



April 2012

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Love yourself?

'Jesus told us to love our neighbours as ourselves and to do that we must first love ourselves.' That sounds very reasonable and quite logical but I have problems with this popular statement. First of all, if it is that obvious, why is it a saying that has only arisen in recent decades rather than one which can be traced through the wisdom of centuries? Secondly, is it not of the essence of love that it is for the other, not for oneself? We wouldn't really consider a person who loves himself as the most loving.

But the biggest problem I have with it is that it is not only a consequence which Jesus never drew from his teaching but also one that is not found elsewhere in the Bible. In fact it is the opposite that is there. Jesus said 'whoever loves himself is lost, but he who hates himself in this world will be kept safe for eternal life' (John 12:25). The language Jesus is sometimes deliberately shocking, especially when compared to popular wisdom, and must always be read in the context of costly discipleship. When Paul wrote to the Ephesians (5:28) that 'men ought to love their wives, as they love their own bodies' he adds that 'In loving his wife a man loves himself.' He continues that 'no one ever hated his own body'. Today some would disagree with Paul about that but self-hatred is a psychological disorder to which self-love is not the remedy.

I suggest that it is more in keeping with the teaching of Christ and the consequences of his Gospel to see yourself as the object of the love of God. It is not about loving yourself but about being loved. That addresses the more common state of people whose life experiences have led them to think that they are unlovable. How often do people say that they stay away from church 'because they are not good enough'? That implies that those who do go to church think that they are good enough, despite the prayers of confession and repentance with which most acts of worship begin.

So the Good News which we are commissioned to tell is not to love yourself – many are already quite good at that – but to know that you are loved, not because you deserve to be but as a purely undeserved favour. How many people are yet to hear that? Between Easter and Pentecost is the best time of all to spread the rumour. [Back to top](#)

Mission event in Manila concludes with renewed commitment

The pre-assembly event of the World Council of Churches (WCC) Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) concluded in Manila on 27 March with spiritual reflections, prayer and a profound commitment to the churches' work on mission and evangelism.

"Mission is not a commandment received once and for all. Mission is an ongoing relationship of friendship and collaboration," was the message of a closing act by Sister Josune Arregui, delegate from the Roman Catholic Church, which she communicated to the 300 participants in the event.

In his sending-off reflections, Itayi Ndudzo, a Zimbabwean member of the WCC Central Committee, called on the participants to live out their shared hope in Christ and to fulfil the vision of togetherness. He was referring to the theme of a draft statement on mission and evangelism, "Together towards life", which will be presented at the WCC 10th Assembly in Busan, Korea in 2013. "We must find courage in the incontrovertible fact that we are not being called to pursue a human idea or philosophy. We are being invited to serve in God's own mission for the salvation of all creation."

Referring to the mission statement, one of the sending off reflections stated: "The challenge for each one of us and those whom we represent is to put the statement on mission and evangelism into visible action, so that it does not simply become yet another reverent but practically irrelevant document." The prayer service at the end of the day included moving music from diverse Christian traditions performed by youth from the Asian Institute for Liturgy and Music, and the Adventist University of the Philippines. [Back to top](#)

Ethics and human rights focus for Rio+20 summit

Justice must be the guiding principle for the upcoming summit on sustainable development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, church organizations say.

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, also known as Rio+20, is to be held in Rio de Janeiro from 20 to 22 June 2012. The event marks the twentieth anniversary of an earlier UN environmental conference in the same city, the so-called Earth Summit of 1992. Rio+20 will focus on the benefits and possibilities of a "green economy" and the international framework for sustainable development. In mid-March, a pre-summit forum scheduled to coincide with a meeting of the Human Rights Council was held in Geneva, Switzerland. Those attending included ecumenical activists and members of other civil society groups, U.N. officials and diplomats.

At the event, World Council of Churches (WCC) programme executive Guillermo Kerber described a joint submission to the Rio+20 conference by the WCC and the Lutheran World Federation, arguing that ethical principles, justice and human rights concerns should be the central tenets of the final document. Kerber commented that "together with other ecumenical and faith-based organizations," the WCC "has been involved in the process towards Rio+20 in a strong way. Large ecumenical delegations, representing member churches from all regions, participated at the Earth Summit in Rio 1992 and in Johannesburg 2002. Rio+20 is an opportunity to assess what has happened in these past twenty years".

According to an article by John Zarocostas of ENInews, participants in the Geneva human rights event concluded: "The current draft text for the forthcoming U.N. Rio+20 summit on sustainable development is weak and needs to be strengthened to include ethical principles that highlight stronger commitments on equity, accountability and universal human rights norms." [Back to top](#)

Christians in India call for respectful approach to mission

"Christians are to acknowledge that changing one's religion is a decisive step that must be accompanied by sufficient time for reflection and preparation, through a process ensuring full personal freedom." This assertion is one of the guiding principles for Christian mission in India suggested in early March by a consultation convened under the leadership of the Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore University (BTESSC).

The purpose of the meeting was to study and review the 2011 document "Christian Witness in a Multi-religious World: Recommendations for Conduct". These guidelines were jointly approved and published by the World Council of Churches, the World Evangelical Alliance and the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue of the Roman Catholic Church. BTESSC collaborated in organizing a National Level Christian Leaders Consultation with the Evangelical Fellowship of India, the National Council of Churches in India and the Interfaith Coalition for Peace. The keynote speaker at the 29 February–2 March event was the Revd. G. Devakadasham, Moderator of the Church of South India.

The group's aim was to develop a code of conduct for the Indian context based on the earlier, international document. The result is *Christian Witness in the Pluralistic Context of India: Recommendations for Conduct*. Among the principles proposed: "Christian witness must reflect the fullness of life that Jesus came to offer. We oppose any inappropriate methods of exercising mission, such as resorting to deception and coercive means, which betray the gospel and may cause suffering to others. Such departures call for repentance and remind us of our need for God's continuing grace (cf. Romans 3:23)."

The document continues: "We affirm that while it is our responsibility to witness to Christ, conversion is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit (cf. John 16:7-9; Acts 10:44-47). We recognize that the Spirit blows where the Spirit wills in ways over which no human being has control (cf. John 3:8)." [Back to top](#)

EU should set the standard on Freedom of Religion

In every country where the people's rights for freedom of religion has been violated - and even threatened - the society itself is at risk. Freedom of Religion is actually an important indicator for assessing the implementation of Fundamental Rights as a whole. The EU should therefore more clearly monitor violations of Freedom of Religion both within the EU and throughout the world. This was the main request put forward by the Church and Society Commission of CEC and COMECE to the European Commission and the European External Action Service on the occasion of the Dialogue Seminar held in Brussels on 30 March.

During a day long session, the churches presented their assessment of the recent violations of religious freedom. Mgr Coutts, the Archbishop of Karachi and Paul Bhatti, the brother of the assassinated Minister, presented a vibrant report on the situation of Christians and other minorities in Pakistan. As in a number of other countries, although religious freedom is officially granted in Pakistan, the facts show that religious minorities suffer from violence and the exercise of pressure. Christians and other religious minorities do not claim a special status or protection, but simply access to 'common citizenship', the Bishop emphasized: "they are full citizens of their countries and should simply be granted their legitimate rights as citizens".

The representatives from the European External Action Service (EEAS) shared their intention to enhance the monitoring of Religious Freedom violations through a more systematic and coordinated strategy at the EU level. The churches fully supported the increase of the EEAS potential in this regard and encouraged the EEAS to develop a 'Toolkit' containing measures and instruments to counter religious freedom violations in the world and offered their expertise in the field. To this effect, Canon Dr Gary Wilton from the Church of England offered several best practices ranging from human rights education inside and outside the churches to common seminars with police, judiciary and religious representatives from specific conflict zones. He also added that in Trade Agreements concluded by the EU with third-countries, the insertion of conditionality clauses relating to respect for human rights are a good tool but that these clauses need to be made more effective, especially with regard to religious freedom.

Concerning countries which intend to join the EU, the European Commission should scrutinise, with particular attention, the respect for the fundamental right to freedom of religion and its related aspects (property rights, implementation of the rule of law). Clear and unequivocal steps towards the implementation of freedom of religion shall be present before a country is allowed to join the EU.

When it comes to the internal dimension, the main reference point for EU policies on human rights is Article 2 TEU. The right to religious freedom within the EU is based on Article 10 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights. The EU institutions should ensure that it is not simply an individualistic interpretation of this fundamental right which is promoted but that this is also broadened out to fully include its social and institutional dimension. Dr Peter Krömer, from the Protestant Church AB in Austria, and of Revd Anthony Peck, Secretary General of the European Baptist Federation, emphasized in their presentations the need to pay special attention to the implementation of the rights of minority churches and religious communities under the anti-discrimination provisions.

The churches asked the Fundamental Rights Agency to produce a survey on discrimination based on the grounds of freedom of religion in EU Member States and in applicant countries. To this end, the EU should also encourage the Member States to collect this kind of data at national level and provide the FRA with the relevant information on a yearly basis. Recent attacks based on religious hatred make it clear that respect for freedom of religion is at the very heart of our living together in Europe and allows the promotion of 'Unity in Diversity'. The role of religion in the public square must be protected from attacks, which constitute a violation of religious freedom. It is important, in this regard, to acknowledge the positive role that religion plays in public life and in society. [Back to top](#)

Future of Christchurch Cathedral, New Zealand

It is not responsible to leave this now very dangerous building in its present unsafe state. The existing cathedral, based on a design by the Victorian architect George Gilbert Scott, has been inaccessible to the public since large parts of its structure, including the steeple, collapsed in the earthquake that struck Christchurch just over a year ago, killing 185 people. Further damage was sustained in aftershocks, and the cathedral was deconsecrated in November. The building must now be made safe, and clearly there should be no risk of anyone being injured on the site –with continuing shocks there is further deterioration of the building and geotechnical experts say there is a risk of further major seismic events.

With safety requirements and to retrieve Maori and other heritage items for their storage and protection, the deconsecrated Cathedral is to be lowered 'with the utmost care and respect' to 2-3 metres until decisions about a new Cathedral are made. Items already retrieved include the eagle from the lectern, the Tukutuku (Maori decorative wall panels), some of the flags hung in the cathedral including the blue ensign from one of the first four ships, the Charlotte Jane, the organ from the chancel, cathedral choir music, a carved stone head from the Pacific chapel, war grave cross from Flanders, chalices and the pounamu (Maori: NZ 'greenstone') door from the aumbry. It is still hoped the stained glass windows, Bishop Harper's effigy, the organ, pulpit remains, memorial stones and panels along the walls may be saved. Bishop Victoria Matthews says up to 10 feet of the existing cathedral's base will be kept, possibly for use as a prayer garden.

The Anglican Diocese is large; many churches have sustained damage or become dangerous with the seismic activity of the last eighteen months. They are very concerned that no one is injured by a church property. Over 25 worship centres have been closed. Five churches have had to be / are to be demolished, irreparable or too costly to repair, along with a number of chapels, all of these buildings dearly loved by their parishioners and local communities.

With an estimated \$20-\$30million shortfall across it, excluding costs of any future damage, the diocese is facing a hard reality. Cost considerations are staggering and a major factor in the collective decision-making due to the significant shortfall in expected insurance monies. A new build replica Cathedral, with an estimated \$100 million shortfall has been ruled out; incorporating some of the old bringing that to \$50million). 'We would not be responsible stewards if we ignored the financial realities. We face a similar challenge to the Roman Catholic Diocese... but we acknowledge the high level of community interest and sense of ownership: the Cathedral was both an iconic building and a place of regular worship by many. We look to creating a beautiful, inspiring, safe new Cathedral - it will take some time for any of these decisions to be made – our preference would be to build on the current site. However, for everywhere in the central city, including the Cathedral, safety is the first priority. Meanwhile, we are committed to establishing a Transitional Cathedral in the central city to bring hope to Christchurch and provide a much-needed venue where the community can pray, reflect and gather for worship.' [Back to top](#)

St George's Day Celebration

A day at King's Cross Baptist Church, Vernon Square, London WC1X 9EW on Monday 23rd April 2012 from 10.30am to 4.00pm is being organised by the London Baptist Association (LBA). The speakers will be Malcolm Johnston, Moderator of the LBA, on 'When are the English?', Richard Reddie, known to many as the Director of *Set All Free*, marking the Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade, on 'Diaspora Views of the English' and Ann

Morisy, a popular speaker and writer on mission and community ministry, on 'An English Effort at Being Christian', with worship led by Pete Leveson, Minister of South Norwood Baptist Church.

The cost of £20.00 includes a hot English meal and other refreshments. To book please contact the London Baptist Association Administrator Norman Kincaid (norman.kincaid@londonbaptist.org.uk) or ☎ 020 7692 5592 [Back to top](#)

How will you celebrate World Fair Trade Day?

People all over the globe will celebrate by having Fairtrade Breakfasts in their communities, homes, businesses, schools and places of worship - just about everywhere! Last year, almost a quarter of a million people got involved. Let's make it a wonderful day to raise awareness about making trade fair and the need to support farmers and workers in the developing world. Guidelines and breakfast recipe cards are available [here](#). [Back to top](#)

Methodist and Elim Churches join Baptists in giving a BIG Welcome

More churches than ever before are expected to give a BIG Welcome to visitors this September.

The Methodist Church and Elim Pentecostal Churches are taking part for the first time, alongside Baptists in England, Wales and Scotland, in the Free Church initiative the BIG Welcome. The initiative encourages Christians to 'invite someone they know to something they love'. This could be a welcome event or service at a church or an alternative venue like a restaurant or gym. The BIG Welcome is due to take place on Sunday 23 September 2012 but the resources are undated so can fit into the church's calendar when it suits them.

The BIG Welcome was started by the Baptist Union of Great Britain in 2010. Last year 3,000 attended church for the first time in the 280 churches that participated in the initiative. This year the resources are based around the parable of the prodigal son and have been designed to help churches think 'creatively'. One suggestion is instead of inviting people to a church service, churches could hold a different Big Welcome event like a curry night, a quiz night or a big breakfast for example.

Mark Wakelin, President Designate of the Methodist Conference 2012-2013, wants Methodist churches to take part. "I'd like to encourage you to be part of the BIG Welcome, and to be bolder and to trust that God can work through you, as he can work through me, in making people feel loved and wanted in a big wide world, where so much of the time we don't feel that at all."

"The BIG Welcome is a hugely important initiative," said John Glass, General Superintendent of Elim Pentecostal Churches. "It is a catalyst for inviting friends and neighbours to hear and experience the message of the gospel at any time of year. I would encourage every church in the UK to embrace the concept of this great initiative and make it their own."

Ian Bunce, Head of the Mission Department at the Baptist Union of Great Britain, said "We are excited that this year we are doing the BIG Welcome in partnership with our friends from Elim and the Methodist Church. With resources based around the story of the prodigal, we are using the image of a puzzle piece to say to people, there is a space for you. We look forward to hearing the stories about how churches have used this exciting resource." [Back to top](#)

Cautious welcome for Government action on alcohol pricing

A coalition of national Churches and charities has welcomed reports that the Government plans to enforce a minimum unit price on alcohol sales. But the groups warn that a long delay on implementation could cost lives. The groups [wrote to the Prime Minister](#) back in February asking him to introduce a minimum unit price, and have made a range of resources on the issues available as part of their [Measure for Measure](#) campaign.

Prime Minister David Cameron is proposing to introduce a minimum price of 40 pence per unit on all alcohol sold in England and Wales. However, the exact details and time frame for implementation remain unclear. "We are delighted that the Government is resisting pressure from the drinks industry to take the action that is needed," said Ruth Pickles, Vice President of the Methodist Conference, and a former alcohol misuse counsellor. "This move will save not only money, but lives."

Studies conducted at [Sheffield University](#) indicate that introducing a minimum unit price will have a dramatic effect on problem drinking, with only a minimal impact on moderate drinkers. The researchers estimate that over ten years a 40 pence minimum unit price will save the nation £546 million in healthcare costs, £140 million in crime costs, £80 million due to workplace absence and £2.5 billion due to unemployment. The savings would be even higher should the Government choose to introduce a minimum unit price of 50 pence. However, Churches and charities have warned that a delay in implementing a new policy will only worsen the damage caused by cheap alcohol to individuals and communities.

“The evidence speaks for itself,” added Ms Pickles. “We see no reason for a delay in implementing the measures when so many academics and health professionals are backing the move. We cannot act quick enough to save lives and safeguard the vulnerable. Things weren’t always like this. Over recent decades, Britain has developed an unhealthy drinking culture, fuelled by a drinks industry which aggressively markets its products. We would also like to see broader action taken to address the root causes of this damaging culture.”

A survey conducted in December last year revealed that 61% of UK adults believe that excessive drinking is a problem (from minor to major) in their neighbourhood. The survey commissioned by the Methodist Church and their partners asked people to judge the effects of alcohol on the area within walking distance from their home, or where they use local facilities. More information can be found [here](#). [Back to top](#)

Demand to drop aid 0.7 per cent a ‘betrayal’ says Christian Aid

Faulty reasoning lies behind a demand from the House of Lords economic affairs committee that the Government drop its commitment to give 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income in overseas aid, says Christian Aid.

The committee’s proposal betrays a promise made more than 40 years ago to the world’s poor, and backtracks on the moral imperative of combating extreme poverty. The committee, in making the call, stressed that it was not opposed to humanitarian aid. But it said increasing the aid budget to 0.7 per cent would wrongly prioritise the amount spent rather than results achieved, and would make reaching the target more important than ensuring the spending was effective.

‘The committee’s view that reaching the figure would prioritise spending over results is wrong,’ said Eric Gutierrez, Christian Aid’s senior governance adviser. ‘In Scandinavian countries, where the 0.7% threshold has been achieved, the discussion has shifted away from how much to give, to focus instead on how well it could be used. The committee also failed to understand that money spent in aid on development projects now can help minimise the amount spent on humanitarian aid in future. It is estimated that for every £1 spent on preventing disasters, £4 is saved in responding to them.’

New research, added Mr Gutierrez, showed that 0.7% amounted to 1.6 pence of every pound of government spending. If implemented, it would put 15.9 million children in school, provide more than 80 million children with vaccines, ensure 5.8 million births take place in a safe environment, saving the lives of over 50,000 mothers, and provide better nutrition for nearly 10 million people. ‘The UK has long been seen as a leader in international development, and maintaining the pledge to deliver on the 0.7% target, which all major parties have signed up to, will enhance our ability to lead on broader questions of international development policy by joining the group of countries that meet the 0.7% threshold,’ he added.

‘Academic analysis of aid shows that a key determinant of impact is predictability. Aid is notoriously unpredictable, with commitments made and then unmet, and frequent reversals over time rather than steady flows to individual countries. Delivering on the promise to enshrine this target in law will in itself increase the predictability of UK aid, and therefore supports greater impact. We should all welcome this.’ Tackling corruption is always important, he added, but the report ignored the huge efforts the Department for International Development was already making in that direction.

The committee’s demand, meanwhile, for an early end to aid for India ignored the level of need that existed there. The stark reality, said Mr Gutierrez, is that in emerging economies, growth’s benefits are often shared unequally, out stripping the anti-poverty efforts of newly wealthy countries. Today, 75% of the world’s poorest, living on less than \$1.25 a day, are in middle income countries, with India alone home to a third of those most desperately in need – almost one billion people. [Back to top](#)

Homeless and Housing Need: Busting the Myths

The Housing Justice Annual Conference 2012 will be at the Wilson Carlyle Centre, Sheffield, on Wednesday June 13th from 9.30 to 4.00 pm. The Speakers will be **Bishop James Langstaff** Chair of Housing Justice; **Mark Russell** CEO of The Church Army; **Suzanne Kochanowski** Department for Communities and Local Government; **Alison Gelder** Director of Housing Justice; **John Battle** former Leeds West MP (1987-2010) now engaged in Leeds Community Organising; **Neil Hewitt** Triodos Bank; **Catherine Harrington** National Community Land Trust Network; **Pastor Pete Cunningham** Green Pastures; **Jon Fitzmaurice** Self help Housing; **Dawn Lonsdale** UNLOCK; **Paul Reilly** Housing Justice; **Dave Smith** Boaz/ NACCOMM; **Gina Clayton** City of Sanctuary; **Ruth Batty** CHAS @ St Vincent’s; **Helen Loosemore** and **Tasmin Maitland** Homeless Link; **Tracey Bessant** Housing Justice Faith in Affordable Housing; **Richard Trahair** Housing Justice Trustee; **Ruth Smith** Livability; **Phil Stone** Scargill Community; Service users and staff from Sheffield Cathedral Archer Project.

Myths to be busted include:

- We cannot afford more social housing!
- Britain is full! There is not enough land!
- Many homeless people prefer life on the streets!

Living in a land of plenty ...without a secure place to call home is one of the greatest struggles an individual or family can face. So why doesn't housing get the public priority it deserves? Why are we building less housing now than at any time since the 1920s? Come and join this vital discussion with Housing Justice, and our network of churches, housing and homelessness initiatives. This will be a day to remember!

Please see the [Housing Justice Website](#) for full conference information and booking form. Take advantage of early bird rates until 30 April! [Back to top](#)

Croydon Marking the Anniversary of the August Riots

Croydon Voluntary Action is working on the basis that by August 2012 – the anniversary of last year's riots – Croydon will have a social recovery plan in place to tackle the underlying causes of what happened. They are working on two fronts to prepare for this – by backing the strong intent of local businesses, residents and community groups to be leading the recovery; and by championing the role that voluntary organisations and social enterprises can play in tackling the key issues identified in today's national riots report around skills, parenting, disconnected communities and criminality.

The report provides further analysis of what caused the riots, but the key question remains what will be done to prevent them from happening again. In Croydon the local report listed twenty-four recommendations for action but, as yet, these have not become part of a social recovery plan for the borough that all sectors can get behind and engage the people of Croydon in. The anniversary of the riots is just over four months away and by August there will need to be a strategy in place that reassures local people that Croydon is on the road to recovery, with a clear sense of how the journey will be made.

Since last August members of the local community have shown their determination to lead the process of social and economic recovery. CVA quickly began to link up with the local traders and residents who were most vocal about the sorts of responses they were expecting such as greater security, cleaner streets, special measures to boost local businesses and more for young people to do. In coming together, local people were demanding that the borough's response to the riots was swift and convincing and they were beginning to show a real interest in what finance was becoming available, what it was being spent on and what role they were likely to be given in influencing that spend. The London Road Traders Association began to meet at CVA and when the Broad Green Residents Association started to attend meetings it soon became clear that they shared an appetite for a single community forum to represent local people's interests. CVA's community development team are now supporting a process that will remain community-led, operating in the way that local residents and businesses want it to, with the emphasis on finding workable solutions to the area's biggest problems – as defined by the local people themselves. The current state of play is that representatives of the residents and traders associations are now meeting - with CVA and the Council supporting them - to discuss and plan the outreach work needed to extend the scope and membership-base of the community forum in order to ensure that it is fully representative of the local area.

CVA is also working to create opportunities for voluntary and community organisations, social enterprises and faith groups to play their part in supporting Croydon's hardest-hit communities. Mike Fisher, the Leader of the Council, will chair a round-table event in May that will aim to support stronger connections between the services providing opportunities for local recovery (i.e. around skills and employment; family support; community resilience etc) and to identify the gaps in services and a process for bringing agencies together to plug them. CVA's hope, in line with the recommendation in Croydon's riots report, is that "consideration (will) be given to how local agencies and community and voluntary groups that provide supportive services can, wherever possible, further work together to deliver holistic, complementary and tailored support packages to individuals and their families to tackle concentrated underlying social problems".

Crucially, a financial package needs to be in place to support Croydon's social recovery – to go alongside the £23 million coming into Croydon that will be spent entirely on the town's physical infrastructure. The headline item at the next Croydon Congress meeting on 29 May is Tackling Deprivation with Iain Duncan Smith, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and Chair of the Social Justice Cabinet Committee, lined up as the keynote speaker. [Back to top](#)

John Wesley, Man of Medicine, in Heritage Exhibition

As one of the founding fathers of Methodism, John Wesley is well-known throughout the world as a Christian evangelist. But his experiments into producing cures for the sick are not often talked about – until now.

An exhibition revealing the surprising and illuminating history of Wesley's wild and wonderful medical ideas will tour the country from 2 April until 30 September, visiting Epworth, Bristol, Launceston, Englesea Brook, Cheshire, London and Newcastle. The exhibition, entitled '[Wesley and Well-being](#)', will explore Wesley's medicinal manual, *Primitive Physic*, which was so popular in its day that it was republished 23 times, making it an 18th century best-seller.

Although some of his "cures" were denounced by 18th century critics as "possibly deadly", his thinking was occasionally ahead of his time: honey is used in many of his remedies, even though its antiseptic and antibacterial properties have only been recently confirmed by science. It was only in the 1700s that medicine in Western Europe began to be a respectable profession and care for the sick was not seen as an extension of the pastoral care provided by the Church.

Jo Hibbard, Methodist Heritage Officer, said: "When Wesley's *Primitive Physic* was published in 1747, doctors were still more likely to kill at a price than cure for a fee. Wesley wanted to put the knowledge of curing diseases into ordinary people's hands. Some of his remedies, such as holding a live puppy over the stomach to cure colic, sound comic to us today. But, to Wesley's credit, if he thought a critic's claim was well-founded, then he would make changes in the next edition."

Wesley opened free clinics in London and dispensaries in London, Bristol and Newcastle. He took remedies and cures from other published medical books and re-wrote them in plain English. He tried to make all the remedies cheap and easy to get hold of and he asked his preachers to sell his book, encouraging them to add their own cures. He provided remedies and preventions on a range of ailments and diseases, from headaches to the plague, and gout to obesity. His "cures" ranged from advising people to exercise around two to three hours a day in order to "soften the evils of life" to drying and powdering a toad into small pills in order to help ease asthma.

Dr Richard Vautrey, a former Vice-President of the Methodist Conference and a practising GP, said: "John Wesley took the command to 'love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind' seriously, working to ensure that Methodists were not only nurturing their spiritual health but looking after their physical health as well. Whilst some of his ideas belong in the 18th century, many are as relevant today as they were then. All Methodists today would do well to follow his advice by increasing the amount of exercise we do and reducing the amount of salt in our diets. By doing so whilst our hearts may still be "strangely warmed" – as Wesley's was – they won't overheat!"

The Church's Olympic and Paralympic Co-ordinator Ish Lennox is supporting the exhibition along with [More Than Gold](#). "The Methodist influence on Britain's sporting heritage can be seen clearly in the history of football," she said. "Aston Villa FC was formed in March 1874 by four members of the Villa Cross Wesleyan Chapel. Walter Tull was brought up in the Methodist orphanage in Bethnal Green. He was one of Britain's first black footballers, playing for Tottenham Hotspur."

A souvenir leaflet for visitors will explain not only Wesley's interest in health but how the Church has used sport as a means of service and outreach since the 19th century. [Back to top](#)

Churches Hustings for Mayor of London election

The London Churches Group for Social Action with the Evangelical Alliance have organised a special hustings debate on 18 April to enable Christians across London to question the main candidates running for Mayor of London in the election on 3 May.

The event will provide a chance for Christians from churches all over London to challenge the candidates about the big controversies making the headlines, and help to set the agenda for the next four years of London's politics. Questions may be sent in advance or asked on the night.

The event will take place at St James's Church, Piccadilly on Wednesday, 18 April from 6 to 8 pm. Current Mayor Boris Johnson and his key challengers, Ken Livingstone, Brian Paddick and Jenny Jones will all attend. Revd George Pitcher, former religion correspondent for the Daily Telegraph, will chair the debate. At each of the previous mayoral elections the London Church Leaders group and the Evangelical Alliance have run hustings for the mayoral candidates. This year's event continues this long-running engagement with the candidates and will show the key role that Christians play in London.

The Rt Rev Peter Wheatley, Bishop of Edmonton said: "This is a great opportunity for churches to engage with the mayoral candidates and hear them respond to our questions and concerns. It will help us make an informed and effective choice for Mayor when we vote on 3 May."

Dr Dave Landrum, director of advocacy for the Evangelical Alliance said: "The Church in London is growing and it's bringing huge benefits and hope to the capital's communities. As London votes for a leader this is a chance to see the candidates engage with Christians and encourage them to carry on that relationship when the winner takes office."

Revd Lucy Winkett, Rector of St James's Piccadilly, said: "We are delighted to be hosting this live debate on the issues of the day, affirming the vital contribution people of faith make to public life." [Back to top](#)

Money, the Economy and Faith

On 14 June 2012, 10am-4pm, at Sarum College, Salisbury, Tarek El Diwany and Peter Selby, Muslim and Christian Investment Adviser and Theologian, will lead an interactive discussion about money, the economy and faith. Both have worked extensively on what their respective faiths have to offer to our understanding of economics. In the process they have each written prescient books on modern-day usury, and can show that the financial crisis of 2008 is rooted in a deep failure to understand the rightful creation and use of money in the economy.

In the first two sessions both Peter Selby and Tarek El Diwany will give their account of how their faith approaches economic issues. In the final session there will be a discussion on where both visions differ and where they agree. In the process learning more about the theology and practices of both faiths, and the different ways in which Muslims and Christians can help change our economic system for the better.

Price: £45 (including lunch and refreshments)

Contact Alison Ogden for booking details aogden@sarum.ac.uk ☎ 01722 424800

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New conflict coaching service and new resource for facilitators

St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation & Peace is launching an exciting new service. Conflict coaching is one to one support for anyone experiencing conflict who wants to be able to respond in a more skilful way. It has been shown to be a highly effective tool for the workplace, but can also be used by individuals in any context. St Ethelburga's has been developing and testing its own structured approach to this tool. For more information click on the links below:

[Conflict coaching for the workplace](#)

[Conflict coaching training](#)

[Personal conflict coaching](#)

They are also publishing a new free resource on our website. Our ten principles of group facilitation were produced in collaboration with Corrymeela, Northern Ireland and ICCI, Israel, and emerged through our own reflective practice and through exploring what our different approaches shared in common. [Download the principles of group facilitation](#)

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Diamond Jubilee New Testaments

A Souvenir Diamond Jubilee edition of the New Testament has been created to give out at schools, churches and street parties. This attractive NT is available at just £50 for 100 copies (50p a copy), plus postage, and includes 8 pages of photographs from the Coronation and the Queen's life, plus Bible references to help readers understand the Good News of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection and its relevance today.

Advance orders have already been received from churches across the nation. The expected number of pre-orders was 25,000 but over 110,000 have been ordered. Churches are planning to give away thousands of copies to pupils, shoppers, day care centres and at community events as we celebrate.

Rachel Jordan for the Church of England says: 'The New Testament is the British NIV translation 2011 and has been gifted by Biblica. It is available at cost in boxes of 50 for £25.00. Please find [attached an information sheet about the New Testaments](#). To place an order please go to: <http://diamondjubileebibles.eventbrite.com/>. Please help to make sure that children, young people and adults receive this gift and have the chance to read the word of God for themselves' [Back to top](#)

Journeys from Disconnection to Reconnection

The 'connection metaphor' is a central theme of Connect4Life (C4L), a new ministry member organization of EA first introduced in IDEA Nov/Dec 2011. C4L use the premise that all electrical and internet devices need connection of some kind to function - without the connection, no gadget can fulfil its identity, value or purpose. The wide range of resources for discipleship and outreach are pitched for this generation, demonstrating in accessible language how connection is also vital for human beings to fulfil their identity, value and purpose in Christ. A sound connection leads on to security, happiness and a motivated life.

Four groups of people are served by these resources:

1. Connected – disciples of Jesus, joined to the vine and bearing fruit (c.5-10% UK population)

2. Unconnected – no Christian background or frame of reference (c.85% -90%)
3. Disconnected – at present in the land of prodigals (c.16million within the 85-90%)
4. Reconnected – a steady number returning to church and /or God (moving back from the disconnected group)

The ministry has made a promising start with many giving positive endorsements and reviews. Among leaders from across the denominations who suggest churches get hold of these resources is Steve Clifford, EA's General Director: "Connect 4 Life offers to churches an integrated approach to discipleship which is outward looking yet God focussed. This could be a vital resource for 21st century leaders." Jim Currin, Evangelism Secretary for Churches Together, did an independent review of all the materials, has been particularly favourable to the resources for the disconnected and reconnecting: "I am not aware of other resources like this for people who want to reconnect with Christ - for that reason alone this is a welcome resource for churches to have available." See more on this [web link](#).

A study commissioned by Tear Fund in 2007 found that 16 million people in the UK who once attended church no longer do so. An extra 77,000 people attended church on Back to Church Sunday 2011 (over 58,000 in the Church of England). Francis and Kay's earlier research found that 45% would be open to reconnection. Since the first Back to Church Sunday in 2004, nearly 230,000 people have come back to church (source Christian Today web site). Due to the need for the wider church to gain a better understanding of issues facing disconnected and reconnecting people, a further piece of research is being undertaken by C4L to investigate the journeys for Christians in the Twenty-first Century.

This study, 'Journeys From Disconnection to Reconnection', will address key questions to help church leaders better understand those experiencing some measure of disconnection or who are considering the possibility of reconnection. Is a period of disconnection from church (and/or from God) a 'normal' part of the faith journey for Christians today? What types of change occur to a person during such disconnection? In what ways might they be different when reconnecting?

If you are a leader or someone who is in process of reconnecting, you are invited to be part of a short study looking at the journey many Christians go through – it can be done [on line](#). The study looks at two groups:

- 1) Christians who have disconnected but are now at some stage of reconnection
- 2) Church Leaders who experience many disconnecting and some reconnecting

The responses will be collated and anonymous. A number of faith journeys from disconnection to reconnection and minister's views will be featured – the names and places will be altered to safeguard anonymity. If you would like to participate in any aspect of this, questionnaires can be downloaded from <http://www.connect4life.org.uk> and returned to contactus@connect4life.org.uk. See website for more details and to order free samplers for outreach and discipleship resources. [Back to top](#)