

A Common Life - National

How can the churches nationally collaborate more in mission?

What can they share, and what stops them from sharing?

How can the churches witness more effectively to a troubled and divided nation?

What new campaigns should be undertaken, along the lines of Jubilee 2000?

Examples:

- ◆ www.calmonline.org.uk Adult Education and Learning specialists get together in CALM (Christian Adult Learning Meeting).
- ◆ www.ccrj.org.uk Churches work together for racial justice.
- ◆ www.cim.org.uk Churches gather information for mission together.
- ◆ www.baptist.org.uk. Instead of creating its own, the Baptist Union has adopted the Methodist Church's Guidelines on the Internet.
- ◆ www.christianity.org.uk The Churches work together to encourage and answer questions about the faith, through the Christian Enquiry Agency.

A Common Life - District, Diocese, Division

How much do the Churches plan for mission together in city/county ecumenical bodies?

Where are relationships built up in a **Common Life** so that there can be trusting and truthful conversations.

What plans are made to respond together to the social, economic and civic needs and opportunities of the area?

Where is the future ministry of the Churches discussed, so that there is good stewardship of human and material resources.

Examples:

- ◆ www.ctdorset@clara.net/news Churches in Dorset address social issues together as DORCAS (Dorset Church and Society).
- ◆ www.ctal.org.uk Lincolnshire churches share news and activities
- ◆ www.ruralnet.org.uk/~arc/ Churches respond together to foot and mouth challenges through the Arthur Rank Centre.
- ◆ www.welcometolakeland.com/~Churches_Together_In_Cumbria Lake District churches encourage discovery of the peace of God.

A Common Life - Local

How can we move from "doing ecumenical things" to "doing things ecumenically".

How can we serve the local community better?

How can the churches think of "ecumenical" as liberating, enriching and a real sharing of common concerns and opportunities.

How can churches really participate in one another's agendas?

What can be discovered about a **Common Life** as we:

- Respond to local social needs together.
- Worship together.
- Study together.
- Evangelise together.
- Nurture together.
- Prepare people for marriage, together.
- Do our youth work together.
- Contact local schools together.

Examples:

- www.thisischurch.com In Local Ecumenical Partnerships, denominations share ministry, members and building in a **Common Life**, such as at St Mark's and Putnoe Heights on the outskirts of Bedford.
- www.btinternet.com/~ctk/role-rep.htm Those who represent their church in a local ecumenical meeting need to ensure that it is churches together, not a group detached from the life of the churches.
- www.liskeard-churches.co.uk Churches in a Cornwall town make their activities known, together.

Together in a Common Life raises questions for Churches and individual Christians about the extent of the communion (*koinonia*) which we celebrate and claim when we say "*The Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all!*"

Such fellowship - **common life** - is at the very heart of God's own eternal Life. Communion in God's Life and with one another is God's gift to us. God's gift of **common life** is integral to his plan for the whole world. Our unity is for the sake of the wider unity of humankind.

Intensive dialogues go on between the Churches in England and world-wide. We rejoice that there are new agreements and richer understandings between formerly estranged Churches and Christians. Alongside and ahead of such conversations we need:

- to find ways of delighting in diversity
- to feel that we belong to one another
- to develop our inter-dependence
- to be mutually accountable
- to become truly reconciled with one another.

... all this, so that the world may believe, and so that the divisions of the Church may not be a stumbling-block to faith.

Together in a Common Life is meant to help those who are pilgrims together on the way to God's kingdom

- to deepen their relationships
- to discover unity not only as the journey's end, but also as a way of journeying now.

Together in a Common Life

*O God, Holy and Eternal Trinity,
We pray for your Church in all the world.
Sanctify its life; renew its worship;
Empower its witness; heal its divisions;
Make visible its unity.*

*Lead us, with all our brothers and sisters,
Towards communion in faith, life and witness
So that, united in one body by the one Spirit,
We may together witness to the perfect unity
of your love.*

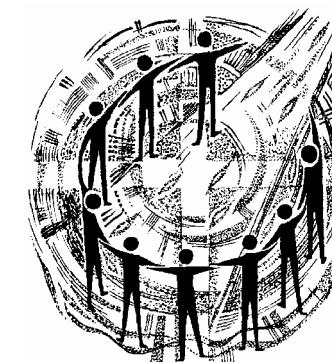
www.churches-together.org.uk has information about Churches Together in England, and the work of various Co-ordinating Groups and Bodies in Association.

www.churches-together.net is a web-site devoted to **common life** material, intended to encourage inter-change of experiences as churches grow closer together in their life and mission. You are invited to send your comments on this material to **Common Life** at Churches Together in England, 27 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HH or email to commonlife@churches-together.net.

Copies of this leaflet may be obtained from Churches Together in England, 20 for £2 incl. p&p.



INTRODUCING



TOGETHER in a COMMON LIFE

The Millennium Year saw great steps forward in ecumenical relations. Churches got together to distribute candles or Gospels, to hold special evangelistic events and to initiate new projects.

At Pentecost 2000 more Christians in England were united in worship *All Together in One Place* than ever before. They came from all traditions: they made new friendships, they forged new links in the worship and service of Jesus Christ.

The Churches in England want to build on this positive experience. Reflecting on the account of the first Christian Pentecost when "*They met constantly to hear the apostles teach, and the share the common life, to break bread and to pray*", the Churches are committed to ask "How can we grow closer **Together in a Common Life?**"