



9 March, 2016

News:

‘A great servant of the Baptist family’

Tributes have been paid to the Revd Dr Roger Hayden, who died last Thursday (3 March), aged 80

Roger served as Area Superintendent of the Western Area of the Baptist Union (now known as the West of England Baptist Association) between 1986 and 2000, having previously been a minister of four Baptist churches: Waterbarn, Bacup (1961-66), Broadmead, Northampton (1966-71), Haven Green, Ealing (1971-81), and Abbey, Reading (1981-86).

A scholarly yet accessible historian, he was committed to explaining Baptist history. He wrote the highly readable English Baptist History and Heritage, and was both a former Vice President and 'stalwart member' of the Baptist Historical Society. He also served on Baptist Union Council for a number of years.

While Roger was ‘a great servant of the Baptist family in a whole variety of ways,’ he was ‘first and foremost a follower of Jesus Christ, a deeply committed man of God,’ said the Revd Nigel Coles, Regional Minister Team Leader at WEBA.

Roger was my immediate predecessor and was a very helpful colleague and encourager of me personally. The last time we met we prayed, read scripture and confessed sins together and this is how I shall remember him. Please pray for his wife, Edwina and their family at this time.

The Revd Dr David Coffey was Baptist Union General Secretary throughout most of Roger’s period as Superintendent. He said:

I valued Roger as a colleague on the Superintendents Board during my time as General Secretary. He never shirked the challenge of digging out the deeper issues behind any proposed changes to the Union and was a fearless champion for causes he felt were being marginalised in public debate. His encyclopedic knowledge of Baptist history ensured we always walked in well trodden paths, but equally he was open to new ways of mission and once he caught a vision he was passionate in promoting its cause.

David also highlighted Roger's humility and the centrality of Christ to his life.

My Presidency of the Baptist Union (1986-87) coincided with his appointment to the Superintendency of the Western Area. During a visit to the annual meetings of the Gloucestershire Association Roger was invited to introduce himself to the gathering. He could have presented his ministerial cv. He might have cast an early vision for his new ministry as Area Superintendent.

Instead Roger gave his testimony along the lines of 'Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so'. For all his numerous titles and achievements, being a disciple of Jesus Christ was central to Roger's life and ministry.

The Revd Dr Keith G Jones, President of the Baptist Historical Society, highlighted Roger's accessible and high quality work as a historian.

The Baptist Historical Society has lost a Vice President and stalwart member of the Society in the death of the Revd Dr Roger Hayden. Roger was a passionate man and an inspiration to many, not least in his work as a historian. His speciality was the Particular Baptists and the development of Baptist life in Bristol and through the Bristol Baptist College. He placed us all in his debt by his persistent scholarship, which was of a high quality. Nevertheless, he was not a remote academic, rather someone committed to explaining our past.

He had a wide range of readers who benefitted from his knowledge through his English Baptist History and Heritage, published in 1990 by the Baptist Union Christian Training Programme.

A private funeral service will be followed by a memorial service sometime in April.

Forty Days of Good News

In the period between Easter and Pentecost Baptists have been encouraged to proactively share the Good News of Jesus

40 Days of Good News, it emerged from the vision for each association to participate in one way or other in 'on the ground evangelism' with the churches they serve. Associations are using the period from 10 April - 15 May (Pentecost) to bring this vision into particular focus, and are responding in different ways.

South Eastern Baptist Association has produced a flyer called 40 Ways for 40 Days, with ideas in six categories covering social action, bridge building, preparation of pre-evangelism, direct evangelism, evangelism among others churches, and among young people.

‘When we are confronted by the challenge of mission and evangelism the first question we must ask is where we shall start,’ it states. ‘This leaflet is designed to answer that very question. It is an ideas leaflet... Read it with an open mind. Ask whether any of the ideas suggested are appropriate for your church.’

Central Baptist Association has linked it to President Jenni Entrican’s “Daring Greatly” theme.

CBA has produced a flyer, which offers a range of church and personal ideas. ‘Doing something brave as a church is at the heart of this initiative,’ it states, ‘wouldn’t it be great if every church in the CBA did ONE BRAVE thing over this 40 day period, stepping out beyond where they feel safe?’ The neighbouring Eastern Baptist Association has adapted the Daring Greatly flyer and distributed it to its churches.

The West of England Baptist Association team is engaging in 40 Days of Good News by resourcing its churches in three ways:

creating a document bringing together 40 ideas for showing and telling the good news; offering one of its team to visit the church for a service or special evangelistic event during this period; providing a series of very short animated videos to use in churches during the 40 days of good news period, to challenge the congregation to try one simple challenge each week.

‘As Christians we are ambassadors of Jesus, sent out to share his great message of grace and mercy,’ said WEBA Regional Minister Alistair Longwill. ‘During these 40 days we particularly want to encourage each other to SHOW and TELL this message in ways that are best suited to each of our geographical and relational contexts.’

‘Let’s encourage each other to step out of our comfort zones and explore ways of being good news in our communities and networks. And let’s pray for and motivate each other to discern and create ways and opportunities to tell our neighbours the wonderful message of Jesus.’

A number of events have already been organised in the East Midlands Baptist Association: Oundle Road Baptist Church has hired a soft play area for mums and tots with a children’s Christian entertainer presenting good news; Blaby Baptist Church has organised a sleepover for the Brownies (which meet regularly at the church) with a Good News focus; regional ministers Dianne Tidball and Mike Fegredo have already been booked to speak at supper events. EMBA has offered ideas which follow Laurence SInglehurst’s “Sowing, Rowing, Keeping” pattern.

It states, “Sharing faith is not so much about ‘telling the truth’ as the ‘outworking of love,’ not so much about requiring people to ‘make a decision’ as being part of a process and what the Holy Spirit is doing in a person’s life over time, not so much about making converts as about making disciples, not so much about a few gifted evangelists proclaiming ‘the truth’ as about every Christian being good news in their neighbourhood.”

Northern Baptist Association is encouraging its churches to engage in evangelism, either through their regular programmes or by running additional events, activities or initiatives, with the intention that these should not merely be one-off projects but ones which can be meaningfully built upon into the future. The Association has an ongoing 'prayer relay' where each church in turn has a week as a focus for the association's prayers: the churches who will be hosting the prayer relay during the 40 days period are being encouraged especially to undertake something evangelistic.

A number of churches in the North Western Baptist Association took part in something similar during Holy Week in 2015. They included the People's Church in Partington and Greenfield Church in Urmston which teamed up to organise an acoustic evening at a local Costa coffee shop with a mutual musician friend, who performed his own songs, interspersed with a little more testimony. Regional minister Phil Jump then spoke about Jesus and the woman at the well.

'It was an easy thing to invite people to, particularly those on the edge of church life,' said Partington pastor Jonathan Boyers. 'It was a natural progression – come and find out more about the faith that fuels us.'

'We had a relaxed evening, and were really happy with it as an event. The people who came along appreciated it. Costa is open to us doing something similar. We've taken confidence in inviting people, and it's challenged us to think about we know and who we are connecting with.'

A statement prepared by Association Team Leaders said that while for some the period between 10 April and 15 May could present an ideal opportunity to engage in some kind of intentional event in which a clear invitation is given for people to become followers of Jesus, for others "it might not be the right time or context".

However, it could be an opportunity to "consider the challenges it raises," the statement continued.

'One probing question that we might all reflect on, whatever role we might have within our Baptist Union is "for all that we are doing and seeking to become – how many people have become followers of Jesus in recent times through our shared endeavours?" As we reflect on our responses to this question, what might the Spirit of God begin to say to us? How can we pray together for a renewed openness to the message of the Gospel?'

The statement concluded with a number of points for prayer and reflection:

- Please pray for this initiative and all those churches and individuals who are involved.
- Please pray that women and men, young and old might be touched and inspired through this initiative, to become followers of Jesus themselves.
- Please consider how your church could become involved by engaging in some form of intentional evangelism or through reflecting on your own mission vision.

- Are there other local churches that you could support and encourage as they seek to engage in this initiative?
- Encourage the members of your church and congregation to pray for opportunities to share the good news of Jesus with the people they come into contact with through their daily lives.

Statement on Calais and Macedonia

Baptist leaders have expressed alarm and dismay at the recent news stories of the treatment of refugees and migrants on European borders. The news that Macedonian authorities have responded with tear gas to a breakthrough at their border with Greece is echoed in scenes from the camp in Calais where people are being cleared from their makeshift homes in what has come to be known as 'The Jungle'.

Representatives of the Baptist Community in the UK have visited the Calais camp on several occasions and been involved in active peacemaking strategies. Describing this week's events, Baptist minister Juliet Kilpin, a regular visitor to the Calais camp, reflected:

My friends are being tear gassed and targeted with rubber bullets on our own border. Children are in hospital suffering effects of tear gas and fires started by the sparks from tear gas canisters. Desperate people who have already fled war and persecution are threatening to harm themselves as they defend their flimsy wooden shacks from bulldozers. Unaccompanied children are in danger of being dispersed and exposed to far greater risks than exist in the camp. It is important that the British people recognise the full picture and do not simply absorb narratives that exasperate the situation, scapegoating those who are living in limbo, defending the only life and home that they currently have.

Although alternative accommodation is being offered, communication is confusing and many residents are not going there because they are afraid – the same people ordering them to move are also tear-gassing them! People are walking out of the camp with nothing, leaving behind the little humanitarian support they were receiving, mostly from British volunteers ashamed at Britain's inadequate response to the migrant crisis.

Baptists Churches and leaders in the UK have been expressing concern about the growing crisis for some time. As well as making regular visits to the Calais camp, many local churches are working ecumenically to provide welcome and support for those refugees who do arrive, and also to campaign for a more just and humanitarian response. Baptists are also part of the National Refugee Welcome Board working with Citizens UK to campaign for safe and legal routes of access to the UK for the needy and vulnerable.

Phil Jump, one of the Baptist representatives to the Citizens UK resettlement board, comments. “Along with Citizens UK we call upon the British government to do three things:

To create an expedited process for the implementation of Dublin III’s family reunion provisions so that all minors who are currently residing in the camps in Calais and Dunkirk with family connections in the UK are able to reunite with their loved ones with immediate effect.

To ensure that those minors who have no legal right to come to the UK are protected and supported within France and that the French child protection process is also expedited to afford them the protection they are entitled to.

To persuade the French authorities that the decision to destroy further parts of the camp in Calais is postponed until all the minors currently residing there are either given child protection within the French system or enabled to reunite with their loved ones in Britain.

Commenting on the situation, Baptist Union General Secretary Lynn Green said:

While we do not underestimate the complexities of the current migration crisis, we cannot remain silent when children, the elderly and other vulnerable people are being harmed and overcome by tear gas on the borders of a community of which we are a part. It is clear that our political leaders need to work for a just and co-ordinated response to those who are simply seeking refuge from conflict, violence and inhumanity in the places from which they have come.

Blogging about baptism

Baptist minister Andy Goodliff explains why he is sharing 40 different accounts of baptism on his blog throughout Lent

This Lent I've set myself the task of posting 40 Days of Baptism: each day I'm posting a story, a sermon, song, a sonnet, or similar around the theme of baptism. The aim was to help the church where I minister and any other interested readers think more deeply about baptism – what it means, how we celebrate it and remember our own.

Finding 40 different accounts of baptism has been a task, but an interesting and enjoyable one and I've found it put me on the path of discovering new thoughts and new things to read. Included are some stories of infant baptism, which some of us might exclaim, "But it's not baptism!" I see this as an opportunity for some receptive ecumenism[1], to hear some stories that may challenge our views and give us pause for thought.

It feels appropriate to think about baptism during Lent because the season is a chance to immerse ourselves in story of Jesus' journey, passion and death, which is what we do as we come to baptism.

Baptism, like the Lord's supper, like the reading of Scripture, is a gift of God in which its meaning never gets exhausted. Hopefully the 40 days of baptism give us a glimpse of that.

They can be read here: http://andygoodliff.typepad.com/my_weblog/baptism/

Reading church unveils redevelopment plans

The fellowship at Caversham Baptist Church hopes the substantial work will give the village an improved building fit for 21st century use

Caversham Baptist Church in Reading has unveiled initial plans for a substantial redevelopment of the Victorian church building that has sat at the heart of the village for the past 140 years.

The current church building was completed in 1877 when the church, having outgrown West Memorial Hall, moved to the new premises in South Street.

West Memorial Hall is now The Waterhouse flats in Gosbrook Road and both buildings were designed by renowned Victorian architect Alfred Waterhouse, who was also responsible for Reading Town Hall, The Natural History Museum and Balliol College, Oxford.

Caversham Baptist Church was last remodelled in 1980, when the pews were removed, new rooms created and better facilities installed.

This latest transformation will make the building more inviting and more accessible, with new glass doors, step-free access at the front and improved signage. However, the exterior will retain the features and design Alfred Waterhouse originally intended.

Inside the church, there are plans for a first floor stretching the length of the building. This will create a large community hall on the ground floor and a worship area upstairs. At the north end of the church, meeting room facilities will be upgraded on both the ground and first floor, as well as improved toilet and kitchen facilities on both floors and enhanced audio and visual capabilities around the building.

The building is currently used by many community groups, including drama, keep fit and photography as well as regularly hosting community meetings. These plans are designed to enhance the experience of the users of the church but also to give the community a multipurpose building that can be used as a hub at the heart of Caversham.

Church Secretary Sue Cantwell said, 'As a church we are excited about a future that includes having facilities fit for 21st century use. The church is ideally positioned in the centre of Caversham and we want to create, not only a beautiful area for worship, but also improved, accessible and attractive facilities for church and community activities.'

'Our strapline is "Showing the heart of Jesus, in the heart of Caversham" and we believe our improved building will help us to do that better.'

In 2013 Caversham Baptist Church sold the North Caversham Baptist Church building and the money from the sale of that property will be used to fund part of this project. The Church and its members will raise the rest of the finances to fund this redevelopment.

Richard Wilson, Church treasurer said, 'These are ambitious and exciting plans which aim to provide a fantastic community facility right in the heart of Caversham. We hope that a cross-section of local residents and organisations will respond and engage in the consultation process to help us shape these plans and bring them to fruition over the next couple of years.'

Caversham Baptist Church would welcome any feedback to this building project and are keen to engage with the community to shape the redevelopment plans.

Members have delivered over 14,500 leaflets to every home in the Caversham area and the initial plans are available on the website www.cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk/redevelopment The plans will also be on display in the church lounge.

The church held an open morning on 5 March where the community was invited to look at the plans over a cup of tea and a biscuit. The architect, church members and the church building planning group will also be available to answer questions and talk the community through the initial ideas.

There is also a short consultation survey, which can be accessed here:
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CavBaptistConsultation>

Alternatively anyone interested can email the church at reddevelopment@cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk to keep up to date with the redevelopment plans and ask any further questions.

Baptisms:

Bishop's Stortford Baptist Church, Hertfordshire: Rianna Jamieson

Blaby Baptist Church, Leicestershire: Steve and Helen Allan

Bluntisham Baptist Church, Cambridgeshire: Carol-Ann Penfold, Lizzi Catterick, Pauline Beaumont, Rob Lemmon

Desborough Baptist Church, Northamptonshire: Judith Lewis-Warren, John Temple, Heather Temple

Dover Baptist Church, Kent: Neil Richards, Terri Smith

Kidderminster Baptist Church, West Midlands: Terry & Eunice Love, Jayne Green, Sally Shephard & Oluwaseun Osim

Kidlington Baptist Church, Oxfordshire: Catherine Nobbs & Ella Newton

Limbrick Wood Baptist Church, Coventry: Andrew Sedman

Oakham Baptist Church, Rutland: Leanne Martin

Rushmere Baptist Church, Ipswich: Fred Allsopp and Clare Williamson

West Wickham and Shirley Baptist Church, Croydon: Hannah Whitman

Wokingham Baptist Church, Berkshire: Alex Freeney, Bethany Hudson, Lauren Clark and Nicole Smith

Baptism stories

Sue Best writes: Andrew Sedman was baptised at Limbrick Wood Baptist Church on the morning of Sunday, 28 February 2016 - the first time the baptistery has been used in 14 years - Praise the Lord!

Michelle Gore writes: In February we had the pleasure of baptising Carol-Ann Penfold, Lizzi Catterick, Pauline Beaumont and Rob Lemmon, all of whom attended our Puzzling Questions course last year and wanted to take their next step on their journey with the Lord. It was a very emotional and uplifting service.

Deaths:

MARKWELL, Margaret widow of the late Revd. Kenneth Markwell passed away peacefully on 29th February aged 92 at Rushden Park Nursing Home, Rushden, Northants, where she had recently moved from Hitchin. The very loving and much loved Mum of Gill and David, Grandma, Great-grandma, relative and friend. Thanksgiving Service at Tilehouse Baptist Church, Upper Tilehouse Street, Hitchin SG5 2EE on Wednesday 9th March 1.45pm. Donations in her memory for Barnardo's and Save the Children may be sent to Chenery Funeral Services Ltd, 44 Bedford Road, Hitchin SG5 2TY. For further details contact Gill Matthews; gill.matthews56@hotmail.co.uk; Tel. 01933 316155.

Jobs

Family Worker, Carey Baptist Church, Preston

Finance Manager, the Baptist Union of Great Britain

Regional Minister, Heart of England Baptist Association

Ordained Minister, The Methodist Church in the Isle of Man

Youth Pastor/Worker, Downton Baptist Church

Public Engagement Officers, Sailors' Society

Ecumenical Accompaniers, Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine + Israel (EAPPI)

Tutor and coordinator of ministerial formation, Bristol Baptist College

Ministerial Support Worker, Potter Street Baptist Church, Harlow, Essex

For more information on all these positions, visit <http://www.baptist.org.uk/jobs>

Notices

Flames of Prayer

Lynn Green is encouraging all our Baptist churches to join together in creating a Beacon of Prayer – sharing the ways in which God is at work in and through our churches and communities. She would like church leaders to download and print a flame template (if possible on yellow or orange paper), and then write down where you see God at work in and through your church/community. Bring it with you to this year's Baptist Assembly in Oxford on 14 May, or send it to the Assembly office by 29 April. Full details are on the Baptists Together website.

http://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/461204/Flames_of_Prayer.aspx

New Pack Helps Churches to Address Domestic Abuse

1 in 4 women in the UK experience domestic abuse. This International Women's Day (8th March), Christian charity Restored called on churches to make addressing domestic abuse a greater priority. To help them do so, Restored has developed and published a new 40-page Church Pack. Download your FREE copy at www.restoredrelationships.org/churchpack or, for a printed version, email Restored at info@restoredrelationships.org with your contact details.

Urban Life will be co-hosting with Pioneer Mission Leadership Training an upcoming Creative Conversations Day, free of charge, at Bristol Baptist College on Friday 15 April.

More details here:

<http://urbanlife.cmail20.com/t/ViewEmail/i/B06388164243462A/7F405145F2B93FC0F6A1C87C670A6B9F>