



April 2013

Electronic, ecumenical news from Churches Together in England

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Revd John Bradley is the Field Officer (South) for Churches Together in England

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Jim Currin comments while standing in for John Bradley (on Sabbatical April and May editions)

Capt Jim Currin, CA is a CTE staff member (Evangelisation and New Housing) and CTE web manager

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Reflection

One expression of our diversity is the different ways in which we understand what is happening in Holy Communion. My wife and I once went to a day conference on the theme of The Ecumenical Significance of the Eucharist which was being hosted by the Catholic Church but had been advertised widely. It was only when we broke for discussion that we realised that we were the only non-Catholics there. One nice lady, assuming that we were Catholic, said "of course, they don't believe in the Real Presence". It made me think. We certainly don't believe in the 'real absence', though I did hear of one very evangelical Anglican church which had a banner over the communion table with the text 'He is not here; He is risen!'

So I started thinking how in the Methodist tradition we see the presence of Christ in what we most naturally call the Lord's Supper. I studied the Eucharistic Hymns of Charles Wesley and concluded that for us if Christ is present anywhere more than anywhere else it is in the gathering of His people. Then I thought about the Last Supper. There was Jesus Christ in his human body of flesh and blood, just like yours and mine. Around him are gathered his apostles, soon to be told 'you are the body of Christ'. Then he takes and breaks the bread saying "this is my body". So the body of Christ gives the body of Christ to the body of Christ! Where is the real presence? Everywhere! They say a biblical literalist is somebody who takes every word of the Bible literally except when Jesus said "This is my body"! He didn't say 'this means my body' or 'this will become my body' but 'this IS my body'. In terms of what the disciples thought he meant, I reckon he was saying "this is me... for you!" And when we break bread today it is a thin place where the thousand miles and two thousand years fade away and we are there with him and them in the Upper Room.

John Bradley

Book

Note: the previous General Secretary of Churches Together in England, Rev Bill Snelson, wrote a book about our various understandings of Lord's Supper / Holy Communion / Mass. The book is available £4.95 post free from the CTE website and is called 'Enriching Communion':

http://www.cte.org.uk/Groups/43010/Churches_Together_in/Resources_Shop/Publications/Publications.aspx

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Comment on April / May CTeNews

The material in CTeNews will be shorter than usual in the April and May editions, partly because Jim Currin standing in for the irreplaceable John Bradley, but also because we have a bumper amount of material to cover.

Many of the items will relate to news items on the CTE website, to which links will be given. They have been posted during the month since the last CTeNews – to keep up to date see 'Recent updates' on www.cte.org.uk.

In addition, and to be even more up to date, you can follow CTE on Twitter. Many denominations, Bodies in Association, and other key networks and church leaders share news on Twitter. At CTE, we only pass on relevant and significant items of news, which you can see by following '@churchesengland' on www.twitter.com.

You can also follow various CTE staff member too. All details are at:

http://www.cte.org.uk/Articles/330675/Following_CTE.aspx

Jim Currin

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CTE sent greetings to Pope Francis

Further to the denominational greetings quoted in the last CTeNews, the Enabling Group of CTE had one of its regular meetings just a few days after Pope Francis took office. Greetings were sent from the Enabling Group which you can read:

http://www.cte.org.uk/Articles/348417/Churches_Together_in/News_Events/News/Ecumenical_Greetings_for.aspx

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Millennium Development Goals

In *Inherit the Earth?* Barbara Butler, Executive Secretary of Christians Aware, considers the bold aspirations for the future outlined at the beginning of the 21st century by the United Nations - the vision of a better future for the developing world, formulated as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Undoubtedly the MDGs have helped to lift millions of people out of poverty, save lives and ensure that children attend school. They have reduced maternal deaths, expanded opportunities for women, increased access to clean water and freed many people from deadly and debilitating disease. Much was promised. Many promises made, however, have not been kept. The original goal for the achievement of the MDGs was 2015, yet as that year looms before us, it is increasingly clear that there is still a long way to go. Undaunted and writing from her own Christian perspective, Barbara Butler also uses stories, poems, images and points of reflection from other world faiths to urge us not to become complacent in our efforts to bring the ideals of the MDGs to fruition.

www.ctbi.org.uk

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MDG's: 80 Church leaders sign letter to Financial Times

G8 1000 days to consider MDG's – The Archbishop of Canterbury is among 79 religious leaders calling upon the G8 countries to fulfil their pledges on aid. In a letter published in the Financial Times, they urge the heads of government to follow the UK in fulfilling existing commitments to spend 0.7% of national income on aid. Other signatories include the Reverend Jonathan Edwards, General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Reverend Roberta Rominger, General Secretary of the United Reformed Church, and the Reverend Dr Mark Wakelin, President of the Methodist Conference. The letter reminds political leaders that there are only 1,000 days remaining before the 2015 deadline for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to eradicate extreme global poverty.

<http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5045/archbishop-joins-call-on-g8-to-strike-at-causes-of-poverty>

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WCC statement re North Korea

The general secretary of the WCC has called for an end to the increase of tensions on the Korean peninsula and encourages the parties involved to move immediately to dialogue about peace, reconciliation and reunification. The general secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC), Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, has called for an end to the increase of tensions on the Korean peninsula and encourages the parties involved to move immediately to dialogue about peace, reconciliation and reunification. The situation on the Korean Peninsula is of increasing concern to the WCC not only because of the impact on its member churches in South Korea, but also for the Korean Christian Federation in North Korea with which the WCC has developed long term dialogue and relationships. The WCC is scheduled to celebrate its 10th Assembly in the South Korean city of Busan from 30 October to 8 November this year. The assembly is held once every seven years and brings together Christians from around the world in one of the most diverse gathering of churches. "We have no plans to have our assembly anywhere else but in Busan," Tveit said. "The theme of the assembly is 'God of life, lead us to justice and peace.' It is now that the Korean peninsula needs a message of justice and peace." "The fact that the assembly is being held in Korea is from our perspective an expression of the hope of the worldwide church and churches in Korea for pursuing peace and reconciliation on the there," Tveit said. "Peace on the Korean peninsula is possible without hostilities."

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/wcc-general-secretary-calls-for-end-to-increased-tension-on-korean-peninsula>

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Ecumenical Water Network

The Ecumenical Water Network (EWN) joined hands with faith groups and civil society on World Water Day to stress viable access to clean water and sanitation facilities, still a luxury to millions around the world. World Water Day, initiated by the United Nations in 1993, is celebrated each year on 22 March to promote activities addressing water issues. The EWN of the World Council of Churches (WCC) engaged in the World Water Day celebrations and High Level Forum, organized by the UN and the Netherlands government, from 20 to 22 March in The Hague, Netherlands. Among other stakeholders of the EWN celebrating World Water Day, the Council of Churches in the Netherlands on 22 March affirmed a statement on the "right to water and sanitation" issued by the WCC Central Committee in 2011 and pledged to promote water justice among their congregation members.

<http://www.un.org/en/events/waterday/>

<http://water.oikoumene.org/en/whatwedo/seven-weeks-for-water/2013>

WCC mission and evangelism

'To strengthen Christian mission and witness, it is essential to evolve creative ways of implementing a new statement on mission'. With these reflections the WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) prepared for the upcoming WCC 10th Assembly at a meeting in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 8 to 13 March. The assembly will take place in Busan, Republic of Korea, later this year. The new mission statement, "Together towards life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes," was discussed extensively by the CWME members who gathered in Rarotonga concluding their seven-year terms of service. The statement formulates a renewed understanding and practice of mission and evangelism, drawing insights from Protestant, Evangelical, Orthodox and Roman Catholic mission theology. In the meeting, CWME members developed study and policy guidelines, as well as training modules on the statement. They agreed on the importance of making the statement relevant for the congregations globally.

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/cwme-invokes-new-understanding-of-mission-and-evangelism>

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EU report Religion or Belief in the workplace

Following various rulings from the Court of Human Rights, and from the Equality and Human Rights Commission, comes a document containing their considered guidelines following various cases brought to the European Court of Human Rights. The document considers three key aspects in the work place and provides examples of good practice - including wearing a cross or a nurse praying for a patient, for example. The document is relevant for people of all faiths and none and is being quoted in UK newspapers, so here made available for reference.

http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/RoB/religion_or_belief_in_the_workplace_a_guide_for_employers.pdf#.UWHvqrfrPDA.twitter

Archbishop signs Ecumenical Covenant

In a new development, the new Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, agreed to sign the covenant to work with the other Presidents of Churches Together in England during his own enthronement in Canterbury Cathedral on 21st March 2013. Several photographs of the event are now posted on the photo sharing site 'Flickr'. A link to the photographs and a BBC report interviewing church and faith leaders at the service, are on the CTE website. The page also has links to the presidents and information about the Ecumenical Covenant.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit attended the enthronement of Archbishop Justin Welby in England, expressing "heart-felt congratulations" and "profound prayers for his new ministry". "We admire Archbishop Welby's commitment to lead the worldwide Anglican Communion. Our hope is that the Anglican tradition and communion of churches will continue to make significant contributions to the ecumenical movement, as they always have," said Tveit. "On behalf of the WCC member churches, we look forward to working with Archbishop Welby to build upon our mutual relations, as well as strengthening our efforts for peace, justice, reconciliation and inter-religious dialogue," he added.

http://www.cte.org.uk/Articles/352099/Churches_Together_in/News_Events/News/Photos_of_Archbishop.aspx

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IF Campaign update

100 UK charities are in partnership for the IF campaign which has four aims to communicate about world poverty and how to eradicate it with the strapline 'enough food IF'. They have a new video focussed on the forthcoming G8 gathering with children acting adult parts to raise the question about what we are planning for now re the future. Supported by celebrities and denominations alike, the video can be shown in a variety of contexts. One World Week 2013 will have 'More than enough?' as its theme for 2013.

<http://enoughfoodif.org/>

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Hope resource book

HOPE – the Heartbeat of Mission is HOPE's best-ever collection of tried-and-tested mission ideas. Denominations, dioceses and groups of churches working together have ordered thousands of copies to make sure that every church leader in their network is inspired and equipped to do more together in mission in words and action in 2014. Before it was printed the Methodist churches had ordered 2,500 copies to give to leaders; they upped their order to 3,500 copies when they saw the book. The Revd Ian Bunce, Faith and Society mission networker of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and a member of the HOPE leadership team, said, 'It's a significant resource bringing together hundreds of missional ideas in an accessible way. I think its life will be beyond that of HOPE, as churches use it for ideas.' The book includes 150 different tried-and-tested mission ideas; 18 community projects backed with funding of up to £2,000 to start each new church-led initiative; words and action linked to an annual rhythm of mission running through the church calendar. Bulk copies are £3 each for 20.

<http://www.hopetogether.org.uk/Groups/32586/HOPE.aspx>

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Glasgow Ecumenical officer

Glasgow's umbrella body for churches is looking for an ecumenical officer to promote their work in the city. Methodist minister Rev Alan Anderson, chair of Glasgow Churches Together, said: "Our seven member denominations have a great deal in common, and there is lots of co-operation and fellowship among local churches. "With great pressures on society and the Commonwealth Games taking place next year, this is both a challenging and exciting time with plenty of opportunities for the churches to put their beliefs into action."

www.glasgowchurches.org.uk/eo

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Church guide to welfare reforms

Following the 'Lies about Poverty' report from Methodist, URC, Church of Scotland and Baptist churches - reported in the last edition of CTeNews - the Church Urban Fund and Church of England have produced an extensive guide for churches about the reforms in the welfare system. This paper is the first of three to be published by Church Urban Fund and the Church of England on welfare reform. The second paper will examine the combined impact of recent reforms on household budgets. The third paper will then look at the broader impact of welfare reform, exploring how policy changes are affecting people's everyday lives and decisions.

<http://www.cuf.org.uk/guide-welfare-reforms-2010-%E2%80%93-2017>

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CEA 25 years / posters

The Christian Enquiry Agency works on behalf of the churches in England to provide anyone with an opportunity to find out about the Christian Faith. CEA has had a very close relationship with CTE throughout its 25 year history, chiefly through the Churches Group for Evangelisation, to which it reports. Staff member, Jim Currin as Secretary for Evangelisation is a CEA trustee for CTE. A major campaign has been launched to advertise the website www.christianity.org.uk and Jim asks all churches to consider putting the web link on websites, email signatures, magazines, brochure, weekly notices etc. A poster is available for churches to advertise the website. Postcards and business cards can be supplied in bulk orders to be left in public places so enquirers can be in touch by web / post.

http://www.cte.org.uk/Articles/350305/Churches_Together_in/News_Events/News/CEA_25_www.aspx

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'Unbelievable?'

This is a conference on the theme, 'Jesus: liar, lunatic, legend... or Lord?' which is to be held on Sat 25 May, 9.30am - 5.30pm, The Brewery, Chiswell Street, London, EC1Y 4SD. Now in its third year, *Unbelievable? The Conference*, is the leading UK event for apologetics and evangelism. Ordinary Christians (yes you!) will learn how to share their faith effectively. We'll also be marking 50 years of CS Lewis' remarkable legacy as well as how to engage with today's ethical and scientific issues in a variety of seminars featuring expert speakers: Alister McGrath, Amy Orr Ewing, Peter S Williams, Fuz Rana, Dr Trevor Stammers, Kurt Jaros. Every booking of 2 or more tickets will receive a free copy of *Unbelievable? The Conference 2012* triple DVD worth £20.

<http://www.premier.org.uk/unbelievable2013>

Pray for the Media

Andrew Graystone from the Church and Media Network invites all churches to pray for the media: 'We're encouraging all churches and Christians to mark Sunday 12th May 2013 as a special day of prayer for the media, and to use the prayers on this website in their church and individual intercessions on that day. The British media is under scrutiny as never before. Illegal and unethical practices by some journalists have combined with tough economic times and pressures from new technology to make these challenging times for everyone working in the media.

http://www.churchandmedia.net/Groups/187802/Church_and_Media/For_the_church/Day_of_Prayer/Day_of_Prayer.aspx

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St Philip's Centre Leicester - Christian Muslim Dialogue Group

Our Christian Muslim Dialogue Group meets once a month covering various discussion topics and themes. During our meetings we look at theological and cultural topics such as: Scripture, The Arab Spring, Religion and Science and most recently Religious Pluralism from a Muslim perspective. Meeting together with local people in dialogue from the Christian and Muslim faiths (as well as people from other faiths and none) is a wonderful opportunity for discovery and learning about one's own faith perspective and also that of our neighbours. The center also runs courses and helps individuals with study, sabbaticals, conferences etc.

<http://www.stphilipscentre.co.uk/community/dialogue/>

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Street Pastors 10 years

Ascension Trust exists to equip the Church to serve. At Ascension Trust, we look to do this through a number of God-led initiatives and we're also part of Serve, as we seek to enable churches to do great things. This year, Ascension Trust will celebrate two important dates - our 20th year as a charity and the 10th anniversary of one of our initiatives, Street Pastors.

No-one could have imagined the impact that a simple vision of wanting to be where the people were to "care, listen and help" would have caught the imagination of not only the Church, but society as a whole.

I was one of the original 18 that first went out on the streets of Brixton in 2003. I recall it as if it were yesterday. Eighteen of us meet at a small office in Brixton - 15 women and three men heading out on the streets unaware of the reception that awaited us. Whenever I tell this story, I am sure to mention that I was a little apprehensive that night - come on, wouldn't you have been? Twenty years down the road, we are humbled by what God continues to do in the lives of those who come into contact with Ascension Trust, via Street Pastors, School Pastors, Word4Weapons, Urban Mission, Overseas Mission, and Gift my Time. So forgive us (or join us) if this year we make a bit of a noise as we give God all the glory.

Eustace Constance is Operations Director at Ascension Trust and a member of Serve.

http://www.serveuk.org/Groups/213319/Serve/Stories/Street_pastors/Celebrating_Street_Pastors/Celebrating_Street_Pastors.aspx

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Flesh and Blood

An ecumenical network including The Salvation Army, United Reformed Church, Church of England, Baptist Union of Great Britain, and Methodist Church, together with the Evangelical Alliance and Hope, and in partnership with the NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) have launched the 'Flesh and Blood' campaign.

A survey conducted by Christian Research shows that 10% of Christians have given blood in the past year compared to 4% of the general population in the last 2 years, and almost half of all Christians are registered on the NHS Organ Donor Register, compared with 32% of the general population.

Despite this significant Christian support, 'Flesh and Blood' has been set up, backed by the NHS, as a brand new initiative in 2013 to encourage more Christians to see blood and organ donation as part of their giving. An ecumenical network, backed by the NHS, has produced a web resource.

http://www.cte.org.uk/Articles/352125/Churches_Together_in/News_Events/News/Blood_and_organ.aspx

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CofE launch 'Men and Women in Marriage'

The Church of England's view of the long-established meaning of marriage has been outlined in a new report - "Men and Women in Marriage" - published this week by the Church's Faith and Order Commission. The publication includes a foreword from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York which commends the document for study. The report sets out the continued importance and rationale for the Church's understanding of marriage as reflected in the 1,000 marriage services conducted by the Church of England every week. The document also seeks to provide "a more positive background on how Christians have understood and valued marriage" arguing that marriage "continues to provide the best context for the raising of children".

<http://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2013/04/men-and-women-in-marriage---new-document-from-faith-and-order-commission.aspx>

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Fostering and adoption resource launched 'Home for Good'

Every day more than 50 children are taken into care in the UK. They are removed from chaotic, traumatic, abusive, neglectful or desperate situations. Some of them need a home in an emergency. Some of them need a temporary home until they can return to their families. Some of them need an occasional home to give their families a break. Some of them need a permanent home with a new forever family. The Church is uniquely placed to offer its help to meet this need. As a large social network with involvement of large numbers of families, the Church is fertile soil for recruitment. Once carers have been through the full process of assessment, the Church could also provide an excellent community of support to wrap around families who are adopting or fostering children. After a year of extensive consultation, with foster carers, adoptive parents, church leaders, social work professionals and fostering and adoption agencies, Care for the Family, CCPAS (The Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service) and the Evangelical Alliance have launched the Home for Good initiative. Home for Good aims to change the culture in local churches throughout the UK, to make adopting and fostering a significant part of their life and ministry. It is a fantastic opportunity for the Church to be good news in society, change our communities and transform the lives of some of the most vulnerable children in the UK.

<http://www.homeforgood.org.uk/>

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Together for the Common Good

'Together for the Common Good' is exploring how faith communities can work better together for social justice. A year-long Together for the Common Good inquiry will draw on the Anglican, Catholic and Free Church traditions of social justice to highlight effective strategies for collaboration. The inquiry will consist of a research process, a conference and a book. It will take inspiration from current examples of joint working and the legacy of Bishop David Sheppard and Archbishop Derek Worlock who, with Free Church leaders, were advocates for communities and acted as 'honest brokers' with government during the 1980s. Outcomes are better when we work together, standing side by side with our communities. We aim to identify how people from different faith groups can further their collaboration in addressing social issues. Starting from what we know best - the Christian traditions of social justice, and our collective experience - we hope also to learn from examples of interfaith community initiatives. Where people are working together for social justice, we want to look at the factors that make this work.

<http://www.togetherforthecommongood.co.uk/>

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Church and New Housing Areas

New reports and resources have been added to the CTE web are 'Church and New Housing Areas' including comment from the Minister for Housing about the Budget, the National Planning Policy Framework, Faith in new Developments from the East of England Faith's Council, Church Commissioners, etc. A network day for pioneer ministers and network resource officers is planned at CTE on 19th June.

www.cte.org.uk/newhousing

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Twitter updates for more ecumenical news - remember daily updates of nationally relevant ecumenical news are posted @churchesengland so you can follow the news as it happens.