



December 2011

Electronic, ecumenical news from Churches Together in England

Click headings for more...

First a Reflection...

[The Door of the Mansion](#)

Trevor Howard of [Churches in Communities International](#) reflects on different ways into recognised ministries.

Now here's the news from around the world...

[Praying with the Coptic Church in Egypt](#)

Appeal from Bishop Angaelos

[Churches highlight migration issues](#) in Beirut

[New WCC statement on mission and evangelism in process](#)

Commission for World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) met in Ghana

[Religious voices advocate for climate justice at Durban](#)

Interfaith rally before UN climate change conference

[Catholic students make ecumenism practical as well as theological](#)

visiting the WCC

And here's the news from around the land...

[Cumbria, the ecumenical county](#) Leaders sign Declaration of Intent

[CTE Presidents and Church leaders say Hope is a 'gift'](#) endorsing words and actions

[St Pauls Institute publishes Value and Values](#): Perceptions of Ethics in the City Today

[Operation Noah lecture: Climate change](#) a confessional issue for the churches?

[The United Reformed Church ends 19-year boycott of Nestlé](#) but questions remain

[Companies should do more to protect vulnerable workers](#) as the London Olympics approach

[CTBI Co-ordinating Groups meet WCC leaders](#) at High Leigh, November 28-29

["Talk Marriage" panel discussion to promote marriage and family](#) February 7th at Westminster

[Reaching Beyond](#) major arts festival in East London for Olympics

[Justice and Peace Annual Assembly in Crawley](#) Slaves to Branding, 21 January

[Breaking Barriers: Poverty and Homelessness Week](#) 28 January – 5 February 2012

[Climate Week Challenge](#) 12-18 March 2012

[Back to top](#)

For the current list of forthcoming events on the website, click [here](#).

To add your e-mail address to the list for an alert when CTe-news appears, click [here](#).

For your address to be removed from the alert list, click [here](#).

For news of the Churches Co-ordinating Group for Evangelisation of CTE, click [here](#).

The Door of the Mansion

For many years now, Monday has been my day off. In the days before my wife and I had children, we would jump on my motorbike, tear down to a country house and stomp around quiet galleries in biker boots and bulky leathers, attracting the frowns of retirees who doubtless felt that people of our age (we were then in our early 20s) should not be there... particularly on Mondays! Memories of these country house sorties came to mind after a recent ecumenical encounter...

As the International Co-ordinator for Churches in Communities International, I met in my office with a minister from one of the 'historic denominations' to discuss routes into ministry. Now, CiC, which is probably CTE's newest member, is a worldwide network of some 4000 plus independent churches, ministries and networks (mostly charismatic, Pentecostal and evangelical). In the course of our accreditation comparisons my guest mused that 'there will always be a back door into ministry'. Implying that we in CiC might well be it! Interestingly this didn't bother him too greatly as long as, to use his expression, 'the back door is well-guarded'. It was a fascinating point and made me think, how few country mansions I had entered via the front door.

I wonder whether the main door into 'ministry' may have changed more than once in the last two millennia. Evidence of calling and equipping have always been vital and should clearly go hand in hand but at times it seems that a 'front door' emphasis on 'calling' has created a 'back door' emphasis on 'equipping'. Maybe today the emphasis is the other way around.

In England CiC has a wide range of members, including some from UK house-church circles and some from similarly innovative church strands originating in Africa, the Caribbean, South Asia and the Far East. The 'Independent', 'Pentecostal', 'Charismatic' and 'Evangelical' labels we carry are not always written large on ecumenism's ministry 'front door'.

At first it may seem inconvenient to have a back door for those who do things differently whilst claiming to be serving our Lord Jesus Christ. Mutual accreditation and accountability bodies such as CiC gladly guard the door, but we do so believing that there is wisdom in making space for those who may have 'calling' so strongly on their minds that thinking of ministry as a 'career path' has become virtually an irrelevance.

In the UK, the growth of independent churches is well documented, even by the secular media. Keeping a back door for ordinary people who, having been changed and challenged by the radical, crucified Christ, have given up successful medical, banking, accounting, teaching, business and legal careers to put their energies and expertise into building a new generation and expression of churches and ministries, makes sense. They believe they can be relevant to the communities they seek to reach and we need to share their optimism. I know that in sharing like this I am creating a false dichotomy. In my ideal mansion there are many rooms: games rooms, dining rooms, drawing rooms, bedrooms, servants' quarters, galleries, kitchens, sculleries, secret passages... and nowadays the National Trust would do its best to make sure every single room was open to all, regardless of whether they entered at the front or at the back.

At Christmas in times past a mansion would open its front doors widely to favoured guests, whilst servants would come and go via the back way. If Jesus had been born in a mansion, would the kings have had to enter by the front door and the Shepherds via the back? I doubt it. There is something about the King of King's being in the house that resolves all these dichotomies. It is not about how we came in but about how much we find once we are in there. Those who find Jesus will simply want to worship in His presence.

If the National Trust is prepared to take us in by the humblest route to grant us maximum access, then somehow we must find ways of doing the same. I think I learnt something on those Mondays off and I like to think that those who were perturbed by our leathers would be pleased to know that their tolerance paid off.

Revd Trevor Howard is International Co-ordinator for Churches in Communities International

[Back to top](#)

Praying with the Coptic Church in Egypt

On November 22nd Bishop Angaelos, leader of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Britain, issued this call to prayer:

'With the call for the million-person march in Egypt, please join me in dedicating our prayers throughout today and tonight for God's protection upon all those who demonstrate as well as the army and the police on the streets. We

pray that there will be no further injury or death that will bring pain and sorrow to another family or community in Egypt.

While there is a need for every person to exercise his or her democratic right in contributing to the shaping of this new era in the contemporary history of Egypt, this must be immediately accompanied by our fervent prayers and a calling upon God to protect the land that He once blessed Himself, and all her people.

Please encourage as many people as you can to join us in prayer today: within our own church communities, friends in other churches or denominations, Christians, Muslims, and those of any other faith, as well as anyone else who has a heart for humanity and a concern for a nation experiencing pain. This is by no means a time for separation or segregation, but a time to stand together and call upon God, each in our own way, that He may protect and keep His people in every place'. [*Back to top*](#)

Churches highlight migration issues

Around 214 million people in the world are on the move, seeking livelihood and security outside their home countries. To address this global phenomenon of multi-directional migration, and respond to the political, economic, ethical and ecclesiological challenges it poses, the World Council of Churches (WCC) organised a regional conference in Lebanon from 5-7 December. Migration activists, leaders of migrant churches and representatives of ecumenical organizations from Africa, Europe and the Middle East gathered in Beirut to discern new directions in supporting migrants by taking account of the emerging challenges and opportunities.

"Migration and the Ecclesial Landscape: Who is my Neighbour?" was the theme of this regional conference, organized by the WCC office of Just and Inclusive Communities in partnership with the All Africa Conference of Churches, Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe and the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC). The event was hosted by the MECC at the Near East School of Theology in Beirut.

While describing objectives of the conference, Revd Dr Deenabandhu Manchala, WCC programme executive for Just and Inclusive Communities, says, "This event will attempt to assist the churches amidst this phenomenon of increasing diversity of people, cultures, languages, ethnicity and religions. It is our hope that this conference helps us to discern new meanings and implications of being an ecumenical movement."

"Many churches have been actively responding to a variety of challenges posed by migration today, which includes assisting their new neighbours, welcoming newcomers, striving for their rights, ensuring their safety, and exploring ways of 'being church together'," explained Sydia Nduna, WCC programme executive for Migration and Social Justice. She hopes that the event will reaffirm churches' significant role in responding to the needs of migrant communities.

The Global Ecumenical Network on Migration conference focussed on Africa, the Middle East and Europe. The event came after a meeting on Asia and the Gulf region in Bangkok last July, and will be followed by one for the Pacific region, Canada and Latin America to be held in Australia in 2012. The conference in Beirut will be followed by a theological reflection on the ecclesiological and missiological implications of migration. The outcome of the process will be shared at the upcoming 10th Assembly of the WCC, which will take place in Busan, South Korea in 2013. Representatives of the WCC Commission on Faith and Order and Commission for World Mission and Evangelism, the network of African women theologians and representatives of the various WCC networks on Just and Inclusive Communities will participate in this process. [*Back to top*](#)

New WCC statement on mission and evangelism in process

The first draft of a new mission statement for the World Council of Churches (WCC) was at the centre of a 5-day meeting recently held by the 25-member Commission for World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) on the campus of the University of Ghana near Accra. The draft statement will find its way to a larger mission and evangelism pre-assembly gathering in Manila in March 2012 and ultimately be placed before the next WCC Assembly in Busan, Korea in 2013.

During its Ghana meeting, 22-26 November, the commission also celebrated the 50th anniversary of the integration of the former International Missionary Council (IMC) into the WCC and the subsequent formation of the CWME, a development which started in Achimota, Ghana in 1958 and was completed in 1961 at the 3rd Assembly of the WCC in New Delhi. The formation of the CWME was marked by a process that continues today attempting to bring greater unity between autonomous mission agencies and the church as a whole. This is necessary "because mission is the very nature of the church," said Revd Dr Jooseop Keum, CWME secretary. Presently the CWME meets every 18

months and represents all of the WCC member churches as well as affiliated members from the Roman Catholic Church, Evangelicals and Pentecostals.

In their preparation of the draft statement the commissioners recognized that the process of unity in mission between mission bodies and the church is still unfinished business. The group also saw that there remains work to be done on the articulation of mission and evangelism. Last time the WCC issued a definitive statement on mission and evangelism was in 1982, according to Keum. "After three decades the context of mission and evangelism has changed," he said. In fact, mission and evangelism have received relatively little attention in the last two WCC Assemblies, in Harare, Zimbabwe in 1998 and Porto Alegre, Brazil in 2006. But with a new statement on the way and plans for mission workshops at the upcoming WCC Assembly in Busan, Keum has been assured that mission and evangelism will be an integral part of the next WCC gathering.

While the CWME statement remains in draft form until the March meeting in Manila, Keum pointed out that the statement will recognize this and other shifts in mission and evangelism emerging during the past five decades. He said that the statement will have five pivotal points including acknowledgment that the thrust of mission in the future will no longer be moved from the centre of privileged societies outward to the margins and marginalized, but now mission will be coming from the marginalized.

As a starting point of mission, the statement will say that **mission begins with the whole of God's creation** rather than a more narrowly focused, anthropocentric approach. Evangelism will find solid recognition in the statement, particularly in the context of inter-religious dialogue and the content of the recently released "Christian Witness in a Multi-religious World: Recommendations for Conduct" which was jointly issued last June by the WCC, Roman Catholic Church and World Evangelical Alliance. In an attempt to continue working at the issue of unity between mission bodies and the church, the statement will call for broadening the circle of the CWME to include more representatives of mission bodies along with national councils of churches and other partners. Finally, the statement will say that economic and ecological concerns are equally part of the mission of the church, as the church attempts to fulfil its mission within God's creation. All of this will be placed before some 200 CWME members and affiliates, mission leaders and missiologists in Manila in March 2012, then handed over to the WCC Assembly in 2013.

In a celebration of the IMC and WCC integration on Sunday 27 November, former WCC deputy general secretary, Dr Mercy Amba Oduyoye, a theologian from Ghana, described changes in the mission landscape. At the same time she kept to the core of what mission is and is becoming. "Jesus is sending us out as God had sent him out," she said. "According to Luke, God sent Jesus to preach the good news to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim release for prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to let the broken victims go free, preach deliverance, release the captives, set those at liberty who are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord or to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour," she continued. However you want to translate it, she said, "God sent Jesus to take human beings out of conditions that do not portray the love of God and bring them into the glory of being children of God, made in God's own image."

If a new WCC statement on mission and evangelism might make mission by the church sound easy, Oduyoye made certain that this idea was quickly squelched. "Jesus did not have it easy being in God's mission," she said. "It was not easy for Moses, it was not easy for the true prophet, it was not easy for the biblical prophet, it was not easy for Jesus, it was not easy for the first disciples and it will not be easy for us if we obey the point of the mission and speak truth to the powers that be," Oduyoye concluded. The next meeting of the CWME after the Manila pre-assembly meeting will be in March 2013 in the Cook Islands. [*Back to top*](#)

Religious voices advocate for climate justice at Durban

"This is the only home we have," said Archbishop Desmond Tutu referring to the crucial significance of our planet and its survival. He was speaking in an interfaith rally in Durban, urging the United Nations conference on climate change (COP17) to deliver a fair, ambitious and binding treaty to address climate change effectively. The interfaith rally, held at the Kings Park Stadium on 27 November was the first event for faith communities in Durban, who have been preparing for COP17 since one year ago.

"We have faith!" proclaimed Bishop Geoff Davies, director of the Southern Africa Faith Communities Environmental Institute, one of the key organizers of the rally. "Africa is a continent of faith, and we have come here together from different faith traditions to voice our moral and spiritual call for a paradigm shift. We call for climate justice now," said Davies. During the rally Tutu also delivered the petition with 200,000 signatures of support titled "We have faith" to the incoming president of COP17, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, South African minister of International Relations and Cooperation, and to Christiana Figueres, executive secretary of the UNFCCC Secretariat. In support of the document

Mashabane said, "Your petition will be taken seriously", while Figueres encouraged the faith movement "not to give up faith and hope", regardless of the results of the COP17.

The petition had an African emphasis taken from the "Time for Climate Justice" campaign which has brought churches together for some years. At the interfaith rally, Brahma Kumaris, Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders expressed the common concern of caring from a religious perspective. With these messages, renowned African artists like Gcina Mhlope and Ladysmith Black Mambaso paid tribute to the late Nobel peace laureate Wangari Maathai and performed various songs.

Mary Robinson, former president of Ireland and former high commissioner for Human Rights also addressed the audience, calling for the inclusion of gender issues, agriculture, human rights and climate justice at the core of COP17 negotiations. Among other faith leaders, the WCC general secretary, Revd Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, conveyed greetings on behalf of the churches, and sent a strong message to Durban, saying, "It is time for climate justice". [Back to top](#)

Catholic students make ecumenism practical as well as theological

In preparation for becoming Ecumenical Centre tour guides, six students of Catholic theology from the University of Fribourg in central Switzerland, recently spent a day at the World Council of Churches (WCC) to seek deeper understanding of the modern ecumenical movement and the work of the WCC. Their goal was to make practical what is often theoretical "handbook ecumenism".

"Tracing the history of the ecumenical movement at the Ecumenical Centre is overwhelming for me," says Noemi Honegger, a student from the German-speaking part of Switzerland. "For me Christian art work at the centre shows diverse ways of working for one God, which for me is the essence of ecumenism," she says. These students of theology come from the German-speaking section of Fribourg University, which was founded by the Dominican order. This is the first time they have visited the Ecumenical Centre, as part of the course requirement.

In this initiative, students are getting trained to give guided tours on behalf of the WCC, especially for groups of German-speaking visitors. Since the Catholic Church is not a member church of the WCC, this is a unique opportunity for the students to look behind the scenes of the WCC, and come to know the ecumenical movement "from within". The students also consider the visit a "grooming opportunity". Sarah Imsand, a student of theology and art history, says, "this is the first time for me to see churches working together to challenge violence. When I see the implication of spiritual values in line with social realities, makes me very hopeful. This is a great opportunity to observe involvement of the churches in social issues."

Dr Annemarie Mayer, the WCC's Catholic consultant for mission and evangelism, and professor for fundamental theology at the Catholic faculty in Fribourg, considers the project a contribution in student's knowledge of ecumenism. "This tour provides a practical perspective on ecumenism of what students read in books only. Their learning about various Christian traditions and the chance to interact with people of different cultural and denominational backgrounds adds to their confidence as future ecumenists." Mayer also pointed out how this tour helps students to understand structures of the ecumenical organizations. "Students not only observe important stages of the current ecumenical debates, but also learn about the dynamic structures. They get to know about the WCC sister organizations like the Lutheran World Federation, World Communion of Reformed Churches, Conference of European Churches, and others. Mayer goes on to say that, "students will not only receive knowledge, but will contribute significantly to the work of the WCC by leading guided tours, and introducing people to the important ecumenical tasks of the WCC." [Back to top](#)

Cumbria, the ecumenical county

Church leaders from the Methodist, United Reformed and Anglican churches in Cumbria made history on Sunday 27th November 2011 by signing a historic ecumenical declaration of intent, or agreement, to work together. Supported by the other five main Christian denominations in Cumbria (Roman Catholic, Salvation Army, Baptist, Quaker and Church of Scotland) this declaration means that Cumbria becomes the first ecumenical county in England with churches agreeing on a county level to work more closely together for the sake of unity.

Building on a shared faith, the declaration affirms the common goals of the three churches and commits them to:

- Seek out every possibly opportunity for join initiatives at local and county level in mission to all the people of Cumbria.

- Work together to equip both lay and ordained ministers whenever possible, and to share that ministry wherever appropriate.
- Continue the work of developing strategies whereby the use of church buildings is optimised for the benefit of communities throughout the county.

The service in Ambleside at which the Declaration was signed was attended by members and church leaders of all the churches represented in Cumbria, and by representatives from the national churches involved. A message of support from the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, Dr Fykse Tveit, was relayed during the service, along with messages of support from Churches Together in England and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. Over 230 people took part in the service, which was led by a team representing the three participating denominations and Churches Together in Cumbria.

The Revd Richard Church, Moderator of the North West Synod of the United Reformed Church said: "The United Reformed Church has always been passionate about the visible unity of the Church. We are so encouraged that in Cumbria this dream is being brought closer to accomplished reality."

The Revd Richard Teal, Chairman of Cumbria Methodist District, said the Declaration of Intent was the result of vision, hard work, prayer, trust and openness. "It is now important that we do not just sign it but ensure its far-reaching implications become a reality."

The Right Revd James Newcome, Anglican Bishop of Carlisle, added: "I am personally thrilled that we are taking a significant step towards an ecumenical county and highly delighted that our declaration of intent was unanimously welcomed by Carlisle Diocesan Synod."

[Back to top](#)

CTE Presidents and Church leaders say Hope is a 'gift'

In November, HOPE took a giant leap towards its goal of mobilising the whole Church to spend a whole year bringing hope – in words and actions – to people in the UK's villages, towns and cities. The Presidents of Churches Together in England, meeting at Jesus House in north London, signed a declaration endorsing HOPE, giving the backing of all the major denominations to the mission initiative.

Roy Crowne, Hope's Executive Director, says, 'HOPE doesn't tell people what to do. Churches know what's best for their communities. But HOPE gives national impact to local mission. Momentum is already building towards a whole year of mission in 2014 when thousands of projects will be running to bless local communities as churches put their faith into action, living out God's love, proclaiming the Gospel in word and action and doing it all in unity with other Christians.'

HOPE provides churches of all shapes and sizes throughout the UK with a shared platform to work in mission together. 2012 will see thousands of churches taking a lead in their communities holding a Big Lunch in their neighbourhood on Sunday 3 June to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

Describing HOPE as 'a gift to the Churches,' the declaration endorsed by the UK's denominational leaders, was a launch-pad for united action. It was signed by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, the Most Revd Vincent Nichols; the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Dr Rowan Williams; the Free Churches Moderator, Revd Michael Heaney and Bishop Jana Jeruma Grinberga, the Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain, who also represents the 'fourth constituency' of Churches Together in England, including the Orthodox, Black Majority Churches, the Quakers and others.

The declaration reads: 'We were pleased to affirm the work of 'Hope08' through our individual Churches and as Presidents of Churches Together in England, committed to sharing in the mission of Jesus Christ, we are delighted to commend the on-going work of 'Hope' as a gift to the Churches in this nation.'

[Back to top](#)

St Pauls Institute publishes Value and Values

[St Pauls Institute](#) has recently published [Value and Values: Perceptions of Ethics in the City Today](#), an analytical report that explores levels of financial history knowledge held by those working in the financial services sector and provides a detailed look at their current perceptions of the ethical culture within City organisations and their relationship to wider society. The report consists of a survey study, conducted and written by ComRes, and reflection by a number of key commentators including Rev Dr Giles Fraser and Rt Rev Dr Peter Selby. The report was completed preceding the [Occupy](#) encampment outside St Pauls Cathedral. ECCR and the St Pauls Institute are committed to work together to

encourage engagement, advocacy and public discussion on issues of banking and the economy. ECCR's report *The Banks and Society: Rebuilding Trust* was published in March 2011. (ECCR Newsletter) [Back to top](#)

Operation Noah lecture: Climate change

Professor Tim Gorrington gave the Operation Noah annual lecture on Monday 14th November at St Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside, close to St Paul's Cathedral, and asked 'Is climate change, and its connection with the global economy, a matter for church confession?'

Speaking to a packed church, Professor Gorrington challenged listeners, in a wide-ranging lecture, to make connections between climate change and other moral issues on which Christians have previously taken a stand. In the context of a 'confessing church' that has questioned itself on issues such as Nazism, nuclear weapons and apartheid, Prof Gorrington asked whether climate change is also a confessional issue: something that touches the very heart of faith. The three hallmarks of church confession, he said, are firstly 'a response to an emergency'; secondly, a decision, based in a particular time and place 'that the church, if it is going to be the church, has to take a stand'; and thirdly 'an acknowledgement of guilt or complicity': the church itself is called to repentance.

His analysis of the causes took a hard look at the economy: fittingly, as the venue is close to St Paul's Cathedral, where the Occupy London protests have raised questions about the relationship between the church and mammon. Drivers of growth, he argued, are firstly the very proper desire to raise living standards for all, but a desire which fails to recognise that 7 billion cannot live at that standard in a finite planet; second competition and third debt. And an economy based on these factors is a driver of climate change. He argued that climate change is a confessional issue for at least three reasons: firstly because it excludes certain members of society (those countries which are the immediate victims of climate change, and coming generations); secondly because it threatens to destroy many aspects of God's good creation; and thirdly because it raises the question of idolatry, giving a higher value to an economic system than to human life and creation.

Using the analogy of the Barmen Declaration, a response to Hitler's National Socialists (and the institutional church's subsequent failure to act), Prof Gorrington asked how the church should now respond to climate change. If climate change is a confessional issue, what would follow? Carbon accounting should become part of Christian discipleship. Discipleship would also include campaigning for a different economy. And there should be repentance on the part of the church, 'examining our complicity with, and reliance on, the present financial system and doing something about it. For the sake of God's creation the church has to set its own financial house in order and develop different investment and economic strategies.'

Prof Gorrington ended with a note of hope, arguing that 'a low carbon society would be a happier and a more just society' and adding: 'This is effectively a recognition of creation as grace.' Finally, he challenged listeners: 'Can we live up to the example of all those confessors in our history? Can we learn from them? Or will we just remain quiet? A decision is required of us.' [Back to top](#)

The United Reformed Church ends 19-year boycott of Nestlé

On Friday afternoon – 25 November 2011 – the United Reformed Church (URC) ended its 19-year boycott of Nestlé products when its Mission Council voted to end the ban. The decision was a result of Nestlé's listing on the FTSE4Good Index under their breast milk substitute (BMS) category in March this year. The URC has actively supported the campaign to boycott Nestlé products over the past 19 years, due to concerns for the health of babies and the unethical way in which Nestlé has marketed its breast-milk substitutes in poorer countries.

Commenting on this historic decision, Ms Melanie Smith, past-convenor of the Nestlé working group of the URC said: "The URC believes that our boycott has been effective in getting Nestlé to rethink its marketing strategies of breast-milk substitutes in poorer countries. Its listing on the FTSE4Good Index demonstrates good faith and is, we hope, a first step on its journey to becoming fully compliant with the International Code on the marketing of breast-milk substitutes."

Mr Richard Nunn, convenor of the URC Investment Committee said: "We're pleased that, as the first company listed under FTSE's new breast-milk substitute category, Nestlé has signalled its willingness to become more open and transparent about its reporting and management systems related to its marketing practices in higher risk countries. He added: "This sets a good precedent for other companies in this sector, and the URC looks forward to working with the FTSE and other agencies to review the outcome of the verification assessment of Nestlé's management practices

in India and Zambia and to monitor Nestlé's compliance with FTSE BMS criteria in other regions of the world next year.

In agreeing to rescind the boycott of Nestlé products, Mission Council noted that Nestlé's listing on the FTSE4Good index only represents the first step in the process of assessing the company's compliance with FTSE criteria and the International Code. The Mission Committee of the URC has therefore been tasked with monitoring Nestlé's verification process and reporting back to the Mission Council in 2012. Should Nestlé be delisted from the FTSE4Good Index, then Mission Council has the authority to reinstate the boycott.

However, Mike Brady, Campaigns and Networking Coordinator at Baby Milk Action, the campaigning group which has drawn attention to the effects of Nestlé's practice of marketing its baby formula in developing countries, said 'Nestlé's ongoing violations of the international baby food marketing requirements mean that it would not pass the relevant criteria for inclusion in FTSE4Good at the time this was referenced by the Assembly Resolution in July 2010. Unfortunately, the criteria were weakened in September 2010 by FTSE with the express purpose of bringing baby food companies into the Index even while violations continue.'

The Methodist Church took a similar step in 2006 to that now taken by the URC. The Ethical Investment Advisory Group of the Church of England continues to engage with Nestlé amongst other firms. [Back to top](#)

Companies should do more to protect vulnerable workers as the London Olympics approach

Both the global economic downturn and the pending London Olympic year bring issues around the exploitation of vulnerable workers into sharp focus in the UK. The wide-ranging nature of this exploitation and the opportunities for large companies to do more to prevent it were discussed by five expert speakers in front of an audience of about 130 people at a public panel debate organised by the Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR) at Friends House in London on 17 November.

Entitled 'Vulnerable Workers, Trafficking, Pornography and the Economics of Exploitation: London 2012 and beyond', the debate was chaired by Victoria Heath, an ECCR Board member and Head of Business Development at EIRIS. Panellists Dr Stella Creasy MP, Catherine Howarth of FairPensions, D.I. Kevin Hyland of the Metropolitan Police Trafficking and Prostitution Unit, Dr Sasha Rakoff of OBJECT, and Bill Seddon of the Church Investors Group and Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church addressed a wide range of issues affecting vulnerable workers across many of the key Olympic sectors. In the ongoing context of financial crisis, speakers highlighted the need not just for the minimum wage but for a living wage. Many workers in the construction, catering and hotel industries, among others, are currently paid well below living wage level. Shareholder pressure is needed to encourage more FTSE100 companies to apply the living wage across their whole UK operation.

Human trafficking is a significant problem in the UK with many victims forced to work in appalling conditions, for example in the building trade and in the sex industry. Church investors are engaging with major UK hotel chains to encourage them to do more to prevent their premises being used by traffickers, particularly during the London Olympics, following similar work by faith-based investors in the US around major sporting events. Hotels, sex trafficking and London 2012, a briefing paper researched by ECCR and commissioned by CCLA, published in the same week as the debate, was made available to all who attended. The paper shows the role that ethical investors can play in addressing this issue in advance of London 2012.

The engagement of ethical investors with companies across the whole range of issues highlighted in the panel debate is vital; for as Catherine Howarth said in her presentation "where ethical investors lead, the mainstream follows their pioneering work". [Back to top](#)

CTBI Co-ordinating Groups meet WCC leaders

Members of the networks of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland met on Monday 28 November - Tuesday 29 November 2011 to reflect on developing the ecumenical vision in the 21st Century.

Revd Bob Fyffe, General Secretary of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, introduced the theme: "The need for coherent action has never been clearer, the need for greater unity and witness between churches has never been more urgent, and yet so many of the road signs point in other directions. We need a vision for ecumenism for our own time."

The networks were addressed by Revd Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC). "The ecumenical movement will continue and will flourish as long as we make the prayer of Jesus our own

and challenge each other to respond to it through our lives and the common witness of our churches," he said. On the evening of 28 November, Revd Dr Olav Fykse Tveit also provided the sermon for the worship session based on the material for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2012. During the conference Olav Fykse Tveit and Bishop Angaelos discussed the current difficult situation for Christians in Egypt. "There needs to be a focus on social justice and human rights because if we continue to look at the rights of one part of the community whether Muslims or Christians or anyone else, it's going to continue to be a divided community" said Bishop Angaelos.

Revd Dr Martin Robra, Programme Director for WCC, gave details of the plans for the next WCC Assembly in 2013 in Busan, South Korea. Revd Dr Olav Fykse Tveit provided extra insight into the preparations: "This is an assembly to which we belong together, therefore we also need to prepare together and therefore it is not only an event, it is a process and it is something that should lead to the ecumenical movement's shape and purpose for the years after." Reflecting on the plans from Gillian Kingston, CTBI trustee, said "I think this is the challenge for the ecumenical bodies of these islands - we are mutually accountable to each other and yet in each of our four nations we need to have a clear definition."

For videos of the conference, see the [CTBI website](#).

[Back to top](#)

"Talk Marriage" panel discussion to promote marriage and family

A panel discussion to promote marriage and family will be held on 7 February 2012 6:00 – 8:30pm at the Emmanuel Centre, Westminster. It is sponsored by the Evangelical Alliance and Church Communities UK who say 'Britain needs to rediscover the foundation on which families and societies are built – a man and woman married for life.'

The speakers will be Les Isaac, Street Pastors, Steve and Ann Clifford, Evangelical Alliance, Harry Benson, Bristol Community Family Trust, Edmund Adamus, Catholic Diocese of Westminster and John and Regula Fransham, Bruderhof.

The event is FREE but places are limited, so RSVP at www.talkmarriage.co.uk or phone 0845 600 9121 [Back to top](#)

Reaching Beyond

Plans for a major arts festival in East London to coincide with next year's London Olympics have been launched by community arts group **Reaching Beyond**. An innovative programme of visual arts and community involvement will culminate with an exciting exhibition at Bow Road Methodist church between July 23 and September 2.

The newly renovated and spacious church – about one mile from the Olympic site - is situated prominently on the busy A11, one of the designated 'Olympic highways'.

With an inclusive remit that welcomes involvement from people of all faiths and none, **Reaching Beyond** is launching the following key components:

- An international Poetry Competition for adults and young people (via the internet).
- A young people's Art Competition through schools and community organisations in the London boroughs of Greenwich, Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest.
- A major Exhibition of work by contemporary artists with roots in a variety of cultures. The **Reaching Beyond** Exhibition will include the work of some 20 artists with work in a variety of forms – paintings, icons, sculptures, cartoons, fabric, mosaic and more. Also featured will be the winning art work and poetry from the competitions.
- Running alongside the exhibition will be a programme of events including art workshops, talks, explorations, tours etc.
- Kerbside painting, carving and other hands-on activities for passers-by on the exhibition forecourt beside the A11.
- An interactive journey with the **Reaching Beyond** 'Device' (a small sculpture) around the London boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Newham, Waltham Forest and Greenwich. *Route to be announced.*

Organiser the Rev David Moore said the name **Reaching Beyond** was intentionally open to a wide range of interpretation. "We are looking to engage with people across and beyond London during the period of the Olympics.

We want to encourage people to think beyond the limits of any one language, medium or culture and to stimulate creative thinking and engagement," he said.

Mr Moore, who was a Methodist minister in the East End of London for 23 years, now lives in Milton Keynes. He is founder of Colloquy, an art and theology project. He is chair of the **Reaching Beyond** steering group which convenes at Bow Road Methodist Church.

[Back to top](#)

Justice and Peace Annual Assembly in Crawley

The theme 'Slaves to Branding' has been chosen for the Assembly on Saturday 21 January 2012 from 10.00am to 4.00pm at the Christian Education Centre (DABCEC), 4 Southgate Drive, Crawley, Sussex RH10 6RP. This year's assembly will focus on the exploitation of all workers in the clothing industry. The speakers are from War on Want, Labour Behind the Label and Anti-Slavery International. They will explain their current campaigns, which focus on addressing the threat of an increase in modern slavery connected to the 2012 Olympic Games and ensuring that workers who make our clothes are paid a living wage.

To book your place at the assembly please contact Ruth Gerun (01293) 651164 or email ruth.gerun@dabnet.org

NB: Refreshments will be available, but please bring a packed lunch.

[Back to top](#)

Breaking Barriers: Poverty and Homelessness Week

Rich Poor
Housed Homeless
Rural Urban
Migrant Settled
Homeowner Tenant
Employed Unemployed
Private sector Public sector
Employer Employee
Bankers The rest

Our world is filled with barriers between people. Barriers that prevent us from understanding one another, especially the stigma attached to being poor or homeless. And by the growing gap between the richest and poorest people in our society. To combat these issues this coming January will see the start of Poverty & Homelessness Action Week 2012. The theme is Breaking Barriers: we want people to get involved with their churches or other groups to help break the barriers that trap people in poverty and homelessness.

This year Housing Justice have prepared some new materials for those who are planning events during Action Week. These include games and activities for engaging with children and young people, ideas for how to involve the themes in your worship (including preaching suggestions and possible prayers,) and suggestions for events you might like to hold, from hosting coffee mornings to arranging talks led by those with experiences of poverty and homelessness. All

these resources are available as free downloads here or you can contact Housing Justice to order printed copies.

Please take a look at the resources and think about whether you can put an event on for Action Week 2012. If you do decide to put on an event, please register it online, or contact Housing Justice and let them know about it. We'll support you with advice and further resources. They'll also maintain a list and map of all the events that are taking place, so that anyone visiting [Action Week](#) can find out about your event. [Download your resources for Action Week now at \[www.actionweek.org.uk\]\(http://www.actionweek.org.uk\)!](#)

[Back to top](#)

Climate Week Challenge

Climate Week 2011 saw a staggering 145,000 people taking part in Britain's biggest ever environmental competition. It will run again for Climate Week 2012, and is expected to be even bigger.

One Task One Country One Day

People from across the country are being challenged to explore practical solutions to help combat climate change by participating in the Climate Week Challenge. The Climate Week Challenge takes place on the first day of Climate Week, a supercharged national campaign to inspire a new wave of action on climate change.

The Climate Week Challenge will involve thousands of people from schools, colleges, universities and workplaces all over the country simultaneously tackling the same task on the same day. The exact Challenge is kept as a secret until 9am on Monday 12 March 2012, when it will be revealed online and the one-day competition begins! Previous judges have included TV presenter Ben Fogle and singer KT Tunstall.

It is designed for teams of four to six. Any school or organisation can enter any number of teams, for FREE! No preparation is required. All that a team needs to participate is a table at which to work. It is a powerful way of

developing creativity, teamwork, environmental knowledge, problem-solving and communications skills. There are nine age categories, with different levels of sophistication expected from the entries, but everyone - from primary pupils to senior managers - will be given the same core challenge. Everyone will share in tackling the same task.

Last year's Challenge was "Save the Planet, Save the Pounds: develop a green idea to save money or make money". With over 145,000 people registered to take part we had loads of creative, innovative and imaginative entries from all across the UK. Pupils from Maryburgh Primary School in Ross-shire thought of the Flood Prevention Pipe, which would encircle the globe to take water from flooded areas to those hit by drought. Students from Pool Business and Enterprise College in Cornwall came up with the 'Fidgit', which would be a squeezable, bendable gadget to convert the energy of fidgeting children into electricity. You can view all of the Climate Week Challenge 2011 winners and finalists [here](#). *[Back to top](#)*