



12 August, 2015

News:

Callam calls on Baptists worldwide to unite

Baptist World Alliance (BWA) General Secretary Neville Callam renewed a call for the unity of the worldwide Baptist family at the closing plenary session of the 21st Baptist World Congress in South Africa

In the address, Callam called attention to the jubilant occasion in July 1905 when the original BWA constitution was agreed by the delegates at the inaugural Baptist World Congress.

He drew attention to the emphasis the originators of the BWA placed on the organisation as an expression of "the essential oneness in Christ" of Baptist churches worldwide. This was against the background of a perception of the worldwide Baptist witness as being weak and divided at the time.

Callam said those who formed the BWA were keen to emphasise that the worldwide fellowship being formed was to signify or express the oneness in Christ of Baptist churches worldwide. "The BWA was to become a vehicle for both the expression of that oneness and the furtherance of Baptist unity," he said.

The BWA leader urged contemporary Baptists to affirm the importance of unity as a central focus of the BWA. "I believe that the BWA continues to have the vocation of giving expression, and bearing witness, to Baptist unity in Christ," he told the more than 2,500 participants from more than 80 countries attending the congress in Durban. "The BWA has the calling to model this unity in our life as a denominational community and to serve as a vital instrument that helps Baptists overcome fragmentation and division."

At the same time, Baptists ought to recognise that they are part of a wider global community of Christians, with Callam declaring that Baptists share with "other

Christians the one body of Christ."

In a final appeal, Callam urged Baptists to commit to the core principles of the BWA, which are preaching the Good News of the kingdom, practicing responsible Christian discipleship, defending those who are persecuted and identifying with people in need not only by contributing to their relief, but also by working to remove the systems and structures that perpetuate injustice.

Callam challenged Baptist Christians to "keep the word of God in our hearts and let us model a loving and united movement of Baptist Christians," going "forward as a people who are united in God our Savior."

The congress, which had as its theme, "Jesus Christ, the Door," was held from July 22 to 26 at the International Convention Centre in Durban. It was the first Baptist World Congress in Africa since the first in London, England, in 1905.

During the gathering [the fifth Congress Human Rights Award was presented to Rwandan Corneille Gato Munyamasoko](#), general secretary of the Association of Baptist Churches in Rwanda (AEBR). Munyamasoko was recognised for his work in peace and reconciliation after the 1994 genocide in his country.

Visit the BWA for [reports](#), [photos](#), and [videos](#).

Ethics Daily also produced substantial coverage, with [news and opinion](#), [filmed interviews](#) and [Pinterest](#).

Read [Congress reflections from Jenni Entrican](#), the President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain.

The 2020 celebration will, for the first time, combine the Baptist World Congress with the Baptist Youth World Conference. It will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Torquay church's Cambodian mission

Members of a Torquay Baptist church are preparing for a major mission trip where they will be working alongside street children and vulnerable women.

The 10-strong team from Barton Baptist Church travel to Cambodia for two weeks in November to work with two established ministries there.

It's the first time the church has undertaken such a mission and it came about through a family connection from a couple within the church, as minister Richard Matcham explains. "Their [the couple's] daughter attends a church in Victoria, Australia called 'Riviera Christian Centre' (not bad considering Barton is in the 'English Riviera'), and this church have partnered with two ministries in

Cambodia for 15 years, so have lots of experience.

'I said wouldn't it be great if we (Barton) partnered with them and joined them on the next possible trip. The couple said it was a great idea and that was that.'

The church is joining two ministries: Transform Cambodia and Precious Women.

Transform Cambodia provides street children with an education in English and a meal each day. The families of the children are consequently given rice every month to compensate for the loss of income sustained in removing their child from work.

Women working in the sex industry are taught skills for trade by the ministry, Precious Women. These skills may include hand-crafting items or skills for work in the hair and beauty industry. This ministry helps the women to gain skills for trade outside of the sex industry, whilst keeping safe.

On this first visit, the team go with the mission to see what's going on already; to learn, to pray and to serve as needed.

Richard said, 'I think our over-riding concern is to walk humbly, listen carefully, pray greatly.'

Barton Baptist sees this as a whole-church mission, adopting the inclusive mantra, 'some people will go; some people will stay; everyone will pray'.

Richard explained how this prayerfulness is central to their collective mission. 'This way, we include everyone whilst highlighting not only the supreme importance of prayer, but also our collective responsibility as church to pray!' he said.

Preparing for the mission is another way the church has come together. They have established a prayer-prompter box in preparation for the mission, which means that everyone in the church has someone to pray for.

The team has also been quizzing up on Cambodian history and church members have come up with creative fund-raising activities including hosting a whopping 8 course Cambodian meal.

New film explores self harm

The film has been launched by koko, the Girls' Brigade Ministries' multi-award winning blog for teenage girls in collaboration with selfharmUK

The documentary-style film, called *koko explores: self-harm*, looks at what self-harm is, what you can do to support a friend who self-harms, and features real-life stories from former self-harmers. It was made in collaboration with [selfharmUK](#), a project dedicated to supporting young people impacted by self-harm.

'We've been hearing lots about self-harm recently,' said koko Project Co-ordinator Meg Cannon, 'from teenage girls, on social media and in the news and so we decided to go out and ask some questions.'

'Our aim was to shine a spotlight on the very delicate subject of self-harm and create a film that offers hope and encouragement.'

The film launched at the summer conference for Girls' Brigade (GB) leaders on Saturday (11 July 2015) as part of a special session focusing on cultivating self-worth in young women – led by Rachel Gardner, National President of GB and founder of the Romance Academy.

The short film was produced in collaboration with selfharmUK - a project dedicated to supporting young people impacted by self-harm, providing a safe space to talk, ask questions and be honest about what's going on in their lives.

Project Director Rachel Welch said 'I hope that those who see the film will be reminded that they're so much more than "just" self-harm and that the journey is best travelled with company – so please take a risk and tell someone.'

The film can be seen on the [koko website](#) or [via YouTube](#).

Everything on the innovative koko site, a mission initiative from Girls' Brigade Ministries, is created with teenage girls firmly in mind to help them explore life together – inspiring, challenging and encouraging them – and looking at tough issues.

The [previous koko film, on friendship, called I've Got Your Back](#) has been viewed by around 6,000 people since it launched in March 2015.

koko stands for Keep On Keeping On and you'll find it at www.thekokostory.com, as well as on Twitter ([@thekokostory](https://twitter.com/thekokostory)) and Facebook (facebook.com/thekokostory)

Church planting in Poland

An encouraging number of Baptist churches are being planted in Poland, a country under “a strong influence of secularism”, according to the European Baptist Federation (EBF)

There have been approximately 20 new church plants in Poland and several of those have been facilitated by EBF, reports [the latest EBF Mission Partnerships News](#).

Almost 90 per cent of Poland's 38.5 million population claim “a nominal” adherence to Roman Catholicism, says the newsletter.

The Baptist Union in Poland comprises 90 established churches with more than 5,000 baptised members.

Church planting is an important part of the Baptist Union's strategy, and the newsletter highlighted the “crucial role” played by emerging young leaders such as Lukasz and Ola, a husband and wife team in their twenties.

Lukasz and Ola started working with a large Baptist church called 5N in Poznan, a city in western Poland.

The couple have established student Bible-study groups and also a youth group, and their goal is to build up a healthy Christian missional community that grows in faith and numbers.

The church is structured around group meetings on Sundays and one-to-one discipleship. During the week they also meet for a Bible study and an English Club where the regular attenders can also invite newcomers. They also organise outreach events and various conferences.

‘We managed to organize a country-wide conference that was attended by 120 people,’ said Lukasz. ‘It was a time of encouragement, fellowship and learning. Last winter we also organised a week long skiing camp which became excellent occasion for Bible-centred discussions. Since then four new people visited Sunday services regularly and three of them joined discipleship groups.’

He continued, ‘Our group is very young. I am 25 years old and other leaders are my equals. Most of our people were not raised in Protestant Churches and we try to create a culture friendly environment of faith. At the same time my focus is to preserve the biblically sound teaching.’

Whilst the statistics are encouraging, Baptists in Poland are calling for prayer, continued the newsletter:

Pray for an openness of the people of Poland to the message of the gospel, as Poland is now widely influenced by secularism.

Pray also for Lukasz and other young mission minded leaders who have a vision for church planting, that they may be successful in reaching out to the multitudes.

Baptisms:

Bishop's Stortford Baptist Church, Herts: Jordan Smith, Tanne Shorter
Bottesford Baptist Church, Scunthorpe: Ruth Parrott and Chris Wheeler
Calvary Baptist Church, Cardiff: John Cooper
Chatsworth Baptist Church, West Norwood: Sheku Alghali
Keynsham Baptist Church, Keynsham, Bristol: Victoria Edwards, Liesel Abrell, Nick Price
London Road Baptist Church, Lowestoft, Suffolk: Claire Bokenham, Carmen Marris, and Imogen Firma

Jobs:

Regional Minister Team Leader – South West Baptist Association
Minister – Stoke Row Independent Chapel
Full Time Associate Pastor - To be part of the pastoral team with responsibility for a small Urdu/Punjabi speaking group linked to Southall Baptist Church

For more information on these positions, visit

<http://www.baptist.org.uk/jobs>

Events/resources:

Reconciling a Wounded Planet – 18-19 September, Coventry Cathedral
A two-day conference where Christians will come together to consider ‘stories of hope’ in the midst of the growing environmental crisis that the world is experiencing. Together they will explore how we can work towards finding solutions and creating a lasting legacy that will protect the planet for generations to come.

Speakers include Sir Ghillean Prance, Professor Richard Bauckham, and Revd Margot Hodson.

Bursaries available for ministerial students.

Visit <http://www.reconcilingawoundedplanet.com/>

The Rugby World Cup, the world’s third largest sporting event, is taking place across the country in September/October 2015.

An extensive set of resources for churches to use rugby to engage with their

communities has just gone live. They have been produced by Engage 2015, a cross denominational campaign.

For more visit: www.engagemediahub.com

msm online

The Pioneer Collective has facilitated a partnership with Fresh Expressions to deliver the first online mission shaped ministry in the UK. Individuals are welcome to register, but msm online will be most effective when small groups gather in a home to access the course together.

Visit <http://www.missionshapedministry.org/online>