



24 August, 2016

News:

Community sponsorship scheme for refugees

Baptists are being encouraged to participate in new Government initiatives to support people seeking refuge in the UK

The full community sponsorship scheme was launched last month by the Government alongside the Archbishop of Canterbury, and will enable community groups to take on the role of supporting resettled refugees in the UK.

An online service that enables people to offer a range of help, from baby clothes to supported lodging, has been developed alongside.

The vision for community sponsorship has emerged as a key campaign for the National Refugee Welcome Board, of which our Baptist Union is an active member. There has been extensive consultation between the Board, which is convened by Citizens UK, and the Government.

Community sponsorship embraces two key realities:

That if re-settlement is to be successful, we need to do more than look to our statutory sector to cater for the material needs of refugees. We need to build communities of welcome where individuals can be supported, helped to integrate and existing communities can build bridges with those who need and seek refuge within them.

That provision for those in need is not simply something that communities can “outsource” to statutory agencies, but needs to be the active responsibility of every citizen. Our nation can do more, and can do some things more effectively when local citizens and community groups take on the task of welcoming and providing for those in need. Many of the resources needed, including housing, training and employment are in the hands of private citizens and can be mustered and co-ordinated through community action.

What does a community sponsor do?

Community sponsors will be allocated a family fleeing conflict. It will be their responsibility to support the resettled family from the moment of arrival in the UK. This will include:

- meeting the family at the airport;
- providing a warm welcome and cultural orientation;
- providing housing;
- supporting access to medical and social services;
- English language tuition; and
- support towards employment and self-sufficiency.

Their formal responsibility to support the resettled family will last for one year, with the exception of housing, for which the responsibility lasts for two years.

Baptist Regional Minister Phil Jump said local churches can clearly play 'a significant role in this approach to refugee re-settlement'.

It offers the potential of more integrated and cohesive communities, more sustainable and holistic support for refugee families and is potentially more cost-effective for the tax-payer.

God's vision of a just and wholesome society, as laid out in the law books of the Old Testament, includes the provision of places of refuge and living as communities of welcome to the alien and the stranger.

The successful campaign to introduce a sponsorship programme provides the opportunities for local churches to take a lead in developing communities that reflect something of this Biblical vision.

This was echoed by The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, who launched the scheme alongside the Home Secretary Amber Rudd in July.

The full community sponsorship scheme presents churches and other civil society groups with the opportunity to provide sanctuary to those fleeing war-torn places.

Refugees, like all people, are treasured human beings, made in the image of God, who deserve safety, freedom and the opportunity to flourish.

Amber Rudd described community sponsorship as 'a ground-breaking new development for resettlement in the UK'. She added, 'I wholeheartedly encourage organisations that can help to offer their support.'

The online service for donations provides a list of ways in which people can offer help, such as cultural activities, goods, housing, befriending and specialist services, such as language teaching and legal advice. The offers are logged and then shared with local authorities. Of this new service, Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said:

This is an historic opportunity for individuals, charities, faith groups, churches and businesses to support refugee families directly. By bringing together the voluntary sector and local and central government, we can better support those fleeing conflict to fully integrate into life in the UK.

Citizens UK said the scheme will only include a small number of sponsorships initially, but many groups have shown an interest. In time, it continued, the National Refugee Welcome Board believes that Community Sponsorship has the potential to become a significant pathway to refugee resettlement in the UK. In Canada, more than 250,000 refugees have been resettled through sponsorship in the last 25 years.

Bishop of Durham, Paul Butler, Co-chair of the National Refugee Welcome Board said:

The launch of Community Sponsorship in the UK, which has been so successful in Canada, will help church groups to get involved in resettling refugees in their communities in a way which has previously been unavailable to them.

We are confident it will grow, leading to many more refugees from across the world's trouble spots being able to settle in the UK and build a safe, new life. There is a real public appetite for Community Sponsorship across the UK, and many people have already signed up to help.

A number of Baptist churches are already undertaking a significant ministries to people who have sought refuge in the UK. Mr Jump said, 'While we must and should not act with ulterior motive, we might also note the positive and in some places transformative effect that refugee and migrant Christian believers are having in local churches. In recent weeks in NWBA, I have had the privilege of engaging with two churches where, in quite different circumstances, such stories are being told.'

Last year Government has previously announced that the UK would accept 20,000 refugees from Syria by 2020 via the Syrian vulnerable persons resettlement (VPR) scheme.

The latest published statistics show that more than 1,800 Syrians in need of protection have so far been provided with refuge in the UK.

Links:

Story behind the new schemes:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/community-sponsorship-scheme-launched-for-refugees-in-the-uk>

The community sponsorship scheme:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-full-community-sponsorship>

The online service to help refugees:

<https://www.gov.uk/help-refugees>

National award for wellbeing café

Renew 37, led by New Life Baptist Church in Nottingham, has won a national award to replicate its ministry

Café aims to foster good emotional and mental wellbeing in its community

'We have been amazed at how many people want to pray'

The café launched last year and aims to be a community space for everyone, a kind of 'shared front room'. It aims to foster good emotional and mental wellbeing with activities inspired by the nationally recognised five ways to wellbeing.

Throughout the week it offers a variety of workshops and activities, and has strong community partnerships. This all contributed to Renew 37 being a joint winner of the Cinnamon Project Lab, a national competition for local church-size social action projects who have a vision to replicate through other local churches across the UK. It

will receive £15,000 funding as well as access to expert advice and government and market contacts.

'We are so excited to have won the prize,' said Ruth Rice, pastor of New Life. 'Renew 37 is a space for all of us to attend to our wellbeing as equals, to connect, learn, get active, take notice and give. Not volunteers and service users, but humans sharing hobbies and habits.'

'Winning the prize is confirmation that we are on the right track with what God is up to in the area of mental health and wellbeing.'

Cinnamon Project Lab had more than 250 applicants. In the final each had seven minutes to talk about their project and answer questions before a judging panel. Renew 37 was a joint winner, along with Care Home Friends.

Explaining its success, Mark Kitson of the Cinnamon Network said, 'Ruth has tried and tested different models of working with mental health over seven years, and has developed strong and effective partnerships in her community and with her council.'

'As a result, Renew 37 has a strong model and methodology that it can train other churches to use.'

The prize money will help Ruth to aid other churches to set up similar projects with the idea of seeing spaces like Renew 37 opening across the country. The Cinnamon Network emphasises the idea of replication not duplication.

'It's much quicker and less expensive in the long run to follow a tried and tested methodology. It also means that your project becomes part of a whole, a movement, a national solution,' said Mark.

Ruth's advice for other churches looking to do similar was that it could be anything as little as two hours a week, as long as it is in a place where people normally feel at home and have access to refreshments, as well as a quiet prayer area. Cafés work, but don't have to be within a church building; Renew 37 shares a space with an existing café, avoiding complicated catering arrangements.

'Keeping it simple is essential and the renew team can help read a community and work out where the best place might be. The idea is simple ... be prayerful, be present and be in partnership with your mental health team,' she said. 'It's very often more of an unlearning process for a church as this is not a service, not a "them and us" ministry. I have loved how the "them and us" of Christian and not yet Christian has not been important.'

She said Renew 37 has given the church opportunities to spend time and listen, learning about other's strengths and gifts. There has been an opportunity for learning about mental health issues and how to treat people suffering from mental health issues, treating them not like projects, but like people.

'It is not programmes and services that are essential, but just showing up and being fully present to God and each other. We have been amazed at how many people want to pray ... people are not rejecting God, just what we call church,' said Ruth.

The project has not only benefited the community, but the church too. As the minister, Ruth has found more opportunities to spend time with people and less home visits, as people help each other.

The café has also reduced the stigma around mental health by reducing ignorance and fear. It unites a community with a variety of mental and emotional health issues and allows them to share hobbies and habits. It serves as a place for anyone who needs a place not to be ok.

'We understand each other's stories better, celebrate each other's strengths, bear with each other's weaknesses in an unhurried way,' said Ruth. 'We don't talk about people having "physical health" yet we all have bodies. We all have mental health. The way we use language is changing here.

'I do believe it is time for every church to find ways to be church differently for those struggling daily with the balance of their minds.

'God hears their cry, hears our cry ... and calls us to slow down, be present, turn our prayer and wellbeing habits inside out and sit alongside those struggling.'

Soul Survivor coming to Peterborough

Soul Survivor is pulling up its tent pegs and moving its main venue next year (2017); Momentum to be replaced by an all age event focused on the Holy Spirit

Currently weeks B and C of the popular Christian youth festival take place at Somerset's Bath and West Showground.

Next year they will be staged at the East of England Showground's Peterborough Arena.

'We hope [the change] will make it easier for many who come to our events as well as for new friends to join us,' said Soul Survivor's Liza Hoeksma.

'We've loved our summers at the Bath & West Showground but are really excited about this new chapter in Peterborough.'

A Facebook post added, 'We can't wait to show you our new place. It's totally brilliant, perfect for our events and will host all our favourite venues plus so much more! Centrally located, in the heart of the country, it's really accessible with great transport links too!'

The showground also includes a purpose built arena for the main meetings.

Week A of Soul Survivor will continue to be hosted in the Stafford Showground. Soul Survivor Scotland, which is in its third year, is due to continue as it was.

Soul Survivor has also announced that Momentum, its festival for 20-30s, will be replaced next year by an all age event called Naturally Supernatural. It explained in another Facebook post there will still be lots of provision specifically for 20s and 30s, but that the organisation had 'an increasing passion to encourage the church to move in the ministry of the Holy Spirit.'

'We're really passionate about equipping the whole church to move in the ministry and power of the Holy Spirit, so this will be our first summer conference for all ages,' said Liza.

'We're really keen that everyone who has enjoyed Momentum comes along to Naturally Supernatural. We'd love to keep journeying with all those who have been to Momentum over the years and hope they will come and join us as we learn and grow together.' There will be Momentum camping villages so that 20s and 30s can camp together, as well as venues and social events the same as those at previous Momentum festivals.

The main meetings will look at what the Bible says about leading supernatural lives, as well as having prayer and worship time. Workshops will teach on subjects, including how to hear God and how to pray for physical and emotional healing. The aim is to provide opportunities for all who attend to put into practice what they have learnt, so they return home more confident.

The event will take place at the start of the summer (22-27 July), unlike Momentum, which has been held at the end of August. Like Soul Survivor Weeks B and C, it too is moving from the Bath Showground, and will be held in Stafford.

Responding to concerns about a clash with New Wine, Mike Pilavachi said, 'The end of August at Shepton Mallet was just not working. The site was a mess and the weather was too often either wet or cold. Stafford is a much better site for us although it will be sad to leave Somerset.'

Radio treasure hunt discovers foodbank-supporting Baptist church

Alvechurch Baptist Church had a surprise visitor at the end of its morning service on Sunday 14 August – one of its church members was being ‘hunted’!

BBC Radio WM broadcasts a three-hour programme on Sunday mornings called Hunted – a 'Treasure Hunt' style show with the tagline 'Three hours and five clues to find one person in Birmingham and the Black Country'.

But on this particular day it was a treasure hunt with a difference – the 'hunter' was tasked with DELIVERING 'treasure' to the final clue.

At each of five locations Debbie (the 'hunter') picked up the next clue for the listeners to solve and also a mysterious bag containing tins or packets of food items.

The final location was in Alvechurch and the last clue instructed the hunter to find the key person – the 'hunted'. Rushing into Alvechurch Baptist Church she began looking for her 'hunted', who turned out to be John Hill – one of the church members, and the only person who had been primed in advance.

John was then able to explain to Debbie and the listening audience that, in common with many other churches, members of the congregation regularly bring in items for the Redditch Foodbank for use by families in emergency or crisis situations.

It turned out that Debbie herself is a Christian and she was delighted to learn that the effort she had put into carrying five bags of food around the West Midlands was in aid of such a good cause.

Catalyst Live 2016: full speaker list confirmed

BMS World Mission has revealed the full list of speakers for Catalyst Live 2016

You know when you meet someone for the first time and have a captivating conversation with them? The kind of person you could listen to for hours?

We've got 13 scintillating people just like that speaking at Catalyst Live 2016.

And you are going to want to know every one of them. All have interesting backgrounds and fascinating things to say. They come from all over the world and will give a global perspective on everything from faith to technology, worship music to science, poetry to art. They will challenge and surprise you and make you think.

So who's speaking? Here's the full list:

Vinoth Ramachandra – The Sri Lankan theologian, social critic and author is never dull. “Expect to be provoked,” he says. “I hope to be able to deliver stimulation and healthy provocation.”

Samuel Escobar – Yes, the legendary Latin American theologian will be at Catalyst Live! He made his name through his involvement in the Lausanne movement and writing influential books such as *The New Global Mission*. He is widely respected for his wise insights on mission today.

Anneke Kaai – Anneke is a Christian artist based in the Netherlands. She will be showing and talking about her abstract, symbolic paintings, many of which have biblical themes.

Miyon Chung – If there was ever a person born that fits the description ‘global citizen’, it is Miyon. Born in South Korea and now living in the US, this talented theologian teaches in seminaries all over the world and works at the respected Morling College in Australia.

Steve Stockman – Steve is a brilliant poet, music critic and a minister in Northern Ireland. He’s award winning too! Check out his blog to get a flavour for his style of writing and sense of humour.

Nigel Crook – Mr Robot! Nigel Crook is Head of Computing and Communication Technologies at Oxford Brookes University where he leads research in cognitive robotics. He will be speaking with a robot on stage. Not to be missed!

Shadia Qubti – A Christian Palestinian Israeli, Shadia is involved in many initiatives encouraging Palestinian women and youth to advocate for peace. This is your chance to hear from someone working for reconciliation in one of the most complicated conflicts today.

Elie Haddad – Wise, humorous and inspiring, Elie fled civil war in Lebanon in 1990 and is now President at the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Beirut. One of the highlights at the Baptist Assembly in Scotland in 2015, he is a brilliant speaker.

Alan Wilson – Speaking at Birmingham only, the Bishop of Buckingham is never short of interesting things to say – check out his blog to see what we mean.

Sam Wells – Speaking at Reading only, the vicar of the prominent St Martins-in-the-Fields Church in Trafalgar Square is a well-known speaker, author and broadcaster you may well have heard on Radio 4.

Margaret Gibbs – the former BMS World Mission Regional Secretary for East Asia, ethnomusicologist and minister at Perry Rise Baptist Church in London, Margaret is well known and loved by BMS supporters. She spoke and performed at Catalyst Live in 2013. Check it out – it was superb

Nigel Wright – Principal Emeritus of Spurgeon’s College London, Nigel is a legend in Baptist circles and has great knowledge of the UK Church and the challenges we face.

Mark Woods – The former Baptist Times editor and now Consulting Editor at Christian Today is our host this year. He is well known for his painstakingly researched investigative journalism and provocative opinion pieces. Mark doesn’t think you should go to Catalyst Live – here he explains why.

What a great list of speakers, eh? So what are you waiting for? Book your tickets and see this amazing line-up of speakers either in Birmingham on 16 November or Reading on 17 November. You will regret it if you don’t go, so go!

Scattering seed on the ground

Zion Baptist Church, Ebbw Vale

This church family in South Wales has faithfully been spreading the word and is encouraged that God is at work through them

In the four years since Pastor Udo Mueller has been minister, Zion Baptist Church has had 21 baptisms

We are a very friendly and welcoming church, we strive to make the name of Jesus known to our community, to engage with people at their level and love people for what/who they are - people created in the image of God. We proclaim a message that transforms peoples lives, because that is the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. There are many things that happen in our normal week, Bible Studies, Line Dancing, Drop-in Evening (Thru the Roof), Prayer Meetings, Celebrate Recovery, Craft Group, and our Sunday Services, and in everything we hope to be inclusive to anyone and to proclaim an exclusive message of salvation by faith.

During these almost four years that God had placed us in Zion, through the grace of God and for his glory, many have come to believe. We have had 21 baptisms, and

many also joining the church as members and contributing to the life of the church (nine of them were baptised in our last baptismal service on 3 July - see photo).

The passage in Mark 4: 26-27 comes to my mind:

'This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how'.

God asks of us to be faithful in spreading the Word; he gives the growth! The Lord is saving today. His blood is still powerful to cleanse, heal, forgive and restore, and he is faithful to his word, which never return to him empty, and we will continue to proclaim it with his strength.

We appreciate your prayers for us and we give thanks and praise the our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Pastor Udo Mueller

Baptisms

Dereham Baptist Church, Norfolk: Linda Brown-Balaam; Mark Cockbill; Heather Melandri-Street; Fraser Morrison and Tricia Waller

Dover Baptist Church, Kent: Lisa Fox

Lockwood Baptist Church, Huddersfield: Kelly Burke and Graeme Duffin

Park Baptist Church, Great Yarmouth: Gretna Barros Raposa, Sidney Monteiro de Almeida, Lucas Herlan Pontes aged eight (baptised at home as terminally ill with a brain tumour, died five days later)

Rushmere Baptist Church, Ipswich: Lydia Barnard, Janet Wade, Daniel Somers

Baptism stories

Lockwood Baptist Church, Huddersfield celebrated how God has been working in a wonderful way in the lives of two people from a non-church background.

One of our fellowship, Savneet Singh, was driving in the pouring rain and saw Graeme waiting at the bus stop and felt prompted by God to turn back and offer him a lift, although he was a complete stranger. Savneet explained to Graeme why he had given him the lift and shared his faith. They got to know each other and Savneet later invited Graeme to his Baptism, Easter 2015, where Graeme made the decision to follow Jesus. Prior to this Graeme had challenged God that if He existed to help him with his life, to his complete surprise Savneet had stopped and given him the lift. By the end of the journey Graeme felt this was the answer to his plea to God.

Following this, Graeme, an old school friend of Kelly's, having not contacted her for years did so through Facebook and told her about his new found faith and invited her to church. There were other 'coincidences' in Kelly's life, including a Lockwood BC leaflet pushed through her door when she was out, inviting her to church at a time she was questioning the meaning of life and wanted to know more about God, having avidly read a children's Bible at the school where she was librarian. She found out that Lockwood BC was the same church that Graeme attended and had invited her to. She eventually accepted Jesus as her Saviour in June 2015. David Martin, their Bible study leader baptised them, assisted in the water by Savneet.

Death

LEIGH, the Revd John 1921 - 2016

The Revd John Leigh died in the Queens Medical Centre, Nottingham on 6 August.

He devoted 34 years of his life to ministry, including pastorates at Madeley and Bingley and ending at Eastwood Baptist Church, Nottingham, where he was minister from 1963 until his retirement in 1983. Eastwood Baptist Church agreed to appoint him as Minister Emeritus in recognition of his service to the church in 20 years of ministry.

There will be a thanksgiving service for his life at Eastwood Baptist Church, Nottingham, on Tuesday, 6 September at 2pm.

Engagement

Roger Gray (of Derby) and Maureen Scholes (of Hastings) are delighted, if still somewhat surprised, to announce their engagement! "God ambushed us" sums up how a friendship was transformed into a deep love over a very short period of time by the grace and kindness of our loving heavenly Father. The wedding will take place at Halton Baptist Church, Hastings, at a date yet to be decided.

Events/notices

Baptist Assembly Review

What do you think about the Baptist Assembly? Since 2013, we have been experimenting purposefully with the style and format of Assembly. The intention has always been to review the experience after the 2016 Assembly: to reflect on what Assembly means to us; and to look at options for the future.

An online survey is currently taking place. Whether you normally attend Assembly, have been only occasionally or have never been, your thoughts will be taken into consideration as the Baptist Steering Group and Council consider the future shape of Assembly from 2018 onwards.

Full information about the Assembly review we're undertaking can be found on the Assembly website, along with a link to the online survey. Alternatively, please email your thoughts to admin@baptistassembly.org.uk or write to us at the Baptist Assembly Office.

The deadline for responses is Monday 19 September

http://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/278424/The_Future.aspx

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/T6ZLN2N>

National Prayer Weekend - 23-25 September

This is a weekend to initiate a wave of prayer over our nation, one life, one street, one community at a time. Local people praying for their community can transform the nation. Central to National Prayer Weekend 2016 is the heart to see people in our local communities know and encounter God as their Father through the power of prayer.

Click here to find out more, and download resources.

<http://www.national-prayer-weekend.com/>

Peacemaking Sunday - 18 September

Peacemaking Sunday is held each year on the nearest Sunday to the United Nations International Day of Peace on 21 September. The

theme for this year's resources is solidarity with refugees. On 19 September the UN holds a summit on refugees and migrants, and on 20 September President Obama will host a meeting of world leaders on the global refugee crisis. The focus of our prayers on Peacemaking Sunday will be for the success of these meetings and for our churches to continue to express concern for and act in solidarity with refugees. Click here to download the service materials.

<http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/peacemaking-sunday-18-september-2016-when-i-needed-a-neighbour/>

The Baptist Historical Society wants to capture your memories and experiences of Baptist life. This is about building up a history of local Baptist life - what happened on a Sunday morning, what happened during the week, what was the building like and how has it changed, what kind of groups were there, what was a baptism or the Lord's supper like, how were church meetings conducted.

We're not looking for books or long essays, but shorter pieces around different topics.

No one is too young to take part, because yesterday is now history, but there is particular opportunity for those who are older to pass on their stories that they might not get forgotten. So perhaps as a church you might like to see this as a project around a Church Anniversary - a memory for every year of your church life - if your over a hundred years quite a challenge!

For further details please email Ruth Gouldbourne (ruth@bloomsbury.org.uk)

A used Portable Immersion Heater'' (P.I.H.) of 3 kw maximum capacity capable of plugging into a 13amp mains wall socket is required for a baptistry Pool at Highworth Methodist Church.

Please contact Malcolm Alexander 01793 763745