

Summer 2018

PARTNERSHIP

the magazine of the North West Partnership



Planning for the Future

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Trustees: Robin Barfield, Paul Baxendale, Mark Cawson, Suzanne Cowburn, Maurice McCracken, Tim Hanson, Brian Elfick, Ken Lippold and Gerry Straker.

What is the North West Ministry Training Course?



"Faith comes by hearing, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ" Romans 10:17 When the Bible is taught God's voice is heard. Teachers who 'rightly handle' the Word of truth are essential in today's church. The training course exists because wherever the Bible is taught, we need people who can teach God's Word in the power of the Spirit.

1st Year Daytime

Liverpool (Tuesday)
& Leyland (Thursday)
Cost: £550

2nd Year Daytime

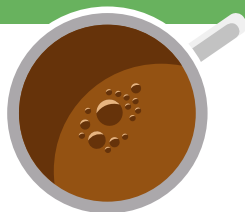
Leyland (Thursday)
Cost: £550

1st Year Evening

Liverpool
(Date TBC)
Cost: £330

2nd Year Evening

Manchester
(Date TBC)
Cost: £330



To register your interest in these courses, contact Sara on sara@northwestpartnership.com



North West Partnership

@NWPPartnership



DEAR FRIENDS...

There's nothing like an interview process for a new Director of the North West Partnership to focus our minds on what we are actually all about!

A few of us met and this was our top line, 'We exist to glorify God by expanding gospel ministry in the North West region and encouraging Bible believing evangelicals to contend for Biblical reformed Christianity within our networks and denominations.'

I'm sure that many of you could do better but at least it's a starter for 10!

The basic aim, as far as I can see, is that we want faithful local churches in every community.

The local church is God's plan A to reach communities with the good news of the Lord Jesus, and there is no Plan B.

And don't you find that there is desperate and heart-wrenching need?

It was GK Chesterton who said,

"When people stop believing in God, they don't believe in nothing – they believe in anything."

Isn't that exactly where our culture is at the present time? I am sure that we could all tell stories of conversations where people have explained the most ridiculous beliefs and world views, but they won't believe the gospel of the Lord Jesus.

People need that good news, people need Jesus and so they need local churches.

Local churches that are full of people living in joyful obedience to Jesus and speaking about Him whenever they can.



This is what the NWP must work hard to encourage.

Since our Partnership started in 2003 we have been wonderfully led by Justin Mote. It is so inadequate to just say 'thank you' to Justin for the way that he has given of himself to hundreds of students and leaders over so many years.

He has loved and honoured Jesus by faithfully teaching the bible and he has loved and served each one of us in so many ways. Justin, we thank God for you.

We also thank God for Jo, Justin's wife, who has supported him so faithfully and enabled his ministry in so many ways.

Our prayers are with the Motes as they continue to serve the Lord Jesus in the future.

Following on from that, it is my pleasure to announce that the Trustees have appointed Rev Dr Mark Pickles to serve as the new Director of the North West Partnership from August 1st 2018.

Mark has many years of experience as senior Pastor in a number of churches, including in the North West and has recently been on the staff of Oak Hill Theological College.

Please pray for Mark and his wife Diane as he takes up this new position.

Tim Hanson
Chair of NWP



GREAT HARWOOD CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Whenever people hear the name Great Harwood, they usually ask, "Where's that?" Great Harwood is a small mill town, near the M65, between Blackburn and Burnley. Like so many Lancashire towns, it can look back to a time of plentiful work and relative prosperity. But, sadly, the time of "employment for all" has gone, leaving behind fond memories, derelict buildings and empty shops. Today the town has all the problems associated with a deprived community and while it is surrounded by lovely countryside, it suffers from neglect and can often feel like a forgotten town.

However, even though the town is, in the eyes of the world, small and certainly not strategic, the Lord does have His people here. Great Harwood Christian Fellowship (GHCF) started in the early 1990's when a dozen local Christians wanted to gather together in a church which was serious about studying God's Word. A local man, Keith Nicol, was appointed as their Pastor and the church started meeting together in someone's front room.

Gradually, the Lord added to their number, larger venues were hired and eventually, the church purchased a derelict primary school building. Slowly, the Lord provided

people with the right skills and when needed, a bit of money, so that today, the church meets in a fully refurbished facility in the heart of the town.

In 2013 Keith retired and handed the baton over to Matthew Clay. Prior to being called into ministry and training at Oak Hill Matthew worked in the development group of a pharmaceutical company.

As an Independent Evangelical Church we are serious about sharing the gospel and growing as Christians through the study of God's Word. We try and share the gospel through personal contacts and our weekly Outreach Table. Recently, in partnership with local NWP churches, we were involved in a Roger Carswell mission; during which we hosted a very popular Cream Tea.

Joining the NWP is an exciting step in the development of GHCF. We are looking forward to working in partnership with the NWP to share the gospel and grow in our love for the Lord.

Matthew Clay





ST ANDREW'S ASHTON-ON-RIBBLE

In this day of church planting being the vogue, I read a book which makes the very helpful point about the place of church revitalization: church planting goes from a neutral gospel witness to a positive one; turning around a church goes from a negative one to a positive one, bringing a double blessing. Over the last 7 years this is something of what has happened, under God, at St. Andrew's, Ashton-on-Ribble, Preston. I am delighted to say that St. Andrew's is now an established positive gospel witness, and a mark of that is becoming a partner church of the NWP.

Looking back over the last 7 years, the process has been very much akin to that of turning an oil tanker (as opposed to a speedboat), long, slow, energy-sapping and relentless, but ultimately we are now going in the right direction! If you had visited St. Andrew's 7 years ago and came back today, you might think that a new church had been planted. However, the reality is God's working for good which can be seen through the following three factors:

People: God has graciously gifted the right people at the right time to allow the ministry to gradually grow and develop: a couple here; a family there; a staff member (and provision of the finances) here; a single person there. This has established a committed core of 'gospel partners' who are wonderfully servant-hearted and generous with their time, love, energy and money.

Prayer: A number of churches (and individuals) have taken us on as UK Mission Partners and have been faithful in praying for us over the last few years. We are so grateful for the way God has answered prayers, often in surprisingly specific ways!

Power: At heart the last 7 years have been a testimony to the deep conviction of heart that only the Holy Spirit can bring. At times our broadcasting of the gospel seed has felt very haphazard and yet God has softened hearts and brought a significant number of people to put their trust in Jesus.

James Nash



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Previous Ministry Training Course Students share their stories. Some of the graduates of the course go on to ministries so risky that we have to be particularly vague about the details...

"Beth"



I am about to finish my second year of being a ministry trainee and I am so grateful for the training it has equipped me with for my next step. Since childhood I have had an increasing burden to go to share the gospel with people who are unreached, who have no way of hearing the good news of Jesus because there is no church and no Christian witness.

I have been accepted to go to a creative access nation with a mission agency and am currently preparing to leave later this year.

A creative access nation is one where there is open hostility to the gospel so going to work there means you cannot go openly as a mission worker. I have been gaining a new skill in preparation for going but I am so thankful for the training I have had through the North West Partnership Ministry Training Course.

It has been a privilege to have two years to spend sustained amounts of time studying the Bible and has also been massively encouraging to meet with other Christians who are new to ministry or who just want to become better equipped in handling God's word.

If you are interested in supporting "Beth", please contact Sara at sara@northwestpartnership.com

Tim Ball



Hi, I'm Tim and right now I live and work in Liverpool. I serve 2 days a week on the staff of Christ Church Liverpool and 2 days as a disability support worker.

I attended the first year of the MTC and then the Union Graduate Diploma through the NWP. But this September life, and where I wake up every day, is going to change drastically as I head abroad to join in with cross-cultural mission.

I will be moving to Central Asia (sorry that's as specific as I can be) to work with a team of missionaries living and working in the capital city of a Central Asian country.

I will be exploring how the influx of western media mixed with the first generations of adults born after the fall of The Soviet Union is creating emerging cultures, and how Christians can be part of the narrative that informs these cultures. I will also be involved in music ministry with the local international church and taking on the daunting task of learning Russian at a local language school.

I am really grateful for the teaching and mentorship provided by the NWP and there is no doubt that there are things I learned on both courses that will stay with me as I continue to seek to serve the Lord. If you would like any more information about my upcoming move, do check out www.timgoesaway.com.



CONFIDENT

Hannah looks back on a challenging and encouraging NWP Annual Conference

In September 2017 I started at Christ Church Liverpool as a Ministry Trainee and, in January, I had my first exposure to a North West Partnership conference. The two day conference really encouraged and challenged me, and exposed me to a lot of passion for the gospel.

The main speakers, Denesh Divyanathan and Tim Ward spoke with real hearts to both challenge and encourage us in persevering in sharing God's word.

I remember how Denesh spoke about the pursuit of God's voice. It is a deeply human experience to long for the voice of truth, a divine and fully trustworthy voice that will speak into our lives. Across the world, so many people are desperate for His voice. We have it in the Bible. I think to us, it becomes so every day, it's easy to lose the wonder at what we have. But we were reminded that through the Bible and the Holy Spirit, we hear God's very voice. We hear words of rescue which are speaking powerfully into lives and bringing people to salvation.

We were encouraged to persevere in bringing the Bible to people, to preach it faithfully, to let it both sing and sting. We were challenged to be bold and to trust in its beautiful sufficiency.

Tim Ward brought so many interesting and challenging questions. He communicated deep truths about God and His word,



highlighting the interplay between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in John 16. The Spirit was servant hearted to the Son, stewarding His words carefully. How can we be faithful stewards of these precious words of life to the people around us?

The most compelling challenge to me was that ultimately gospel ministry is about eternal rescue.

As well as these deep truths, I took away with me a lovely picture painted by Denesh Divyanathan of the nature of gospel ministry. Preaching is like a mother's cooking. It is constant and sustaining but probably not very appreciated from day to day. You don't always remember what you ate last week or last year. But it is always nourishing, always doing good, and over the years it was sustaining life and causing growth.

What a sweet encouragement and a great expectation leveller for someone like me; working out persevering and being faithful in ministry and in every part of my life, no matter the response.

Hannah Northover



PREPARING TO PLANT

AN EVANGELICAL ANGLICAN CHURCH IN CREWE

Launching 2018/19

PREPARING TO PLANT

Updates from a planned church plant in Crewe.

People tend to know Crewe for one reason, the station! The town grew up around the place where several lines meet, so, at its heart, Crewe is a place of connection. However, the sad truth is there are more than 70,000 people currently living in Crewe and only a tiny proportion are connected to Jesus. Even those who are connected to Him can find it difficult to connect with a local church. We have met lots of people who live in Crewe and have struggled to find a faithful Bible teaching church. It is the largest town in south Cheshire, yet there are no evangelical Anglican churches and virtually no conservative evangelical churches. That's why we hope to plant a place of connection – a local church that will connect people with Jesus and His people.

We are seeking to plant through the Church of England, with the support of the Chester Association and our local partnership of churches. We've now spent about 18 months working with the Church of England, listening to their concerns and adjusting our plans accordingly. We have received a positive response from some in the Diocese but have also experienced many difficulties and it remains to be seen whether we can do this together. Please pray we might be able to find a way forward and if not that we'd know how best to proceed with the plant. Pray for our partnership of churches, that we would be united in any decisions we make.



We hope to launch at the start of 2019 and currently have a small team of people who are willing to move to Crewe to reach the lost. We're incredibly thankful for their enthusiasm and commitment to God's mission. We are also encouraged by the conversations we are having with people who are looking for a faithful church in Crewe and might want to join us. Please pray that more people would hear about our plans and get in touch. We are also thankful for the pledges of money we've received and the number of different churches and individuals who are supporting us. God really does provide!

For more information or to receive our updates go to www.preparingtoplantcrewe.com

Matt Guest





NEWLY-PLANTED

News from **Grace Church**, a new church plant in Sandbach, Cheshire

A new church was launched in Sandbach, Cheshire on Easter Sunday. Grace Church Sandbach is a church plant involving about 50 members from Wheelock Heath Baptist Church, a NWP partner church in the village of Winterley.

Sandbach is a pleasant market town just one mile from the M6 which has been “discovered” in recent years, attracting many cafés and restaurants and also large housing developments which are bringing many more people to the area.

Most of Grace Church’s members already live in the town, and we’re excited at this opportunity to share the good news of God’s love in Christ with more people in our local community.

2,500 invitations were delivered to local houses to publicise the launch along with a stall at the town market where many conversations took place, a Family Town Trail which attracted 125 children plus their families, and personal invitations to neighbours and friends including many connections through the local primary school. Our morning and afternoon launch services were both well attended with a number of visitors.

Grace Church is meeting for worship each Sunday morning at the local girls’ school, and also on the first Sunday of each month for a more informal afternoon service in the Town Hall, at the heart of the town



centre. We have been asking people across Sandbach to tell us ‘if you could ask God one question, what would it be?’ and in our next three afternoon services we will be addressing the 3 most asked questions with a short talk followed by discussion and Q&A: ‘What is the meaning of life?’; ‘Why is there so much suffering in the world?’ and ‘What happens after death?’

We’d love you to pray for us in this new venture and also for our sister church, Wheelock Heath Baptist Church, as they seek afresh to share the good news with the village of Winterley. And if you’re thinking of moving to South Cheshire, we’d love you to join us!

For more information:

- visit www.grace-sandbach.co.uk
- email pastor@grace-sandbach.co.uk

Paul Gibson





A FAREWELL MESSAGE

Justin writes to say goodbye at the end of his fifteen years with NWP

This year sees fifteen years of the North West Partnership. I remember it all starting. There was a planning meeting in Knutsford for a visit by Archbishop Peter Jensen from Sydney. There were the meetings in Knutsford itself. Over 600 came and were urged by Dr Jensen as he said 'whatever you do as a result of my visit, please don't do nothing'. Then there was a meeting following his visit where about 10 of us thought and prayed about what we could do to grow the gospel in the North West. And so it all started!

There is so much to be thankful for over these last fifteen years. First there is partnership. Churches, and their leaders, have got to know each other, have worked together and have supported each other in all kinds of gospel projects. Secondly there has been training. I have had the joy of seeing so many people become better equipped to teach God's word through the various training courses. So many ministry trainees are now better serving in their local churches. Others have gone into full-time pastoral ministries in our region. And others still are now overseas working for the gospel in places like France, Malawi, China and Singapore! Thirdly there has been church planting. About 30 new churches have started in the last 15 years. And some of those church plants are plants from plants. What a joy to see gospel growth in our region.

However, there is still so much to do! We still need more church plants! Our church planting has not matched the increase in the population of our region! Further we need many more people trained for ministry, both to serve our local churches and to plant more! There are still so many people in our region who have no knowledge of Jesus whatsoever. Then we need to work out how to reach the rural areas of our region. There are still many parts of the North West where people have to travel long distances to find a Bible teaching church. And we also need to do much more to reach the Muslim communities in some of our larger towns and cities. Over 15% of the population of Manchester and the borough of Pendle is Islamic. In Blackburn and Darwin, it is nearly 30%.

I rejoice at what the Lord has done through the NWP over the last 15 years. But I am acutely aware of how much there is still to do. I am now stepping down from my role after 15 years involvement. I am so grateful for the privilege of serving in some small way. As an adopted northerner, I will continue to pray for Jesus to be known better in the North West.

Justin Mote





NEW BURNLEY PRAYER GROUP

Details of a new group starting for supporters in the Burnley area

A small group from East Lancashire have started meeting on a monthly basis to pray for Burnley. It has been encouraging to meet to pray so far.

We meet to pray for Burnley as a town and the churches and Christians in the area. We also pray, that if it's God's will, He would provide a team to start a new church in the future. The prayer group is being led by David Lovell. David works full time as an Evangelist and Community Worker at Blackburn Baptist Church

Burnley is a significant town with about 75,000 people living there. It's surrounded by some beautiful countryside and has had some regeneration recently. It also has a growing student population and a growing Asian population. The University of Central Lancashire has expressed their desire to increase their presence in the town which would increase the student population further. There is certainly a need for more bible and gospel preaching churches in the area. Burnley could probably do with about 4-5 new churches to reach the town in our opinion.

The challenge of starting a new church in Burnley is not simply that it is a poorer

area where a lot of people would not normally choose to live but also that a lot of the churches round here are quite small and it's hard to see where a team might come from. Even if God's timing might be different to ours, it's good that more prayer for this town is taking place.

If you might be interested in attending the Burnley prayer group or even being part of a new work in Burnley then please do get in touch with David Lovell.

Please be praying for the Gospel to advance in East Lancashire and that God might provide a team for a new work to begin.

You can contact David via email:
david@blackburnbaptistchurch.co.uk

David Lovell



EXCITING NEW DEVELOPMENTS WITH THE UNION COURSE!

In 2011 the North West Partnership began facilitating a degree-level distance-learning theology course with the vision of making high quality, affordable, theological education available in the North West. In 2014 this developed into a partnership with Union School of Theology and we have had fifteen people graduate with a GDip in Theology, equipping them for church leadership, planting, youth work, overseas mission or further training. The Union courses facilitated by the NWP also provide the training for associate pastors in the Alliance for Transatlantic Theological Training (AT-3) based in the North West. The courses are delivered online, but students meet together once a week in a Learning Community to watch lectures and have discussion and tutorial groups. So far there has been one group meeting in Liverpool City Centre but we are delighted to see this enterprise grow, as below we announce a new Learning Community and a new development in the scope of the programme.

If you would like any information about the Union course in the North West, or to enquire about applying, please visit www.ust.ac.uk or contact joshprobert@live.co.uk.

Josh Probert



Youth, Children & Families Module

North West Youthworks have long had a passion for seeing those involved in youth, children and families' ministry as weekly volunteers or employed workers, to be better equipped to serve. This has occurred through our annual training days and our youthworker lunches. Many of us who are employed ministers in these situations have ended up staying after an apprenticeship position and yet desperately need further theological and practical training; the mistakes made in our youth groups end up being replicated in our churches a generation later! Yet, because we are already in post it makes leaving for residential training that much harder, both for the individual and the supporting church.

It is therefore very exciting for us to announce that Union will be running an optional module in Youth, Children and Families Ministry as part of their GDip qualification. This has been spearheaded by North West Youthworks. It will run as a four-day intensive residential in Bridgend, making it a great option for those currently in ministry in the North West and beyond. This also provides the opportunity for theory learnt to be tempered and sharpened by the experiences of everyday practice. Our prayer is that this module will equip students to better lead the ministries in their churches with a clearer vision that will benefit the whole church as well as having the gifts and skills necessary for the unique role that these ministries demand.

Please do be praying that this module would be useful; church leaders, do invest in the development of your youth, children and families ministers; youth, children and families workers do take seriously the privilege and responsibility you have. Please get in touch with me for further details at robin@thebarfields.net



Robin Barfield



New Learning Community

Oldham is officially the most deprived town in England and woefully under-served by gospel churches. The borough has 230,000 people yet there are only two Gospel Partnership churches in the region. You could count on one hand the other churches which could credibly be labelled as evangelical.

We are excited to be partnering with Union this September, offering their Graduate Diploma (GDip) in Theology for Greater Manchester. We are also accessible for West and South Yorkshire as well as South Lancashire. We were particularly drawn to Union's focus on closing the gap between academy and church, such that able theologians might be raised up to serve in local church contexts.

It is our hope that providing the GDip will serve the church across the region, helping to keep workers in their home churches as they train for gospel ministry. We also hope the hub may lead some to consider joining Oldham Bethel Church and training practically in an urban context mission alongside their academic studies. We currently have funding in place for two trainees to join us on either a one, two or four year programme depending on experience involving one or both of the NWP Ministry Training Course and

the Union School of Theology GDip (advertises available on the NWP 'ministry opportunities' page).

This model of training will serve our community because we won't have to send our very best workers away for three years whilst they train. Further, it helps cover much of the cost of theological training by allowing people to stay at home and study alongside existing work. We will also be able to serve other local churches in need of in-context training for their people. We can do this by receiving their workers on a one, two or four year placement and sending them back fully trained. Otherwise, we can help keep their workers within their home church whilst studying locally at our learning hub.

It is our hope that this partnership with Union will lead to more workers for Oldham Bethel Church, more gospel workers being raised up for the wider work of the church and more churches being planted both in our borough and across the North West region.

Stephen Kneale





NWYW CONFERENCE

Jo & Toby share their experiences of the North and South events



We hadn't been dreaming of a WHITE conference but, despite the snow, it was great to gather 'Up North' for our Spring (!) Training Day.

In the words of one satisfied customer:

"It was a good time with folk from around Cumbria thinking together about God's word transforming the lives of younger people."

55 attended from 14 different churches: particularly encouraging following last year's cancellation. Thank you Lord!

While it was great to sing and share together; the highlight was Gareth's excellent teaching on biblical application - "taking the truth and making it STICK in the lives of the individual". We were challenged to not only know and love God's word, but those we teach; planting truth right into the nooks and crannies of their lives; confronting the lies of the world right in their HQ.

For them to be with us at the destination of a session we get them 'on the train' right from the start with our use of language/ situations from their worlds.

The day ended with some practise - but hopefully the practise didn't end with the day. Let's pray for ongoing honing of skills and establishing good habits as we apply the bible for all its worth up north.

I have been part of Platt's Youth and Children's team for five years, and the NWP conference has become a highlight of the year for me. To come together with so many others with a united purpose of sharing Jesus Christ with the children and young people of our churches is a massive encouragement and I always come home re-energized with my head buzzing with new ideas.

This year's focus on applying God's Word well in our teaching was really helpful. To be reminded in the morning of the importance of understanding their world view, and to be walked through techniques to help build up that understanding, gave me a renewed commitment to working hard at application.

The afternoon sessions were especially challenging; we split into the age groups we worked with and talked about the issues they faced and the difficulties in teaching them. I've been excited that, since the conference, I've been able to put what I've learned into action and have seen changes in how I work with the young people, making more time to have meaningful conversations with them so I can get to know them better and apply well to them.

I would say to any Youth and Children's leader – go to this conference! It will cause you to praise the Lord for His goodness in allowing us to be part of this work and His kindness in giving us events like this.

Jo Boddam-Whetham



Toby Butt





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FOR MORE INFO: admin@soundholidays.org.uk



www.soundholidays.org.uk

Sound Holidays is part of the Northwest Partnership in partnership with CPAS Ventures



Time for our 14-18 year olds, meeting up with friends from the North West, having fun and hearing God's word.

**7:00pm-9:30pm - 29th June 2018
All Saints Preston**



(((Contact us

2 Blackburne Place, Liverpool, L8 7PE
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WEB www.northwestpartnership.com
EMAIL info@northwestpartnership.com
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If you would like to support the NWP and be kept up to date with the latest news and events, you can become a partner, as a church or an individual. For more information, please contact the office.

(((*partnering churches, nurturing growth*