

THE BAPTIST TIMES



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Housing the vulnerable

A BAPTIST church is to house women leaving a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre.

Norwich Central Baptist Church will adapt a house it owns next month as move-on accommodation for women from the Christian drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre Hebron House.

It's a partnership with the charity Hope into Action, which enables churches to provide accommodation for the vulnerable. The charity will give professional support, with the church providing the temporary accommodation for two women, plus friendship, practical help and volunteer opportunities.

The Revd Mark Fairweather Tall, minister of Norwich Central Baptist, explained it was a continuation of the close links the church has had with Hebron House.

'We were looking at other ways of supporting Hebron House. What really changed was Government support being cut from six months to three months.'

'Moving on from Hebron House at the end of the programme can be a difficult experience as the transition is so great.'

'So we've been in talks with Hope into Action for about a



year, and our property, which is currently being rented out to private tenant until the end of August, will then be used as move-on accommodation and offer a further stage of care to the women.'

It's the latest partnership with a local church for Hope in Action, which quotes Isaiah 58 and Acts 4 on its website and was founded around two years ago.

Its model involves the church using its investment capacity to acquire a house, which will then support two people in a vulnerable situation.

The rent or housing benefit pays a return on the investment. The charity provides the professional support, with the church providing community, non-judgemental relationships, practical support and prayer.

In this way the church, using its own resources, is able to 'holistically support people in their community who are in a vulnerable situation,' according

to the charity. It now has links with around ten churches, from a variety of denominations.

Noel Garner, operations and marketing director, said it facilitates churches which wish to offer care for the vulnerable.

'They key to how we operate is the people themselves. If there is a small core of people in the church with the will to do this, the rest can fall into place.'

For Mark, the partnership with both Hebron House and now Hope into Action strikes at the heart of the church.

'I am excited about the project because it fits in so well with who we hope to be as a church,' he explained.

'Every person matters to God and this is a chance to reflect His love and show that we care.'

'God transforms lives bringing hope where once there was despair.'

'We have the privilege of being called to engage in this process and our hope is that using the house in this way will be a small step in demonstrating God's Good News for all.'

• For more information about Hope into Action visit www.hopeintoaction.org.uk

From the editor

Whose heart cannot have gone out to the family of four year old Dylan Cecil, who slipped off a jetty and into the water at Burnham-on-Sea on Sunday? One minute he was there, the next he was gone.

On Wednesday there were reports of five year old Lara Lewis, who drowned with her grandfather in Portugal.

Tragedies, though isolated, dominate news bulletins, and raise all sorts of difficult questions.

If someone asked 'Why did God let these two little children die?' I couldn't confidently explain. But Christians do not deny the realities of tragedy, just as pain and suffering does not negate the reality of God.

We believe that Jesus weeps with those who are weeping (John 11:35).

We know there are countless stories of God bringing good amid awful circumstances. Ultimately we trust God's promise to one day 'wipe every tear from their eyes' (Rev 21:4).

I have a five year old, and have just returned from a short holiday near the Norfolk coast. I cannot begin to imagine what these families are going through.

But I pray, in the midst of their heartache, they will somehow experience something of the peace of God.

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Soul Survivor success

MORE than 25,000 young people attended the three Soul Survivor events this summer in Stafford and Somerset, with more than 5000 at Momentum, an event for those in their 20s and 30s.

Many Christians brought friends who aren't part of church and in the main meetings alone around 1,800 people gave their lives to Jesus.

Soul Survivor director and event host Mike Pilavachi, said, 'It's always incredible and humbling to see thousands of young people meeting with Jesus

and a privilege to see hundreds give their lives to God.'

Highlights from the conferences included the launch of Soul Survivor Youth Bible with over 500 articles for young people to access God's word.

Two thousand young people also signed up to take part in the Soul Action 'Free 2 Play' campaign, to raise money and awareness to end trafficking.

Mike added, 'I honestly believe we are seeing a greater openness to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ than at any time over the past 20 years.'

MINISTERIAL

The service of ordination and induction of Jonathan Bugg as associate pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Church, Penarth, will be held on Saturday 8 September at 2pm, followed by refreshments.

The induction service for the Revd Dane Baker as associate pastor of Fleet Baptist Church will be held on Saturday 15 September at 3pm. The guest speaker will be Robert Weston of Ruach Ministries and the induction by the Revd Stuart Davison.

DEATHS

David Hudson was a Baptist Minister for nearly 40 years. With his wife Muriel he served churches in Bewdley, Twynholm, Wallington, Sudbury and East Devon, before retiring in 1996 to Thornbury, Bristol. Both have now passed away peacefully: David in February and Muriel in July 2012. They were dearly loved, faithful servants of the Lord. We thank God that they are now home with Him. A Service of Thanksgiving will be held at Thornbury Baptist Church, August 30. Contact Jenny Hudson jennymiah2009@yahoo.co.uk

BAPTISMS

Bristol (Counterslip): Hannah Steed 1
Coseley, Dudley (Providence): Leonard Flavell, Martin Turner 2
Plymouth (Mutley): Joel Seldon, Debbie Hubbard, Shaughan Lewis, Julia Johnston, Ruth Tongeren, Prad Anand 5
Wolverhampton (Tabernacle): Stephen Jones, Salwa Khalil, Sylvia O'Connor, Alice Tooms 4
Total notified 12

Send notifications of baptisms, ministerial changes, deaths and testimonies to editor@baptisttimes.co.uk