



Reflection of the Month: Listen



Charry Hamilton writes:

'You'd better get on with it – you're not getting any younger'.

Her words punched me in the stomach and left me choking back tears, whilst my mind whirred with a thousand witty and cutting retorts that I would never utter.

This well-intended comment came from a lady I'd never met before, during small-talk, at the back of church, over a cup of tea.

The lady didn't know me at all, or that my husband and I were exhausted from four painful years of trying, unsuccessfully, to have children. But she assumed that she knew what I needed, as if it wasn't etched at the forefront of my mind, and jumped in to tell me how to fix it. If you happen to be that lady, bless you – I'm sure you are actually really lovely.

But you're not, right? You are reading this, thinking that you'd never be so insensitive, and I'm glad of that. But how often is our personal or church's evangelism just as blunt a tool?

Evangelism without understanding, without listening, can not only be ineffective, but dangerous.

We are like the favourite wedding verse, 'If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.' Does the hearer ignore the clanging cymbal? No, she runs from it, and makes a mental note not to go there again.

Listening is not just for touchy-feely types, for people with time on their hands, for women. It is deep, it is rare, it is love. It is for everyone who wants to share the Gospel. It shows we care enough to give time, to keep an open mind, to meet people exactly where we find them and stay with them a while. And if we really care, then we will love them too much to leave them there. We will point them in the right direction and trust them and God that they will find the way for themselves. And we will support them on the journey.

And if we don't love, then we must question why we are wanting to share the Gospel

with this person in the first place.

This is why I take delight in my new job as communications manager for the Christian Enquiry Agency. Part of my work is the true honour of engaging in email conversations with people who get in touch to discover more about Christianity. If they simply want 'answers' they can (and do) find them on our website. But it is a joy also to provide a service where I can listen to people via email, correspond personally, and pray. It is quiet, it is unassuming, it is powerful.

Someone, possibly Theodore Roosevelt, said, 'People won't care how much we know, until they know how much we care.'

And so it was with me and the lady at church. Those few throwaway words she said were factually true, all too true, but they didn't help me.

In contrast, my doctor, busy man though he was, listened. He supported and advised us through the many months of appealing an IVF rejection. He spent long evenings of his own time researching information that would help our case. He kept in touch through the emotional and difficult IVF process.

And he attended the dedication of our daughter.

Cherry Hamilton is the Communications Manager for Christian Enquiry Agency (CEA) CEA is an Agency of CTE and hosts www.christianity.org.uk Information on evangelism and the agency: www.christianenquiryagency.org.uk

Heading to CTE Forum 2018

Jim Currin writes:

The 6 Presidents of Churches Together in England and more than 200 delegates are all heading to The Hayes conference centre in Derbyshire for a Forum 17th-19th September 2018. They will together consider the theme "'I am with you always' - together in God's mission" in a series of keynote addresses, top-table conversations among and with the Presidents, workshops, small groups, a multi-voice bible study and time around the dinner table.



Several features of Forum 2018 build on the experience of the last Forum in 2015. These include a focus on young people who are fully involved in the Forum, who will pose questions to the Presidents and who have planned one of the worship sessions. Other Forum firm favourites will be the Marketplace of resources and morning prayer options. We plan to produce a thirty minute video resource of the Presidents' sessions for use locally.. The Forum also provides the public place to thank David Cornick who retires as General Secretary, and introduce Paul Goodliff, as his successor.

Ruth Gee, the new incoming National Ecumenical Officer for the Methodist Church, is Moderator of Forum and said in a recent Reflection of the Month:

It is difficult to describe how exciting it is to be with representatives from at least 45 different Christian churches and traditions. The CTE Forum is a place where this happens and is a place where each one of us can grow in understanding God. I am so aware that my knowledge of God can only ever be a fraction of the reality of the God whose ways are not my ways and whose thoughts are not my thoughts. I am so aware that my understanding of scripture is conditioned by my context and my upbringing. When I have the opportunity of praying, talking and worshipping with Christians from such a wide variety of contexts I am enriched and my understanding grows. It isn't always easy because I am often asked to consider different points of view, to listen carefully to the experience of others and this often changes me but it is change that brings me closer to God.

During the Forum look out for posts on a Facebook page www.facebook.com/CTEForum2018 and you can follow the proceedings on twitter [@CTEForum2018](https://twitter.com/CTEForum2018).

As soon as possible, videos, photos and reports will appear on the CTE website: www.cte.org.uk/Forum2018

In October there will be a Reflection of the Month from Hilary Topp, Deputy Moderator of Forum. In the meantime, please pray for all those representatives of Member Churches, Intermediate Bodies and Bodies in Association as they gather for Forum 2018, the largest representative gathering of the Churches in England.

100th meeting of English ARC

Jenny Axtell writes:

The English Anglican-Roman Catholic Committee (English ARC) celebrated its 100th meeting with a special event held at Lambeth Palace on 2 July.



English ARC was established in 1970 as an official dialogue group between the Church of England and the Catholic Church for monitoring and promoting the relationship between the two churches. The group also works together on specific joint projects such as study guides, mapping relationships between the two churches across the country and joint schools. It will also engage with the developing work of the third Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC). English ARC is chaired by the Right Reverend Robert Byrne, auxiliary Bishop in the Diocese of Birmingham, and the Right Reverend Christopher Foster, Bishop of Portsmouth.

The Committee's new membership met for the inaugural meeting of the new 5-year term, learning about the role and history of English ARC, its international context alongside bodies such as ARCIC and the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM), and discussing areas of future work.

The meeting was later joined by 35 former members of English ARC to celebrate this 100th meeting with tea, cake and prosecco. All were warmly welcomed by the Co-Chairs and there were presentations from four former members who spoke of the warmth of friendship, the challenges and the desire to walk forward together that they had experienced whilst serving on the Committee. The celebrations drew to a close joining the Lambeth Palace community in Evening Prayer led by Archbishop Justin Welby. It was a wonderful occasion where members past and present shared stories, greeted old friends, made new ones, and all looked forward to the continued work of English ARC and the strengthening of relationship between the two churches.

To view photos of the event click here: <https://flic.kr/s/aHsmokqEvp>

Photo © Mazur/catholicnews.org.uk

For further information about English ARC see the Churches Together England website www.cte.org.uk/englisharc

New membership of English ARC 2018-2023

Anglican

Church of England

The Rt Revd Christopher Foster, Bishop of Portsmouth (Co-chair)

The Rt Revd Dr Jill Duff, Bishop of Lancaster

The Rt Revd Mike Harrison, Bishop of Dunwich

[EARC 2 July - new members comp] The Revd Canon Dr Andrew Davison, Starbridge Lecturer in Theology and Natural Sciences, University of Cambridge; fellow of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge

Ms Doral Hayes, Executive Development Officer for the Association of Interchurch Families; Ecumenical Facilitator for Churches Together in Hertfordshire

The Revd Canon Maggie McLean, parish priest in the parish of Battyeford, Diocese of Leeds

The Revd Andrew Moughtin-Mumby, Rector of St Peter's Walworth, Diocese of Southwark

[EARC 2 July compressed]

Church in Wales

The Revd Dr Matthew Hill, Priest in the Diocese of St David's, Secretary to the Standing Doctrinal Commission of the Church in Wales

Co-secretary

The Revd Canon Jeremy Worthen, Secretary for Ecumenical Relations and Theology, Council for Christian Unity

Catholic

The Rt Revd Robert Byrne, an Auxiliary Bishop for the Archdiocese of Birmingham (Co-Chair)

The Most Reverend Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham

Fr Andrew Cole, Parish Priest of the Parish of the Most Holy & Undivided Trinity, Grimsby, Cleethorpes & Immingham

Mr Claudio Gangemi, Head of RE at St Bede's School, Surrey



The Revd Canon William Isaac, Parish Priest of St. Teilo's with Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, North Cardiff
Fr Steven Parkinson, Parish Priest in Whitefield, Manchester
Professor Janet Martin Soskice, Professor of Philosophical Theology at the University of Cambridge; Fellow of Jesus College Cambridge
Miss Patricia Whitney, former secondary school teacher; member of the Focolare Community

Co-secretary

The Revd Canon Anthony Churchill, member of the Arundel Cathedral Chapter; Episcopal Vicar for Ecumenical Affairs in the Arundel and Brighton Diocese.

[Download a PDF list of members with their biographies](#)

Photo of the new members © Mazur/catholicnews.org.uk

[Homepage for English ARC](#)

CEC agreed priorities Press Release 28 August 2018 Brussels



The 2018 Novi Sad General Assembly of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) recommended to CEC Member Churches six areas for concern in the coming years: economic and climate justice, security, arms and nonviolence, refugees and migration, human rights, populism, and the family.

The importance of each of these areas, and proposals for action, are detailed in the full report from the public issues committee, which can be accessed in English as a PDF [here](#).

Economic and Climate Justice. Today, it is the poorest who suffer the most to adapt to climate change and ecological devastation. It is unjust that those who have contributed the least to climate change suffer the most. Jesus teaches that we must care for the least of these, and so we must confront profound economic and climate injustice through advocacy and action. Churches are called to use the international Sustainable Development Goals in their efforts in ecological and economic justice, support grassroots efforts, work for intergenerational justice, and continue advocacy efforts at the European level.

Security, Arms and Non-Violence. Recent developments at European and global levels risks the European Union's role as an instrument of peacebuilding and reconciliation. Arms development, production, and export is a major contributor to the outbreak and continuation of armed conflict and war, and forced migration. Churches are called to strengthen their voices against the militarisation of the EU, advance a Christian perspective on security, advocated against any further development of nuclear weapons, and explore the theological dimensions of security, arms, and non-violence.

Refugees and Migration. The mass movement and displacement of people touches all

CEC Member Churches and peoples in Europe today. Economic conditions, climate change, youth unemployment, and so on, prompt many people to leave their homes in search of better lives elsewhere. Churches are called to advocate for safe and legal access to Europe, as well as fair and just asylum procedures, and humane return policies. Churches are also encouraged to speak out against the criminalization of solidarity with undocumented migrants and support humanitarian initiatives for search and rescue at sea.

Human Rights. Building a Europe for all is an important task for European churches. Diversity and plurality in Europe is a richness, and churches and religious communities are an important part of this. Existing European frameworks favour extended freedom of religion or belief, and the 2001 Charta Oecumenica encourages dialogue between minority and majority churches. Churches are called to support each other in working for freedom of religion or belief, including access to holy places and places of worship, and in strengthening universality of human rights, such as civil political, social, economic and cultural rights.

Populism. Today, populist parties are on the rise, and take advantage of democratic processes to gain power and recognition. Decline in living standards and rising unemployment rates, especially among young people, undoubtable goes in favour of strengthening extreme nationalism and increasing populism. Exclusionary politics shrinks public discourse—a serious problem for European societies. Churches are called to be a uniting force in their local communities, build bridges with other partners with common values and commitments, and continually work for greater youth engagement.

Family. A Christian family should be a shelter where one learns to love, to support, to care about the other, to offer hospitality and be attentive to sufferings. This path for justice and love can begin in the home and expand outward, reaching entire communities. Growing circles of nurture draw on the gifts and love of others and draw them into what we call family. We must not underestimate the importance of this understanding of family for the fate of our societies. It is, therefore, unacceptable that this right is undermined or violated for so many, especially asylum seekers, refugees, and minors who arrive to Europe unaccompanied. Member Churches are called to start a dialogue on the condition and attitudes toward family life, including gender justice, and how this impacts life in Europe today.

Website: www.ceceurope.org

Corrymeela in Exeter

Hope in Conflict. Can we find hope in times of conflict – personal, communal, international?



News item from the Corrymeela Community, a Body in Association of Churches Together in England.

Day event

November 17th 2018, with Pádraig Ó Tuama, poet and theologian, leader of the Corrymeela Community is open to those of all faiths and none. The venue is the Alumni auditorium, The Forum, Streatham Campus, University of Exeter, Stocker Rd, Exeter EX4 4PT: 9.30 registration for 10.00 – 4.15.

The programme shares creative ways to deal with conflict, from practitioners in different contexts with a keynote address by Pádraig, followed by panel discussion.

Other group contributors include Jo Berry, founder of charity Building Bridges for Peace; Jude Taylorson, a Zen Buddhist; Louisa Burnand, of the Centre for Peaceful Solutions; Jayme Reaves, a public theologian; Brother Jonathan Herbert & Brother Hugh, Anglican Franciscan friars and Bishop Peter Price, co-founder and Chair of the Burns-Price Foundation. Pádraig will lead a group on Brexit and the Book of Ruth.

Tickets are available now from <https://store.exeter.ac.uk/conferences-and-events/education-student-experience/events/hope-in-conflict>

Rhythms of Peace

A poetry reading in support of the Corrymeela Community, Northern Ireland's oldest Peace and Reconciliation organization. At 7.00 pm St Luke's Chapel St Luke's Campus Heavitree Road EX1 2LT. The poets reading with Pádraig will be Alwyn Marriage, Lawrence Sail, Richard Skinner and Dana Littlepage Smith.

Ecumenical service

Sunday 18th November at 10.30: Pádraig will be the guest preacher at an Ecumenical Christian service in the Southernhay United Reformed Church, Dix's Field Exeter, EX1 1QA.

Details, more information and booking links are [here](#)

Poet in Residence for JPIT

The Revd Lucy Berry, a performance poet and United Reformed Church minister, has been named as the first poet-in-residence for the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT).

JPIT responds to current social, political and policy issues on behalf of the Baptist Union, the Church of Scotland, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church.

Ms Berry will write and perform poetry related to the policy areas JPIT work on such as poverty and the welfare system in the UK, immigration, political engagement and broader themes around peace and justice.

The unremunerated position will commence on Monday 3 September and is marked with a poem specially written by Ms Berry, entitled 'An Empire and a Village'.



Explaining how the joint venture began, Ms Berry said: 'It came about through my residency at JPIT's last national conference, 'Brave New World: faithful living in a time of change', in Manchester in March. 'We all hit it off brilliantly. JPIT has an attractively practical attitude towards the issues of the day and I love practical Christianity.'

A new page will be created on JPIT's website entitled 'poetry hub' and will feature all poetry she writes during her time with the organisation.

She explained what lay behind the inspiration for her work. 'It's the Bible,' she continued. 'It seems to me that what is happening in the Bible is always happening; which makes the Bible eternally – and urgently – relevant.'

Lucy Zwolinska, JPIT Policy and Engagement Officer, added: 'We are delighted to welcome the Revd Lucy Berry as our poet in residence. When Lucy joined us for our Brave New World conference in March and performed her poem "Ideas, like doves" the positive feedback was overwhelming, demonstrating the power of her work. Lucy's words allow people to engage with issues of justice and peacemaking on a deeply spiritual and personal level. We look forward to working with her more closely.'

Watch Ms Berry perform the poem [here](#).

CTBI appoint Richard Reddie

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) is delighted to announce the appointment of Richard Reddie as its new Director of Justice and Inclusion. The newly configured post will include work on migration and refugees along with a major focus on racial justice issues.



Richard Reddie is already well known around many networks where he is currently Deputy Head of London Region for Christian Aid. Before his current work he was Senior Coordinator for Community Engagement with the Greater London Authority.

Richard also has broad experience of working with the ecumenical structures having previously directed the Set All Free project marking the slave trade bicentenary and highlighting current modern day slavery.

CTBI General Secretary, Bob Fyffe, commented that "Richard comes to us with great experience and huge networking ability. But it's Richard's passion and energy for justice that shines out of every conversation with him. He will be an enormous boost to the whole movement for justice and inclusion".

Richard will take up his post with CTBI at the beginning of November 2018.

[Information and CTBI news link](#)

CT in Eastleigh mission week

Gary Stupple, chair of Churches Together in Eastleigh says:

'Hope Eastleigh is birthed every year out of the ten days that is known as *Thy Kingdom Come*. The last three years of that have helped us get ready on Pentecost to recruit for a week of mission in July'.



'That week of mission has five streams. It has a stream for the elderly, called Silver stream. There is a stream for young people called the Millennial stream. There is the Turning stream, which is street evangelism. We have then a social action stream where we work with partners who we work with through the year to accelerate their projects, and then a Prayer stream to try and soak everything in prayer'.

[See Danny and the mission activities on video](#)

And finally ...

New name for CCPAS

CCPAS is a Body in Association of CTE and write:



We found that our previous name – Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) - no longer adequately reflected who we are, and the scope and range of services we provide.

As an independent Christian charity offering a complete safeguarding solution we work alongside organisations, faith, community and government groups, making sure that they are equipped and empowered to protect vulnerable people. We provide training, consultancy, disclosures and a 24-hour helpline, as well as leading the way in informing legislation and promoting high standards in safeguarding practice.

We recognised the need for change and to better communicate who we are and why we do what we do. We're motivated and inspired by our biblical mandate to 'speak out on behalf of the voiceless, and for the rights of all who are vulnerable' as described in Proverbs 31:8 from where we get our name.

Link for more information: <https://www.ccpas.co.uk/thirtyoneeight>

70 years of the World Council of Churches



WCC write:

With a particular focus on August 23rd, in 2018 we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the World Council of Churches with the fellowship that is its heart and soul. This is an opportunity to mark the achievements of the past 70 years in working for Christian unity and action, and to look to the challenges ahead as a fellowship of churches responding to God's call for unity, mission, justice and peace.

Link for information and resources: <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/wcc70/>

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