

Relationships – Action / mission – Theology

Last year [CTE's Directors](#) completed a reflection on key factors in ecumenism. They noted:

- CTE's membership had increased from fourteen to forty-two since 1990.
- New members included major Pentecostal denominations, several smaller networks of churches and denominations shaped by particular ethnic backgrounds.

How, then, they asked, can this wider spectrum of Churches relate better to each other?

At local level, too, there had been a sea change. Many Churches Together groups and other, more informal, groupings are engaged more than ever in action and mission eg food banks, Hope and Street Pastors.

In conversations with CTE's Enabling Group, where Member Churches meet, a 'three-legged stool' strategy emerged:

- Relationships
- Action / mission
- Theology

Staff changes

One immediate result of this new strategy was to reconsider staff portfolios. This was done alongside financial cuts – the financial difficulties of Member Churches has sadly now affected CTE and we have had to retrench somewhat.



We said farewell to Carole Golden who worked in our office for many years. [Lorraine Shannon](#) (photo) is left as our only Administrator, in charge of the [London office](#) and now full-time.

Recognising changes in local ecumenism and the increasing competence of [County Ecumenical Officers](#), Directors reluctantly made the two Field Officer posts redundant. John Bradley took the opportunity to retire. He was Field Officer for the South for 12 years – moving to CTE from the post of County Officer for Devon. We celebrated his service to ecumenism with a [thank you tea party](#)

at John's home church, Christ the Cornerstone, Milton Keynes. John is shown here with Marion, his wife, cutting his cake.



New post

[Jenny Bond](#), formerly Field Officer for the North and Midlands, was offered the Training, Resourcing and Events post. She continues to be the first port of call for queries about local ecumenism, although [LEP queries](#) are now dealt with by the National Ecumenical Officers through a dedicated e-mail address: LEP@cte.org.uk

Supporting Intermediate ecumenism

Churches Together in England and its [staff](#) remain committed to the support of [Intermediate Bodies](#) and are available to visit on request. We continue to service the annual Consultation of County Ecumenical Officers (CEOs), to help with the [employment of new CEOs](#) and to advise on [reviews](#) of Intermediate Bodies. We continue to offer all new [CEOs](#) an induction session, though now this is done as a group and in London.

Pentecostal and Multicultural relations

Directors give a high priority to Pentecostal and Multi-cultural Relations and so [Joe Aldred](#) now works full time for CTE. Recognising the increasing importance of Pentecostal members, CTE last October appointed a new Pentecostal President, [Bishop Eric Brown](#). We have two other new [Presidents](#) too.



Other staff

[David Cornick](#) continues as full-time General Secretary, with particular responsibility for theology. [Jim Currin](#) is now full-time with a portfolio for Evangelisation, Mission and Media and [Celia Blackden](#) continues with half-time responsibility for Inter Faith relations. Visit our website for [staff contact details](#).



One outworking of the 2014 strategy is the new structure of the [CTE website](#). Jim Currin, our web manager, has put a huge amount of work into it and we hope that the result is attractive and easy to navigate. The re-design also had smart phones and tablets in mind – try it and see!

A significant improvement is our [resources](#) section, with clearer menus and, we hope, a more logical arrangement of material. In particular, resources for [local ecumenism](#) and [Local Ecumenical Partnerships](#) have been brought together in separate sections. [News items](#) are also added daily. It's all a work in progress, so if you find broken links or something missing, please e-mail jim.currin@cte.org.uk

Pentecostal and Multicultural Relations (PMR)



CTE's PMR work is headed up by [Joe Aldred](#). The task is to deepen inter-church, inter-faith and multi-cultural relationships, mission and theological reflection. Joe writes:

'In terms of **building relationships**, a key aspect of PMR is working with Eric Brown, the new CTE Pentecostal President, to shape the relationship between white and black Pentecostals and new churches, and between them and main stream churches. We work closely with the headquarters and key leaders of relevant CTE members. We nurture contact with national government departments such as the Faith Unit in Communities and Local Government; facilitate conversations between Black clergy with Jewish Rabbis, Pentecostals and Catholics, Pentecostals and Anglicans, and Pentecostals and Muslims, this latter being a collaboration with [Celia Blackden](#) CTE Inter-faith Officer. (The Anglican-Pentecostal meeting last April is shown below.) We respond to numerous enquiries about Black and Pentecostal churches and communities.



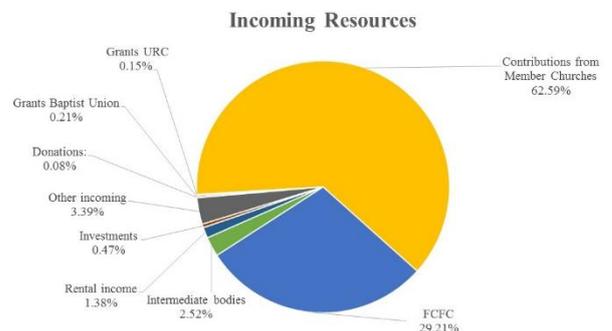
'In terms of **mission/action**, the online directory of [Black and Multicultural Churches](#) has been revamped and re-launched. We have worked with the Woolf Institute's [Commission on Faith and Belief in Britain](#); Human Trafficking and other agencies tackling human trafficking/modern day slavery; the department of culture in marking contributions to World War 1. We have supported the [National Church Leaders Forum](#) including its publication of a Black Church Manifesto; supported the [Boys' Brigade](#), the [Churches' Agency for Safeguarding](#), [Operation Black Vote](#),

[Muslim Charities Forum](#) and the Inner-city Think Tank examining the roots of historic black and white slavery.

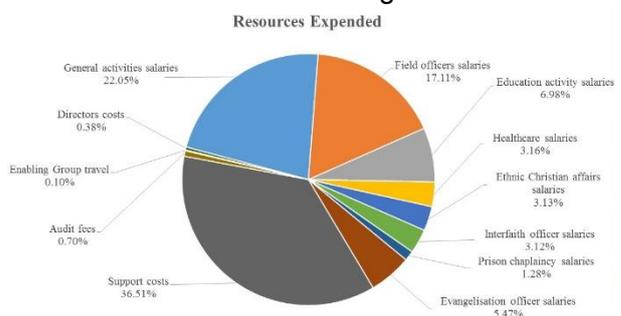
'In terms of theological reflections, we have attended several lectures, supported individual students and organisations including Timothy School of Ministry, NTCG Leadership Centre, Christ the Redeemer College, Roehampton University, The Queen's Foundation and Black Theology Forums; including lectures and sermons in many educational, church and ecumenical settings.'

CTE's finance

CTE is dependent on [Member Churches](#) for its income. Most of that is derived from the older, historic, denominations. We are engaged in dialogue with all our members to find ways in which our financing can represent more truly the nature of our wide ecumenical engagement.



The graphs illustrate 2013 accounts. The restructuring of work by both CTE and the Free Churches Group (FCG) means that in future FCG income and expenditure will be separate. That won't affect CTE's overall budget.



Inter Faith

[Celia Blackden](#) manages to cram a huge amount of work into her half-time post. She highlights the following aspects of her work:



- The fifteen-week online study course [Bridging the Great Divide: the Jewish-Muslim encounter](#) run by the Cambridge Woolf Institute and the American University of Washington, was amazing, creating a global network of people learning a great deal about this 'encounter' historically and today; and sharing on a wide canvas of experience. You can sign up for 2015.
- The new CTE strategy, based on relationships, action/mission and theology, encouraged me to work with Joe Aldred and church leaders among the multi-cultural and Pentecostal members of CTE to tap into rich and varied experiences and perspectives on inter faith relations.
- Further work has been done in preparation for the second [national ecumenical gathering of interfaith advisers and advocates](#) arranged for February 2015.
- [An 'A-Z' of inter faith relations: twenty-six short reflections for Christians](#) and a review of the book [No Peace Without Prayer](#) by Abbot Timothy Wright were published.
- A number of new friendships were made in the Leeds/Bradford area which have led to good opportunities for dialogue in the north, including Christian-Muslim dialogue and collaboration with Leeds Trinity University (LTU) and local partners for Inter Faith Week. Dr Ed Kessler from the Woolf Institute spoke at LTU on the evening of 20 November.
- I continue to be part of the [Churches Forum for Inter Religious Dialogue](#) at Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, where there is good exchange and collaborative effort.

[Listen to Celia talking about her work](#)



In 2014 we launched our Twitter feed @churchesengland and provide the latest tweets from Member Churches on our website home page. We have 414 followers and retweet 20-40 items of news a day. If you're on Twitter, please do join us! Celia is @cteinterfaith, Jenny is @JennyBondCTE.

Evangelisation

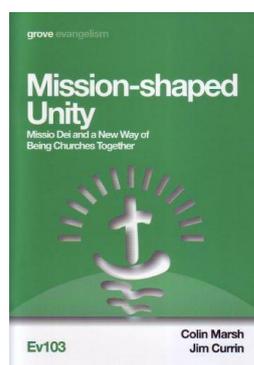
How we 'share the good news of Jesus Christ together' is a key question being addressed by a number of Churches in England at present. For example, the Church of England produced its [Intentional Evangelism](#) report and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales is planning a major conference on Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation [Evangelii Gaudium: The Joy of the Gospel](#).

CTE provides space for the Churches' Group for Evangelisation. Among many other things, it is the reference group for www.christianity.org.uk which serves the Churches in England as an enquiry agency.

[Evangelism UK](#) is a CTE news service provided to anyone involved or interested in evangelism. In 2014 we passed a landmark by posting news item № 1500. Subscribe free and consult the archive at www.evangelismuk.typepad.com

Mission

[Hope Together](#) is a major initiative in 2014 involving many groups of churches. For example, a hundred groups are planning a 'Silent Night' Carols event in a football stadium to remember the truce in World War 1. CTE works closely with Hope and other related agencies by providing information about mission initiatives, from Open Crowd Community Festivals to Food Banks. [Visit our website for a fuller picture](#).



Reflecting on many recent changes in mission, Jim Currin co-wrote the [Grove](#) booklet ['Missio Dei' and a new way of being Churches Together](#) with Colin Marsh, the County Ecumenical Officer for Birmingham Churches Together. Colin writes as an ecumenist on the theology of *Missio Dei*, and Jim writes as a Church Army evangelist about mission praxis today.

CTe-News

It's what it says on the tin: a roundup of news relevant to everyone interested in Christian unity in England. A new format was introduced in 2014 with a new database of subscribers – we now have about a thousand people who receive a free monthly notification. The content covers a wide range of articles spanning 8-12 pages and each edition starts with a 'Reflection of the Month'. Ensure you're on our list: www.cte.org.uk/news.

CTE's 2015 Forum

The largest representative gathering of the Churches in England, [the Forum](#) is a delegate conference, bringing together over three hundred representatives of Churches Together in England's Member Churches, Intermediate Bodies, Co-ordinating Groups and Bodies in Association.



The [next Forum](#) takes place from teatime on Monday 28 to lunchtime on Wednesday 30 September 2015 at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire. If you wish to attend, contact the national office of your Church or your Intermediate Body to see if you can be one of the delegates. Nearer the time, if we have spare spaces, we will open it out to others.

The 2015 Forum will focus on three distinct areas of church life in England:

- The Orthodox Churches
- Pentecostalism
- Young People

Young people will be welcome to join the Forum on Tuesday, in particular for the permanent marketplace where various organisations display information and resources, for the after-tea Presidents' Panel and for the youth session in the evening. Contact [Jenny Bond](#) for information.

Celebrating fifty years since Vatican II and the Nottingham Faith and Order Conference

2014 marks the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council and the Nottingham British Council of Churches' Faith and Order conference, both of which took place in 1964 and both of which were key to the development of Christian unity in the last fifty years.

[Unitatis Redintegratio](#) is Vatican II's Decree on Ecumenism. It was promulgated on 21 November 1964 and represented a huge shift in the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, although signs of change had been evident earlier. It officially recognised that ecumenism is a priority for the Roman Catholic Church which no longer understood unity as 'separated brethren' returning to the fold, but as restoration, a way forward to a unity which is not uniformity.

Throughout England the anniversary has been celebrated in various different ways. Key events:

- In September CTE's Enabling Group took the opportunity to study the document with a talk by Bishop Paul Hendricks.
- On 11 November, there was a [seminar in Leeds and ecumenical vespers](#) attended by key ecumenical guests and most of the Catholic bishops of England and Wales. The preacher was the Most Revd Sir David Moxon, co-Chair of ARCIC, the Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative to the Holy See and Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome.
- On Saturday 15 November there was a day conference in London: [Christian unity since Vatican II -- memory, present, where now?](#)
- 24-26 November will see an important invitation-only conference for Ecumenical Officers in Britain: The ecumenical landscape: changing seasons -- expanding horizons.

Receptive Ecumenism

2014 has been rich in opportunities for theological reflection, not least on the subject of receptive ecumenism. In essence, receptive ecumenism is simple. As we engage with people who belong to Churches not our own, we often focus on what gifts our own tradition can add to the ecumenical treasure trove. That's important. But receptive ecumenism goes further. Instead of looking at what we can bring, our strengths, perhaps, it invites us to look at our weaknesses and the gifts and strengths of others, to notice what we can learn or receive from them.

Our [overview web page](#) links to:

- David Cornick's report on the third International Receptive Ecumenism conference, June 2014, held in the USA
- The paper David Cornick gave to the Churches' [Theology and Unity Group](#), the following month.
- Callan Slipper's presentation to CTE's [Enabling Group](#) and another to a seminar for [County Ecumenical Officers](#).