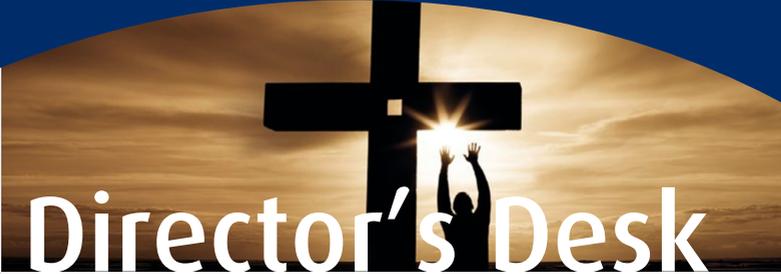


Intouch

News of ministries within
the Affinity Family

NEWSLETTER
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Director's Desk

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Affinity is a growing network of 1200 Bible-centred churches and Christian agencies throughout Britain and Ireland.

affinity
gospel churches in partnership

It seems that those of us who live in the Western world may be living through the death of a civilisation. Like the Roman Empire, the Western world is disintegrating, being destroyed from within by increasing ungodliness and sin. We are facing crises on many fronts and our political leaders seem neither to understand the issues nor to have any real solutions.

Our contemporary world is similar to that in which 1st century Christians lived. Then and now the church grows even in the face of active hostility and we need to take encouragement from this. But it is important for us to know what our priorities are and to maintain them.

We must energetically proclaim the good news of Jesus. This good news shines brightly in a dark world and offers hope to all. The gospel is God's power by which people of all ages and cultures are born again and converted. Faith comes from hearing the word of Christ.

We must live lives of sacrificial discipleship. God is calling us out of our comfort zone

to courageously live for him, whatever the cost. Christians in the 1st century were willing to be faithful even to the point of shedding their blood. Such costly consecration won the respect of some around them.

We must demonstrate love in action to hurting people in our world. The early Christians didn't run away when plagues came but went, at great risk to their own lives, to care for the sick and dying. This costly love showed the difference that knowing Jesus made to their lives. People need to see our faith in action as well as hear the gospel message.

We must demonstrate our love for one another. We may need to confess our loveless actions to our fellow believers and then stand together with them for the cause of Christ. Jesus said, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Warmly yours

Peter Milsom (Director)

Barnabas Fund:

Enabling Believers to Bless their Brothers and Sisters



“You have proven to us that the Body of Christ is one!” Our brothers and sisters in Nigeria are suffering greatly from kidnappings, killings and destruction of their property by Islamist militants such as Boko Haram.

Displaced Iraqi Christians whom Barnabas is helping

When Barnabas Fund provided emergency kits for victims of anti-Christian violence, they were “full of praises to God for the gift items from their unseen Christian family” said our Nigerian partners.

Barnabas Fund also supports many feeding programmes for Syrian Christians affected by the current conflict, both those within Syria and those who have fled to other nearby countries. In the first half of 2014 we sent them £931,820.

Barnabas Fund was established in 1993 to channel funds from Christian donors around the world, through local churches and Christian organisations on the ground, to Christians in need. The focus is always on helping those who suffer *because they love the Lord Jesus*, whether it is discrimination, oppression, injustice or violence. We also aim to strengthen the Church and her ministry in places where the Christian faith is under pressure. By God’s grace and through the generosity of our supporters, in a typical year we now help 400-500 projects in 60 countries.

The projects are initiated and run by local believers who have the vision, the know-how and, of course, the culture and language. Barnabas does not send people, only money. This means overheads are kept low. It also means that, in the most sensitive and dangerous contexts, Barnabas can be completely invisible.

“Full of praises to God for the gift items from their unseen Christian family”

Over the years we have built up a network of trusted Christian partners in countries where the Church is under pressure. This means that in a sudden emergency we can get funds out to those in need within a couple of days. When Mosul fell to ISIS fighters on 10 June, we sent funds to help the fleeing Iraqi Christians on 12 June.

As well as helping victims of violence, Barnabas supports a range of long-term feeding programmes, especially in Pakistan and Egypt, where Christians are desperately poor due to discrimination in education and jobs. Another priority is start-up grants for small businesses, especially vital for converts from Islam who often lose their jobs when they decide to follow Christ.

We also support Christian schools, national pastors, evangelists and church planters, and fund theological training, clinics, safe houses and church buildings.

“The work of BF is essential in fulfilling the Christian mandate, ‘not grow weary while doing good... to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith’ (Galatians 6:9-10).”
Ian McNaughton, chairman of Barnabas Fund UK.

Patrick & Rosemary Sookhdeo



A new church in Manchester



City Church
MANCHESTER

City Church Manchester launched on 7 September: a new church with a vision for reaching with the good news of Jesus Christ those who live, work or study in Manchester city centre.

These have more than doubled over the past decade; it is home to 95,000 students across four universities and a hub for media and the creative arts with the nearby BBC Media City. The harvest field is huge but with a relatively small number of gospel-centred, bible-teaching churches.

City Church Manchester has been planted by two Liverpool FIEC churches (Christ Church and Aigburth Community Church) working in partnership with like-minded churches in South Manchester. Both sent their Assistant Pastors to lead City Church as well as a number of their members to form the core team. It was always the intention that the Church should grow primarily through conversions and Christians moving into Manchester. Members have come from more than ten churches in Liverpool (the majority), Birmingham, Manchester, Leicester and Cheshire; and from many different walks of life (a nuclear engineer, a medical writer,

teachers, doctors, a housing worker, musicians, stay-at-home mums and a computer game programmer).

We were praying that we would have 30 regulars by the time we began meeting and the Lord has wonderfully answered that prayer and more. In addition to our 27 founding members we had 6 committed regulars by the time we started and 5 children. At our launch service we were joined by more than 60 people including a number of non-Christians. Even more encouraging is that they have kept coming back and are showing real interest in the gospel.

As a church we are convinced that the Holy Spirit uses God's Word to transform lives. Expository bible teaching is central to all that we do.

We also believe that new churches reach new people and are committed to sending people to support and plant churches in Manchester, the North West and beyond. We already have plans for our first church plant in 2019.

There is much to give thanks and to pray for. The Lord has provided in many varied and wonderful ways. We pray for the church to be financially self-supporting within five years, for greater diversity in the membership, more senior saints and more lives to be impacted by the gospel. We would love for you to join with us in praying for those things. And perhaps you might be in a position to consider moving to Manchester and joining us? Further details about the church (including a prayer letter sign-up) are available at www.citychurchmanchester.org

Ralph Cunnington,

Co-pastor of City Church Manchester
ralph@citychurchmanchester.org



Praise Trust

When it started twenty years ago the basic aim of the trust was to compile a hymnal suitable for the 21st century. The average life of a hymnbook is, perhaps, 25 years.

Christian Hymns and Grace Hymns, published in the mid-1970s, had served FIEC and Grace Baptist congregations well, but they contained very few 20th century texts, and yet there had been a hymn-writing explosion as gifted evangelicals wrote hymns and songs in contemporary language – some in traditional hymn format, and others, usually referred to as worship songs, wedded to their own tunes.

Pastors realised that people were learning these items at conferences and came home wanting to sing them. Some young people were mystified by archaic language and the poetic imagery of Victorian writers. Some hymns, basically good, had become unsingable because of the change in meaning of some words, or contained ideas that tended to provoke unseemly mirth amongst the young.

So in 1994 a group was formed from FIEC and Grace Baptists, chaired by Brian Edwards. They had a

common vision of a new hymnbook to include a complete psalter in intelligible English and metrical form, a good selection of traditional hymns revised to remove archaic language, a range of hymns from contemporary authors, and a selection of the best worship songs that seemed likely to have staying power. They were helped by a variety of gifted people to ensure the high quality of words, music and the actual presentation in book form. Help on the business side, distribution and design was received from Evangelical Press and Day One. This year distribution has been transferred to 10ofThose.

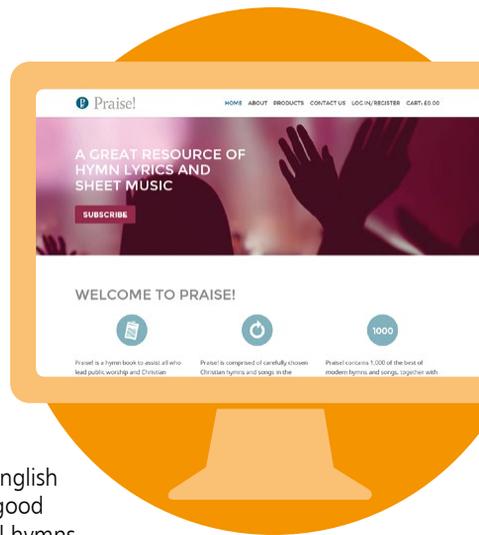
Praise! finally saw the light of day in 2000. Music and words editions were published and sales continue to be made throughout the UK and abroad, too, where hymns are scarce and English is commonly understood.

Companion volumes were also published, providing background

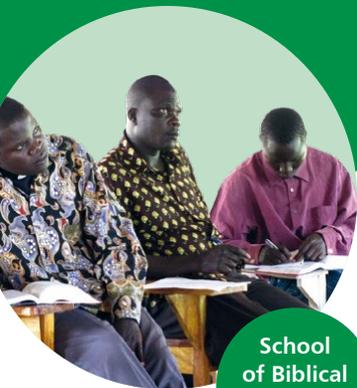
information to each item and its author and composer. All books can be ordered via the website www.praise.org.uk. Also, for £10 per annum, subscribers can access and download the words and the music of all the hymns and songs, and will find that more have been added that are not in the book. Instrumental arrangements and MP3s are added from time to time.

We would like to think that **Praise!** is the hymnbook of choice for the majority of churches affiliated to Affinity. Perhaps that is saying too much, and there are no statistics. With no office and no paid staff, Praise Trust survives by God's amazing providence, the generosity of his people and the income from sales. To God be all the glory, who has "helped us hitherto".

Bob Campen, secretary to Praise Trust



Crosslinks



School of Biblical Training, Uganda

Some of the lessons that the Lord has taught us through the last 92 years are:

1. Mission is mission wherever it takes place;

BCMS served churches in Britain & Ireland as well as further afield, focusing especially on training for gospel ministry. Crosslinks is today involved in church-planting ventures to gospel-poor areas of this country.

2. Faithfulness in mission involves suffering,

which God uses both for the individuals involved and for the wider cause; people have been expelled from many places yet, despite great cost, the Lord has matured his servants and grown the gospel in other areas.

3. Not to neglect the visible church;

it was decided in the 1930s to work for revival within the Ethiopian Orthodox Church rather than plant new ones. Pioneer Alfred Buxton dreamed of awakening that

church and, through its members, non-Christians. Crosslinks continues that work to this day, not only in Ethiopia but elsewhere.

4. The gospel trumps denomination; Crosslinks is a recognised mission society within the Anglican Communion, but our doctrinal basis is evangelical rather than Anglican, and we often have much more in common with other evangelicals than with 'Anglicans' who have abandoned biblical roots.

5. Our job is to serve churches.

I have referred to Crosslinks as a mission society rather than a mission agency because the Bible seems clear that God's mission agency is the local church through whom 'the manifold wisdom of God' is made known. There is an unhelpful tendency for the 'mission agency' to supplant, rather than serve, the church.

6. The importance of supporting indigenous mission endeavours. We remain keen to deploy mission partners long-term, but we also recognise that 'the

Crosslinks was founded as the Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society in 1922 a time when confidence in the authority of the Scriptures was being eroded, even amongst those claiming the label evangelical; current debates should come as no surprise to us. In the early years, confident of the biblical witness, BCMS men and women took the gospel to the Canadian Arctic, India, China, Burma, North West Africa and Persia.

students I am helping to teach the Bible will preach in places to which I will never be able to go, in languages that I will never master, with an understanding of their culture that I will never possess, and they will keep doing it long after I am gone'. We have programmes specifically directed to make this possible.

7. To show that the surpassing power belongs to God;

whilst I think that Crosslinks' people are impressive, some of the saddest pages of missionary history are concerned with the shortcomings of the human agents in God's employ yet, wonderfully, that is all part of God's plan!

What of the future? Under God we aim to highlight the critical need of Europe (including the UK and Ireland) alongside many other opportunities to take 'God's word to God's world'.

Andy Lines (Director)



BCMS
Crosslinks



Theological Study Conference

“Union with Christ”

25-27
February 2015,
King’s Park
Conference Centre,
Northampton



Speakers:

Cor Bennema,
John Fesko, Bob Letham,
David McKay, Tim Ward
and Paul Wells

Further information can be downloaded from our website along with a booking form. Or you may email us your details and we will book you in directly.

Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act

Our Social Issues Team recently wrote to the government department responsible for implementing the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act to express concern about an aggressive letter that had been sent out by Essex County Council earlier this year, warning churches that they needed to immediately register to conduct same-sex marriages. The reply received made it clear that the council was wrong to do this as the Act stipulates that no church can be compelled to conduct or participate in same-sex marriages. Essex Council has now issued an apology for its actions. The government’s guidance to public authorities on how the Act is to be implemented was clearly inadequate in this instance, and we need to continue to be vigilant in case there are further examples of pressure like this being put on churches.

Publications

The Bulletin

The latest issue of *The Bulletin* produced by Affinity’s Social Issues Team will be available on our website in early November. It will include articles on the growing problem of loneliness among older people in Britain, and the opportunities this opens up for local churches; a review of Dutch theologian Herman Bavinck’s book on the Christian family; the importance of having a biblical worldview; as well as comment on education, bioethics and current legal cases and government legislation.

Foundations

The latest issue of our theological journal will soon to be available on our website. This time it will include articles on the ethics of IVF and a model for mission in Latin America from Luke and Acts.

Personal Members

We are encouraged by the growing number of Affinity Personal Members. Personal Members receive a monthly update and a copy of the Prayer Calendar so they can pray more intelligently for the work. If you would like to become a Personal Member please send an email to office@affinity.org.uk and we will be happy to send you further information.

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