

Reflection of the Month: International Reformed Anglican Dialogue

Elizabeth Welch writes:

It has been commented that at present in the UK we live in an 'ecumenical winter', in which the search for self-identity in separated churches has become stronger than the desire for moving closer together with one another. Local practical co-operation has flourished, as in the area of Hackney in which I live, where 30 churches co-operate in the Hackney Winter Night Shelter, providing shelter for the homeless on church hall floors during the winter months. However, the wider issues, such as the nature of shared Christian believing in a changing world, and the understanding of authority in the church and where authority lies, have taken a back seat in terms of ecumenical growth and development.



Having previously chaired a round of United Reformed Church and Church of England conversations, culminating in an historic service of Reconciliation, Healing of Memories and Mutual Commitment in Westminster Abbey in 2012, I was privileged to be invited to be the Reformed co-chair of the new round of the International Dialogue between the Anglican Communion and the Reformed Communion.

The last time this dialogue met, in the early 1980's, the report *God's Reign and our Unity* (1984) was offered as the culmination of the work. This report was seen as significant for its particular focus on the mission challenges facing the church and the need to share together in mission.

The next round of the dialogue began in Kerala, South India, in 2015. The carefulness with which the conversation needed to proceed was highlighted at the very start in the discussion about the title of the dialogue. Should we be the 'Anglican Reformed International Dialogue'? But this would abbreviate to 'ARID', which was far from our hope. Or could we be the Reformed Anglican International Dialogue? This would then abbreviate to 'RAID', and we were praying for a more peaceful outcome. So we became the 'International Reformed Anglican Dialogue' or IRAD, with the hope that the title would reflect a neutrality and an openness to the way in which we prayed that God would lead us forward together.

Kerala is significant in being a place in which Reformed and Anglican churches, alongside other traditions, have come together, as part of the united Church of South India. One of the team members in the dialogue is a Reformed bishop from this church.

The communique from this first meeting pointed to the purpose of the dialogue: 'The dialogue has been mandated to study to the nature of communion (koinonia), a wide range of missiological challenges facing the two Communion, and the sources wherein the work of the Spirit may be discerned, notably authority and governance, episcopate and episcopacy.'

The meetings take place in the context of different continents, giving an opportunity to reflect contextually on the issues between Anglican and Reformed Christians. In South India we heard from the Moderator and General Secretary of the Church of South India, as well as from local congregational experience of sharing. In Cambridge in 2016 a visit was made to a Local Ecumenical Partnership between the Church of England and the United Reformed Church. In South Africa, there was a time to reflect on the churches' role in the apartheid and post-apartheid eras.

'Communion' has given an imperative to the direction of the talks. This is a word that has many dimensions. The Anglican Communion is a long-standing body with much historic experience. The World Communion of Reformed Churches is a relatively new group, formed in 2010 from the Reformed Ecumenical Council and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. In each of our traditions, the service of Holy Communion lies at the heart of our worship. The dialogue group has reflected on the meaning of communion from the international setting to the local and personal context. This has been set within an understanding of the gift of communion that is seen in the life of the Holy Trinity, and thus reflected in the church. Many papers have been presented on the range of different meanings. In the third meeting of the dialogue group, 'the group deepened its exploration of communion as an unbreakable gift and calling within the context of our diverse world communions.'

The meetings are rooted in prayer and worship, offered from the riches of these two traditions of the church. While the conversations have had times of difficulty and challenge, I give thanks to the Holy Spirit, for holding us together with one another, and opening up new pathways of shared exploration of our common faith.

Revd Elizabeth Welch

United Reformed Church Minister in Clapton Park United Reformed Church
Former Moderator of the United Reformed Church General Assembly
Reformed Co-Chair of the International Reformed Anglican Dialogue

[Download the communique Word document](#)

CTE embarked on the next stage of the ecumenical journey

Churches Together in England has published extracts from its 2017 report to the Charity Commission, highlighting the Theos report, *That they may all be one: insights into Churches Together in England and contemporary ecumenism*, which had been



commissioned to signpost the next phase of the ecumenical journey. The *Review of 2017* is structured around CTE's strategic priorities of relationships, action for mission and theological reflection. It reports on the work CTE did in 2017 in all three areas of work and also highlights the importance of the 500th anniversary of the 1517 Reformation, which loomed large in CTE's work last year.

Routine and key pieces of work are included in the work, particularly the report *Behind Closed Doors – voices against gendered violence, human trafficking and modern day slavery*, the eighteen month long Heritage Lottery funded project, *They Also Served – the contribution of Black African and Caribbean servicemen and servicewomen to WW1*, and the game-changing *A new framework for Local Mission in Unity* together with A guide to understanding 'A New Framework'.

Looking to the future, the *Review of 2017* notes the impending retirement of David Cornick, CTE's General Secretary, and the appointment of his successor, Paul Goodliff. Future tasks include further work on the Theos report, re-aligning CTE's strategic aims towards a mission focus, seeking financial stability for CTE and using CTE's expertise for the benefit of Member Churches and Intermediate Bodies.

- [Download the Review of 2017](#) (contains hyperlinks to further information)
- [Order free printed copies in bulk to distribute at your meetings](#) (one sheet of A3 folded)
- [Read previous annual reviews](#)

Please note that the '2017 Annual Report and Accounts' is not yet available. That has first to be approved by CTE's Independent Examiner and then signed off by the Board of Directors. At that point it will be uploaded [to our website](#).

Moving Mountains A mission in Cumbria

Mike Talbot writes:

Take 300 churches, stir in 160 visiting team members, surround with prayer and infuse with the willing participation of scores of Christians from across Cumbria, and the result is Moving Mountains.



Over a weekend in March, around 500 events took place, 15,000 gospels were distributed and about 25,000 people connected with what was going on in one form or another across Cumbria. Finding its roots in the Northern Bishops' Missions (which have been in Sheffield, Blackburn and Durham), what made the mission to Cumbria stand out was its ecumenical nature. 40 Senior Leaders (drawn from Methodist District Chairs, URD Moderators, Anglican Bishops and Salvation Army Divisional Commanders) came together to engage in a time of outreach, in obedience to Jesus prayer in John 17: 'Father, may they be one as we are one, so that the world might know'.

Unity with a purpose in a county where the ecumenical engagement is already making a significant difference to the way in which churches work together as part of the God for All initiative, so that everyone in Cumbria will have an opportunity to discover more of God and his purpose for their lives, so that they come to discover more of Jesus, and the good news and become followers of Jesus within a Christian Community.

Over the four days we saw a kaleidoscope of creative ideas, often flowing from what was already happening impact local communities, culminating in England's largest every Messy Church, when 2000 people were drawn to the Rheged Centre, just outside Penrith, on Mothering Sunday. What was significant, however, during Moving Mountains, were the one-to-one conversations that took place in pubs, over soup lunches, at ceilidhs, on sofas in the centre of villages as people explored what it means to be followers of Jesus.

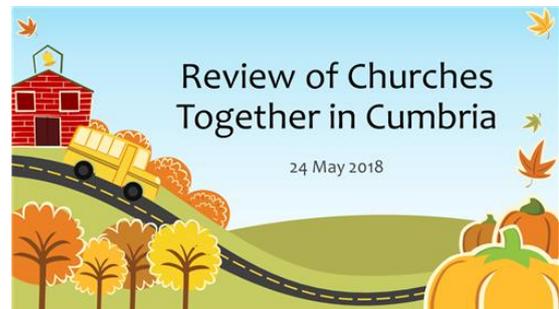
Alongside those discussions, churches were encouraged in their own outreach – not least in seeing what happened in March as one piece of a much bigger jigsaw puzzle of ensuring that mission is an ongoing part of their lives, individually and as church communities. If Moving Mountains simply becomes an event that happened in March 2018, then it is of little value. If it becomes a movement, then it can have a significant impact. And most of the 300 or so churches that were involved have grasped that and are looking ahead with renewed energy at ways in which they can ensure that outreach is a normative part of their lives in the months and years ahead.

More information: <https://www.godforall.org.uk/moving-mountains/>

Review of Churches Together in Cumbria

The vision is remarkable, fruitful and of God

That is the conclusion of Churches Together in England's review of the ecumenical endeavour in Cumbria. Cumbrian ecumenism is the fruit of its history and is based on strong relationships honed in major disasters over the years. The Churches had pulled together in their service of local communities, earning the respect of secular authorities and deepening their desire for Christian unity.



Outstanding ecumenical generosity

The review noted the challenges facing Cumbria including vast geography and tiny numbers. It recognised the size of the diocese of Carlisle compared to the other Churches in Cumbria and suggested that comments about this were the 'sound of the small confronted with the large'. The review paid tribute to the outstanding ecumenical generosity of the diocese of Carlisle which takes seriously the Church of England's charism to serve the whole community and puts huge resources at the service of all. 'Imbalance is a reality', concluded the reviewers, [David Cornick](#) and [Jenny Bond](#), 'work creatively with it! The reality of Anglican strength is a gift for all.'

Is 'Churches Together' dead?

In presenting the review document to the Executive and Church Leaders of Churches Together in Cumbria, and to the annual gathering of Churches Together groups on 24

May 2018, the reviewers said that they had expected to conclude that developments towards an ecumenical County in Cumbria and the formation of mission communities spelled the end of the usefulness of Churches Together structures in Cumbria. This, however, was not so. It had become clear that Churches Together structures were still wanted and needed at both local and county level, providing a level playing field for all Churches and able to scan horizons to expand ecumenical relationships. In particular, the review noted that although many people were tasked to work ecumenically in Cumbria, only Churches Together in Cumbria uniquely had the task of working towards Christian unity.

Social Responsibility work is the jewel in the crown

The review paid particular tribute to the work of the Social Responsibility Forum in Cumbria, recognising that its work over twenty five years was the key to the enormous respect accorded to Churches Together in Cumbria by secular authorities. It had also facilitated and enabled local Churches Together groups to become proven vehicles for social action together in response both to emergency situations and also to ongoing needs.

Keep walking

The way forward, suggested the review, was a 'mixed economy' of structures, all working in partnership with each other, alongside and overlapping yet not duplicating. Each place would need something different and must be allowed to develop accordingly. In this the role of Churches Together in Cumbria was crucial.

In conclusion the review stressed that kingdom building, which is what was happening in Cumbria, involves challenges and difficulties but is also blessed by God. The Churches in Cumbria were doing all they could, constantly pushing at the boundaries of possibility. 'Trust in God and remain faithful to the vision' urged the reviewers. 'Only God has the map; we make the path by walking.'

God is doing great things here

Sarah Moore, President of Churches Together in Cumbria and Area President of the URC Cumbria Area said: 'This report confirms the fact that rumours of the death of ecumenism are greatly exaggerated! Here in Cumbria we are working hard to engage in mission together as we hold together the covenant partnership between the Salvation Army, the United Reformed Church, the Methodist Church and the Church of England outworked in *God for All* and the wider relationship between all of the member churches of Churches Together in Cumbria that is grounded in our long-standing and well respected engagement in Social Responsibility. God is doing great things here!'

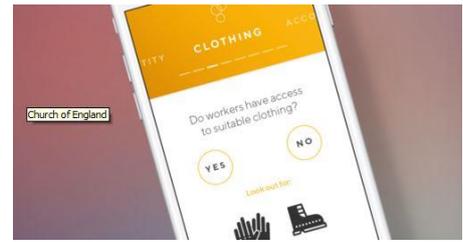


- [Download the review report as a pdf](#)
- [Download the review report as a Word file](#)
- [Download the PowerPoint presentation](#)

Photo credit Chris Dobson

Churches to help stop car wash modern slavery with app

A report from Premier, by Cara Bentley.
Sun 03 Jun 2018



Anti-slavery charities suspect many victims to be in car wash businesses and support the churches' app.

The National Crime Agency thinks there are tens of thousands of people being exploited in the UK, forced to work long hours, for little or no pay, and under threat of violence. They suspect many of them are working in terrible conditions in car washes as police have unearthed this kind of exploitation in garages throughout the country.

To combat the problem, drivers are being encouraged to join a national information-gathering campaign launched by the Church of England? and the Catholic Church in an app.

The Safe Car Wash app will allow drivers to log where they are washing their car and answer a series of questions which could help identify if the staff have been trafficked.

This could vary from saying whether the workers have suitable protective clothing to any personal indicators such as staff seeming withdrawn.

[Read the whole story from Premier.](#)

Spirit of Windrush service to be at Westminster Abbey

Press Release from Marcia Dixon



A special service is being held at Westminster Abbey on 22 June 2018 to mark the 70th anniversary of the arrival of the MV Empire Windrush at Tilbury Docks on 22 June 1948.

A thanksgiving service, 'Spirit of Windrush - Contributions to Multicultural Britain' will uniquely reflect on the impact Caribbean people have had on the UK, particularly since the Windrush's arrival. The Dean of Westminster, the Very Revd Dr John Hall, will officiate at the service and will wear the Windrush Cope (a liturgical vestment) that has been specifically created to mark this Windrush 70th anniversary year. The service will be broadcast on BBC Radio 4's Sunday Worship (0810-0848) on Sunday, 24th June.

The Revd Canon Joel Edwards will preach and participants will include a 70th Anniversary Windrush Choir, directed by Karen Gibson, and a specially commissioned anthem by composer Shirley Thompson.

Gospel soloist Carla Jane will perform as well as the Shernall Street Methodist Steel

Band, with dramatic creativity moments designed by young people and directed by award winning young Director Roy Alexander Weise.

The artist Terry Duffy's acclaimed 14ft by 11ft painting 'Victim no Resurrection' will be a symbolic offering during the service. Images reflecting the Windrush era will be projected on screens before and after the service and an exhibition of the iconic 'grip' (aka suitcase) will be on show.

Dr Joe Aldred, a child of the Windrush Generation and Chair of the ecumenical Windrush Service Planning Committee said, "This special service gives the nation an opportunity to learn about a major era in Britain's migration history. By focusing on the three themes of 'Invitation', 'Mixed Welcome' and 'Resilience/Overcoming' it's our hope that the service will give insights into the complex Windrush journey of challenges and opportunities."

The service which takes place against the backdrop of the recent 'Windrush Generation' citizenship controversy, has been planned during the past year and Westminster Abbey will be full.

Please note that admission is by ticket only and all tickets are now fully allocated.

WCC calls for Day of prayer to end Famine



WCC Press Release 31 May 2018

The World Council of Churches (WCC), World Evangelical Alliance and All Africa Conference of Churches, along with a coalition of other partners, are promoting 10 June as the second annual Global Day of Prayer to End Famine.

Eastern Africa, the horn of Africa, Yemen and northeast Nigeria continue to be gripped by a devastating food crisis. Across these regions, 30 million people are experiencing shocking levels of hunger. But that famine is only the tip of the iceberg of food insecurity that is experienced globally. In 2017, almost 124 million people across 51 countries and territories faced crisis levels of acute food insecurity or worse.

Unfortunately there was a funding gap of 29% of the amount required. Inadequate action and response in this most massive hunger emergency in the world will lead to untold misery, malnutrition, and deaths. The United Nations estimates that as many as 1.4 million children could die of starvation in the coming months.

The easy way out of the situation is to refer the problem back to the people or communities who are in need, reflected Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, WCC general secretary. "We often hear responses from ourselves, to people who are in desperate situations and are hungry and thirsty, asking: 'Why didn't you prepare for the hard times? Haven't you saved any money? Why don't you stop fighting each other?' " But 30 million people facing the risk of famine need more from the rest of the world, Tveit urged. "You give them something to eat. That is what Jesus commands us to do."

Rev. R. Christopher Rajkumar of the National Council of Churches of India, and chair of the Strategy Group of the Food for Life Campaign of the WCC-Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, added: "It is not necessarily out of our plenty, that we are asked to give. We are called to share what we have, regardless of our situation. We are not to worry if the little we provide is enough for everyone in need. Together, we can transform hunger to satiety and plenty!"

[Reflection on Famine & Hunger for the Global Day of Prayer in End Famine 2018](#)
[Global Day of Prayer to End Famine](#)
[Join the Global Day of Prayer to End Famine](#)

Cherry Hamilton appointed to Christian Enquiry Agency

Kathy Morgan writes:

The trustees of the Christian Enquiry Agency (CEA) are delighted to announce the appointment of Cherry Hamilton as their Communications' Manager from June.



Cherry replaces Peter Graystone who co-ordinated the CEA for the last seven years. Cherry will be overseeing a further update of the website www.christianity.org.uk as well as increasing social media presence to raise even further the number of people contacting the CEA.

Cherry Hamilton has over 10 years' experience of communications management in the public and charity sectors. She has used her gifts of communication to further the evangelism of her local church in Manchester.

In previous roles Cherry created and revitalised communications and media strategies for organisations, securing national TV and print coverage, and engaging leading politicians. She provided media advice to CEOs and acted as a press spokesperson. She also freelanced as a photographer.

Cherry says, "The CEA shows people the love of Jesus Christ through listening, prayer and helping them grow in their understanding of the faith. People from all walks of life are interested in Christianity, and it's my privilege to put that good news within easy reach of today's audience."

Cherry starts as CEA Communications' Manager on 11th June 2018.

The Christian Enquiry Agency is an [Agency of Churches Together in England](#).

The church facing website for information is <https://christianenquiryagency.org.uk/>

Thy Kingdom Come Ecumenical Beacon event with 3 Presidents of CTE



Methodist Central Hall in Westminster, on the evening of Pentecost Sunday 20th May 2018, was the venue for an ecumenical Beacon event of [Thy Kingdom Come](#). It was hosted by Methodist Central Hall and the acting

Superintendent Minister, Revd Tony Miles. Present was the President of the Methodist Conference, the Revd Loraine Mellor, and the Secretary of the Methodist Conference, the Revd Canon Gareth Powell.

The main speaker was the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Justin Welby, one of the six Presidents of Churches Together in England. The Archbishop, alongside the Archbishop of York, has been the lead for the international call to prayer between 10th May and Pentecost Sunday 20th May 2018.

1000 people were present, praying with 2 other CTE Presidents: Pastor Agu of Jesus House, who is the Pentecostal President, who led the prayers, and Revd Dr Hugh Osgood, Moderator of the Free Churches Group, who read from Scripture Acts 2: 1-21, about receiving the Spirit. This Pentecost prayer was the theme of the music from the Gospel Choir from Jesus House, and the singer Pete James who sang a new song '[Your Kingdom Come](#)'.

You can watch the ecumenical Beacon event from the live stream that was watched by 35,000 people and the [video still available here](#). The service was one of many thousand held in all parts of the UK and in over 85 countries around the world. The intention of the prayer was particularly for evangelisation and for individuals to pray for friends and colleagues to come to be followers of Jesus. The resources produced for that purpose are still available from the website [Thy Kingdom Come](#).

'More than belonging' Germinate rural conference 13th October 2018



Louise Davis writes:

Through key note speakers, case studies and workshops, the 2018 Germinate Conference will explore what it means for rural Christians to do more than belong to their churches and communities. Both inspiring and practical, the day will bring together individuals, churches, agencies and networks involved in rural mission and ministry.

Saturday 13 October 2018: 9.30am-4pm

The Welcome Centre, 47 Parkside, Coventry, CV1 2HG
Tickets from £50

Keynote speakers:

The Rt Revd Dr David Walker, Bishop of Manchester. Bishop David is the President of the Rural Theology Association, Bishop of Manchester and the author of God's Belongers: How people engage with God today and how the church can help.

Revd Claire Maxim, CEO, Germinate. Claire is Germinate's new CEO. Formally a rural rector, with a business and engineering background, she brings a wealth and breadth of experience of what it means to belong in and to a variety of contexts.

Workshops

Choose two of the following seven workshops when you book your tickets:

- Open Welcome: using our buildings for mission (Elizabeth Clark). What do our buildings say about us? How can we ensure that our church buildings are open and how can we use them to tell the story of faith?
- Rural Fresh Expressions: beginning with listening (Sally Gaze, Simon Mattholie, Pete Atkins). How might we rediscover the value of mission as a dialogue, listening to both culture and God, in order to understand what is the good news for our rural communities? In this session Sally Gaze and others share examples of listening in mission to draw some key point of learning to help us missionally engage in our local rural context.
- Making the most of Rural Mission Sunday (Louise Davis). Rural Mission Sunday is an opportunity to celebrate the rural church and encourage opportunities to share faith. This workshop will share both stories and practical tips on how to do it well.
- Effective Church Communications (Jo Swinney, CPO). How to communicate successfully with your rural community. Come and explore how to get your message across to the people you want to hear it.
- Shared Ministry: the Cumbria story (Richard Teal, Chair of Cumbria Methodist District) How can we really work together and share ordained ministry across denominations? Come and hear about the experiences of the Methodist Church, Church of England and the United Reformed Church in Cumbria and how they to work ecumenically.
- Discerning Gifts: facilitating shared ministry (Matthew Reed, Appreciating Church) How can we help members of our congregations to discern their gifts? A team from Appreciating Church will help us to look at discerning and nurturing gifts across congregations.
- Discipleship in Messy Church (Messy Church Team). Discover more about building a Christ-centred community with a focus on forming new disciples, deepening discipleship and how Holy Communion can form part of Messy Church.

Conference tickets

Early bird special offer: £50 until 30 June, £60 until 20 Sep, Full price £70

For further help or information about any aspect of the Germinate Conference, contact the Germinate office by email (info@germinate.net) or phone (024 7685 3060).

Feedback from previous participants

'Most focused and inspiring rural conference I have ever attended!'
'Energising, creative, inspiring... exciting to be part of this.'
'I'm left with a feeling of excitement and renewal.'
'The Germinate Conference has totally energised and enthused me.'

More information and booking: <http://germinate.net/training/germinateconference/germinate-conference-2018/>

Summary of CRG meeting 24.05.18.

The Churches Rural Group met at the Arthur Rank Centre in Stoneleigh, Warwickshire, and welcomes as a new member the Revd Claire maxim, the new CEO of Germinate.

The group discussed the following:

- 'More than belonging.' Germinate conference 13th October 2018.
- Rural Mission Sunday 15th July.
- The recent international rural conference IRCA
- The recent Roman Catholic rural conference
- Implications of GDPR
- etc

[Download the Summary](#)

Jobs

[Welcome Directory Regional Officer](#)

for the East Midlands region. Applications must be received by Friday 8 June 2018

[Stepwise Programme Assistant](#)

sought by URC. Applications must be received by 12 noon on Monday 11 June 2018

[Stepwise Programme Manager](#)

sought by URC. Applications must be received by 12 noon on Monday 11 June 2018

[Dementia Officer for Churches Together in Cumbria](#)

Closing date for applications 16th June

And finally ...

Asylum Applications and Christian Belief

This is a briefing for ministers called to give evidence in support of asylum applications and has recently been updated in May 2018. Produced by the Joint Public Issues Team, made up of the Baptist Union, the Church of Scotland, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church, working together for peace and justice.

Many people seek asylum in the UK on the grounds that they fear persecution as Christians or as converts to Christianity in their country of origin. Some may have entered the UK as Christians or have experienced a conversion to Christianity after they have arrived. Some of these worship in our local churches and participate in the life of the congregation. As a result, ministers and members of our congregations are confronted, possibly for the first time, with the complexities of the asylum process.

[Read the briefing paper.](#)

English Bishop elected Vice President of CEC

Bishop Guli Francis-Dehqani, the Bishop of Loughborough, has been elected Vice President of the Conference of European Churches. The regional ecumenical body is a fellowship of some 116 Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican, and Old Catholic Churches from across Europe. It also includes 40 national councils of churches and partner organisations. It celebrates its 60th anniversary next year. Bishop Guli was elected at the CEC's quinquennial General Assembly, which is currently taking place in Novi Sad, Serbia.

[Read the news in the Anglican Communion News Service](#)

Archbishop of Canterbury speaks at CEC

Archbishop Justin Welby spoke at the current General Assembly of the Conference of European Churches on the theme of being called to be workers of peace for Europe. "The gift of reconciliation must call the churches to unity and, in that, we attach great importance to CEC and ecumenical work. Reconciliation is also much more than that: it draws us forward in our quest to become workers for peace," he said.

[Read the text in the blog from CEC General Assembly](#)

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