

Foodbanks inquiry

AN INQUIRY into why increasing numbers of people are using foodbanks is set to be launched by a national Christian charity later this month.

Church Action on Poverty and its partners have decided to seek the answers themselves after MPs voted against looking into foodbank use in a heated House of Commons debate just before Christmas.

The debate was brought following a 142,000-strong petition instigated by blogger and poverty campaigner Jack Monroe, and supported by the Daily Mirror and the Trussell Trust.

The motion called on the Government to reduce dependency on foodbanks, including a freeze on energy prices, a water affordability scheme, and measures to end abuses of zero hours contracts. Although there was gratitude from MPs for those who provide foodbanks and other services such as debt counselling, they voted on political lines and the motion was rejected.

According to the Trussell Trust, 500,000 people received

emergency assistance from a Trussell Trust foodbank from April 2013. Church Action on Poverty co-published a report alongside Oxfam last May

Liam Purcell.

‘Church Action on Poverty first brought attention to the national disgrace of food poverty last May,’ he told *The Baptist Times*. ‘Half a million people were forced to use food banks in 2012-13 – and the most common reason for people to need this support is that their benefits have been cut, stopped or delayed.’

‘We have been calling on the government to carry out an inquiry and establish what can be done to tackle the problem. It is deeply saddening that they have

so far refused to acknowledge the situation or to take any action.’

‘We are therefore working with partners in the churches to organise our own inquiry, with local events in food banks across the country.’

The project will be launched during Poverty & Homelessness Action Week (25 Jan – 2 Feb).

For more information about the Church Action on Poverty Campaign visit www.church-poverty.org.uk/walkingtheheadline.



highlighting UK food poverty, and has been campaigning for the Government to launch its own inquiry into its causes. The Trussell Trust has also called for an inquiry, as well as urgent cross-party action on food poverty.

Because there has been no response, and with an official report into the growth of foodbanks for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs still to be published, the charity and its partners will launch an inquiry of its own, said spokesman

‘Spread the word on blood and organ donation’

CHURCHES across the UK are being challenged to become long term advocates of blood and organ donation.

The fab Church Challenge, launched this week by the **fleshandblood** campaign, aims to encourage churches to become ‘donor churches’ and equip them as long term advocates of donation by providing practical tools to help them donate together, talk about donation and raise awareness in their communities.

It is the latest stage of the **fleshandblood** campaign, which seeks to encourage churches to see blood and organ donation as part of its giving.

The campaign launched at the start of 2013 and marked the first time the NHS has worked alongside the church on a national initiative of this kind. It is backed by a range of denominations and organisations, including our Baptist Union of Great Britain.

In just one year, 30,000 churches have received information about the



fleshandblood campaign and across the UK denominations, organisations and festivals have taken part in raising the profile of donation, mobilising the church to increase the number of donors. Around three people die per day due to the shortage of organs in the UK.

‘We have seen an amazing response in the UK Church over the past 12 months and are encouraged by the number of local churches raising the profile of blood and organ donation’, said Juls Hollidge, **fleshandblood**’s Campaign

Director. ‘What we need now is a long term commitment that continues to support the ongoing demand for blood and organs that the NHS faces every year.’

Any church taking up the challenge will be asked to make three commitments: to donate together; talk about donation by integrating it into their teaching; and raise community awareness by hosting an event, connecting with local schools or getting involved in blood and transplant week. Lots of ideas and resources are available on the website.

Visit fleshandblood.org

What kind of ministers do we need?

WHAT kind of ministers do we need for the next 20 years? How do we prepare them for this ministry?

What are we forming ministers for? Should we be training ‘jobbing pastors’ or potential theologians? How can we equip ministers to be pioneers and to have a greater mission-focus?

Most Baptist Christians

will have an interest in these questions - and are being invited to have their say in a new survey.

A small, task-focussed group is now exploring issues around ministerial formation for our Baptist Union of Great Britain, as part of a wider review of selection for ministry, continuing professional development and funding.

As many Baptists as possible

– church members, students and ministers – are encouraged to take a few minutes to complete the survey. The survey will close at 8pm on Monday 27 January 2014.

Visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/83G9ZPC>

Visit <http://bit.ly/1ih95g7> for a longer article explaining the process

Blogging, and building morale

Though thousands of good deeds take place in them every day, hospitals often only make the news when something goes wrong.

But through online technology and a desire to give people a voice, a Baptist minister is ensuring that the uplifting stories of one particular Trust are being told.

The Revd Dr David Southall is the Chaplaincy Team Leader at the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust. Having become aware of a mismatch in perceptions, he set up a blog to catalogue all the good that was taking place there.

'I had so many people telling me about the wonderful treatment they had had at Worcester and seen so much compassion and professionalism on the wards,' David explains, 'but just kept reading the negatives on the front pages.'

'I believe in a free press, and the stories they told need telling. But there was no public forum for the good stories. It's a difficult balance because I did not want to criticise the press for doing its job, but I did want these good stories - who knows, maybe 99per cent? - of people's



How David's blog was reported in the Worcester Evening News

experience to be told.'

The reaction, he says, has been 'fantastic'. The blog has racked up thousands of hits and its posts are widely circulated through social networks.

Staff and patients have been forthcoming with their stories, enabling him to keep a regular flow of content. He is frequently stopped by staff, grateful that their general activities are being recognised.

The blog also gives patients coming in for a procedure confidence about the hospital. Significantly, it also has the support of the Trust Board.

Bev Edgar, Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development, said, 'We think this is the most fantastic way of patients telling their stories and is a huge boost for staff morale.'

'We have been overwhelmed by the interest shown in the blog by the public and staff - something we could have never anticipated.'

'David is not representing any faith - just stories of decent human kindness, consideration and hopefully good news of patient recovery.'

'We also use the blog to raise awareness of issues such as fund raising for the African maternity link - and David is always keen to get staff to tell their own stories.'

David, who says the blog takes less than 30 minutes each day ('it's mainly copying and pasting'), recommends others think about doing similar for their own Trusts.

Visit www.revdavidsouthall.com

this ministry? Share your views in new survey

<http://bit.ly/1ih95g7>

> My son has a behavioural condition which hinders his ability to communicate. Despite this distressing news, I know I've been blessed

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

> Dementia: hell or foretaste

of heaven? A Christian mental health professional explains how understanding dementia shed new light on her faith

<http://bit.ly/1a8EHPD>

> The people who came to Jesus' crib were members of the first church - a Christmas Church. What sort of church was it?

<http://bit.ly/1bRw7Eq>

From the www. baptisttimes.co.uk

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

> What kind of ministers do we need for the next 20 years? How do we prepare them for

Awards for church magazines

DOES your church produce a magazine?

The Association for Church Editors has just launched its Magazine Awards for 2014.

The Awards are now focussed on a different type of magazine each year and on this occasion it is for A5 magazines which include colour printing at some point, which are produced not less than four times a year and which have a print run of not less than 50 copies.

Magazines are assessed under the following categories:

Cover design

Overall layout & structure

Creativity of headlines

Use of graphics

Clarity of the Christian message

Appeal to a wider community

A Certificate of Achievement is awarded to the winner in each category and there is also a trophy (The John King Trophy) for the overall winner.

The closing date for entries is Friday 7 February 2014. Two copies of two issues produced during the previous 12 months are required. One should relate to Easter or Christmas. The review process will be based on paper magazines, so please do not forward electronic versions. Entries should be sent to:

John Farrow, Hamilton House, East Common, Harpenden, Herts AL5 1DA

Multi-voiced church

A ONE-DAY workshop looking at how all church members can participate in their communities is being held later this month.

Multi-Voiced Church will be led by Stuart and Sian Murray Williams on Saturday, 18 January in Westbourne (Hampshire).

They suggest that healthy churches empower all their members to participate actively rather than being passive consumers and that multi-voiced communities are more likely to

be effective in mission and in sustaining faith and discipleship. At the workshop they will discuss the thinking behind the book of the same name.

The workshop is presented by the Mennonite Trust and Anabaptist Network in partnership with Warren Park Cafe Church, Westbourne Baptist Church & The Incarnate Network.

For more information visit <http://menno.org.uk/events>

Reviewers sought

DO you have an interest in music and films with a Christian perspective? Would you be interested in writing about it?

Each year *The Baptist Times* receives new music from Christian artists, and a smaller number of DVDs, and we would like to bring together a number of reviewers.

In return for writing a review for *The Baptist Times*, you would get to keep the CD or DVD.

If you are interested, or know anyone who would be, please contact phobson@baptist.org.uk with a short review of something you have recently listened to or watched.

DEATH

MACKENZIE, the Revd Donald MacInnes

Died peacefully aged 87 on 23 December 2013 after a period of ill health. After taking an MA from Glasgow University, a BD from New College, Edinburgh and ministerial training at the Glasgow Baptist College, Donald had pastorates in Scarisbrick Street, Wigan (1954-64), Avenue, Westcliff on Sea (1964-81), and Fuller, Kettering (1981-92), before retirement in Welwyn Garden City. Donald will be missed by his many friends, but especially by his wife Elspeth, children, Neil, Catriona and Duncan, and seven grandchildren. The funeral takes place at 1.30pm on Thursday 9 January 2014 at Dagnall Street Baptist Church, St Albans, followed by cremation at West Herts. Crematorium at 2.40pm.

BAPTISMS

Broadway Baptist Church, Derby: Roger Patten 1
Hereford Baptist Church: Shamilla McShane and Sue Hall-Neale 2
Upton Vale Baptist Church, Torquay: Abigail Greenwell 1

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