

Reflection of the Month: Ebb and Flow in the same tide

Jim Currin writes:

I have just been aboard a 41' yacht for some study leave to learn about Celtic Christianity. It was a great joy to be with leaders Howard and Andy in the mission project *Navigators of Faith*.



The plan was to be sailing between Grimsby and Greenwich, but the boat *Rival Star* was stuck in Edinburgh with engine problems and we only got as far as Newcastle. It was not going to plan ... which provides me with the topic of this Reflection. Where is God when things go wrong, especially when it is his work?

It is easy to believe God's hand is on things when they are going well. Indeed, this was the case when we had another engine failure when heading back to harbour and it cut out within gliding distance of a waiting pontoon. It was a huge relief to have someone take the ropes and secure the boat in a safe place, as it could have been quite dangerous drifting towards a harbour wall or ships just passed. 'Thank God', we thought, after praying for an hour to be safe ashore.

The experience added to many other amazing things. Caroline, for instance, the other crew member, heard basking seals on the island of Inchcolm. She wrote and sang a song of their sounds which you can hear from the [web text link](#). Also, at North Shields I met Peter who is a relatively new Christian. Joining a local church that wanted to serve the local community but with little money, he helped make a cafe bar with wooden pallets. It was a great 5-day adventure, with inspiring people to meet.

However, many of the events of the mission raised lots of questions too. If it was God, (as well as Andy, the skipper's, skill), that brought us safely to shore, why didn't God sort the engine and keep the mission on track? Was this spiritual warfare? And then, what is success and failure? How does God answer prayer? Are trials necessary in God's mission? It reminded me of a reading in a Celtic Daily Prayer book (1), 'when we are faced with the reality of lives that are complex, messy and full of paradox, in the context of a rapidly changing worlds, quick answers are often at best unhelpful. If we choose a different approach, we find ourselves living the questions'.

Being at sea certainly helps you 'living the questions', but I was also reminded again that biblical truth is often on both sides: not a case of 'either/or', but 'both/and'. Learning about Celtic Christianity it is clear these ancient people saw paradox in the gospel with many of their views on creation, prayer, mission and the church. It made me think again about complex opposites eg Jesus, both God and man; servant and

king; born of a virgin mother (how paradoxical is that?!) and the 'complex in the whole' as expressed in a song called *Trinity* from the website [Songs of Mind and Spirit](#).

The 'complex in the whole' is important to remember. We need a bigger view of the gospel that has both sides of each question. When discussing this a friend said, 'just as the Ebb and Flow belong to the same tide?' Yes! That's it, when things are going well and when they are not. We need the whole picture, always looking to Jesus who, like the Celtic saints, himself sailed the sea to bring good news and not just simple answers.

Andy, tells the story in his [in his blog](#)

Read Caroline's blog: [Pilgrims at Sea](#)

See the approach to the River Tyne a [video clip](#)

(1) Northumbria Community. Book II, p1360. Collins 2015

More information www.navigatorsofffaith.com

PS please keep praying for Howard, Andy, new crew members, mission events and the engine on *Rival Star* as they head back to Bristol.

Jim Currin: Evangelisation, Mission and Media, Churches Together in England.

100 days of prayer for peace, hope, and reconciliation



Jim Currin wrote on 3rd August 2018:

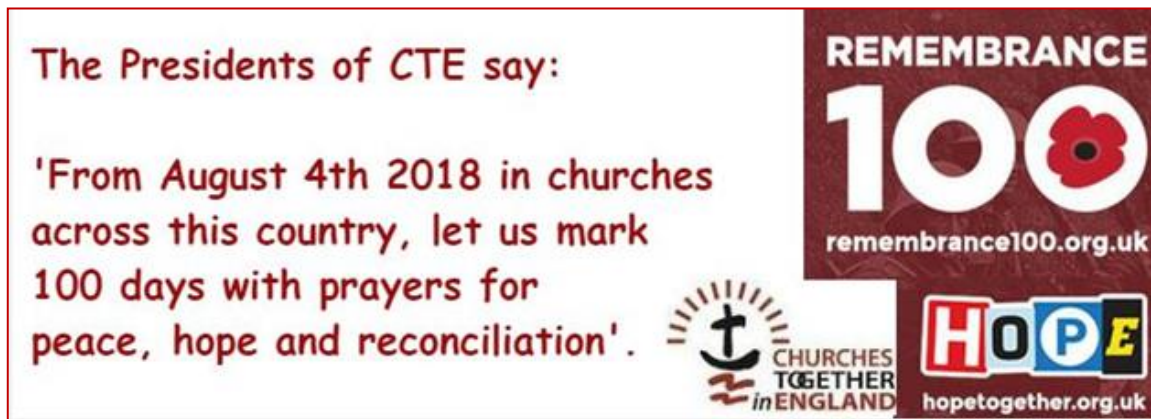
We heard today from Catherine Butcher of Hope, that the following significant statement has been sent to the press re Saturday 4th August.

You will see that we at CTE have been working in partnership with Hope, and you will see a banner on the CTE website of the Presidents core statement (below, and do copy), attached with a graphic from Hope. Please distribute this information and visit www.remembrance100.org.uk for further resources. More information will be on www.cte.org.uk next week and in the August edition of CTe-News.

News release:

The Presidents of Churches Together in England are joining with Buckingham Palace in recognising the significance of a National Day of Prayer one hundred years ago on 4 August 1918. The National Day of Prayer called that day by King George V, brought the nation together in prayer, asking God to bring peace. The King and Queen Mary joined members of the Houses of Parliament for a special service in Westminster. Services were also held in churches throughout the country. One hundred days later, the Great War ended. From 4 August 2018, in churches across this country, let us mark the 100 days to 11 November with prayers for peace, hope and reconciliation as part of Remembrance 100.

Banner for publicity:



For more information contact Catherine Butcher, HOPE's Communications Director, 07850 083414 Cath.Butcher@hopetogether.org.uk

Creation Time resources

1st September - 4th October 2018

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland are among a number of denominations and agencies providing resources in partnership for Creation Time or the Season of Creation 2018. These groups include A Rocha UK; CAFOD; Church of England; Eco Congregation Scotland, together with a number of global ecumenical networks.



CTBI have a 5 week set of resources about Passing our planet on for local churches and Churches Together groups.

[Link to the CTBI resources, more information, and further links.](#)

AIF Jubilee Weekend

October 13th – 14th 2018
The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire

Doral Hayes writes:

Meet other interchurch families as together we worship, share and celebrate 50 years of the Association of Interchurch Families.



During this special Jubilee Weekend we will focus on the biblical theme of jubilee,

combining the ideas of celebration and liberation. As always, worship and fellowship will be central to our time together and, as well as hearing from and speaking with our guests, there will be a special drinks reception and celebratory meal on the Saturday evening. Children are very welcome and will enjoy a separate, but integrated, programme.

During the weekend we will be joined by several guests including:

- Archbishop Bernard Longley
- Bishop Tim Thornton
- Dame Mary Tanner
- Bob Fyffe, General Secretary of CTBI
- Rev. Dr Paul Goodliff, General Secretary of CTE
- Dr Elizabeth Davies, Marriage Care
- Rev. Dr Callan Slipper, National Ecumenical Officer for the Church England
- Professor Thomas Knieps Port le Roi

For more information please email the office at info@interhchurchfamilies.org.uk

[Information about AIF](#)

[Weekend booking form link](#)

Eucharistic Pilgrimage and Congress



John O'Toole writes:

Ecumenical colleagues may be aware of the forthcoming Eucharistic Pilgrimage and Congress which will be taking place in Liverpool from Friday 7 September until Sunday 9 September 2018. The overall theme of the Pilgrimage and Congress is "Jesus Christ – I am the Bread of Life", a theme which unites us with all Christians in celebrating the presence and power of Jesus as he nourishes and feeds our faith with spiritual food and drink.

A number of podcasts are available on the Bishops' Conference website and I recorded a podcast recently with James Abbott (our Digital manager) on the theme of Jesus – I am the Bread of Life. The link to the podcast is:

<https://soundcloud.com/catholicchurch/let-us-adore-him-i-am-the-bread-of-life-ep-6>

In Liverpool Fr Dominic Robinson SJ will be leading a presentation of "The Eucharist as a sign of the Church's unity: One Bread, One Body revisited." I and three of my ecumenical colleagues (from the Church of England, the Methodist Church and the Salvation Army) will be involved in this presentation and in the various other events taking place over the three days of the Pilgrimage and Congress. Fr Dominic wrote an excellent article for last week's Tablet (23 June 2018) with the title 'Sacrament of unity' in which he quotes from paragraph six of One Bread, One Body in which the

bishops of England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland said:

"[We] are gladly and irrevocably committed to growing in unity with our fellow Christians until we reach full communion and can celebrate the Eucharist in one visible Church of Christ."

I look forward to meeting many of you in Liverpool and would ask for your prayers and support so that the joyful celebration of faith in September will bear much eucharistic and ecumenical fruit.

[Eventbrite booking for the ecumenical seminar](#)

[Information about the parallel program including the seminar](#)

[Information about the Eucharistic Pilgrimage and Congress](#)

Society for Ecumenical Studies Conference



Elizabeth Welch writes:

The Society for Ecumenical Studies are hosting a conference called: *Liturgy and Theology Ecumenical Perspectives* in October.

It will take place on Saturday 13th October 2018 at the Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral, London, W1K 5BQ.

The speakers are:

Paul Avis - *What does Liturgy tell us about the Church and its Unity?*

Thomas O'Loughlin - *Intercommunion and intercommunication: conflicting languages in Roman Catholic discourse.*

Carolyn Hammond - *The theology of liturgy*

Cost: £20 (SfES members £15)

[Please download this flyer for more information and timetable.](#)

JPIT Paper re Brexit, farming and fishing communities



From the Joint Public Issues Team blog: 19th July 2018

This paper is an information briefing for churches on how Britain's departure from the European Union might affect farming and fishing communities.

Please continue to pray for all those who work in agriculture and fisheries industry as well as the communities who rely on those industries. If you live in a rural community and have concerns about Brexit, don't hesitate to get in touch with your MP. Tell them what worries you about the future and ask the government to give rural communities enough time to adapt to any changes they choose to make after Brexit.

Read the briefing paper [here](#).



And finally ...

Songs and Prayer for World Council of Churches 70th

A collection of prayer and songs include this one:

"We've come a long way, Lord, a mighty long way...
you took your burdens in the heat of the day;
we know our God's gonna find a way.
We've come a long way, Lord, a mighty long way."

Link to the WCC news [article](#)

Vatican and Canterbury Joint Cricket XI

Having played against each other in previous matches, in July the two cricket teams played together. Quoting from the Church Times: Their opponents were a multifaith team, captained by Lord Patel of Bradford, who chairs Social Work England and is also a director of the England and Wales Cricket Board. A prominent sponsor was Muslim Aid, and Muslims predominated; but the team included Hindus, Jews, a Sikh, and a Buddhist.

Pope Francis had sent a message of support, quoting from his 2013 address to the European Olympic Committee: "Because the language of sports is universal, it extends across borders, language, race, religion, and ideology; it possesses the capacity to unite people together by fostering dialogue and acceptance."

Read the Church Times [article](#)

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