

# Concern in Iraq

CHRISTIANS in Mosul have been ordered to leave the city or face execution by Islamic State (IS, formerly ISIS) militants.

As a result Mosul is empty of Christians for the first time in the country's history.

According to Middle East Concern, the militant group controlling Mosul, IS, summoned Christian leaders to a meeting on July 17 to notify them of Islamic rules to be applied to non-Muslims – including the imposition of jizya, a protection tax. Islamic State is imposing strict Sharia law over the territories it has taken by force.

When Christian leaders failed to attend, IS announced that remaining Christians should leave Mosul or face execution by July 19.

Canon Andrew White, also known as the Vicar of Baghdad, shared the news, making an urgent plea for prayer on Saturday via his Facebook page. 'Serious threat of death to Iraqi Christians. We seriously need your prayers ISIS have stated they will start killing all the Christians in Mosul from mid day Saturday unless they convert or pay jazeera tax, this is really seriously (sic), we need your prayers.'

Even before that, observers



believed that as few as 50 Christian families remained in Mosul. Many had already fled to areas of northern Iraq under Kurdish control.

It's believed that most of the remaining Christians have now left. 'For the first time in the history of Iraq, Mosul is now empty of Christians,' Patriarch Louis Sako told the AFP news agency.

A fact-finding team from the charity Release International - a partner of Middle East Concern - has just returned from northern Iraq to investigate the plight of Christians caught up in the conflict.

Most of the Christians they interviewed despaired of ever

returning to their country, and many just wanted to leave the Middle East.

Many church leaders could see no future for Christians in Iraq and feared that within a generation Christianity would be extinct in the land.

'The terror is palpable,' said Release Chief Executive Paul Robinson.

'That fear is driving Christians from their homes.'

'If IS behave true to their form in Syria, then the Christians who remain in Iraq under their control can expect to live a life of subjugation under their brutally-enforced variation of Islamic law, and to have to pay for the privilege.'

# Life... after Street life

THE latest film from Acting on Impulse, an associated ministry of Altrincham Baptist Church which works with socially excluded people, has launched.

'Life After Street Life' follows the gang of characters from the homeless community who featured in last year's music video 'Streetlife.' A series of four episodes shot in documentary style, it also features Coronation Street characters Sophie Webster (Brooke Vincent) and Maddie Heath (Amy Kelly).

The film saw the actors working for five days with professionals in locations around Salford, Manchester and Trafford.

It was directed by CBeebies' Joe Chambers, written by Drew Ballantyne and produced by Acting on Impulse founder, and member of Altrincham Baptist Church, Lauren Pouchly.

The film was premiered on Friday night (18 July) in front of 200 people at the Z-arts theatre in Hulme and the first episode is now available on Youtube.

Like previous Acting on Impulse productions, the characters and storyline were



developed through workshops and reflect the actors' real experiences.

Lauren, who set up Acting on Impulse in 2007 with the aim of giving homeless and marginalised people a voice through film and theatre, said the latest project had been 'an amazing adventure' for the actors.

'They've worked through gales, rain and freezing cold like complete troupers.'

'They've travelled to locations all over the city and worked from early to late,

standing for hours. There was no script to prepare them for the crazy things that happened to them each day and we couldn't be prouder of the end result.'

A new episode will be released on Youtube each Friday. In addition to Life After Street Life, Acting on Impulse has now produced three short films, two stage productions and a music video, which has received more than 67,000 views on Youtube.

**To find out more visit [www.actingtonimpulse.net](http://www.actingtonimpulse.net)**

# Update on Donetsk University

LAST week we reported how Pro-Russian separatist terrorists had taken control of the campus and buildings of Donetsk Christian University, a leading Baptist seminary in Ukraine.

All staff and students have now been evacuated, but the armed group – named Oplot – still control the building.

In total around 2,000 armed soldiers are occupying the

dormitories of universities, schools and hotels in the city.

Taras Dyatlik, director of Educational Development Department explained, 'The separatists promised to turn Donetsk into the second Stalingrad, which they have so far, unfortunately, been successfully doing.'

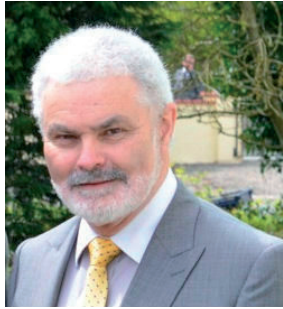
'Thousands people are leaving Donetsk every day because of the

war. 'All workers and faculty members had to flee from the campus leaving most of their belongings at Donetsk Christian University, which has one of the best Protestant theological libraries in the former Soviet Union.'

Donetsk Christian University values everyone's prayers in this military conflict.

# Baptist Union of Wales begins search for a new General Secretary

Current incumbent the Revd Peter Thomas will stand down at the end of the year



PETER (pictured) was appointed to the role in January 2005, having served as part-time Assistant General Secretary for 18 months in an interregnum. This summer he celebrates 40 years in ministry, and he will officially retire on 31 December.

Reflecting on his tenure as BUW General Secretary, he said there had been many highlights as well as challenges. 'There is a maxim that states that "Life should not be measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away."

'As I face these final months in office and prepare to pass the baton of leadership to my successor at the turn of the year, I thank God for those many instances that made me gasp with excitement at the wonderful things that He has done and is doing within our Union.

'The many blessings, the doors of opportunity, the thrill of journeying with people called by God and to discern his purpose for their lives. The joy of seeing an increasing number of new ministers and new models of ministry over the years and of being part of a small but wonderful and dedicated team at the BUW Office in Carmarthen.

'Above all I thank God for my dear wife Meryl for her love, patience and understanding, without whose constant support I would not have been able to manage the responsibility of office.'

The Revd Simeon Baker, the BUW's Director of Mission,

said, 'Peter has been a wonderful servant of the Union during his time as General Secretary and more importantly a true servant of Christ.

'He has served with visionary leadership that has been brave enough to take risks whilst graciously holding together the diversity of the Baptist Union of Wales. He has consistently prioritised mission and encouraged new ministries wherever possible. There is no doubt that Peter will be greatly missed when he stands down later this year and we wish him and his wife Meryl well in retirement.'

The process of appointing a successor has now begun. The role is being advertised with interviews set to take place on 15 September.

'I pray God's guidance upon those who will be involved in the process of appointing a new General Secretary over the summer,' Peter continued, 'and pray God's richest blessing upon the person that He has chosen and called to take up the baton and to carry on the work.'

Carolyn Skinner, someone who does just that

[bit.ly/1ke0yzi](http://bit.ly/1ke0yzi)

> Standing in the gap between Israel and Gaza - how can Christians respond amid this violence and hatred? A response from an Arab-Israeli Baptist church leader

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

> Review, Kansas, Shepherd's Bush Empire: A rare UK gig for the legendary American rock band with an unusual thread of genuine faith-searching

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

> Local news: Exhibition features Baptist First World War fallen - and inspires pupils

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

## From the www. baptisttimes.co.uk

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

> Interested in reaching out to people in gyms, night clubs and coffee bars? An interview with

## BWA re-elect Neville Callam

BAPTIST World Alliance (BWA) General Secretary Neville Callam has been re-elected by the BWA General Council at its meeting in Izmir, Turkey, to another five years in office.

Dr Callam, a Jamaican, became the first person who is neither North American nor European to lead the global Baptist organisation when he was elected in 2007 at the BWA General Council meeting in Accra, Ghana. His new term runs from 2015-2020.

Dr Callam came to the office of general secretary at a time of major constitutional and operational changes within the global organisation for Baptists, many with potentially major implications on the future of the BWA.

Taking what he calls a "collaborative approach to leadership," Dr Callam worked closely with other BWA leaders to successfully implement many of the changes.

Much work was also done to streamline the administration of the BWA office.

A Covenant on Intra-Baptist Relations was also adopted to provide a framework for BWA response to the diversity of within the BWA. It assists member organizations to understand that all equally belong in, and are needed by, the BWA.

Membership has grown since Dr Callam came into office, moving from 214 to 231 member organisations in 121 countries and territories.

## BT Weekly Round-up update

CHANGES are taking place to the way we send out *The Baptist Times* Weekly Round-Up.

Currently the email is sent to ministers, church secretaries, treasurers and other individuals who have subscribed to receive it.

With the imminent arrival of our new database, the way in which data for these emails is stored will change.

If you are currently a minister, church secretary or church treasurer, we will be able to use the email address we have for you on the new database, and you do not need to do anything further.

If you do not hold one of these roles in your church, but would like to continue to receive *The Baptist Times* Weekly Round-up, you will need to confirm your name and email address by

completing a short form on our website.

We will then make sure that your name and email address are included on our Union's database so that you continue to receive this mailing.

Please make sure that you complete this form by the end of July so that you don't miss any of our emails. There is also the option to receive the Monthly News from our Union (formerly called 'Webwatch').

Visit <http://bit.ly/1qCpWSr>

As a result of these changes and staff holidays, the next Baptist Times Weekly Round-up will be **21 August**.

News, opinion pieces and features will continue to be published at [www.baptisttimes.co.uk](http://www.baptisttimes.co.uk)

**THE Racial Justice Service of the London Baptist Association takes place on 14 September at Streatham Baptist Church (6.30pm). The theme of this year's service is "Everybody is Somebody."**

**Roger Samuels, a gospel vocalist, will be leading worship and theologian Dr Anthony Reddie will be preaching. Refreshments after the service: please inform Cynthia Arthur if attending. [cynthia.arthur@londonbaptist.org.uk](mailto:cynthia.arthur@londonbaptist.org.uk)**

### JOBS

**General Secretary, Baptist Union of Wales  
Financial Accountant, Baptists Together  
Chaplain, the Abbeyfield Society**

For more details visit: <http://www.baptist.org.uk/jobs>

### BAPTISMS

**Moriah Baptist Church, Risca:** Sarah Jones, Victoria Walters, John Lewis  
**Quorn Baptist Church, Leicestershire:** Hannah Bursell and Susannah Smith . . . . . 2  
**West Wickham & Shirley Baptist Church:** Sylvia Rowe, Hannah Egan . . . 2  
**Wokingham Baptist Church, Berkshire:** Emma Foster and Adam Green . 2

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