



'A Beautiful bit of Subversive Artistry'

A Reflection by Ruth Harvey, Churches Together in Cumbria

At a recent ecumenical gathering in SW Scotland, while discussing contentious and controversial issues, after a moment of silence, one participant offered: 'churches together networks are a beautiful bit of subversive artistry'.



My delight was followed by intrigue as we unpacked this image. What she meant was that very close beneath the surface of formal church interaction is a network of people prepared to stand up for a radical interpretation of the gospel, and the life of Jesus that reaches beyond definition and doctrine to a deeper belonging together in the spirit. (For an inspiring reflection on the Quaker approach to 'belonging in the spirit', and being 'open for transformation', see the [2014 Swarthmore Lecture by Ben Pink Dandelion on YouTube](#).)

So, in what way is Churches Together in Cumbria a 'beautiful bit of subversive artistry'?

Our flagship project, building a Mission Community in each area of the county, made up of Anglican, Methodist and United Reformed members and leaders, is a beautiful new dance that is being written in this part of NW England. As with any new dance, we're kind of making it up as we go along, trying to bring the best of our traditions into this new configuration. In the process we are laughing, and sometimes crying. Laughing as we realise that there is no blueprint, we do need to trust one another, God and our instincts. And crying, as we discover new steps together, while also treading on one another's toes.

In the process we are giving birth to a new model of ecumenism which is rooted in mission and a passion for justice. It is also, but not primarily, a pragmatic project: each denomination is aware of decline in membership and leadership. But this project is no last minute flurry, but rather a prayerfully grounded outworking of Jesus' call 'that all may be one.'

In the process this new dance has spin-offs: smaller dances emerging round the edges. It is in these and more places that I believe we are reaching for the subversive nature of faith that Jesus modelled.

- 'Social Responsibility': Jesus' bias to the poor is key in the gospel. In Cumbria we already have a well-established and highly respected Social Responsibility Forum, engaging with the third sector and with local and national government to keep the needs of the poorest to the fore. As we work together on a shared mission, it is this bias that we must continue to affirm and adopt as our core mission.
- 'Companion Churches': Jesus kept the door open always to the small, those on the edges, the forgotten ones. As we deepen our relating, the three lead denominations keep the door open to the other 6 member churches of CTIC who are involved as 'companions', not yet fully part of Mission Communities, but welcome to join in. And our Church Leaders continue to meet with leaders of smaller, independent churches in the county, always widening the network and remaining open to the surprise of the Holy Spirit.
- 'Growing through Conflict': Jesus did not shy away from conflict, but walked towards it. The letters to and acts of the early church model a startling degree of conflict, and an ability to respond. As we change in Cumbria, we will encounter conflict and tension. So a network of mediators from across the denominations is being trained and equipped to support situations of conflict. The development of Rose Castle near Carlisle as an international centre for reconciliation is a welcome gift.
- 'Gender Aware': Jesus promoted and affirmed the voice and ministry of women amongst his followers. One potential tension in Cumbria is over the role of women in leadership. And so a

Gender Aware project is being nurtured through CTiC to broaden our shared understanding of the role of women in the church.

- 'Ecumenical Spirituality': Jesus took himself to places of quiet for reflection in times of stress. Prayer was never far from his lips. Our already existing network of spiritual directors, gathered up in the 'Ecumenical Spirituality Group', continues to offer a 'Nourishing the Soul' course, and a ministry of availability to all seeking to deepen their spiritual life. This group takes on a new energy and focus as we deepen our structural relationships.

As our new dance in Cumbria takes us outside our comfort zones, offering a 'refreshed' (or as in the motto of the Church of Scotland, 'always in need of reform') model of church that challenges perceived norms of structure, form and mission, so we must remain alert to peril. We may be forging a new dance, but it certainly won't be perfect, and will contain many of the pitfalls of the old ways. Complacency and short-sighted historical perspective will remain our companions, but need not cloud our vision as we continue to model a Gospel-inspired, 'beautiful bit of subversive artistry' in Cumbria. Come and join the dance!

Ruth Harvey is the Ecumenical Development Officer for Churches Together in Cumbria www.churchestogethercumbria.co.uk

The archive of 'Reflection for the Month' is kept at www.cte.org.uk/reflection

Metropolitan Anthony Centenary Conference

Last call for registration for the M. Anthony Centenary Conference.

Metropolitan Anthony Centenary Conference will take place on November 15 - 16, 2014 at King's College London.

Please note that places for the conference are limited, therefore booking is essential.

As demand is high and the College will not allow us to exceed the designated number, please apply at latest by November 5, 2014.

After that please check with the organizers by telephone or e-mail to see if places remain.

<http://www.exarchate.org.uk/>

METROPOLITAN ANTHONY OF SOUROZH (1914-2003) Centenary Conference

'THE GLORY OF GOD IS A MAN FULLY ALIVE'
St Irenaeus of Lyons

SPEAKERS
Dr Rowan Williams (Cambridge)
Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon (Athens, Greece)
Father Alexander Fostiropoulos (London)
Brother Adalberto Mainardi (Bosa, Italy)
Dr Susanne Sklar (Wisconsin, USA)
Dr Elisabeth Robson (London)
Costa Carras (Athens, Greece)
Karin Greenhead (London)

NOVEMBER
15th - 16th 2014
KING'S COLLEGE
LONDON

Organised by the
Metropolitan Anthony
of Sourozh Foundation

Programme & application
form to follow May/June
www.exarchate.org.uk
www.mitrast.ru
Booking Essential:
01869 347457
masf.foundation@gmail.com

Romero and the Ecumenical Future

Lord Rowan Williams (former Archbishop of Canterbury) will deliver the 2014 Archbishop Romero Memorial Lecture:

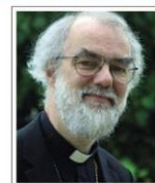
A saint for the whole people of God: Romero and the ecumenical future.

Friday 12 December at 7.00pm
at St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham B4 6EU.

Hosted by Archbishop Bernard Longley. All welcome.

Further information:
romerotrust@btinternet.com or www.romerotrust.org.uk

Archbishop Romero Lecture 2014



Lord Rowan Williams
(former Archbishop of Canterbury)
will deliver the
2014 Archbishop Romero
Memorial Lecture

'A saint for the whole people of God:
Romero and the ecumenical future'

Friday December 12th
at 7.00pm

St Chad's Cathedral,
Birmingham B4 6EU.

Hosted by Archbishop Bernard Longley.

All welcome



contact: romerotrust@btinternet.com website: www.romerotrust.org.uk

'The Cross' DVD by Billy Graham

'The Cross' has now been released across the United Kingdom as part of 'My Hope UK with Billy Graham'.

The DVD is released as a 60th Anniversary of 'Haringey' and on the 96th birthday of Billy Graham, the preacher who drew Christians from a wide spectrum of churches to the evangelistic mission. Church leaders in a variety of denominations root their faith journey to the preaching of Billy Graham and this DVD is designed to reach a new audience with testimonies from current American pop icons Lecrae and Lacey.



The 29 minute DVD is free for individual churches and groups of churches to use as a resource for evangelism with copyright permission granted. The organisers, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association UK, only ask for a report as to how the DVD has been used and 'how the Lord used it to bring people to Himself either for the first time or by renewal'.

The anniversaries are on or around 7 November 2014 but the DVD is available from then for any mission event and at any time as its use is not limited to the date.

How to use 'The Cross' DVD

CNI Network at Lambeth Palace

Over forty people gathered at Lambeth Palace to help launch a year of celebrations for Christian based work within the night-time economy.



Christian Nightlife Initiatives (CNI) Network held an afternoon tea reception to launch 2015:10 which will see a year of celebrations around the anniversaries of 20 years of NightLight in Northern Ireland, 15 years of Street Chaplains in Scotland and 10 years of Street Angels in England.

The afternoon also launched a "Volunteers are amazing - thank you" booklet which will be given to every volunteer within the Network's 120 local projects.

Speaking at the event were representatives from the Home Office and Cabinet Office who thanked those who volunteer and spoke about the impact of our work from a national perspective.

Founder of CNI Network, Paul Blakey MBE, said of the afternoon, *"This was a great occasion not only for CNI Network but also for our local projects and partners. The fact that alcohol related violence and A&E admissions are reducing year on year is part of our story that is something we aim to celebrate with those volunteer teams who are helping to make this happen."*

[See pictures from the day here](#)

[Click here for more information on the work of CNI Network](#)

ECCR calls on investors to tackle pay inequality



To mark its 25th anniversary, the Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR), the church investor advocacy coalition has released a report 'Using Ethical Investment to Close the Gap', a radical call to action for the investor community to use their ownership responsibilities to address ever increasing levels of wealth inequality in the UK.

John Arnold, Executive Director of ECCR, said *"For too long investors have presided over a corporate system that over-rewards the elite whilst leaving many employees at poverty level. We want individual and institutional investors to join their church investor colleagues, and revisit their responsibilities, as owners of businesses, to challenge companies to tackle low pay and insecure work."*

Acknowledging that one in five British workers are paid below a "living wage" and – in the same financial year – the average FTSE 100 Chief Executive Officer earned £4.7 million, the far-reaching report calls for FTSE AllShare companies to:

- Ensure that all staff working on their premises, be they employees or subcontractors, are paid a living wage
- Provide greater transparency on differences in pay by disclosing the extent to which senior executive pay exceeds average employee pay.

Bishop Michael Doe, Chair of ECCR, stated that *"As we approach a General Election there needs to be a concerted effort by Christians and others to show that an increasingly unequal society is bad for the people involved (whether they are at the top, or pushed to the bottom by the declining value of wages and benefits), for society as a whole, and often for business itself."*

www.eccr.org.uk

HRH The Prince of Wales sends message to the Coptic Orthodox Community in the UK



The Coptic Orthodox Church in the United Kingdom celebrated the Feast of Nayrouz, marking the new Coptic Year in St Margaret's Church, Westminster Abbey on 21 October 2014, with a sermon by His Grace Bishop Angaelos, General Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the United Kingdom, and messages from His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, The Right Honourable David Cameron Prime Minister, and the Most Reverend Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Speaking of his recent visit to The Coptic Orthodox Church Centre in the United Kingdom, HRH The Prince of Wales praised:

"the dedication and commitment of the Coptic faithful in contributing to the life of the Church, and of this country, in many ways, some unseen and unheard."

Going on to say:

"I very much share your deep concern for all those still facing grave challenges across North Africa and the Middle East...The Coptic Orthodox community in Egypt and, indeed, Christians across the Middle East, have often proved themselves to be those who build bridges between different groups and religions. They have shown great forbearance and longsuffering despite the on-going persecution they face, providing a humbling example of what it is to be a faithful Christian."

In his message, Prime Minister David Cameron said:

"As our Coptic communities mark Nayrouz today, we celebrate the fantastic contribution they

make to our country and we think of the many Christian communities around the world for whom this New Year is a time of fear and suffering."

Speaking in support of the Coptic Orthodox Community, the Prime Minister went on to say: *"We call for unity in support of tolerance, in standing up for the rights of people of all faiths and backgrounds and in promoting the building blocks of democracy as the long-term basis to defeat extremism in the region...we stand alongside the Coptic Church and other Christian churches in the Middle East in pursuing these values, treasuring the long history and deep roots of these churches and their commitment to the common good."*

The Archbishop of Canterbury, in his message said:

"My prayer for all the faithful of the Coptic Church is that the coming year will bring peace and hope. In situations of crisis and conflict may the primacy of our inter church relations as Christians standing together and praying for one another provide us with the wisdom, courage and strength in Christ to dialogue, clarify, act and heal."

In his sermon, Bishop Angaelos spoke of the responsibility and obligation of Christians to advocate for religious freedom for all, saying:

"Freedom is a responsibility and an obligation that we have been given by God and must take seriously. We must, when we can, speak the truth; it is not an option. We must look at the freedom we have today in standing and praying together, and seek to use that freedom to benefit all those who are not able to do the same."

[Click here to read this press release online and view photographs from the event](#)

Archbishop's call for prayer

40,000 Christians pray for Nigeria and the captured schoolgirls

18 October 2014

News of the Nigerian military truce with Islamist militants Boko Haram broke as 40,000 Christians – many with Nigerian roots – gathered for a night of prayer at London's Excel centre. Fervent prayers filled the auditorium as they prayed that the promised release of 200 captured schoolgirls will go ahead.

Pastor Agu Irukwu, the leader of the Redeemed Christian Church of God in the UK, said: 'We hear that part of the benefits of the truce will be the release of the girls. We don't know whether it is authentic – but we have been praying for these girls; we must never forget them.' Together the 40,000 people at the massive prayer event raised their voices to pray that the girls would be reunited with their families.

The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, who has visited Nigeria 75 times, was the guest speaker at the Festival of Life run by RCCG-UK. He said the Anglican Church needed to learn lessons in prayer from the RCCG churches. His first priority as Archbishop, he said, was for 'a renewal of prayer' in the UK and in the Anglican Communion: 'a renewal of prayer and of communities that pray'. 'There has never been a renewal of Christian life in this country without there being a renewal of prayer,' he added.

The Festival of Life saw the launch of three months of prayer throughout the UK using a specially-produced prayer calendar published by HOPE Together by national Christian broadcaster UCB, and distributed free to churches of all denominations throughout the UK including the 40,000 RCCG members gathered at the Excel Centre.

Acknowledging the role of HOPE Together as a catalyst, bringing churches together, Archbishop Justin said: 'You keep finding them popping up here and there making things happen, bringing people together and doing the right thing, in the right way, at the right time.' Roy Crowne, Director of HOPE Together said: 'We have so much to learn from the Black Majority Churches about fasting and praying. Last year I was a guest at a prayer event in Nigeria with more than a



in our villages, towns & cities

million people praying. HOPE is thrilled to be working with the 720 RCCG parishes in the UK to spread the hope Jesus gives. When Christians pray, things change. We hope that thousands of people will join us over the next three months as we pray for the UK.'

[Copies of the HOPE / UCB prayer calendar can be downloaded or ordered in bulk here](#)

[A selection of photographs from Friday's reception and Festival of Life programme are available here](#)

www.hopetogether.org.uk

WCC launches online survey on theology schools to probe climate justice



A new online survey supported by the World Council of Churches (WCC) aims to promote the study of issues such as the environment, climate change and food security as part of the training of future pastors, priests and other Christian leaders.

"Activities organized by the WCC in various parts of the world in regard to climate change, environment and ecological justice have highlighted the need to have an assessment of what is being done, share good practices and provide theological insights on climate, environment and the wider creation," said Guillermo Kerber, WCC programme executive for climate justice.

The "Global Survey on Ecotheology, Climate Justice and Food Security in Theological Education and Christian Leadership Development" aims to map the current situation of training, teaching and research on these matters, as well as the resources and examples of good practice that are available.

[The survey is open until the end of February 2015 and may be accessed here](#)

The survey is aimed at teachers, lecturers and students in theological education institutions of all kinds, such as university theology faculties, church-linked theological colleges and seminaries, Bible schools, lay academies and distance-learning courses. It is also aimed at people in faith-based organizations, specialized ministries and NGOs that have resources that could be used in programmes of theological education, formation and leadership development.

Following earlier discussions this year at the meeting of the WCC Working Group on Climate Change, the survey also will be presented during the Lima Climate Change Conference to be held in December. In June 2015, at a WCC-sponsored conference at the Orthodox Academy of Crete, findings of the survey will help to prepare a handbook on green churches, based on a proposal coming from the Ecumenical Institute seminar held in Bossey this year. Issues such as ecology and climate justice are among the key elements of the emphasis on "pilgrimage of justice and peace" coming from the WCC 10th Assembly in Busan, Republic of Korea, 2013.

The results of the survey will contribute to an online collection of resources within the [Global Digital Library on Theology and Ecumenism](#) (GlobeTheoLib) which is hosting the survey.

[More information about the Global Survey](#)

[Full project description: Global Survey on Eco-Theology, Climate Justice and Food Security](#)

[WCC's work on climate justice and care for creation](#)

[Religions for Climate Justice: International Interfaith Statements 2008-2014](#)

Pete Rollins Conference 2014

Pete Rollins, a prominent writer and theologian, will be the keynote speaker at '[Godly Mayhem](#)', a conference held jointly by SCM and the Progressive Christianity Network (PCN).



Taking place from 14–16 November at The Hayes Centre, Swanwick, the conference includes workshops, talks and panel discussions that will explore the role of church life in contemporary society.

Pete has written on a number of topics in the past and this conference will be a fantastic opportunity for people to encounter theology in fresh and accessible ways.

[Click here for further details and online booking.](#) (SCM is a 'Body in Association' of CTE)

Night Shelter IMPACT Report 2013/14 Thousands of volunteers mobilised to help homeless people



Ahead of the start of the Winter Shelter season in November, Housing Justice launched a new report on Thursday 16/10 which shows the impact that the network of Church and Community Night Shelters is having on homelessness. The Night Shelter IMPACT Report 2013/14 gathers together more comprehensive data than ever before on how many churches and volunteers are responding to rising homelessness in their community, as well as how many people are being helped off the streets.

The report highlights that almost 450 Churches, Church Halls, Synagogues and Mosques in 23 London Boroughs offered their premises for use as Night Shelters. 112,300 volunteer hours were mobilised, valued at almost £1.5 million.

1,577 guests (1,303 in London) were offered overnight shelter; 934 had some form of case management support (60% of the total) and 491 were helped to move on to more secure accommodation, a 34% 'move on rate'. We were able to gather the best quality data on 1,094 of the guests in the Housing Justice network of Night Shelters in London. Just over 50% were between 26 and 49; over 50% were from the UK, and 27% were from the EEA. A total of 888 had been street homeless. 332 (approx. 1/3) were 'new to the street', and 317 (approx. 30%) had been on the street for more than 6 months.

Housing Justice CEO Alison Gelder said at the launch: "*This report busts some of the outdated myths about Night Shelters. For example, that the people who use them are not really homeless. It also shows what a massive mobilisation of churches, community groups, and volunteers there is, which is definitely something to celebrate.*" *As we present these findings we must ask the question why more and more people are becoming homeless. Night Shelters are part of the answer but not a substitute for safe, secure and affordable accommodation which is no longer available to an increasing proportion of the poorest in our society.*"

www.housingjustice.org.uk (Housing Justice is a 'Body in Association' of CTE)

Ecumenical Officer for South London

John Richardson, the current Ecumenical Officer, is standing down from the post on 31 March 2015 and Churches Together in South London wishes to appoint a successor.

if you are inspired by the vision of Christians of different traditions working together and if you are a good networker, solution finder and administrator, this post may appeal to you.

Its main purpose is to encourage connections between South London churches, their leaders and members, in ways that enhance the unity of the church in its mission locally and more widely

across the area. The post is open to lay or ordained members in good standing of one of the Christian traditions associated with Churches Together in South London.

The salary is £15,000 pa for 18 hours a week, involving some evening and weekend work. The job is home-based plus travel across South London.

- Download the job description, person specification and application form.
- For an informal conversation about the post, telephone John Richardson on 01462 422502.

The closing date for applications is 14 November 2014 and interviews will take place in Streatham on 15 December 2015.

Ecumenical Marian Pilgrimage

The 2015 Ecumenical Pilgrimage to Walsingham will take place from Tuesday 17th to Friday 20th March 2015. Accommodation (full board) is at the Anglican Shrine.

The following is the provisional programme:

- Sung Mass at the Catholic National Shrine: Celebrant and preacher, The Rt Revd Alan Hopes, Bishop of East Anglia
- Sung Eucharist in the Anglican Shrine Church: Celebrant and preacher, The Rt Revd Jonathan Goodall, Bishop of Ebbsfleet
- Liturgy of the Presanctified at St Seraphim's Orthodox Church, served by Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia
- Holy Communion Service at Walsingham Methodist Church: Preacher, The Revd Dr David Cornick (United Reformed Church), General Secretary of Churches Together in England
- Akathist Hymn before the Icon of the Theotokos from the Chapel of the Life-Giving Spring of the Mother of God, in the Anglican Shrine Church
- Oriental Orthodox Raising of Evening Incense
- Daily Catholic Mass and Anglican Eucharist



[Click here for further information and the booking form](#)

A Celebration of Ecumenism 50 years after Vatican II in Northampton Cathedral

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Northampton Ecumenical Commission invites ecumenical guests and friends to join all parishes in the diocese at a 'Celebration of Ecumenism 50 years after Vatican II'. The invitation is from Rt. Rev. Peter Doyle and the preacher is Rt. Rev. Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham.

The event is on Wednesday 21st January 2015, 7.30 pm at Northampton Cathedral NN2 6AG.

www.northamptondiocese.org

(follow links to The Diocese / Diocesan Departments / Ecumenism)

[Attached is the poster to download and display](#)

Rural church leaders should be 'brave' and 'radical' says The Archbishop of Canterbury



Addressing the 'Germinate!' rural mission and ministry conference on 11th October The Archbishop of Canterbury, Most Revd and Rt Hon Justin Welby, called on rural church leaders to be 'brave' and 'radical', particularly with reference to shared leadership.

The national conference, held in Coventry, was attended by more than 270 rural church leaders, both lay and ordained, from all the main denominations active in the countryside. The Archbishop especially emphasised the need for lay leadership:

"Reimagining ministry in the countryside involves coming back to the faithfulness of God in all his people, especially lay people. It means coming back to the God who pours out his gifts and his Holy Spirit on us and strengths and encourages us."

"I really want you to be brave and radical in how you look at rural ministry, how you think about it, how you pray for it, what you hear the Spirit saying to the churches about the future of rural ministry."

The Bishop of Shrewsbury, Rt Revd Mark Rylands, gave an inspiring key note address that was also realistic and challenging, giving practical examples of success. He concluded by saying, *"I believe 'Germinate!' is more than a conference. It has the potential to be a movement; a movement for the renewal of God's Mission in the countryside."*

Worship was led by Revd Ruth Gee, immediate Past President of the Methodist Conference. Case studies included a presentation on rural mission from Revd Elizabeth Clark, National Rural Officer for the Methodist Church and United Reformed Church; and another on multi-church mission in Glendale from former President of the Baptist Union, Revd Roy Searle.

The conference was a shared initiative led by the Arthur Rank Centre, and involving the main rural denominations, networks and agencies, including Fresh Expressions, New Wine, Messy Church and the Rural Theology Association.

Conference organiser and Arthur Rank Centre CEO Jerry Marshall said, *"I am thrilled that we had such a good response and that so many organisations came together. After a series of case studies, and workshops, and a session sharing rural mission resources, delegates told us they left inspired, encouraged and equipped."*

Several "Germinate" initiatives are already being offered or are being developed for rural churches, including a leadership programme, learning communities and a rural business start-up initiative.

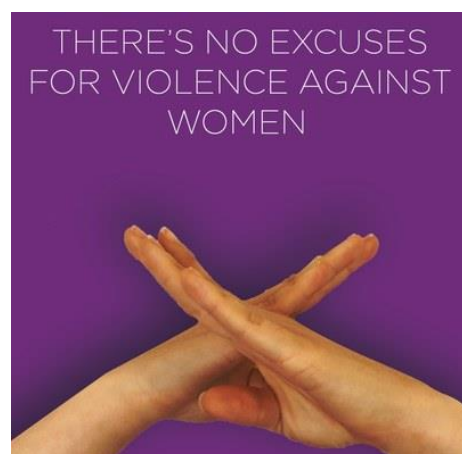
[Conference presentations, transcripts and hand-outs are available here](#)

(CTE was one of the partners in Germinate! through the [Churches Rural Group](#))

'There is no excuse for violence against women'

To say no to all kinds of excuses that justify violence against women and girls, the World Council of Churches (WCC) invites its member churches and partners to join the World YWCA campaign "NoXcuses for Violence against Women".

"There is no excuse for violence against women. There is no excuse for ignoring it!" With this message the campaign



marks the World YWCA Week without Violence observed from 13 – 19 October, leading up to 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, an international campaign, which starts on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and ends on 10 December, Human Rights Day.

The World YWCA has launched a [website](#) for the NoXcuses campaign, featuring testimonies of women survivors of violence, as well as testimonies of support from partners such as UN Women and United Nations Population Fund, among others. The NoXcuses website features a “Wall of Support” and live feeds from social media. The campaign calls for participation by urging the public to share photos of themselves doing the X hand gesture, or by posting pictures of any excuse that was used when a violent act was committed, and by sharing them through [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) using the #noXcuses hash tag.

Participants are also encouraged to wear and distribute temporary X tattoos that can be downloaded in the “Get Involved” section of the website. Participants may use the Toolkit provided in this section that offers various ideas of how to get involved and join the campaign.

Dr Fulata Mbano-Moyo, the WCC’s programme executive for Women in Church and Society, reflected on the significance of the campaign. “Throughout the course of history, both men and women have given excuses to justify sexual and gender based violence, accusing raped girls or women for their dressing or disobedience. Even cultural or religious teachings have been used to justify violence,” she said.

“In this campaign we are saying there are no excuses under the sun. Neither religion nor the name of God should be used to condone gender injustice and violence,” added Moyo.

“This year we are saying there is no excuse for violence against women, whether it is rape, domestic violence, intimate partner violence, sexual harassment at the work place, child marriage or psychological violence – there is no excuse,” said Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, general secretary of the World YWCA.

“Since 1995 when the world gathered in Beijing to affirm women’s human rights, we have kept saying no to violence against women, and this year again we say – no excuse!” Gumbonzvanda added.

In collaboration with the WCC and the Lutheran World Federation, a selection of videos featuring religious leaders is being uploaded on the [You Tube channel](#) as part of the campaign. The videos feature diverse voices from the faith communities urging awareness on the issue of violence against women and girls around the world.

Over many years the WCC has addressed the issue of violence against women. The NoXcuses campaign also makes use of the WCC initiative “[Thursdays in Black](#)” which, through the simple gesture of wearing black on Thursdays, promotes an end to violence against women.

[Visit the NoXcuses Website](#)

[Watch videos: NoXcuses for violence against women](#)

[WCC programme on Women in Church and Society](#)

Churches to be more inclusive of persons with disabilities

Members of the Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN), a programme of the World Council of Churches (WCC), met in the Netherlands to develop a new statement with the working title “Gift of Being: Called to be a Church of All and for All”.



The new document, which aims to build on the WCC interim statement on disability "A Church of All and for All" issued in 2003, is founded on the premise that even a decade later, persons with disabilities experience marginalization both in societies and in the church communities themselves. The meeting, held from 12-15 October at the Mennonite Conference Centre at Elspeet, gathered staff members of the EDAN, the WCC Faith and Order Commission and the WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, among other participants.

Hosted by Professor Hans Reinders of the Free University of Amsterdam, the meeting initiated theological reflection on both disability and the place of disabled persons within the life of the churches as part of just and inclusive communities. These reflections served as a basis of EDAN's new statement.

Dr Samuel Kabue, coordinator of EDAN, said, "Churches have moved on issues of disability in the last ten years, but there are still continuing challenges that must be addressed. The new statement from the EDAN will give churches a fresh momentum to address the issue of disability."

During discussions on the WCC's new mission statement Together Towards Life, the Faith and Order convergence text [The Church: Towards a Common Vision](#) and the WCC's [Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace](#), Kabue said the issue of disability poses a clear challenge to the churches in terms of its unity, mission and witness.

"The communion of the churches in unity and diversity is impaired without the gifts and presence of all people, including persons with disability. The mission of the church is to proclaim God's reign of justice and peace and is less than credible if the churches do not actively and visibly receive the diverse gifts of all its members, including persons with disability."

"The inclusion of persons with disability is not an option but a defining characteristic of the church," Kabue added.

At the meeting, Rev. Dr Gordon Cowans, EDAN's Caribbean coordinator, drew attention to the working title of the document. He said since "life is a gift, every life has intrinsic value". Aikaterini Pekridou, a Greek Orthodox doctoral student from the Irish School of Ecumenics, affirmed these views stressing the significance of EDAN's contributions in ecumenical and ecclesiological dialogue. "If communion is the gift by which the church lives, and the gift that God calls the church to offer to a divided and wounded humanity, ecclesiological reflections from EDAN provide a concrete challenge and opportunity to live into a common vision of the church as communion," Pekridou said.

Fadi El Halabi, a Maronite Christian from Lebanon and EDAN's Middle East coordinator, said, "the new document from the EDAN will challenge churches in the Middle East to address disability from a theological perspective and find new ways of making the church an inclusive community at all levels."

A significant contribution to the statement was received in a colloquium hosted by the Faculty of Theology's Centre for Dogmatics and Ecumenical studies at the Free University in Amsterdam on Tuesday. In the discussions a research group comprised of faculty, students and ministers in formation engaged with the text, providing a stimulating critique to help shape the draft.

The EDAN statement will be finalized in February 2015 and will be presented to the WCC governing bodies for approval.

[EDAN communique from the Netherlands meeting](#)

[A Church of All and for All - An interim statement](#)

[Information on Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network](#)

[WCC programme on Just and Inclusive Communities](#)

http://www.cte.org.uk/Articles/418920/Home/News/Latest_news_articles/Churches_to_be.aspx

The Plight of the Christians of the Middle East:



Message from the Catholic & Orthodox Pastoral Consultation in England, September 2014

The Catholic & Orthodox Pastoral Consultation in England, meeting in London for its 2nd Session, wishes to add its voice of support and union in prayer to the Apostolic Churches of Iraq and Syria, their Patriarchs and all their people, to the message of solidarity in prayer and hope from the 13th Session of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches, that met earlier this month in Amman, Jordan.

At the present moment of their suffering, dispersal and witness for the sake of faithfulness to Christ, we pray for their continued growth, strength and enduring presence in the Middle East in peace and safety, as integral members of their societies' history, identity and future.

Increasingly, these very Churches in diaspora are becoming close to us in England as the Christians of the Middle East seek safety and a future in the West. Already they are forming part of the developing character and shape of the Christian Church in Britain as a whole, not least as we seek the restoration of our unity in the one Body of Christ. To them and to their bishops among us we also extend our heartfelt concern and prayer for the security and deliverance of their families and fellow Church members in their homelands.

Above all we pray for a peace that is just, in which those of all faiths may live in harmony and freedom, Christian refugees can return to restore their Churches, wrongs are put right through mutual and equal respect, enemies reconciled and hope for the future assured.

Co-Secretaries

- Fr Mark Woodruff - Society of St John Chrysostom
- Archpriest Stephen Platt - Fellowship of St Alban & St Sergius

29 September 2014

Note: The Catholic-Orthodox Pastoral Consultation is an initiative to discuss matters of mutual concern and interest, jointly sponsored by the [Fellowship of St Alban & St Sergius](#) (a Body in Association of CTE) and the [Society of St John Chrysostom](#), sister societies founded in the 1920s to raise awareness of the Eastern Churches and to work for East-West Church Unity

The Pentecostal and Charismatic Constituency within the British Church

- an internal CTE explanatory briefing[1]

Overview

The Pentecostal and Charismatic constituency within the British Church is extensive, diverse and definable. It brings together all who embrace experientially those distinctive gifts of God's grace, the *charisma* that are specifically listed as 'Gifts of the Holy Spirit' in 1 Corinthians 12:7-10, and which made their first appearance at the Pentecost celebration immediately following Christ's crucifixion, resurrection and ascension, as described in Acts 2. The continuing growth of the constituency is both indigenously-propelled and diaspora-driven. It is a constituency that exists both within and among Britain's 'historic denominations'.[2]

There is general agreement within the Pentecostal and Charismatic constituency that the apparent absence from much of church history of the 'charismatic' and 'Pentecostal' gifts (which include the ability to speak in unknown tongues) has been due to their neglect rather than their withdrawal. However, some Pentecostals and Charismatics do speak of a restoration of these gifts, which some take as implying reintroduction, rather than rediscovery. This can be confusing as the terms 'restoration' and 'renewal' have been used in academic circles to distinguish between those who use the gifts within the 'historic denominations' (who are said to have experienced

'renewal') and those who have sought an expression of these gifts outside the historic denominations (who are inappropriately labelled 'Restorationists'). In practice the theological gap between the two groups is small, since all are agreed that the 1 Corinthians 12 gifts of the Holy Spirit are available to the church today and that these gifts relate to a greater personal experience of the Holy Spirit (such as was advocated by the 18th and 19th century holiness preachers, some of whom used terms such as 'second blessing', 'filling with the Spirit' or 'baptism with the Spirit').

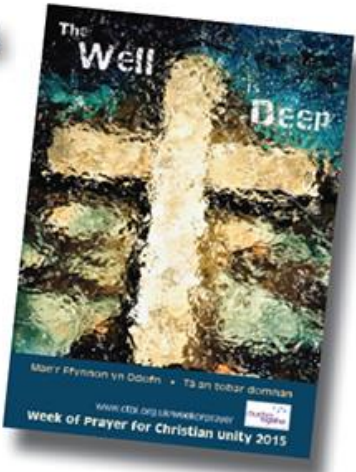

[http://www.cte.org.uk/Groups/248695/Home/Resources/Pentecostal and Multicultural/The Pentecostal and/The Pentecostal and.aspx](http://www.cte.org.uk/Groups/248695/Home/Resources/Pentecostal_and_Multicultural/The_Pentecostal_and/The_Pentecostal_and.aspx)

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2015

Resources adapted by the Britain and Ireland writers group include:

- Pamphlet with order of service and reflections
- Powerpoint of service
- A3/A4 Poster

Order or download from:
WWW.CTBI.ORG.UK/WEEKOFPRAYER



CTE Christmas card picture competition - an invitation to all

Each year the staff at Churches Together in England have a Christmas card printed with a copyright free picture on the front. Several hundred cards are sent to a wide variety of people in the national, county and local networks of Churches Together.



This is an invitation for any artist to submit their work for consideration in the competition. The prize is to have a picture printed on the CTE Christmas card, with the work referenced on the card with thanks, acknowledgement, and a link to the artist's blog or web site if there is one. The picture will also be used on the CTE website for Christmas too, so be seen by all our web visitors.

This invitation would be an opportunity to profile the work of a new or amateur artist who has not had a picture in print before - or it may be an opportunity for a professional to add to their portfolio. We would like to consider work from people of all ages, backgrounds, and theological persuasions.

All details: www.cte.org.uk/christmaspicture

.....

This mailing is from Churches Together in England and is sent once a month
Subscribe and see the archive: www.cte.org.uk/news
To unsubscribe or to submit items for consideration, email: website@cte.org.uk