

DOWN TO EARTH

News and update from North Western Baptist Association

Welcome to this news update from NWBA. We have been glad to work in partnership with Baptist Times over the last couple of years to produce a regular supplement to keep you up to date. Sadly the BT has announced its intention to cease publication at the end of 2011. We have produced this newssheet as a one-off while we explore longer term plans and options.

We hope that the theme “down to earth” will become a familiar one during 2012, as we encourage churches to work together in developing and reflecting on our calling to share the Good News. Our Gospel commission and message is rooted in the reality of a God who in Christ came “down to earth” and it is during this season of Advent and Christmas that we particularly acknowledge this reality.

The challenge of Evangelism can often be a daunting one; we can often lack confidence or fear that we might say the wrong thing, be confronted with a question that we cannot answer or come across as a bit weird if we seek to share our faith with others. Yet many who have been attracted to faith through the witness and encouragement of others, often speak of being impressed by the “down to earth” way in which it was introduced.

Being good news, does not mean that we all have to become street corner preachers, or distribute tracts to everyone in our workplace. We can be good news by investing time in our colleagues and neighbours, being willing to listen, when others might appear too busy. Evangelism can be as simple as inviting someone around for a coffee, giving someone a lift or helping them out in a moment of struggle. In these small, down to earth ways we show and share the love of Christ within us.

The vision for “down to earth” has emerged through the appointment of Revd. Chris Duffett as incoming President of the Baptist Union in May 2012. Chris came into ministry through NWBA and was our first accredited evangelist. Much of his work has been developed through the **Light Project**, a charity based in Chester which Chris founded to encourage and equip local churches in evangelism. Chris will

be visiting NWBA in January 2013, and we hope to have a particular evangelistic focus during the time he spends with us. But our vision is that this will not be a “one off” series of events, but a celebration of an ongoing commitment to evangelism and outreach that has developed in the year prior to his visit.

During 2012 we will be seeking to develop and offer various resources to help local Christians and churches find encouragement and support in sharing the Good News that is so central to our faith. Our world at the moment seems wracked with uncertainty and crisis, there has probably never been a more significant time for God’s people to offer a message of hope.

One resource that we developed during 2011 was the **World of Difference coffee morning**. This was designed as a simple project through which local Christians could invite a few friends and neighbours around for a coffee to raise funds for the work of Home Mission and BMS world mission. This is quite a common practice in today’s society, and provides a simple and natural opportunity to tell a little of your local church’s story and activities.

We intend to run World of Difference again in 2012 and hope that many will be interested in participating. This kind of project reflects the basic philosophy of Down to Earth. To help create natural and accessible opportunities to help the people around us to discover the truth of God’s message.

It is encouraging to see many new ideas and initiatives getting off the ground across our North Western Baptist family, and we are grateful for your generosity to Home Mission which makes much of this possible. There are of course some situations of disappointment and struggle, but on the whole we have much to celebrate.

We hope that this snapshot of life in our NWBA churches will encourage and envision you. Thank you for your interest and support.

Phil Jump
NWBA Regional Minister

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a world
of difference

