

## Council commitments

HOW to embody the renewed culture of our Union, further work on its priorities and strategy, and a presentation on pioneering mission all featured at the latest gathering of the Baptist Union Council.

Ministerial Recognition Rules, an update on the review of Ministerial Selection and Formation, the election of new trustees, and the continuing conversation around sexuality were also agenda items. For the first time a Council Facebook group was created, enabling people to feed their thoughts into the discussions, ask questions and interact with Council members. By the end 350 people had joined the group.

This was the second meeting of the Council in its new form, with a much smaller and revised membership and reduced business content. Moderator the Revd Sheila Martin reminded everyone that the two-day gathering was a time of listening to God, 'so we can discern the strategic direction God wants us to move in.'

Wednesday morning and early afternoon were spent looking at aspects of the renewed culture that we want to develop as a Union. Significant work has been done by Council, the Cultures Group and the Steering Group to

help articulate this culture, and a document outlining this was shared:

In what was the first in series of discussions around tables (reflecting the desire to make Council a space for listening and discerning) Council members were asked to explore a series of questions together:

Where do you see our new



culture already present?

What would need to happen for our renewed culture to become real in your setting? What would you need to change and prioritise?

The final question was: what are *You* going to do about embedding this culture?

Those gathered were encouraged to make a commitment to what they would do personally to achieve this. The pledges were attached to a 'peer accountability wall' (pictured) where they will be looked at next time Council meets.

The relationship between

pioneers and the more established church was highlighted in session on mission on Thursday afternoon. The presentation was given by the Revd Simon Goddard, a regional minister (EBA) who helps to lead the Pioneer Collective, which is seeking to identify 400 Baptist pioneers in the next over years.

Both were vital, he said, and shared a picture of a forest: a mix of established trees; those that have come to the end of their life; and new life, growing within the protection of the forest. Pioneers were risk taking and incarnational, he continued, and it's always better taking risks if you are coming from a settled community.

The Pioneer Collective is not starting something new, but attempting to offer support, more training and improve structures. And people are being raised up, Simon added: God is calling them, and one of the tasks of our Union is to 'identify them, encourage them, and let them go'. He added, 'I am passionate about pioneers because they are part of our renewal.'

**For a full Council report:**  
<http://bit.ly/1hZtkOe>

**To join the Facebook group**  
visit: [on.fb.me/1YCoW8](https://on.fb.me/1YCoW8)

## Call for clarity on use of UK drones by US forces

CHURCHES are calling for the Ministry of Defence to clarify its deployment of UK drones in Afghanistan after a Defence Committee report, issued on Tuesday (25 March), confirmed the likelihood of UK drones having been used by US drone operators.

Leaders of the Methodist Church in Britain, the United Reformed Church and the Baptist Union of Great Britain have backed a call made in the Defence Committee report, urging the MoD to provide clarity on whether UK Reaper aircraft have been operated by US personnel.

The Defence Committee report states that: 'It is important that it is clear that UK aircraft have only been utilised within Afghanistan and always in accordance with UK Rules of Engagement.'

Steve Hucklesby, Policy Adviser for the Churches' Joint Public Issues Team, said, 'The lack of accountability over civilian deaths from air strikes



has been a serious concern in Afghanistan. UK and US Rules of Engagement are likely to differ in some important aspects.

'For example, the Defence Committee report states that the Royal Air Force does not fire missiles from drones unless there is a zero expectation of civilian casualties. Once you hand control of your aircraft to another military, you have no say in how they will be used.'

The United Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) reported that in 2013 there were 182 civilian deaths from air strikes in Afghanistan. Women and children comprised

almost half of these deaths.

It is not known how many of these deaths were caused by drones, or how many were a result of US air operations as opposed to UK air strikes. UNAMA suggest that the civilian death toll indicates the need for further review by international forces of pre-engagement considerations and precautionary measures.

Mr Hucklesby added, 'Although the Ministry of Defence discloses little in the way of information on the UK use of drones, it seems likely that our use of drones operates to a more 'precautionary' stance.

'However, it also appears that we then lend our aircraft out to others who operate to different standards.

'The MoD states that UK drones have not been used by the US in Pakistan. Nevertheless, it seems that we do permit the use of UK drones by US forces with no accountability to the British public.'

## Challenging injustice resource

A NEW resource designed to empower and inspire Christian leaders and their churches to engage in campaigning for the global poor has been launched by Christian Aid.

'The Prophetic Church' outlines the theology of campaigning for justice, uses historical examples to illustrate the long Church tradition of speaking truth to power and

highlights what Christians are doing today to challenge the structures which keep people poor.

One of the contributors is the Revd Simon Jones, Ministry Team Leader at Bromley Baptist Church, who tells the remarkable story of William Carey's campaigning work in India.

Carey, father of the modern missionary movement, was an

activist who 'modelled a way of mission that engaged with pressing social and economic concerns of his day', Simon said.

The booklet is free to download and an accompanying summary includes suggestions for small groups on how to use the resource. Free hard copies can also be ordered at [www.christianaid.org.uk/theoppheticchurch](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/theoppheticchurch).

# Rugby World Cup 2015

The third largest international event of its kind will be here in the UK in the autumn of 2015, writes **Baptist chaplain Dave Chawner**. Can the church engage its local community as it did around the Olympics?



In 2003 England snatched the glory – remember Jonny Wilkinson’s match winning kick? In 2007 against all odds England reached the final. In 2011 Wales just lost out in a nail biting semi-final. All this drama and passion will be on our doorstep as England host Rugby World Cup 2015.

48 games in 13 venues from Newcastle to Exeter and Cardiff to Brighton spread over just six weeks. 20 international squads using 50 training venues. Local festivals of rugby in every major town and city. Half a million fans from 100 different countries. Wall to wall media coverage.

Here is another golden opportunity for the church to engage with a national event and with its local community as it did around the Olympics. And Engage 2015 is here to help, providing a menu of ideas and resources many of which can be built into existing activities.

Backed by the denominations and many of the organisations involved with More Than Gold, we are working closely with the tournament delivery body, England Rugby 2015, to provide hosting for participants’ families, chaplaincy to the squads, games pastors and volunteers.

At the local level there will be opportunity to develop partnerships to screen matches, host community festivals, experiment with touch rugby, stage quizzes and speaker events, minister to locally based squads and their supporters, and much more.

Irrespective of limitations on resources there will be ways in

which your church can link into your community during RWC 2015. Don’t risk missing out on these God given possibilities to serve and to share. Start thinking and planning now.

**The Revd Dave Chawner, chaplain for the England team in 2011, is the co-ordinator of Engage, an organisation created to help churches engage with the tournament**

**Register your interest by contacting [david.chawner@engage2015.co.uk](mailto:david.chawner@engage2015.co.uk), and look out for the website [www.engage2015.co.uk](http://www.engage2015.co.uk) due on line after Easter 2014.**

it means to be intergenerational  
<http://bit.ly/1hZszVo>

> When rain falls like lead - the unexpected death of his sister led an associate minister to explore the presence of God in the darkness of suffering  
<http://bit.ly/1gtaTUD>

> British Baptist pastors wanted overseas - the International

Baptist Convention has several vacancies in Europe and beyond  
<http://bit.ly/1I6KDZz>

> A prayer for End Hunger Fast – calls for courage and “the will to end the hunger that shames our society”  
<http://bit.ly/1dQ3J7W>

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

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

> Our journey with Today not Tomorrow – how one church has been working through what

## Care on Twitter

WORKING in healthcare and interested in the spiritual side of care?

A new twitter feed set up by a Baptist chaplain might of interest.

The @WeChaplains account is designed to provide a forum for those working in healthcare to discuss and be resourced in spiritual care.

It was set up by the Revd Dr David Southall, an accredited Baptist minister who is Chaplaincy Team Leader at the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust.

He was inspired after discovering the WeNurses website which holds online chats for people working in healthcare to share tips. He encouraged the group to host a twitter chat on spiritual care in December, and due to its popularity subsequently set up the dedicated feed.

He said WeChaplains has two aims: to provide a forum for healthcare chaplains, and for getting spiritual care in the NHS a higher profile.

The account has already gathered more than 1180 followers in its short life, with followers from the health care community. They are not just chaplains either – nurses, CEOs, doctors, patients and relatives have all followed and contributed.

‘The account is for anyone who has a passion about spiritual care in the NHS,’ said David.

David, who runs a blog sharing good news stories about hospitals in Worcestershire, has organised a group of moderators to help run it.

# Noah ‘a powerful film’

FREE official community resources to help people explore the new film *Noah* are now available.

The film stars Russell Crowe as Noah and is inspired by the biblical story. It also features Emma Watson, Jennifer Connelly, Ray Winstone and Anthony Hopkins, and is directed by the visionary filmmaker Darren Aronofsky.

*Noah* is in UK cinemas from 4 April and to mark this the educational charity Damaris Trust has created a range of official resources for community groups.

There is a leader’s guide, providing everything to put on an event around the film; thematic videos that are ideal for use

in church services and school assemblies, and a supplementary resource for churches, which will provide additional questions and biblical reflections.

Damaris Trust co-founder Nick Pollard said, ‘*Noah* is a powerful film that builds on the short biblical story by drawing in concepts and insights from the rest of the biblical narrative.

‘It was such a pleasure to create these official resources and we hope that they will be of great benefit to people as they explore questions of faith and doubt, righteousness and wickedness, judgment and mercy, and the relationship between humanity, the world and God.’

Visit [www.damaris.org/noah](http://www.damaris.org/noah)

## JOBS

**Full-time Café manager and Part-time Volunteer Co-ordinator/ Assistant manager, Hawick Community Café**  
**Pioneer Mission Enabler, Southern Counties Baptist Association**  
**Children and Youth Worker, Bessels Green Baptist Church**  
**Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship), United Reformed Church**

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

## DEATH

**BOONE, Marjorie Lois Boone** passed away peacefully in Worthing Hospital on Monday 17 March after a protracted illness. She will be sadly missed by her husband, David, and her children, Tim and Liz.

## BAPTISMS

**Amesbury Baptist Church, Wiltshire:** Terry Bickerstaff . . . . . 1  
**Belle Vue Baptist Church, Southend on Sea:** Aimee Gilroy . . . . . 1  
**Bishop’s Stortford Baptist Church, Herts:** Helen Bintley . . . . . 1  
**Chatsworth Baptist Church, West Norwood:** Chantel Dixon, Edwin Junior Smith, Moses Smith, Edrisa Smith . . . . . 4  
**Newport Pagnell Baptist Church, Buckinghamshire:** Evelyn Goss, Peter Forster and Tim Pring . . . . . 3  
**Thatcham Baptist Church, Berkshire:** Matthew Clover . . . . . 1

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