

Tackling unemployment

CHURCHES could be doing a lot more to help people who are unemployed, according to a new report by the Evangelical Alliance.

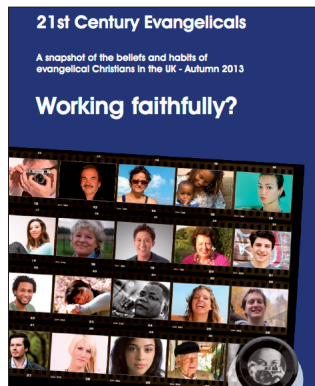
Released on the World Day for Decent Work (Monday, 7 October) *Working faithfully?* looks at the experiences of evangelical Christians in the world of work and how churches are responding to the challenge of unemployment.

The report found that Christians are concerned about unemployment, with 82 per cent saying that the government should do better to ensure there are enough decent jobs for those who want to work. Three quarters agreed that the law should be changed to ensure everyone receives a living wage.

Churches are often seeking to address the symptoms of unemployment through projects such as food banks, with 40 per cent saying their church offers practical support to unemployed people in the community.

However, only 13 per cent of the report's respondents were in a church which ran (or partnered with) a specific project to help unemployed people.

Just 13 per cent were in churches offering voluntary work placements to the unemployed,



and just eight per cent were in one which had set up a social enterprise or business that offered opportunities for employment or work-related training.

Many Christians commented on the shame and low self-esteem they experienced after losing their job. Almost a third – 31 per cent – felt they received no support from their own church when they became unemployed.

In addition 39 per cent felt that their church provided regular teaching about the biblical understanding of work.

In a statement accompanying the report, the EA said this was 'a shame', given evangelicals' strong historical track record of helping people into work.

There are many ways that

churches can get involved in tackling issues of unemployment, it continued. These include setting up a Christians Against Poverty Job Club, while the Church can also address the issue of unemployment by 'encouraging entrepreneurial Christians to create much-needed jobs'.

In a series of action points at the end of the report, it stated, 'In the context of continuing economic difficulties, the Church's lack of attention for unemployment needs addressing.'

'Our challenge is to become prayerfully and practically involved in relevant activities and initiatives to help people into work. Importantly, the Church also has a responsibility to encourage entrepreneurial Christians to create much-needed jobs, and thereby regenerate our communities.'

Working Faithfully is the tenth research publication in the 21st Century Evangelical series Visit www.eauk.org/ snapshot to view and download the report.

Is your church involved in tackling issues of unemployment? Send stories to phobson@baptist.org.uk

Church gives platform to 'bold and diverse' artists

A CHURCH has teamed up with a nearby arts centre to launch a new gallery in its historic building.

The inaugural exhibition of the Tower Gallery in Plaistow opened last week, featuring 63 works by 16 local Newham artists.

The gallery is based in the east tower of the Memorial Church Community, and marks the latest attempt by the church to use its building throughout the week for activities that help and empower people in different ways.

When it restored its tower and bells in 2011, it recognised the former would be a good venue for a gallery.

It invited the Rosetta Art Centre to come and look. 'We'd heard they needed places to display the work of their artists and it turned out they loved our building,' explained Philippa King, the church's development manager.

'So between us we secured some funding for a one-off



exhibition to see if it would work, and it looks great.'

The project is supported by grants from Community First Canning Town North and Let's Get the Party Started. Nearly 100 people attended the opening, including councillors Brian Collier, Marie Collier and Kay Scoresby.

Sanaz Amidi, Director of Rosetta Art Centre said, 'Rosetta are proud to have collaborated with Memorial Church to

transform their tower to offer an alternative contemporary art gallery to platform the exciting, bold and diverse work by Newham's talented creative community!'

'We look forward to a continued relationship to ensure our artists have access to a range of opportunities to empower them and acknowledge the important role arts and culture plays in the continued regeneration of the area.'

Racial justice and 'undiluted oneness'

ONE hundred and four candles were lit at a service to remember all who have been murdered in London in a suspected racially motivated attack since the death of Stephen Lawrence.

The name of each victim was also read out at the London Baptist Association Racial Justice evening service, and prayers were said for their families.

The service took place at

Rye Lane Baptist Church in Peckham under the theme 'Undiluted Oneness'. The diverse congregation was led in worship by ABBRR, (meaning Presence Cloud) an Urdu worship rock band based in Walthamstow.

LBA regional minister the Revd Kumar Rajagopalan's gave the address, giving evidence for God's commitment to oneness from the 'made in the image of God' creation account in Genesis,

through Jesus as 'the enfleshed reality', to the Revelation 7 portrayal of an eternity with every tribe, tongue and nation standing before God in unified worship. His personal reflections caused the hearer to self-examine; given the right setting we are all at danger of defaulting to 'ingrained, discriminating attitudes and behaviour'.

For a full report visit <http://bit.ly/19zLR3m>

Circle of prayer for George

A prayer circle for a Baptist diagnosed with cancer quickly spreads through email and social media to friends around the world

When grandfather George McLaughlin, 73, was diagnosed with terminal lung cancer, his family and friends were shocked.

'We came home from our holiday at the beginning of August,' said George, a member of Beacon Lough Baptist Church in Gateshead. 'I found by 4 September I had terminal lung cancer. When we were given the news my wife Carole and I cried. Our family were



devastated.'

After the initial shock, their thoughts turned to God. 'When the crying stopped we started to look to our Great God, though we still cry occasionally. And

our theme for prayer is that we are praying for a great miracle.

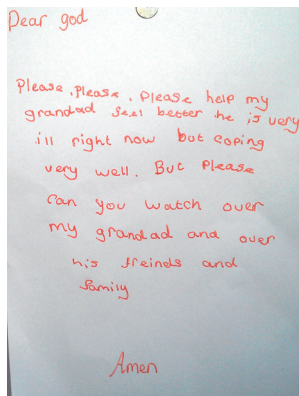
'Our family have been wonderfully supportive, not only our close personal family, but our church family from all over the world, and especially our church family at Beacon Lough Baptist.'

This support was shown when secretary Ian Britton helped organise a circle of prayer throughout the night for George.

This idea quickly grew to organising a 24 hour event. An automated, sign up system using Google was created, and the idea was shared through Facebook, text messages and email.

With friends from Australia, New Zealand, America, Peru, Cambodia, St Helena, Singapore, and Lithuania signing up, all the slots last Wednesday were covered.

House groups met in the church and anointed George with oil. George's young granddaughters Molly (nine) and Maddie (seven) came straight from school with their mum to church, and wrote a prayer of their own (pictured). In all more than 100 people were involved, and from start to finish it took just four days.



They included Irmantas Pinkoraitis, Pastor of the Vilnius New Testament Baptist Church in Vilnius, Lithuania. George and Carole had spent time at the church during an NBA Mission trip to Lithuania 18 months ago.

George said the response 'touched my soul'.

'This to me was God working in the youngest to the oldest, and really touched and thrilled my soul. Praise God.

'We have so much to thank Him for and we know we are in God's Hands.'

For more visit: <https://www.facebook.com/BLBCPrayer>

their parents - do?

<http://bit.ly/19zx6xG>

> Should we make buying, or even simply reading the Daily Mail, a church membership issue?

<http://bit.ly/1bZtGCD>

> Promoting fair labour practices and more - the

Christian community's influential ethical investment role. It's National Ethical Investment week October 13 - 19

<http://bit.ly/1608bwW>

> About Time - reflections on the latest British Rom-Com with a twist...

<http://bit.ly/15VdGIY>

New minister for Portsmouth church

A NEW minister has been appointed at North End Baptist Church, Portsmouth after three years without one.

The Revd Tracey Ansell, 45, is now minister at the church in Powerscourt Road after being ordained this summer, following three years of training at Spurgeon's College in London. Previously she worked as a Business Advisor for Business Link and as Strategic Director for Learndirect.

She said, 'I'm excited about my new role at North End Baptist Church and looking forward to making plans for the future in terms of how we can serve our local community and join in with what God is doing in Portsmouth.'

A special induction service was held at the church recently to welcome Tracey to the post.

The event was attended by around 180 people, who also enjoyed an afternoon tea.

Church Secretary Jayne Howard said, 'We're delighted to welcome Tracey into our church family and, after three years without a minister, are looking forward to what this will mean for our church and its future.'

Tracey and husband Steve hope to soon move from Cosham to the North End area to be nearer the church.

Send your church stories to the editor: phobson@baptist.org.uk

Get in the Picture

THE 2013 Get in the Picture website is now live and being offered to Baptist churches.

Get in the Picture is a project that enables all kinds of people to be involved in the Christmas story.

After setting up a nativity scene in their local town, churches invite people from their local community to dress up and be part of the scene.

A photo is taken and then uploaded to this website, so that each participant can find their photo - and then print it, email it to friends or share it on Facebook at no cost to them.

The cost of running the

project is covered by the £50.00 registration fee. For this fee, each church or group is given full use of the Get in the Picture website and 300 information cards - which not only direct visitors to the website to find their photo, but have space to add details of the local church.

Get in the Picture, which started in 2008, is a collaboration between our Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Light Project and Hope. Registrations are now being taken.

Visit <http://www.getinthepicture.org.uk>

THE Baptist Women's World Day of Prayer takes place on 4 November.

A suggested order of service with resources for worship and prayer has been prepared by the Revd Jenni Entrican, using the programme produced by the European Baptist Women's Union.

It is available here: <http://bit.ly/18ORvM9>

JOBS

New jobs posted on www.baptist.org.uk

Full-time Assistant Pastor, Southall Baptist Church

Regional Minister, Association Life South West Baptist Association

External Communications Officer, The Faraday Institute

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

BAPTISMS

Beverley Baptist Church, Yorkshire: Naomi Peach, Sally Delaney, Alison Barker, Emily Mason and Chris Mason **5**
Colchester Baptist Church, Essex: Andrew Bell, Ralph Goode, Tim Sargeant **3**
Crewkerne and Misterton Baptist Church, Somerset: Heather Johns ... **1**
Devonshire Avenue Baptist Church, Southsea: Steve Lee **1**
Emmanuel Baptist Church, Bootle: Marie Walker, Tony McVeigh **2**
Fleet Baptist Church, Hampshire: Ivan Gerber and Oliver Evans **2**

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

From the www.baptisttimes.co.uk

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

> Large numbers of children experience online bullying and worse. What can they - and