

## What difference do faith groups make to society?

THAT'S the question being asked by the Cinnamon Network in a new, wide-ranging national audit which will be presented to church and community leaders, local authorities and government bodies after the General Election next year.

The Cinnamon Network is a not-for-profit organisation helping local churches across the UK to run projects for those people most at need in their communities.

It has just launched Cinnamon Faith Action Audits, a national initiative to capture the work done by local churches and other faith groups across the UK.

Carried out by a network of hand-picked 'local champions', Cinnamon Faith Action Audits will record faith-based social action in up to 50 regions, creating an extensive picture of faith in action in 2015.

The audits will collate responses from local churches and other faith groups across villages, towns and cities to present a report of the time invested and impact on communities.

The results will be presented to church and community leaders, local authorities and government bodies shortly after the General Election in May 2015.

To find out more visit <http://www.cinnamonnetwork.co.uk/cinnamon-faith-action-audits/>

## Youthwork Conference offer

BAPTISTS thinking of attending Youthwork the Conference 2014 have the opportunity to get £10 discount on the full weekend price.

Enter the code YC2014BU on the checkout to receive the reduced price. This offer is valid up until the start of the conference.

Youthwork the Conference is an annual gathering of Christian youth workers from all over the country, and is being held from 14 – 16 November at the Congress Theatre, Eastbourne.

Main stage (Big Room) speakers include Tamsin Evans, Andy Croft and Justin Welby.

There are also 25 seminars covering topics such as burn-out, social media and creative resources in evangelism.

As in previous years, there will also be a Baptist youthworker reception on the Saturday evening, 5.15-6.15pm in the Devonshire Room.

It's a great opportunity to meet up with fellow Baptist youthworkers at the conference, with pastries and coffee available.

If you know of any Baptist youthworkers who are planning to attend, please do pass the information on.

To book for the conference visit [bit.ly/1xnqii0](http://bit.ly/1xnqii0)

### JOBS

**Part-time Regional Minister, South Eastern Baptist Association Leadership development programme, secondment opportunity, Baptists Together**

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

### DEATH

**WEBSTER, Ruth** - On Wednesday 17 September, a former Lyme Regis resident, Mrs Ruth Webster (née Huckle) died peacefully at a Nursing Home in Sheffield, aged 86.

Ruth was for many years in the 1950s the Secretary of Lyme Regis Baptist Church, and together with Mrs Iris Warren ran a thriving Girls' Brigade company in the town.

She moved away with her father to Bath, and later married and moved to Sheffield. The service of celebration for her life is to be on Friday 26 September at 3.30pm at Carterknowle Methodist Church, Sheffield.

### BAPTISMS

**Ashford Baptist Church, Kent:** Sarita Goacher, Tara Dickens, Jane Harrington..... 3  
**Leigh Baptist Church, Lancashire:** Geoff Gardner..... 1  
**Long Buckley and Brington Baptist Church, Northamptonshire:** Kristen Middleton; Elizabeth Garrett..... 2  
**Norbury Baptist Church, London:** Amy Chin..... 1  
**Rugby Baptist Church, Warwickshire:** Simon Clifford, Meryl Lovatt..... 2  
**Walmer Baptist Church, Kent:** Catherine Norman-Symonds..... 1

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

# Military caution

THE UK Government must not give into rhetoric that Islamic State can be 'simply bombed out of existence', church leaders, including Lynn Green, said this week.

As Britain prepares to recall Parliament this Friday to approve air strikes against Islamic State, the leaders said that military intervention should only be part of a broad political and economic strategy which must have the support of countries in the region. However, they are not certain that 'the most crucial elements of that strategy are in place'.

The statement was signed by Baptists Together General Secretary Mrs Green alongside Ken Howcroft, President of the Methodist Conference, and Gill Dascombe, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference.

They stressed that military action could help to protect persecuted minorities and prevent IS from expanding its control in Iraq.

However, it carries "huge risks". Establishing a broad strategy supported by the region is "crucial", and while the leaders recognise the Government's attempts to involve Iran, there are a number of 'unanswered questions that must urgently be



addressed. For example, what is the level of commitment among countries in the region to take steps to prevent the funding of violent extremism - not only in Iraq and Syria but more broadly?"

In addition, countering extremist violence in Iraq requires that 'Iraqis effectively address the underlying grievances that provided support for the rise of IS. The situation in Syria is more chaotic and the effectiveness of external military intervention less certain'.

The statement also called on the Government to extend further support to refugees from both Iraq and Syria, noting that only a handful of Syrians so far have been resettled in the UK.

The leaders pledged to pray that the leaders in government 'who grapple with seemingly impossible situations' will be guided by God's wisdom and peace.

The statement was

accompanied by a briefing document from the Joint Public Issues team examining issues surrounding military intervention in Iraq and Syria.

The document stated that there are circumstances in which our nation 'may be called upon to support military intervention', but without guarantees of regional support for a comprehensive strategy in both countries, 'there is likelihood that military intervention now, including the provision of arms to militia forces, will add to the increasing cycle of violence that has been a notable feature of the past few years.'

The document outlined three potential action points for church members:

- **Stress** the importance of UN sponsored human rights monitoring in Iraq and Syria

- **Urge** that refugees and displaced are adequately protected

- **Be vocal** concerning the threat to historic Christian communities across the Middle East and seek further alliances with Muslim partners to counter intolerance and extremism.

Prayer resources have also been shared: [bit.ly/1quyVIn](http://bit.ly/1quyVIn)

# The role of Baptists in Scotland

SCOTTISH Baptists will be exploring the place of their churches in the nation at the forthcoming Assembly.

So wrote Alan Donaldson, General Director of the Baptist Union of Scotland, in the latest edition of Connect, his Union's magazine.

He noted how the recent independence referendum debate that 'grew in intensity' over the last 18 months 'raised many as yet unanswered questions'.

Many were issues of justice, compassion, integrity and wisdom 'that relate to our daily walk as disciples of Christ'.

'Trident does not cease to be an issue for the future of Scotland because the referendum is over,' stated Mr Donaldson

'The distribution of wealth, justice and influence within Scotland are issues we must grapple with and act upon as disciples of Jesus. Seeking to live 'under Christ's rule' means engaging with the way our taxes are spent and supporting the building of a better Scotland, based on Christ's Kingdom values.'

Several of these issues will be



explored at the Scottish Baptist Assembly at the end of October.

'How will we seek to make a difference when we see injustice?' said Mr Donaldson. 'How will we respond with compassion when we observe or experience prejudice?'

'How will love for our neighbour affect our engagement with the local health service or schools?'

Elsewhere Scottish Baptists have voiced similar opinions. The Revd Dr Stuart Blythe, new rector of the International Baptist Theological Seminary, expressed his hope that the referendum was an opportunity for churches 'to try and work out how they think the issue of mission and discipleship relate to the

wider social/economic/political context'.

'I'm not sure how many of them did that,' he said, 'But I hope churches who embraced that will carry on.'

Another role for churches in civic Scotland, he tweeted, was to 'call for politicians to keep promises'.

This point was made by Andy Scarcliffe, minister of Portobello Baptist Church in Edinburgh. On his Facebook page he spoke of the 'huge disillusionment expressed over the undermining of the integrity of political leadership', and how 'a different kind of victory for all would see an honouring of last minute promises, but also righteous leadership which can be trusted.'

# Equipping young women leaders

A NEW discipleship and leadership opportunity for young women aged 18-30 called the Esther Collective has been launched by Girls' Brigade Ministries.

Over the course of nine months, The Esther Collective aims to foster a community of women, both in person and online, that disciple, encourage and mentor one another. It wants

to equip this generation of women leaders to serve God in the world.

Through a series of five Saturdays over the course of a year, members of The Esther Collective will have the opportunity to meet other women, have a Q+A session with Christian women from a range of backgrounds, share food, develop their faith, and more.

Members will also have access

to an online hub filled with blogs, articles and resources. They will be encouraged (and supported) to find a mentor, and to commit to reading the Bible in a year.

**To find out more, email Charlotte at [charlotte.hendy@gb-ministries.org](mailto:charlotte.hendy@gb-ministries.org) or download a booking form from <http://theesthercollective.jimdo.com/booking-form>.**

# Adoption into God's family

Home for Good founder Krish Kandiah explains the invaluable support his fellowship have given during his family's fostering and adoption journey



MIDNIGHT. The phone rings and not quite awake we answer. It's social services and there's an emergency.

Can we give a sibling group somewhere safe to stay for a night? We rummage around for bedding and toothbrushes and wait for them to arrive. We wonder how traumatised they will be, how anxious, how needy. We do our best to help them feel safe and happy.

One night turns into two and then a couple more and each day brings new logistical challenges. Firstly we need school trousers in the right sizes.

One of them won't go to bed without a vest. Next day we need a swimming kit. Then we need help picking our adopted daughter up from school so we can make a hospital appointment. Fortunately we have a whole network of support that we can call on, who seem only too

willing to lend a hand – or a vest!

Our local Baptist church plant to whom we belong has been invaluable to our family on our eight year journey in fostering and adopting.

Over the years they have helped not only in responding practically to late night messages on our Facebook group, but also emotionally in the many fostered children they have welcomed with open arms and hearts into the church family.

Sunday school teachers have adapted the programme they run to make it more appropriate. Children have invited them to parties and football games. A couple of the adults have wrapped something up especially for them at Christmas, or pushed magazines through the letterbox.

Adoption gets mentioned a lot at our church, especially when the whole church gets to celebrate with us when foster children move on to their forever families.

We have been really encouraged by the passion which our little congregation has grasped of our role as a whole church to care for the vulnerable children in our community - and also to care for those who care for them.

Why not join with churches across the UK and take part in Adoption Sunday on 2 November?

**Download the free Adoption Sunday resource pack at [www.homeforgood.org.uk/adoptionsunday](http://www.homeforgood.org.uk/adoptionsunday)**

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

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

> Building your church... or His Kingdom? Michael Shaw wonders about what would

happen if we applied Jubilee principles to our churches

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

> Coping with a life-changing illness - Emily Ackerman was a doctor before her circumstances changed, and has now written a book about walking biblically through difficult and life-changing illnesses [bit.ly/1uZFY8D](http://bit.ly/1uZFY8D)

> Islamic State, Mirrors and Freedom - What might a non-violent response to Islamic State look like?

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

> Key themes from the September meeting of the Baptist Steering Group

[bit.ly/ZLWBZP](http://bit.ly/ZLWBZP)