

# Tackling food poverty

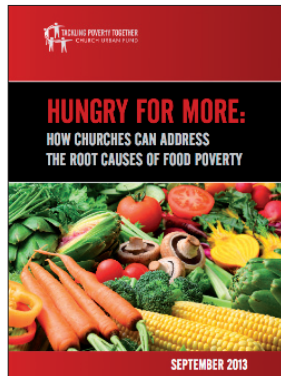
SIGNIFICANT numbers of churches are now involved in the provision of a food bank - but can they do more to tackle the causes of food poverty?

That's the challenge posed in a new report from the Church Urban Fund, which found that four out of five churches are currently supporting food banks in one way or another. This could be by collecting food, providing volunteers, managing a food bank or distributing vouchers. The majority (62 per cent) of food banks have been running for less than two years, indicating the rapid growth of the food bank network in recent years.

The report focused on Church of England parishes, but its findings equate with figures from the Trussell Trust, the largest network of food banks in the UK, which opened at a rate of three a week last year.

This contributed to almost 350,000 people receiving a minimum of three days emergency food from Trussell Trust food banks in 2012-13, 100,000 more than expected and significantly up on the 128,697 in 2011-12, and 26,000 in 2008-09.

There are now a total of 387 foodbanks in the Trussell Trust network, 17 of which are led by Baptist churches.



But as well as highlighting the high numbers of churches involved in foodbanks, the Church Urban Fund report also explored ways churches can work alongside others for long-term solutions to food poverty.

Citing a framework devised by international development experts, the report said that all poverty-alleviation work falls into three areas: relief, rehabilitation and development.

As its research found that 30 per cent of churches are running an organised activity to address one or more causes of food poverty, it said there were other areas for churches to look at.

The report's conclusion stated, 'These survey results suggest that, if churches are to contribute to a long-term solution to food poverty,

there is a need to rebalance church-based activity ... towards long-term work that tackles the underlying problems.'

Debt advice and a credit crunch cookery course were cited as examples of rehabilitation and development work.

Commenting on the report Chris Mould, executive chairman of the Trussell Trust, said tackling the root causes of poverty was 'extremely challenging'. The report didn't pay proper attention to the preventative impact of foodbanks, which 'stop a whole load of worse things happening' - such as crime, housing loss, and mental health deterioration. He said the thousands of churches involved with foodbanks are already making 'an enormous difference' in the UK.

But ways in which churches can get involved, Mr Mould continued, include understanding the root causes of poverty at a macro level and supporting campaigns on these issues (such as the Living Wage campaign); and understanding the major underlying drivers of poverty in their community. For example, if entrenched unemployment is a major cause, churches could explore how to stimulate employment in the form of social enterprises.

## New partnerships for IBTS

THE International Baptist Theological Seminary (IBTS), Prague, has announced it has secured future academic programmes with the VU University Amsterdam and the University of Manchester in the UK.

In June 2013 IBTS signed an agreement to become a collaborative Centre within the Faculty of Theology of the VU University Amsterdam to guarantee facilities for PhD research degrees.

The VU has one of the largest Theology Faculties in Europe and its research degrees are highly regarded. The move comes following the decision of IBTS' previous partner, the University of Wales, to withdraw from all international collaborative relationships.

In addition, in August 2013 IBTS signed an agreement with the University of Manchester recognising the Seminary as an



approved partner for the award of an MA degree in Baptist Histories and Theologies.

It stated that awards from the University of Manchester - one of the UK's Russell group of Universities - are 'highly valued'.

Speaking of these developments new IBTS Rector the Revd Dr Parush Parushev, said, 'To be able to offer a Master's degree with Manchester and a PhD with the VU is a tremendous outcome to a period of uncertainty, and strong validation of the quality of post-

graduate work at IBTS.'

Dr. Parushev continued, 'Over the past months the uncertainty concerning our future and the knowledge that the Prague campus is up for sale has led some to conclude that IBTS is closing.

'As can be seen from these developments, nothing could be further from the truth. IBTS is planning for, working towards and anticipating a bright and exciting academic future.'

The Seminary is to move from Prague to join with the offices of its parent body, the European Baptist Federation (EBF), along with the Dutch Baptist Union and the Dutch Baptist Seminary in a new Baptist House project in Amsterdam.

**Details of IBTS programs and application forms can be found at [www.ibts.eu](http://www.ibts.eu)**

## Church responds to Muslim invitation

A BAPTIST church in Leicester helped to take part in a fun day organised by the local Muslim community.

Oadby Baptist Church accepted the invitation from Oadby Central Mosque to participate in the event at the start of September, intended for the whole community to spend time together.

There was entertainment and stalls selling everything from make up to great food. The local police, firemen and health educators had also responded to the invitation, and it was the first time the Baptist church was there.

Alongside the local Imam,

minister the Revd Ellen Price was invited to pray at the start of the event.

The church then offered a range of activities, including a marble game, very popular with the children and young people, a weaving craft (making 'the eye of God' with lollipop sticks and wool), and an opportunity to write a prayer for the town on a roll of paper. In addition the previous Sunday the church members had written prayers on cards which all had depictions of the cross, which were laminated and offered as a 'pick a card'.

'This offered us many

opportunities to talk about prayer and many were surprised how pertinent the prayers were for them,' Ellen explained.

'One Hindu lady with a grumpy husband picked up a card which simply said 'Jesus loves you' so she turned to her husband and said 'Well Jesus loves me!'

'She then repeated it several times to him as they walked away. There were times we were able to pray with people of all cultural backgrounds. After our service many of the congregation came and milled with the crowd.

'There was a clear sense of us being Jesus' body in our town.'

# Sharing the induction covenant

The Revd Lynn Green will be inducted as General Secretary of our Baptist Union of Great Britain on Sunday. Everyone across our Union is invited to share in the covenant below that will be used as part of the service at Sutton Coldfield Baptist Church.

## Leader:

Today we stand with one another recognising Christ in our midst. We bring ourselves and the gifts we have, recommitting ourselves as a Baptist community to live and work together as a Gospel people.

Our God is a faithful God and has given us Jesus Christ who is before all things, and in whom all things hold together. Christ is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead; in everything he has supremacy.

## All:

Jesus, be our centre and our head; may we fix our eyes and hearts on you as your faithful followers.

## Leader:

God, in Christ, is reconciling all things. God calls us into all the world as proclaimers of the Gospel and seekers of the kingdom, to work and pray for its coming.

## All:

Inspire and equip us to be a people of mission. Envision us and grant us courage to be faithful, generous and innovative; encouraging and releasing the gifts of all as we seek every opportunity to make your love known



## Leader:

The Spirit is poured out on all flesh, making us one; male and female; Jew and Greek; slave and free. Together we are the body of Christ in which each part matters.

## All:

Help us to cherish the gifts of your Spirit, to listen to every voice through which you speak, to stand against injustice in its every expression, to oppose prejudice and to place your kingdom values at the heart of our life together.

## Leader:

Christ has called us to be his Church, rooted in him and an instrument of God's mission. In every place where believers gather in his name, Christ is in the midst.

## All:

Build your church through us; help us together to support, serve, and nurture its every expression.

## Leader:

We are called to walk together in love, and to watch over one another in ways known and ways yet to be known.

## All:

Make us one we pray: working together, bearing one another's burdens, speaking the truth in love, that we might be a sign of your loving presence in our world.

## Leader:

Lord Jesus, fill us afresh with your Holy Spirit, that the promises we make today may be an offering of love, our duty and our delight, that by our life together we may glorify you.

## All:

This day we give ourselves again to the Lord Jesus and to each other, to be bound together in fellowship for the sake of the mission and glory of God. Celebrating our shared life, we commit ourselves to belonging and working together in our congregations, our cluster networks, our Associations and our Union. We pledge all that we have and all that we are to fulfil God's purposes of love.

**Will your church be sharing the covenant on Sunday?**  
Please send any details and photos to  
[editor@baptisttimes.co.uk](mailto:editor@baptisttimes.co.uk)

## A year of HOPE

TWO events are taking place next month to launch a year of mission in 2014.

An all-night prayer event for 40,000 people and a reception hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury for the leaders of Britain's churches and ministries mark the start of HOPE 2014.

Christians are invited to the Excel Centre in London on Friday 18 October 2013 for the Festival of Life from 8pm hosted by the Redeemed Christian Church of God. This prayer gathering brings together 40,000 Christians every six months to pray for the UK and it is where HOPE will be launched.

A week later, the Archbishop of Canterbury is hosting a reception at Lambeth Palace for 100 key leaders on 24 October.

HOPE is a catalyst which aims to bring churches together to transform communities, with the vision of seeing 'the whole church, reaching the whole nation, for a whole year'.

The Revd Ian Bunce, the Baptist Union of Great Britain's networker for Mission and Media, is a member of the HOPE leadership team. 91.7 per cent of projects in HOPE 08 had Baptist involvement, according to research from Theos.

HOPE's prayer countdown to 2014 also starts on 18 October and runs through to 31 January 2014.

**For more and to download the prayer calendar visit <http://bit.ly/18x9hQw>**

## Pioneering seminars

A SERIES of three webinars (web-based seminars) exploring the theme of pioneering will take place throughout the autumn.

The three webinars are hosted by the Church of the Brethren and organised together with Urban Expression, Bristol Baptist College and BMS World Mission. They will run for 90 minutes from 7.30pm on 24 October, 14 November and 11 December, and will be led by Juliet Kilpin, Steve Finamore and

David Kerrigan respectively.

The programme was introduced on the Incarnate Network website: 'This series of webinars explores the role of pioneers in post-Christendom western societies, offers a biblical/theological foundation for pioneering within the mission of God and reflects on what can be learned from the world church,' it stated.

**Visit <http://bit.ly/1aTIsPx> for more**

## DEATHS

**HARDING, the Revd Neil Anton**, aged 56, sadly died very suddenly on 3 July 2013. Neil's pastorate at Arbury Road in Cambridge, began in 2004. Prior to this he had been pastor at Goodmayes Baptist Church, Ilford. He leaves a wife, Ruth and four sons.

His funeral and burial have already taken place at the Woodland Burial Ground, Barton, Cambridge. A thanksgiving service was held at Arbury Road Baptist Church on 28 July 2013.

The family has requested that any donations in his memory be sent to BMS World Mission, for the work of Geoff and Christine Holder in Mozambique.

**TUTTY, Gerald James** Gerald sadly passed away peacefully in hospital on Tuesday 10 September 2013, aged 88. Much loved by his wife Noreen, daughter Jennifer, late son Julian, grandchildren and great-grandson. A Thanksgiving Service at Kings Sutton Baptist Church, where he was a member, will be held at 2pm on Friday 27 September to which everyone is warmly invited to.

Donations in Gerald's memory may be made to the Baptist Union Home Mission c/o John & Maurice Humphris, 32 Albert St., Banbury, Oxon OX16 5DG. Cheques to: Baptist Union of Great Britain.

Previously, Gerald was a member of Abbey Baptist Church (King's Road) 1947 to 1969 and Crowthorne Baptist Church 1970 to 1984.

Enquiries may be addressed to Gerald's daughter Mrs Jennifer Orton, 7 Allonby Way, Aylesbury, Bucks HP21 7JA.

## BAPTISMS

**Christchurch Clarendon Park, Leicester (Baptist / Methodist LEP):**

Masoud Ghaffari and Fahameh Safaee. .... 2

**Enfield Baptist Church, London:** Teresa Watts, Robin Yates. .... 2

**Farnworth Baptist Church, Bolton:** Emily Bradbury, Sandra Baker, John Forrest. .... 3

**Holly Lodge Baptist Church, Ipswich:** Lorna Cameron. .... 1

**Zion Baptist Church, Newtown: Powys:** Brenda Beadles, Enid Brymer-Griffith, Anne Lovatt, Pam Rees. .... 4

Send notifications of baptisms, ministerial changes, deaths and testimonies to [editor@baptisttimes.co.uk](mailto:editor@baptisttimes.co.uk)