



**13 May, 2015**

**News:**

**'Recognise us as valuable partners in building a wholesome society'**

**Lynn Green has urged Baptists to both pray for our political leaders, and write to their newly elected MPs with support and shared concerns**

In a message released in the wake of the General Election, Mrs Green highlighted five shared concerns that Baptists might encourage every MP to commit themselves.

The General Secretary of our Baptist Union began the message by quoting 1 Timothy 2:1-3, before revealing she would be joining church leaders in writing directly to Prime Minister David Cameron in the next few days, “assuring him and his government, both of our prayers as Christian communities, and also our concern that issues of truth, justice, peace and wellbeing are recognised as key priorities for our nations.”

She hoped everyone connected with Baptists Together would take time to “intentionally pray for our political leaders at the outset of this new parliament.”

In addition, she urged churches to write to their local MPs “assuring them of our prayers and encouraging them to recognise us as valuable partners in building a wholesome society for all.”

The shared concerns she invited churches to highlight in their correspondence include commitments to a fair and accessible Welfare and Benefits system, a to recognising and taking active steps to address growing inequalities in our society, and environment and nuclear deterrent issues.

**Bookings close a week before Assembly**

**Tickets sell out for the new look Baptist Assembly**

Tickets have proved popular for the one-day gathering at the 1,200 capacity Kingsgate Centre in Peterborough on Saturday (16 May), and sold out on Friday (8 May). Unfortunately no tickets can be bought on the day.

The gathering will have a different feel from recent Assemblies. It is an intentionally intergenerational event, with the children’s dedicated programme only beginning in

the late afternoon. The event, say organisers, is “an opportunity for all ages to explore and be inspired in mission and discipleship”.

The youth programme Innovation, once again led by Andy and Joy Clark, takes place between 2 and 4pm. The young people will then lead the iOpener Prayer Session from 4.15-5.15pm.

Before then the opening celebration will be an opportunity to welcome and pray for our new President the Revd Jenni Entrican, and hear more of her Daring Greatly theme.

The preparation for Communion will begin during this session, which will then take place during the Big Picnic, when everyone will be encouraged outside to picnic together while being entertained by strolling performers.

The early part of the afternoon sees a busy range of sessions called the Market Place. The sessions are banded under four streams, called Vision and Values, Word and World, 21st Century Disciples and Mission and Ministry (Present and Future). Delegates can plan their afternoon by looking at the programme here.

When it begins at 4pm the children’s programme, led by Arise Ministries, will take the story from Acts 10, considering what it was like for Peter on that rooftop, but also what it means for us to seek God’s heart for the communities we’re a part of.

The closing celebration will welcome and affirm new ministers and mission workers in a new way, and the closing message will be a creative three-parter, from different voices and perspectives.

### **Centre for Anabaptist Studies launches at Bristol Baptist College New centre aims to provide resources for the increasing number of Christians in the UK who want to learn from the Anabaptist tradition**

In recent years the Anabaptist vision has inspired Christians from many traditions, not least Baptists, as we face the challenges of post-Christendom. It has offered fresh insights on peace and justice, faith and politics, hospitality and community, church and mission, discipleship and biblical interpretation.

However, there have been few opportunities or resources for studying Anabaptist history and theology in the UK.

That’s why this year Bristol Baptist College has partnered with the Anabaptist Network and the Mennonite Trust to launch the Centre for Anabaptist Studies at the college.

The founding director of the Centre is Dr Stuart Murray Williams, previously chair of the Anabaptist Network, currently chair of the Mennonite Trust and the author

of *The Naked Anabaptist*. Stuart's doctorate was in Anabaptist hermeneutics.

From October 2015, the Centre will offer a taught MA in Theology, Ministry and Mission comprising five Anabaptist modules (taught both in block weeks and online) and opportunities for doctoral research. It will also offer supervision of postgraduate research.

It presents six webinars a year on Anabaptist themes. These webinars began in Autumn 2014 with a series featuring authors from the *After Christendom* collection. Another key feature is an annual lecture, while the Centre is also now the home for the extensive library and archives previously housed at the London Mennonite Centre.

'The aim of the Centre is to provide resources for the increasing number of Christians in the UK who want to learn from the Anabaptist tradition,' says Stuart. 'We have already had several enquiries from prospective students and welcome many more.'

College Principal the Revd Dr Steve Finamore said he was 'delighted' that the Centre for Anabaptist Studies has been established and is based at the College in Bristol.

'Many of the best insights of the Anabaptist tradition will be important for the future of the life of the churches in Britain and so it's very important that Christians have the opportunity to study this in some depth,' he explained.

'We hope that through its students the Centre will make a significant contribution to enhancing discipleship and mission in the UK and beyond. I am also very pleased that Stuart Murray Williams has agreed to be the Centre director; I cannot think of anyone better to lead this significant initiative.'

Anyone interested in learning more can contact Stuart at [Anabaptist@bristol-baptist.ac.uk](mailto:Anabaptist@bristol-baptist.ac.uk).

**The London Consultation: standing in solidarity with Ukraine  
Christian leaders from across the world gathered to discuss the Ukrainian crisis  
at Lambeth Palace, in an event co-hosted by BMS World Mission**

More than 6,000 people killed and 1.2 million internally displaced in the last year – how should the global Church respond to the Ukrainian conflict? Around 60 delegates and observers grappled with this question at the London Consultation, a special event organised by BMS and Mission Eurasia on Tuesday (28 April 2015) at Lambeth Palace.

Around a horseshoe of tables were delegates from Ukraine, Russia, the UK and across Europe from denominations, Christian organisations and humanitarian agencies. Surrounding the delegates were observers, including a number of Baptist

ministers invited by BMS.

The event was conducted in three languages: Ukrainian, Russian and English with simultaneous translations available so as not to slow down the discussions.

There were four sessions at which speakers explored different aspects arising from the conflict: the concept of the 'Russian worldview' and how certain ideologies within it may be driving the current crisis in Ukraine, how Christians should react to the humanitarian needs, threats to religious freedom and human rights and developing a reconciliation process. The final session was an open discussion of the day's themes.

At the close of the Consultation, a resolution was signed by delegates. The resolution calls on the global Christian community and humanitarian agencies to acknowledge what is happening in Ukraine, and to develop a practical response to support the Ukrainian people.

At the signing, BMS Global Ambassador Revd Dr David Coffey joined hands with Revd Yuri Sipko, former President of the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists of Russia and Bishop Mykhailo Panochko, President of the Evangelical Faith of Ukraine, and each prayed in their own language. The symbolism of them joining together in prayer for Ukraine was an abiding image that many will remember clearly from the Consultation.

Pray that the London Consultation will lead to a renewed effort by the global Christian community to support the people in Ukraine practically and spiritually.

Commenting on the conference the Revd Tony Peck, European Baptist Federation General Secretary said, 'This Conference was a very positive experience that nevertheless highlighted the continuing difficult and challenging conflict situation in Ukraine, especially in the Donbass.

'My own contribution was to speak of preparing even now for the possibility and hope of reconciliation, especially between the churches of Ukraine and Russia. That will continue to be a priority for the EBF as it relates to its member Unions in the two countries.'

For more on the London Consultation, read [Ukrainian Church leaders: The West must wake up to the threat of Russia](#) by Lucinda Borkett-Jones on the Christian Today website. You can also read the full text of the [London Consultation Resolution](#) to fully understand the aims of the conference.

Read [Tony Peck's reflections on travelling to Ukraine just prior to the conference](#)

**Andrew Miles new minister at Belper Baptist Church**

**The Revd Andrew Miles has accepted a call from the members of Belper Baptist Church, Derbyshire to be their new minister. The pastorate began on 18 April**

Prior to accepting the call to Belper Baptist Church, Andrew was working in Brazil as an itinerant preacher but returned to the UK in the autumn of 2014.

Andrew and his wife Talita had been involved in a serious car crash in Brazil in late September 2014. A drunken driver had fallen asleep at the wheel and smashed into the back of their car at about 35mph as they waited at a red light.

A visit to the local hospital found no apparent injury to either Andrew or Talita. However, in the following weeks Andrew had more and more pain in his lower back and began to lose the use of his right leg.

Further investigations were inconclusive but then Andrew got a message from the UK to say his mother had suddenly died. So Andrew flew back to be with his family. After 18 hours of travelling Andrew was struggling to walk and his family took him to A and E.

After surgery and intensive physiotherapy, in late January of this year, the hospital concluded that there was not going to be any improvement in Andrew's mobility. But Andrew was keen to get back to serving God and was put in touch with EMBA.

Shortly after Christmas, he met with the church at Belper and, following a unanimous vote, accepted the church's call to be minister.

Before serving God in Brazil, Andrew has previously been senior minister at Herne Hill Baptist Church in London and prior to that was based at Lochgilphead in Scotland. He has a passion for telling people about Jesus.

Prior to taking up full time ministry as a Baptist minister, Andrew worked in a varied ministry that included working with drug addicts in the Walled City in Hong Kong with Jackie Pullinger, church planting both in the UK and in Spain and teaching in a Bible college.

Belper Baptist Church has been without a minister for just under two years. During that time, the members have been seeking God's will for future ministry within the church.

Andrew's faith in the living Jesus Christ has led him to be committed to the community in which he lives, and the wider world through his involvement in Brazil, Hong Kong and other places.

He is eager to begin his work in Belper as he, along with the church, firmly believes that God has specifically called him to the town. He depends heavily on his wheelchair to get around but he says it slows him down a bit but doesn't stop him!

When asked how these events have affected his faith, he says, "It has strengthened my faith, I have learned something very precious and in a very real way, God is enough".

He looks forward to sharing with other Christian denominations in the town and to explore how God is at work in the area.