

**Buckland Road
Baptist Church**

Director of Education

Ian Pethick

**CREATING SPACE FOR
THEOLOGICAL LEARNING**

From unused shelving
to a resource centre for
discipleship.

SOUTHERN COUNTIES BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

CMD Grant Impact Report

**Establishing a theological
library for congregational
learning and discipleship**

Prepared by Ian Pethick
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Buckland Road Baptist Church
May 2026

With thanks to SCBA for investing in
continuing ministerial development
and local church ministry.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A modest grant helped establish a lasting resource for discipleship.

I am grateful to the Southern Counties Baptist Association for awarding a £400 Continuing Ministerial Development grant towards my attendance at Explore Your Call and the Baptist Assembly. Both events shaped my vocational discernment, deepened my sense of Baptist identity, and encouraged me to think more intentionally about how theological formation can serve the local church.

The grant did more than support attendance at two events. It helped create space for a practical ministry legacy at Buckland Road Baptist Church.

Ian Pethick

During the final months of my internship, that reflection became tangible through the development of a theological library at Buckland Road Baptist Church. An underused storage area began to be transformed into a dedicated resource centre containing more than 500 catalogued books. The collection now supports biblical study, preaching, discipleship, pastoral practice, mission, church history, spirituality and theological reflection.

Particular attention has been given to making the library accessible: shelves have been prepared, books classified using a Dewey-based system, a catalogue created, and borrowing procedures established. The project also intentionally promotes the work of women theologians and biblical scholars alongside the wider Christian tradition.

One of the most encouraging aspects has been the involvement of a recently joined 23-year-old member of the congregation, who worked alongside me in cataloguing books and helping the library become a shared ministry rather than a personal project.

500+

books catalogued and classified

1

dedicated resource centre established

3

core systems: shelving, catalogue, borrowing

FORMATION

Explore Your Call and Baptist Assembly strengthened my sense of vocation.

Explore Your Call provided space to reflect on vocation, ministry and Baptist identity alongside others discerning future pathways of service. It helped me consider ministry not simply as a role or profession, but as a response to God's invitation and participation in God's mission.

The Baptist Assembly offered a wider perspective on the life of the Baptist movement in the United Kingdom. Through worship, teaching, seminars and informal conversation, I was able to gain a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing churches and ministers.



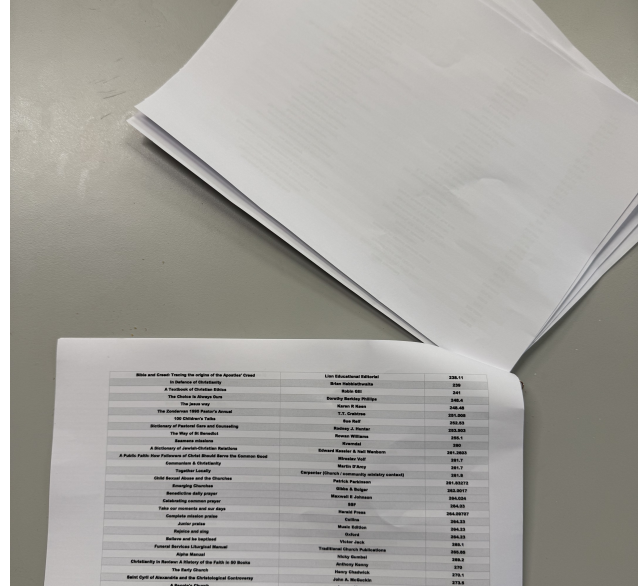
The learning returned me to the local church with fresh energy for formation, discipleship and shared ministry.



A period of vocational discernment became connected to a practical act of resourcing the church.

ESTABLISHING THE LIBRARY

From unused shelves to a working theological resource centre.



The church already held a substantial theological collection, but much of it was dispersed, uncatalogued or difficult for ordinary church members to access. The first task was therefore practical: create a place, create a system, and make the books findable.

The project involved preparing shelving, gathering books, sorting the collection, assigning classifications, creating a catalogue and establishing a simple borrowing process. It has required patience and detail, but the result is a resource that can continue to grow after the internship ends.

01

Space

An underused area was prepared to house a dedicated theological collection.

02

System

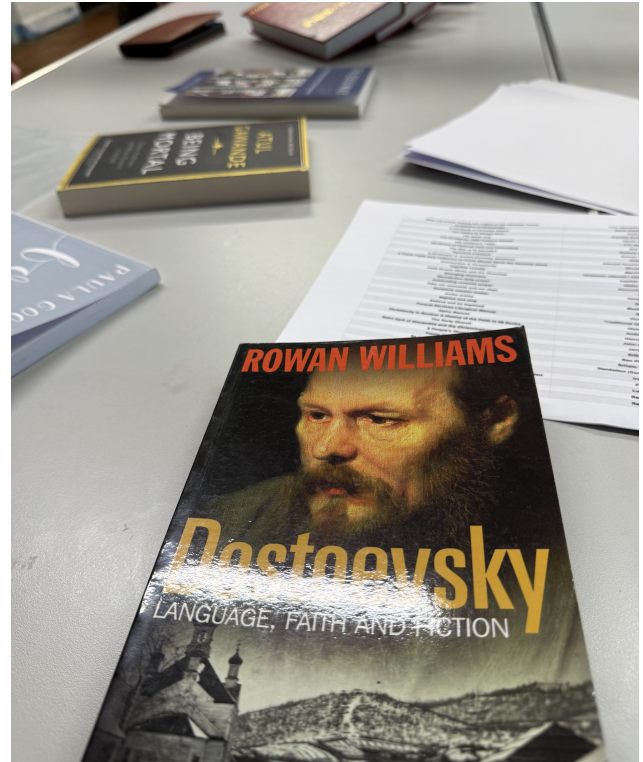
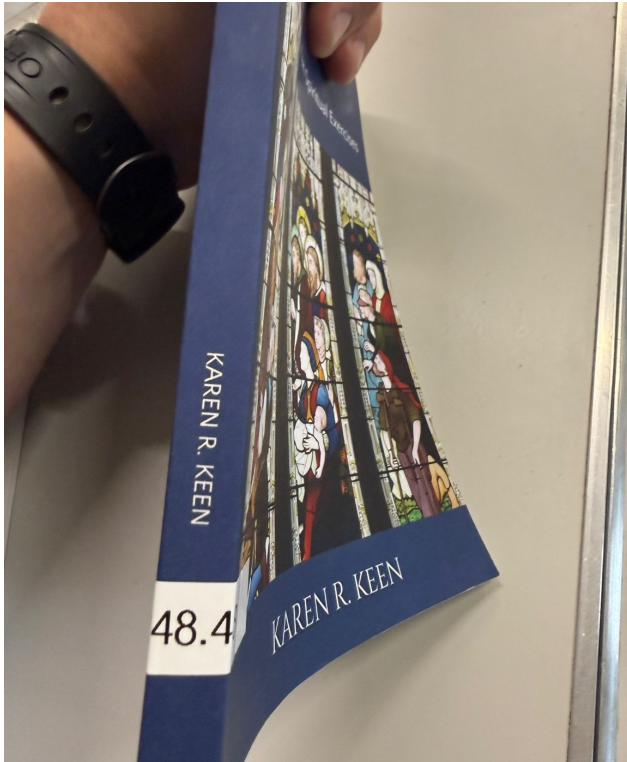
Books were catalogued, classified and made searchable for church members.

03

Access

A sign-out process was created so the collection can be borrowed and used.

The library is designed to broaden, not narrow, theological imagination.

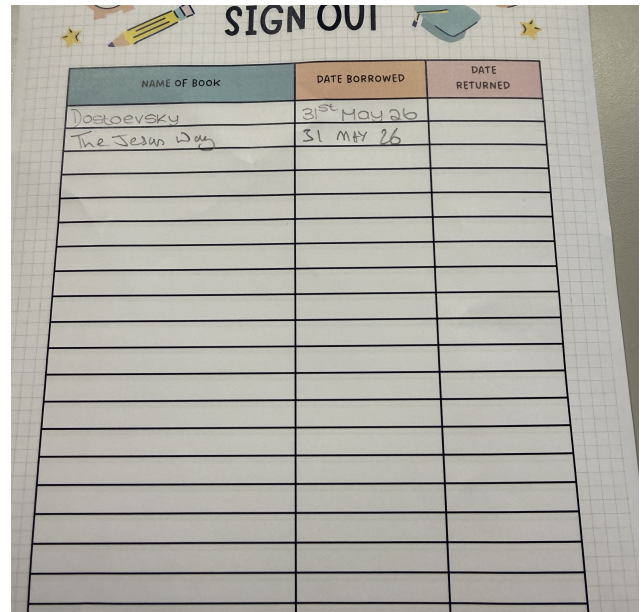
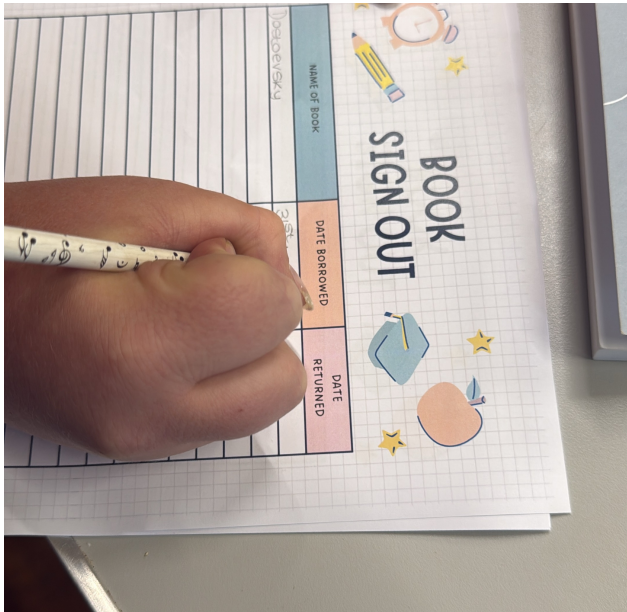


A local church library can quietly shape what people imagine theology to be. For that reason, the collection has been organised not merely as an archive of inherited books, but as an invitation to deeper and broader Christian learning.

Alongside established voices in biblical studies, theology, spirituality and pastoral ministry, I have intentionally highlighted the work of women theologians, biblical scholars and Christian writers. This helps the library reflect more of the breadth of the Christian tradition and makes visible voices that are sometimes underrepresented in local church

The aim is not simply to store theological books, but to help church members find their way into serious, generous and accessible Christian learning.

The project became stronger when it became shared.



One of the most encouraging developments has been seeing the project move beyond me. During the final weeks of my internship, a recently joined 23-year-old member of Buckland Road Baptist Church became actively involved in cataloguing, organising and helping establish the borrowing process.

That mattered. It showed that the library was not simply a conclusion to my internship, but a resource around which others could gather, contribute and take ownership. The sign-out system also means that books are beginning to move from storage into use.

Early signs of impact

A borrowing sheet is in place, the catalogue is expanding, and the project is creating opportunities for intergenerational participation, theological conversation and practical service.

A local outcome shaped by wider Baptist encouragement.

SCBA exists to encourage, connect and resource Baptist churches and leaders. This project reflects that pattern at a local level. The grant supported my continuing ministerial development, and that development is now being translated into a resource that can encourage learning, connect people around theological reflection, and resource the church for mission.

Inspire

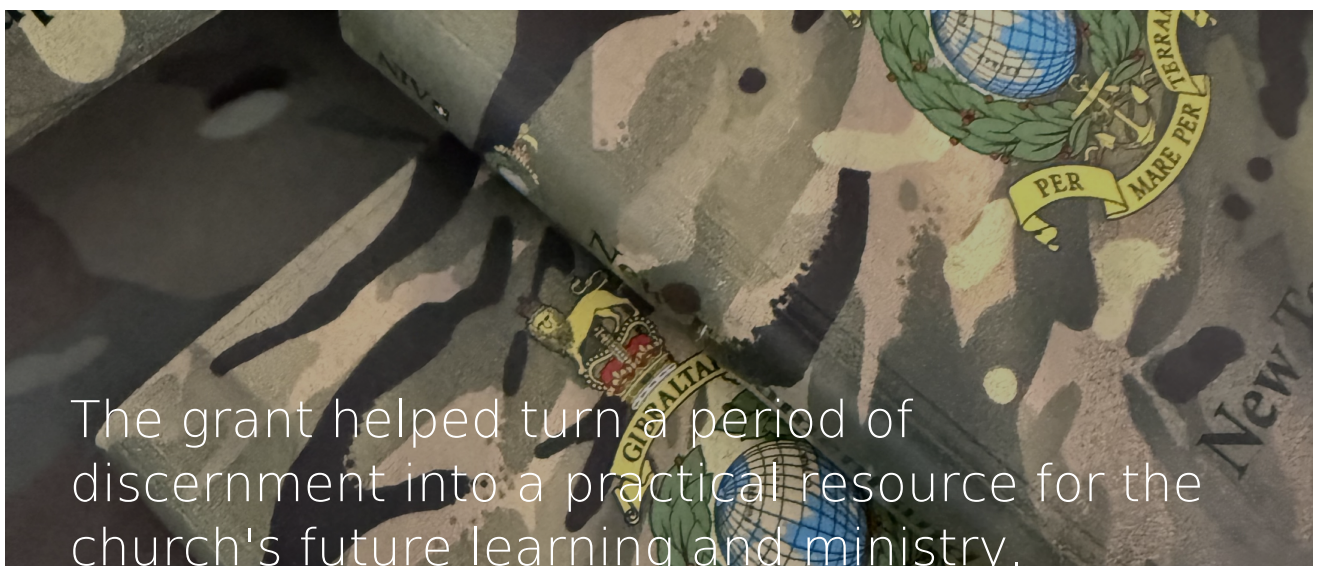
The events renewed my sense that ministry is about faithful participation in God's mission, not simply performing a role.

Connect

The grant connected personal formation, Baptist identity and local church practice, while the library is now inviting others into shared ownership.

Resource

The church now has a developing theological library, with 500+ books catalogued and practical systems for borrowing and access.



Thank you

I am deeply grateful to SCBA for supporting my continuing ministerial development.



The grant enabled me to participate in Explore Your Call and the Baptist Assembly, both of which have shaped my ongoing discernment, theological formation and understanding of Baptist ministry. It has also contributed to a concrete legacy at Buckland Road Baptist Church: a theological library that I hope will serve the congregation for many years to come.

With thanks,

Ian Pethick

Director of Education and Ministry Intern Buckland Road Baptist Church May 2026