



14 October, 2015

News:

Baptist Union Council: October 2015

The latest Baptist Union Council has just taken place at the Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick, Derbyshire (7-8 October)

Three major reports that will develop the strategy of our movement as Baptists Together were shared and discussed at the latest Baptist Union Council. The reports focused on our mission (Fit for Mission), the leadership and ministry needed for that (Ignite) and how we are going to resource it (Project Loaves and Fishes). To help set a wider context new research into evangelism in the UK (Talking Jesus) was reflected on by General Secretary the Revd Lynn Green, prior to the sharing of these three reports.

Council October 2015

The theme of mission bookended this year's autumn Council, as well as being woven throughout. The opening address was given by the Revd Dianne Tidball, who preached on Romans 1: 1-17. For Paul it is all about "Gospel, Gospel, Gospel", she said. It's the simple truth of the Gospel that transforms lives. To what degree do we need to rediscover our confidence in the simplicity of the Gospel?

There were echoes of this message in a final, prophetic word given at the end of the gathering, from the Revd Joe Kapolyo, minister of Edmonton Baptist Church and a Baptist Union trustee.

'In all our debates my mind turns to the 54 million in our country who don't know Christ,' he said. 'Our vision should be focused on that. How are we going to raise the 20 somethings who can punch the light of the gospel into the darkness?'

Commenting on the latest gathering, Lynn said, 'We have met five times as the "new" Council now and I am so encouraged to see how we are really beginning to embed our renewed culture. Many have said that this Council was the best yet and I had many points where I was so encouraged over things that I heard, saw or shared in.'

Council overview

Baptist Union Council consists of some 80 members mostly drawn from churches, Associations, colleges and co-opted delegates. It meets twice a year and helps to set the broad strategic direction of our Union. Managing the implementation of this direction is subsequently the task of the Baptist Steering Group.

Delegates met at the Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick, Derbyshire for the October 2015 gathering, the first Council moderated by the Revd David Mayne, minister of Shoeburyness and Thorpe Bay Baptist Church in Essex. Worship was led by the Revd Ian McManus, minister at West End Baptist Church in Westbury.

During this latest gathering members had the joy of welcoming eight new churches into our Union: Lizard Christian Fellowship; Church Without Walls, Victoria Park, Manchester; Sandbach Baptist Church, Cheshire; Witney Baptist Church, Oxfordshire; The Well Baptist Church, Sheffield; Meopham Green, Kent; Riverview Park Baptist Church, Gravesend, Kent; and Sompting Community Church, West Sussex.

Talking Jesus

Lynn Green gave an introduction to Talking Jesus, the biggest research of its kind into perceptions of Jesus, Christianity and evangelism. The research was organised by ComRes and Barna Group, on behalf of HOPE, the Church of England and the Evangelical Alliance, and backed by all major denominations, including Baptists Together.

The research found that Christians are generally considered positively, and they are having a number of good conversations with people - but the conversations could be more effective. Many Christians attribute their faith to growing up in a Christian home. A key challenge in evangelism is that only 60 per cent believe Jesus was a real, historical person, a figure which drops even further in the 18-34 age category.

‘The research shows people are getting out there and talking about Jesus, and I was really encouraged by this,’ said Lynn. ‘How can we enable people to be more effective?’

Much more information is available at the Talking Jesus website, including the two-minute clip Lynn shared with Council.

Fit for Mission

Fit for Mission is an ongoing piece of work assessing and reflecting on the state of our Baptist Union. The Revd Stuart Davison, Regional Minister Team Leader of

the South Eastern Baptist Association presented what had emerged from the findings of a detailed survey so far, to which an encouraging 684 of our churches (35 per cent) had responded.

A key point was perception – 13 per cent of churches reported they were declining, 49 per cent said they were constant, and 36 per cent reported growth. When measured against membership statistics, 49 per cent were in decline, 25 per cent constant, and 26 per cent in growth.

Many churches responded by stating there was a need for a stronger internal spirituality: there's a recognition in churches that they don't pray enough; and have a strong, clear vision, said Stuart.

Council members were invited to reflect on: What surprises us? What is important for us to take on board?

There was subsequently discussion about the difference between attendance and membership. Church membership are our only measurable statistics, and Stuart added that while there is a post-modern trend for not wanting to be a member, our challenge is to be counter-cultural: following Jesus involves signing up and belonging.

The Fit for Mission team will now be undertaking in-depth research with one Association to explore underlying issues and trends.

Ignite

A review into ministry was established by Council in March. Called Ignite, its key brief was to establish a small team that would consult as widely as possible on all aspects of ministry among Baptists Together. The group was invited to explore three key questions: What sort of ministries we will need in the future? What support will these ministries need? What of this should be done nationally, regionally and locally?

The Ignite team, led by the Revd Phil Jump, Regional Minister Team Leader of the North Western Baptist Association, presented their findings so far to Council members. It was, said Phil, more a direction of travel rather than a detailed set of recommendations – showing what has been found; and highlighting what needs to be talked about as we move forward.

A number of statistics were presented. For example, fewer than 50 per cent of our churches currently receive ministry from someone who has followed the traditional route of Association recognition, college formation and accreditation.

Ministry is changing, said Phil: mission context, the way in which churches express ministry, the roles to which people are eventually called. How can we develop a vision for ministry and ways of supporting it that can continue to adapt, while at the same time retaining meaningful continuity with all we have understood as ministry in our journey thus far?

In a summary document, Council members heard that the review offered four key responses to the question: “What will continue to define Baptist ministry in future decades?”

A new benchmark for affirming an individual’s call to ministry needs to be found. The team have described this as Marks of Ministry – ‘a term that expresses less of an interest in what individuals can do, in favour of an emphasis on who they are and why they do what they do.’

Alongside this new benchmark is a recognition there needs to be a renewed emphasis on both Personal Development, and Continuing Ministry Development, as well as the introduction of a Ministry Covenant. ‘Ministry can therefore be defined less in terms of achieved standards and experience, and more in terms of a forward commitment to ‘walk together and watch over one another in love’, the report stated.

There were sections on re-imagining how we recognise and develop ministry, with a recognition that there can never be a one size fits all approach; redefining how we support ministry from the point of view of the local church; and supporting ministry as Baptists Together; with appropriate support and administrative structures.

Over the course of the two days Council members were invited to discuss the report and offer feedback. These comments will be incorporated into a final report, which will be presented to the Baptist Steering Group in December, and then made available for everyone to engage with. Members of the Ignite team include Alice McDermott, Ann Lane, Israel Olofinjana, Adam Stacey and Andrew Jackson.

Loaves and Fishes

The Loaves and Fishes Project was set up to explore ways to increase income so that our Union might be even more effective in mission.

Following a comprehensive consultation earlier this year, the Project came up with several recommendations, including:

- We need a renewed focus on, and compelling communication of, our vision as Baptists Together;
- renaming of the Home Mission Fund;
- a further development of our subscription model;
- develop income potential of our investments
- and improve our legacies campaign.

These were considered by the Baptist Steering Group in July and Council members were asked to consider several points resulting from these considerations. Rather than the Home Mission Fund, what would be the strengths and weaknesses of simply raising money for Baptists Together? What are the implications of changing the subscription model – currently £3 per church member? How would this impact the Appeal?

On Thursday morning Lynn spoke about the challenges of communicating our vision, and reiterating that it was “Growing healthy churches in relationship for God’s mission.”

We need to communicate clearly that we spend our Home Mission Appeal money in four main areas, she said: Planting and pioneering; equipping our existing churches for mission; investing in Godly leadership; and having a voice in the “public square”.

In a passionate address she challenged Council members to own and advocate giving to the Baptists Together Home Mission fund. ‘We’ve got to be able to articulate what we’re doing,’ she said ‘if we cannot advocate that every penny will be used to grow healthy churches in relationship for God’s mission, what hope is there for everyone else?’

‘We’ve got to put money where our mouths is; every penny spent and invested in growing healthy churches for God’s mission.’

The biggest issue is ownership, and underlying that is trust, she continued. While it’s true that local ownership over the money motivates giving, it’s not the whole truth. We must believe and have confidence that all the money we raise will be spent wisely

Our giving is still on a small but gradual downward trend, Council heard. The Futures Process resulted in the disbanding of the Communications Department in favour of devolved communication, and this has had patchy results. We need to reflect on that, said Lynn.

Another major decision from the Futures Process was the devolving of Home Mission grants regionally. This was working well, Council heard, transforming the relationships between Home Mission-supported churches and their Associations.

Council members’ feedback on the recommendations of Project Loaves and Fishes will be taken to the Baptist Steering Group.

**Resettlement Board: refugees welcome
Baptists joined with people from across the spectrum of civil society to participate in the inaugural meeting of the National Refugee Resettlement Board in London**

Convened and organised by Citizens UK on 1 October, the Board is seeking to coordinate and develop the citizen-led response to the growing refugee crisis, and in particular to help local groups and individuals to play their part in creating communities of welcome for those who arrive on our shores seeking refuge and safe haven.

Many Baptist congregations have already responded to the refugee crisis, and it is largely through those endeavours that contacts have been made with Citizens UK, which in turn has led to the Baptist Union commitment to the emerging Resettlement board. Regional Minister the Revd Phil Jump, currently a member of the Joint Public Issues Team, was present at the meeting.

The gathering also numbered representatives of the Syrian refugee community, several Christian denominations and networks along with other faith groups and key agencies, including representatives from the United Nations and the Red Cross.

The focus was on “mobilising our resources most effectively and the with the greatest degree of collaboration,” explained Citizens UK deputy director Jonathan Cox. As the tide of public opinion toward refugees turned in September, Citizens UK found itself swamped with offers of help and requests for advice. Mr Cox said that one of the main challenges going forward was to “sustain an atmosphere of welcome”.

A key task of the board will be to encourage the formation of local re-settlement councils, and to offer co-ordination and support where these already exist.

Another idea it is keen to explore and promote is that of “private sponsorship”. In many nations around the world (including Canada) citizens are able to pledge direct, sustainable support for refugee families and on the strength of this, potential recipients are granted leave to enter its borders.

Following its initial meeting the Re-settlement board will now meet quarterly. The bulk of its day to day work will be facilitated by a number of specialist working groups.

Mr Jump said, 'It was both moving and challenging to sit at a table with people who not only shared our deep concern to develop an effective response, but spoke of parents, brothers and sisters who were still caught up in situations of desperation, conflict and danger.

'The potential of connecting the on-the-ground resources of ordinary people seeking to help with the key agencies seeking to oversee our nation's response is truly significant.'

He said local Baptists wishing to play their part are encouraged to first seek out existing networks in their own locality and explore what they might have to offer in the development of communities of welcome.

Visit the local groups page for more information: <http://www.refugees-welcome.org.uk/refugeeswelcome-groups-training-action/>

In communities where these do not exist, local Baptist churches are encouraged to consider what role they might have in making this happen. For more information on how to do this visit: <http://www.refugees-welcome.org.uk/>

Mr Jump continued, 'It is some weeks now since our General Secretary joined with other Free Church Leaders in calling for a change of attitude on the part of our Government in relation to refugees and asylum seekers.

'Since then there has been a significant turnaround, and it seems natural that we now play our part as Christian citizens in providing the welcome that we have called upon our political leaders to offer.

'Our engagement is rooted in the foundational Biblical principles of being a people of welcome, caring for the most vulnerable in society and recognising every human being as made in the image of God.'

He added that Baptist communities are invited to prayerfully consider what part each of us is being called to play in response to one of the biggest humanitarian catastrophes in our lifetime.

Anger at Calais camp conditions

A Baptist minister has spoken of his frustration about the impasse that surrounds those living in the "Jungle" migrant camp in Calais

Jungle campThe Revd Sam King of Calne Baptist Church in Wiltshire recently saw the shocking conditions at the camp with his own eyes - and said whatever one's views on immigration, to leave people in such inhumane place was a scandal.

Around 4,000 people are there, including women and children, but many are in limbo and are waiting for their asylum applications to be processed.

Researchers from the University of Birmingham, working with the Doctors of the World Group, described conditions as "diabolical" in the first study of conditions at the camp.

Sam discovered the French police do not enter the camp, but are stationed outside, which means the threat of violence is high. According to one witness, women live in constant fear of being raped, and are sleeping six to a tent, and church leaders request prayer for safety at night.

'Whatever their motives for being here, the people in the camp should be treated like human beings,' said Sam. 'At the moment they're being treated like animals.'

'It seems to me not beyond the two governments to set up offices in Calais, agree on who pays and process these people so they do not have stay in these awful conditions.'

Since returning from the camp Sam has written to his MP, the Mayor of Calais and even the Prime Minister.

'But what more can I do?' he continued.

'I wish they needed more blankets, but they don't. They need people to sort them. They need some form of justice.'

Sam visited the camp with one of his church deacons, Rachel Rounds. Rachel is head of communications at Bible Society, which had heard that from charities working there that Christians had been asking for Bibles.

Jungle Camp Sam KingThe visit saw nearly 300 New Testaments, Bibles and Gospel portions given to asylum seekers living there. The Bibles were in Arabic and also Amharic, the language spoken by Ethiopians.

The Christians in the camp seek solace at St Michael's – a makeshift church – which holds regular services throughout the week and was featured on Songs of Praise in August.

The Bibles are handed out by the church elders along with blankets, shoes and clothes, some of which had been donated by members of Sam and Rachel's church.

One of the recipients included Solomon,* a taxi driver from Ethiopia, was given an Amharic New Testament. He has been living in the camp for over five months after travelling through Sudan and Libya from Ethiopia.

He is in his late twenties, and has left behind a wife and daughter, Ruth, who is three-years-old. He wanted to start a better life for his family and has applied for asylum in France but the authorities have yet to process his claim.

'I dream of going to Canada', he says, 'but I spent \$6000 crossing African and the Mediterranean on a boat. What can I do? I have no money to go home and seeing so many people who have been here for much longer, I know that the French will not welcome me.'

Sam was invited into a couple of tents. 'It was really moving for them to tell their stories. And when they spoke of the favourite Bible passages, they had even more meaning.'

*Solomon is not his real name - changed at his request.

**Tributes to former Baptist Union President
Professor Graham Ashworth CBE, President of our Baptist Union in 2000-1,
has died aged 80**

Graham Ashworth 400 During a distinguished career Graham was a leading figure in the environmental sector, and was awarded the CBE for services to the environment in 1980.

He trained as an architect and had a keen interest in urban development, which he put down to seeing wartime destruction. High profile projects included the redevelopment of Liverpool Albert Dock.

He became well known nationally as Director General of the Tidy Britain Group (now Keep Britain Tidy) from 1987 to 2000, and was involved in Operation Spring Clean, a two-year programme that saw 65,000 people clean up their area. He would remain active in environmental advocacy right up to his death.

Graham held several senior positions in his career: he was made President of the Royal Town Planning Institute in 1973, was a former President of the Foundation for Environmental Education, and a former member of the UK Round Table on Sustainable Development.

As a former Professor of Urban Environmental Studies at the University of Salford he was an advocate of urban regeneration and land reclamation.

He was a Deputy Lieutenant of Lancashire from 1991, and chaired his local Parish Council.

'Graham ranks as one of the outstanding Baptist layman of his generation'

Graham served as Baptist Union President in 2000. The Revd Dr David Coffey was General Secretary at the time, but revealed their association began much earlier.

'I had the privilege of knowing Graham Ashworth since my student days and pay personal tribute for his warm encouragement to me throughout my ministry, but especially during my years as General Secretary,' he said.

'He could be an immensely challenging friend if he sensed you were not taking seriously the issues that were close to his heart, and his passionate advocacy always opened my eyes to issues I had overlooked.

'As a Baptist community we are immensely proud of Graham's distinguished achievements in the realm of town planning, environmental research and education.

'In the lists of honours and recognitions bestowed on him, he never failed to highlight his Presidency of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and his fellow

professionals knew his gifts and skills were rooted in his firm faith in Jesus Christ.

'Graham ranks as one of the outstanding Baptist layman of his generation and one of the few British Baptists to have gained international recognition for his knowledge and expertise in the care of creation.'

'A leading voice - one of the first - in support of environmental issues'

The Revd Dr John Weaver, whose own presidency of our Union in 2008-9 focused on creation care, worked alongside Graham on numerous occasions.

'It was with sadness that I learned of the sudden death of Professor Graham Ashworth CBE,' he said.

'Graham was for many years a leading voice, in fact one of the first, in support of environmental issues, and a supporter of the John Ray Initiative (an educational charity that connects the environment, science and Christianity) from its early days under the leadership of Sir John Houghton.

'I was privileged to work with him both in teaching and at conferences. He and I both taught on the Certificate in Applied Theology course for young Baptist leaders from central and eastern Europe at the International Baptist Theological Seminary, Prague.

'He was a great encourager of debate. From my own position of chair of the IBTSC Board, I know that Graham's teaching of environmental theology was greatly appreciated by the students and the staff in Prague.

Graham signing Presidents Bibl 'We can give thanks to God for Graham's prophetic voice, a voice we will miss in the run up to the UN Conference on Climate Change in Paris.'

'His significant achievements were a visible reflection of his unstinting faith' Graham was raised in Plymouth and Bristol, but after studying at Liverpool University he would remain in the North West all his life, where for a time he served as assistant minister at Carey Baptist Church in Preston.

The Revd Phil Jump, regional minister team leader at the North Western Baptist Association, was a longstanding friend and preached at his funeral, reflecting on how Graham's significant achievements were a visible reflection of his unstinting faith.

Preaching from Psalm 24 he said, 'What would you do if you truly believed that the earth is the Lord's and everything in it – how would that affect your commitment to the wellbeing of the created environment?

'What would your priorities be if you believed that this God, seeing that the world was not as it should be had become personally involved in its salvation?

'How would you order your life if you believed from your teenage years that you were called to make known the message of this Gospel?

'We can cite numerous projects and initiatives that now stand as a living testament to Graham's commitment to live out that faith with every ounce of his being.'

Graham died suddenly at home on September 18, and leaves wife Gwyneth, daughters Clare, Alyson and Kate, grandchildren Angharad, Holly, Morgan, Daniel and Charlotte, and son-in-laws Gwyn and Richard.

Speaking to the Lancashire Evening Post, Kate said, 'People enjoyed having him around. He loved jokes and he was so fun.'

Of his achievements, she continued, 'He wasn't just dabbling, he was leading the field in so many different ways.

'But he was such a gracious man. He didn't boast about anything. People didn't know who he knew, who he had influenced and who he could pick up the phone to.'

Partnership in mission

A Baptist minister's new book highlights the intercultural ecumenism emerging between Black Majority and historic Churches - and challenges Christians to rethink their understanding of mission in light of Britain's fast-changing social landscape

IsraelThe future of the UK church is multi-ethnic - and how Black Majority Churches partner in mission with the wider UK church is of chief importance.

That's the view of Baptist minister the Revd Israel Olofinjana, minister of Woolwich Central Baptist and a Nigerian with a Pentecostal background. Israel's latest book *Partnership in Mission (Instant Apostle)* explores how Black Majority Churches at national, regional and local level are working together in unity and partnership with non-African Christians in the historic and mainstream churches in Britain.

Written from a Black Majority Church perspective, its primary purpose is to look at the "intercultural ecumenism emerging between BMC and historic Churches."

He covers the history and diversity of BMC in London and their development from being migrant sanctuaries to undergoing a theological shift that is enabling them to engage in holistic mission. Readers are invited to jointly experience the riches of multicultural Christian expressions in faith and practice.

In so doing the book asks: 'What is the BMC? How heterogeneous is the movement? What opportunities are there for partnership with the wider church?'

'Church growth in the UK is argued by some commentators to be dominated by the myriad of black majority churches (BMC) which continue to spring up in this country,' stated a press release to accompany the book. 'These churches have played and continue to play a significant role in the history of the British church, encompassing a wide range of theologies, structures, missiologies, cultures and ethnicities.

'Yet many in the wider church are unfamiliar with BMC and while some might welcome the energy and creativity they bring others might equally take the view that they can be divisive.

'Therefore the question of unity and what impact BMC are having in the area of ecumenism, and how they will partner in mission with the wider UK church is of chief importance.

'This book challenges us to rethink our understanding of mission in light of Britain's fast-changing social landscape. How can Black Majority Churches and other churches partner to effect structural and institutional change in our culturally and ethnically diverse society?'

Israel's previous books have included *Turning the Tables on Mission*, which documented the experiences of contemporary missionaries from the global south coming to the UK, and *Reverse In Ministry And Missions*, an historical study of African churches in Europe.

'Israel's latest offering goes the extra mile, beyond documentation,' said the Revd Dr Kate Coleman, founder of Next Leadership, and former President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, 'by proposing insightful and pragmatic ways that UK Christians can further express the prophetic nature of what must inevitably be increasingly creative and diverse expressions of mission and ministry in the unfolding history of the United Kingdom.'

The Revd Dr Stephen Holmes, Senior Lecturer in Theology, St Andrews University, added, 'The rise of the BMC, their spread and growth, life and vitality, is the great untold story of British Christianity in the last three decades, and is vital to understanding the current and future shape of the church.

'In this book, Rev Olofinjana proves himself again one of the most capable and lucid interpreters of the BMC scene. Here he turns to ecumenical relationships, particularly to the good things that have happened between BMC and historic churches over the years.'

Baptisms:

Acre Mill Baptist Church, Lancashire: Pauline Sinkinson and Stephen Ball
Bishop's Stortford Baptist Church, Herts: Jonathan Neville
Bowthorpe Church, Norfolk: Lyn Gnessill, Rachel Elvin and Reuben Elvin

Chepstow Baptist Church, Monmouthshire: Andrews Amankwah, Clare Chapelton and Richard Walliker
Christ Church, Ramsbottom: Debbie Carter
Clarence Park Baptist Church, Weston-super-Mare: Emma Hawkins
Rebecca Goodwin, Mark Redman, Michael Moore, Valerie Flack
Emmanuel Baptist Church, Gravesend: Rosaline Griffiths and Gary Ram
Fleet Baptist Church, Hampshire: Sarah Arkley, Catherine Bookham, Janet Fullbrook, Neil Wallace
Folkestone Baptist Church, Kent: Brian Beal, Christine Beal, Valerie Convery
Harlesden Baptist Church, London: Anne Marie Charles, Angela Smith-Mark, Noreen Williams, Joan Grant
Harrogate Baptist Church, Yorkshire: Kate Watson
King Street Baptist Church, Thetford: Jean Smith (aged 86!), Margaret Newland, Wendy Hughes
Rugby Baptist Church, Warwickshire: Michael Kearney
Stony Stratford Community Church, Milton Keynes: Steve Mottley, Leah Crabbe, Nikki Chapman, Eillien Gallagher
Tanterton Christian Fellowship, Preston: Janet Johnson and Julie Fazackerly
Teignmouth Baptist Church, Devon: Kaz Denning, Bev Coombes, Patrick Pickering
Warley Baptist Church, West Midlands: Adam Francis

Deaths:

MATTHEWS, the Revd Alexander Vincent 1929-2015

The family of Alexander Vincent Matthews share with sadness the death of a much loved husband, father, grand and great-grandfather on 18th September 2015. A service of thanksgiving was held on 2nd October at 2pm at Witney Congregational Church, Oxfordshire. No flowers please but donations to the RBMHS and the local church.

Alex was a former missionary, with Jo, with the BMS in Congo, 1950-60 and then a Baptist Minister serving in Hertford, Shirley Southampton, Sherborne and Ducklington Baptist Churches. He was an inspiration to many and will be very much missed. He is survived by his beloved wife Jo.

JONES, Audrey

Passed away at Waterbeach Lodge on Thursday 1st October 2015 aged 80 years. Audrey previously worked at Spurgeon's College as a secretary for 25 years and she shared her musical talents in the Croydon area for all her life.

The funeral will take place at Waterbeach Baptist Church for a celebration of Audrey's life at 12.30pm on Friday 16th October 2015.

No flowers by request but donations, if desired, made payable to 'Spurgeon's College' can be sent c/o Weymans Funeral Service, 26 Abbey Walk, Cambridge, CB1 2QJ.

Jobs:

Communications Enabler, The Baptist Union of Great Britain

For more information, visit <http://www.baptist.org.uk/jobs>

Events/resources:

Get in the Picture

Registrations have now opened for Get in the Picture 2015, an opportunity to re-experience the Christmas story in a creative and fun way.

<http://www.getinthepicture.org.uk/>

Pension roadshows

Pension and finance roadshows are taking place across Associations between now and January.

Visit

http://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/449747/Pension_Finance_Roadshows.aspx

Faith Full Service?

Faith Full Service? is a training day focused on how to integrate the Christian faith alongside high quality social care. It's run by the West London Mission (WLM) in partnership with Theos, and facilitated by Baptists Jon Kuhrt (WLM's Executive Director) and Social Work Chaplain the Revd Ruth Bottoms

The Centre for Baptist History and Heritage and the Baptist Historical Society are hosting a study day in Oxford on 28 November, to launch the publication of a new volume exploring 18th century English Baptist Life.

The study day is free of charge, but to secure your place please write to: paul.fiddes@regents.ox.ac.uk.

Crucible Course

"Restoring hope", and "After-Christendom" - two streams at the next Crucible Course weekend (7-8 November). The Crucible Course is training that equips Christians to follow Jesus on the margins

<http://cruciblecourse.org.uk/>

For sale

For sale: 80 comfortable interlocking beech wood 'Cambridge' stacking chairs (h 840mm, w 505mm, d 580mm, sh 460mm) upholstered in green tweed fabric. Back of chair has shelf for kneelers and book rack. Only 10 years old. Will sell in part lots if necessary. Buyer to collect from Winchester. All reasonable offers considered. Email office@stbw.org.uk.

Vision and culture cards/bookmarks

Two new resources are now available for you to use with your church.

Vision and Culture cards - outline our Union's vision to grow healthy churches in relationship for God's mission

Beacons of Prayer bookmarks - using artwork specially commissioned from Chris Duffett as a reminder of Lynn Green's call to prayer.

Both are free. Order here:

http://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/446362/New_Free_Resources.aspx

Welcoming the Stranger

An updated and abridged edition of Welcoming the Stranger, a free 20 page download that aims to help us engage theologically and practically with the plight of refugees, has been published.

Visit http://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/448817/Welcoming_the_Stranger.aspx