



May 2012

Electronic, ecumenical news from Churches Together in England
Click headings for more...

First a Reflection...

Give the tools to help people out of poverty

Alex Chapman, 22, organises Christian Aid Week for his church.

Now here's the news from around the world...

Global Christian Forum confirms future vision

at meeting in Rome

New life of gospel can touch everybody

says Dr Tveit in India

Human Enhancement: promises and realities

Outcome of consultation in Brussels, 25-27 April

Joint Methodist-Catholic statement on Eucharist and ecology

from US Catholic Bishops Conference and United Methodist Church

World Week for Peace in Palestine

Israel

28 May - 3 June

And here's the news from around the land...

New start for the English Anglican - Roman Catholic Committee

Evangelization, ecumenical progress and spiritual ecumenism

Easter Message Passed on to Commuters

by Stockport Church

Responsible Capitalism?

June 9th in Swindon

Government commits to introducing minimum unit price for alcohol

welcomed by Churches and charities

Free school meals campaign

backed by faith groups and church leaders

Day of Prayer for Police

Ascension Day, May 17

All Party Parliamentary Group on RE

will focus on safeguarding the provision of Religious Education

Chrim: CHRistians In Secular Ministry: Ministry outside the Walls

13-15 July, Birmingham

Praise bus - a resource for the torch relay

- starting at Land's End

Paralympic Games and 'inclusive' message

challenges the Churches

Massive give-out of new book on parenting

from Plough Publishing

Exciting Events at St Ethelburga's

Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, 78 Bishopsgate, London EC2N 4AG

New Neighbours, New Opportunities

ICCJ, July 1-4, Manchester

Golden Rule resource

This link shows a postcard and text resource prepared for Christian volunteers in the context of the 2012 Games. It highlights the Golden Rule shared by all religions in the context of Christian witness.

There are a good number of the postcards at the CTE office, so if they can be useful to you or your colleagues, don't hesitate to order them.

[Back to top](#)

For the current list of forthcoming events on the website, click [here](#).

To add your e-mail address to the list for an alert when CTE-news appears, click [here](#).

For your address to be removed from the alert list, click [here](#).

For news of the Churches Co-ordinating Group for Evangelisation of CTE, click [here](#).

Give the tools to help people out of poverty

There's a new look about this year's Christian Aid Week, but the message is the same. For the first time in its 55 year history the money raised during Christian Aid week will be matched pound for pound by The Department for International Development, up to a maximum of £5 million. I didn't know about the matched funding when I volunteered to take on the Christian Aid Week organisation for my church, but it's particularly satisfying now to know that the £200 we've already raised from the Church cake sale will become £400, and the same doubling will apply to the money from the Beetle Drive, the Zumba-thon, the envelopes and the street collection.

Supporting the work that Christian Aid does in developing nations, building towards a fairer and more sustainable future, is, for me, one way of responding to the Christian challenge to "love my neighbour". And this year's stories of change in Sierra Leone – one of the hungriest countries in the world - remind me that just because someone is a long way away from my comfortable home in Milton Keynes doesn't make them any less my neighbour. This sense of solidarity with my world-wide neighbours is strengthened all the more by Christian Aid's increased use of technology, whether on Facebook, twitter or text messaging.

The prayers we all texted in on Sunday are now viewable on the Christian Aid Week website, and if you need a reminder of why we are doing this you need look no further than the graphic on their website (<http://www.caweek.org/pray>; I recommend pressing the button to switch it to full screen). Whether it's Christian Aid's partners in Africa, strangers putting money in the box I hold out in the shopping centre or fellow members of the congregation in my church: Christian Aid Week reminds me that they are all my neighbours. [Back to top](#)

Global Christian Forum confirms future vision

High on the agenda at the recent committee meeting of the Global Christian Forum (GCF) Committee, held in Rome late January, were consultations with Vatican officials about the ongoing relationship with the Catholic Church, and consideration of future initiatives for the GCF as outlined by the second global gathering of the GCF in Indonesia last year. The Vatican discussions through the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity proved great stimulus with an assurance that there was a strong, common commitment to continue to journey together in the search for Christian unity. The Rome meeting was the first of the GCF Committee following the successful GCF gathering at Manado, on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi in October, 2011.

In his initial GCF committee meeting since becoming secretary of the Forum on 1 January, the Rev Dr Larry Miller said the invitation to meet in Rome by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and subsequent conversations indicated "a consolidation of the shared commitment to build bridges between all churches. Our relationship with the Catholic Church is of the highest order, and on our part reflects our desire to go further on our common journey with Jesus Christ."

The Rome GCF Committee meeting was also the first opportunity to consider in detail the two key documents to come out of the Manado gathering: the 'Message from Manado' and the accompanying document of 'Guidelines'. Both set out future directions for the GCF. In addition to the conversations with the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, the meeting agreed on a provisional outline of its future work for the next several years; this outline will now be tested with GCF participating bodies.

The plan includes:

- convening or facilitating global, regional, national, and local consultations — including thematic meetings — with all Christian churches and organisations;
- following through consultation processes already begun in Latin American and the Middle East;
- tending and growing relationships with GCF participants, including the World Council of Churches, the World Evangelical Alliance, the World Pentecostal Fellowship, the Catholic Church, and other Christian World Communions
- reflecting on and fleshing out the theological basis that underpins the work of the Global Christian Forum
- amplifying the effort to communicate the vision and insights of the GCF to all participating bodies and the wider world of global Christianity.

Miller underlined that the GCF committee had resolved to "articulate theologically the meaning" of the GCF's journey with Christ. During the Rome meeting, Pope Benedict XVI welcomed the GCF during the vespers service at St. Paul Outside the Walls basilica, marking the conclusion of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Bishop Brian Farrell, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity told the GCF Committee that he appreciated the goodwill and the vision behind the Global Christian Forum, even if it was "not necessarily love at first sight." But, he said, "I have been proven wrong." Farrell said there was a clear sense of the GCF's presence and progress, and that

it was important to now articulate theologically and programmatically the work of the movement. "The ecumenical task and the theological dialogue, while going on for so long, must continue to produce results. The battle cries of the past were so intense – there are whole libraries written on them – but we cannot let that keep us down, despite this being such a major quest on such a large scale. At the end of the day it's God's work under the guidance of the Spirit," Farrell said.

[Back to top](#)

New life of gospel can touch everybody

"The fellowship in the church should always be a sign of the empathy of God, with everyone who is suffering, groaning, longing for relief," said the World Council of Churches (WCC) general secretary, Revd Dr Olav Fykse Tveit in his keynote presentation at the 27th Quadrennial Assembly of the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI). Tveit was addressing the theme of the NCCI Assembly, "Gospel in a groaning world", which took place from 25 to 28 April in Bangalore, India.

In his address, Tveit shared theological reflections on the realities of those suffering and faced with inequalities and discrimination, and how the gospel can reach them all. "The new life of the gospel is what can touch every situation and everybody. There is nothing and nobody untouchable in the light of the gospel," Tveit said. "The church, wherever it is, in India or elsewhere, is only following in the footsteps of the apostle Thomas, when it is willing to touch the reality of the one who is suffering, those who are groaning, even touch their skin and their wounds," he added. Tveit also introduced the theme of the WCC 10th Assembly in Busan, Korea in 2013 "God of life, lead us to justice and peace" to the participants, emphasizing the need for the churches to "become agents for justice and peace".

[Back to top](#)

Human Enhancement: promises and realities

Churches warn but do not reject

From 25-27 April 2012, around 50 representatives mainly from European churches but also from other religions and the fields of politics, ethics, and science, met in Brussels to discuss the subject of human enhancement. The conference was organized by the Church and Society Commission (CSC) of the Conference of European Churches (CEC), a platform in which a range of Christian denominations in Europe work together. A common workshop with STOA at the European Parliament, brought together around one hundred participants.

For Christians, human enhancement is situated between two poles: on the one hand, freedom in the Christian sense, on the other hand, dependence on God and the gift of life.

In a Christian understanding, freedom is related to love for God and for one's neighbour. This gives us the responsibility to see that our use of freedom expresses our respect and compassion for ourselves and the neighbour as created in the image of God.

Freedom can be perverted into forms of despair, i.e. people do not accept themselves as they are. However, some forms of enhancement might be seen as expressions of Christian freedom.

The main guiding criterion is whether human enhancement genuinely, on the long term, would promote life as creatures of God, or would entail unacceptable risks for and threats to individuals, humanity as a whole, both in present and future generations, and the environment.

In our discussions we highlighted the following issues amongst many:

- The **transhumanist agenda** seems to us illusory and utopian. Many of so-called enhancements may be unrealistic.
- **Enhancement technologies** should not be considered outside of the social context in which people might feel under pressure to pursue them.
- **Commercial pressures** lead to developments both in medicine and, potentially, to enhancement technologies, without respect of the main principles of bioethics.
- **Time** is needed to understand the long term effects of any interventions, e.g. deep brain stimulation. Many examples from medical history demonstrate the importance of prudence.

We urge the churches of Europe to undertake and extend their work in this field, including neuro-enhancement, the psycho-social context of enhancement, the tendency to reduce the human condition to a medical or technological problem. Enhancement is too vague of a concept and we should focus more on particular cases.

[Back to top](#)

Joint Methodist-Catholic statement on Eucharist and ecology

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has announced the publication of "Heaven and Earth Are Full of Your Glory: A United Methodist and Roman Catholic Statement on the Eucharist and Ecology."

The statement's authors acknowledge that "the sources of Catholic teaching about the Eucharist [are] not matched by similar sources for the United Methodist partners, and vice versa," according to the document's introduction. "As we present this agreed statement, we realize only too well its limitations ... [and] fully realize that this statement does not reflect the breadth of what either church holds to be the total content of its Eucharistic belief or practice."

"We believe that we can and should offer a joint prophetic witness on a significant challenge facing both our communions regarding the relation of humanity to the rest of the natural world," the statement continues. "In our time, the appearance of the skies has become a sign of the times. The threat of climate destabilization, the destruction of the ozone layer, and the loss of bio-diversity point to a disordered relation between humankind, other living beings and the rest of earth. United Methodists and Roman Catholics have interpreted the signs of these times of ecological crisis as a summons to an ecumenical response."

Following the document's three main parts - "The Eucharist as the Unity of Creation and Redemption," "Creation as the Mystery of Our Origin Encountered," and "Eucharist as the Wholeness of the Christian Mystery Encountered" - the statement concludes:

Eucharistic renewal and environmental responsibility are intrinsically linked. Separating them yields an incomplete and distorted "sending," that is to say, a diminished evangelical witness to the glory of God. A Christian response to the ecological crisis, to environmental degradation and environmental injustice, is adequate only when informed by a sense of wonder before God's gift of creation. The Eucharist evokes this sense of wonder when we join with the choirs of angels and all the company of heaven, indeed with all of creation, singing, Holy, holy, holy, LORD, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. Hosanna in the Highest. [*Back to top*](#)

World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel

"Pray, educate, and advocate for justice in Palestine" An initiative of the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum (PIEF) of the World Council of Churches

The Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum (PIEF) of the World Council of Churches invites member churches, faith-based communities, and civil society organizations to join together in 2012 for a week of advocacy and action in support of an end to the illegal occupation of Palestine and a just peace for all in Palestine and Israel. Congregations and individuals around the globe who share the hope of justice shall unite during the week to take peaceful actions, together, to create a common international public witness.

As part of the most recent World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel, from 29 May to 4 June 2011, churches in at least 21 countries around the world sent a clear signal to policy-makers, community groups, and their own parishes about the urgent need for a peace settlement that ends the illegal occupation and secures the legitimate rights and future of both peoples.

During World Week for Peace 2012, from 28 May to 3 June, participants are encouraged to plan their activities around the following three principles:

1. Praying with churches living under occupation, using a [special prayer](#) from Jerusalem and other worship resources prepared for the week.
2. Educating about actions that make for peace, and about facts on the ground that do not create peace, especially issues related to displacement.
3. Advocating with political leaders using ecumenical policies that promote peace with justice.

This annual observance of a week of prayer, education, and advocacy calls participants to work for an end to the illegal occupation of Palestine, so that Palestinians and Israelis can finally live in peace. It has been more than 63 years since the partition of Palestine hardened into a permanent nightmare for Palestinians. It is now more than 44 years since the occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza overwhelmed the peaceful vision of one land, two peoples.

Yet the dream of one nation cannot be fulfilled at the expense of another. The action week's message is that now:

- It's time for Palestinians and Israelis to share a just peace.
- It's time for freedom from occupation.
- It's time for equal rights.
- It's time for the healing of wounded souls.

[*Back to top*](#)

New start for the English Anglican - Roman Catholic Committee

The English group which works for unity between Anglicans and Roman Catholics has begun a new stage of its life. Meeting at Canterbury Cathedral from 23 to 24 March in a context of prayer and worship, the members of the newly configured English Anglican – Roman Catholic Committee set in train a programme of work for the next five years.

Evangelization in the context of an increasingly secular society will be a key theme. How our two churches can bear joint witness in the area of public affairs (on issues such as the common good as well as other social and ethical questions) will also form part of the agenda. In addition, English ARC will seek to inform members of both churches about ecumenical progress already made over the last fifty years, emphasising what our churches have in common, and to encourage spiritual ecumenism, which involves joint prayer and worship (liturgies of the word). It will also engage with the developing work of the third Anglican – Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC).

English ARC will report to the joint meetings of English Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops, which happen every two years. At the end of its five-year programme, it will produce a report for our churches on the work it has undertaken.

English ARC, which was established in 1974, now comprises ten Roman Catholic and ten Anglican members, with the General Secretary of Churches Together in England as an observer. It is chaired by the Archbishop of Birmingham, the Most Revd Bernard Longley, and the Bishop of Truro, the Rt Revd Tim Thornton. The Archbishop of Birmingham said, 'I look forward to working with the members of English ARC to find new paths towards the unity for which Our Lord prayed.' The Bishop of Truro said, 'I am excited by the commitment of English ARC's new members and the prospect of a programme of work which will make a difference to our churches and their common witness both nationally and at the local level'.

[Back to top](#)

Easter Message Passed on to Commuters

Heaton Moor United Church, Stockport, an ecumenical partnership of the Methodist and United Reformed Churches, worked with the local Plough public house this Easter. Church members handed out free coffee, buns and a booklet about Easter to commuters on their way to the train station. Ian Wardle, landlord of The Plough, was only too happy to help. "We are continuing to work together for the benefit of the community," he said. "This work has built upon a partnership that started at Christmas when the church and pub held a beer and carols evening in The Plough."

The church and the pub are planning to do more together in the months ahead with the start of a monthly discussion group meeting in The Plough. Revd Stuart Radcliffe said: "We wanted to do something a bit different during Holy Week, to reach out and share something of God's love to busy working people as they rush to work. Meeting people where they are at is how Jesus shows His love to us, and in doing this we hope to show the people of The Heaton's a little of God's love and care."

[Back to top](#)

Responsible Capitalism?

ISR, the Churches for Work and Social Justice, and the Swindon Deanery of the Church of England are organising a morning conference to consider the economic crisis and what needs to change to build a fairer economy for the future. It will be on Saturday June 9th 10.00am to 1.00pm at Christ Church, Cricklade Street, Swindon SN1 3HG.

The speakers will be Andrew Studdert-Kennedy, Team Rector of Marlborough, author of "The Values of Money: The Just Economy" and former stockbroker, Kit Beazley, UK Head of Finance, Triodos Bank, and Simon Topping, Social Responsibility Officer, Swindon and North Wilts. The facilitator will be Jon Doble, Director of ISR.

To book a place (conference fee £5), email eyeoftheneedle@ccisr.org.uk or telephone ☎ 0117 955 7430

Another event entitled '**What money can't buy - the moral limits of markets**' hosted by St Paul's Cathedral in collaboration with the London School of Economics and Political Science, JustShare and Penguin UK will take place on Wednesday 23rd May, 6.30 – 8pm.

Is there something wrong with a world in which everything is for sale? Do market values dominate too many spheres of life? What are the moral limits of markets? Noted public philosopher and Harvard Professor Michael J. Sandel will explore some of these pressing questions and Bishop Peter Selby will respond. Copies of Michael Sandel's new book What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets will be available on the evening and there will be plenty of time for questions from the audience.

This event is free but a ticket will be required. Reserve your ticket now by emailing institute@stpaulscathedral.org.uk with your name, postal address and phone number (please note: this information will be sent to the LSE events team so that they can mail out tickets on the 10th May). Tickets will also be available on the door. You can find out more [here](#).

[Back to top](#)

Government commits to introducing minimum unit price for alcohol

A coalition of national Churches and charities has welcomed reports that the Government plans to enforce a minimum unit price on alcohol sales. But the groups warn that a long delay on implementation could cost lives.

The groups wrote to the Prime Minister back in February asking him to introduce a minimum unit price, and have made a range of resources on the issues available as part of their Measure for Measure campaign. Prime Minister David Cameron is proposing to introduce a minimum price of 40 pence per unit on all alcohol sold in England and Wales. However, the exact details and time frame for implementation remain unclear. "We are delighted that the Government is resisting pressure from the drinks industry to take the action that is needed," said Ruth Pickles, Vice President of the Methodist Conference, and a former alcohol misuse counsellor. "This move will save not only money, but lives."

Studies conducted at Sheffield University indicate that introducing a minimum unit price will have a dramatic effect on problem drinking, with only a minimal impact on moderate drinkers. The researchers estimate that over ten years a 40 pence minimum unit price will save the nation £546 million in healthcare costs, £140 million in crime costs, £80 million due to workplace absence and £2.5 billion due to unemployment. The savings would be even higher should the Government choose to introduce a minimum unit price of 50 pence. However, Churches and charities have warned that a delay in implementing a new policy will only worsen the damage caused by cheap alcohol to individuals and communities.

"The evidence speaks for itself," added Ms Pickles. "We see no reason for a delay in implementing the measures when so many academics and health professionals are backing the move. We cannot act quick enough to save lives and safeguard the vulnerable. Things weren't always like this. Over recent decades, Britain has developed an unhealthy drinking culture, fuelled by a drinks industry which aggressively markets its products. We would also like to see broader action taken to address the root causes of this damaging culture."

A survey conducted in December last year revealed that 61% of UK adults believe that excessive drinking is a problem (from minor to major) in their neighbourhood. The survey commissioned by the Methodist Church and their partners asked people to judge the effects of alcohol on the area within walking distance from their home, or where they use local facilities. [*Back to top*](#)

Faith groups and church leaders back free school meals campaign

The Anglican Archbishop of York is among those backing calls from charities to make sure that all children living with poverty can get a free school meal. He joins a wide range of civic, trade union, policy and church groups in highlighting the issue. Among the faith-based organisations supporting the research and initiative are the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Anglican Bishop of Truro, CSAN (Caritas Social Action Network), Catholic Education Service, Ekklesia, Liberal Judaism, the Methodist Church, Oxford Anglican Diocese, and the United Reformed Church.

More than half of all school children living in poverty – 1.2 million – are missing out on free school meals. 700,000 are not entitled to free school meals at all, according to the Children's Society's latest report, Fair and Square. Yet the report shows that 91 per cent of UK adults believe that all children living in poverty should receive free school meals. It is estimated that 2.2 million school children are living in poverty in England alone.

Dr John Sentamu, who earlier addressed the Church Urban Fund annual conference on 'Tackling Poverty Together', commented: "I welcome The Children's Society's Fair and Square report into the provision of good quality free school meals. Nutritional meals are vital for all low income families to ensure that children living in poverty get a healthy lunch at school, without burdening an overstretched family budget."

Free school meals provide vital financial support for low-income families, argues the charity. For almost a third of children, school lunch is their main meal of the day. The Children's Society's Fair and Square campaign exposes that eligibility for free school meals also has serious ramifications for families in low paid work and those looking to move back into work. They are asking people to sign their [petition](#) asking the government to make sure that all children living in poverty can get a free school meal.

Simon Barrow, co-director of the Christian thinktank Ekklesia, which is backing the initiative, said: "Good nutrition isn't a luxury, it's an essential. Without decent food, health problems will multiply and millions will remain trapped in impoverished lives. Proper school meals for children from working families shouldn't be denied to those on low incomes and with limited budgets. Given changes to the benefits system and cuts effecting the most vulnerable, the Children's Society is right to identify free school meals for those on Universal Credit as an axial issue. This is a matter of justice, not charity; common interest, not profligacy." [*Back to top*](#)

Day of Prayer for Police

Every year on Ascension Day the Christian Police Association encourages Christians everywhere to pray for Police Officers and Staff. This year it falls on Thursday 17 May. They ask you to pray for their safety while on duty, success in bringing offenders to justice and success in reducing crime. Please do not forget their families who often have to wait, not knowing when their loved ones will be home. The stresses on the Police Service are always increasing and often undervalued. Please pray without ceasing. For a poster on the Day of Prayer, please go to [their website](#).

[Back to top](#)

All Party Parliamentary Group on RE

The Religious Education Council for England and Wales (REC) has recently announced that a new All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) is being set up which will 'focus on safeguarding the provision of RE in our schools and explore how the subject can continue to deliver a valuable dimension to the education of all children and young people.' The REC will be providing the secretariat of the APPG. The APPG, which will be chaired by Mr. Stephen Lloyd, MP for Eastbourne and Willingdon, will draw on earlier cross-party support for the inclusion of RE in the English Baccalaureate. Further information can be found on the [website](#) of the REC.

[Back to top](#)

Chrism: CHRistians In Secular Ministry: Ministry outside the Walls

The Kingdom is among us – at work, rest and play, sharing experiences of Ministry and the Kingdom, wherever you have found it – the CHRISM Summer Conference, 13th - 15th July, 2012, is at Woodbrooke Quaker Adult Study Centre, Bourneville, Birmingham

Involving a wide range of contributors, we plan to explore themes such as:

- theological education and training for ministry in work
- innovative and prophetic social mission through our work
- ministry in the manufacturing and retail sectors
- the value of ministry in work
- the impact Christians can have on the organisations in which they work

The weekend incorporates the CHRISM AGM and visits to local places of interest and of work.

Woodbrooke Quaker Adult Study Centre is set in the leafy suburb of Bourneville, based in the former home of George Cadbury, of chocolate fame. It's easy to reach by train, car and even not far from one of Birmingham's famous canals. Birmingham has much to offer, with more canals than Venice, art, sculpture and a chocolate factory! Accommodation is in single-bedded en-suite bedrooms at the International Mission Centre 5 minutes away from Woodbrooke.

Partners are welcome; why not make this part of a longer break? Cost, from dinner on Friday evening to lunch on Sunday, inclusive: £ 180 (members); £ 190 (non-members). Grants should be available from your Church to cover all or part of the cost. Apply now to get their support! Please ask CHRISM for a receipt, if required.

Please book the date in your diary now, and book in by 1st June, 2012. Contact: Sue Cossey, 1 Bye Mead, Emerson's Green, Bristol, BS16 7DL. sue.cossey@yahoo.co.uk

[Back to top](#)

Praise bus - a resource for the torch relay

Making the journey between most of the seventy overnight stops of the Olympic Torch relay will be an open top praise bus. This huge undertaking is an initiative of one small Methodist church, Escalls Chapel, just three miles from Lands End. The bus will travel from location to location on the same day as the Olympic Torch itself. Worship bands and Christian music groups will provide 'an unbroken symphony of praise'.

The praise bus is part of More Than Gold's 70 day cascade of prayer that follows the route of the Torch Relay, encouraging churches to pray for their communities and the nations. This ambitious praise bus project is the vision Tina Bonfield, a member of Escalls Chapel which is the last outpost of Methodism on the British mainland.

Tina says, 'When I heard of the plans for the Olympic Torch, two visions I'd had at last made sense. I had seen a flame going from Lands End all over the UK – and learned others had seen something similar. Then I'd seen Jesus on an open top bus travelling along. On hearing the Olympic Flame was to start from Lands End and travel through over a thousand communities I knew it was related to what I'd seen'. As a result, Tina took the idea of a praise bus to her church and recalls, 'They agreed to the project with the least fuss I have ever experienced in a church meeting'. Tina recognises that taking the bus on a seventy day journey, for which local bands and overnight accommodation are needed, present a huge logistic challenge. But, she says, 'I feel no fear. From the beginning it has felt like building the Ark. The Lord has to do miracles; it is his job to get everything we need in place. We just have to be obedient.'

Leading More Than Gold's response to the Olympic Torch relay is Sarah-Jane Alley of the Salvation Army who says, "The Olympic Torch Relay gives churches everywhere a chance to be a part of the Games and the Praise Bus is a great way to get involved through both worship and hospitality." Tina and her small team are looking bands, solo performers, choirs and groups willing to play for a day, or part of a day, as the bus comes to their area. And overnight accommodation for about six people at each stop.

The Praise Bus contact is: escallsbus@btinternet.com Tina Bonfield can be contacted on ☎ 7521 247161 [Back to top](#)

Paralympic Games and 'inclusive' message

With the opening of the Paralympic Games only months away, churches are being challenged to be as inclusive as the 2012 Games themselves. The call has come from More Than Gold, the agency helping churches make the most of the Games. It's CEO, David Willson said, 'The Olympic movement has fully embraced those with disabilities. It's time for churches to get serious about doing the same'.

For More Than Gold, this means churches making their events around the Games welcoming for those with disabilities and learning difficulties. To help, a check list on how to do so has been produced. It highlights the need for 'step-free' access, disabled parking spaces, large print publications and other practical responses. Also available is a list of help and resources from agencies specialising in working with people who are disabled.

Ian Richards, Chair of the More Than Gold Paralympic Committee said, 'With around 10 million people in the UK classified as having a disability, it is time for churches to make them more welcome and more able to contribute their God-given gifts'. The call is also for churches to use the Paralympics to highlight the issues of disability and inclusiveness to their members. In support, there is a DVD resource designed for a one-hour church service produced by BMS World Mission. It celebrates the faith and excellence of Paralympians, while addressing issues of global injustice and promoting inclusion of disabled people everywhere.

'The signs are already encouraging', adds David Willson. 'For example, Aylesbury Youth for Christ are planning a Paralympics opening night festival with the disabled kids as the stars. And Guildford Cathedral are opening their doors during the Paralympics for artists with a disability to display their work'.

More Than Gold's checklist on inclusiveness and a list of agencies that can help can be downloaded [here](#).

More Than Gold UK, Unit 37 Tileyard Studios, Tileyard Road, London N7 9AH

[Back to top](#)

Massive give-out of new book on parenting

Parenting was never easy. In these times of cultural decline and moral confusion, it has only become harder. To counteract this, Plough Publishing has decided not to charge for their new book ***Why Children Matter***. The book is being given out free at www.whychildrenmatter.com and thousands of copies have gone already.

Pastor Johann Christoph Arnold wants to arm parents—and anyone who cares about children—with biblical wisdom and down-to-earth advice on how to hold a family together and raise children with character, despite the odds. With chapters on founding a family, the unborn child, birth, motherhood, fatherhood, building character, teaching respect, discipline, the role of grandparents, the special child, consideration for others, when children suffer, teenagers and more, *Why Children Matter* is a handbook for every parent and educator in the trenches of daily life. As Arnold writes, "bringing children into the world will always be a step of faith. But it can give purpose to our lives and will be rewarding beyond measure."

Johann Christoph Arnold is an internationally acclaimed speaker on marriage and family, education, and conflict resolution. He has written 11 books, which have been translated into more than 20 languages. More importantly, he and his wife Verena have been married 46 years. They have 8 children and 42 grandchildren, but feel that every child they meet is a grandchild.

Plough invites other organizations wishing to help distribute the book to contact them. Schools have been requesting a copy for the family of every student, and local churches for every family in their congregation. Endorsed by Timothy Cardinal Dolan, Alice von Hildebrand and others, *Why Children Matter* is a book for our times. [Back to top](#)

Exciting Events at St Ethelburga's

Wednesday 16th May 5.30pm: The elephant in the room

In partnership with Belief in Mediation and Arbitration, we bring you an event for mediators of any kind to explore the question of what can you do when there is a palpable but unspoken "elephant" in the room? For more info click [here](#)

Monday 28th May 6pm: Centring prayer and spiritual awakening

Cynthia Bourgeault, Christian mystic and author, explores whether paths of meditation in different spiritual traditions lead towards a common point - the compassionate heart. For more info click [here](#)

Friday 1st June 7pm: When Abel met Cain

A vivid, turbulent storytelling journey and a powerful portrayal of the Israel-Palestine conflict. In their quest, storyteller Raphael Rodan and musician Anastasios Sarakatsanos join powers to probe into the darker side of the human psyche and find light. Don't miss this! For more info click [here](#)

Wednesday 13th June 6pm: Talk for Change

Talk for change present their research on how discussing controversial issues can strengthen community relations in England. A stimulating dialogue event for anyone interested in community building. For more info click [here](#)

Friday 29th June 9am-5pm: Stories that heal, stories that harm

A participatory day of cross-disciplinary dialogue. The aim is to pool learning from those working with personal and community narratives, in order to build a more complete picture of the field, stimulate best practice, and allow cross-fertilisation of ideas. In collaboration with The Forgiveness Project, The International School of Storytelling and The London Inter Faith Centre. For more info click [here](#) *[Back to top](#)*

New Neighbours, New Opportunities

The International Council of Christians and Jews is meeting in Manchester in early July. The conference "New Neighbours, New Opportunities: The Challenges of Multiculturalism and Social Responsibility" is from July 1-4. The ICCJ serves as the umbrella organisation of 38 national Jewish-Christian dialogue organisations world-wide. Its member organisations world-wide over the past five decades have been successfully engaged in the historic renewal of Jewish-Christian relations. Further information from: <http://www.iccj.org/>