

## Ukraine president a Baptist

A BAPTIST has been appointed as the interim President of Ukraine.

In a fast moving situation at the weekend, Dr Oleksandr Turchynov was selected by the country's Parliament to succeed the ousted President Viktor Yanukovich. He had already been appointed Speaker and deputy prime minister, and will remain as interim President until new elections are held later this year.

Dr Turchynov is a Baptist elder at the Word of Life Centre in Kiev, a member of the Baptist Union of Ukraine (the All-Ukrainian Union of Churches of Evangelical Christian Baptists).

A BBC profile said Dr Turchynov was considered the right-hand man of Yulia Tymoshenko, the former Prime Minister imprisoned by President Yanukovich but then dramatically released at the weekend. He was Deputy Prime Minister in Ms Tymoshenko's Government between 2007-2010.

It also described him as 'a prolific writer of novels that deal with themes of corruption, the black economy and totalitarianism'.

In his first address he explained that elections would take place in May, whereupon he will immediately resign.

The first task, he said, was



to 'stop the confrontation, to regain control.... to ensure peace and tranquility, to prevent new victims, local rivalries and lynchings'. He has spent the week trying to form a unity Government.

Over the years he has met a number of Baptist leaders from organisations such as the European Baptist Federation and the Baptist World Alliance during their visits to the region. They include the Revd Tony Peck, EBF General Secretary, who urged prayer for Dr Turchynov. He said, 'We pray for him and his colleagues in these critical days as they face many challenges in seeking to steer Ukraine into the path of democracy, unity, and peaceful co-existence.'

At least 88 people have

been killed in clashes between protesters and government forces over the last three months, the worst violence the country has witnessed since independence in 1991.

Pavel Unguryan, the International Missions Department Director with the Baptist Union of Ukraine and a former member of Parliament said that 'joy and sadness overfills our hearts as we celebrate the news of birth of a New Ukraine and grieve for the young men, students and husbands who died for this to happen.'

While there were ovations and cheers about events over the weekend, many people now have 'much anger and hatred for opponents'.

The country needs to turn to Christ, he said. 'What Ukraine needs is not just a change of people in authority but a change of the system and the relationship of the authorities to ordinary citizens. Ukraine needs love, mercy and forgiveness. Ukraine needs Christ!'

Mr Unguryan also praised the Christian community, which had been the light and the salt for both parties during the days of protests and confrontations.

A group from Hungarian Baptist Aid has also arrived in Ukraine to help the recovery.

## End Hunger Fast - Baptist support for new campaign

A LENT campaign to highlight and address food poverty in the UK has been welcomed by Baptists.

With a half a million people using foodbanks in the last year, the End Hunger Fast campaign aims to bring a national focus to why people are going hungry.

It calls the government to task on three areas - welfare, low wages and food markets that have contributed to food inflation - and has earmarked 4 April as a national day of fasting.

The movement, spearheaded by Church Action on Poverty, the Trussell Trust, Quakers and Just Fair, has the backing of many church leaders across the UK, including Baptists.

The Revd Stephen Keyworth, Faith and Society Team Leader said, 'Many of our churches are involved in the provision of foodbanks in their communities, and they are seeing the reality of people who, through a variety of circumstances, simply do not have enough to eat. No one in Britain should be going hungry or forced to choose between heating and eating.'

'The End Hunger Fast campaign to seeks to address the causes of why this is happening and bring a renewed focus on the issue to tackle this injustice. We welcome the campaign and encourage everyone in our churches to think about ways they



can take part.'

End Hunger Fast specifically calls on the Government to ensure that the welfare system provides 'a robust last line of defence against hunger in Britain' - 30 per cent of those visiting food banks do so because their benefits have been delayed, 15 per cent because they are under sanction.

It also calls on the Government to make work pay enough for working people to properly provide for their families. Stagnant and falling real incomes, unemployment, and casualization of work have contributed to less money for food. Research also shows around 60 per cent of families with an income under £17,000 have cut back on food to save money with an even higher rate among families on £17,000-£30,000.

Finally the End Hunger Fast Campaign calls on the

Government to make sure that 'food markets function, promoting long term sustainable and healthy diets with no one profiteering off hunger in Britain.' Rapidly rising food prices - up 30.5 per cent in the past five years - have had a major impact on the growing hunger in the UK.

All these factors were highlighted in a Government-commissioned report looking into food aid, which was released last Thursday.

The researchers said rising food prices, shrinking incomes, low pay and increasing personal debt meant families were struggling to pay for enough food.

It added that benefit payment problems were also a factor in the increase in demand for food.

To find out more visit <http://endhungerfast.co.uk/>

**Is your church involved in running or supporting a foodbank? The Joint Public Issues Team (Baptist, Methodist and URC churches working together) is hoping to produce resources aimed at helping churches tackling food poverty and would like to hear from churches already doing this.**

**If you are involved in a foodbank, could you drop an email to Matt Collins ([collinsm@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:collinsm@methodistchurch.org.uk)) giving him information about the work you are doing, including any wider campaigning work or how you make your church aware of the foodbank?**

# City centre chaplaincy launches

A CITY centre retail chaplaincy has been launched by churches in Exeter.

The team of eleven volunteers is available to the staff and management of the city's large central stores and small shops, and is drawn from a wide range of church backgrounds.

They are mostly lay people, and the team is headed by two Lead Chaplains, retired Anglican priest Revd Tony Raven and retired Methodist minister Revd Norman Wallwork.

The declared aim of the chaplaincy is to serve the people of Exeter city centre as a practical Christian presence, expressing the loving care of God. The administrator for the chaplaincy is a member of South Street Baptist Church Exeter, and minister the Revd Simon Taylor is chairman of the steering group. He said, 'We recognise increasingly the need to share God's love beyond our walls in the city centre.'

'Sectors in the city such as health, the university, the prison and police have chaplaincy support – but here in Exeter city centre we also have many thousands of people employed



in the retail sector, and through this chaplaincy we want to serve them.

'We recognise the diverse pressures on those who work here; we know that times are not easy for them and we want to offer what support we can.'

Encouragement has been given by the managers of the shopping precincts and by the City Centre Manager John Harvey, who said, 'I'm absolutely delighted to see the launch of Exeter City Centre Chaplaincy.'

'In what remain challenging times for many, the City Centre Chaplaincy will play a vital part in building understanding, trust and co-operation between workplaces, businesses, agencies

and faith communities.

'We all face challenges in our lives and I know that the chaplains will offer a fantastic listening ear for those working in the city centre. I wish the City Centre Chaplaincy team good luck at the start of what will be an interesting journey. The City Centre Chaplaincy has my absolute support.'

The Bishop of Crediton the Revd Nick McKinnel blessed the new project and commissioned the chaplains before a full congregation at St Stephen's parish church. He said, 'The City Centre Chaplaincy is a great opportunity for the churches to engage with and serve the thousands of people who work in our city, in the name of Christ.'

## Bananas, and Fairtrade Fortnight

A NEW campaign to make the price of bananas more competitive and ensure a better return for the growers is at the heart of Fairtrade Fortnight, which began this week.

The 'Stick with Foncho' campaign says that intense retail competition in the UK has seen the price we pay for loose bananas slashed to unsustainable levels. In the last 10 years, as the cost of producing bananas has doubled, the UK supermarket sector has almost halved the shelf price of loose bananas. It means that millions of banana farmers are struggling to make ends meet.

Even though one in three bananas sold in the UK are Fairtrade, to have a transformative effect 'we need to go further', according to the campaign.

Albeiro Alfonso 'Foncho' Cantillo is a 43-year-old banana farmer from Colombia, and is coming to the UK in Fairtrade Fortnight to speak to Business Secretary Vince Cable.

People in the UK are urged to petition the government to work with supermarkets to end unfair supermarket pricing practices, and the Fairtrade Foundation is calling on churches to join the campaign.

**Find all the latest news and lots of free resources at [stickwithfoncho.org.uk](http://stickwithfoncho.org.uk)**

## Easter Cracked - 20 years on

FOR 20 years Slough Baptist Church has been involved in a presentation for 11 year old pupils from local schools who spend 90 minutes in church learning about Easter.

A similar presentation, Christmas Unwrapped, happens in late November. The aim is to provide a positive experience for all those attending (staff and pupils) and to share something of these two key Christian festivals that times in with school RE curriculum and in other ways.

Here is just one piece of feedback the team had from a visitor: 'Every aspect of the presentation was well thought out and executed beautifully. The children's attention was focused

from start to finish. I would love to see every school have the opportunity to participate in such a presentation.' Elizabeth (retired RE Teacher).

Easter Cracked takes place in numerous locations across the UK from Glasgow to Gravesend and Altrincham to Woodley.

**If you are interested in knowing more and maybe visiting one near you e-mail or call Wayne Dixon 01753 523058 [wayne@ccschools.org.uk](mailto:wayne@ccschools.org.uk)**

**Or see the website [www.sloughbaptistchurch.org.uk/schoolsweek](http://www.sloughbaptistchurch.org.uk/schoolsweek)**

**THE 'Equip your Church to be at the Heart of Community' training, which help churches take advantage of the many opportunities which 2014 provides for engaging with their communities, will be rolled out across London, Hertfordshire and Wiltshire in March.**

**The training days will help people take advantage of opportunities to organise events and festivals around some of big moments this year, such as the World Cup and the Commonwealth Games. For more information ring Kim on 07763513013**

### JOBS

**Children and Families Leader, Purley Baptist Church  
Full time Youth Leader, Newbury Baptist Church  
Chaplain, Royal Air Force  
Tutor, Bristol Baptist College  
Regional Minister, Central Baptist Association**

For more details visit: [www.baptist.org.uk/jobs](http://www.baptist.org.uk/jobs)

### MINISTERIAL

**The Revd John Lewis** has accepted a call to the Ministry at Portstewart Baptist Church, Northern Ireland and will be inducted on Saturday 5 April 2014. John has been the minister at Gorsley Baptist Church for the last 17 years and has seen the growth and expansion of the Church over this period. His valedictory service will be held at Gorsley Baptist Church on Sunday 16 March.

Send notifications of baptisms, ministerial changes, deaths and testimonies to [phobson@baptist.org.uk](mailto:phobson@baptist.org.uk)

## From the www. [baptisttimes.co.uk](http://baptisttimes.co.uk)

Recent stories and comment pieces on *The Baptist Times* website

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game

<http://bit.ly/1jArZPY>

> All-age worship: can we sometimes become entrenched in our positions, particularly with regard to children and the church?

<http://bit.ly/1k9fA8l>

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Lanka over 200 years ago is now sending workers to the mission field

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