

# Chaplaincy milestone

THE organisation which sends Baptist and other Free Church chaplains to serve the armed forces has marked its centenary.

The United Navy, Army and Air Force Board formally recognised its first two chaplains in 1914, with one of them, E L Watson, becoming the first UB chaplain to be deployed to the front in France.

One hundred years later and the United Board now has 34 regular chaplains drawn from our Baptist Union, the United Reformed Church, Congregational Federation, Elim and Assemblies of God.

Chaplains past and present joined denominational leaders in gathering at the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre at Amporn in Andover last week.

Lieutenant General James Everard, the current Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff later gave an address at the United Board conference dinner.

Current convenor of the United Board, Baptist minister the Revd Ian McFarlane, said the ministry was as valued as ever.

'James Everard gave a stirring affirmation of the value of chaplaincy from the point of view of the armed forces.

'The role of chaplains is highly significant. There isn't a military formation that moves into a



conflict situation without one. They are not an add on - they are core.'

There has been a marked growth in the number of chaplains coming through the United Board in the last 10 years, Ian added. This was partly as the number of armed conflicts have increased (military chaplaincy has been growing since the First Gulf War), and because the sending denominations have 'opened up to the possibilities of the importance of the role that military chaplaincy plays across all three services'.

'It wasn't the thing to endorse the military,' he said, 'but the huge, emotional turmoil our military personnel have had to face over the years, has become apparent.

'Chaplaincy is the ministry of

presence, in war time and peace.'

Another significant feature in the United Board history has been the growth of ecumenical relationships between the sending churches. This has led to the appointment of a Baptist – Jonathan Woodhouse (pictured centre) – to the highest rank possible for any serving chaplain, Chaplain General.

Jonathan said, 'God has blessed this ministry over the past 100 years and there is much still to come in this demanding, unpredictable and fulfilling calling.

'Please pray for us and for others to join us in serving members of the Armed Forces.'

To find out more about armed forces chaplaincy contact [convenor@unitedboard.org.uk](mailto:convenor@unitedboard.org.uk)

# Growing food poverty, say charities - but Govt hits back

A NEW report claimed there has been a huge rise in food poverty in the UK, but was criticised by the Government and ultimately led to a high profile row involving the Charity Commission.

*Below the Breadline*, a report published on Monday from Church Action on Poverty, Oxfam and the Trussell Trust, calculated that food banks and food aid charities gave more than 20 million meals last year to people in the UK.

This was a 54 per cent increase on the previous 12 months, the charities said, calling on the Government to draw up an action plan to 'reverse the rising tide of food poverty.'

In response the Government said it is 'simply not possible to draw conclusions from these unverified figures drawn from disparate sources', adding it had a plan to fix the welfare system and help people out of poverty.

The report detailed how a 'perfect storm' of changes to the



The *Below the Breadline* report from Church Action on Poverty, Oxfam and the Trussell Trust highlights growing food poverty, but was criticised by the Government

social security system, benefit sanctions, low and stagnant wages, insecure and zero-hours contracts and rising food and energy prices are all contributing to the increasing numbers of meals handed out.

Oxfam subsequently sent out a tweet highlighting this, prompting Conor Burns, the Conservative MP for Bournemouth West, to say he was "shocked" by Oxfam's

"overtly political" campaign. Mr Burns asked the Charity Commission to investigate whether the campaign breaches the organisation's charitable status. Ben Phillips, Oxfam's campaigns and policy director, said 'fighting poverty should not be a party political issue', adding that 'successive governments have presided over a tide of rising inequality.'

# Queen's Award for Baptist centre

A COMMUNITY centre which brings together a Baptist church and a local authority has received a major award.

The Hub is a partnership between Altrincham Baptist Church and Trafford Council, offering a café and a range of church-based and wider community activities and services for all ages.

Last week it received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, an annual award made to

recognise and reward excellence in voluntary activities.

Andrew Smyth, the centre manager said, 'This award is a huge honour for us and is a fitting recognition of the hard work and many, many hours our volunteers put in to care for and serve the people of our community.

'We are so fortunate to have such a dedicated team of high quality volunteers from all walks of life.

'We especially want to thank Councillor Patricia Young for her support in nominating us for this prestigious award.

'We hope that this will be a springboard to enable us to grow and develop the services we can offer to the locality.'

The hub is based in the centre of Altrincham, and houses the admin offices of Altrincham Baptist Church.

For more visit <http://www.ourhub.org/>

# Christian men fostering call

An overwhelming majority of British men shy away from applying to become foster dads because they think they'll be rejected but the church-based organisation, Home for Good, says that this fear is unfounded and is appealing to Christian men to step forward this Father's Day.

A recent survey revealed that 73 per cent of men believe they would not be accepted as a foster carer if they applied in the next two years.

Dr Krish Kandiah, a director of the Evangelical Alliance and member of the Baptist Union-affiliated Cornerstone Church in Thame, said that many Christian men are already breaking the old fashioned image of a foster carer as 'a middle-aged woman slaving over a hot stove to feed a house full of little children'.

Krish, himself a foster dad, believes there is a role for church families to providing a loving and caring home for children in need.

'We have been travelling the country talking to churches about this and many women say they would love to be foster carers,' he said, 'but it is their husbands putting the brakes on their family taking part so I am calling on



men to step forward and be the father that these vulnerable children need.'

There are currently 52,500 foster families looking after 63,000 children in the UK but the Fostering Network has said there is still need for another 8,600 families this year.

Several professional men are supporting the Alliance's Home for Good campaign this Father's Day urging other fathers to step forward and help.

They include Dr David Ward (pictured), a fusion scientist. He said, 'I became a foster carer about a year ago. We've got three wonderful children of our own

who are pretty much grown up now.

'I know that a lot of families haven't had that same stable environment and I would like to help kids provide some stability in their lives.

'At the minute we are fostering a baby boy and he's the only person on the planet that squeals with delight when he sees me in the morning.'

**A video of all the men supporting the campaign is available at: [www.homeforgood.org.uk/fathersday2014/](http://www.homeforgood.org.uk/fathersday2014/)**

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

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

> As she visits projects tackling gender-based violence in Zambia, Heather Skull reflects

on how small the world can be [bit.ly/1u7h6lr](http://bit.ly/1u7h6lr)

> How to avoid an electrical storm - faulty electricians are one of the prime causes of fires - stay safe with this guide from Baptist Insurance [bit.ly/118WDO5](http://bit.ly/118WDO5)

> Living cross-shaped lives - what if we really followed the

example of Jesus? [bit.ly/1iogF7o](http://bit.ly/1iogF7o)

> 'It's changed the way we see the world' - an insight into a gap year programme with Smile International in Uganda [bit.ly/UtGQEA](http://bit.ly/UtGQEA)

## New night shelter standard launches

A NEW national good practice standard for Night Shelters, the Housing Justice Quality Mark (HJQM), will be launched this week.

The new HJQM sets out standards of good practice, including risk assessment, health and safety, training for volunteers, and partnership working.

The HJQM will make sure that shelters operate safely and work in partnership with others to respond effectively to the needs of their homeless guests.

The HJQM is for both new and existing shelters. It is applicable for winter shelters and year round shelters, and those commissioned under Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) which open when the temperature drops below zero.

It will be rolled out initially in England, but it is hoped to transfer the methodology to shelters in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The HJQM has already been piloted across several shelters. Juli Thomson, Coordinator of Bradford Inn Churches said, 'As a result of our measures adhering to the Quality Mark our central insurance policy premium has now been reduced.

'I would encourage other shelters to get involved in the scheme.

'It highlights the strengths of the excellent work we all do and supports areas where we feel we might need improvement.'

# World Blood Donor day

TO mark this year's National Blood Week and World Blood Donor Day on 14 June, churches across Britain and Ireland are being encouraged to raise the profile of blood donation in their local communities

The **fleshandblood** campaign, supported by our Baptist Union, is encouraging communities and congregations as a corporate act of generosity to register as blood donors this week by visiting [www.fleshandblood.org/blood/register](http://www.fleshandblood.org/blood/register) or by texting 'FAB Blood' to 62323 in England and Wales.

In addition to new registrations, existing blood donors are being asked to book a date to donate blood.

A survey, conducted by Christian Research on behalf of **fleshandblood** found that 10 per cent of Christians have given blood in the last year compared to 4 per cent of the general population who have given blood in the last two years.

Local churches are also being provided with practical tools and ideas through the "Church Challenge" [www.fleshandblood.org/churchchallenge](http://www.fleshandblood.org/churchchallenge)

## JOBS

**Chief Executive Officer, African Pastors Fellowship**

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

## DEATH

**HANCOCK, The Revd Dr W C R**, always simply 'Bill', died at his home in Ilfracombe on Monday 2 June following a lengthy debilitating illness, but with his mind as alert as ever. After training at the London Bible College as it was then known, Bill served at West Mersea in Essex and then at Mount Pleasant, Northampton, until 1977 when he was called to be the General Superintendent in the Southern Area, later slightly reduced in size to become the South East Area.

In 1985 he was appointed to be the Secretary for Ministry in the Baptist Union and remained in that post until his retirement in 1992. He was a highly esteemed and widely loved man whose work helped many in need and whose counsel was greatly valued. We hold in our hearts and prayers his beloved wife, Lyn, their children, Ruth, Sarah and Tim, their husbands and wife together with their children. The Thanksgiving Service for Bill will be held at 2.30 pm on Monday 16 June at Immanuel Church, Wilder Road, Ilfracombe.

## BAPTISMS

**Bretton Baptist Church, Peterborough:** Ken and Gill Rogers . . . . . 2  
**Dereham Baptist Church, Norfolk:** Deth Yim Symons . . . . . 1  
**Hereford Baptist Church:** Ben Menzies and Joseph Micklejohn . . . . . 2  
**Salisbury Road Baptist Church, Plymouth:** Steve Mills . . . . . 1  
**Strode Crescent Baptist Church, Isle of Sheppey:** Abbey Samways, Luke McCarten, Colin Allison, Trisha Clarke and Lorraine Apps . . . . . 5  
**Wade Street Church, Lichfield:** Tracy Buckby (+ renewal of baptism vows - Hattie Wright) . . . . . 2

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