



**13 January, 2016**

**News:**

**New Year's honours for Baptists**

**A tireless community worker, one of "the most dynamic social reformers of our age", a champion of inter-faith relations in diverse Leicester and an internationally-renown lawyer were among the Baptists recognised in the New Year's Honours List**

**Rose Peaty MBE**

Rose Peaty was awarded the MBE for services to the community in Blakeney, Gloucestershire, where her tireless work for more than 30 years has led her being known locally as "Aunty Rose".

A committed Baptist from her teenage years, Rose's first community project was to support refurbishment of the local Baptist chapel and develop it as a base to support youth work and a 'Drop-in' work skills programme. The programme has helped generations of children to improve their qualifications and find employment.

In 2009 she founded the [Blakeney Community Green project](#) with Ewart Woolley to develop a community all-weather path round the village green, create additional play areas for local children, establish a community café, build a nature trail and provide access to 'conservation woodland'.

The process saw £100,000 raised from major donors including Village SOS, part of the Big Lottery fund, the Gloucestershire Environmental Trust, and enlisted the Gloucester Wildlife Trust. Rose also successfully built support from the whole community included local schools, businesses and other smaller donors.

The work was completed within four years, and Rose ran the café for the best part of a year until recently. During this time Rose supported another successful parallel project to create the Soudley-Blakeney Gateway, a series of linked footpaths which re-establish an ancient three-mile route up the Soudley Valley.

But that's not all. Rose has worked tirelessly for many other community projects, such as the Blakeney defibrillator project and more new play equipment, reinvigorated the Blakeney Baptist Luncheon Club, which now serves around 60 people each week, ran summer games days for local children and even supported the annual Blakeney duck race! As well as thanking all the other volunteers and fundraisers, she said she has been simply doing “what the Lord expected”. Following the closure of Blakeney Baptist Church, Rose now attends Lydney Baptist Church in Gloucester.

### **Hilary Willmer MBE**

Hilary Willmer in Leeds received the MBE for voluntary service to Disadvantaged Communities in West Yorkshire.

In 1986 Hilary, a member of Moortown Baptist Church in Leeds, set up the [Leeds and Moortown Furniture Store](#) to provide good quality second-hand furniture, free of charge, to those in Leeds who needed it. The furniture store marks its 30th anniversary this year.

The following year she responded to the need for emergency accommodation for young homeless people by setting up [Nightstop](#). Despite initial scepticism Nightstop continues to exist with many schemes across the country.

In 1996 Hilary founded CROP, the Coalition for the Removal of Pimping, alongside Irene Ivison, the mother of a murdered 17-year-old prostitute. Irene died after complications from a routine operation in 2000, but driven by Hilary, CROP and its work continued. It has a long history of working collaboratively with the police and social services, and is the only organisation nationally that supports the parents of children who are sexually exploited, working with hundreds of families. It's now known as [Pace](#) – Parents against child sexual exploitation. Moortown's minister Graham Brownlee is the current chair of trustees.

Hilary has also campaigned on the issue of human trafficking. At the 2006 Baptist Assembly in Brighton she presented a resolution which called on the Government to make it an offence for men to profit from

procuring girls and women for sex. The resolution, which was passed by delegates, also called on the Government to sign the Council of Europe Convention on Action against trafficking, and urged churches to increase their awareness of the issue, to lobby parliament and pray.

Writing on the [Moortown Baptist Church's website](#), her friend and successor as Leeds and Moortown Furniture Store Chair of Trustees, John Sherbourne, described Hilary as 'not only one of the most dynamic social reformers of our age, but when it comes to getting results, one of the most effective.'

He also spoke of Hilary's modesty. 'I've just exchanged texts with Hillary; me congratulating her, she not surprisingly replying by saying she feels "rather embarrassed" and asking me to make sure I mention all the others who are part of the story.'

Hilary was a Baptist Union Council member for 14 years from 1998.

### **Christine Swan MBE**

Chris Swan from Oadby Baptist Church has been awarded an MBE for services to education and inter-faith relations in Oadby, Leicestershire.

Oadby is a diverse part of Leicester, she explained, where wonderful people of all faiths and none are committed to making a real difference, and where God is already at work in the community.

'I've been really fortunate in being able to join in with what he's already doing in the schools and the wider community and have found genuine friendships growing out of a common commitment to seeing Oadby flourish,' said Chris, who is a member of the [Baptist Inter-Faith Working Group](#).

'The call to truth and justice, particularly in the current climate where some wonderful friends are being misjudged simply for being Muslim, leads me to get involved with shared projects to develop community cohesion which is strong enough to withstand attacks borne out of fear or ignorance.'

Chris is also chair of Lionheart Academies Trust which includes some schools beyond our local community facing challenging situations. This involvement was partly inspired by a comment by Jim Wallis in a talk at Greenbelt 'loving your neighbour is about loving their kids as much as you love your own'.

All of this is made possible by having a husband who is wonderfully supportive and is happy for me to be free to operate as a full time

volunteer, and by being part of Oadby Baptist Church which is a hugely encouraging and loving family. I'm very blessed!

Writing in the Baptist Collaboration Group, Alexandra Nance said, 'Chris has been a school governor for well over a decade, including being chair of governors for two schools at once, and has worked very closely with the local Muslim association to help promote community values and cohesion. 'She was also my Sunday school teacher and youth leader, friend, counsellor, and hot chocolate procurer, and has played a big role in bringing plenty of children and young people to faith, and helping to keep us there. We're all super chuffed for her!'

### **Sir Malcolm Evans**

[Professor Malcolm Evans](#) from the University of Bristol Law School was awarded a knighthood for his services to torture prevention and religious freedom. Sir Malcolm, husband of Baptist minister the Revd Dr Alison Evans, had been awarded the OBE in 2004.

An internationally-known lawyer, he has worked extensively on human rights issues for numerous international bodies and NGOs and is currently a member and Chair of the [United Nations Subcommittee for the Prevention of Torture](#). Its work includes visiting places of detention around the world, speaking with detainees, finding out how they are treated and working confidentially with those governments to try to ensure they are not ill-treated.

The [Foreign Secretary's overseas New Year Honours list](#) describes his 'exceptional and unparalleled contribution to the global fight against torture and other inhuman treatment and punishment and a consistently strong contribution to the promotion of religious liberty.' It added, 'He has worked tirelessly and voluntarily over a sustained period at the international level to advance human rights.

'It was a delightful surprise, and really nice to have recognition of the work I've been doing for the past 20 years,' said Sir Malcolm in a Bristol University [press release](#). 'It's also nice to have the importance of the subject matter recognised because a lot of our work goes under the radar due to its sensitive nature.'

### **Brian Stone MBE**

Brian Stone, a member of Milton Malsor Baptist Church in Northamptonshire, was awarded a British Empire Medal for service to the community in Northampton.

He told the [Northampton Chronicle](#) he was “absolutely amazed” by the award.

‘I had been out shopping when I returned to find a letter from the Cabinet Office on the mat,’ he said.

‘I was amazed. I don’t really know what I have done to deserve it. My wife Hilary deserves a lot of credit as she has been very understanding when I have spent time volunteering on Christmas and Boxing Day.’

That reference to volunteering relates to Brian's visiting of lonely and elderly patients this Christmas, despite suffering from prostate cancer himself. He has been a volunteer with the Friends of Northampton General Hospital since 2001, where he also drives the passenger buggy and helps outpatients and visitors with limited mobility.

Brian, now 77 and previously manager of the housing advice centre at Northampton Borough Council, has served a range of charities and organisations in Northampton for more than 20 years. He began volunteering with the Northampton Association for the Blind in 1993, and still regularly visits blind people at home to provide company and support.

Before joining Milton Malsor Baptist Church, Brian was heavily involved both with Mount Pleasant Baptist Church in Northampton, where he ran the Sunday School in the 1980s.

### **Church 'good for your physical health'**

**Going to church appears to be good for your physical as well as your spiritual health - that's according to new research released by the Evangelical Alliance**

More than nine out of 10 evangelicals had been in good health during the past year, compared to [three quarters of all English adults](#). Even

more said that Christians should lead healthy lifestyles to look after their God-given bodies.

Two thirds of the evangelical Christians surveyed in late 2015 said their church offers practical support for those facing health issues. Despite the relative good health of their members, only nine per cent say their church teaches about health issues and the importance of being healthy. Around a quarter say church responsibilities have caused 'significant stress.'

Virtually all (98 per cent) think that God miraculously heals the sick today. Almost as many (86 per cent) said that their church pray for the sick in worship and organise hospital visits for the sick. Many wanted help praying for the sick with six out of 10 wanting more training from their church.

The research was published exclusively in the Alliance's [idea magazine](#). EA editor Amaris Cole said, 'The Church is great for providing care for people, and helping them when times are tough. Evangelicals clearly benefit from their beliefs, and the community around them can make a life-changing difference. 'But there's much more that the Church can do to promote healthy lifestyles – less than one in 10 have heard sermons on living a healthy lifestyle or other health issues; if our bodies are temples we need to help people look after them.'

The Evangelical Alliance has released [a 10 step guide](#) for churches to help their congregation live healthier lives. Ideas include swapping the biscuits for fruit for the after-service snack and taking the prayer meeting on patrol by walking around the neighbourhood.

Amaris continued, 'There's an old joke that church can be as dangerous as a helicopter – be careful otherwise you'll get caught in the rotas. We want churches to also take seriously the emotional and mental health of their congregations and it should bother us that a quarter say church responsibilities have caused significant stress.' Steve Clifford, general director of the Evangelical Alliance, added, 'Clearly the research indicates going to church is good for your health, but if that's all it is then there's something missing. For church attendance to be true to itself, it must go deeper and be food for the soul.'

### **BME Women Ministers' Network**

**A network that provides support and encouragement to Baptist women from black and minority ethnic groups (BME) in leadership positions is looking forward to its second year.**

The BME Women Ministers' Network launched in November 2014 for women who are lay pastors or accredited ministers (or in the process of training to become lay pastors or accredited ministers).

The network aims to:

- Provide a safe space where women can meet together, share experiences and encourage spiritual growth as they live out their calling.
- Provide access to and understanding of good resources to use to identify and nurture leadership potential in women and girls.
- Provide opportunities to make good connections and access information.

It met four times in its first year, and a further four networking events are planned for 2016. A core group of around 10 women have been meeting. There is a broad mix: some are ministers in training, some are in the settlement process and while others are settled in churches. The majority exercise ministry to adults, and it is hoped the network may connect with more who exercise ministry to children and youth in Baptist churches.

'Their experience of the group is a good one,' says Gale Richards, a tutor at Northern Baptist College who co-ordinates the network. 'It's helpful to know each other exists, and get that support from people in similar situations. We're at the stage now where we're reflecting on how we grow the network, and raise its profile.'

Gale stresses the importance of understanding why such a group is needed. These women have traditionally faced barriers for several reasons, she explains.

Firstly there is a gender issue. Although Baptists were the second denomination to ordain women in Britain, we are below national averages in terms of how many female ministers are leading our churches. Even when they come through college women spend longer in the settlement process. Quite a significant number don't last long in a pastorate.

When barriers related to ethnicity are also factored in, it's not surprising that the number of BME women in ministerial roles in our churches is relatively low (it's thought to be below 20).

Those that are in the system therefore have important stories to share – to each other, and beyond.

‘We felt strongly that these few BME women ministers could meet together, support each other and share experiences,’ says Gale, ‘and that these experiences could be fed into the thinking at a national level, such as the Ignite ministries review. It’s important to have a sense of what the reality is like on the ground.

‘It’s also important to have people who can relate to your experiences, not just from the point of view of being a woman or being from a minority ethnic group in Britain, but from being a woman from a minority ethnic group in Britain.’

As well as the relational support, there’s an equipping element to the network. Guest speakers have included Mary Taylor, a regional minister in the Yorkshire Baptist Association, Baptist Union General Secretary Lynn Green, and Canon Eve Pitts, one of the first Anglican women to be ordained, who have shared tips on key issues, such as moving through the settlement process.

Another dimension is looking ahead – the women have been encouraged to look at how they can inspire the next generation and break down more barriers. The network also connects to the Baptist Gender Justice group.

But its existence serves another purpose too, that is to highlight and recognise the positive, celebrate what the women have already achieved.

‘These women have multiple gifts, unique insights and creativity,’ says Gale, ‘in areas such as leading worship, preaching, teaching, and their stories and experiences they bring to the table. We have a poet, writers, someone who has done outreach in the Bronx, another who was formerly a solicitor before receiving the call to ministry.

‘Nurturing them blesses everyone.’

**Networking events will be held throughout the year of 2016 in February, May, September and November at locations in Birmingham, London and Bristol. Themes and subjects are chosen to cater to the needs of those attending the Network and all Networking events are facilitated by Gale, Leoner and Carol. For further details and information contact: Gale Richards:**

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**From Haworth to Calais**



## **How West Lane Baptist Church in Haworth, West Yorkshire and its community are helping refugees in Calais. By Nick Drury**

The refugee crisis has been the bedrock of the news and media for much of the year, and the question we've asked ourselves as a church and community is what we in Haworth can do to help those people over 300 miles away in Calais, without using the distance as an excuse to not act?

I started as a Student Minister at West Lane in Haworth in September, and during this time there've been numerous fundraising initiatives and projects set up for helping the refugees in Calais, both through the churches in Haworth and also the wider community too.

In September under the banner of 'Churches Together in Haworth' we helped set up and publicise a collection point for different items such as tents and sleeping bags to be donated then passed on to one of the charities linked with the refugees in Calais. We offered to collect heavier or numerous items too, and built up quite a mountain in the pews of the local parish church.

In October we plugged and advertised an auction event set up within the community where all of the money raised would go to charities for the refugees. Everything to be auctioned was donated by local businesses, and ranged from afternoon tea for two, to a professional sculpture. This event was extremely successful and raised £6,500 across three different charities.

In addition, a few months ago the community started fundraising for the 'Worth Valley Tent Project'. This is where a European Company is producing eight-man UNHCR style tents designed for the conditions in Calais, and a page has been set up to raise funding for these;

<http://gogetfunding.com/provide-shelters-to-migrants-in-calais/> So far more than £1,600 has been raised through different initiatives, which is enough for three of these winterised tents.

In early November I accompanied two others from another church, in a van loaded with items to distribute to the refugees. In the lead up to this we had done some fundraising and received donations that had been listed as required by a charity in Calais.

One initiative we set up was to have a 'Super Sock Sunday' at our church where people either bought or donated socks to take down to Calais. This worked really well as socks were something everyone could give and get involved in, regardless of their financial position.

The Calais trip had an obvious impact for the refugees, however, through reporting about it in a number of local newspapers and magazines, and focussing services around the experience and exploring the question of what it means for us to do 'mission', further awareness has been raised too.

After Calais I was also asked to share at the local Labour Party about the experience to help them explore what they can be doing to bring aid to these people.

There's also a committee of people from the area that's been formed recently and it's discussing how we can help refugee families who get placed in the Bradford area in the near future.

Our plans are to team up with the organisation designated by the Government to house these families, and to offer whatever services we as a community can provide – ranging from dentistry and medical care, to befriending and help with accounts. If this happens we will be exploring as church what role we can play in getting alongside and helping these refugees.

**Nick Drury is the student minister at West Lane Baptist Church This story originally appeared on the [Yorkshire Baptist Association website](#) and is used with permission**

### **Baptisms:**

Battle Baptist Church, Sussex: Rebecca Lewis, Poppy Thornton, Ollie Griffiths, Jenny Leah, Suzanne Martin  
Bromley Common Baptist Church, London: Kayleigh Row  
Cemetery Road Baptist Church, Sheffield: Reza, Matin, Sina, Mohammad, Sajad, Mohamad, Rasoul, Mehdi, Hamed, Behrooz, Hadi, Amin, Ali, Arsalan, Kimya, Edris, Mandela, Reza, David, Mohammad, Saeb, Clemantine, Grace, Kwadwo, Hassan, Kondwani, Arash, Shahram, Mostafa, Majid, Mohamad, Sadaf, Amrola, Abbas, Mohsen, Elham, Yousef, Sogol, Ann, Daniel, Dariush, Hussain, Hamid, Abbas  
Fernhill Heath Baptist Church, Worcester: Zoe Aris  
Spalding Baptist Church, Lincolnshire: Chris Dunne Vicki Richards  
South Street Baptist Church Brierley Hill: Becky Wheeler, Tracey Tromans, Chrissy Platt and Craig Tucker  
Ross Baptist Church, Ross-on-Wye: Paul Cockburn

Witney Baptist Church, Oxfordshire: Alan Band  
Woodstock Baptist Church, Oxfordshire: Lauren Fox

Know anyone preparing for baptism? [Check out our new range of cards](#)

Send your baptism notifications and stories to  
[phobson@baptist.org.uk](mailto:phobson@baptist.org.uk)

**Baptism stories**  
**Cemetery Road Baptist Church in Sheffield** was blessed with more than 40 baptisms in 2015. Its minister James Chapman writes:

‘We are blessed to have a diverse congregation, which over the last year or so, has been added to by a number of Iranians and Congolese asylum seekers and refugees.

‘People are attracted to the church by the warm hospitality offered and the attempt to include alternative cultural expressions where possible in the worship and through fellowship groups.

‘We are on a journey of understanding, and we are dealing with the challenges and opportunities that arise from the expectation of those new to the church (some established Christians, some new to the faith, or seekers - including a number of Muslims) and those long-standing members.

‘The number of baptisms has 'normalised' the experience, and that has provided an opportunity for our young people to consider commitment for themselves. For those of junior school age who want to make a public commitment, we have introduced a rite of anointing with oil, to mark a journey from dedication on the road to baptism.’

[Baptism joy in Leeds](#): What better way to start a new year than with a double baptism

Deaths

**CUTTS Barbara** May our much loved Aunt, sister of the late Kenneth, only daughter of the late Rev Abraham Cutts, died

peacefully at home on New Year's Day, leaving her devoted friend of 60 years Jean Green, and her nephews and nieces. Thanksgiving Service at Exeter Crematorium Chapel Thursday 14th January 11.15 - any friends most welcome Family flowers only please. Any donations in Barbara's Memory to the Red Cross please.

**RENSHAW (nee Alden) Elsie Miriam** died peacefully in her sleep at the age of 98 1/2 at the residential home in Exeter she only moved to in October.

She was a qualified Orthoptist and became a minister's wife on 8 July 1944. She shared the Revd Norman J Renshaw's ministry, including worldwide with the Camps Farthest Out organisation, until their retirement after more than 50 years. She outlived Norman by 7 years and is survived by 3 daughters, 6 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren.

The Thanksgiving Service will be at 2pm on Saturday 30 January at South Street Baptist Church, Exeter, EX1 1EB.

People travelling from outside the area could contact Liz Chamberlain on 01392 669918 or

[lizchamberlain@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:lizchamberlain@blueyonder.co.uk) to advise if they would like hot soup/drinks and a buffet lunch from 12 noon in the church hall. There will also be refreshments afterwards.

Long term parking is available at the Cathedral and Quay car park close by.

## **Jobs**

Regional Minister - South West Baptist Association

Regional Team Leader - East Midlands Baptist Association

Team Leader - London Baptist Association Regional Team

Host-Evangelist - Northcliffe Church

Specialist Team Leader, Ministries, Baptist Union of Great Britain

For more information on all these positions, visit

<http://www.baptist.org.uk/jobs>

## **Events/resources:**

### **Baptist Assembly 2016**

Bookings for this year's Assembly, taking place on 14 May in Oxford, are now open

<http://www.baptist.org.uk/Group/Group.aspx?ID=247895>

### **Homeless Sunday 24 January**

Homeless Sunday is a way for churches to demonstrate solidarity with people experiencing homelessness in the UK and takes place on 24 Jan. Find out more on its new website:

<http://www.homeless-sunday.uk/>

### **Immersive experience with Baptist pioneers**

Interested in a few days of living alongside the ordinary life of pioneering Baptist church plants? A 4-day residential opportunity to experience and reflect on emerging Baptist churches is being offered in April.

More here: <http://churchfromscratch.org/immersive-experience-25-28-april-2016>