

CALENDAR – OCTOBER 2010

Sunday 3rd	10.30 am	Communion
Tuesday 5 th	7.30 pm	Deacons' meeting
Wednesday 6 th	7.30 pm	time@tyndale - Meal
Friday 8 th	7.15 pm	TYC Club Evening
Sunday 10th	10.30 am	Morning worship
Wednesday 13 th	7.30 pm	time@tyndale – Moral Maze
Sunday 17th	10.30 am	All age worship led by Revd Ken Stewart
Tuesday 19 th	7.30 pm	Home groups meet
Wednesday 20 th	7.30 pm	time@tyndale - Communion
Sunday 24th	10.30 am	Morning worship followed by Open Church Meeting (see note after Michael's letter on page 3)
Wednesday 27 th	7.30 pm	time@tyndale – Talkback
		<i>British Summer Time ends!</i>
Sunday 31st	10.30 am	Morning worship

All services led by Revd Michael Docker unless otherwise indicated.

Three elderly church ministers, all hard of hearing, were playing golf one blustery October morning.
The Methodist minister observed, "Windy, isn't it?"
"No," the Baptist pastor said, "it's Thursday."
The Anglican vicar agreed: "So am I! Let's go and get a pint."

From the minister...

Aggressive Secularism

Pope Benedict's visit went well, both from the point of view of the Roman Catholic Church, and the British State, which welcomed him as a Head of State and provided the resources so that his 'faith community' (to use current jargon) could celebrate his visit. In the middle of the visit the Pope spoke not only to members of his Church but also to politicians and community leaders – an address, as it was billed, to the nation.

During the address the Pope urged the nation's leaders to give religion a fair hearing in the public sphere. His whole visit was carried out under the umbrella of Cardinal Kaspar's comments just before, referring to Britain as 'aggressively secular'. What is this aggressive secularism and what, if anything, does it have to do with our current situation as Christians – Roman Catholic or otherwise?

Britain is a 'secular' country. Simply, that means it is not ruled by the authority of the Church. There's not time to rehearse the long history that has got us to this point, but we are where we are after centuries of conflict and change in which, gradually, the power of the Church over the affairs of individuals and communities has waned, and become itself subject to the independent, ostensibly fair, rule of law.

There are, still, one or two anomalies. The Queen is Head of State and Head of the Church (of England) though her powers are strictly limited. Church of England Bishops still sit in the House of Lords, the Prime Minister still has the power to appoint the Archbishop of Canterbury. But ours is a country in which the freedom *to* worship is enshrined in law, and the freedom *from* religious control of daily affairs is also enshrined in law.

Probably, from the point of view of the Vatican, with a leader who holds absolute authority over that State and considerable *actual* authority over millions of people worldwide, Britain's secular arrangement - especially when it is defended robustly and powerful voices (Richard Dawkins and Stephen Fry among them) cry in protest at the Pope's visit – seems aggressive. Some commentators have said that during the Pope's visit two very different worlds - his religious one and 'our' secular one – failed to communicate at all.

We who belong to the Free Church world have a unique perspective on all this. Our forbears – Baptists, Congregationalists, Quakers, etc etc – did much to oppose the power of religion in this country, and paid, often, a heavy price for it. Having no centralised authority in our church life, we are bound to look askance at such as the Papacy. And few if any of us would want to return to a way of life while, being outwardly devout, must surely have felt repressive if you were an ordinary citizen (or, for that matter, church-goer).

Still, we probably feel some regret that the sheer joy of the celebrations in Cofton park, Birmingham and Hyde Park in London are now the preserve of a small section of this country's people. And we are less than comfortable with a secular state that seems sometimes to ignore the fact that it is what it is thanks to the Christian Church.

But there's no going back. And it's not likely that the British state is going to create a new place for the Church just because a foreign Pontiff says it ought to. Ours is a world more free and open to the gospel than for many a long year. And even if the Church as an institution wishes it had a bit more power and influence, the *true* authority is Christ's in any case. Ours is the duty, destiny and joy to live by that authority, which is gracious, freely offered, and marked by love and sacrifice, not by power and influence, come what may.

Michael

Open Church Meeting ...

After the morning service on Sunday October 24th there will be the first of a new programme of Open Church Meetings. On that day the service will be a bit shorter, to enable us to start a meeting at about 11.45 a.m; the meeting will last no longer than an hour.

The hope is that as many folk as possible will stay for the meeting, and join in the opportunity to hear a bit more about what's going on in the life of the church and to reflect with the members and officers on some of the challenges we face.

Michael

Update on the Church Meeting held on 13 July 2010

Finance:

Julian West reported on the figures for the first quarter of the current financial year, and responded to questions. We are roughly on target for the year.

The following comments were discussed:

- Julian commented that the amount of money collected by the loose offerings on Sundays varies enormously from week to week.
- The ground rent is received in two payments, the first of which has been received. The next is due at the beginning of the third quarter.
- It was noted that the halls lettings is very profitable.
- Solar panels: Should we consider installing solar panels, as Redland Park URC has done? Bruce Lloyd reported that this would not be a viable option for Tyndale as the church roof is not steep enough for the panels to work effectively.

It was agreed that users of the premises should be encouraged to ensure that lights are switched off. Bruce Lloyd commented that Fabric Committee is considering having sensors installed, which would automatically switch lights off if no movement is detected after a set time. It was agreed that this idea would be worth exploring further.

Ministry Review:

Michael Docker reviewed the situation so far:

Between January and March 2010 initial discussions led us to explore the idea of a family worker. Sian Hancock of the Centre for Youth Ministry was invited to speak at the June church meeting. Family workers employed by churches are becoming more common as churches seek to respond to the changing needs of our society. The role of the family worker is to seek to make links between the 'churched' and the 'unchurched', by identifying needs and reaching out to the local area. They could, for example, get involved in local schools. However, it is impossible to predict whether having a family would necessarily result in more families attending church, and there is certainly no guarantee that this would be the case.

Identifying local needs: Michael Whitfield has contacted local health visitors, who expressed the need for people to help isolated young mothers in the area, and also to help run language classes for female immigrants, often the wives of people who have come here to work. He also intends to speak to the leaders and members of the groups which use the church premises, and to the local primary schools, and to other local clergy.

Michael Whitfield also showed graphs showing the patient list of a large

medical practice near the church broken down into age groups. This shows relatively low numbers of young children and elderly people. By far the largest category of patient is between the ages of 17-34. This would not include University of Bristol students, as the University operates its own medical service. There is also a very high level of patient turnover, as people move into and leave the area. Michael has seen the same graph for another local practice, which shows a very similar breakdown in age.

Michael Docker asked the meeting to split into small groups for informal discussion and each group reported back on the issues raised.

There was concern about the amount of support a family worker would require from the church family in order for them to meet the needs they have identified. It would be unhelpful, to say the least, to raise expectations when it would be impossible to meet the needs identified from our limited resources. We also need to be very careful in this litigious age, about the need for CRB checks, training, etc, if we are to work in the community with children or vulnerable adults.

It was suggested that we need to be realistic about how much we can take on. It might be better to use our resources to strengthen the groups we already have, eg, Babies and Toddlers and Tuesday Coffee Shop. When all the groups had reported back, Michael reported that, having considered this matter in some detail, the conclusion of the deacons was that now is not the right time to pursue the idea of employing a family worker. The meeting concurred with this view.

What are the alternatives? Various possibilities were considered and discussed.

The view was expressed that Tyndale has reached the stage where it needs to think very carefully about its own future. Where will the next generation of the church family come from? It is essential to prioritise creating growth within the church in order to increase revenue so that we have the means to continue to fund outreach projects. Although no firm conclusion has been reached, this was a helpful discussion, which will be revisited in the months to come.

Examination of our regular meetings:

Church Meeting

Michael Docker reported that the deacons have suggested changing the programme of church meetings in an attempt to encourage non

members to play a larger role in discussions. The proposal is to hold four very short meetings, open to everyone, immediately after all age worship on the third Sunday of the month in February, April, June and October. The meetings would all have an individual topic for discussion, and no decisions will be taken. Normal church meetings would continue to be held in September, November, January (budget approval), March (election of deacons), May (AGM), July and September. The proposal to hold a 'pilot' meeting on Sunday 17 October was agreed with two abstentions. Assuming the response to this meeting is favourable, the change will become effective from January 2011.

Bible Study

Gordon Luton reported on the Sunday morning Bible Study group which he has been leading since 1982, when Revd Peter Webb suggested that he try it out for a month! The Bible Study, which starts at 9.15 am, currently has six regular members, who are all very committed. Two rely on David Bell for transport, which means they are unable to attend if he is away. New members can be assured of a very warm welcome. The meeting expressed its thanks to Gordon for his sterling service in this role.

Home Groups

The groups were due to be re-organised last year but this was postponed in order for **time@tyndale** to 'bed in'. The re-organisation has now taken place, and the programme will start in September.

All Age Worship

The Junior Church leaders have met to discuss the future of all age worship in the light of the fact that there are often few or no children in the congregation. They are in favour of keeping it running on the third Sunday of the month. Many people appreciate the opportunity to experience a less formal, style of worship. Thought needs to be given to the layout of the chairs to ensure people can see. The question was raised whether a decision had been taken by the church meeting to hold all age worship once a month. This was unclear, but Michael Docker confirmed that it was always the intention for them to be held on a regular basis, and keeping to one particular Sunday in the month makes it easier for people to know when they are taking place.

Tyndale Circle Day Centre Needs You!

Since its beginning in 1995, we have been very fortunate in having about 20 volunteers working on a rota basis to support the Day Centre each

week. Although we still have close to that number, some are less able to work as frequently as in the past and we have room, therefore, for two or three new volunteers.

The Day Centre is open each Thursday from 9.00 a.m. until 3.00 p.m. and generally a volunteer undertakes to serve on one Thursday a month for a whole or half a day. In advance of each quarter, volunteers are asked to sign up for their preferred Thursdays for the three months ahead.

We have twelve members (clients) covering a wide range of ability and most suffer from some degree of memory loss. Our day aims to provide a stimulating time of different activities, some mental and some gently physical (exercises to music, potting the balloon, golf, bowls, crafts - the list goes on!). The key words are safe, fun and stimulating. We guarantee you and our members a very happy and interesting day.

The induction programme starts in an easy and informal way – simply coming along to see what we get up to and what volunteers do. It can be for part of a day or a whole day and is followed up with the opportunity for more structured training depending on your own experience and confidence in this setting.

If you think this is for you, we should love to hear from you – men and women. Please contact me if you would like to join in a taster day – and that reminds me - the tea and toast to start the day is brilliant!

Edward Duffield
0117 968 6065
eaduffield@talktalk.net

David Roberts

David Roberts has recently retired after some twenty five years serving the Baptist Union. During that time he emerged as a highly respected and greatly loved figure. His expertise in Union affairs is considerable and as will be seen, it has been widely used and the Union has been much the richer for his work. I've had the privilege of being at the Baptist Union Council when David has presented reports. With his wry humour and grasp of detail as well as his relaxed style he managed to turn potentially dry and tedious reporting into something both lively and effective.

David has continued the long tradition of Tyndale people who have served – and still serve – the Baptist world in significant ways. The Union will certainly miss his contribution but for Tyndale much of his work - and that of others – will have gone largely unnoticed. I asked David to write a reflection on his service both to inform us and to present an opportunity for us as a church to express our gratitude to him and to wish him and Pauline well on his retirement. His reflection follows. I hope it may also remind us of the wider world to which we at Tyndale belong and inspire us to continue to engage with that world.

Michael

REFLECTIONS ON TWENTY-FIVE BAPTIST YEARS

It was an offer I couldn't refuse! Well – I could, but it made no sense to turn it down. Early retirement on full pension at age 53 – wow! Not something likely to be on offer 25 years later in these straitened times. However, at that age I needed to find something, preferably useful, to do with my time. It was at that point that I was told of the need for a new part-time Secretary for the then Bristol Baptist Association (now absorbed in the West of England Association – WEBA). So, that is what I became, although I soon discovered that the 'part-time' bit was a little inaccurate! After seven years I retired again and took on the secretaryship of the Baptist Building Fund for a further 12 years.

At that time the Secretary of each Association was automatically a member of the national Baptist Union Council. So I started my 25 years membership of this body, which ended earlier this year, when I finally retired. What an interesting time it has been. As a comparatively young lay person I was soon in demand for various committees – some more interesting than others! I have counted 15, three of which I chaired for 6 years each. I had the dubious distinction of being the last Moderator of

the General Purposes & Finance Committee before its functions were absorbed into the new Trustee Board five years ago. As Association Secretary I had to deal with trust and legal matters and developed an interest in this area, which led to my chairing the BU Corporation and Legal Committee for 6 years.

Beyond this was the ecumenical involvement. For five years I was one of the Baptist representatives on the British Council of Churches and on one of the working groups which arranged the transition to the present Churches Together bodies. The most interesting outcome of this involvement was a 10-day visit in 1989 to Israel, the West Bank and Gaza as a member of a British Churches delegation. I also got to know several of the leaders of other denominations and discovered what wonderful people many of them were.

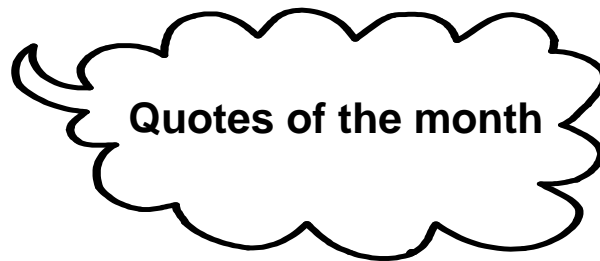
So what has changed in 25 years? In 1990 the BU moved its headquarters from London to Didcot. This meant the loss of the old Council Chamber, where the long standing members each had their accustomed seat, and, being a round structure, acted as a whispering gallery, which could enable eavesdropping on some interesting conversations! For a while we met at various venues around the country (twice at Tyndale) until settling on a pattern of residential meetings at the Hayes conference centre at Swanwick in Derbyshire. These changes contributed to a much more informal atmosphere in Council meetings. At the same time a lot of progress has been made in correcting the gender and ethnic imbalances in the membership, although there is still a good way to go and there are still very few members under the age of, say, 40.

I have served with three general secretaries, each bringing his own emphases to the Union. The ecumenical scene has changed as has the society in which our churches witness and serve. Broadly the Union has adapted to the changes. One of the biggest constitutional changes was the amalgamation of the 30 associations into the present 13. On the whole I think this has been a good move, but I am less happy with the loss of the distinctive ministry of the former General Superintendents.

The other major change has been the creation of the Trustee Board. To a large extent this was a response to successive charity acts. The relationship between the Board and the Council is still being worked through, but my impression (as a member of both bodies) is that it is settling down and working well.

So that's it! I shall miss meeting so many of my fellow Baptists at meetings – and especially over the excellent lunches provided at Didcot! I shall also miss working with members of the BU staff, whose work is so vital to the churches but which often goes unrecognised. In 1985 I could never have envisaged being on Council for 25 years, but it has been a special privilege to serve the denomination in this way.

David T Roberts



Some observations on life as a Christian....

Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than going to McDonald's makes you a hamburger.

A coincidence is when God performs a miracle and decides to remain anonymous.

Did it ever occur to you that nothing occurs to God?

Here are two things I have learned:
There is a God.
And I'm not Him.

Your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the reach of God's grace.
And your best days are never so good that you're beyond the need of God's grace.

Science can add years to your life, but only Christ can add life to your years.

The Christian's chief occupational hazards are depression and discouragement.

Until you are free to die, you are not free to live.

John Wesley's Instructions for Singing 1761

That this part of Divine Worship may be the more acceptable to God, as well as the more profitable to yourself and others, be careful to observe the following directions:

- I. Learn *these* Tunes before you learn any others; afterwards learn as many as you please.
- II. Sing them exactly as they are printed here, without altering or mending them at all; and if you have learned to sing them otherwise, unlearn it as soon as you can.
- III. Sing *all*. See that you join with the congregation as frequently as you can. Let not a slight degree of weakness or weariness hinder you. If it is a cross to you, take it up and you will find a blessing.
- IV. Sing *lustily* and with a good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead, or half asleep; but lift up your voice with strength . Be no more afraid of your voice now, nor more ashamed of it being heard, than when you sung the songs of Satan.
- V. Sing *modestly*. Do not bawl, so as to be heard above or distinct from the rest of the congregation, that you may not destroy the harmony; but strive to unite your voices together so as to make one clear melodious sound.
- VI. *Sing in Time*. Whatever time is sung, be sure to keep with it. Do not run before nor stay behind it; but attend closely to the leading voices, and move therewith as exactly as you can. And take care you sing not *too slow*. This drawling way naturally steals on all who are lazy; and it is high time to drive it out from among us, and sing all our tunes just as quick as we did at first.
- VII. Above all sing *spiritually*. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing Him more than yourself, or any other creature. In order to this attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your *Heart* is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually; so shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve of here, and reward when he cometh in the clouds of heaven.

Roger Kirby

A Prayer for Harvest

*God of creation,
We praise you.
Once there was nothing,
But now the world teems with life
And the cup of your provision overflows.
Once there was dark emptiness
But now there is sound and colour,
Majestic mountains and intricate petals.
Beasts and birds gain their food from you,
And all humankind depends
On the fruitfulness of the earth you have made.
We praise you, faithful provider,
Generous and gracious God.*

From Gathering from Worship, BUGB

Autumn Glades

*We stroll through leafy autumn glades,
An amber carpet 'neath our shoes;
As Nature's summer beauty fades
She clothes herself in golden hues.
The stillness of October days,
The chillness of a frosty dawn,
Yet autumn sunshine's slanting rays
Caress us with their glowing warmth.*

*They also warm the southern breeze,
Which comes upon us, as it may,
Releasing crispy, ochre leaves
To gently patter on our way.
Soon, soon comes winter's icy grip,
Of freezing wind and driving snow,
But, just for now, we'll gladly slip
Through gentle autumn's golden glow.*

By Nigel Beeton

The Leaves

*The leaves had a wonderful frolic.
They danced to the wind's loud song,
They whirled, and they floated, and scampered,
They circled and flew along.
The North Wind is calling, is calling,
And we must whirl round and round,
And then when our dancing is ended
We'll make a warm quilt for the ground.*

Author unknown

As the dark nights close in, and the season of Hallows Eve, All Saints, and All Souls arrives, here is part of an ancient Celtic prayer from Benbecula asking for God's provision, redemption and protection from evil.

The Gates of the Kingdom

*Give us, O God, the needs the body feels,
Give us, God, the need-things of the soul;
Give us, O God, the balm which body heals,
Give us, God, the soul-balm which makes whole.*

*O great God, thou who art upon the throne,
Give to us the heart repentance true,
Forgiveness give us of the sin we own, -
The sin inborn and the sin we do.*

*Give us, O God, a yearning that is strong,
And the crown of glory of the King;
Give us the safe home, God, for which we long
In thy kingdom's lovely gates to sing.*

*May Michael, archangel warrior white,
Keep down hostile demons of the fall;
May Jesus Christ MacDavid guide our flight
And give lodging in his peace-bright hall.*

Are you a New or Returning Student?

You are? - then welcome (back) to Bristol - we're pleased that you're here!

Students at Bristol University are particularly welcome at the University's Multifaith Chaplaincy Centre based at 1 Woodland Road. We start the new term with some very shiny new signs that direct you into our building, where you'll find: -

- *A Common Room with comfy sofas, music, games and Wi-Fi. Here on Monday lunchtimes we serve homemade soup, and on Friday lunchtimes the FairTrade Café has a delectable range of sandwiches and cakes.*
- *A Kitchen with free FairTrade tea and coffee available all day.*
- *A Quiet Room with space to pray, reflect and worship. Here throughout the week we offer inspiring Christian worship from different traditions, including Taizé and contemporary new forms.*
- *A Reading Room with study space plus a library of spirituality and theology books.*
- *An Activity Room with a pool table.*

But it isn't just about rooms. In the Chaplaincy you'll find people meeting with people in a safe, soul space where anyone whatever their faith background is welcome. There is always a Chaplain available, and we can offer confidential pastoral and spiritual care, as well as an opportunity for reflection on faith.

On Sunday evenings, the Chaplaincy Centre hosts Bristol MethSoc (The Methodist Society). All students (Baptists, Methodists, Anglicans, Reformed ...) from any University or College in the city are welcome to join this lively group, and to share in worship, discussion, activities and Bible study.

For more information about the Multifaith Chaplaincy at the University of Bristol and MethSoc, contact Rachael Fletcher (The Free Church Chaplain) by email: rachael.fletcher@bristol.ac.uk.

Or check out our webpage: www.bristol.ac.uk/chaplaincy

31st October – All Hallows Eve

Modern Halloween celebrations have their roots with the Celtic peoples of pre-Christian times.

In those long-ago days, on the last night of October, the Celts celebrated the Festival of Samhain, or 'Summer's End'. The priests, or Druids, performed ceremonies to thank and honour the sun. For there was a very dark side to all this: Samhain also signalled the onset of winter, a time when it was feared that unfriendly ghosts, nature-spirits, and witches roamed the earth, creating mischief. So the Druid priests lit great bonfires and performed magic rites to ward off or appease these dark supernatural powers.

Then the Romans arrived, and brought their Harvest Festival which honoured the Goddess Pomona with gifts of apples and nuts. The two festivals slowly merged.

When Christianity arrived still later, it began to replace the Roman and Druid religions. 1 November - All Saints' Day - was dedicated to all Christian Martyrs and Saints who had died. It was called 'All Hallows' Day'. The evening before became an evening of prayer and preparation and was called 'All Hallows' Eve', The Holy Evening, later shortened to 'Halloween'.

For many centuries, however, fear of the supernatural remained strong. During the Middle Ages, animal costumes and frightening masks were worn to ward off the evil spirits of darkness on Halloween. Magic words and charms were used to keep away bad luck, and everybody believed that witches ride about on broomsticks. Fortune telling was popular, and predicting the future by the use of nuts and apples was so popular that Halloween is still sometimes known as Nutcrack Night or Snap-Apple Night.

Today, Christians have learned to turn to prayer instead of charms to overcome the powers of darkness. And the deeper, true meaning of All Hallows' Eve should not be forgotten. As Christians, we all draw closer to Christ when we remember and give thanks for our loved ones and for others who have gone before us through the gates of death.

CALENDAR – NOVEMBER 2010

Wednesday 3 rd	7.30 pm	time@tyndale – Faith matters
Sunday 7th	10.30 am	Communion service
Tuesday 9 th	7.30 pm	Deacons' meeting
Wednesday 10 th	7.30 pm	time@tyndale - Quiz/games
Friday 12 th	7.15 pm	TYC Club Evening
Sunday 14th	10.30 am	Morning worship
Tuesday 16 th	7.30 pm	Church meeting
Wednesday 17 th	7.30 pm	time@tyndale - Communion
Sunday 21st	10.30 am	All age worship
Tuesday 23 rd	7.30 pm	Home groups meet
Wednesday 24 th	7.30 pm	time@tyndale - Forum
Friday 26 th	7.15 pm	TYC Club Night
Sunday 28th	10.30 am	Morning worship – 1st Sunday in Advent

All services led by Revd Michael Docker unless otherwise indicated.

LIBRARY VOLUNTEER NEEDED!

Bristol Baptist College is looking for a volunteer to work two mornings, or afternoons, per week in the library. Main duties would be shelving returned books and covering and labelling newly processed books, with scope to learn other library skills.

For further information, please contact the librarian Mrs Shirley Shire, or Business Manager Mrs Fran Brealey on 0117 9467050.