



south eastern baptist association

www.seba-baptist.org.uk

Annual Report of the Executive for 2008

WELCOME

The purpose of this short leaflet is to give you a summary of what has been happening in SEBA during 2008. 146 Baptist churches in Kent, Sussex and parts of Surrey and north-east Hampshire are the members of the Association. Your support and involvement are vital for its continuing development. 2008 was only the second year of SEBA so we are still learning!

A GOOD YEAR!

God has blessed SEBA during 2008 and as we look back, we see many encouraging developments. For a young association, much was achieved during the year including:

- The SE Team working together well in a spirit of support and co-operation
- Travelling Annual Meetings in Networks
- Churches and Ministers helped through difficult and challenging crises
- Greater awareness of SEBA in the churches
- Website greatly improved and used much more
- New SEBA leaflets widely distributed and well received
- Churches settled with new Ministers and Ministers with new churches
- A training day for secretaries and treasurers
- The setting up of a new Evangelism Strategy Group

- Huge involvement of young people – especially an encouraging increase in Kent and Surrey
- Increasingly supportive Executive members
- A very effective and innovative Seniors for Christ day
- Being a venue for the Fresh Horizons national tour
- An increase in giving to Home Mission
- Sent a gift to the Baptist Union of Uganda to help develop their work among children.
- Full complement of administrative staff to assist the Regional Team

Below are a few more details of what has happened

THE NETWORKS

These are our geographical groups of churches which we are encouraging to work towards becoming valuable ways of offering local support and encouragement, sharing resources, arranging training events and celebrations and engaging in mission opportunities together etc. etc.

A second Network Day was held at Worth Abbey in November when representatives from all the networks met to share experiences and investigate possible ways of increasing their effectiveness.

In time, it is hoped that each network will also have a voluntary co-ordinator to work alongside the elected executive member.

THE EXECUTIVE

The Executive Committee looks after the affairs of the Association and each Network appoints one person to be on the Executive. Three of the nine retire at the end of each year and this year was the turn of the Revd Michael Fanstone (North Kent);

the Revd Bob Kirby (South Kent) and the Revd Tim Langdon (Guildford).

We are grateful to all three for being willing to be nominated for a further three years and pleased that they were overwhelmingly affirmed by the churches.

Others who continue on the Executive are

the Revd Geoff Cook (East Kent);

Mrs Rosie Davis (Gatwick);

the Revd Tom Duncanson (Mid Sussex);

the Revd Paul Kerley (West Sussex);

Mr Colin Marchant (East Sussex) and

the Revd Graham Wood (Tonbridge).

The Regional Ministers, the Treasurer and the Moderator are also members of the Executive. Mave Whitchurch, Brian Hasler and Chris Andre-Watson attend. During 2008, the Executive had presentations from people who have strategic roles in SEBA including the Revd Penny Marsh (Kent Thameside Church Project); Sheila Smith (Ministerial Recognition Committee) and Reg Hughes (Baptist Union Corporation and Spurgeon's College).

THE SEBA TEAM

For the whole of the year, we had two full-time Regional Ministers – the Revd Norman Tharby (Team Leader) and the Revd Stuart Davison (Mission Enabler). Together with Mave Whitchurch (Youth Officer), the Revd Chris Andre-Watson (BMS World Mission) and the Moderator, they make up the “SEBA Team”. We are pleased that links with BMS are increasing with Chris’s involvement in the Team.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Our Youth Officer, Mave Whitchurch has been continuing to make contact with youth and children’s leaders across the whole association in addition to arranging the popular child protection and first aid training events.

Many youngsters from our Baptist churches go to ecumenical n:vision events in which Mave is also involved. Four kids events were held at Maidstone; Canterbury; Eastbourne and a soft play venue in Burgess Hill. Participants included Powerpack; Jim Bailey and John Hardwick. In all some 400 – 500 children attended.

Youth 'ADORE' events happened in Maidstone and Haywards Heath with worship by Phatfish and Yfriday. The speakers were Ross Ciano and Mark Ritchie, over all there were about 800 young people. The response amongst the youth was astounding with many responding to the message.

A successful Leaders evening dinner and worship retreat took place in Crawley The worship was led by Stuart Barbour and there were 45 youth leaders present.

FINANCE

During 2008, £403,626 was contributed for Home Mission - 25% of which will be returned to the SEBA to fund the association’s work in 2009. Our grateful thanks go to churches and individuals who gave so generously. Although this was 4.3% more than last year it was £16,374 less than our target.

The target figure for 2009 is £425,000. If every church felt able to make 5% of their unrestricted income available for Home Mission, we would far exceed this!

Copies of the Association’s annual accounts for 2008 are available on request from Brian Hasler.

From Home Mission funds, eleven grants totalling £65,274 were given to churches and special projects in the south east for what are now called “Mission through Ministry” grants and £8,500 for five “Mission through Project” grants.

KENT THAMESIDE

In an area where vast numbers of new homes are to be built, our exciting Kent Thameside Church Project was relaunched in 2008 with the appointment of the Revd Penny Marsh. Penny is enthusiastically making new contacts in the area and would love to share her experiences and challenges with churches. Why not ask her to give a presentation. This is our special Church of the Year Project for 2008 and 2009 and contributions are invited to further the work.

MINISTERIAL RECOGNITION

We are grateful to Shelia Smith who chairs this committee and Anne Jeater who does the administration. During the year, eleven new candidates were interviewed as potential entrants to the Baptist ministry, nine of whom were recommended. Seven were interviewed part-way through their newly-accredited minister period and another five were recommended as fully accredited. As part of the widening of the committee's role, two of the new candidates and one of the full accreditations were for Youth Ministry. Also, one person was accredited as a Preacher and one commended as a Hospital Chaplain.

ADMINISTRATION

The Association's Administrator, Mrs Steph Tidy has continued to faithfully keep everything in order! The second edition of the Directory was produced with new sections and updated details.

We also acknowledge the work done in assisting the regional staff by Emma Dann (Norman Tharby); Liz Adshead (Stuart Davison); Richard Jago (Mave Whitchurch); and Helen Boyd (financial book-keeper). Congratulations to Helen and Julian on the birth of Esther on 9 November 2008.

LOOKING TO 2009

As we go into 2009, we know that Norman Tharby is to move on at the end of March to take up the pastorate of Whitehouse Baptist Church in Ipswich. We shall therefore be looking to God to guide us as we -

- Appoint a new Team Leader
- Support Stuart Davison during the period of vacancy
- Rebuild the Team following the new appointment and work towards strengthening it with a third (probably part-time) regional minister
- Help the Networks to support fellow churches in their network
- Continue developing the pastoral work among ministers and churches
- Build on the excellent foundations of our contacts with youth leaders
- Continue to take advantage of a wide variety of mission opportunities.
- Actively promote Home Mission with a view to reaching our target
- Enhance communications with churches via the website and develop a new format of newsletter

Roger Barnett (Moderator)