

Pray with the BSG

THE Baptist Steering Group meets next week (3 December), and all in Baptist churches are invited to join in praying with the group. General Secretary Lynn Green has outlined the following two areas of focus:

1 Following on from very helpful discussions and input at Council, BSG will be praying and working out the next steps needed to implement the **Ministries Project**.

The Ministries Project is a focused piece of work that will bring together theological thinking we have already done about ministries, the Review of Selection, Formation, Funding and Continual Ministerial Development and then, in consultation across our Union, will generate some proposals that will address three key questions.

Firstly, what sort of ministries will we need in the future?

Secondly, what support will these ministries need?

And finally, what of this should be done nationally, regionally and locally?

2 We are continuing to pray and reflect together about how **we build deeper relationships across our Union**, encouraging everyone to feel they have a place and a part to play within our Baptist community. We want to discern what steps we can take, and how we can use the resources we have, to pursue our desire for a culture where we "Feel like one team" as Baptists Together.

Presidential nominations

NOMINATIONS are now open for the person who will serve as Baptist Union President in 2016-17.

This is the first time the nominations have been open for two years, and the first time they can be made online.

The role has been reviewed to reflect changes in Baptist life in recent years.

For instance, a key part of any future President's role is to lead the Accompanying Group to the Baptist Steering Group (BSG). This provides prayer support and shares in spiritual and missional reflection with BSG, and acts as 'critical friends' bringing perspectives from beyond the BSG. The President's role as part of this group will be in bringing insights from their presidential travels as well as their own particular experience and expertise.

More generally the President's main role is as a communicator/facilitator of our Union's vision

and mission. They will need to undertake to travel around our Union, engaging with local churches, regional Associations and Colleges as appropriate.

There will also be occasions when the President will provide a symbol or focus for unity of our Union, and as such will represent the Union at various civic and ecumenical events.

There may be some involvement in the annual Assembly, and the President may be invited by BMS World Mission to visit some of their work overseas.

The deadline for nominations is 31 December, which can be made online. Voting will then take place between 31 January and 31 March.

The current President is the Revd Dr Chris Ellis. He will be succeeded by the Revd Jenni Entrican (pictured) at next year's Baptist Assembly.



For more details:
bit.ly/11UIS5t

JOBS

Interim Ministries Team Leader, Baptists Together Chaplains, RAF

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

BAPTISMS

Counterslip Baptist Church, Bristol: Janet Webb and Becca Hardcastle . 2
Milford on Sea Baptist Church, Hampshire: Mary Brown 1
Streatham Baptist Church, London: Beryl Hylton, Shalonne Lee and Bobby Samuels 3
Tabernacle Baptist Church, Wolverhampton: Hannah Taiwo, Anthony Gathercole, Mansour Tofighi 3

Send notifications of baptisms, ministerial changes, deaths and testimonies to phobson@baptist.org.uk

Food bank findings

GAPS in the social security safety net are a key reason why people are turning to food banks, according to the first in-depth study into the personal experiences of recipients of emergency food aid in the UK.

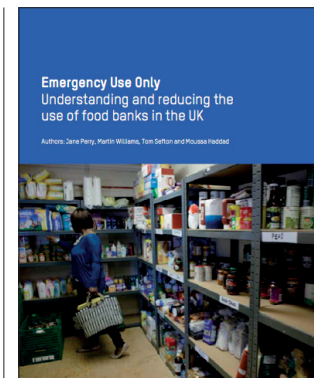
The findings came in the *Emergency Use Only* report, jointly commissioned by Oxfam, Child Poverty Action Group, the Church of England and the Trussell Trust.

The report interviewed 40 users at seven Trussell Trust food banks across the country to try to shed light on the factors that are driving food bank use in the UK.

These interviews were backed up by additional data collected from more than 900 recipients at three Trussell Trust food banks and an analysis of the cases of 178 clients accessing an advice service at one food bank.

The key findings from the research were as follows:

- Food banks were predominantly a last-resort, short-term measure, prompted by an 'acute income crisis' - something which had happened to completely stop or dramatically reduce their income
- Income crisis could be caused by sudden loss of earnings, change in family



circumstances or housing problems. However, for between half and two thirds of the users from whom additional data was collected, the immediate trigger for food bank use was linked to problems with benefits or missing tax credits

- 19-28 per cent of users for whom additional data was collected had recently had household benefits stopped or reduced because of a sanction and 28-34 per cent were waiting for a benefit claim which had not been decided

- Many food bank users faced multiple challenges, including ill-health, relationship breakdown, mental health problems or substantial caring responsibilities. Many were

unable to work or had recently lost their job.

Use of emergency food aid in the UK, particularly in the form of food banks, has dramatically increased over the last decade. Figures from The Trussell Trust show that numbers receiving three days' food from their food banks rose from 128,697 in 2011-12 to 913,138 in 2013-14.

The Government, which says there is no link between its welfare reforms and increased food bank use, said the report was inconclusive. It pointed out it spends £94bn a year in working age benefits.

That food banks are a politically divisive subject was a point highlighted in a resource created by the Joint Public Issues Team earlier this year.

Faith in Foodbanks helps churches explore issues raised by food banks, and to make connections between the work of these food banks and the life, worship and witness of local churches and fellowships.

The resource looks at why the number of food banks are growing, and provides Bibles studies, prayers and worship ideas.

For more visit bit.ly/11v1LtZ

Poverty: two sides of the same coin

Many of the factors which cause poverty are the same across the world, and require similar approaches to deal with them

The more we shared our stories and experiences from communities in Angola and Greater Manchester, the more themes emerged and the more connections we began to make, said Dr Clare McBeath, Baptist minister and co-Principal of the Northern Baptist Learning Community.

Dr McBeath was speaking after a conference jointly organised by Christian Aid and Church Action on Poverty, which explored tackling global and UK poverty, and the links between them.

More than 100 people gathered in Manchester Methodist Central Hall for the event, hosted a few weeks after church leaders from Greater Manchester had spent time visiting both Christian Aid partners in Angola and CAP's projects in Manchester. The purpose of this was to allow those



Dr Clare McBeath, (pictured right) speaking at the conference which explored how the same factors cause poverty across the world

working towards the same goal to witness first-hand the positive effects of each other's efforts, and maybe learn from them.

Delegates heard that in both 'developed' Northern countries, such as the UK, and in 'developing' Southern countries, such as Angola, poor communities lack a voice in decisions that affect them. Unfair tax, employment, and business structures often prevent them from escaping poverty. These issues therefore require similar approaches to deal with them.

The conference also explored practical ways for local churches

to respond to poverty.

Dr McBeath, one of the speakers and church leaders part of the Angola delegation, called for originality and bravery in bringing poverty issues together.

'No longer is it a case of supporting either work in the global south or responding to issues on our doorstep,' she said, 'Rather this is a call to engage with our shared story, to respond with creative and courageous imagination, that together we might learn from each other and start community by community to celebrate signs of God's kingdom.'

National award for youth project

A MANCHESTER based youth work project, which began out of a basement of a Baptist church nearly 50 years ago, has won a national award.

The Hideaway Youth Project began in the basement of Moss Side Baptist Church in 1965. It won this year's Youth Work Award at the Children & Young People Now Awards, which is supported by the National Youth Agency.

Working with 900 12-25 year olds each week, it tackles issues such as gang culture and sexual exploitation whilst helping to boost cohesion.

Many young users have gone on to volunteer with the scheme – and the majority of paid staff were once young people who benefited from support.

Fiona Blacke, CEO of the National Youth Agency said, 'This

project illustrates the very best of youth work – engaging young people in positive activities which help them develop their potential, raise their aspirations whilst diverting them away from gangs and other risky behaviour.'

Hideaway still shares the building with the successor to Moss Side Baptist Church – now Trinity Church – a Baptist/URC Local Ecumenical Partnership.

In honour of Paul Fiddes

Baptists and the University of Oxford honoured the important contribution of Paul Fiddes to theology and the life of the church this week. By Andy Goodliff



Paul (left) with colleague Anthony Clarke, who was involved in the editing of the two Festschriften

Professor Paul Fiddes, although perhaps unknown to many in our churches, has been and still is one of the UK's leading theological thinkers.

He has helped Baptists – both here in the UK and around the world – think deeply about who we are as a Christian people. At the same time, he has contributed to the task of theology in the academy like no other Baptist before him.

I say this as a way of introduction to Tuesday night's presentation to Paul of two books of essays written by friends and colleagues that engage with, and honour, his work. When someone makes a significant contribution, we give them a "festschrift", from the German meaning "to celebrate in writing".

One set of essays, *Within the Love of God: Essays on the Doctrine of God in Honour of Paul S. Fiddes*, is a collection

from fellow theologians and scholars working in the University of Oxford and beyond.

One of the contributors is Jürgen Moltmann, one of the most influential theologians of the last 50 years. Professor Moltmann, although now 88, travelled from his home in Germany to be in Oxford on Tuesday night to give a lecture before the presentation to Paul.

This was significant because Paul himself spent a year in 1976 in Germany being taught by Professor Moltmann and has developed several of Moltmann's themes in his own work.

The second book, *For the Sake of the Church: Essays in Honour of Paul S. Fiddes*, is a collection of essays from

colleagues at Regent's Park College, where Paul has spent nearly all his life, and other friends. Both books demonstrate that Paul has been both a person of deep intellect (a too rare gift among Baptists) and also a great encourager of so many in the pursuit of theology.

It is not only Paul's theological work that has made a huge impact, it is Paul himself, as a man of generosity and humility, which will be a long-lasting legacy on many of us. Paul has shown not only how to write and speak theology, but how to practise theology as a means of friendship with God, with each other and with the world.

Andy Goodliff is Minister of Belle Vue Baptist Church, Essex.

A longer version of this story can be found at <http://bit.ly/1FrTZOn>

From the www. baptisttimes.co.uk

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

> Partnering for the gospel – we all have different roles, and these are best expressed when

we work in partnership with each other rather than on our own or, worse still, in competition
bit.ly/1yXhXPI

> Church membership – Is it too rigid? Aren't there circumstances when we should become part of different churches at the same time?
bit.ly/1ATLPk3

> Three views on giving money to the poor: BMS World Mission workers explain how they deal with this issue
bit.ly/1xFQ2Bz

> An innovative theological educator and ecumenist – a comprehensive obituary of David Goodbourn
bit.ly/1vIB2M3