone say this, and so he is formulating his own grammatical hypothesis. Eventually he corrects himself, possibly passing through a phase of 'I ranned fast' before his usage becomes fixed at 'I ran fast'. He knows when to break the -ed rule, because he is immersed in a community of proficient language speakers.

The second is that of a poet. Poets are usually extremely proficient in their own language, and this profound and intimate knowledge of the syntax allows them to break the rules and create something new and beautiful in the process. Here is Gerard Manley Hopkins:

I caught this morning morning's minion,
kingdom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn
Falcon, in his riding
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,
As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and gliding
Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
Stirred for a bird, —the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!

Microsoft Word tells me that the poet has made a couple of punctuation errors in this text; I tell Microsoft Word that these errors are entirely intentional! Perhaps more intelligent software would point out that 'achieve' is a verb not a noun and ask what on earth it means to ring upon the rein of a wimpling wing. But to do so is to misunderstand, because the master poet breaks all the rules to create a striking image of breathtaking beauty.

Let us return now to James K.A. Smith's words: 'Orthodoxy, I would say, is a way of distilling the grammar of the belief of the community that is following Jesus on [a] practical level'. Perhaps we can understand this profound assertion a little more easily now. The 'community that is following Jesus at a practical level' is constantly having to create its own, new faith sentences. Yes, of course, it turns again and again to the Bible as its pedagogical grammar, but it does not treat it as prescriptive. The members of such a community demonstrate their living faith in a living Lord by constantly striving to create new utterances which are relevant and life-giving to the society in which they live. They cannot do this by simply memorising and repeating the grammatically perfect faith utterances which previous generations have crafted. That would be as helpful as quoting Chaucer to a bunch of 15-year olds. They need to struggle to learn the grammar, they need to live faithfully among those who are fluent in the faith and proficient in its utterances—

and then they need to be bold, and take the step of crafting their own, new faith utterances.

This then is the challenge facing us as we follow our living Lord in the new world of Brexit, Twitter, and gender-fluid identity. If we are following Jesus at a practical level, we are going to find that the old sentences just don't work any more. We need to return to the Bible and craft our new sentences, our new faith utterances. Our orthodoxy will be new every generation, being distilled from those proficient faith speakers who have learned the rules so well after years of faithful following that they understand that, sometimes, being faithful to Jesus means that you have to break the old rules. But precisely because they know the grammar so well, the new utterances which arise out of the rule-breaking will have the captivating beauty and the compelling truth of a great poem. Which, after all, is how Jesus spoke and taught. To give Frances Young the penultimate word: 'a dispassionate look at the gospel records hardly suggests a figure with episcopal authority propounding dogma and excluding debaters or doubters'.[8] And let's give the last word to the great G K Chesterton: 'People have fallen into a foolish habit of speaking of orthodoxy as something heavy, humdrum and safe. There never was anything so perilous or so exciting as orthodoxy…I did try to found a heresy of my own; and when I had put the last touches to it, I discovered that it was orthodoxy'.[9]

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Notes to text

1. 'What is Truth, and do we even care about it?', in *Mission Catalyst*, Issue 3, 2017, pp4-6, quote from p6.

2. David Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Language.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, p88.

3. Crystal, *Encyclopaedia of Language*, p88.

4. Frances Young, *The Making of the Creeds.* London: SCM Press, 1991, p3.

5. Crystal, *Encyclopaedia of Language*, p88.

6. 'L'Académie française...est chargée de définir la langue française par l'élaboration de son dictionnaire qui fixe l'usage du français'. (http://www.academie-francaise.fr/, accessed February 2018)

7. Young, *Creeds*, p1.

8. Young, *Creeds*, p2.

9. G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy.* Project Gutenberg: 2015.

‘What has William Shakespeare got to do with us?’

by Andrew Mumford

Such was the comment of a veteran Baptist minister to me after a church meeting one Sunday afternoon. I had been telling her that I had discovered from my studies that the current structure and practice of the denomination can be traced directly to Shakespeare. Of course, I meant John Howard Shakespeare (1857-1928), as I quickly explained! I have come to see that this man and is legacy are probably not well known enough among us, and that is a great pity, because, whether one agrees with the changes he made or not, he was ‘a colossus in Baptist history’.[1]

There is no doubt that J.H. Shakespeare was one of the central figures in Baptist life in the early part of the last century. Ian Randall states ‘The person in the early twentieth century who did most to draw Baptist churches together and give them a common vision was a formidable church leader, John Howard Shakespeare’.[2] Even his detractors admit that he was ‘undoubtedly the architect of the modern Baptist Union’.[3] Yet not a few scholars, historians and pastors have made serious criticisms of his role over the years.[4] Was all that he achieved good—and was he a facilitator, autocrat, or neither?

Shakespeare was responsible for a number of significant structural changes in denominational life: the acquisition of new premises, the new Baptist Union constitution and departments, the Sustentation Scheme (ensuring minimum stipends for grant-aided ministers, which has become the Home Mission scheme), the introduction of General Superintendents (and the creation of their areas of responsibility), the development of a national roll of accredited Baptist ministers, and the system of ministerial settlement. He influenced the life of Mr and Mrs Baptist in myriad related ways: from the content of their weekly *Baptist Times* (of which he was editor), to the stipend their minister was paid. Add to this his involvement with the Baptist World Alliance, his ecumenical activities (not least the co-founding of the United Board for military chaplaincy, and Free Church Federal Council) and one can see how he has such a pivotal role, not least because some of these things survive today, under a different name or in a slightly different form.

For me, one of the most significant aspects of Shakespeare’s time in office was his deep

concern for the pastoral ministry: for there to be a well-educated and quality ministry, which was well supported. He believed this was key to the health of the churches. He wanted to 'lessen the burden of the humblest village minister',[5] and it is apparent that this concern lay behind his attempt to provide adequate stipends for pastors. Hayden writes that he wanted the system changed 'so ministers would not be frequently 'broken on the wheel of life'.[6] Shakespeare cared for the ordinary Baptist minister, and wanted to prevent abuse of ministers. Can any of us who read these pages say that this is not an issue today? Shakespeare felt that it did not make sense, simply in terms of efficiency, for trained ministers to be forced out of the ministry by nervous illness or be made unproductive by financial concerns. He is quoted as saying 'It is false economy to starve an Andrew Fuller'.[7] The concept of the minimum stipend for BUGB ministers we have today is traceable to Shakespeare.

Shakespeare exercised what we would call a visionary, prophetic leadership, and did not seem afraid sometimes to champion radical causes. He thought ahead, planned, and considered what type of church might be needed in society at large. Shouldn't all Baptist ministers be thinking like this today? A good example is his advocacy of the ministry of women, expressed through the founding of the Baptist Women's League[8] and Deaconess Order.[9] In fact, he was an early voice against prejudice in this matter. He said in 1918 'Only at its peril can the church make itself the last ditch of prejudice in this respect or forget that its problems will be best served by men and women working together…Does anyone think that women can be permanently excluded from the highest service in the church?'[10] He laid the foundation for the situation we have 100 years later and yet, even now, in our churches women still face prejudice when exploring a call to ministry, as some of my female colleagues at college have found. The impact of the Deaconess Order alone is worthy of comment, since the members planted many churches in deprived areas still in existence today (my own being one!). These women were the pioneers of their generation.

Shakespeare was also radical in ecumenical matters. He called for greater ecumenical unity before it was fashionable to do so and was a pioneer of the ecumenical movement.[11] In both these areas he was ahead of his time: what he longed for in terms of the further inclusion of women in Baptist ministry and the full involvement of the Union in the ecumenical movement did eventually come to pass much later in the 20th century.

In terms of gifting, if ever someone had the gift of administration[12] it was this man! He was 'an ecclesiastical administrator of the first order',[13] a brilliant and dedicated organiser. He could inspire people to work with him and give them a firm lead. Payne writes, 'many new developments were in large measure the product of Shakespeare's fertile brain, his organising skill, and his power to gather round him men and women'.[14] He was also a determined man, when he felt a matter to be of great

importance: it took several years for him to get the Sustentation Scheme up and operating, for example.[15] Those of us in churches supported by Home Mission grants today are surely grateful for this purposeful singlemindedness.

There are those, however, who view Shakespeare as less than a positive influence. That some do so to advance their own separatist agenda is to be expected,[16] yet there are those among our ranks who have questioned his actions too. How may we evaluate his legacy? I would firstly raise a concern that, as Shakespeare sought to mould Baptist life, his focus was on the institutional. I am not sure that is a good thing: surely local churches have a spiritual basis as the body of Christ, based on relationships. Such institutions which do emerge should serve the body, but not define it. There is always a danger in ecclesiastical structures of institutionalism developing, and the whole becoming greater than the sum of its parts. I do wonder whether Shakespeare's changes went a little too far in this direction, and in doing so one could argue that he was not in line with earlier Baptist history. Shepherd writes, 'It seems unlikely, however, that a denomination that owed its past vigour and growth to the local and the spontaneous could ever recover that vitality by means of institutionalisation'.[17] Maybe changes which have taken place since—for example, Regional Associations, Regional Ministers being directly employed by Associations, and even more recently the devolving of much authority to Associations—have addressed this.

Some have contended that the reforms Shakespeare made compromise the independence of the local church. Aside from whether 'independence' is something Baptists should ever have contended for, there is some truth that, while our interdependence was strengthened through his work, the autonomy of local churches was not at the fore. There are people who would argue that congregational church polity was weakened by the introduction of a national system of settlement and the ministry of Superintendents, who were seen as 'bishops'.[18] By no means all have seen it so: Payne writes, 'what seemed to some a radical departure in Baptist polity was, in certain respects, a return to the 'Messenger' system, which had been a feature of the life of the General Baptists in the seventeenth century'.[19] Yet even Payne acknowledges that the scheme 'involved considerable changes in Baptist polity and marked an important stage in the abandonment of 19th century independency'.[20] Hayden notes that 'the about face in Baptist church polity was, in truth, a revolution'.[21]

Even today, though, the final authority in BUGB churches is the church members' meeting—so I cannot see how autonomy has been compromised. I think the fact that Regional Ministers (the successors of the Superintendents) are employed by the Associations (as opposed to Didcot) is healthier. While we still refer to them jokingly as Baptist bishops, in my view they have the sort of spiritual authority described by Walter Bagehot in the English Constitution, referring to the monarch: the ability to be consulted, to encourage and to warn,[22] which is a long way from the power vested in bishops in episcopal denominations.

In his view of ecumenical unity, I believe Shakespeare had a blind spot. He desired a united church in England and was prepared to consider episcopal re-ordination of Baptist ministers to achieve this. This was not the desire or view of most Baptists in his day, as was shown after his views were seriously challenged after 1919.[23] Despite his influence over Baptists, they were not, on this issue, persuaded. Maybe he had lost touch with the grassroots because of his years out of local pastorate. There was an element of idealism and pragmatism about this ecumenical agenda, but I believe also naivety: did he really expect Baptists with such a radical history to agree to re-ordination?

As with C.H. Spurgeon before him, Shakespeare was a driven man, with a tremendous capacity for work, but also someone who suffered breakdowns from time to time. These seem to indicate that he drove himself too hard, leading to what today we would call depression, and stress-related illness. There is a lesson here for all of us, for if ministers of this calibre can suffer in this way, surely, we all need to 'keep a close watch over ourselves'[24] to ensure we develop and maintain a healthy work-life balance, in this fast-paced culture in which we live.

Shakespeare's guiding motivation was the mission of the church to a needy world, conscious as he was of the decline of Christian influence. The horror of WWI affected him deeply.[25] His compassion for society, and the task of bringing the gospel to it, meant that when it came to the necessary changes, he seems to have regarded church polity as secondary. But in my reading, Baptists up to Shakespeare do not seem to have regarded it as secondary. The early Baptists began with the question, 'what is a church?'. I think maybe Shakespeare, being a pragmatist, began in the wrong place: he had a high view of the ministry (and was legitimately concerned for the welfare of ministers) but this meant that that he placed his theology of ministry above ecclesiology. It would have been more in line with Baptist tradition to have begun with the local gathered congregation, (from which such leaders initially come), bottom up, not top down. His approach seems to have stemmed from what we would now call an ontological view of ministry—not that there is anything 'un-Baptist' about this: this view is not uncommon now among us.[26] The problem was that it developed into a centralising tendency and an almost sacerdotal concept of ministry, which goes beyond our tradition.

I admit I am among those who would want to defend Shakespeare's reforms, and their residual legacy in BUGB, partly because I have seen from experience the wisdom of many of the changes. As a former independent pastor, I felt the isolation to which an overemphasis on independence can lead, together with misunderstanding and suspicion of other denominations. My wife and I know of the difficulty of attempting to minister and raise a family without sufficient support either financially, or relationally, from a denominational structure. I have witnessed firsthand a woman's call to ministry cruelly crushed by prejudice disguised as complementarianism. At critical points in ministry since then I have benefited from the advice, support and encouragement of Regional Ministers and other denominational officials.

Yet it is not just experience which convinces me: Scripture does too. Was not 'independence' the original sin in the Garden of Eden? Can we not see, in the pages of the Bible, Paul asking for local congregations to help one another financially? Translocal ministries can be seen in the New Testament. Often, Shakespeare's critics asserted that it was a fundamental Baptist principle that every local congregation has all it needs to be a fully functioning church. Certainly, the Baptist founders believed that every congregation was a church in its truest sense: yet they did not operate as self-sufficient groups but had fellowship with other groups of believers from the beginning.[27] They recognised that some congregations are more blessed than others and operated interdependently. Therefore, I believe that Shakespeare's changes in this regard were in accordance with the Baptist tradition. Maybe the pendulum needed to swing back the other way after the controversies of the late 19th century.

Certainly, one can see Association life as a victim of Shakespeare's reforming agenda, as does Peter Shepherd.[28] Their relevance may have declined for a season, but in our generation the Associations have come back to the fore, following the review of associating and the changes made as a result in the early years of this millennium. The radical nature of some of the changes Shakespeare put forward were consistent with Baptist principles, even if they were not in Baptist history: for example, the ordination of women. The key changes of structure he made, from a distance, can appear concerning. But I don't agree that they were 'at odds with traditional Baptist thinking',[29] and I think their legacy lives on among us, where ministers are enabled to fulfil their vocation with appropriate personal, financial, spiritual, and relational support, and opportunities not found in some church streams. We should be thankful to Shakespeare and to God for this, and value what we have as a denomination. Some of us who have previously ministered in situations which lack the things Shakespeare set up can testify to how helpful BUGB 'system' can be!

Andrew Mumford is an MiT at Spurgeons College. He is the minister of South Ashford Baptist Church, and can be contacted by email on andrewpmumford@yahoo.co.uk.

Notes to text

1. Peter Shepherd, *The Making of a Modern Denomination: John Howard Shakespeare and the English Baptists 1898-1924.* Carlisle: Paternoster, 2001. Quoted on back cover.

2. Ian M. Randall, *The English Baptists of the Twentieth Century.* Didcot: Baptist Historical Society, 2005, p21.

3. Jack Hoad, *The Baptist: An Historical and Theological Study of Baptist Identity.* London: Grace Publications Trust, 1986, p129.

4. From inside the denomination see Shepherd, pp169-187, from a separatist Baptist position, see Hoad, pp129-132.

5. Roger Hayden, *English Baptist History and Heritage.* Didcot: BUGB, 2005, p159.

6. Hayden, p163.

7. Randall, p74.

8. Randall, p74, Hayden, p161.

9. Hayden, p161, Shepherd, pp140-141.

10. *The Story of Women in Ministry in the Baptist Union of Great Britain.* Didcot: BUGB,2022, p8.

11. Michael Townsend, 'John Howard Shakespeare, Prophet of Ecumenism' in *Baptist Quarterly, 1998,* **37,** 298. http://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/bq/37-6_pd. (accessed 27.2.2018).

12. 1 Cor.12:28.

13. Hayden, p159.

14. Ernest A. Payne, *The Baptist Union: A Short History.* London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1958, p165.

15. Payne, p175, 182.

16. Hoad, pp129-132.

17. Shepherd, p172.

18. Shepherd, p80.

19. Payne, p182-3.

20. Payne, p184.

21. Hayden, p165.

22. Andrew Marr, *The Diamond Queen: Elizabeth II and her People.* London: Pan, 2012, p139.

23. Randall, p63.

24. Acts 20:28, 1 Tim 4:16.

25. Hayden, p171.

26. See Paul Goodliff, *Ministry, Sacrament and Representation: Ministry and Ordination in Contemporary Baptist Theology, and the rise of sacramentalism.* Oxford: Regents Park College, 2010.

27. Hayden, p27.

28. Shepherd, p187.

29. Randall, p111.

‘Hello, it’s me’

by Peter Shepherd

How many songs can you think of with a title that includes either the word ‘hello’ or the word ‘goodbye’? It doesn’t take long to run up quite a list. Helloes and goodbyes mark the beginnings and ends of relationships, or stages in relationships. They are important markers in life and it is no wonder they feature a lot in popular songs.

In September 2016 I ended my last pastorate and became, officially, a retired Baptist minister. We moved from Leicester to Sheffield, a new city for me and my wife. The process involved a whole range of goodbyes and helloes. They almost always go together, because endings lead naturally to new beginnings. Shakespeare’s famous lines in *As You Like It* come to mind:

All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players: they all have their exits and their entrances; and one man in his time plays many parts...

We largely define ourselves in terms of our relationships with others. I experience life as a husband, father, grandfather, preacher, British citizen, resident in a local community and so on, all of which have to do with how I relate to others. The beginnings and endings of all those relationships are decisive moments for my sense of who I am.

Some beginnings are fundamental. Birth, of course, but also marriage, Christian conversion, baptism or starting a new job. Similarly with endings—retirement, redundancy, divorce and ultimately death. There is a constant flow of beginnings and endings, and all have their importance. Some turn out to be more significant than they seemed at the time. An apparently casual greeting leads to a new, life-changing relationship. A routine goodbye proves to be the last ever contact to take place. Our lives, from the first hello at birth to the final farewell, involve an infinite series of relationships being launched and coming to a close. Each beginning and each ending is a step into the unknown.

Public, formal greetings and farewells, like an induction service or a retirement ‘do’, are important occasions, but are often artificial. In everyday speech, farewells and greetings are also often formal and superficial. Conventional expressions like ‘See you later’, ‘All the best’, ‘Cheerio’, ‘Good morning’ and ‘Hi’ may be socially necessary, but rarely tell us anything about the real feelings of the people involved—and may be empty of meaning altogether. They are conventional ways of marking beginnings and endings

without getting too involved. After all, who knows what the consequences of an over-enthusiastic welcome might be, or how an over-enthusiastic goodbye might be interpreted? Alongside these superficial greetings, many of which pass by more or less unnoticed, there is something profoundly interesting about helloes and goodbyes.

Jesus' human relationships with his disciples are those we know best. In the gospels, the starting point of those relationships was his call to them to be with him, and their acceptance of that call. The welcome of Jesus was an invitation to transformation: 'I will make you fish for people'. The disciples could not tell what this transformation would mean, but their decision to say yes showed a willingness to be changed.

Starting a new relationship, even a fleeting one, if it means anything at all, means a willingness to accept change and an openness to new possibilities. A genuine and sincere welcome is therefore an act of self-giving. In some measure at least, it says to the person being welcomed, 'I entrust myself and my future to you, for you to alter and influence me in ways that are as yet unknown'.

In January 2017 our latest grandchild was born. What greater welcome can there be than to a brand-new person? A new-born baby is helpless and utterly dependent. Just as her character will be shaped by the people into whose world she has come, we as her family will be changed by her: we have already been changed, young as she is. This new relationship is not only a gift to enjoy, but also an invitation to transformation. Our respect and love for her will transform our experience of life, and our welcome to her expresses a readiness for that to happen.

Being open to new possibilities is not always comfortable, and there are times when it is resisted. A willingness to listen seriously and be ready for change—a state of mind that necessarily accompanies loving and respecting others—is a challenge. For believers, it is an acceptance that God is going to do something new through this new relationship.

Apparently warm and sincere welcomes can be given for less praiseworthy reasons. They may be opening gambits in an attempt to gain some kind of advantage or control. The welcomers have no intention of changing and listen merely to get what they want, perhaps a sale, or a vote. Hopefully we can recognise the danger of giving such fake welcomes ourselves as we engage in Christian outreach. We can easily fall into the trap of wanting others to listen to us and be persuaded by us, without being prepared ourselves to listen seriously. A genuine welcome always implies a willingness to be changed, even when there is deep disagreement.

All this raises an intriguing question about Jesus himself. How was he affected by his involvement with the disciples, if at all, and even more interestingly, is he affected by his relationship with us? Can we understand his relationship with us as making a difference to him, as well as to us?

The evidence of the gospels indicates that Jesus was affected quite deeply. Far from a

predetermined life in which there were no surprises or disappointments, Jesus experienced a similar range of emotions to ours. The conversations with his disciples, and the other people he met, were genuine, in which both sides listened to each other and were influenced by what they heard. When Jesus called his disciples, he faced the possibility of disappointment at their failings and misunderstandings. His hopes for their growth and development, and his gladness when it occurred, were genuine. It was a relationship that possessed all the unexpected twists and turns one might expect. How else can we explain the frustration he shows, the warnings he gives and the joy he expresses? What was true historically is surely also true today. Jesus is grieved, frustrated, glad—even surprised—by us.

The incarnation is God's great hello to humanity in Jesus. He puts himself at our disposal, exposed to the influences of the people around him and ready to be shaped by the culture and beliefs of the society into which he was born. Medieval paintings of the infant Jesus sometimes depict him as a grown man in miniature, hand raised to bless the shepherds and the wise men, but surely this misses the whole point. In coming to us for our salvation, God in Christ makes himself available and vulnerable to us.

God's initiative in creation too is at heart a choice to have a relationship with the world, and ultimately with humanity, an open relationship susceptible to change. It is a moment of welcome as he greets us and offers himself to us. Such humility, which lies at the heart of the biblical story, is a powerful example to us for the way we welcome others. The great medieval icon created by Rublev depicts the three persons of the Trinity sitting on three sides of a table in fellowship with each other. The fourth side of the table, facing the viewer, is empty. God is inviting us to draw near and to share in their loving communion. Whether or not we accept the invitation is up to us.

Jesus bid farewell to his disciples at their final Passover meal in the Upper Room. The meaning of his relationship with them is summed up in this moment. It is at the table, where he talks about his imminent death and prepares them for a future without him, that what is happening between them starts to become clear. The true significance of his purpose and mission is revealed in the breaking of bread and the sharing of wine.

Paradoxically, however, Christ's farewell is not really a farewell at all. The relationship with the disciples is changing but has not come to an end. They will no longer walk the hills of Galilee, but this does not mean that they can no longer know each other. Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit will come in his name and that he will be with them always—promises repeated later before the ascension.

Christ's farewell in the hours before he was crucified has a unique importance, but it also has something to say about our goodbyes. Only when a relationship is ending does its true significance become clear. For as long as it continues, its meaning changes and develops, so that only at its end is there an opportunity to understand it properly. The

significance of a journey can only become clear when its destination has been reached.

The final stage of any relationship, and the words and events that mark it, are important. The last words of a person approaching death are precious, often revealing thoughts and feelings long kept hidden. Equally profound are the words said to a person at the end of life. We cannot know how the mystery of death is experienced, but there is something deeply significant about that decisive and final ending, and the events that attend it, for everyone involved.

Death is the most dramatic and complete of endings, but all endings have an echo of dying, as reflected in the familiar song lyrics, 'every time you say goodbye I die a little'. The end of a working relationship when someone moves on or retires or the end of a romantic relationship for example. Even in more mundane or short-lived relationships like the end of a game of football or a session at the hairdresser, the experience is summed up and completed in its ending. To some degree or another, what has happened will have shaped who I am and will determine my future, and as I move on from it, I do so as someone who has been affected and changed. To move on hastily from an encounter, dismissing it as something that belongs to the past and has no relevance for the future is a failure to understand what it means to be human. As we move through life towards its moment of closure we experience a countless number of personal encounters and relationships, each moving from its beginning to its end. To ignore or avoid the significance of endings is to forget that we are mortal, time-bound beings.

Even when a relationship has come to an end, however, it continues to be important. The farewell of Jesus to the disciples was not a final or complete separation. This is also reflected in all our farewells. Sometimes the sense of an ongoing relationship is very real. Continuing contact with people who have died is important in cultures that keep an honoured place for ancestors, and something similar can be seen in the Christian idea of the communion of saints. For many people, there is often a powerful sense of a continuing relationship with someone who has died.

In more superficial endings something similar is going on. Conscious memories may quickly disappear—although sometimes the briefest encounter can remain in our minds long afterwards—but no moment of contact is without its ongoing influence on our lives. The conversation at the paper shop or with the bus driver who brings us to our destination will affect the rest of the day, whether we realise it or not. Goodbyes, however they are expressed, do not cast such encounters into oblivion, but mark the completion of something that has contributed to who we are and how we will experience life in the future.

Some relationships end unhappily or destructively, with harsh words and unresolved conflicts, leaving regrets, painful memories and damaged personalities. There are relationships that provide no opportunity for a goodbye to be expressed, or where goodbyes are avoided as too painful. Bidding farewell to such unhappy encounters can be

especially difficult, and how to do so successfully lies beyond the scope of this article. Saying goodbye well is important, however, whatever the circumstances. Reflecting on what that involves, there are some qualities worth taking note of.

Saying goodbye well involves humility. The ending of a relationship should include an acknowledgement of the contribution it has made to our lives. We are who we are not chiefly by what we have made of ourselves, but by how others have shaped us. Acknowledging our debt to others is a humbling thing to do, and an antidote to pride. Just as we owe a great deal to those who in the historical past have paved the way along which we now travel, so we are moulded and shaped by all the personal encounters that have come and gone.

Humility should mark our farewells in another way too: we know that our contributions to any relationship will not always have been good. Insensitivity and selfishness, even at times cruelty and dishonest, have done harm. A goodbye is an opportunity to say sorry, inwardly if not publicly, for no relationship is without its failings.

The counterpart to admitting failure is to forgive. Forgiveness means a resolve not to harbour grievance or nurture the desire for revenge at real or perceived wrongs. To release others from blame and recrimination is to create hope. Jesus offered peace to his disciples as he left them, forgiving them their failings, and we are called to do the same.

As we say goodbye, we recognise that our influence will continue, and we should intend that to be for good. We want to be a blessing. As we say 'Goodbye' ('God be with you') and 'Farewell', we may be using routine social conventions, but we can also mean what we say. To say goodbye well is also to say thank you. Even (sometimes especially) the hard times are valuable. Thankfulness acknowledges benefits received in the past, but it also has an impact on the relationship because memories and feelings continue into the future. A card received, a touch on the arm, a smile—such gestures expressing thanks have the power to transform our attitude towards the future, releasing anxiety and creating hope.

In different ways, these qualities of humility, thankfulness and hope are shown in the gospel farewells. The dramatic transformation from crucifixion to resurrection demonstrates how ending and separation leads to hope and blessing.

Our lives are made up of welcomes and farewells. In being welcomed we can find an echo of God's welcome, and in welcoming we can try to reflect in some measure the loving welcome of God to all. In being bid farewell we can hear his promise of hope in the face of separation, and in saying goodbye well we can be instruments of hope for others. God is with us through all the transitions we face, ready to reveal himself to us and through us.

Peter Shepherd is now retired from Baptist ministry, and can be contacted on shepherd.peter@talk21.com.

Laying-off the 'Lay'

by Laura Staves

While lay pastor of a small Baptist church I was in a position of oversight, able to do everything that an ordained minister would do and accepted as an equal by the local minister's group. Yet the title 'lay pastor' defined me by what I was not: not ordained. To those outside the church it was a puzzlement and implied that I was not a professional. As part of a dissertation for a master's degree I did some research into the place of lay pastors in the Baptist Union; looking at the official position and investigating the situations of other lay pastors. I was interested to know if they also found the title to be a contradiction in terms: 'lay'—implying not clergy; and 'pastor'—with the responsibilities of the role, belonging to the clergy.[1] I also thought the language was alien to a Baptist ecclesiology and potentially divisive.

This article gives a brief overview of some of my findings. By lay pastor (LP) I am including those in some form of pastoral charge in a church, including nationally recognised pastors, but not ordained ministers, nor ministers in training. The label 'lay' is used for ease of reference to these pastors but used reluctantly, since there is the sense that the title contributes to the problem of these pastors' identity. As well as looking at available literature, including official documents, a survey was completed by 90 people who are, or were, LPs and in addition 48 of these kindly provided responses to some follow-up questions.

The term 'lay'

The word 'lay' was only officially adopted for non-ordained pastors in the 1920s under centralising reforms of the then BUGB Secretary, John Howard Shakespeare. Aiming to improve standards of ministry, ordained ministers were given ministerial recognition, while the non-ordained, after training, were awarded national recognition. Through adopting 'lay' rather than the more usual term 'local' BUGB gained greater control over who should minister and made any local consideration less important. This change was not founded on theological or ecclesiological principles. Its impact was to reinforce a ministerial/congregational division and resulted in a two-tier clerical system not fitting a Baptist ecclesiology. At this stage, the difference between ordained and recognised non-ordained ministers was merely administrative.[2]

Since then there has been a lack of clarity over how to fit LPs into the system. The official view in the 1983 report *Half the Denomination* classified LPs as having a diaconal role,

suggesting they only give a limited amount of 'leadership and pastoral care',[3] whereas a practitioner in the 1980s describes them as appropriately gifted persons who give their spare time to pastoral oversight of a small church with limited finances. Alongside this is the suggestion that they should not be considered as second best to a full time trained minister, but as the best person for a work that no one else can do.[4]

The 1994 report *Forms of Ministry Among Baptists* gives an ambiguous picture. LPs are not considered real ministers in the first section and later are described as having a ministry of pastoral oversight. This ambiguity is also seen in the 2013 BUGB document, *Called to be a Nationally Recognised Pastor*: a diaconal definition is used initially and later one of pastoral oversight. From the responses to the survey most LPs are in positions of pastoral oversight and there was overall disagreement that they only give pastoral service (diaconal). From the responses to follow-up questions, 94% of the definitions of LP refer to being in leadership or pastoral oversight or having a role equivalent to ministers. There is a range of services given by LPs, and they cannot all be pigeon-holed as diaconal since most are in positions of oversight.

Accredited lists

Initially the accredited lists were described as an expedient, necessary for the running of the denominational apparatus.[5] By 1969, in the report *Ministry Tomorrow*, accreditation had changed to become the confirmation of someone's ministerial call and recognition that personally, spiritually and through theological study, s/he is competent enough to be a Baptist minister.[6] However, accreditation confirms the importance of professional qualifications, whether for ministers or for those in other church roles who now form a second accredited list.[7] The sadness is that this new list will mainly apply to larger churches. The implication for nearly half the churches of BUGB who cannot afford an accredited minister and are unlikely to have any of the other accredited people, is that any ministry they do have is second class. This seems to be at odds with the inclusiveness of biblical covenants and perhaps lies behind the *Ignite* report's suggestion of the extension of the covenant of recognition to include locally recognised ministers.[8]

One description of ministry is Wright's 'inclusive representation', which involves the concept of ministers being representative in three ways:

- representing Christ, since they are called by him and sent into the pastorate;
- representing the local church to itself, since they bear God's word to his people and have the authority to speak both to the church and on behalf of the church;
- representing the wider church.

Although LPs satisfy the first two points, it could be argued that they are not representative in Wright's third area, since they have not been recognised by the wider

church. It would be interesting be to ask how many LPs had local clergy at their induction (probably most). Nearly a third of the survey responses mention involvement with other churches as important. In this sense many LPs are representing their church in the wider church and bringing the wider church into the local.

Unlike accredited ministers, LPs are not officially ordained, yet as Holmes explains,[9] through baptism all believers are ordained for ministry, since in baptism a disciple commits themselves to Christ's service in his church and world. Here is the context for the local church to call and ordain certain people to specific tasks. This fits with Wright's suggestion that we should ensure ordination is perceived as the validating of an office from below, not a transmission of authority downwards.[10] Another comparison with ordained ministers can be made about the functional and sacramental viewpoints of ministry. From a functional viewpoint, LPs in oversight of churches do everything ministers do. But their commissioning service is not called an ordination even though the content is similar, and both local clergy and regional minsters are often in attendance.

A sacramental approach is more concerned with the being of the minister than the doing, the concern that Christ will be present in and through the minister, almost approaching priestly terms.[11] The recognition of the LP's call and the concern that is shown to be a channel for God's grace means there is similarity here too. These comments are not to detract from all the training undergone by an ordained minister, which deserves recognition. Most LPs will pastor small fellowships and so they are likely to be involved in a 'more basic expression of church life' than ordained ministers. This results in a varied mix of being and doing in their ministries, including things like administration, upkeep of the buildings and maintenance tasks. Perhaps the differences between LPs and accredited ministers are more peripheral to the ontological and functional dimensions of ministry, such as qualifications, pensions, titles and dog collars.

The ministry of LPs

The traditional view of LPs having tentmaking ministries and earning their livelihood through an occupation outside the church is no longer the norm. The circumstances of those who responded to the survey show many varied financial situations. In addition, the responses reveal LPs to be dedicated men and women of God showing a professional approach to what God has called them to do. Nearly 70% of those surveyed have done training to support their ministry and several of the follow-up responses point out the value of their previous experience and the transferable skills that they bring to the role.

Many LPs are in places where the church cannot afford ordained ministry, so it was not

surprising that the survey showed that at the start of LP ministries, around two-thirds of their churches were financially weak, had serious problems and/or were in danger of closing. Over three-quarters of LPs surveyed were in sole charge of a church, with over half in a small church. Here is a strange situation in BUGB: the least trained pastors/ ministers face some of the most awkward and fragile situations in small struggling churches. From the *Ignite* data 46% of churches do not have an accredited minister and currently around half the churches in BUGB have 40 or less members.[12] *The Small Churches Project: Report to Council* (March 2005) describes the expected career path for successful ministers being the movement to ever larger churches. This implies that second best is sufficient for smaller churches. The writers go on to plea that this assumption of better ministers progressing in this way should be acknowledged or even challenged within all BUGB areas.[13]

'Lay' was a term *not* used by a high proportion of the practitioners in the survey and it was not applauded as positive. One person questioned the value of using a title which identified where your money came from rather than having any theological significance! The use of the title is not consistent across associations and is used by colleges but dropped for officially recognised pastors. In addition, there is a problem of using terms that are ecumenically recognised but whose meanings vary according to context. The logical conclusion of the empirical research is that 'lay' should stop being used. Wright thinks that 'laity' is a hard word to replace, and so presumably is 'lay', but the reason he gives is that it takes many words to express the same idea. He does comment that it should be used in the right way and that it is unfortunate if it is taken to signify rank.[14] Holmes goes a stage further by referring to a recent Baptist slogan which points out that Baptist ecclesiology is about 'the abolition of the laity' rather than being anti-clerical.[15] Any difficulty in replacing 'lay' would be worth facing to enable Baptists to move closer to our roots and away from speaking of the clergy and the laity.

The way forward

For the future of this ministry, a good place to start would be West's vision: for every church to have a strong enough fellowship doing God's work in reaching out in mission, from suitable buildings and with a sufficiently maintained ministry (noting that he was not suggesting the closure of all small churches). This was back in 1967 and we need to heed his warning of the danger of doing nothing.[16] Several reports have come and gone, for example *The Small Churches Project* report referred to the absence of 'tangible changes' from the *Half the Denomination* report and gave the cause as the lack of the means to deliver the changes. It went on to make a plea to the Baptist Union to simply contact small churches, to encourage them and reassure them that they are considered important even though they are small. Along with this was the suggestion that the Home Mission Fund could be used more creatively to help them.[17]

Giving help to smaller churches and support to the lay pastorate does depend on it being received and welcomed. Sadly, there are churches who do not want to change and prize their independence at the expense of being helped. If there are LPs in such fellowships they will need all the encouragement possible and prayer support for the Holy Spirit to bring life to these dry bones, as in Ezekiel 37:1-14. A common agreed approach across the associations would be beneficial, including putting into action the call from the *Ignite* project report to invest in local (lay) church leaders which would greatly contribute to 'building healthy local churches'.[18] LPs give a necessary and valuable service in BUGB but need a more suitable name.

In the final report from the *Ignite* project there is a suggested title of 'locally recognised minister', which seems to apply to LPs in pastoral oversight, especially those who are likely to seek recognition or even accreditation. Local recognition sounds a better way forward and, at least officially, replacing the label 'lay' by 'local' makes sense. Theologically the ministry would be based on covenants with the local church and association. It would be a return to terminology used prior to Shakespeare's centralising reforms and there would be more affirmation of the ministry of 'lay' pastors and support of their churches through local recognition or acceptance. 'Local' does not carry overtones from other denominations and fits into the Baptist ecclesiology of interdependent local churches. Laying-off the 'lay' and using the title 'local' for local minister or pastor would better fit the scope of a LP's role as an overseer: as one who brings the word, provides care pastorally, guides in mission and administers both communion and baptism within their fellowship.[19]

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Notes to text

1. Peter Shepherd, *The Making of a Modern Denomination: John Howard Shakespeare and the English Baptists 1898-1924.* Carlisle: Paternoster, 2001, p180.

2. Shepherd, pp146-47.

3. BUGBI Dept of Ministry, *Half the Denomination: The Report of the Working Group on the Care of Small Churches.* London: BU, 1983, pii.

4. F.M.W. Harrison & BUGBI Dept of Ministry, *The Lay Pastor's Workbook.* London: BU, 1984, pp10, 21.

5. M.E. Aubrey, BU Council in 1925, qtd in Douglas C. Sparkes, *An Accredited Ministry.* Didcot: BHS, 1996, un-numbered p31 section 7 on *Developments after The First World War*, para 27.

6. BUGB, *Ministry Tomorrow: The Report of the Commission on the Ministry*, in BU Documents 1948-1977, ed Roger Hayden (London: BHS, 1980), 97-112 (p107).

7. Paul W. Goodliff, *Patterns of Ministry among Baptists: A Review of The Register of Covenanted Persons Accredited for Ministry: A Report of the "Review of the Register Working Group*", February 2010 Draft 8, Appendix 5 in *Ministry, Sacrament and Representation: Ministry and Ordination in Contemporary Baptist Theology, and the Rise of Sacramentalism*, Centre for Baptist History and Heritage Studies, **2**. Oxford: RPC, 2010, 208-23 (p222).

8. BUGB, *Ignite* 2105, p45 <http://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/456614/Ignite_Commendation.aspx> [Accessed 14 January 2016].

9. Stephen R. Holmes, *Baptist Theology.* London: T & T Clark, 2012, p112.

10. Nigel G. Wright, *Free Church, Free State: The Positive Baptist Vision.* Carlisle: Paternoster, 2005, p163.

11. John Colwell, *A priestly ministry?*, *bmj*, **312,** 2011, 3-10 (p10).

12. Hilary Taylor, *A Toolbox for Small Churches: A Spiritual and Practical Guide to Small Church Life.* Seaford: Thankful Books, 2007, p18.

13, BUGB, *Small Churches Project: Report to Council*, March 2005, p13 <http://easternbaptist.org.uk/files/smallchurchBU.pdf> [Accessed 31 October 2015].

14. Wright, p161.

15. Holmes, *Baptist Theology*, p112.

16. W.M.S. West, 'Baptists and the Future', *BQ*, 22 (1967), 176-85 (pp.184-185) in Biblical Studies.org.uk, <https://biblicalstudies.org.uk> [Accessed 7 January 2015].

17. BUGB, *Small Churches Project*, pp1, 9.

18. BUGB, *Ignite: Final report*, p51.

19. Goodliff, p215.

Reviews

edited by Michael Peat

Baptist identity into the 21st century: essays in honour of Ken Manley

edited by Frank Rees

Melbourne: Whitley College, 2016

Reviewer: Brian Talbot

Ken Manley was Principal of Whitley College, Melbourne and is the author of the definitive two-volume history of Baptists in Australia. Marita Munro provides a short biographical chapter at the start of this work, which concludes with a chronology of his life and a list of his scholarly publications.

The first chapter is a stimulating essay on Baptist identity by Brian Haymes that graciously challenges contemporary Baptists to take their ecclesiology more seriously if we are to be true to our calling; followed by seven sections of this book that contain an essay on a set theme followed by responses. The first topic is 'Lessons from our history' by John Briggs, exploring how our past can inform and enrich our present witness; revealing the vital importance of church history in preparation for ministry today. Graeme Chatfield gives a short response on Ken Manley's contribution to this subject in the Australian context.

In the section ‘Reading the Bible’, Mark Brett focuses on emigration to Australia in the 19th century and reflects on biblical narratives used in support, such as the journey of Abraham to the Promised Land. The responses consider how the Bible has been or is being used to speak into contemporary issues.

Merill Kitchen, with responses from Ros Gooden and Carolyn Francis, explores ‘Women in Ministry’: both historically in Australia and in overseas mission, with a shorter focus on the current scene. Graeme Garrett offers a challenging essay on preaching, inviting pastors to consider how they provide a balanced diet, with brief responses from Geoff Pound and Allan G. Demond on the practical implications raised by Garrett. Ross Clifford and Tim Costello write on ‘Mission in the Australian context'; while Neville Callum, in ‘Baptists on the global stage’, reviews Baptist participation in bilateral theological dialogue with responses from Tony Cupit and Keith Clements.

In the final section, Paul Fiddes offers a vision for Baptist ‘Theological Education’ in a university setting, with responses from Thorwald Lorenzen and Frank Rees. In summary, it is a very stimulating book to engage with for any Baptist, especially those of us in pastoral ministry or theological education.

Paul and his friends in leadership

by Paul Barnett

Bible Reading Fellowship, 2017

Reviewer: Pieter Lalleman

Paul Barnett is the author of many books on the New Testament, of which I particularly enjoyed *Jesus and the Logic of History* (1997). Most of his books have an historical focus, but this one tends towards the devotional. The book owes some inspiration to F.F. Bruce's *The Pauline Circle* (1985), in which Bruce studied Paul's co-workers in their historic context. In the bulk of this book (pp33-123), Barnett does the same: he presents each co-worker (Barnabas, Timothy, Silas *etc*) and rounds off these biographies with reflections for the readers. The introductory part of the book deals with the life of Paul and the conclusion has a chapter on love which seems out of place.

Barnett's basic assumption appears on p8: 'It is a mistake to look to institutions and church leaders to carry forward the cause of the gospel. Revival has usually followed the rise of charismatic leaders and those who supported them’.

I quite like this approach in principle, but the execution is not what it could have been. Although Barnett does acknowledge the roles of the women among Paul's co-workers, he does not do full justice to Priscilla and Phoebe. He also comes to some other questionable exegetical decisions. Elements of the text tend to be repetitive. Because the sections of the text are of unequal length and because there are no questions for discussion, the book will not be easy to use in groups. Yet preachers who are planning a series on New Testament persons will not have these problems, and they will be able to tweak interpretations with which they don't agree.

The book's value will be in the fact that Barnett asks for attention to Paul's many friends and their roles in church planting, letter writing and communication in the earliest days of Christianity.

Christmas through the keyhole

by Derek Tidball

Bible Reading Fellowship, 2017

Reviewer: Michael Toogood

The author needs no introduction. Anyone who has studied the Bible seriously for their personal benefit or in preparation for an address or sermon, will have gained much from Derek Tidball's help over many years. Those who maintain a time for daily Bible reading and prayer have no reason to fear that this book is too deeply theological for them. Derek's deep learning provides a solid foundation for the themes but nowhere intrudes. Helpful everyday illustrations and insightful comments abound.

Christmas Through The Keyhole provides a series of devotional readings that cover the entire Advent period, from 3 December to 6 January. The themes are based on the songs found in the New Testament, inspired by the coming of Jesus, beginning with Mary's song (Luke 1:46-55) and continuing through to Christ, the reflection of God's glory, (Hebrews 1:2-4). These 5 themes are helpfully grouped under the following headings:

- Jesus: the hope of the needy (3—9 December);
- Jesus: the redeemer of the world (10—17 December);
- Jesus: the joy of the earth (18—20 December);
- Jesus: the light of the nations (24—30 December);
- Jesus: the splendour of the creation (31 December—6 January).

Each passage is short and ends with a meditation based upon the day's reading.

This book is an ideal companion for that quiet time of the day when, with our Bibles open, we come into God's presence, worship him, refresh our souls, pour out our prayers to him, and seek his equipping for whatever the day holds for us. For my part, I'm planning to use this book for my own quiet time through Advent later this year—while encouraging others in the congregation to do the same!

Engaging the word: biblical literacy and Christian discipleship

by Peter Phillips

Bible Reading Fellowship, 2017

Reviewer: Rosa Hunt

This is a carefully researched, thoughtful, passionate and inspiring book about making disciples, and the role that the Bible has to play in this process. In the first part of the book, Phillips asks what the Bible is. He explores five options in some detail: what does it mean to say that the Bible is a sacred text, or an object of study, or the engine of discipleship, or God's drama or God's word?

He then asks in which ways people engage with the Bible, and in so doing, refers to a host of fascinating research to demonstrate that biblical literacy in past and current society is so much wider than simply 'reading the Bible'. Phillips develops a framework of biblical literacy which includes five different types of engagement with the Bible: corporate, ecclesial, individual, cultural and social. Over the lifetime of the church, the Bible has not only been read and preached, it has been

painted and sung and acted and put online and mediated in a vast number of ways. Phillips adopts a Time Team metaphor and digs some metaphorical archaeological pits to find out how people at various points in the past created a mediated biblical text and sought to develop a biblical literacy through it: the Didache, Augustine, Aldred, medieval mystery plays, Erasmus and Wesley.

In the second part of the book, Phillips turns to the task of identifying the role that the Bible has to play in making disciples of Jesus. Here, he turns to different conversation partners: Hans von Balthasar, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and the covenant discipleship theology of the Methodist church (the author is a Methodist minister as well as an academic specialising in New Testament and communicating the faith in a digital age). Phillips explores different dimensions of Bible-centred discipleship, which he characterises as 'reaching up, reaching in and reaching out': individual and (especially) communal spirituality, congregational wellbeing and engaging the world.

As a busy minister, I feel perpetually guilty at the lack of systematic discipleship-making courses in our church! I found this book very encouraging and would recommend it to all church leaders. Phillips encourages a more profound understanding of what discipleship looks like, based round key elements such as hospitality, creating space for Christian conversation, teaching in small groups and welcome. But above all, he advocates soaking, marinating in the Bible: 'Making disciples is both terribly easy and terribly complex…It's the process of walking the walk while we also learn to talk the talk…'What does the Lord require of you?' He wants you to walk with Him in the cool of the evening. He wants you to live your life in the presence of the living Word, Jesus'.

The ghost of perfection: searching for humanity

by Joseph Haward

Resource Publications, 2017

Reviewer: Peter Shepherd

The author was called by the South West Baptist Association to plant a new church in Newton Abbot, Devon, and in response to that call founded This Hope in 2016. He says that *The Ghost of Perfection* is the beginning of his evolving thinking around what it means to be human in the light of the person of Jesus. The 'Ghost' of the title seems to represent sometimes an unachievable fantasy, sometimes a demonic power seeking to control us, sometimes an idol we make for ourselves. It entices the church away from Christ's call to be truly human by promising that the rewards offered by our consumerist, success-driven contemporary society can 'fix' our problems. The book is a passionate appeal to wake up, reject these siren calls and return to the way of Jesus.

Haward makes use of a wide range of source material, including scripture and theological writings from the Church Fathers to today, but also fiction, contemporary films, philosophy, politics and psychoanalysis. This makes for stimulating reading, but is sometimes rather bewildering. The chapter on consumerism, for example, starts with a quotation from

Jonathan Harper's *Dracula*, and before the end of the second page there is another lengthy one from Nietzsche, another from the film *Zombieland*, and a reference to the *Call of Duty* video game.

I warmed to Haward's approach as I went on. There is no in-depth analysis of contemporary culture, and often more questions than answers, but there is plenty to stimulate and provoke. His attempt to allow the Church Fathers to address us is to be applauded. I was left, however, without much sense of what 'a vision of humanity that is faithful to the person of Jesus' might mean in practice. Perhaps some more information about how This Hope is seeking to realise this might help. I look forward to seeing that in due course.

God Chat

by Bob Allaway

Faith and Thought, 2017

Reviewer: Martin Gillard

'Dear God, if you're there—please let me know!' How many times have you heard of prayers like this one? In this lovely little book, Bob Allaway shares seven such prayers directed to God, which are full of personal spiritual inquiry and thoughtful reflection. Bob's aim is to let us listen in to a conversation between himself and God, the kind of prayerful conversation we all have with God within the quietness of our minds: asking God our questions and listening for the internal answers of the Holy Spirit in our thoughts.

God Chat covers seven subjects which seekers are likely to want to ask God:

- Are you there?
- How can I know you?
- Who are you (in the sense of 'what are you really like')?
- Father forgive.
- Jesus, Son of God.
- Come, Holy Spirit.
- What now?

It is a good book to pass on to a thoughtful seeker and ask them their reaction, and could be a useful tool in evangelism.

Does it work? The difficulty with all such concepts is that the questions and answers can be as revealing of the person writing as they are of God. It was good to learn of Bob's testimony, but at other times his personal concerns were not necessarily the same as mine, or I think, of everyone else. Bob's take on predestination was a little unclear but thought-provoking, yet was it necessary in a short book aimed at general enquirers? I will pass it on to a thoughtful enquirer and see what they think.

Animals, theology and the incarnation

by Kris Hiuser

SCM Press, 2017

Reviewed by Bob Little

We value the companionship of our pets. Moreover, some 60bn animals are killed each year for our consumption. Yet public prayers, even at harvest festivals, rarely mention animals.

Ethical and animal welfare issues apart, John 3:16 says that the incarnation happened because God loved the whole of his creation—

including non-human animals. Driven by two key questions—why did God become human via the incarnation, and what are the implications of Christ's humanity for understanding human and non-human relations—Kris Hiuser explores why God became human rather than, say, a horse. So, this book is a theological anthropology (a theology of what makes humans 'human') rather than a theology of what makes animals worthy of moral concern. Yet, unusually and importantly, it includes animals within its theological considerations.

Discussing the incarnation's implications for both human and non-human animals—and what our ethical response should be—Hiuser concludes that 'just because God became human, and humans have a special calling within creation, doesn't necessarily indicate they're somehow superior to their fellow creatures'—and, even if humans are, it doesn't justify their mistreatment of those creatures. To support this view, he explains that ideas of domination are contrary to the model of Jesus.

Hiuser decides that God's motivation to become human is due to humanity's unique calling—to be creatures who speak to God on behalf of creation through prayer and who also learn the divine will for creation. That's not to say that God can't speak to other creatures, nor they to God. Rather, Hiuser believes that ignoring our calling ignores a significant part of what makes us human.

In this scholarly work (eye-wateringly priced at £70; on Amazon at £65.80), Hiuser examines the doctrine of the incarnation principally through the work of four theologians, analysing and critiquing each. The book's first four chapters are headed: *Anselm of Canterbury and Sin, Gregory of Nyssa and the Image of God, Maximus the Confessor and Microcosmic Constitution*, and *Barth and the Representative Covenantal Partnership*. The book's final chapter explores *Ethical Implications of our Calling to Representation* before the *Conclusion*—reasonably enough—advocates further study of this oft-neglected theological backwater since, says Hiuser, in studying humanity's relationship with nature, 'our capacity to become more fully who we're made to be becomes an ever more real possibility'.

Jesus through the Old Testament: transform your Bible understanding

by Graeme Goldsworthy

Bible Reading Fellowship, 2017

Reviewer: Bob Allaway

This is a brief, simple introduction to the Old Testament, for anyone who is not sure how it relates to the New, attempting to show how Christ is the fulfilment of just about every theme running through it. Goldsworthy is a fine communicator. His text comes in easily digestible chunks, summarised in text boxes and illustrated with little diagrams, with a few questions to reflect at the end of each chapter. Some of what he deals with here is covered in more detail in his earlier books: *Gospel and Kingdom* and *Gospel and Wisdom* (both now available, with *The Gospel in Revelation*, in *The Goldsworthy Trilogy*).

The fact that it is brief and simple is also its main problem. Writing this review, there were points whose omission I was going to query, but on rereading it, I noticed he had touched

on them in passing, but so cursorily that I had missed them at first reading.

He seems to have a blind spot for apocalyptic (ironically for someone who has written a commentary on Revelation). Surveying the contents of the Old Testament, on p19, he says, 'Neither Lamentations nor Daniel strictly belong in the prophets but have been included here for good reason.' This would confuse anyone who was unaware that these two books are placed by the Hebrew Bible not in the Prophets, but the Writings. (Although he mentions the threefold division of the Hebrew Bible on p20, he does not tell us which books are in each section.) However, having assured us that there is 'good reason' why Daniel is included as a prophet in our Bibles, when we turn to chapter 10, on 'the prophetic books', apart from saying, 'Daniel is also a prophetic book, and is usually included with the latter prophets', Daniel has vanished! This is curious for someone who defends the presence of our Old Testament by its fulfilment in Jesus, for how can the teaching of Jesus be discussed without some consideration of Daniel?

If you have an educated church member who does not 'get' the Old Testament, this could be a safe book to recommend. If, however, you want to increase your own understanding, I would suggest reading his earlier books.

Learning to live well together: case studies in interfaith diversity

by Tom Wilson and Riaz Ravat

Jessica Kingsley, 2017

Reviewer: Ronnie Hall

Britain is a multicultural, multireligious place to live. In our towns and cities we will see churches, mosques, gurdwaras, temples and buildings hosting different community groups. Diversity can lead to tension and that tension sometimes boils over. We hear phrases like 'integration', 'respect' and 'tolerance', but what do they mean—if anything at all?

This book is a series of case studies written by the St Philips Centre in Leicester. It has been established that Leicester is the most diverse city in Britain by head of population. It is also a model of success (largely) in which diversity is not a cause of conflict. This book is not an analysis of how this was achieved, but it is a fascinating insight into how the St Philips Centre played its part.

The book itself follows the linear approach the Centre uses, with the four sections giving case studies of how things work in practice. The four stages are Encounter, Understand, Trust and Co -operate. It all sounds very simple but it is a bit different to the way the language is usually used. For example, 'tolerance' is often used when it concerns communities and faith communities working together. While tolerance can be a positive thing it is more often than not a negative with connotations of a group in power merely tolerating a minority. The St Philips model which leads to co-operation is much more helpful.

This little book resonated with me strongly. I work in a chaplaincy in the multicultural city of Birmingham. Every day I encounter people of other faiths and communities. The interactions that happen in the chaplaincy office embody the values that St Philips promotes and I am delighted that we do so.

I would recommend this book to any chaplain—particularly if you are working in a chaplaincy that is struggling with working together for a common goal. It would also be useful for a chaplain to assess if his/her own department works as well as it can.

I also recommend this book to any minister who is struggling working with other faiths or where there are tensions with other faiths. The pathway from St Philips will help foster good relations and understanding.

Paul and death: A question of psychological coping

by Linda Joelsson

Routledge, 2017

Reviewer: Paul Goodliff

In this version of her doctoral thesis Linda Joelsson brings together Pauline studies and modern psychological theory in an attempt to read his letters in the light of coping strategies. She utilises those letters that are uncontestably by Paul (in assumed chronological order: 1 Thessalonians, Galatians, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Romans, Philippians and Philemon) to argue for a transformation of Paul's approach from denial to reaction, to processing, and to acceptance exhibited by a 'a person of antiquity'. This method assumes that the psychological dimension of human nature is stable from the period of antiquity to the current day—not a reckless assumption, but one that requires some justification, nonetheless, and which she provides on pp17 -18. 'He probably struggled sometimes to come to terms with different aspects of reality, and his psychological coping was aided by his theological thinking' (p2). Joelsson views Paul not 'primarily as a philosopher or systematic theologian' but as 'only human' (since when are philosophers or theologians also anything other than 'only human?)' She recognises that 'Psychological coping is inherently contextual', but is it also unavoidably cultural?

Paul's letters are often written to defend particular and significant values that are at risk and so coping strategies are integral to all of Paul's letters, but Joelsson is primarily interested in those ways in which Paul interprets his own death, that of other Christians and especially of Jesus of Nazareth. A long opening chapter serves as the methodological justification for her reading of Paul, both in terms of the biblical/literary framework and the understanding of psychological coping, which begins with a subjective appraisal of the particular threat. This draws upon the psychological model of Kenneth I. Pargament—a four-stage model that starts with preservation and proceeds with reconstruction, re-evaluation and re-creation. In terms of the challenges brought about by death and dying, Joelsson refers to Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, and Colin Murray Parkes, and their theories of 'stages of grief', still widely taught as the basis of 'grief work', but, I believe, now quite widely disputed as being rather too formulaic or mechanical (and it might have been helpful to acknowledge that), especially as the theories of Flora Keshgegian arising from the Armenian genocide, and which Joelsson uses fully, might offer a more appropriate framework.

Joelsson continues in the opening chapter with a justification for Paul's letters as 'fragments of a biography', which requires a chronology, allowing for a changing perspective over time. This is seen in the context of the honour-shame culture of the ancient world.

The bulk of the remaining thesis/book divides Paul's story into his early letters (chap 2); the Corinthian correspondence (chap 3); Romans (chap 4) and the prison letters (chap 5.) What these detailed analyses demonstrate is how Paul's coping strategies change as witnessed by his letters. This is then mapped onto the changing responses to death, and the whole of Paul's life viewed as a long process of initial denial of death through to joyful acceptance of it. This very human approach avoids any 'attempt to find a universally true perspective', or 'to find a universal or ahistorical truth in Paul's letters' (p203).

This is an interesting book, weaving together psychological insight and biblical criticism, and I am sure it is a worthy doctoral thesis. I am positive about publishing such theses, even if many represent the first, and relatively immature, thought of those who will go on to make more substantial contributions in the future. Furthermore, as so often with Routledge, this is a beautifully presented book, hardback, quality paper and clear typeface, making a joy to read. However, if publishers charge over £100 for what is actually quite a slim book, then I do wonder who will actually purchase them. I am sure no more than one or two readers of this journal would even consider doing so, and I could not defend spending over half of what amounts for most ministers to be relatively generous book allowance on such a specialist text. Even libraries, at least those of our colleges, might baulk at doing so when there is such a demand upon their budgets. Congratulations to Joelsson for having this published, but I wish it had been more affordable!

The train: a pilgrim odyssey

by Allan Ramsay

Mirador, 2018

Reviewer: Bob Allaway

Even before opening it, I suspected this British book has an eye on the US market. The train on the cover is a double-decker, and that is how the train in the book is described. But such trains cannot run in this country because of our low loading gauge, though they are common in the US and continental Europe. More tellingly, the train bears a destination board 'HELL'. It is plain, reading the book, that this is seen as the traditional place of eternal torment. Yet many respected voices in British Evangelicalism (Michael Green, John Stott, John Wenham, to name but a few) have held to conditional immortality, not because they did not teach God's judgement, but because they held that was what the literal text of the Bible was teaching about it.

Who is the author? The cover says Allan Ramsay. In the opening *Reflections*, where he describes getting the idea on a night sleeper to Aberdeen, he says he is Simon Godfrey (in the story proper, he becomes Simon Seeker).

This is an allegory. Simon and his companion, Paul Comforter, must wander back through various symbolic carriages, till they reach the last two, which are detached at Calvary Junction to go to King's City, while the rest of

the train proceeds to Hell. Just in case we don't get the allegories, the author spells out who each person is in the *Contents.* For example, the first entry under 'The Women's Carriage' is 'Meeting Marie Jolly (Divorcee Turned Lesbian)—the Message and Freedom/ Divorce'. In fact, it does not emerge that she is in a lesbian relationship till a few pages later, so why not leave us to figure that out for ourselves? The women are glad to have Simon and Paul pass through their carriage, as the men are able to do all sorts of practical odd jobs for them! A couple of them nearly seduce Simon, but Paul drags him away to continue his journey to the End Carriages.

These bemuse me. Only the Contrite Carriage goes straight to King's City. The Contented Carriage is left in Tribulation, symbolising what? Purgatory? Denial of Final Perseverance? Part of dispensationalist schematics?

On the cover, the book bears a subheading: 'If you don't believe in God, read this…' No! I would certainly not give this book to a non-believer; it would leave them more prejudiced and confused than they already were. If you pastor a congregation of US-style Fundamentalists, you might use it to confirm them in what they already believe.

Towards the prophetic church: a study of Christian mission

by John Hull

SCM Press, 2014

Reviewer: Stephen Heap

British Christians need freeing from the theology of empire, argues John Hull in this scholarly and timely work. A rediscovery of the prophetic is the key to that freedom.

The book begins with a review of the prophets of the Old Testament with their message of justice, hope and community (and with other messages which do not sit easily with Christian understandings). It then moves to Jesus. In him, says Hull, 'the prophetic tradition became the mission of prophetic love' (p67), a mission carried forward in Jesus through sacrifice and self-giving. With that foundation, Christianity 'portrays a love 'which seeketh not its own'' says Hull (p67), quoting Reinhold Niebuhr. Or at least it should do that; over the years other forces have moulded its life and, importantly, its faith.

'The faith of the Western Church has been profoundly changed by its social and political context' says Hull (p65). He discusses the theology which developed around the Crusades of the 11th—13th centuries and around the empire building efforts of European nations in the 17th century. Hull argues Christian faith became aligned with the pursuit of earthly power and the ways such power is pursued; different from those of self-sacrificing love. There is a fascinating study of the hymns of Isaac Watts, some of which originally contained specific reference to Britain and her special role under God.

Hull is not crassly dismissive of attempts to spread Christian influence as empires grew. He is understanding of, even sympathetic towards, what people were aspiring to. However, he is clear the sense of being a prophetic church, centred on God's mission of justice, community and self-giving love, was

lost. The tragedy today is that the empire is gone, but the theology associated with it endures. The church needs to rediscover the prophetic.

There are movements within the church where the prophetic survives. Hull traces them through the Reformation, the work of Paul Tillich and that of Reinhold Niebuhr, with occasional references to liberation theology, a movement which could have been given more attention. Despite such contributions, much mission today centres on the church. The division between the 'churched and the unchurched' becomes the important one, with 'the principal purpose of mission to transfer as many as possible from the latter category to the former' (p220). That is a church-centred mission rather than the God-centred one embodied in the prophetic tradition. Taking the latter seriously means ' we must say a more fundamental distinction in the sight of God is between the rich and the poor, those at home and the aliens, those who seek selfish power and those who set out to serve their neighbours' (p220).

The point of mission is to change the world and to do so through self-giving love. Hull expresses the hope, vain or otherwise, that if the church rediscovers its Godly mission 'its health, relevance and possibly its growth will follow' (p223).

Whether such things do follow is not self-evident, though relevance is a serious contender in a profoundly unjust world. What does shine out from the book is a refreshingly big vision of Christian mission, invigoratingly free of anything self-centred or trivial.

Of interest to you

edited by Arderne Gillies

NEW PASTORATES AND PASTORAL APPOINTMENTS

Wayne ADAMS	To Temple, Pontypridd (April 2018)
David AUGER	To Queensway Chapel, Melksham, part time Pastoral Worker (April 2018)
Gary COLLIER	From Blackhill, County Durham to Calvary, Cardiff (August 2018)
Neil COULSON	From Military Chaplain to Christ Church LEP, Ipswich (Summer 2018)
Gary DOUGLAS	To Elkington Road, Burry Port (March 2018)
Ray ELLIS	To Salem, Barry (June 2018)

Dan FOSTER	From Howlands, Welwyn to Pembury (July 2018)
Hannah FREELAND	From South Street, Exeter to Hooe, Plymouth (July 2018)
Claude HALM-ADJEPONG	From Alperton to Seven Kings United Free, Ilford (September 2018)
Nick HARRIS	From Woodstock to Aston Clinton (August 2018)
Cole MAYNARD	From Military Chaplain to Colchester (August 2018)
Roy MONKS	From Ibstock to Church Plant, Castle Donington (September 2018)
Jim MULLIN	From Haddenham to Market Bosworth and Desford (September 2018)
Andrew OPENSHAW	From New Mill, Tring to Homelands Free, Walton on the Naze (July 2018)
John SCREEN	To Coombe Martin (March 2018)
Iain SHADDICK	From Battisford Free, Suffolk to Stoke Green, Ipswich (September 2018)
Klass STOL	To East Sheen, Minister for Evangelism, LBA
Barry THOMPSON	From Farnhams & Hedgerley Community Church to Darlington (Summer 2018)
Vicky THOMPSON	From Farnhams & Hedgerley Community Church to Darlington (Summer 2018)
Graham WOOLGAR	From Brighton Road, Croydon to Sutton (Transitional Minister) (April 2018)
Matt WYNN	To Bethel, Llay (March 2018)

MINISTERS IN TRAINING

Lanre BANWO	Northern to Christway, Salford (September 2018)
Robbie HALL	South Wales to Hope, Bridgend (July 2018)
Wayne LAWTHER	Bristol to Chippenham (July 2018)
Oliver STOPP	Spurgeon's to Eastgate, Lewes (May 2018)
George TIKUM	Spurgeon's to East Ham (March 2018)

CHAPLAINCIES, EDUCATIONAL APPOINTMENTS, MISSION & OTHER SECTOR MINISTRIES

Chris POWELL	To Chaplain, Cardiff & Vale NHS Trust (April 2018)

Danny PRITCHARD	From Letton Hall, Shipdam to Chaplain, James Pagett Hospita (July 2018)
Mark TAYLOR	From Carleton Rode to Chaplain, Norfolk & Norwich Hospital (July 2018)

RETIREMENTS

Roberta DAY	Redhill (July 2018)
Graham HOLLIDAY	Beulah, Bexhill (March 2018)
Bill LONGLEY	Waterlooville (March 2018)
Stuart ROBINSON	Ferring (April 2018)

DEATHS

Peter EGGINGTON	Retired (Birmingham) March 2018
Leslie EVANS	Retired (Market Harborough) March 2018
Gerald FORSE	Retired (Chipping Norton) April 2018
Andrew GARDINER	Hope, Plymouth March 2018
Bryan JAGO	Retired (Loddiswell) March 2018
Derek TAYLOR	Retired (Burton Latimer) April 2018

ANNIVERSARIES

Ernest and Ruth GRANT	Diamond Wedding, 5 July 2018

Of Interest To You

To include matters for prayer or interest such as special wedding anniversaries (50+), bereavements, illness etc, please contact Arderne Gillies at

Greenhill, 39 South Road, Chorleywood, Herts. WD3 5AS

or email her at rev.arderne@btinternet.com

Please note that Arderne's resources include the Ministry Department and the Baptist Times, as well as direct communications. Because of this, the descriptions of posts published may not always match the locally identified roles.

The Whitley Lecture

The establishment of the annual Whitley Lecture is designed as an encouragement to research and writing by Baptist scholars, and to enable the results of this work to be published

The Whitley Trust Committee would like to increase the scope of nominations in the interests of good inclusive practice, and so welcomes nominations from members of the Baptist community in the UK and in Ireland for the 2021 Whitley Lecture.

For potential Lecturers, the Committee requires (on the proper nomination form, available from the Secretary, below):

• name, church and occupation of both the nominating person and the proposed Lecturer;

• a paragraph (250-500 words) about the subject material for the Lecture;

• a declaration that the proposed Lecturer will be available for the main Lecture period: normally January—May 2021 (all precise Lecture dates are subject to negotiation between the Lecturer and the hosts).

Please note that:

• the Lecturer does NOT need to be a Baptist minister;

• the Committee will select a balanced range of topics over the years from suitable nominations, reserving the right not to appoint a Lecturer in any particular year, if none of the suggested material is deemed suitable.

Please contact Sally Nelson, Secretary to the Whitley Trust Committee, at revsal96@aol.com, if you would like a nomination form, further information about the Lecture, or information about the process of nomination.

The Whitley Trust Committee, 2018