Revd. Dr. Ian White - Ministry profile

In a nutshell

Personal gifts and skills

When I participate in programmes to identify my spiritual gifts, the charisma of teaching, leadership and prophecy usually emerge as dominant characteristics. In practice these manifest themselves in a desire to enunciate vision for the church and weld together well-equipped teams of people to translate vision into reality.

My desire to teach the scriptures faithfully is exercised through the preaching ministry of the church in which my passions are to be systematic, compelling and relevant.

Leading and managing the church teams of both paid and volunteer workers is an aspect of my work that brings daily satisfaction. Seeking to discern the leading of God in a work environment, while still maintaining focus on our goals is a constant challenge where clarity and vulnerability are both necessary.

Since childhood I have had a love of music which is currently used in playing piano and keyboards, worship leading, composing arranging and (formerly) directing and conducting several musicals.

Brief history

Before entering the ministry I had a career in research mathematics, lecturing at a university and and then conducting research with a multinational oil company. I retain some links with the mathematical world, usually by teaching students privately and reading mathematical and scientific literature.

Walton-on-Thames Baptist Church commissioned me, recognising God's call on my life for ministry. I studied at the (then) London Bible College and completed BU accreditation. Being called by Purley Baptist Church as their assistant minister gave me a flavour of leading a growing church. There followed a call the Chichester Baptist Church where we saw the church more than double in size and develop its first multi-staff team.

Having been called to Victoria Baptist Church it has been a privilege to see the church develop and the staff team grow. I am now responsible for the management and leadership of a staff team of six and a much larger volunteer team including the elected Core Leadership Team of the church.

Along with roles such as Chair of the former Sussex Baptist Association (now South East Baptist Association), membership of the ministerial recognition committee and vice chair of Spring Harvest my ministry is not restricted to the confines of the church. Conference speaking and writing are additional responsibilities I take, time permitting. While in the church I have overseen significant changes to the leadership structure and worship pattern and (I trust) facilitated a spiritual dynamic that will provide a good foundation for its future.

In more detail

Theological values

I regard myself as theologically Evangelical with an acceptance of charismatic forms of expression. Few things thrill me more than to preach the whole gospel and see people respond to the Holy Spirit's prompting in their lives. *I believe that preaching should be 'logic on fire'.*

A blend of careful reasoning from the scriptures and the dynamic of the Holy Spirit is one I try to maintain both in preaching and in worship as I am convinced that the Bible is powerless without the Spirit and spiritual expression is mere froth without the bedrock of the Word. *I believe that God's blessing flows when the Word and the Spirit are brought together.*

Developing holistic discipleship has been a feature of my ministry. I believe conversion is incomplete without a radical re-framing of a person's life so they follow the way of Christ through sanctification. A genuine Christian disciple will then discover and use their spiritual gifts to live a life of witness and service. In this way the gospel is seen in all its fulness. *I believe we are called both to be and to make disciples.*

Leading the leaders is a key necessity of any developing church. This requires me to be clear about priorities and establish the best possible relationships with the team. This (hopefully) draws the best out of staff and volunteers alike. Handling disciplinary issues is never a pleasant part of this role, but I seek to do it with grace and clarity. *I believe that Godly management should hold a balance of being friendly, being fair and being firm.*

I am committed to a Baptist expression of Christian faith, believing that adult baptism and congregational accountability are important to the healthy growth of a local church. *I believe that equipping God's people for acts of service is a Biblical way of growing a church.*

Conversion and Christian experience

I was converted under my father's ministry (himself a minister of Baptist Churches) in Woodford, North London. There followed a period of rapid growth but as a teenager I relegated my faith to an area of secondary importance. An experience of renewal, sparked off by other young people and godly youth leaders reawakened my faith and this undoubtedly helped me to face the stern intellectual rigours of university life.

During my university career I served as organising secretary, and president of two university Christian Unions and as the Student Union Hall Vice president.

Involvement in evangelical (mainly Baptistic) churches has been my desire throughout and this has led to periods of music ministry, youth work and other forms of leadership.

Mentors

There are certain people who have had a profound impact on my life and shaped my ministry. Among them would be:

- my father - without whose ministry I would never have found faith. His hallmark was consistency of lifestyle. To this day it would be difficult for me to identify examples of theology being taught in church that were not also practised at home.
- a youth leader (Alan Turner) who invested much time in me in my early years and whose sudden loss (he died of a heart attack) was a deep blow to me.

- David Watson - who managed to draw together such diverse streams of churchmanship in support of his passionate evangelism has always had a fascination for me. His ability to bring together the power of the Spirit and the authority of the Word has always inspired me to strive for the same impact.
- John Balchin - who was the Senior minister in my first church. We worked very closely together and I learned a great deal about church leadership from his example.
- Donald Guthrie - my father-in-law whose intellectual depth coupled with his advocacy of an evangelical approach to the scripture gave me a great confidence in the Bible as the word of God.
- There are others who have had an influence on me mainly though their preaching or writing and these would be Bill Hybels, Rick Warren, Gordon MacDonald and John Stott.

Education and work history

Age 4 - 11: Churchfields primary and Junior Schools, South Woodford

Age 11 - 15: West Hatch Technical High School, Chigwell, Essex

Age 15 - 18: Sutton Grammar School, Sutton Surrey (8 O-levels, 4 A-levels)

Age 18 - 21: University of Reading - Degree in Mathematics (2-1)

Age 21 - 22: University of Reading - Masters degree in the Numerical Solution of Differential Equations.

Age 22 - 25: University of Swansea - PhD in Finite Element analysis of multiphase flow in porous media. (i.e. How do water and oil mix together while they are both flowing through an oil field? My PhD resolved the problem of how to solve the equations which describe the process. This is vital to working out how much oil we can extract from a given oil field.)

Age 25 - 28: Senior Research Assistant (Lecturer grade 1A) at university of Swansea

Age 28 - 31: Worked for British Petroleum, Research Centre as a Research Mathematician responsible for developing mathematical methods of predicting oil production from oil fields, particularly enhanced oil recovery using secondary fluids such as surfactants. Concurrently Rosi and I were youth leaders and active in the music ministry of Walton-on-Thames Baptist Church.

Age 31 - 34: London Bible College - Degree in Theology (2-1), Pastoral Diploma, and Baptist Accreditation (July-August 1985 Worked with Montreal Associates as a Consultant Mathematician. July - August 1986: Worked with Elgood and Dye (London) Ltd. as Consultant Mathematician). During this time my major church assignment was to Rayners Lane Baptist Church and minor assignment at Gold Hill Baptist Church

Age 34 - 39: Assistant minister at Purley Baptist Church with responsibilities for pastoral care management, small group management, counselling, music, marriage preparation, and 25% of the preaching.

Age 39 - 47: Senior Minister of Chichester Baptist Church. Responsible for the establishment, leadership and management of a team ministry. Vision building and implementation in the sole Baptist church in the city. During this time we saw the church grow from a single pastor-teacher model of leadership to a multi-staffed ministry centre reaching a much wider cross section of the city. During this period I initiated a building programme which was completed by my successor (who was previously my associate).

Age 47 - 65: Senior Minister of Victoria Baptist Church Eastbourne. Responsible for

- the formation and communication of the church's vision and strategy
- the leadership and chairmanship of several leadership teams including the Victoria Baptist Church Trust.
- the adult teaching and worship programmes for weekend services and midweek Bible Studies
- management and leadership of the church staff team
- music ministry of the church
- oversight of the pastoral carers and involvement in the more testing pastoral situations
- I supervise Ministers In Training (MITs) for Spurgeon's College and mentor other ministers

During this period we saw a sea change in the culture of the church towards a more relevant and less formal approach to the ministry. Building a staff team of eight we changed the leadership structure of the church to reflect the vision and values of the fellowship.

Among the projects initiated were

- 'stepstone events' providing people with a half way house to coming to church, Alpha, Christianity explored and other programmes.
- a new youth work, which ultimately led to the employment of a full-time youth pastor.
- The 'Niche programme' – a scheme to help people discover and use their spiritual gifts.
- 'Reality' - a discipleship programme to integrate people into the church.
- A multiple service worship pattern – this enables people with diverse worship expectations each to engage in an appropriate worship experience at the weekend.
- Incorporation of Victoria Baptist Church Trust as a charity and a Company limited by guarantee along with the composition of its Governing Documents.

Age 65 – present: I continue to minister through

- Being a Field placement Tutor for Spurgeon's College, and other mentoring of ministers.
- Preaching at churches throughout the UK
- Acting as a funeral celebrant for local people.
- Moderating churches
- Recording teaching for churches' online services through the 'feed-yer-faith' label.

Ministry outside the church

Conference speaking - I am periodically asked to speak at church conferences and training events. This has taken me to various parts of the country and also to Poland, Belgium, Ukraine, Cayman Islands, Thailand, China and Kenya.

Radio Ministry - BBC Southern Counties "Thought for the day" - I am a regular contributor to "Best Seller" programmes on UCB and Premier Radio.

Membership of other bodies

- Chairman of Sussex Baptist Association 1998 - 2002

- Member of Baptist World Mission council 1993 - 1995
- Trustee and member of Council of Reference of Christ for the Nation College, Easebourne 1996 - 2000
- Member of Council of reference of 'Go' ministries 1998 - 2003
- Member of the Baptist Ministerial Recognition Committee (the group assessing candidates for the ministry in the South of England) 1997 - 2003
- 2003 – 2008 Chairman of International Christian Communications (ICC) (a recording and media distribution charity based in Eastbourne)
- 2008 – 2015, Vice Chairman of the Memralife Group who now operate the former ICC ministry and are the board of Spring Harvest. I am chairman of the Spring Harvest Grants Committee which oversees the distribution and monitoring of the offerings given at SH.
- 2005-2014 leader of the local Baptist Cluster
- 2008-2015 vice chair of Memralife (a.k.a. Spring Harvest).
- I'm on the advisory Board of Footprint Films (an independent film making company)

Publications

I published various academic papers while a research mathematician.

November 2015 "The Road Not Chosen – a tale of hope in the face of loss" was published. (ISBN: 978-0-9934534-0-3)

Out-of-work interests

Family - my wife, son and his family do take a significant proportion of my out-of-work time and emotional effort. In 2009 my wife and I lost our 22 year old daughter to diabetes.

Photography – I am an enthusiastic photographer and have completed a course in portrait photography. I also do talks, exhibitions and photo coaching.

Computing and programming - I still write code, now mainly in HTML and PHP, and design web sites.

Music - playing piano, keyboards, music composition arrangement, conducting and directing of musicals.

Walking and cycling.

Personal and family information

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My wife:	Mrs Rosalyn White, B.Sc. Econ, CQSW
Son	Christopher James White B.Sc.
Daughter	Esther Mary White (Esther died February 2009, aged 22)