

# New IBTS Rector

THE Revd Dr Stuart Blythe is the new Rector of the International Baptist Theological Study Centre (IBTS Centre) in Amsterdam.

Dr Blythe was the 'unanimous' choice of the Board of Trustees of the International Baptist Theological Seminary (IBTS), which met in Prague on 1 November.

He is at present Interim Principal of the Scottish Baptist College, where he has been on the staff for the past eight years. He will take up his new post in the summer of 2014.

Dr Blythe, converted and baptised as a teenager in his home town of Uddingston near Glasgow, is the first head of the institution to be an IBTS graduate alumnus, obtaining his degree at Rüschtikon in 1989.

His primary areas of teaching and research are in the areas of practical theology with a concern for Baptist and anabaptist identity and the contribution which this particular perspective can bring to church ministry and mission.

Over the years he has been involved in various ways with the Baptist Union of Scotland and has encouraged thinking and practice in line with what it means to live under the rule of Christ.

Dr Blythe describes himself



as a 'convictional Baptist' with a passionate concern for God's mission. With respect to his new position he says he feels honoured to be invited to take up this post and excited by the challenges ahead.

'Our churches in Europe and beyond face a challenging and changing missionary situation,' he said. 'IBTS has an established reputation of high academic quality not least with attention to the Baptist tradition.'

'My hope is that the tough thinking, research interests, and students of IBTS will be able to support our churches as they seek courageously to bear faithful witness to Jesus Christ in their various contexts. The relocation

of IBTS to Amsterdam seems somewhat symbolic and the close partnerships this offer, full of potential.'

His appointment was warmly welcomed by the outgoing Chair of the IBTS Board of Trustees, the Revd Dr Ruth Gouldbourne, who also chaired the Search Group.

'Appointing somebody to the kind of key position as Rector of IBTS is always a crucial task - and at this time of change, even more so,' she said.

'We believe that Stuart brings to the position energy, vision and skills that will be significant in helping us develop the new patterns and relationships that will mark the life of IBTS in the next years.'

## Scunthorpe challenges its youth

SCUNTHORPE Baptist Church has launched a demanding new two-year youth programme that is challenging its 16 to 25 year olds to learn and grow as Jesus did.

Inspired by a message from Dr John Andrews about Luke 2:52, 'And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and with man', the programme includes four key elements.

### Skills

As Jesus grew in wisdom, participants in the programme are encouraged to learn new skills with a particular focus on life skills; things they won't necessarily learn at school or college. Core skills that all young people will learn include money management and budgeting, first aid and health and hygiene. And optional extras include anything from expressive arts to DIY.

### Fitness

As Jesus grew in stature, participants in the programme are given personal fitness plans that will enable them to build their stamina and develop their core strength. Young people take turns to cook a healthy meal to



share each week and with sessions on nutrition they are being encouraged to learn how to take care of their bodies.

### Spiritual

As Jesus grew in favour with God, participants are encouraged to explore and develop their spiritual lives. They don't have to be a Christian to take part but they do have to be willing to be active in this part of the programme.

### Community

As Jesus grew in favour with man, participants are encouraged to take an active part in their local community by volunteering in an area that interests them. They are also encouraged to actively support a charity or campaign that they are passionate about.

The final part of the programme is an overseas

experience. The young people are asked to take everything they have learned together and put it into practice on a three-six week short-term mission.

Alison Robinson, Youth Leadership Development Coordinator said around 12 young people have signed up, from a variety of backgrounds. 'The 2:52 Challenge has been developed in order to help young people develop habits that I hope will last a lifetime. I want to see our young people grow up to look after themselves both physically and spiritually and not be satisfied when they see injustice but know they can make a difference.'

The Revd Richard Webb, Lead Pastor said, 'This is an exciting programme that I believe can change a generation. For a long time, in our own youth group, we have focused almost entirely on spiritual growth alone. The 2:52 Challenge is incredibly demanding but it is a comprehensive programme that considers the whole person and equips them to get through life's difficult times.'

Visit [www.252Challenge.co.uk](http://www.252Challenge.co.uk)

## Adopting and faith communities

MORE than half (55 per cent or over 2 million people) in England who say they are 'certain' or 'very likely' to adopt a child describe themselves as 'actively practising a religion', according to new research.

However, many religious people don't come forward to adopt because of myths about who can adopt, claim First4Adoption and Home for

Good - a church-based campaign to promote adoption and fostering.

There are more than 4,600 children in England currently waiting to be adopted and although the rate of adoptions has risen 15 per cent recently, many more adopters are needed.

The research was carried out on behalf of the Department for Education and published to mark the launch of a dedicated

adoption information line for faith communities on 0300 222 5950 by First4Adoption and Home for Good. The two organisations have joined forces to encourage more people from faith communities to consider adopting. First4Adoption, on behalf of Home for Good, will provide the dedicated telephone information service for people from all faith communities.

# Catalyst Live 'near sell-out'

CATALYST Live, the two-day theology conference organised by BMS World Mission later this month, is a virtual sell out.

On Tuesday an extra 13 tickets were made available for the Reading leg of the double header (28 November), while fewer than 50 remain for Manchester on 27 November.

Catalyst Live features leading commentators from the worlds of theology, apologetics, science and culture, including Jurgen Moltmann, Sharon Dirckx, John Lennox and Stephen Holmes.

It's the first time BMS has organised such an event directly linked to *Mission Catalyst*, its quarterly magazine for Christian leaders.

'The way that Catalyst Live has come together has been so encouraging,' said BMS director of communications Mark Craig.

'From the earliest moment, when Professor Moltmann said he would come, through all kinds of wonderful people saying they'd join him, to us announcing a sell-out audience in Reading.

'We're thankful that our vision for a BMS-led theology conference has been blessed by God, and we're looking



forward to the two Catalyst Live dates when leaders from across the Baptist family, and well beyond it, can come together to be inspired by the amazing speakers we have with us.

'The fact that there's a real appetite for this kind of unashamedly deep-thinking event is inspiring, and we're all looking forward to Catalyst Live.'

In a podcast ahead of the event Professor Moltmann, one the world's greatest living theologians, spoke about Christian economics, blasphemies about creation and what the rise of the Nazis taught him about Christians in politics.

'One thing we learnt from the

Nazi state in Germany is that we must be involved as soon as possible if a dictatorship arises,' he stated.

'The separation of politics and faith was an obstacle for many Christians becoming involved in resistance against Hitler. Since that time, I would rather be involved in politics, even if I'm wrong. Not being involved is much worse.'

**Book your place on Catalyst Live: <http://www.bmscatalystlive.com/tickets/>**

**To listen to the Jurgen Moltmann podcast, visit: <http://bit.ly/187vN3J>**

Bible, but its truth and their application?

<http://bit.ly/18Zbzsr>

> How can small and larger churches work better together?

<http://bit.ly/HJKymg>

> Is the role of a minister simply about "doing stuff" - or is it something else entirely?

<http://bit.ly/17btdP5>

> The light shines in the darkness. And the darkness has NOT overcome it. Take the light with you and hold it and shine it into the darkness.

<http://bit.ly/1ekOZ5h>

> Analysis from the Baptist Education Group to recent reports about Religious Education

<http://bit.ly/18ZcCsF>

## Fresh Streams conference

*The conference is always a wonderful time of learning from God, experiencing Him working in my life and seeing Him clearly at work in others.*

*It always brings challenge, inspiration, information and fellowship and is a really lovely refreshing time where God always speaks and I am able to hear Him.*

The above quote was feedback from the 2013 Fresh Streams conference, the Baptist Word and Spirit network, and conference organisers are encouraging Baptist leadership teams to consider next year's event.

It takes place at The Hayes, Swanwick, Derbyshire from Monday 13 – Wednesday 15 January 2014.

This year the special guests are Gerard and Chrissie Kelly, Kenny and Morag Borthwick and Martin Young; worship will be led by Duncan Akehurst.

Organisers say the conference offers 'spiritual refreshment through ministry, teaching, worship, prayer and conversation'.

Each year it is attended by ministers, leaders, elders, deacons, worship leaders, youth leaders, including whole church leadership teams.

**Full information and a booking form can be found on the Fresh Streams website. Visit <http://www.freshstreams.net/>**

## Pioneering seminars

THE first of a series of three webinars (web-based seminars) exploring the theme of pioneering takes place on Thursday (7 November).

The three webinars are hosted by the Church of the Brethren and organised together with Urban Expression, Bristol Baptist College and BMS World Mission.

The first will be led by the Revd Juliet Kilpin of Urban Expression and will run for 90 minutes from 7.30pm. The next two will take place on 14 November and 11 December, and

will be led by 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.

**For more visit <http://bit.ly/1aTIsPx>**

### DEATH

**BAYNES, Marian** On Thursday 31 October at Christian Head Residential Home, Appleby, Cumbria, Marian S Baynes of Winton, Cumbria.c/o Glyn Jones Funeral Directors, 12 Battlebarrow, Appleby, Cumbria, CA16 6XS.

**CLARK, Audrey**, a former National President of The Baptist Women's League and wife of Peter died peacefully at home on 28 October. We give thanks for a long and fruitful life. During her many years in membership at Christ Church Baptist, Kings Langley, Audrey served our Lord and his church in numerous ways.

These included running the Womens' Own Fellowship, the choir, a weekly cafe and Sunday creche for over 60 years, and Herts Baptist Association President in 1974. A service of Thanksgiving for Audrey's life will be held at Christ Church on Thursday 7 November at 2pm.

### BAPTISMS

**Ashford Baptist Church, Ashford, Kent:** Florbela Martinho, Nicola Oliver, Joan Welch, Creswell Welch . . . . . 4

**Charlton Kings Baptist Church, Cheltenham:** Ellie Drake, Sarah Woodley, Kerry Pearson, Matthew Reynolds . . . . . 4

**Eastleigh Baptist Church, Hampshire:** Nicola King & Theresa May . . . . . 2

**Fernhill Heath Baptist Church, Fernhill Heath:** Cheryl Rouse, Sam Butterfield, Philip Hartley, Chloe Morrisey . . . . . 4

**Fleet Baptist Church, Hampshire:** Jan Brown and William Hooper . . . . . 2

**Fuller Baptist Church, Kettering:** Nicola Piggott and Esther Mungai . . . . . 2

**George Road Baptist Church, Erdington:** Adam Gordon, Blessing Adyone, Len Peck, Dorothy Richards . . . . . 4

**Spalding Baptist Church, East Midlands:** Melissa Reeve, Jocelyn Ellis, Michael Wardell . . . . . 3

**Tabernacle Baptist Church Wolverhampton:** Junice Shaw, Rob Sullivan, Norma Spair . . . . . 3

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