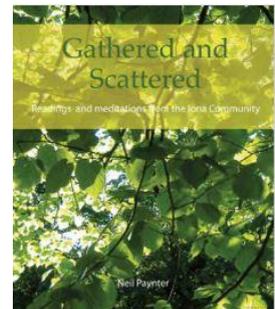


Reflection of the Month: 'Woe is me'

George MacLeod, from a sermon 1944 wrote:

When we realise
that all our scientific discoveries
are sacramental unveilings of the Body of our Lord:
when we realise
that we cannot lift a stone to build a fortification
but the presence of God moves in us to occupy the hole that we
have made:
when we grasp
that the houses we live in
(and not just we who live in them)
are offerings for his glory:
that the food that we eat
(and not just they that eat the food)
are aspects of his presence;
when the angels reveal to us
(as science, that modern trumpet of the angels, reveals)
that 'the fullness of the whole earth is His glory':
when we realise all that
and grasp what we *do* with
stones and iron and food and houses,
there is no other cry that can escape our lips than
'Woe is me' ...
Woe is the people among whom I live, yes:
but firstly - 'woe is me:
for I am a man of unclean lips
and mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.'



Slightly adapted (e.g. 'we' instead of 'men') from a sermon of George MacLeod, of the Iona Community in 1944, quoted in *Gathered and Scattered*, Neil Paynter. Ionabooks 2007. Month 1 Day 24.

The Iona Community is a Body in Association of CTE.

Call to Prayer

The Presidents of Churches Together in England, together with our partners Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, are calling the churches to prayer as we approach the date when the United Kingdom is scheduled to leave the European Union.



From Wednesday 27th March to Sunday 31st March the Presidents urge churches in our nation to find ways to pray, and to enable church buildings to be opened for any in their communities seeking a space for prayer. Churches Together in England supports every opportunity for local churches to pray together and urges Churches Together Groups and other expressions of Christian unity to take hold of this moment to pray together for our nations.

This builds on other calls to prayer from member churches over recent months and reflects the increasing urgency of the moment as Brexit approaches.

In particular, we suggest that as the Presidents of Churches Together in England and other church leaders meet to pray at 10.30 am on Saturday 30th March in central London, churches throughout the nations may wish to join in similar expressions of prayerful concern for the future of the peoples and nations in the British Isles and Ireland, and beyond, during that morning.

Rev'd Dr. Paul Goodliff
General Secretary, Churches Together in England
26th February 2019

Please note that, as and when there is more information about the Call to Prayer, it will be added to the webpage:
https://www.cte.org.uk/Articles/542972/Home/News/Latest_news/Call_to_Prayer.aspx

'Playfully Serious' research about 'Messy Church'

News from Bible Reading Fellowship, a Body in Association of CTE:

'This works!' How Messy Churches create new space for faith.

Significant new research from the Church Army's Research Unit confirms the serious effectiveness of Messy Church. Playfully Serious: How Messy Churches create new space for faith proves that Messy Church is not 'just a bit of fun', as some critics persist in believing. Rather, it is reaching people who weren't previously attending church, it is growing disciples and it is modelling new patterns of leadership - and it is doing so across a wide range of economic and social contexts.



Founded in 2004 by Lucy Moore, and supported throughout its remarkable development by The Bible Reading Fellowship, Messy Church now numbers over 2,800 registered groups in England alone and some 3,500 worldwide. Lucy comments: 'I'm thrilled that the report recognises what we've been hearing from churches for the last 14 years: Messy Church is working... There are so many findings to celebrate... Every page of this report is so full of delights that it's impossible to list them all.'

For more information on the BRF website, click [here](#).
See also: www.messychurch.org.uk.
Read the report, and see an introductory video [here](#).

Living Lent: creating a climate of change



Hannah Brown from the
Joint Public Issues Team writes:

Christians called to make significant lifestyle changes this Lent. The call to climate action has got louder and during Lent 2019, Christians are being invited to respond by making significant lifestyle changes.

During Lent, which starts on Wednesday 6 March, the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) – on behalf of the United Reformed Church (URC), Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Church of Scotland and the Methodist Church – is hosting [Living Lent: Creating a climate of change](#).

Research shows that the window of time to affect change is getting smaller, yet people are still unsure of the practical steps they can take to help.

The Living Lent campaign invites you to take up one or more of six challenges. Could you:

- Go meat free?
- Take up alternative forms of transport?
- Commit to an hour 'electricity free' every day?
- Give up single use plastics?
- Commit to buying goods produced within 30 miles of where you live?
- Commit to buying nothing new?

You are being invited to choose something that will stretch you – and then become part of an online community, who are also making these commitments.

Through daily emails, the Living Lent community will share blogs, spiritual reflections, devotional and creative materials that will help you explore where this lenten journey might take you.

You will also have the chance to share the stories, photos, challenges and joys you face with the rest of the community.

Derek Estill, Moderator of the United Reformed Church General Assembly, gave his support to Living Lent, saying: 'It is vital that we tackle climate change, but it can sometimes seem like an overwhelming challenge. Living Lent reminds us that change can start with each of us. I have therefore decided to give up meat for Lent, which will not be easy, but then few things that are worthwhile are easy to do.'

The Revd Michaela A Youngson, President of the Methodist Conference, also gave her support: 'I am giving up buying new things for Lent. I know it's going to be a challenge, but that is what Living Lent is about. Climate change demands serious and urgent responses from all of us. Living Lent offers an opportunity to step out into the wilderness together, with the promise of Easter before us.'

Richard Frazer, Convener of the Church and Society Council of the Church of Scotland, added: 'Climate change is not simply a challenge we can solve with smart thinking and better technology. In reality, climate change and the human impact on species and habitat loss compels us to completely change our thinking. It is the greatest challenge of our age and will require us radically to alter our lifestyles. So, I wholeheartedly welcome this Living Lent series produced by our ecumenical partners in JPIT which will give us practical ideas as well as inspiration to make that shift.'

The Revd David Mayne, Moderator of the Baptist Union Council, commented: 'Living Lent is an excellent opportunity to reflect on how we live and the impact our lives have on the environment. It is a chance to practically express that we are hopeful about the future and that good things lie ahead of us. Working together we can bring about change and demonstrate the goodness of God.'

Perhaps members of your church, or family could sign up together?

Visit [Living Lent](#) to find information and resources, including Bible study prompts, Lectionary materials, and family resources.

Fresh Expressions

Re-imagining the organisation for the future of the movement



Fresh Expressions (FX) to bring in creative new structure and leadership model in March 2019 as Phil Potter completes his role as Team Leader.

In March 2019, Phil Potter will step down from his role as 'Archbishops' Missioner and Team Leader Fresh Expressions' after 5 years. As part of the process of change and in response to the rapidly changing nature of the Fresh Expressions movement in the UK, we have engaged in a listening exercise across the movement and decided on some significant changes for 2019.

Just as we've encouraged people and communities to re-imagine their mission and their missional churches, so we too as an organisation are changing and re-imagining

ourselves for this next stage in the journey. Our specific focus will be on 'connecting and catalyzing the fresh expressions movement'.

The movement now exists much more as a "network of networks" than simply as a single organisation. We have seen a range of missional networks emerge that together represent the breadth and depth of the movement. Some of these networks have formed naturally but some have also been intentionally created. These networks work across and within denominations and are enabled by leaders from the length and breadth of the country.

The emerging shape of this movement is something we are convinced is part of the continuing work of God. Within Fresh Expressions we are passionate and committed to following and exploring where the Spirit might continue to lead. Therefore, in discussion with partners² our Board³ has now agreed to the following proposals for the future of the movement.

Leadership

From 14 March 2019, Fresh Expressions will move away from the traditional Team Leader role to create a community of leadership drawing from across the wider movement.

Leaders and Enablers from all types of Fresh Expressions will gather to shape our movement in mission, in the way we meet together and in networking and support for the future. A core community will facilitate a coordinated working together of similar leaders across the network and across each of its partners.

Organization

Fresh Expressions will remain as a single charity working ecumenically across every kind of partnership in the UK Church.

From March, Fresh Expressions Ltd will change its name to 'FX Networks Ltd' and will serve and enable the many networks and relationships that make up the movement. We are also setting up 'FX Resourcing' as a creative arm of the organization, to create and share resources, training and good practice from across the movement.

Timing

The new structure and approach will be formally launched at our next Fresh Expressions Community Gathering on 14-15 March 2019.

"We believe that this transition will help to fuel a movement that is not only committed to catalyzing fresh expressions of church but is comfortable with the pioneer premise that 'constant change is here to stay'."

For more information visit www.freshexpressions.org.uk

For background to the movement download our Press Pack <http://freshexpressions.org.uk/about/media/>

For clarity or detail email web@freshexpressions.org.uk

Joint Anglican-Roman Catholic Schools



Updated text on the CTE web page:

https://www.cte.org.uk/Groups/275839/Home/Resources/Ecumenical Dialogues/English ARC/Resources/Supporting_Joint_Schools.aspx

English and Welsh ARC has supported joint Anglican – Roman Catholic schools over many years. In 2010, the Committee commended guidelines on joint schools to the bishops, clergy, education specialists and parents in our two Churches. Much has changed, however, in education since then, and in a number of respects the guidelines are now significantly outdated. The Committee is currently working with the Church of England and Catholic Education Departments to produce a revised version.

In the meantime, some of the general principles set out in the earlier document for joint schools still remain relevant; those who would like to consult it can read the full text: [click here](#)

>> [Download the current list of Joint Anglican and Catholic Schools in England and Wales](#) <<

Gen Verde... spirituality on the road

Gen Verde are part of the Focolare Movement, a Body in association with CTE. The 22 members strong multi artistic performing group of women are from countries including Canada, Mexico, Chile, Brazil, Portugal, Spain, Panama, Venezuela, Korea, Indonesia, Italy, Ireland, United States and Argentina.



Gen Verde toured Britain in 2015 and came back three years later with a focus on young people and dialogue. Their 'start now' workshop culminated in an amazing concert in the Elgar Hall at the University of Birmingham. Archbishop Bernard Longley and Bhai Sahib Ji Mohinder Singh from the Guru Nanak Nishkam Sevak Jatha spoke of the values that they had seen take root in the hearts and minds of the young people involved in the project. They expressed a desire that Gen Verde should return to Birmingham to build on the positive experience of working with pupils from Birmingham schools. That was the initial invitation, which saw Gen Verde return to England and the rest of the tour was built around it.

They held workshops preparing pupils to be involved in their show in both Plymouth and Birmingham. As the days went by, the change in some of the participants in the programme were quite evident. It was brilliant to see young people lacking in self-worth really blossom, while others who were aware of their natural talents, were able

to take them to another level. One of the teachers commented that in her 25 years of teaching she had never seen such profound effects on the students, many of whom came from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Gen Verde have a new album called 'From the Inside Out'. It contains songs that have emerged from their discussions with young people and the choice of sounds and musical styles are those they listen to: rock, electronic/dance music and K-pop. The themes running through those songs draw from the message of the Gospel and show that despite seeming the opposite, there is reason to hope.

Their tour also included events in Welwyn Garden City such as a weekend for young people and meetings with a distinctly ecumenical and interfaith flavour. With Christians from various denominations they prayed for Christian unity and in an interfaith supper they shared their experiences and songs with about 100 people, including members of the Jewish, Baha'I, Sikh, Jain and Hindu faiths, as well as those representing several Christian churches. Their songs which speak of dialogue resounded extremely clearly that evening with a number of people being moved to tears listening to them.

Another highlight of the week was a visit to the Islamic Centre of England as guests of Dr Mohammad Ali Shomali who at the end of an evening of deep sharing encouraged Gen Verde to go ahead with their work: 'You are spirituality on the road', he said, 'You go where people are in need. Don't ever feel desperate or tired or think that you are too small to change the world. What you do is great.' (Drawn from an article first published in New City in January 2019)

The Focolare Movement are a [Body in Association of CTE](#)

And Finally ...

English and Welsh ARC

The formal ecumenical dialogue committee in England between the Anglican and Roman Catholic Church has, up to now, been called 'English ARC'.

Please note that now it is 'English and Welsh ARC' and for all purposes of advertising also has a new short web link to the area of the CTE website where all information, history, members, reports, contacts etc can be found:
www.cte.org.uk/englishandwelsharc

'Crossing Divides' – friends who are good for the brain

Jim Currin writes:

'I saw this item on the BBC News app and thought how much it relates to the ecumenical journey – making friends with people who are *not* like you seems to be healthy!'

The item reads:

When people are exposed to a more diverse group of people, their brains are forced to process complex and unexpected information. The more people do this, the better they become at producing complex and unexpected information themselves. This trains us to look more readily look beyond the obvious - precisely the hallmark of creative thinking.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-47369648>

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