

Reflection of the Month:

Salt and Light in the EU Referendum



The Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew quotes the words of Jesus to his followers, 'You are the salt of the earth' and a little later: 'You are the light of the world'. How might these apply in relation to the forthcoming EU Referendum? Here are a few personal reflections based on the [Think, Pray, Vote resource](#) of the ecumenical Joint Public Issues Team.

The resource from Baptists Together, the Methodist Church, The Church of Scotland, the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office, and the United Reformed Church begins with a reminder of the greatest commandment. 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind', and the second, 'love your neighbour as yourself'. Matthew 22: 36-40. We are salt and light when we fulfil these commands.

Being salt speaks of performing a function, making a difference and bringing out the best. Being light is about illumination and bringing things in to the open. In relation to the current EU debate, I think that means thinking about the issues, praying for the outcome and voting on June 23rd.

Think about the issues. When Jesus used metaphors like salt and light he was making his audience think. When he told parables or posed questions he engaged peoples' brains. Today, voters are being asked a question, 'Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union? In the current climate of public debate and daily news reports, it would be easy to 'leave it to the politicians' or 'those who know what they are taking about'. We are easily confused by multiple messages and conflicting interests. Some say, 'I just want the facts' as if to be told what to do, while others give up on deciding altogether.

Being a follower of Jesus is about 'active engagement' not 'blind faith', and each of us need to take responsibility for the common good by first thinking about the issues. Being 'salt and light' suggests more than putting 'X' on a piece of paper - the decision cannot be left to the last minute in the voting booth when you have the pencil in your hand and a choice between two boxes. Yes, we can 'pray in all circumstances' but a big decision requires proper consideration. As a number of national, regional and local groups of churches are informing the debate, we at CTE have collated resources from a variety of churches and agencies to provide more facts [here](#). Do look through, read, and pass on the link to others.

Pray for the outcome. The recent initiative of the Archbishop of Canterbury discussed on YouTube with the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster ([link here](#)) is a reminder of the importance to pray the prayer of Jesus *Thy Kingdom Come*. It is a prayer which unites all Christians as we pray *Our Father* and leads us to see the common good. By asking for forgiveness and praying for daily bread we offer ourselves to be the agents of the kingdom. Salt and light are change-agents and the change we want to see is God's will and kingdom come. As I write these words I now realise that I have not been praying intentionally for the referendum. Have you? Let's pray.

Vote on June 23rd. All votes are important and each vote counts. There has been debate and books written about whether or not the 1876 American Presidential candidate Rutherford B Hayes won by one vote, but even that is a reminder of the important fact that every vote matters to the outcome. In our own day we are used to election reports of a close-call, recount, hung-parliament and coalition government. Every vote really does count. Christians, like other citizens, have a privilege to vote on June 23rd. I believe we have a responsibility to exercise the right.

Finally, being salt and light says something about being noticed. Verse 14 of Matthew 5 says, 'A city on a hill cannot be hidden'. This suggests to me that, as in our Christian faith, what we believe may be personal, but it is not private. Now I am not suggesting a megaphone and placard approach, but I am thinking we enter more in to the public debate. I was surprised when a neighbour asked my wife and I 'which way are you going to vote?' She said the answers helped her make a decision. Even if she changes her mind at least it was bringing this important debate more in to the open.

Matthew 5:16 provides a summary: 'Let your light shine ... that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven'.

[Think. Pray. Vote. Resource of the Joint Public Issues Team](#)
[Collated list of resources from Churches and Agencies](#)



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

Education Sunday: Sept 11th

Education Sunday 2016: All are welcome!

Education Sunday has moved to the beginning of the academic year and will be celebrated on the second Sunday in September. This year that date is 11 September.

A range of resources, from a liturgy of affirmation and commissioning, to ideas for all-age worship and sermon/homily notes will be available here very soon.

To mark the move, Education Sunday will have a fresh new look and plenty of new ideas.

We hope you will join us in celebrating the calling of all those who serve in education.

Unprecedented meeting of Orthodox and Pentecostal Church Leaders



As part of a Churches Together in England (CTE) initiative, The Coptic Orthodox Church Centre in the United Kingdom hosted an unprecedented meeting of Orthodox and Pentecostal Church leaders. The fraternal meeting, which aimed to build relationships, as well as discuss the issues of the persecuted Church and mission, was facilitated by His Grace Bishop Angaelos, General Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the United Kingdom, Bishop Dr Eric Brown, Pentecostal President of CTE, and Bishop in the New Testament Church of God, and The Very Revd Archpriest Maxim Nikolsky of the Russian Orthodox Church.

In his welcome, Bishop Angaelos, stated the importance of the common witness of the Christian family regardless of differences of expression and denomination, saying:

"There is such value in collaboration, and this historic meeting is the first of its kind in England, the United Kingdom, and possibly worldwide. While we all come from our particular backgrounds and theological understanding, today is a day to build bridges and to strengthen them."

Going on to comment on the persecuted Church, he said:

"In seeing the persecution of our brothers and sisters around the world, and in speaking about mission, we must recognise that this is a time, more than ever, for us to stand together. We must continue to be advocates for all who are persecuted regardless of their faith or ethnicity. As countless thousands continue to be persecuted for their Faith, we must speak out when there is injustice, following the example of Christ, the Chief Advocate, Who came to indiscriminately provide hope and salvation for all humanity."

During the morning session Bishop Eric Brown said:

"Today is a historic day, it is the coming together of the Pentecostals and Orthodox in this country, and essentially we are seeking ways in which we can jointly lift up the name of Jesus and to make Him known in a more powerful way in this nation. Hopefully we can get some consensus as to how we might address the issue of persecuted Christians worldwide."

Bishop Dr Joe Aldred who works primarily with Pentecostal Churches in CTE, and who was the instigator of this meeting, said:

"Today marks a momentous and significant meeting point and a beginning I hope of a lasting fellowship and friendship between leaders. I hope that we can develop a better understanding of what Christians around the world are experiencing, and continue to dialogue and take action where possible together. The other strand of this meeting is mission, and how that mission of Christ in England is better done together than apart."

Father Maxim Nikolsky said: *"It is important to meet people who certainly share much in common; to meet, to understand some of their way of thinking, and to see what it is that is common to us."*

When asked about the persecuted Church, he continued: *"That is a very important topic especially in the modern day, and we need to see if there is anything that can be done on a personal level, and as a community. We read and deliberate on the subject, but we must look at what we can really do to help our fellow Christians, and all who are persecuted for their faith."*

As part of the closing session a discussion was held on ways to collaboratively tackle national and international issues of concern, including religious freedom in England, and the Middle East. It was agreed to establish a working group to develop partnership in fellowship and actions, and a provisional time was set for the next meeting of the group.

[View this press release online](#)

For more information please contact:

[Angela Mikhail, Communications and Media Officer](#) - Coptic Orthodox Church UK or [Bishop Dr Joe Aldred](#) - Churches Together in England

Church Leaders' Facebook Chat

Archbishop Justin Welby and Cardinal Vincent Nichols met in front of a video camera on Friday 27th May for a conversation, taking live questions from viewers in a Facebook chat.



Within 2 weeks the conversation has been viewed a 251,000 times at:
<https://www.facebook.com/archbishopofcanterbury/videos/1017368498317296/>

Church unity was one of the key topics considered. One questioner asked, 'How can we work together as members of the Body of Christ, putting aside differences, to be a credible witness, to an increasingly secular society?'

Cardinal Vincent said, ' We don't need heavy, over-stressed Christian witness, we want

something that first of all says, life is a gift of God and its great, and just that if you want to enjoy life to the full, even in the most difficult of circumstances, here's the way to go.'

Archbishop Welby added that another way was for churches to come together to celebrate what God has given, and in the celebration, to invite friends along to see what that's about.

Another questioner asked, 'What are your thoughts about the charismatic renewal that the Holy Spirit seems to be bringing to the church?' Archbishop Welby said it has been one of the greatest blessing in his own spiritual life and said, 'one of the things I've learnt more over the years, is the charismatic renewal is at its most authentic when you see the spirit of God draw people in love for one another, and healing divisions among Christians.' Cardinal Nichols added that from a Catholic perspective, it would be more seen as an organic part of the life of the church.



Both leaders were speaking about the Pentecost prayer initiative of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York called 'Thy Kingdom Come' for evangelism in the nation. This had become an ecumenical initiative in just a few months as several denominations encouraged their members to take part. In several cities there were 'Beacon Events' were held. In Coventry 1000 gathered after a week of Pilgrimage and Prayer led by 4 bishops and a Gospel event for young adults in the city centre on the Friday night.

At this time the Archbishop of York completed 6 months pilgrimage of 2000 miles meeting and praying with 20,000 people from all church traditions and none.

Pictures:

Cardinal Nichols and Archbishop Welby from the Facebook page. Coventry Cathedral Service 'Thy Kingdom Come'.

Links:

<http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5674/archbishops-call-for-great-wave-of-prayer-for-evangelism-during-pentecost>

<http://thykingdom.co.uk/>

'Called to be One' conference

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland are to host a conference exploring current understandings of 'visible unity'.



A page on the CTBI website reads:

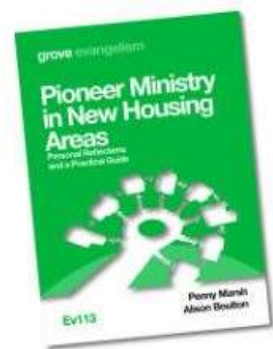
We will be hearing from those involved in local contexts, new developments in inter-Christian co-operation, as well as recent ecumenical agreements. We will be guided in our conversations by those who will explore more deeply the theological and sociological issues.

It takes place on 22-23 November 2016 in Edinburgh. Full board bookings before 24th June 2016 receive a 20% early bird discount.

[More information, flyer, programme and booking details](#)

Pioneer Ministry in New Housing Areas

Pioneer Ministry in New Housing Areas is a Grove booklet in the Evangelism series. Written by two Baptist ministers from their experience, it is applicable for Christians from all traditions. It has been written in close association with the Churches Group for New Housing Areas of Churches Together in England.



Penny Marsh is now Mission Enabler for Kent Thameside, South Eastern Baptist Association, and Alison Boulton is Regional Minister, South of England Baptist Association and West of England Baptist Association Pioneer Mission Enabler. The subtitle of the booklet is 'Personal Reflections and a Practical Guide' - which is just what it is, both for pioneer ministers in their own ministry and for regional ministers in their work of setting up appointments.

The book begins with an overview of the new housing agenda and quotes research in to the value of having a pioneer minister when trying to create community. The underlying mission principles are listed, including an incarnational approach, being a 'blessing to the community' and being open to not having an agenda. Practical steps for establishing such a ministry are included next for those ministers and priests already in post wondering how to plan for a new pioneer ministry when a development is built.

Practical Steps for Pioneer Ministers is a section drawing on the personal experience of Penny in Royal Docks, London, and Ali in Swindon, as well as a number of other pioneer ministers they are in contact with and their own research undertaken. This includes a list of Do's and Don'ts as well as further issues to consider.

Revd Simon Taylor, the Moderator of the Churches Group for New Housing Areas, commends the book saying: *'The CTE Group for New Housing Areas warmly welcomes the publication of Pioneer Ministry in New Housing Areas and is pleased to encourage those working with new communities to make extensive use of it. Penny March and Ali Boulton write out of their creative experience and their passion for effective and strategic mission. The book gives much practical advice on setting up a pioneer ministry in the context of a new housing area and many ideas for appropriate mission, making it an invaluable tool for those wondering how to do church in a newly*



built community'.

Revd Chris Ruddle is County Ecumenical officer for Kent and says: *'For those considering church planting in new housing areas this booklet is a must! It brings together helpful insights for both pioneer ministers and those with strategic oversight. I've bought ten copies for my area. I don't know how we managed without the insights of this marvellous, practical guide to planting missional communities into brand new areas'.*

Fr James Cassidy is a Parish Priest in Milton Keynes and Ecumenical Officer for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Northampton and says, *'New housing areas come in all sorts of sizes, from small developments to complete towns. Regardless of size the location is in at least one Catholic parish. The priest, and the local community have to cope. The booklet, 'Pioneer Ministry in New Housing Areas' from Grove booklets presents a good starting point for reflection. It is written by two Baptist ministers who have worked in such areas. Grove booklets are not a natural resource for Catholics: they come from an evangelical Church of England group. This should not put people off, the booklet has a solid theological base, but it will challenge Catholics as to their understanding of community and mission in this particular situation. The book does not directly address the question of collaboration between the Churches - it presumes it. This begs several questions for Catholics: how should we co-operate? what should we do together? what about the Mass? All must be answered, but the answers should flow from the situation, not be imposed from outside. The key is to be involved with any new development from as early as possible. It is relationships which will make things happen, being with people, sharing their story, not imposing our own'.*



Jim Currin, CTE staff member and secretary to the Churches Group for New Housing Areas says, *'This book is perfect for both regional minister and pioneer minister alike - bringing together a host of resources, advice and ideas to engage with the challenge of starting a fresh ministry in a new housing area. I'd recommend it to everyone interested in the important topic'.*



The book is available from www.grovebooks.co.uk in print and PDF versions.

The direct link is: <https://grovebooks.co.uk/products/ev-113-pioneer-ministry-in-new-housing-areas-personal-reflections-and-a-practical-guide>

Note: there is an invitation to meet the Authors over lunch on Monday June 13th in Euston:

http://www.cte.org.uk/Groups/276370/Home/Resources/New_Housing_Areas/Pioneer_Ministry_in/Meet_the_Authors/Meet_the_Authors.aspx

Minister of The Cotteridge Church, Birmingham

(Anglican, Methodist & United Reformed)

This is a new full-time post to lead an ecumenical church at a significant point in its history and development.

We are looking for an urban visionary from any of the three denominations who will:

- Lead and support initiatives in all-age mission
- Strengthen links between all our different communities
- Participate enthusiastically in the ecumenical lay leadership of the church
- Encourage us in our spiritual growth journey



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

The **Methodist Church**



[The full church profile is available here](#)

Closing date for applications: midnight on 30th June 2016

Interviews will be held on: 19th July 2016

[Email for any further details](#)

There is a genuine occupational requirement for this post to be held by a Christian



The
United
Reformed
Church

Rural Mission Sunday

Supported by the Churches Rural Group:



<http://arthurrankcentre.org.uk/about-arc/support-arc/item/9407-rural-mission-sunday>

Local Church Working Right? A Personal Paper



David Muskett sabbatical study report 'abstract':

This report was prepared at the end of a Sabbatical in February, March and April of 2016. During that time I visited a number of places around the country which Ecumenical Officers had recommended as being examples of good practice in ecumenical working without being a Local Ecumenical Partnership. The purpose of this report is not to describe or identify the places and projects observed or heard about but to identify the main ingredients in the successful ecumenical working.

Three elements are explored:

1. Relationships between ministers of congregations in a locality;
2. Relationships between members of the congregations and
3. The engagement of the congregations in "mission" – both outward looking projects and worship activities that bring them together.

The places visited and the kinds of projects congregations are engaged in are listed in appendices and there is a final section as a personal reflection on ministry in 'mission shaped unity'.

David Muskett

Link to the report:

http://www.cte.org.uk/Groups/276942/Home/Resources/Local_Ecumenism/Resources_for_local/Local_Church_Working/Local_Church_Working.aspx

Biography

David is an Anglican Priest serving as a Methodist Minister in the East Solent and Downs Circuit, based in Haslemere, Surrey. Ordained in Anglican ministry in 1990 David was received into Connexion in 2013. This background as well as a keen interest in and involvement with ecumenical working since university and curacy days made this a natural subject for a sabbatical study. David has served Anglican parishes in Bedfordshire and Surrey and his present post provides opportunities for ministry in Hampshire and Sussex as well. David is also a Tutor and member of the Executive of the College of Preachers.

Note

This paper is not an agreed document of Churches Together in England and the views and conclusions are those of the author who has provided permission for it to be posted for further discussion and study.

Inter Faith Week 2016 - New Toolkit launched

[National Inter Faith Week](#) takes place this year from 13-20 November. Its aims are to:



- Strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels
- Increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- Increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs

An Inter Faith Week Toolkit has just been launched. This short guide is packed with suggestions for marking the Week and examples and illustrations drawn from the many successful activities held for the Week to date. It also includes practical guidance and links to further information.

Inter Faith Week is a week about respect, understanding, relationship building and genuine discussion about issues - about 'living well together'. It is a tremendous opportunity to reach out, learn, make new connections and develop friendships and working partnerships which help make for greater neighbourliness and more cohesive communities. It is also a great platform for all who want to increase religious literacy and understanding of diversity.

The Week is a programme of the Inter Faith Network for the UK whose Trustees hope that you will join the many faith, belief and inter faith bodies, community and voluntary organisations, businesses, local authorities, emergency services, SACREs, schools, colleges, universities, chaplaincies, sports organisations and others who will be taking part this year.

In a special message for Inter Faith Week 2016, Baroness Williams of Trafford, Minister with responsibility for integration and faith at the Department for Communities and Local Government, says:

"Inter Faith Week is an excellent opportunity for people to come together and celebrate the rich diversity of our communities. Whatever you plan to do, from holding a discussion event to opening up places of worship or volunteering together, I hope that you will help make it a truly memorable occasion. This year, the start of the Week coincides with Remembrance Sunday, so it's a further opportunity to remember the soldiers and civilians of different faiths and beliefs who fought for the freedoms we enjoy today."

Notes:

The Inter Faith Week [Toolkit and flyer can be downloaded](#) or hard copies are also available on [request from the office of the Inter Faith Network](#)

Inter Faith Week was established in England and Wales in 2009, and in Northern Ireland in 2010. Scottish Inter Faith Week has taken place with great success since

2004 and is led by [Interfaith Scotland](#). The dates of the Week are the same.

For further information about Inter Faith Week [email: Ashley Beck](#) or telephone 020 7730 0410

Sunday 27 November will be [Mitzvah Day](#) - a Jewish-led day of social action involving people of all faiths and none working together in their local communities. Many events are being jointly held to mark both Inter Faith Week and Mitzvah Day and these will form a part of Inter Faith Week.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK was founded in 1987. Its vision is of "a society where there is understanding of the diversity and richness of the faith communities in the UK and the contribution that they make; and where we live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good." It is a linking and umbrella organisation with member organisations including national faith community representative bodies; national, regional and local inter faith organisations; and educational and academic bodies with a focus on in inter faith or multi-faith issues. Its Co-Chairs are the Rt Revd Richard Atkinson OBE and Vivian Wineman.

The work of IFN is supported by faith communities, trusts, other donors and the Department for Communities and Local Government.

Expanding Sports Chaplaincy - after 25 years



David Chawner reports and [speaks on video](#):

In September 2016 Sports Chaplaincy UK celebrates 25 years of providing chaplains for sports clubs across the UK.

With over 350 chaplains in professional, semi-professional and amateur sport sharing the love and compassion of Christ with players, staff and supporters, there is much to thank God for.

But the work of recruiting, training, placing and supporting chaplains still has some way to go. The vision is to see fully equipped chaplaincy in every sports club in the country and specifically over the next 3-5 years some 1,000 chaplains in UK sports clubs.

On the video David Chawner, Chair of Sports Chaplaincy UK, gives tells more about ways to be involved. Then take a look at the website www.sportschaplaincy.org.uk to see how you and your church may be able to support or be directly part of in this expanding ministry directly into the world of sport.

[Link to the webpage and video](#)

[Link to David Chawner video and web links: Mission in and through Sport](#)

And Finally ...

Becket's Bones

A variety of articles in recent weeks have described the South East tour of a relic bone of Thomas Becket including this text which appeared in the Telegraph:

Relics which escaped Reformation and became a symbol of resistance to Communism return to site of murder after 800 years in gesture of unity between Anglicans and Catholics

Read the article: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/12113298/Bones-of-Thomas-Becket-to-return-to-Canterbury-via-Hungary.html>

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This mailing is from Churches Together in England and is sent once a month

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