

YOUR INVITATION TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE LONDON BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

A Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee

How does a church become a member of the 'new' LBA?

STEP 1 Bring a resolution to your Church Meeting. A model resolution for the Church Meeting would read:

'Re-affirming our partnership in the gospel with our fellow Baptist churches in London, this church resolves to become a member of the London Baptist Association (a charitable company limited by guarantee).'

STEP 2 Fill in the enclosed membership form recording the decision of the Church Meeting, and ensuring that it is signed by the chairperson of the meeting, the Church Secretary and the Church Treasurer.

STEP 3 Return the form to the LBA Secretary:
Rev'd Paul W Martin
London Baptist Association
235 Shaftesbury Avenue
London WC2H 8EP

Please Note

The new company has not yet been incorporated. Churches that respond early may be able to be part of the original membership of the new company.

If the form is received by the LBA office by **Monday 15th October**, your church will be eligible to take part in the elections for the Board of Directors. Voting forms will be circulated to member churches during the first week in November. They will have to be returned by Monday 17th December.

So what's the LBA all about?

In making the decision to re-affirm your membership of the LBA, you may like to take the opportunity to highlight the work of the LBA with your church members. Some may even ask the question, 'Why should we continue our membership?'

The rest of this document attempts to summarise the benefits, opportunities and responsibilities of entering into partnership with fellow Baptists in London in Christ's mission in the world.

It should be said that we would encourage our churches to be entering into partnership with Christians of other traditions as well as Baptists. We are not looking for exclusive loyalty! However we do believe that there is a great deal to be gained in the service of Christ by Baptists entering into partnership in the gospel.

BELONGING TO THE LONDON BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Home Mission

We encourage all of our churches to support Home Mission because this is the 'family purse' of the Baptist Union. Home Mission enables the denomination to enter into partnership with a large number of significant local mission initiatives. It also provides the funds for the day to day running of Union and Association life.

The main source of income for the General Funds of the LBA is from Home Mission giving. The LBA receives back 25% of the money that was given to Home Mission by the London churches during the previous year. That means that the leadership team and other staff of the LBA are financed by Home Mission giving.

We are aware that there are many organisations appealing for our financial support who are doing tremendous work in serving God's kingdom. However, if Baptist churches choose not to give to Home Mission in favour of other organisations, no-one else is going to support Home Mission.

Home Mission at work in London

Grants are given from Home Mission to support, among others, the following mission opportunities in London:

- ◆ Penny Marsh, church planting in Britannia Village
- ◆ A family worker with New Addington, Croydon
- ◆ A worker with the Kaleidoscope project, Kingston
- ◆ Andrew Prassad, leading the Asian Ministry Project at Streatham
- ◆ David Holmwood, the airport chaplain at Heathrow
- ◆ Stephen Heap, the London Universities Baptist Chaplain
- ◆ Wagih Abdelmassih, engaged in mission among the Arabic community in London
- ◆ Usha Harry working with the Asian community at Alperton
- ◆ over thirty ministers in local churches
- ◆ Rosemarie Davidson-Gotobed, the LBA Racial Justice Co-ordinator

The London Baptist Property Board

Most of the churches who are in membership with the LBA are also in trust with the London Baptist Property Board – a separate company which was established to serve the needs of the LBA.

The Secretary of the LBA is also the Secretary of the London Baptist Property Board. The Property Board is able to give advice on legal matters and building projects.

The Property Board also has loan funds available. Many of our churches deposit money with the Property Board which earns interest. This makes funds available for making loans to churches of up to £125,000 for building projects or for the purchase of property.

Further Information ...

about the life of the LBA and the implications of becoming a limited company can be obtained from:

Revd Paul W. Martin
London Baptist Association
235 Shaftesbury Avenue
London
WC2H 8EP

020 7692 5592

— WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BELONG?

A Common Calling

What draws us together is our common faith in Jesus Christ – and a shared understanding of what that means about the way in which we order our life within the fellowship of the church. Even then there is plenty of room for diversity amongst us.

We have a shared practice of believers' baptism and seek to discern God's will for our life together through 'congregational government'.

If there is a statement that binds us together, it is the Baptist Union Declaration of Principle.

More recently the Association has promoted the Baptist Union's 'five core values for a gospel people'.

The Baptist Union Declaration of Principle

"The basis of this Union is:

- 1. That our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, is the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and that each Church has liberty, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to interpret and administer His Laws.*
- 2. That Christian Baptism is the immersion in water into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, of those who have professed repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ who "died for our sins according to the Scriptures; was buried, and rose again the third day".*
- 3. That it is the duty of every disciple to bear personal witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to take part in the evangelisation of the world."*

Five Core Values

We are a Gospel People called to be

A Prophetic Community

following Jesus in confronting evil, injustice and hypocrisy

An Inclusive Community

following Jesus in transcending barriers of gender, language, race, class, age and culture

A Sacrificial Community

following Jesus in accepting vulnerability and the necessity of sacrifice

A Missionary Community

following Jesus in demonstrating in word and action God's forgiving and healing love.

A Worshipping Community

following Jesus in engaging in worship and prayer which inspire and undergird all we are and do.

So what do we encourage in our member churches?

< To engage in mission

< To take part in the life of the LBA

< To contribute to Home Mission and BMS

< To support one another

< To work out a congregational pattern of church life

< To follow best practice in financial management, in child protection policies, in health and safety etc.

THE LONDON BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

A Network of Relationships

Churches that enter into the life of the Association can find themselves entering into supportive relationships with other churches.

- some enter into local clusters, with churches sharing resources and engaging in mission together
- the ten LBA Districts offer opportunities for mutual support, shared worship and joint action
- ministers meetings bring together those called to pastoral ministry
- wider gatherings of the LBA enable relationships to develop between people and churches with similar interests

A Support Structure

The Association makes available to our churches the ministry of a number of people who are able to offer support and advice across the range of church life, enabling us better to respond to the reign of God in the world, and equipping us for mission.

The Leadership Team

Pat Took leads the team and offers pastoral care to ministers and churches, particularly at moments of new opportunity, challenge and change.

Tony Mason will take particular responsibility for 'Church Life' issues, and will be developing training opportunities for churches.

Paul Martin is based at the LBA Office. As Secretary of the Association he co-ordinates Association life and is available to offer help and advice to churches on a range of issues.

Specialist Co-ordinators

Currently Rosemarie Davidson Gotobed works full-time as our Racial Justice Co-ordinator, promoting racial justice in the Association and offering training on racism awareness.

Pete Leveson works half-time as the Youth Work Co-ordinator. He is available to help our churches think through their work with young people.

We are soon to welcome a part-time Home Mission Co-ordinator – Carol McCarthy. Carol will be promoting the work of Home Mission in our churches.

District Ministers

Each of our ten Districts has a District Minister who offers pastoral oversight and support to the churches and ministers in the Districts.

Association Initiatives

In recent years the LBA has facilitated or partnered a number of initiatives, including:

- The Thames Gateway Project, raising £100,000 towards the cost of housing for a church planter, Penny Marsh, in Britannia Village
- Commissioning research into the needs of churches during a pastoral vacancy, which has led to two recent publications, *When a Pastor leaves ...* and *'A Moderator's Training Pack'*.
- The Western District of the LBA has employed a District Evangelist, Steve Gordon, with support from the LBA and from Home Mission

These are the kind of things that can be achieved when we work together!