



22 June, 2016

News:

Evangelistic outpouring in Reading

In just over three weeks of mission more than more than 1,000 people have prayed to give or rededicate their lives to Christ

In a statement on 9 June documenting the dramatic recent events, Baptist minister Yinka Oyekan, of The Gate (formerly Reading Community Church) said more than 700 people had prayed to give or rededicate their lives to Christ in the first 10 days of a mission outreach. This has now swelled to more than 1,200.

Yinka explained that the church had been working with evangelist Tommie Zito on an outreach called *Awakening in the UK - Encounter At The Gate*. Starting on 29 May, the church has been hosting outreach training and prayer gatherings morning and evening. In between members have been hitting the streets to pray with people and share the gospel.

Since then Yinka has regularly been updating his Facebook page with news of dozens of encounters and new converts.

'It is not like anything I have ever seen or experienced before,' he explained. He and Tommie have called this move "The Turning."

In a more recent post (20 June), Yinka speaks of bringing "The Turning" to new towns and cities.

I am beginning to believe that this current outpouring, "The Turning", could be God's own cultural revolution, If we steward this well, I believe that we could see over 1,000,000 people prayed for on our streets with

many giving their lives to Christ. Conservatively if we mobilise to bring this outpouring to the over 1000 cities and large Towns (and hopefully villages) in the UK we will change the consciousness of the nation from being unsure about Christianity to being open, supportive and embracing if it. It will affect our moral values as a nation, and bring a fire into thousands of churches.

The activity was welcomed by Lynn Green, General Secretary of our Baptist Union, who was invited to The Gate on 12 June. She explained the word she had received from God that led to Beacons of Prayer, and how she sensed that He would first move in Reading. This in turn led Lynn to meeting up with Yinka around 12 months ago. Her message to the congregation can be viewed [here](#).

In his first statement, Yinka explains that 15 years ago he was given a prophetic dream from the Lord about revival. 'I saw a river flowing like a waterfall onto the street from the roof the church building we occupied at the time, above this cascading river was the cross.' Leaders in Reading have been meeting every week to prayer for revival.

In recent weeks he has had what he 'can only describe as the manifestation of that lucid dream - I began to see angels everywhere.'

Following Tommie's arrival, all he was hoping for was 'cultural shift in the church', and maybe 10 people added to the church. However, 'I did not see what was coming', he continued. 'We are finding that hundreds of people are happy to pray to give their lives to Christ on the streets of Reading.'

He writes that it could lead to 'full blown revival' in Reading. Other pastors in the town have begun to get involved.

Yinka believes what's happening in Reading is transferable, as it's 'not a technique, it is not a program, it is not a church growth plan but something Holy from the Lord.'

It is simply the empowering of ordinary believers to be able to share the gospel on the streets and that is where the power to transform our cities lies. If we will humble ourselves, not try and control it and allow the Holy

Spirit to flow we will see incredible things on the streets of every city in this nation.

Giving 'huge and eternal thanks' to Jesus, he ends by inviting people to contact him via Facebook should they want to bring Tommie and his team to their city later on in the year. He believes there will be 'a grass roots movement of the Holy Spirit. It is not about superstars it is about ordinary people filled with an extraordinary God.'

Queen's birthday honours for Baptists

A paediatric cardiologist and a minister were among the Baptists recognised in this year's Queen's birthday honours list

Dr Connor Mulholland, OBE

Dr Connor Mulholland, consultant paediatric cardiologist, Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children and lately trustee of the charity the Children's Heartbeat Trust was awarded the OBE for services to healthcare in Northern Ireland.

"It was quite a surprise, out of the blue,' Connor, a deacon Wallingford Baptist Church Oxfordshire, told *The Baptist Times*. 'I've been retired from the health service since 2003!'

His long career featured a three year secondment (1969-71) in Punjab, India with BMS World Mission. In 1976 he was appointed the very first dedicated Paediatric Cardiologist in Belfast. The early years of his work "were devoted to stabilising and making an accurate diagnosis in many ill infants and older children with heart disease," according to this summary on the Children's Heartbeat Trust website.

In 1983 he had the vision to encourage parents to form a support group called Heartbeat and he became a founder trustee. One of Heartbeat's first public roles was to successfully lobby Stormont Officials to create a second Consultant Post in Paediatric Cardiology which was appointed in 1986.

In 2003 Dr Mulholland was appointed Chairman of the Trustees of Heartbeat and was instrumental in appointing a full time Executive Officer and overseeing a change of name to the Children's Heartbeat Trust, to reflect the aims and work of the charity.

When he stepped down as the charity's chair in 2015, his fellow director and former colleague, Paediatric Cardiologist Dr Brian Craig, said, 'Throughout three decades Dr Mulholland has encouraged, supported and led the charity through times of political uncertainty and periods of financial austerity in Health Service funding.

'His voice has at all times been one of reason and he has never failed to support those for whom the charity exists – children and young people with heart disease and their families.'

Connor said he has received great satisfaction in his work. 'It was as though the job was made for me – and God has been with me through the whole of it, through the ups and downs. Christ's community have been very supportive, very much part of my back up.' Connor and wife Sandra moved to Oxfordshire from Belfast in 2011 to be closer to their children.

The Revd Neil Roberts, BEM

Neil Roberts, minister of Chelmsley Wood Baptist Church in the West Midlands, was awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) for services to the community in Chelmsley Wood and North Solihull.

The Other Side of Solihull blog, describing Neil as 'a well-known member of the local community', highlighted how in recent years Neil has helped drive the refurbishment of the church's Three Trees Community Centre. He has also been heavily involved in the debate about the North Solihull Regeneration.

In 2013 he was one of the leading voices in the ultimately successful campaign to rechristen Craig Croft as Chelmond's Cross.

Neil said, 'It was a surprise and really is a recognition of what we have all achieved together as a church and community. The church has worked

hard to make the community centre, now called Three Trees, a real centre of community life and beacon of hope and love for our area.

'We still have a way to go but this is a great encouragement along the way and celebrates all that the church and community have done so far.'

The Baptist Assembly in Wales: 2016

This year's Baptist Assembly in Wales took place under the theme Worth Saving. Jonathan Langley was there

"They seem to like each other," one of the tech guys says. "That's why in theory we're about to start the session and nobody's actually here. They're chatting. Happens every year." The 'they' are delegates at the Baptist Assembly in Wales, and 'here' is the theatre venue for the main worship sessions and talks in Carmarthen.

This is the English speaking Assembly (there's a Welsh speaking one too), hosted by the Baptist Union of Wales, the South Wales Baptist Association and BMS World Mission. The tech guy works for BMS, part of a team that helps to put this Assembly together every year. That means producing, vision mixing, stage managing, sound designing, programme administrating, song wordsing – all of the stuff you know goes into an event like that (and about 40 per cent more that you've never considered). BMS contributes to the programme and planning, too. Why? Because we love the Baptist Union of Wales. Because Welsh Baptists have played a huge and significant role in BMS history for hundreds of years and they are still an essential part of who we are. Because this Assembly is a beautiful thing.

This year's theme is Worth Saving – not to be confused with the latest BMS creation care initiative, also called Worth Saving, which gets a fair look in over the Assembly – with talks and discussions about communities worth saving, a planet worth saving and churches worth saving making up the spine of the event.

Gavin Calver brings a straight-talking energy to his exhortations to boldness and distinctiveness. He's also very funny. His dynamism is offset by Elfed Godding, EA Director of Coalitions and Wales, who encourages the Christian leaders in the room to be smart and strategic

in their proclamation of the truth.

Baptist Union General Secretary Lynn Green brings a prophetic message bordering on mystical as she encourages the Assembly not to miss the literal and spiritual signs of God's calling. A farewell to the much-loved outgoing President, Peter Thomas and a welcoming incoming President, Mark Thomas just serve to amplify the sense that this is a gathering of family, with friendly joshing and heartfelt thanks being the order of the day.

BMS' work with Syrian refugees and Christian Aid's work in Ghana, as well as the various scientific and philosophical approaches that inform our understanding of creation care and climate change, all provide a great deal to think about, while a varied programme of worship and a good emphasis on time and space for prayer and reflection root the Assembly in what it is all about: God's family encouraging each other to see God's kingdom made manifest in Wales and beyond.

In between the main talks, delegates attend seminars on the value of the Welsh language to faith communities, reflecting on climate change at a deeper psychological and emotional level, and a gloriously entertaining public conversation between Roy Jenkins, Lynn Green and her counterpart in Wales, Judith Morris (pictured).

But it's as much about the moments between the programme as the programme itself. You know the kind of thing. The coffee breaks out on the roof or in a muggy seminar room, seeing people you've not seen since last Assembly. Talking about the old days, about the Church and the church, about the speakers and church local mission initiatives and the hip replacements and the grandkids and the refugee crisis. About God's call on our lives. Chatting with the BMS folk on our stand, wearing our 360 degree virtual reality headsets showing images of the countries they work in and the ministries through which we plan to transform a million lives. Just enjoying a lunch with friends.

There is a lot of laughter at the Baptist Assembly in Wales. Very rarely is there a sense of being rushed, of process or production overshadowing people. Yes, it is professional, focused on a higher goal and as ordered as an annual event for hundreds of people must be. But the sense of the

thing, the *flavour*, is of harmony and unity. As if the people actually *like* each other.

Visit the Assembly's downloads page for talks from the event, including Gavin Calver, Elfed Godding and Lynn Green

Jonathan Langley is Head of Content at BMS World Mission

Father's Day welcome at Finchampstead

Vintage sports cars, a golf simulator, sports activities – just some of what was on offer at a Berkshire Baptist church

Finchampstead Baptist Church pulled out the stops to make Father's Day a special time for its community – as well as encouraging people to consider what makes for strength in fatherhood.

The aim was to organise a high quality event catered not simply for blokes, but the whole family, explained minister Chris Simpkins.

On arrival guests were able to admire vintage cars and motorbikes in the church car park, which have been shared by church friends. Once inside there were a range of activities for people to take part in: indoor archery, a digi wall (a fusion of climbing wall and games console), coconut shy, bouncy castles and craft. There was even an opportunity to battle a chess master. Bacon butties and coffee were available throughout.

The activities lasted for 45 minutes, followed by a 30 minute presentation from the main stage, featuring live music, a drama group performing a Fathers' Day rap, and a short message from Chris on the theme of the day, which is strength. He also talked about an upcoming Sunday series on the same theme. Following the talk guests were free to return to the activities.

‘We want to put on a really community focused, high quality event, that’s good for dads and their families,’ said Chris, speaking ahead of the event.

‘We want to give them a vision of what true strength is, and we want to share what God has to say about being a father. For that’s the common thing here – they all want to be better fathers, and God can help them.

‘It’s a hopefully a step to something more. We want them to experience something positive. They will hopefully think there is something in it and want to come to our series.’

It’s the second year the church has organised an event on Father's Day, building on last year’s fun when around 350 come through the doors. Chris explained that the church regularly hosts events on notable dates in the calendar: it’s all part of a culture of invitation, with the congregation equipped and enabled to invite their friends to something of interest. Though there is a core gospel message at their heart, Sundays are deliberately structured to be accessible to non-Christians.

‘It’s a strong priority for people to invite others, for that’s how people come to faith, through invitation,’ said Chris. ‘We work hard to give people the confidence to know they’ll be inviting to something not cringy.

‘We recognise the importance of events as stepping stones, and we make the most of opportunities like Mother's Day, at Christmas, Easter. Events like Man Sunday are pyramid events – they help to introduce people to life here.

‘There’s what we do on Sundays, which is very important, and we also run courses like Christianity Explored, so there are various levels of invitational opportunity.

‘People will come, some will stick and some will find faith. It’s not huge numbers, but it’s lives transformed, and you can see the impact it has on them and their families.’

Theology resources made available

A new website has launched offering theological and spiritual resources which formed the bedrock of the Workshop programme

Running for more than 30 years, Workshop has seen more than 5000 participants from a variety of Christian backgrounds come through the courses held in centres across the country.

Now the course materials, developed by Workshop founder Noel Moules and the teaching team, have become the core components of a new website.

The website was welcomed by the Revd Dr Nigel Wright, former Principal Emeritus of Spurgeon's College, and a former President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain. He said that for a significant number Workshop has been an appropriate stepping stone for work at degree level and/or Baptist ordination.

'I have had links with Workshop since the late 1980s and it has shown itself to be a proven and tested resource,' he explained. 'It has made available learning resources which local congregations are rarely able to supply by themselves.'

'Participants speak of the quality of the materials produced, and the creative ways in which communication takes place. I have been impressed by the rigour and professionalism of the programme in all respects.'

The resources now available on the website cover a broad range of topics with which Christians and the Church are wrestling with today, including sexuality, pacifism, community, doubt and faith among many others.

Noel, who was born to British missionary parents in India and grew up in the foothills of the Himalayas, has spent time as a religious studies teacher, church leader, theologian, campaigner and author.

He said, 'Workshop has always been about creating exciting Christian learning experiences for spiritual formation and applied spirituality.

'It is Jesus-centered, shalom envisioned, scripture serious, values focused, inclusive, empowering and committed to inspiring activism. We have embraced the toughest theological questions and the most demanding moral issues of our time with both rigour and humility, in a way that enables people from all backgrounds to engage with the subject. This new stage in our story opens fresh possibilities for supporting and encouraging people on their spiritual journeys.'

**For more information and to visit the website
visit www.workshop.org.uk**

Baptisms

Bognor Regis Baptist Church, Sussex: Paul Boniface

Charnwood Road Baptist Church, Shepshed, Leics: Sandra Baxter, Nicola Baxter and Cameron Lucas

Cottingham Road Baptist Church, Hull: Hannah Surguy

Stockport Baptist Church, Cheshire: Mohammad Ali, Majid, Maysam, Mohammad B, Mona, Rasool, Shahin, Toni, Ebrahim

Tabernacle Baptist Church, Penarth: Sarah and Jack Westmore

Treeton Baptist Church, South Yorkshire: Katie Emma Saynor

Send your baptism notifications and stories to phobson@baptist.org.uk

Baptism stories

At **Treeton Baptist Church (South Yorkshire)** on Sunday 19 June Katie Emma Saynor was baptised by our Lay Pastor Chris Nuttall. At the same service her son Louis Leo was dedicated. Both Katie and her husband David were welcomed into membership, with David having been baptised at a church which is now closed. The service being a wonderful

spiritual family event with refreshments after the service provided by Katie and David. (submitted by Ida)

On 12 June we had three baptisms at our church, *writes Maureen Walbey, deacon* at **Charnwood Road Baptist Church, Shepshed, Leics.** Sandra and Cameron had been through baptism classes prior to the day. However, after the baptism Howard Ketton, our minister, asked if there was anyone else who felt called to be baptised and Sandra's daughter in law stepped forward to everyone's surprise. Luckily spare clothes were available in anticipation of just such an event. This very special occasion was followed up with a bring and share lunch.

Death

NOLES – Sylvia Ann, died on 16 June 2016. Wife of Anthony, much loved mother of Deborah, Beverley, Jeremy and Jackie, grandmother to Daniel, Fabio, Sarah, Tom, Rachel, Zack and Luke, beloved sister of Valerie.

The funeral will be held on Thursday 7 July at All Saints Church, Walton on the Naze at 11.45, followed by a committal at Weeley Crematorium at 1.15. All are welcome to join the family afterwards at The Bowling Green, Colchester Road, Weeley, CO16 9AD, for some time together over food and drink.

Flowers or donations to Alheimers Society if desired via P.G.Oxley Funeral Directors, 43 – 47 High Street, Walton on the Naze, CO14 8BE, Tel. 01255 675549, email info@pgoxley.co.uk.