

# Urban Life launch

A NEW urban mission and training initiative has 'well and truly launched'.

Dozens of people gathered recently in St Mark's Baptist Church in Bristol to celebrate the official start of Urban Life, which aims to deliver training for innovative and pioneering approaches to ministry and mission in marginalised places.

Urban Life has been formed by Bristol Baptist College, Urban Expression, BMS World Mission and our Baptist Union, with the latter providing much of the funding.

It is facilitated by Mike Pears, accredited Baptist minister and member of an Urban Expression team in Bristol.

Those gathered at St Mark's were drawn from Bristol churches involved in creative urban mission, both Baptist and Anglican. There were representatives from the Baptist colleges in both Bristol and Manchester.

Over an evening of food, liturgy and worship, connections were made and ideas shared.

'It was a celebration of inclusivity,' said Mike 'an evening full of fun and rich experience and we feel well and truly 'launched'.'



Mike describes Urban Life as 'a network of people exploring and researching new approaches to mission and Christian presence in deprived and marginalised neighbourhoods.'

Once fully up and running this network will facilitate training to enable groups to learn in their own context.

It will also provide consultation and training support for churches and associations that are planning to develop mission initiatives in marginalised places.

'For example, if a team in Birmingham is just launching, we can work with them there, on that estate or neighbourhood,' said Mike. 'We are shifting the

centre of gravity away from colleges and seminar rooms.

'It all will be in their context.'

The home page of the website is live, and over the next couple of months much more detail will be added.

At this stage Mike is keen to hear from people involved or exploring a call. 'We want connections and conversations with people interested in mission in marginalised places, so do get in touch!'

**Sign up for Urban Life News, a monthly mailing at [www.urbanlife.org](http://www.urbanlife.org)**

**Contact Mike: [mpears@urbanlife.org](mailto:mpears@urbanlife.org)**

# Minister welcomes pay-day Wonga's debt write-off

A BAPTIST minister involved in a national campaign against the practices of payday lenders has welcomed news that one of the best known is writing off a huge amount of customer debt.

Last Thursday (2 October) Wonga announced it is writing off £220m of debts for 330,000 customers after putting in place new affordability checks.

Wonga's new chairman Andy Haste said new stricter lending criteria would also mean accepting "far fewer applications from new and existing members".

Last year Chris Lewis, the minister at Mount Zion Baptist Chapel in Bonymaen, east Swansea joined the national strategy group of Sharkstoppers, which is campaigning for a law to be introduced that will cap the level of interest on payday loans, as well as supporting the promotion of credit unions as fair alternatives.

He said, 'A lot of us, up and down the country are delighted at the news that Wonga are writing off this amount of debt. That it is



coupled with affordability checks is also good news.

'In Sharkstoppers' campaigns, nationally and locally, we have questioned the validity of the business model that appeared to profit from clients having to roll over loans, thus becoming trapped in a vicious spiral of debt.'

Wonga had been in discussions with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), and Mr Haste said, 'We want to ensure we only lend to those who can reasonably afford the loan in question and, during my review, it became clear to me that this has unfortunately not always been the case.'

'I agreed with the concerns expressed by the FCA and as a consequence of our discussions we have committed to taking

these actions.'

Despite the news, Mr Lewis said much is still to be done.

'For us in Swansea, as for the campaign all over the UK, the work is not over and we are turning our attention to how we can encourage people to better understand the cost of credit.'

'We are encouraging credit union membership, and calling for a payroll deduction arrangement for NHS workers in England and Wales.'

'In Swansea we are looking at some sort of 'Be Credit Savvy' educational vehicle, maybe a website and calling for pupil-run, credit union-backed Junior Banks in all Swansea schools.'

He said 15-year-old Ffion Price, a member of a young people's group at Mount Zion, Bonymaen, joined him in speaking in support of this at the recent Movement for Change event at the Labour Party Conference in Manchester.

Three hundred people were present, the largest fringe meeting of the conference.

# 'Many apartments, cars destroyed'

APPROXIMATELY 5,500 Baptists have been displaced in Eastern Ukraine as a result of the conflict, the All-Ukrainian Union of Associations of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (AUUAECB) has reported.

In total more than 100,000 Ukrainians are displaced from their homes, with thousands more wounded, the AUUAECB stated in a letter to the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) which

gave a graphic description of life in their country.

'Bridges and supply lines are destroyed. Roads and streets are blocked with checkpoints. Cannonade from explosions is heard every night. Many apartments and cars are destroyed. Tanks are ploughing through the city streets.'

The BWA was told that local churches have been mobilised to provide assistance to the

displaced and are collecting and distributing donations to assist those injured.

Campsites are housing families and orphans. Assistance is being given to families that lost loved ones in the ongoing conflict. Health facilities operated by Baptists and other Christian groups are attending to the wounded.

**For the full story visit: [bit.ly/1BVYwqH](http://bit.ly/1BVYwqH)**

# A minister's 30th anniversary

Jacqui Green joined Stony Stratford Community Church in 1984 and has served faithfully ever since



It was a time of thankfulness, looking back and focusing on Jesus at the Buckinghamshire Baptist church recently.

Jacqui was inducted there (then called Stony Stratford Baptist Church) in 1984, and Steve Hepden, the man who preached back then, gave the sermon at her anniversary 30 years later.

She was presented with gifts at the service, which was followed by a lunch for the fellowship that lasted deep into the afternoon. Messages from colleagues were also shared, highlighting the way Jacqui has been a mentor for many.

During her long ministry Jacqui was initially Associate Minister, before becoming Senior Minister in 1994.

'I love my church and consider it a real privilege to have been serving them for so long,' she said. 'I believe that the most important thing is knowing how

much God loves us and then giving that love away. It is a privilege, and exciting, to look for ways of loving and blessing people who do not yet know God.'

Her ministry has always had a strong emphasis on pastoral care, she continued, and of course, there have ups and downs over 30 years.

'You wouldn't believe me if I said otherwise!' she said. 'But we are disciples, on a journey, learning to love as Jesus loved and live as he lived. For me the most challenging verse in Scripture is 1 John 2:6 *Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus walked.* How we handle any problems that come reveals how seriously we take our

discipleship.'

One of the greatest challenges of sustaining ministry over a long time in one place is staying fresh and enthusiastic. In this respect her fellowship has helped Jacqui by releasing her to engage in ministry beyond, which in turn has given her renewed energy and insights to give back to the church.

These opportunities have included Pastoral Team/speaking at Spring Harvest; Hospital Chaplaincy; Trustee of Claybury Trust – a ministry supporting leaders and churches; serving on Baptist Union Council and on local and National Ministerial Recognition Committees.

Following the anniversary service, Jacqui said, 'I really enjoyed the whole day and the fellowship did a wonderful job of making me feel loved, valued and appreciated.

'It was a privilege to have Steve Hepden preach – there can't be many occasions when someone preaches at an induction and a 30th anniversary!

'The worship team also did a great job enabling us to focus on Jesus and enjoy His Presence – after all it is really JESUS it is all about, not us.'

continues his series on leadership

[bit.ly/1Ey8Jhe](http://bit.ly/1Ey8Jhe)

> 'My hope is that we glorify God' – members of the Bicentenary Action Teams heading overseas this week share their thoughts about the year ahead

[bit.ly/1sh6ppqX](http://bit.ly/1sh6ppqX)

> In the silence: In the sometimes painfully quiet months after graduation, Ruth Clemence is discovering a renewed trust on God

[bit.ly/1Ey903N](http://bit.ly/1Ey903N)

> Moving out of our comfort zone: where can we deliver the free gift of Jesus?

[bit.ly/1yPvb59](http://bit.ly/1yPvb59)

## From the www. baptisttimes.co.uk

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

> Five keys to avoid wandering off on your own, not God's, agenda: Darren Blaney

## WW 1 Truces Christmas resources

THE Northumbria and Newcastle Universities' Martin Luther King Peace Committee has prepared resources to mark one of the most remarkable events in the annals of modern warfare: the December 1914 Christmas Truces.

Following weeks of fraternization, men right down the Western front from the North Sea to Switzerland laid down their arms to mark Christmas. These spontaneous acts of festive goodwill directly contradicted orders from high command, and offered an evocative and hopeful – albeit brief - recognition of shared humanity.

The Peace Committee has created two different resource packs: one set is for school teachers, the other for church ministers. They include ideas for carol services, Sunday School activities, and liturgical resources for other worship services.

*Marking the Christmas Truces* allows churches 'to take the opportunity of the centenary to retell not disputed national stories, but the Christian story,' say organisers.

The Peace Committee is named after the US Baptist clergyman and civil rights leader. In 1967, Newcastle University gave Dr King an honorary degree – the only UK university to do so during his lifetime.

To access the free resources visit [bit.ly/1uFe2ag](http://bit.ly/1uFe2ag)

# Service live on Radio 4

BBC Radio 4 is to broadcast its live Sunday morning service from Cannon Street Memorial Baptist Church, Birmingham next weekend (19 October).

The service is the first of three that day which celebrate the bicentenary of the relationship between the Baptist Unions of Jamaica and Great Britain, and BMS World Mission.

The speaker will be Karl Johnson, the General Secretary of the Jamaica Baptist Union, while there also will be contributions from Lynn Green, General Secretary of our Baptist Union.

The service and broadcast begins at 8.10am. There will be two further services at the church, at 11am and 6.30pm.

It is part of a series of events celebrating the 200-year relationship between Jamaican and British Baptists, many of which are taking place in October.

We will share a link to the service once it is available on BBC i-Player via the Baptist Together website and social media channels.

For full details visit [www.200years.net](http://www.200years.net)

## JOBS

**Director, The College of Preachers  
Regional Minister, East Midlands Baptist Association**

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

## MINISTERIAL

**East Sheen Baptist Church**, South West London is pleased to announce that **the Revd Dr Louise Hearn** was inducted as Senior Pastor to our Fellowship on 30 August 2014. Louise comes to us following her service to the Lord at Bethesda Baptist Church in Pembrokeshire in Wales.

On Sunday, 7 September, **Elnur Jabiyev** was inducted as the Minister for International Mission at **Streatham Baptist Church**. On that occasion, we were pleased to welcome David Coffey who preached from Luke 4:14-30.

## DEATH

**NICHOLSON - the Revd John** - A thanksgiving service for the life of the Revd John Nicholson took place at South Parade Baptist Church, Kirkstall Lane, Headingley, on Friday, 19 September, following a family-only committal at Rawdon Crematorium.

John served our Lord and His people for many years after studying at Regent's Park College. A full obituary can be found at: <http://www.baptist.org.uk/obituaries>

## BAPTISMS

**Bilston Baptist Church, West Midlands:** Jade Ehimatie-Brown, Lauren Ehimatie-Brown ..... 2  
**Burwell Baptist Church, Cambridge:** April Atkinson ..... 1  
**Streatham Baptist Church, London:** Sussana Philip ..... 1  
**Willesborough Baptist Church, Ashford, Kent:** Paul Hardisty ..... 1

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