



27 September, 2017

News

Jenni Entrican becomes EBF President

The Revd Jenni Entrican has become the new President of the European Baptist Federation (EBF). Jenni, a former President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, became the second woman to assume the role following her induction at the EBF's annual council in Yerevan, Armenia

She had been elected Vice President in 2015.

'For the last two years as Vice President I have been able to travel to a number of countries in Europe and the Middle East and I have learnt so much of how Baptist Christians are living out their faith in taxing circumstances,' Jenni said.

'So I feel very honoured to take up this Presidency where, with God's grace, I hope to be an encouragement and support to our sisters and brothers in the EBF.

'Your prayers as I fulfil this role, would be much appreciated.'

EBF General Secretary Tony Peck said he was delighted that Jenni had become the new President. When Birgit Karlsson (Sweden), the only previous female incumbent, had been elected in the 1990s there was more debate, he said. This time, there was much more acceptance.

Speaking of Jenni's initial election as Vice President, he said, 'The EBF has a diversity of views about women in ministry, and we have agreed that whilst we are free to express these to one another, we should respect each another and it is not something that should in any way break our fellowship.

'In the end Jenni's nomination was agreed overwhelmingly, the few voting against or abstaining being leaders who quite understandably felt that they needed to represent with integrity the views of their Unions in this matter. I see this result as a sign of real progress in the breadth and depth of our EBF fellowship that can embrace such difference and diversity.'

Tony said that Jenni brings a lifetime of experience to the role, not least her experience as a mission pioneer (she led the Jacob's Well church plant for several years) and her spiritual leadership.

Jenni hopes to reach out to the wide Baptist family.

She said, 'I have learned a great deal of respect for my European brothers and sisters, as I have learnt of the challenges many face, and how they are committed to Christ and the Baptist family. The roll call at the opening night of the Council is always a highlight for me as we are reminded of the breadth of this Federation - encompassing not only Europe but the Middle East.

'Reading the history of the EBF from its inception in 1950, it's easy to be struck by how Baptists have faced the considerable challenges in post-war Europe with fortitude and resilience, finding ways to live together and support one another in remarkably diverse settings.

'I delighted to be the second woman called to this post, and my prayer and my commitment will be to serve, support and encourage this wide Baptist family in their endeavours to live out the Kingdom of God as Christ followers in these complex, and for many, challenging days.'

Meego Remmel of Estonia was elected Vice President. He will succeed Jenni in two years.

The annual gathering took place Yerevan, home of Jenni's predecessor Asatur Nahapetyan (below), who leads the Armenian Baptist Union.

Asatur, who was once mentored by David Coffey, former Baptist Union General Secretary, was taught at the International Baptist Theological Seminary when it was based in Prague, and went through the same Baptist World Alliance (BWA) younger leaders programme that helped to nurture Elijah Brown, the new BWA General Secretary.

'Asatur is a good example of what happens when you encourage potential younger leaders,' said Tony.

'He became leader of the Armenian Baptists at a young age due to the sudden death of his predecessor, and has given excellent leadership. He has helped to develop a Baptist way that is distinctly Armenian, and there has been a growth in the number of churches. When Armenia became independent in 1991 there were just 350 Baptist church members. Now there are more than 100 churches and 6,000 members.'

Four resolutions were agreed at the Council, concerning anti-terror legislation and religious freedom; Christian marriage; Iraq; and religious freedom in Russia. You can find them here: <http://ebf.org/council-resolutions>

'A person of quiet, strong, courageous faith'

Tributes have been paid to the Revd Barbara Stanford MBE, a longtime minister at Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church, who has died aged 81

Barbara Stanford Barbara had initially come to the church as a deaconess in 1961, and was a minister there until 2001. She remained at the church for several years before moving to Suffolk in retirement. During her time in London she received the MBE for her pastoral services to the local community.

The Revd Dr Brian Haymes was a colleague in the early 2000s. He paid this tribute:

It was a great privilege to have been Barbara's colleague in ministry. She first came to Bloomsbury as a new short term placement as Deaconess but stayed for the rest of her life. Simply put, she lived for others, deeply committed to the cause of Christ in the city. I was constantly inspired by her. She sacrificed herself in such ways that she became an example of ministry I have never seen matched.

She was a person of quiet strong courageous faith, fearless in those critical situations that can emerge for a church open to all comers, compassionate in ways that went ways beyond easy sentiment into strong engaged love. She valued all people as Jesus did in the Gospels, with welcome care for all; bag ladies, homeless people, vulnerable young, politicians, captains of industry, finance and academics, all who make up the daily life of the Bloomsbury church. She took time with individuals, responding with steady compassion.

She was notoriously careless of things for herself, sometimes creating situations where others would be full of personal embarrassment but producing only laughter from herself. For her, people always came first.

She made huge contributions to local hospitals as a chaplain. When I arrived towards the end of her ministry at the church it seemed as if everyone knew her, in the caring professions, ecumenically, politically.

She shared in the leading of worship and the congregation knew there the depth of her prayers, evidence of her wide reading especially in the traditions of contemplative prayer.

There was a wholeness about her life and ministry that was beautiful to witness. She was a joy to be with, a minister who served God in the church and the world through the people she met.

I think I learned more about ministry from her than anyone else. She was a gift of God to us.

Another former colleague was the Revd Barrie Hibbert, a minister at Bloomsbury between 1987-99. 'Barbara could not have been a more faithful and helpful colleague,' he said. 'Neither could she have been a closer and dearer friend.'

He added, 'I was always deeply impressed with her great love for the church and all its people. Whenever she spoke from the pulpit or in the office or in the dining room, her words were always thoughtful, sincere and kind ... and often amusing!

'I was even more deeply impressed by her wonderful attitude towards the hundreds of poor and needy people with whom she had contact on the streets of London.'

In an interview for the church's website in 2006, Barbara spoke of the church's acceptance of people of all walks of life, its high standard of music, the constant commitment of volunteers and 'the sense of the church as a family supporting one another in the dark times as well as enjoying with them good times, fun, laughter and teasing!'

Other highlights had included Martin Luther King preaching at the church in the 1960s, the Dalai Lama speaking at a multi-faith service, and Cardinal Basil Hume preaching at a Sunday morning service.

The Revd Dr Simon Woodman, is one of the current ministers at Bloomsbury. He said, 'Although I only knew Barbara in retirement in Ipswich, she demonstrated an unflinching pastoral care for the people of Bloomsbury. Her cheery phone messages - 'no need to call back, love, just calling to see how you are', always seemed to arrive at exactly the right time.

'I often suspected that she had her finger on the pulse of the church more firmly than I did.'

Serving up hot and healthy summer meals at Hay Hill Baptist

As the autumn term gets underway, the summer holidays may seem like a distant memory. But for Hay Hill Baptist Church in Bath, there is plenty to celebrate as they look back on running MakeLunch, a community project set up to fill the holiday hunger gap

1.2 million children in the UK are eligible for free school meals. But when school stops for the holidays, so does the food. MakeLunch supports churches to run holiday meal provision which fills this gap for families at risk of going hungry outside of term time. Ninety-three churches now run MakeLunch and more than 56,000 meals have been served since the first kitchen opened their doors in 2011.

For Hay Hill Baptist Church in Bath, the recent summer holidays was their sixth time of working in partnership with other local churches to provide fun activities and nutritious food to more than 40 children. Project coordinators, Lea Lawton and Claire Henwood, have been involved from the start: 'We wanted to start MakeLunch in Bath after hearing how many children and their families are living in poverty in our city.

'We wanted to respond practically and MakeLunch have equipped us brilliantly to do this. We run twice a week during school holidays in two areas of Bath, whose schools have the highest numbers of children receiving free school meals.'

The sessions are run by 'brilliant' volunteers and are designed to be fun and engaging for primary-aged children, their siblings and parents/carers. There is always games and crafts at the beginning of the session and the churches are working with local organisations to deliver other enrichment activities such as sports coaching and healthy cooking.

The sessions always finish with a "family style" meal where we all sit together to eat a hot, tasty, nutritious meal.

By partnering with MakeLunch, Hay Hill received funding, training and resources to get started. Now working with up to 30 volunteers every school holiday, its Lunch Kitchen is well established and going from strength to strength.

'Our guest families are starting to open up to us and relationships are developing between guests and volunteers,' said Lea. 'One guest said that MakeLunch really helped her this summer, knowing that she and her children could get out of the house twice a week to somewhere safe and fun.

'We're hoping to develop the enrichment activities we offer to our guests to put on a really enjoyable event. We want to open another day a week in a different part of Bath to reach more children and their families.

'MakeLunch is a great opportunity for the church across the city to work together to serve our community and practically demonstrate the love of Jesus.'

As is the case in Bath, for many families, it's not just the food for the children that makes this such a vital support in the holidays. In a report by Kellogg's, 1 in 3 parents from low-income families have skipped a meal so their children can eat in the school holidays(1).

Hannah, Network Development Coordinator at MakeLunch, has been hearing encouraging stories from across the network this summer that highlight how MakeLunch projects are helping parents too.

'One church found that the adults who came with the kids were benefiting just as much; they said "It was as if the two hours spent with us re-charged their batteries"'.

There is lots to celebrate at each of the MakeLunch projects across the UK, just like at Hay Hill. But there will be communities too where holiday hunger is a reality and no provision exists. Could your church open their doors to families in the school holidays and fill the holiday hunger gap?

MakeLunch is a great way for churches to connect with their local school, parents in their community and kids who otherwise might go hungry. If you'd like to find out more about how you can work with MakeLunch, get in touch with Hannah (hannah@makelunch.org.uk) or visit makelunch.org.uk.

**Time to reform 'ageist' church, says CRE 2017 speaker
God cares no less for the old than the young – and the church must take an ageing population seriously when it comes to mission and growth**

That will be the message to next month's Christian Resources Exhibition (Oct 17-19, Sandown Park, Surrey) from Rev Dr David Hilborn of St John's College, Nottingham.

'The generational distinctions we use today are relatively recent and specific to western culture,' David will contend. 'Scripture shows us that God's people tend to go wrong when the young are set against the old.'

The biblical writers tend to see economic status, race and gender as of more concern to God than distinctions of age – and cut across generational lines.

'In our pastoral care, we need to get these concerns into proportion,' said David. 'After some 30 years dominated by a generationally-segmented approach, recent mission and church growth thinking has recovered the importance of intergenerational Christian life and witness.'

In his seminar David will offer practical examples of intergenerational church and mission, alongside case studies of how it can be complemented by generationally-specific strategies.

CRE, the biggest annual exhibition of church-related resources in Europe, returns to Sandown Park for the first time since 2014. Special guests include Terry Waite and Dana, who will open the event, and Dave Gregory, Vice President of the Baptist Union.

- Millennials, X-ers and Boomers: Should Mission and Church Growth Be Generation-Based? Rev Dr David Hilborn of St John's School of Mission (3pm, Wed 18 Oct). St John's College Nottingham are on Stand S26 at CRE 2017.

Big thinking for little minds

Thinking big. That's how one BMS World Mission worker has achieved something incredible. Thanks to the teacher training programme Annie Brown has developed, every child in Nepal will have the chance of a better education and a brighter future.

God takes the little and multiplies it. Faith the size of a mustard seed ends up moving mountains. Five loaves and two fish feed 5,000.

One BMS education worker's passion for great education results in changes to the way education is approached across Nepal. It's truly awesome.

In Nepal, teachers don't necessarily have much formal training. To counter this and make sure it doesn't harm children's chances, teacher trainer Annie Brown has developed a programme that she's been delivering in Nepal for four years. The aim is to help teachers steer away from the traditional rote learning method, and to get both students and teachers more engaged in critical and creative thinking. Her programme has been adopted by the Nepali government as part of their exciting initiative to promote child-centred learning.

When learning becomes interesting, the results are astounding. Students in schools that have received Annie's training are now more engaged in what they're being taught, and their hopes and dreams for their futures are reaching new heights. "These kids could be anything," says Annie Brown.

After observing Annie's team in action in January 2017, the Nepal Government's Ministry of Education was convinced. Annie was approached to roll out her training across the country's entire education system, as part of the Nepali Government plans to improve it.

Starting in January 2018, the plan is for all teachers of students aged between five and 13 years old of all subjects in all government schools throughout Nepal to undergo training pioneered by Annie.

Nepal is made up of 75 regions. In these regions, there are 29,207 government schools. In those schools, there are 252,421 teachers who will have the chance to receive Annie's training. That amounts to almost three and a half million children getting the opportunity for a better education. That's impressive, however you look at it.

One teacher who has already received the training is Hari, who Annie has been working with for the past two years.

Hari has been teaching for 21 years in Lamjung District in central Nepal. And Annie's teaching has changed the way he teaches – proof that you can always keep learning as a teacher. "After training I have more knowledge about how to motivate the students, how to actively participate them," says Hari, who stars in the video above.

Having developed his skills to get children thinking and engaged in his classroom, Hari was recently named the top teacher out of 150 in his district. A huge achievement for Hari, and a testament to the value of the training you're supporting. "Thanks to BMS for your support," says Hari. "I'm also grateful to Annie, who's the best instructor in my life."

We're very excited: the impact this training is having, and will continue to have, and the number of children that will be impacted is extraordinary. It's all part of our mission to see more people on the margins access good-quality education. Thanks to your giving, children in Nepal now have so much more hope for their futures.

Find out more about Annie's work and BMS-supported teacher training in Nepal. Read the latest issue of Engage, available to download [here](#). You can also subscribe to get a paper copy today.

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