

Baptist History

1612

The first Baptist church met in Spitalfields, London. Thomas Helwys, a founder of the Baptist denomination, published *A short declaration of the mystery of iniquity*, one of the first books to call for religious liberty. In the 17th century Baptists refused to conform and be members of the Church of England, arguing that Christ, and not the King (or Queen) was head of the church and were persecuted for their beliefs.

1689

Act of Toleration passed allowing freedom of worship.

1792

Baptist Missionary Society founded by William Carey. It is now known as BMS World Mission.

1812

A group meet in Dr Rippon's Vestry, London to discuss the forming of a Baptist Union.

1813

The first Baptist Assembly held in London.

1832

The formation of the Baptist Union was completed.

1837

The Revd George Cousens was the first reported West Indian minister to hold a pastorate in Britain, becoming pastor of Four Ways Baptist Church in Cradley Heath, Staffordshire.

1854

CH Spurgeon, one of the most famous Baptist preachers, began his ministry.

1855

The Freeman, now The Baptist Times, first appeared.

1891

General Baptists (who believed that when Christ died on the cross he died for everyone in general) and Particular Baptists (who believed that Christ died for the elect, ie a particular group of people) came together to form the present Baptist Union of Great Britain.

1905

The Baptist World Alliance (BWA) was formed and held its first Baptist World Congress in London.

1912

The Sustentation Fund started. It is currently known as Home Mission.

1922

Violet Hedger became the first woman to qualify as a probationer minister.

1955

The BWA celebrated its fiftieth anniversary Congress in London.

1989

The BUGB moves its offices to Didcot and commits to participation in national ecumenical life.

1998

A Denominational Consultation in 1996 led to the BUGB adopting Five Core Values.

2001

New regional association structure for BUGB inaugurated.

2005

The Baptist World Centenary Congress celebrated in Birmingham, England. BUGB General Secretary, the Revd David Coffey, became President of the Baptist World Alliance.

2013

The Revd Lynn Green was voted in as the first woman General Secretary.