



# Annual Report 2017

This publication offers a snapshot summary of our activities for the previous 12 months. It is an outline version of our formal end of year report for 2017, which is available on request from the NWBA Office or can be downloaded at [www.nwba.org.uk](http://www.nwba.org.uk)

For some years now, we have focussed the work of NWBA around an annual theme, which for 2017 was 'Prayerful Listeners' building on some of our previous work around being a people 'Open to God'. Our theme came out of a growing desire to be an Association that listens and responds to the priorities and concerns of our member churches, and to encourage those churches to be discerning and Christ-focussed as they determine their concerns and priorities.

Something that was born out of our desire to be 'prayerful listeners' was a conference we held in September called 'Unlocking the Potential'. This event grew out of conversations with, and listening to a number of churches who do not have a 'full time minister' as we seek to 'unlock the potential' that exists within these churches. This day was really well received and has generated our vision and theme for 2018.

## A year in the life of a Baptist Association

At the heart of our understanding of the Church is that local congregations are free, under the authority of Christ, to discern God's will and purpose together. Yet we also believe that we are bound in covenant relationship with other local churches, and that together we are the Body of Christ. It is through our Baptist Associations, working together as a Union of churches, that we seek to give expression to this fundamental identity.

Much of the work of a Baptist Association is therefore fulfilled through supporting individual churches and ministers, seeking to offer both spiritual leadership and practical advice and support where this is appropriate. Alongside this, we also seek to develop key strategic initiatives that equip our churches in mission, or enable us to work together to do those things that we would be unlikely to achieve alone. Often this happens without the direct involvement of NWBA representatives, but through the natural relationships between churches that are fostered through our shared identity. This will often include working with ecumenical partners, and at times with other Baptist Regional Associations. We see our overall objective as being an Association to **encourage Spiritually Healthy, Sustainable churches.**

In 2017 we set ourselves 10 key objectives, 8 of which were met with 2 ongoing or partially met. These have included:

### **Developing and identifying the spiritual health of churches**

**Key annual events including Impact weekend, Ministers' conference and Annual Forum**

**Completion of the transition process**

**Development of and support for Pioneers in ministry**

**Leadership Development programme**



Another aspect to being an association of prayerful listeners this year has been the completion of our 'transition report' as we seek to support member churches in appropriate and timely ways. We have engaged with and listened to churches in each of our networks within the region, and, having had the chance to hear from our churches have sought a new way of being the association, which has included the expansion of our Regional Team.

Rev Jane Henderson has been appointed to the role of Regional Minister for Transition, intentionally and strategically working alongside churches that are going through transition themselves, asking the key questions and journeying with them. Jane has already worked alongside a number of our churches, while she is also at the forefront of our leadership development programme. Andrew Phillips has been appointed as Regional Minister for Children and families, alongside his ministry at Chelwood Baptist Church. Andrew's role will involve supporting churches to embrace becoming congregations truly for 'all ages' and what that means.

We have transitioned as a Regional team to have 3 clear teams with specific oversight: Management and Operations (overseen by Mandy), Mission and Ministry Development (overseen by Phil) and Church Life (overseen by Tim)

# Working in Partnership

A Baptist Association is, by its very nature, an expression of partnership, so it should be no surprise that much of our work is done in partnership with other Baptist Associations, local ecumenical groups, our Baptist Colleges and our Baptist Union. Many of our churches also work locally in a spirit of partnership with other churches, faith and community groups. One expression of our working together in 2017 was our 'Walking Along Water' event, prayer walking and engaging in conversations with passers by, following the Leeds-Liverpool canal route from Liverpool to Burnley. Representatives from local churches walked with us, prayed with us, and related together as we journeyed, culminating in an excellent afternoon and evening in Burnley for our annual Forum event.

Also, through our ongoing involvement with the Joint Public Issues Team, we have been able to offer, not only to NWBA churches, but many others, resources and briefings to help them engage more in the public square, including responses to Child Poverty, benefit cuts and asylum seekers.

At times this also involves organisational responsibilities, and we have Association representatives serving on all the County Ecumenical Bodies throughout our area region.



## Finance and Administration

It is inevitable, that a publication of this nature will focus on the more high-profile and one-off activities in which we are involved. However, alongside these is a raft of ongoing activities which would include our Forum meetings and Celebrations, safeguarding training, training days for deacons, annual ministers conference, supporting churches in pastoral vacancy, operating a mentoring and support programme for Newly Accredited Ministers and maintaining a process of recognition and training for ministry candidates.

None of these could happen without the generous financial support of our churches, and a solid financial and administrative core being sustained within NWBA. Much of this is done by honorary officers and volunteers, and we remain deeply grateful for their work. Key financial highlights for 2017:

**Giving to Home Mission: £180,748**  
**NWBA Total Income: £234,771**  
**NWBA Net Ordinary Expenditure: £258,877**  
**Loss for the year: £24,106**  
**With this marginal deficit, NWBA finances remain in a strong position**  
**General fund: £234,077**  
**Investment property: £203,276**  
**Social investments: £18,430**  
**One year's running costs: £200,000**  
**East Lancashire Fund: £127,184**  
**Merseyside Fund: £34,958**  
**Pension reserve: £170,000**  
**Total funds held: £992,580**

And the generosity of supporters of our new 'Count Me in' campaign has allowed us to support 2 new ministries in the region; one church plant on a Chester estate, and one minister working with asylum seekers in North Manchester.

## Some of Our Key Objectives for 2018

**Unlocking the Potential** – Maintain this theme and develop specific resources identified through the November 2017 conference including:

Support and resources for good practice in worship leading

Resources to help churches identify gifts and abilities within the congregation

Focused resources, initially aimed at moderators around the management of change.

Input and challenge for minister encouraging a shift from "church managers" to "enabling and developing others"

**Pioneer Development** – Continue work with YBA/NBA/BUGB to develop a clear support and development network for Pioneers.

**Inter-generational Church** – build on existing work done to develop resources to help churches explore working together across generations.

**Learning Initiatives** – continue to encourage informed theological discussion and learning around key ethical issues including deliverance ministry and human sexuality & gender identity.

**Refugees** – Continue to work with BUGB and YBA to support and encourage churches in ministry to refugees.

**Ecumenical:**

Work with CTMR to arrange bi-annual Pentecost Festival

Work with CTMR/Liverpool Hope Uni to support "The Big Hope"

Work with CTC/ICF to develop modern slavery study resource.

**Development** of leadership training including regular days and events at Latchford and Hawkshead, as well as younger leaders' programme