

Reflection of the Month: Facing the D-word

David Richardson writes:

“What is your Church doing about dementia?” is a question to which any Christian should have a ready answer. Indeed, it is a question that anyone of any faith should address in respect of their faith community.



The numbers speak for themselves: there are estimated to be 850,000 people with dementia in the UK currently; there will be one million by 2025 and two million by mid-century. It may confidently be said that ‘everybody knows somebody with dementia’.

So what is your church doing about dementia?

There are two considerations that may mute the response:

Firstly, the fact that dementia is mainly, though not exclusively, a condition that affects the elderly. Churches tend to give priority to ministry among the young. “What this church needs is more old people” is a statement that would be greeted with ridicule in the church council meeting – but as Christians, we do not have the luxury of market choice. We are there for everybody, irrespective of the date on their birth certificate. The church council or leadership team might need reminding that Jesus told Peter not just to ‘feed my lambs’ but to ‘feed my sheep’.

Secondly, the fact that dementia is not, yet, curable. If Pamela is diagnosed with cancer and goes into hospital, the church may be able to pray that Pamela recovers and will be back in her usual pew in due course. But if Pat is diagnosed with dementia, that presents a challenge to faith. What can the church pray for Pat?

Third-hand stories of someone, somewhere who has been ‘cured of dementia’ are the ecclesiastical equivalent of urban myths and must be firmly rebutted – not least for Pat’s sake. The faith of the church needs to be robust enough, and mature enough, to face the fact that there is no cure. Statements such as ‘God does not give us burdens heavier than we can bear’ can be read as meaning that if Pat had been a weaker character, she would not have got dementia. ‘Remember, everything happens for a purpose’ conveys the horrifying, unkind and unchristian suggestion that God willed Pat’s dementia!

So what should the Church do for someone with dementia?

- Firstly, get the setting right: decide on a strategy for addressing the challenges posed by dementia. Someone needs to be identified who will take the lead for the local church fellowship – whether this be in a chaplaincy role with pastoral responsibility, or with a remit to make the church as a whole dementia-friendly (this – full disclosure – being the path chosen for the churches of Cumbria), or whether there be some agreed combination of both of the above.
- Secondly, and returning to Pat, get the preposition right: it should be a matter of ‘working with’ rather than ‘doing for’. Find out what Pat wants. ‘When you’ve met one person with dementia, you’ve met – one person with dementia.’
- Thirdly, stay the distance: never give up. If Pat has to move into residential care, make sure that she is not forgotten. If, say, Pat had been a member of a house group, let her be brought to the meeting or – if this can be arranged – let the group meet in the care home. Let Ruth’s words to Naomi (‘whither thou goest, I will go: where thou lodgest, I will lodge’) serve as our standard of constant support for everyone affected by dementia.
- Finally, pray for a cure. We are able to pray with some confidence that Pamela can return to us because of progress in cancer research a generation ago. Let prayer for a breakthrough in dementia research be a recurrent theme of our public intercessions and private devotions.

So, what is your church doing about dementia?

David Richardson is Vice President & Treasurer, and Chair of the Dementia Reference Group, for Churches Together in Cumbria. He is a Reader and Churchwarden at Kendal Parish Church and a former Trustee of Alzheimer's Society.

Education Sunday 2019



Education Sunday 2019 is taking place on **Sunday 8th September**.

The theme for 2019 is '**Form and flourish - to re-form**'.

Resources are freely available for use by churches, schools, colleges, groups and individuals, and can be found at www.cte.org.uk/educationsunday2019

Each is a downloadable document or graphic:

[Theme Introduction](#)
[All Age Worship outline](#)
[Sermon Notes](#)
[Hymn: Jesus is healing care](#)
[Commissioning Prayer](#)
[Prayer for Education Sunday](#)

[Traditional worship for all ages](#)
[Primary Collective Worship](#)
[Publicity Style Guide](#)
[Logo small for web pages 300px](#)
[Logo medium for brochure 700px](#)
[Logo larger for display 1000px](#)

A fond farewell after fourteen years

Friends from across the churches in England gathered on 18th June to say a fond farewell to **Jim Currin**, following fourteen years of faithful service to CTE – particularly in the areas of mission, evangelism and media. This year also marks 40 years of Jim’s service in the Church Army, and sees him take the opportunity to focus on ministry more locally.



Paul Goodliff, CTE’s General Secretary, expressed his heartfelt thanks to Jim: “Captain Jim Currin has served Churches Together in England for over 14 years, joining its team to lead in the areas of mission and evangelisation. Later he took up the responsibilities for media and communications alongside those existing missional roles, and in both areas served the churches and CTE with great distinction. At the end of June we said farewell to him as a CTE staff member as he looks to new ministries closer to home in Lancaster, rediscovering something of his initial calling to be a Church Army Evangelist.

“Jim was a great networker and seemed to know everyone involved in mission in the churches, becoming a friend to many. He organised The Group for Evangelisation and The Churches Co-ordinating Group for New Housing, and supported the Churches Rural Group. As Dr David Cornick said at his farewell event, Jim brought to CTE the best of evangelical spirituality and taught us from its riches. As the churches called CTE to greater focus upon collaboration in mission and evangelisation, Jim came into his own, and leaves this dimension of its work in rude health.



“Jim also made available to CTE his gifts in photography — and leaves us with a vast resource of his fine photographs to use on the website — and in his writing with Dr Colin Marsh, drew our attention to the way in which Jesus engaged in building relationships in mission. We never quite used his passion for sailing, but we often heard about it, and those two interests of sailing and photography will be put to full use in this next phase of life and ministry.

“We wish him God’s richest blessing as he and Linda look to their future shape of life as they continue to live out God’s call upon their lives.”

Jim shares this message of thanks to all those he has worked in his time at CTE: “Thank you to everyone who either attended the farewell do, contributed to the amazing comments book or added to the generous leaving gift. It has been a great privilege serving in the CTE team for 14 years, and I know from my handover period that the many networks will be served well by Ben and Lucy.



“Thank you to everyone for the encouragement and fellowship over the 14 years, and for the cards for my retirement. Finally, I am delighted to report that the kind gift has focused on photographic equipment and accessories, including two prime lenses, so

there might be more stock images for Churches Together websites in the future! Thank you to everyone for everything, and for praying for our continued journey in mission and unity together.”

Following Jim’s retirement, CTE has appointed [Ben Aldous](#) as Principle Officer for Evangelism & Mission, and [Lucy Olofinjana](#) as Communications and Media Officer. They both joined CTE on 1st June.

Unity movements gather at national summit

Ben Aldous, CTE's new Principle Officer for Mission and Evangelism, reflects on the Gather summit...



The inaugural Gather National Summit took place on 26th-27th June 2019 at the Ridgeway Centre in Milton Keynes, bringing together leaders of unity movements from across the UK.

Roughly 150 people gathered from as far afield as Exeter and Edinburgh - mostly local church leaders seeking to deepen their commitment to ecumenical life, as well as a number of Christian organisations from Evangelical Alliance to World Vision. Worship was led by a dynamic young band from Salford, with rousing singing and a nice gospel flavour.

I was struck by several things over the 24 hours together. This was a conference that, whilst relatively short, was extremely well thought out. Sensitive use of technology really helped the conference be interactive.

Gather was really a place of sharing inspiring stories, listening to where God is at work across the country, and having a chance to have your town or area prayed for by a dedicated prayer team...

[Continue reading Ben’s piece on our website...](#)

Exploring a new approach to Church unity – juridical ecumenism



On 20th June 2019, Churches Together in England hosted a day exploring the ways in which church law, rules and conventions might converge to deepen ecumenical endeavours.

Looking at the work done so far by the Christian Law Project, we explored with English churches the set of principles with wide ecumenical convergence which have already been published, and the ways in which juridical ecumenism might contribute to our unity and mission together.

[Visit our website to hear more about the day’s discussions](#) from Bet Holmes at the International Ecumenical Fellowship.

Cambourne's story: starting something in a new housing area

What we can learn from Cambourne's story of starting something in a new housing area? Ben Aldous, CTE's new Principle Officer for Evangelism & Mission, draws out some lessons we can learn, following a meeting of the Churches Group for New Housing at Cambourne in Cambridge on 19th June.



Visit our website to hear more about Cambourne's story and the principles of:

1. taking your demographic seriously
2. making use of professional help when building
3. keeping committed to the ecumenical nature of the church
4. keeping a pioneer mentality when considering succession in a new housing area church.

Flexible Framework for Local Unity in Mission

Churches Together in England has just published *A Flexible Framework for Local Unity in Mission*.

The document is a reworking and renaming of *A New Framework*, issued some time ago and universally well received as an 'exciting, significant and practical'. It has liberated work for local unity in mission and continues to be key to mission-shaped unity, especially at local level.



The re-published and slimmer text now includes hyperlinks. Pages no longer significant have been moved into 'the story' document, and there is a new PowerPoint presentation which can be freely used and adapted.

Access the resource via [**www.cte.org.uk/AFlexibleFramework**](http://www.cte.org.uk/AFlexibleFramework)

SCM resource on student's mental health

The Student Christian Movement has recently launched [Well Beings](#), a practical guide to good mental health for students. Produced in partnership with Space to Breathe, the resource is a response to a recent survey of students - showing that over 90% of students have had mental health problems, or are supporting someone who has poor mental health.



The resource covers themes such as where to find help, how to face anxiety and how to build resilience. Each topic is presented along with simple, practical activities to help students develop good mental health.

The Well Beings resource has been published as part of a year-long focus on Student Mental Wellbeing by SCM, who are a Body in Association with CTE.

[Read more about the Well Beings resource on our website...](#)

Choose Childhood: 150 years of taking Action for Children

Action for Children, a Body in Association with CTE, celebrated their 150th anniversary this July. Here Karis Kolawole tells us more about their work and latest campaign...

In July, Action for Children, founded by Methodist minister Reverend Thomas Bowman Stephenson, celebrated its 150th anniversary. Our celebrations have been two-edged because it is exciting to be part of a great legacy, but the truth is that we shouldn't really exist.

Our founder was moved by the plight of marginalised and impoverished children deprived of a decent childhood. Many of them could not raise their hopes above hard lives in workhouses. But, Stephenson believed they deserved better – a safe and happy childhood with a future filled with hope. So, he set up The Children's Home (later called National Children's Home) to offer a family-style system of childcare.

That was then, but what about now? We're still here because sadly Action for Children is still needed. On 9th July, we [published a report](#) and launched a campaign called 'Choose Childhood' which shows that, for hundreds of thousands of children in the UK, childhood continues to hurt. Over two-fifths of parents (42%) and grandparents (41%) told us that they think children today do not have a brighter future than the previous generation. While there have been significant changes over the years to make life better, childhood is still marred by various modern-day challenges that need to be fixed – from neglect, bullying, pressures of social media, and poverty to concerns about Brexit. Too many children in the UK are being left at risk of harm, with overstretched services unable to support them.

Every child deserves a safe and happy childhood. Children don't choose their lives – but we can choose to act. So, we are asking churches to please join us in urging the government to commit to a national action plan for children now, before things get even worse. Please sign-up to the Choose Childhood campaign [by visiting our website](#). The Choose Childhood report also comes with [a version for young people and a discussion pack](#). Thank you.

[Karis Kolawole](#), Head of Faith Partnerships at Action for Children.



Responding to the challenges facing Christian youth work



Following a meeting of the Christian Youth Work Consortium (CYWC) in spring 2019, Rev David Howell updates us on their plans to respond to the challenges facing Christian youth work/ministry and theological education/training.

The Birmingham Conversation

In November 2018, just before the National Youth Ministry Weekend in Birmingham, the UK CYWC, supported by CTE, brought together leaders of Christian youth work/ministry across the denominations and Christian agencies. The aim was to continue a conversation held in Belfast in May 2018, which had been organised by the Professional Association of Lecturers in Youth & Community Work. This had been a day conference which had revisited the value of Christian faith-based youth work.

Through these conversations we have sought to recognise and affirm our common unity in God's kingdom in training and supporting those in Christian youth work/ministry; have a deeper understanding of the variety of learning that our providers offer and our place within that provision; raise the profile of good quality training for those in Christian youth work/ministry, and propose ideas to encourage the development of Christian youth work/ministry across the four nations

Future plans

The outcomes of the Birmingham Conversation are that we will:

1. Explore the way in which we can be a 'voice' to the churches on behalf of Christian youth work/ministry training agencies
2. Encourage churches and Christian agencies to recognise the importance of quality work with young people and the value of trained practitioners
3. Explore the development of a research community and the dissemination of research
4. Work with key stakeholders to develop a set of competencies which articulate the skills, knowledge and attitude required of those engaged in Christian youth work/ministry
5. Explore the joint development of a training package for placements, line-managers and practice tutors

Rev David Howell, coordinator of the Christian Youth Work Consortium

Prayer in Trafalgar Square

Trafalgar Square was turned into #TrafalgarPrayer on Sunday 9th June as thousands of Christians from across London united in prayer and worship, at one of the many Thy Kingdom Come events held across the country.



The event on Pentecost Sunday marked the culmination of Thy Kingdom Come 2019, the annual prayer campaign launched by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, in which Christians are invited to pray for their friends and family to know Jesus Christ.

At the afternoon event, families sang and danced as well as joined together in prayer at the event which included prayers and words of wisdom by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, Archbishop Angaelos, Pastor Agu Irukwu, Reverend Trey Hall and Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally DBE.

The five [Presidents of Churches Together in England](#) also knelt together on stage and led a time of prayer for the UK (see photo to the right).



Earlier in the day, the area was full of fun, family-friendly activities including Messy Church, face-painting as well as various prayer workshops from different denominations and traditions such as the Coptic Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said of the event: "Yesterday we turned Trafalgar Square into #TrafalgarPrayer! Thank you to the thousands who joined us to praise God and pray for people to know they are loved and called by Jesus Christ."

Emma Buchan, the Thy Kingdom Come Director, said: "The turnout was amazing. The set-up was excellent and it was fabulous to see so thousands of people turn out to worship God. This is one of the biggest events we've organised and certainly one to remember. All of the contributors were tremendous and it wouldn't be possible without the volunteers and staff behind the scenes.

"Trafalgar Square was at capacity of 8,000 people during the main service between 4-6pm, and many thousands came joined us during the festival from 12-4pm. We are so grateful to God for His blessing in all of this and seeing across the country how hundreds of Christian are praying."

Hundreds of thousands of Christians took part across the UK including Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Last year saw churches from over 65 denominations in 114 countries taking part in the 10 days of prayer, from Anglicans to Roman Catholics, and Orthodox to Methodists. This year, many countries across the world took part including Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Bermuda.

Photo credits: Rodycloud Photography

'When I am weak, then I am strong': Ecclesial Movements meet together

Rumold van Geffen reports on a meeting of Ecclesial Movements, which was held recently at the Focolare Centre for Unity in Welwyn Garden City, Herts.



At Pentecost 1998, Pope John Paul II invited all the new Movements and Ecclesial Communities to Rome to affirm that they were recognised as a co-essential part of the Church as a whole. Ever since that date representatives of many of the New Movements have started to meet on a regular basis in many countries worldwide. At their first meeting in Britain, the ecumenical dimension of some of the Movements was clear. This year's meeting was held on 25 June 2019. As well as from Focolare and Sword of the Spirit (Antioch Community), who are [Bodies in Association with CTE](#), there were representatives from Charismatic Renewal, Chemin Neuf, Madonna House, Schoenstatt, Neocatechumenal Way and the Sion Community.

In the afternoon, the meeting centred on a sharing of how each Movement was absorbing the Word of God in their daily life. This sharing was introduced by Deacon Adrian Cullen, who spoke about the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales' initiative to dedicate the year 2020 to Sacred Scripture, under the name: 'The God Who Speaks'. This will take place in cooperation with the Bible Society.

In the morning, the sharing was about the challenge of trying to communicate to the new generations the constant moral teachings of the Church. Bishop John Sherrington presented an overview of the cultural factors which make communication of such truths difficult to be heard. He then facilitated the sharing of questions and thoughts from members of the Movements who recognise that these can be very difficult teachings to hand onto young people.

Bishop John Sherrington quoted Oscar Romero, who helps us understand that Christianity is not merely a collection of truths to be believed, rules to be followed, or prohibitions. Seen that way, it puts people off. Rather 'Christianity is a person who loves me immensely, who demands and asks for my love. Christianity is Christ.' It therefore becomes necessary that we invite everybody we meet to change from being 'nomads', people who move from one water-hole to the next (i.e. from one excitement to the other), to becoming 'pilgrims', people who are on the way but already know their goal (i.e. holiness in Jesus Christ). This means that only if we are able to invite the new generations to come with us on this pilgrimage can we share with them the centuries old wisdom of the Church contained within its moral teaching, and together with them find new ways in which it is expressed.

There was a candid and open sharing by all present, which felt very much in conformity with the words of the apostle Paul: 'When I am weak, then I am strong' (2 Corinthians 12: 10).

Rumold van Geffen

Photo credit: Adrian Cullen

And finally...

Heads of churches urge support for Sea Sunday

Senior leaders of the Anglican and Catholic churches have called on parishes to support Sea Sunday on 14th July. [The annual event](#) sees Christian churches of all denominations remembering and praying for seafarers, giving thanks to their lives and work.



Rural Mission Sunday & Churches Rural Group

[Rural Mission Sunday](#) is an annual event celebrating the work of small rural churches, taking place on Sunday 14th July.



You can also read a summary of the [Churches Rural Group meeting](#) of 28th May 2019.

Report: Anglican-Pentecostal Steering Group Consultation April 2019

[A report is now available](#) from the Anglican-Pentecostal Steering Group Consultation on Pneumatology & Baptism in the Spirit, held on Tuesday 2nd April 2019 in Birmingham.

Funding to support work with children and young people

A reminder that the Allchurches Trust has launched a new grants programme – Growing Lives – aimed at helping churches and Christian organisations throughout the UK and Ireland to connect with children and young people and forge lasting links with families in their local area.



Grants of up to £25,000 are available.

For more ideas about how this new programme could help your church or Christian organisation, and to apply online, visit www.allchurches.co.uk/growinglives

An invitation: NTA conference - Contemporizing the rich legacy of Black Church liturgy

Member church New Testament Assembly warmly invites you to join them at their national conference with the Institute of Theology and Christian Counselling, exploring the rich legacy of Black Church liturgy.

The event takes place on Saturday 27th July, 9.30am-3.45pm at The Sanctuary New Testament Assembly in Tooting, London, SW17 7BU. Speakers include former CTE

Pentecostal President, Bishop Eric Brown. For more information and to book, [visit the event webpage](#). You can also view the event poster below.

SAT 27TH JULY 2019
9:30AM - 3:45PM
CONFERENCE FEE:
£20.00
£15.00 EARLY BIRD

NEW TESTAMENT ASSEMBLY & THE INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGY & CHRISTIAN COUNSELLING NATIONAL CONFERENCE

CONTEMPORIZING THE RICH LEGACY OF BLACK CHURCH LITURGY

LOCATION: THE SANCTUARY, TOOTING NTA 7 BEECHCROFT ROAD, TOOTING, LONDON SW17 7BU
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