



11 March 2015

News:

Report: Nearly 100,000 children affected by benefits sanctions in 2013/14

A new report from a coalition of major UK Churches has revealed that around 100,000 children were affected by benefit sanctions in 2013/14. It also shows that in the same period a total of nearly 7 million weeks of sanctions were handed out to benefit claimants. The new data, obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, was featured in a recent episode of Channel 4's Dispatches, entitled [Britain's Benefits Crackdown](#).

The report, entitled Time to Rethink Benefit Sanctions, is published today by the Baptist Union of Great Britain, Church Action on Poverty, the Church in Wales, the Church of Scotland, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church. It contains new data on the severity and length of sanctions under Welfare Reform, and on how sanctions affect vulnerable groups such as children and those with mental health problems.

The churches are urging the Government to suspend all sanctions against families with children and those suffering from mental health problems. Most importantly, they say, there needs to be a change of culture, from one of enforcement and punishment to one of assistance and support.

Benefit payments can be cut or stopped for between four weeks and three years if a person is deemed to have broken the benefit rules.

"Those who already have the most difficult lives are those most likely to be sanctioned," said Paul Morrison, Public Issues Policy Adviser for the Methodist Church and one of the authors of the report. "Sanctions impact disproportionately on young people, care leavers, homeless people, single parents, the mentally ill and those with long term illness. This system causes problems for the very people that most need help.

"But sanctions don't just have a financial impact. The people we've spoken to have told us of the shame, demoralisation and loss of self-worth caused by this system. As Christians we believe that everyone is loved, valued and made in the image of God, and we have a responsibility to challenge any structure or system that undermines that dignity."

The Churches are also calling for a full and independent review of the regime and for urgent reform of the hardship payments system to avoid the deliberate imposition of hunger.

The report features the stories of people like James* who have had their benefits sanctioned:

"During the first three weeks of my sanction I continued to look for work as I was required to. By the

fourth week however I was exhausted, unwell and no longer had it in me. I was not eating as I had no food and was losing a lot of weight. I told the Jobcentre I was unwell through not eating but was sanctioned for another three months for not looking for work properly.”

“If you commit a crime, no criminal court in the UK is allowed to make you go hungry as a punishment,” said Niall Cooper, Director of Church Action on Poverty. “But if you’re late for an appointment at the Jobcentre, they can remove all your income and leave you unable to feed you or your family for weeks at a time.”

Phil Jump, Regional Minister Team Leader for the North Western Baptist Association, confirms that benefit sanctions have become a source of increasing concern for many churches, especially those that are involved in foodbanks and other community provision. “It is hard not to sense that reducing the cost of welfare benefit has become more important to officials than making sure that it properly provides for those for whom it was designed,” he says. “Perhaps inadvertently, perhaps by deliberate intent, the present sanctions system is causing undeserved and disproportionate harm to some of the most vulnerable and powerless people in our society. I believe that there is an urgent need to re-consider the severity, frequency and scale of benefit sanctions.”

[The full report is available here](#)

#RethinkSanctions

*Not his real name.

Churches aim to bring truth and justice to politics with latest resources

Four of the UK’s major churches have produced a set of election resources designed to better equip Christians to view and interpret the policies and promises put forward by political parties in the run up to May’s General Election.

The “Love your neighbour: think, pray, vote” resource pack, produced by the Joint Public Issues Team of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church, the United Reformed Church and the Church of Scotland, includes short films, with accompanying Bible studies, prayers and postcards, all focusing on four key themes of truth, justice, peace and wellbeing. The pack costs just £7.50 (plus postage and packing) and is available to buy [here](#).

Commending the resources, the Revd Stephen Keyworth, Faith and Society Team Leader of the Baptist Union, said: “The aim of this pack is not to put forward any particular political view, but to offer the four lenses of truth, justice, peace and wellbeing which Christians can use to view and interpret the messages and promises we receive from candidates and canvassers. While not exclusively Christian terms, we believe these get to the heart of God’s purpose for human society. Our hope and vision is that every member of our churches will enter the polling booth on Election Day, conscious that above everything else, they are called to be followers of Jesus.”

Other election resources, including JPIT’s Faith in Politics briefing – on a range of issues from housing to the economy, and from religious freedom to democracy – and the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland guide to holding hustings, are available from the JPIT website.

Rwandan to receive international human rights award

Corneille Gato Munyamasoko, general secretary of the Association of Baptist Churches in Rwanda, is the recipient of the 2015 Baptist World Alliance Congress Quinquennial Human Rights Award after dedicating his life to peace and reconciliation and fighting the stigma associated with HIV and AIDS

The award, presented every five years, will be made in July in Durban, South Africa, where the 21st Baptist World Congress will be held.

Munyamasoko, who has dedicated his life to peace and reconciliation and fighting the stigma associated with HIV and AIDS, was born in exile in what was then Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), to refugee parents who fled Rwanda in 1959 when outbreaks of ethnic violence shook regions of the country.

While working as a teacher in the DRC, Munyamasoko joined other youth leaders to bring various factions together, helping to overcome national rivalries and ethnic differences between Rwandans and Congolese, restoring harmony and reducing interpersonal conflicts.

The 1994 genocide in Rwanda was a turning point for Munyamasoko and his family. The arrival of genocidaires from Rwanda, those who committed genocide in that country, led to killings of Tutsi people in the DRC.

Munyamasoko and his family returned to Rwanda to participate in the reconstruction of the country. Munyamasoko had connections with the Association of Baptist Churches of Rwanda (AEBR) and was appointed as a high school principal in a region that bordered the DRC.

Armed genocidaires made regular incursions across the border from DRC into Rwanda. On one occasion the entire student body of a nearby boarding school was killed. Munyamasoko and his wife, Anne-Marie, opened their home to accept genocide orphans as their own children.

Pastors of the AEBR recognized Munyamasoko's leadership gifts and elected him deputy general secretary of the denomination. His responsibilities included pastoral duties in a congregation, regional church leadership and oversight of 51 schools.

Munyamasoko was convinced the future of Rwanda depended on building a culture of peace among young people. The majority of adolescents had witnessed acts of violence during the genocide. Some students were Tutsi survivors. Munyamasoko launched peace and reconciliation clubs in each of the secondary schools under his jurisdiction and appointed school chaplains.

He was appointed director of development ministries of the AEBR and participated in integral mission, training that combined the disciplines of community development and biblical theology. While working in this position, he developed regional initiatives that assisted Hutu and Tutsi participants to understand the causes of the genocide, to seek and to extend forgiveness, and to build relationships based on the principles of justice, mercy and faith.

With the assistance of a colleague, Laurena Zondo of Canada, Munyamasoko launched a peace camp movement in 2010. The peace camps bring young women and men together from various provinces in Rwanda. Over a period of one week, participants form an intentional community of equality, respect, creativity and dialogue. At each camp, Munyamasoko leads the group to consider the painful

background of Rwanda's ethnic divisions. Peace camp participants engage in music, drama, art and poetry that help to bring healing and reconciliation. These camps have received government recognition for their impact.

Munyamasoko's commitment to peace has not been limited to Rwanda. He works on both sides of the DRC-Rwanda border. During times of tension between the two countries, Munyamasoko met with church leaders and congregations in the DRC. He visited and worked with Kenyan church leaders after the 2007 election violence that shook that country. Munyamasoko later returned to Kenya to assist churches to prepare to act as agents of peace and to offer places of safety in preparation for the 2013 national elections.

In his fight against stigmatisation of those who suffer from HIV and AIDs, Munyamasoko said, "As a human being but also as a pastor, I have always been touched by the stigmatisation of HIV/AIDS infected and affected people in our churches, and since then I initiated an anti-stigmatization campaign among pastors in AEBR."

Pastors were trained to become role models for those who are caregivers, a campaign which he claimed to have had great success. Stigmatisation, he asserted, "is no longer an issue in our congregations."

In 2013, Munyamasoko was elected general secretary of the AEBR, a position in which he now serves.

Nick Bradshaw makes his face funny for money

This morning, the Revd Nick Bradshaw, team leader for the South Wales Baptist Association did something funny for money. Witnessed by the other association team leaders and staff at Baptist house, he had half of his beard shaved off by Revd Andy Hughes, the seconded team leader of the ministries team. Whilst no blood was shed, the audience who heckled were encouraged to donate to the red nose appeal.

Red Nose Day is happening this Friday, 13 March. For ideas of how to make your face funny for money [visit the Red Nose Day website](#). If you think you can do better than Nick, tweet your pics to @baptistuniongb

Opinions:

Curious distractions

As someone who is easily distracted from what she's supposed to be doing, Heather Skull looks at the positive side to going off the beaten track...

Just lately I've been adjusting to a change in my life – a new job that I never expected to have. It is inevitably taking time to make that adjustment. Although the commute is much shorter than the one I used to make to London, it still means that I'm out of the house for 12 hours.

That's definitely not a complaint, by the way. A commute that meanders its way through west Wiltshire, the Wylde Valley, Salisbury and beyond it Hampshire with its winding streams and rivers to eventually arrive in Southampton, is never going to be dull.

The commute might be the same route every day, but the landscape is always changing. I remain excited about a journey that could mean spotting hares racing across fields or deer calmly grazing in the early morning light.

The pheasant showing up as a garish slash of colour against the white frost-tipped grass and the heron patiently waiting for a fish to approach slightly too close to its lightening-quick beak. The rooks nests hanging like puffballs in the trees and a row of bee hives standing in perfect perpendicular order on the edge of the wood.

You see? No such thing as a dull commute. I can see why Jerome K Jerome got carried away with his descriptive passages in *Three Men in a Boat* and kept having to bring himself up short and bring himself back to the point.

Distractions aren't always bad. Although, I did once famously almost miss my station as I was watching the film *Pirates in an Adventure with Scientists*, but that's a whole other story.

No. Distractions aren't bad when they pull us away from things that take up too much of our time. Distractions aren't bad as reminders that some things are more important than what we are currently doing. Distractions aren't bad when they cause us to raise our heads and look around us.

I made the mistake of buying one of those fitness bands. It now – often mercilessly – tells me whether I've met my targets of steps and aerobic steps (yes, there is a difference). There's no room for complacency. If I meet my targets it sneakily raises them. If I fail to meet the targets it informs me in a message that seems both sorrowful and shaming in its tone.

What this has done of course is made me walk a lot more. I walk to the station, but now I also walk around Southampton where I work before I go into the office. Sometimes I take a proper planned walking route to a specific shop or place. Other times I just find myself taking another path 'just to see where it goes.'

Yesterday I found a monument to the last remaining survivor of the Titanic, Milvana Dean. A few days before that I found an unexpected tribute to the war dead with a statue of Lord Mountbatten in a square in another part of the city. And there's a clump of daffodils hidden away from the roadside and only accessible by walking to it.

I wouldn't have found them if I'd not got bored of the same old route and been distracted by pathways leading off into unknown and potentially exciting destinations.

Occasionally I do run into a dead end and have to turn back and start again. But nothing's lost or wasted. I've racked up a few more steps to shut my exacting fitness trainer up. And I'm meeting and greeting people on these walks. The young and beautiful Somali mother whose face lit up with a massive smile when she greets me. The Polish leaflet deliverer whose mastery of banter livened up my morning two days ago.

And I'm learning a lot about the geography of the city where I now spend a sizeable chunk of my week. Geography I wouldn't have learned by walking straight from the station to the place where I work.

Following the distractions caused by curiosity can be a risk and sometimes a dangerous one at that. But imagine if no-one in human history had ever taken a risk. If there were no explorers because everyone kept to the same old well-used and well-known pathways. Or no inventors because no-one had ever wondered if there was a better way to do that thing that had been done in the same way for the same time. Or no breakthroughs in medicine because no-one wondered what would happen if you used that method to treat that sickness.

Faith and vision often combine to form glorious risk taking. The disciple Peter took a massive step into the unknown when he stepped out of the boat onto the stormy sea: 'I wonder if I can walk on water.' He could have stayed in the boat and been safe. But instead his curiosity, his wonder, his vision and his faith led him to step out of the boat into the unknown where risk met faith and promise and resulted in a miracle.

I don't expect miracles from my walks of distraction. But I have learned that taking risks is more likely to end in joy than sadness. That nothing I do is wasted. And even apparently dead ends will lead somewhere I've not been before.

Sorry. Must go. The train's arrived at Southampton. I have a walk to do and a few more distractions to follow...

Heather Skull is a former BBC Radio Wiltshire journalist and a member of Trowbridge Baptist Church. She blogs at tractorgirl66.wordpress.com, where this article first appeared

Substituting guilt and forgiveness for shame

As a society we have become adept at holding people to account when something goes wrong. But are we looking down the wrong end of the telescope in our process of governance? By Dr Clive Morton OBE

[The Public Accounts Committee Chair, Margaret Hodge MP holds HSBC Executives to account](#) (BBC, 9 March)

The preacher in his sermon on Sunday took the story of Jesus driving out the traders and money changers from the Temple (John 2:12-25) and related it to today's experience of scandals (such as MPs expenses, greed in the City, tax evasion, loan sharks preying on those on low incomes, benefits).

The theme set me thinking. The book I'm reading at present is *The Spirit Level* by Professors Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett which argues that much of the ills that beset developed nations are a product of increasing inequality in society which appears to increase the richer the society becomes.

The US, the overall richest nation in the world, has the greatest inequality (or differential) between rich and poor, and seemingly as a product, high teenage pregnancy rates, suicide rates, incidence of obesity, mental health issues, and lowest trust, feeling of community and poor social relations.

Before we run away with the idea that this is an American phenomenon, the statistics that Profs Wilkinson and Pickett use demonstrate the same patterns, to varying degrees, across the developed world. Their analysis argues that inequity is increasing and in its wake social disintegration follows. What happened to the oft quoted politician's mantra of the "trickle down effect" to justify very high pay being good for the overall growth and well being of society?

Jesus became angry at the defiling of the Temple and the exploitation exercised by the traders and money changers. Jesus was on the side of the poor and oppressed. Have we gone soft on the standards of the Gospel? Have we adopted the politicians' pragmatism that a blind eye can be turned to "greed is good", that tax evasion is good financial planning? Or put faith that our laws, regulation, transparency will eventually 'out' the malefactors?

I want to suggest that we look down the wrong end of the telescope in our process of governance. We are forever reliant in our society on learned reports and investigations after the 'horse has bolted'.

As the former chief rabbi, Lord Sacks argues, we have substituted 'shame' for 'guilt and forgiveness' - honour is satisfied if one or two individuals are 'hung out to dry' and shamed after due process, rather than starting at the beginning with agreed moral values and ethics that form the bedrock of society, giving mutual trust and support whatever people's origins, class, status, ethnicity. This implies honouring our fellow citizens with dignity, setting standards which we keep to, involving Jesus's teaching on acceptance, forgiveness and a "[theology of brokenness](#)" that [Ronald Rolheiser](#) articulates.

I would also argue that the current mores that create and idolise the super-rich is not just bad for society as whole and the poor in particular, but actually bad for the super-rich themselves.

I have worked with wealthy entrepreneurs that operate internationally and an odd phenomenon emerges amongst them - they become stateless and community-less! I can see a full circle arcing between those at the bottom end of society - those who are homeless, stateless, and without community, right to the super-rich who have 'homes' they don't live in in many locations around the world in gated communities isolated from the society in which they reside, with few acquaintances other than their virtual networks and immediate 'hired helps' and spend effort fending off family relations who might "be on the make". Exceptions exist, of course, of wealthy philanthropists, aka Carnegie "a man who dies wealthy, dies disgraced". Hence we should be on the side of a more equal society for all our sakes.

Jesus's teaching offers joy where sorrow predominates. Whether we focus on "what does it profit a man (who has filled his barns with worldly goods) when his soul is required of him" for the rich to recognise priorities; or the promise of "living water" to all who believe that can give joy, comfort and fulfilment; we have the opportunity, just as Jesus modelled in his behaviour, of building forgiving communities in love and tackling injustice at the same time. At source, rather than an addiction to retrospective 'holding to accounts' with a focus on public shaming.

Dr Clive Morton OBE is a former civil engineer and Human Resources director, and is currently an Associate Professor at Middlesex University Business School. A member at Park Road Baptist Church, Peterborough, he also runs retreats in Italy with his wife, Florence. www.umbrianretreats.com

Hunting the light

Shut-up evangelism: seeking out what God is already doing in someone's life, rather than dispensing booklets and tracts. By Chris Duffett

At our supper club/ prayer evening two friends gave me a hat. They thought I would like it as it said stuff about light on it. Being the founder of '[The Light Project](#)' light references often come my way...

as do the occasional light-bulb sales calls and emails from various factories and electrical fitters.

Well, I do quite like the hat as it's rather cool and ups my street-cred ten-fold compared to the 'old man' flat cap I don on forays to the allotment.

However, it's more than the trendiness I like. Its phrase "hunting the light" has got me thinking again about pioneering in post-Christendom.

(Post-Christendom is "the culture that emerges as the Christian faith loses coherence within a society that has been definitively shaped by the Christian story and as the institutions that have been developed to express Christian convictions decline in influence." Alan and Eleanor Kreider in *Worship and Mission after Christendom*.)

In my own role as pioneer over the past 20 years I have observed a striking change in how I do what I do: an emergence from educating and bringing knowledge of the gospel to seeking out that which God is already doing in someone's life.

While teaching what Jesus teaches us is integral to the great commission, the teaching aspect has changed from the premise that 'people know nothing' to one of 'helper'; making sense of the experiences people have of Him, ministering some clarity to strange thoughts, encounters and feelings.

Now, don't get me wrong, I wholeheartedly believe that faith comes through hearing (Romans 10.17). Yet this hearing seems to take on many guises, and it strikes me that more and more people are encountering the presence of God before knowing what that actually means or where 'it' comes from.

In the book *Vanishing Grace*, Philip Yancy comments on the transition in approach Nouwen encountered when it came to evangelism: "Nouwen changed his approach from 'selling pearls', or peddling the good news, to 'hunting for the treasure' already present in those he was called to love – a shift from dispensing religion to dispensing grace. It makes all the difference in the world whether I view my neighbour as a potential convert or as someone whom God already loves."

This 'hunting for the treasure' seems to me a vital role in pioneering. As city centre chaplain this often takes the form of listening to people's stories, then speaking words of truth about Jesus into people's hearts.

The most dramatic example of this 'shut up' approach to evangelism happened last year when I and one of my team were approached by a lady in the streets who wanted to ask what Church we represented. We politely answered her questions and then asked her one: 'Do you want to talk and have a cup of tea?'

Over a brew we listened to the messiest heartache and pain-filled story you could imagine. After which, the lady confided in us that she had everything she needed to end her life that evening and had made plans to do so. We held her hand and with tears explained that it didn't need to be that way, and that we believed in a God of miracles who could change stuff in her life.

Her response shocked me. She explained she really knew what we were talking about, as she felt God

must have brought her to us. She explained that she wasn't even meant to be in town that afternoon, and on seeing us she felt compelled to approach. 'I've never stopped to talk to a stranger ever before in my life' she explained.

This lady has now been baptised and is part of a city centre Baptist church. Gloriously saved through two pioneers willing to shut up and seek the treasure of what God was doing in her life. I wonder what would have happened if this lady had approached us and in answering her question about church we didn't let her get a word in edgeways, but rather sent her off with a pile of booklets and tracts?

Even in such a messed-up life there was light. In this lady I regularly now see an exuberant disciple shining out with good news, and so the hunting of light lives on as some people in her family have encountered what she has and seen that God has been working in them too.

When Jesus declared in Matthew 5.14 that 'You are the light of the world', who was he addressing? Verse one of the same chapter reveals it was to the crowds. Being light in this world isn't a 'sorted disciples-only' club. Every human being is called to be light in this world. Hunt for that light in each one and if you find you've got a bit of a natural knack at it than please do consider joining us at the Pioneer Collective.

We are a movement of new pioneers hunting the light of Christ in everyone we meet. We're looking for 400 pioneers to join our collective over the next four years. Our vision is to go where Church isn't, do what Jesus does and see what happens. For more information check out our web site: www.pioneercollective.org.uk

One last thought... who was it that made sense of the treasure and light that you had as God worked in your life? Take a moment to think of your journey to faith and those who aided you: how about letting that person or people know how they helped you become a follower of Jesus?

Baptist minister and evangelist Chris Duffett is a former President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain. He is an advisor to the [Pioneer Collective](#), which has a vision of releasing 400 Baptist pioneers over the next four years

International Women's Day 2015: 6 women helping women

Sometimes, before we can believe in ourselves, we need someone who believes in us. Someone who sees our true potential and who cares enough to patiently stand by us and help us along the road to reach it, encouraging us over the potholes of disappointment and doubt we may face on the way. Someone who gives us hope.

For many of our mission workers, encouraging others and helping them to reach their potential is a daily calling. To mark International Women's Day on 8 March, here are six BMS women who are using their ministries and relationships to empower the women they meet.

1. Getting women into business

Having the ability to support your family boosts your confidence. [Jutta Cowie](#) has been helping many Haitian women start micro-enterprises that can earn them some real money and teach them a trade. She is encouraging them to help themselves by using their own gifts and abilities. Creative women are

making bracelets, macramé sandals, baskets and crochet hats to sell, and are learning budgeting and marketing skills along the way.

2. Standing against abuse

[Cynthia Chadwell](#) is supporting Nepali women through a weekly fellowship group in Kathmandu. One of the women who attends was being pressured by her family to have an abortion – find out what happened in this [short video](#).

3. Renewing self-confidence

Syrian refugees who cannot get into the education system and Lebanese children who are struggling at school are being helped by the Learning Support Project, an after-school club that [Louise Brown](#) is running at her church in Beirut. The project has transformed the life of one Syrian girl. She had forgotten everything she had learnt at school, which had dented her self-esteem considerably. But by the end of the year at the Learning Support Project, she was able to write Arabic poetry. “You can imagine the transformation that makes in a girl’s self-esteem,” Louise says.

4. Helping the desperate

Many of the people [Charmaine Trendell](#) meets on the Thai-Burma border are desperately poor. She is giving them hope through her work with BMS partner Compasio. Find out how an ill baby girl left by her mother at Compasio’s infant home has been ‘loved to life’ by Charmaine and her colleagues by watching this [video](#).

5. Healing the sick

Church planter [Claire-Lise Judkins](#) is building relationships in France which are leading to people becoming Christians and receiving healing from illness. Lucy was on the Alpha course that Claire-Lise and her husband David ran in Calvisson in 2014. Lucy had given her life to God, but was still unsure of her faith. When she complained about chronic kidney pains, Claire-Lise visited her and prayed for healing. Claire-Lise’s prayers had an immediate effect. The pain disappeared – Lucy felt heat and something moving in her back. “God was giving her a sign to encourage her faith and my faith!” says Claire-Lise.

6. Training church leaders

[Laura-Lee Lovering](#) is part of the team at Nauta Integral Mission Training Centre in Peru, providing training to pastors and church leaders who live along the Amazon. In this [short video](#), Laura shares the difference the training has made to Gisela, who studied alongside her husband Esau.

The work of these six women and all of our BMS workers is helping to encourage and advance women and men around the world. [Make a donation to BMS](#) to ensure this vital, life-transforming work continues.

This article first appeared on the website of [BMS World Mission](#) and is used with permission

Baptisms

Stockport Baptist Church: Clarise Itoriaga, Sarah Mennon and Lola Ayodele

West Wickham and Shirley Baptist Church, Croydon: Andrea Shuff and Paul DaCosta

Tabernacle Baptist Church, Wolverhampton: Henryk Kulyna, Elaine Kulyna and Brenda James

Bromham Baptist church, Beds: Jack Bunker and Jacob Ram

Deaths

The Revd Malcolm Purdy: 1930-2015

A passionate activist, encouraging local churches to work together and supporting Ethiopian asylum seekers, helping to initiate a now-thriving Ethiopian church in Manchester

The Revd Malcolm Victor Purdy died on 2 January 2015 at the age of 84. Malcolm had been ill for several months but had continued to serve in the Wythenshawe Hospital chaplaincy team whenever he was able.

Malcolm attended Adnitt Road Baptist Church, Northampton as a teenager and was eventually baptised there. During National Service he attained the rank of Captain and continued to serve for a time in the regular army. During this time he began lay-preaching, encouraged by a sergeant who knew him. Malcolm's father owned a prosperous business and had always hoped that his son would take it over in due course, however Malcolm had a vision of God calling him to ministry and that was the course he chose.

Malcolm attended Regent's Park College, Oxford, graduating in 1957, the year he got married to Elsie and they moved to Newall Green, Wythenshawe where he was to stay for nearly 60 years. During his ministry of 40 years at Newall Green Malcolm was significantly involved in youth work, starting both a Scout Troop and an open youth club. He was very committed to the ecumenical movement and was a key person in the creation of a Newall Green and Baguely Council of Churches, later to become Churches Together. Malcolm worked hard to bring the Churches together and they formed a covenant community which led for a while to the establishment of an LEP of Newall Green Baptist Church and St Francis of Assisi C of E Parish Church. Malcolm was a keen supporter of the Iona Community and organised various ecumenical groups to visit and stay with the Community. He was also a lively member of the Free Church Federal Council and served as its Chair in Manchester.

Following Malcolm's 'retirement' in 1997 he took pastoral charge of the United Reformed Church in Baguley where he served diligently for some years. Malcolm continued to serve as a hospital chaplain and was deeply respected by the team of ministers who worked with him.

Malcolm was always very concerned about the plight of asylum seekers to the UK and became deeply involved with the Ethiopian community in Manchester, assisting many individuals in their struggle to be recognised as genuine asylum seekers. This was a task that was not only close to his heart but suited his temperament as a doughty fighter. That there is today a thriving Ethiopian Church in Manchester is due to a large degree to Malcolm's support of this venture from its earliest days.

During the later years of his retirement Malcolm continued to invite local priests and ministers into his home for regular meals and times of worship. In this way he continued to support those in full-time ministry and provided a place where stresses and strains could be unloaded and shared with

someone who had 'seen it all'.

Following several stays in hospital and long bouts of illness Malcolm died peacefully at home. His funeral took place on 16 January and was attended by a very large crowd of friends and relatives who literally crammed the chapel. Following the committal there was a service of thanksgiving at Newall Green Church at which tributes were paid by former colleagues and by a representative of the Ethiopian Church in Manchester. Our own Phil Jump, the Regional Minister for the North Western Baptist Association was one of those who paid warm tributes to Malcolm.

The Revd Chris Shelley, Chorlton Central LEP, Manchester

Events:

CBA Science for Ministers workshop

10am-3.30pm, Tuesday 12 May

Loughton Baptist Church, Milton Keynes

How many Baptist Ministers do you know who are interested in things scientific? More than you might think! In a survey of ministers in the Hertfordshire Forum, a third had a degree in science and 95% thought that keeping up with science was important. And yet, only 10% felt they engaged with issues of science and faith during training for ministry.

Drawing upon experience from within the ministers of the CBA, together with others from the world of science and faith, the day workshop will cover a range of scientific topics and issues, exploring the insights that science brings as well as faith perspectives on them. Ideas for how science can be used with local church ministry and mission will also be touched upon. There will be lots of time for questions, discussion and wondering!

To book, contact Dave Gregory: 07501 065481 or dave@croxleybaptist.co.uk The cost of the day is £10.

The Angus Library and Archive: Virtue and Vice and All Things Nice exhibition

Free exhibition and talks

20-25 April, Regents College, Oxford

An exhibition celebrating literature and showcasing some of the extraordinary and unique examples held in The Angus Library and Archive. Featured works will include wonderful accounts of travel and exploration, early examples of children's literature and a selection of work by John Bunyan, author of The Pilgrim's Progress.

23 April 2015 – Prof. Anne Dunan-Page will be speaking on the works of John Bunyan.

24 April 2015 – Dr Hannah Field will be speaking on children's literature.

The exhibition and talks are free to attend, but booking is essential. [Tickets can be booked online](#). For more information call 01865 288120 or visit theangus.rpc.ox.ac.uk

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Events: