

**SEPTEMBER 2014**



Amid the ruins: a Palestinian woman at a UN-run school that was sheltering Palestinians displaced by the war in northern Gaza. Witnesses say it was hit by Israeli shelling that killed at least 43 people, and wounded many others

THE strategies on both sides of the current war in Gaza are self-defeating, and cannot bring about peace, the Archbishop of Canterbury has said.

In a long statement released in August, Archbishop Welby condemned both the firing of rockets into Israeli towns by Hamas, and the aerial bombing of civilian areas in Gaza by Israel.

"Populations condemned to hopelessness, or living under fear, will be violent," he said. "Such actions create more conflict, more deaths, and will, in the end, lead to an even greater disaster than the one being faced today. The road to reconciliation is hard, but ultimately [is] the only route to security."

Praising the humanitarian efforts of the diocese in Jerusalem, Archbishop Welby urged Christians in the West to "beat down the doors of heaven, and pray for peace and justice and security".

His comments were echoed by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Vincent Nichols. In a statement on Thursday, he said: "The pain, anguish and sense of hopelessness of those men, women and children cry out that war is not the answer. As this conflict shows, violence breeds violence.

"I plead for an immediate truce in Gaza that will not only put an end to this latest carnage but that will also address at last the core problems behind this conflict which has so blighted the lives of all the peoples of the Holy Land."

Archbishop Welby also urged people to give to the diocese of Jerusalem's emergency appeal for more than £300,000 to run its Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza City. So far, the diocese in Jerusalem says, donations have reached less than one-fifth of the target. The Bishop's Chaplain in Jerusalem, Canon John Organ, said on Tuesday that, overall, although some individuals had

**Chairman - Bishop Tim Thornton**  
**Vice Chairman - Reverend Steve Wild**  
**CTC Missioner - David H Smith**  
**Treasurer - Mike Cullen**  
Charity No 1053899  
[www.churchestogetherincornwall](http://www.churchestogetherincornwall)

contributed money, "the pledges have not yet materialised into solid funds."

The biggest items on Al-Ahli Hospital's list of needs is psycho-social support for women and children (\$100,000), medical supplies (\$95,000), and fuel (\$60,000) ([www.j-diocese.org](http://www.j-diocese.org)).

Among the contributions received so far are donations in kind from the Catholic Relief Services in the form of medical kits, and \$5000-worth of fuel for the hospital generators. Canon Organ said that supplies were reaching Al-Ahli Hospital via the Red Cross; however, more funds were urgently needed. The view of staff at Al-Ahli, he said, was that the current bombardment was the worst ever in terms of the number of people killed and wounded.

Palestinians in Gaza enjoyed only a brief lull in the violence on Monday, as Muslims worldwide celebrated the end of the sacred month of Ramadan. The tiny Christian community in Gaza City opened up the courtyard of St Porphyrius's to provide sanctuary for Muslims marking the day of celebration. About 500 people made homeless by the fighting were already sheltering in the church.

More than 1200 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli attacks on Gaza, and 55 Israelis have been killed during the conflict..

The Christian humanitarian organisation World Vision says that it continues to support 7000 mothers whom it has trained in what it calls Psychological First Aid, to help their children cope with traumatic events. The programme began after the previous war in Gaza, in November 2012. In a statement, World Vision said that the training had been of great benefit during this cycle of violence, as mothers could support their children and help them deal with fear and anxiety.

World Vision ended its statement with a call for "an immediate halt to this vicious cycle of violence, and for a lasting and just peace in the region".

The national director of World Vision's Jerusalem, West Bank, and Gaza office, Alex Snary, said that children were witnessing things that they would never forget. "The trauma they are exposed to can take years to recover from, and is for ever imprinted in the memory. It transforms a child's understanding of how the world works and how they need to behave in order to survive. No child, whether Israeli or Palestinian, should have to live this way."

Calls for an immediate ceasefire have come from all over the world. Pope Francis last Sunday deviated from his script to make an impassioned plea, apparently choking back tears as he spoke: "Please stop, I ask you with all my heart, it's time to stop. Stop, please."

The Evangelical Episcopal Church's Bishop in Israel & the Palestinian territories, Dr Hani Shehadeh, urged all Christians to stand up for the rights of the Christian family in the Middle East: "Lobby your parliament, speak up in your media, and pray for the well-being and safety of Christians facing persecution." The letter said that the latest conflict in Gaza meant that "the Christian community of this corner of the Holy Land faces extinction."

Kairos Britain, a network of individuals, organisations, and faith communities seeking peace in Gaza and Israel, also urged people to ask their MPs to influence politicians to end the fighting in Gaza. The group called for "prayers for an end to the violence, and for the creation of a just peace for Palestinians, which we believe is the only way to bring about peace and security for Israel, too".

## New Monasticism.



The Reverend Derek Collins, a Methodist minister of many years, led an interesting CEME day at Diocesan House on 7<sup>th</sup> July, attended by about twenty Anglicans and Methodists, clergy and licensed laity. It is widely known that traditional forms of Roman Catholic and Anglican Monasticism in the U.K. are in decline. Some Orders however are still attracting new postulants in former Communist Europe, which is how I have experienced them as a guest and donor to new work and buildings.

Derek Collins, dressed for the part as a pseudo Dominican, has acquired an extensive knowledge of several new forms of 'monasticism' that is a very different animal from the Traditional Orders. After an introductory lecture with a brief history of the subject and an opportunity to listen to clips of a variety of religious vocal music ranging from Greek and Russian Orthodox to people chanting in Scottish Gaelic we ventured into almost unknown territory. We then discussed six New Communities whose origins were explained.

**The Iona Community** was founded in 1938 by George McCloud in Glasgow, later established on Iona Island and despite a few hiccups is now flourishing. Tourism and commercialism have not improved the atmosphere but the members of this community are fairly adept at disengaging from aspects contrary to their way of life.

**The Northumbria Community** was founded by John and Linda Skinner but is now led by others and offers a wide range of activities, spiritual guidance and so on in the north of England.

**The Jerusalem Community** is Roman Catholic and based in Paris. They are self-supporting and in the process of translating material on their Website into English.

**The Franciscan Tertiary - or Third Order** is long established and fairly well known to Anglicans. It is not predominantly evangelical or aimed specifically at younger people.

**Taize** based in a French Monastery was shown to us by video. It is extremely popular particularly by young people, noisy with basic food and accommodation. It presents as a *Religious Glastonbury*. The tragic murder of the leader Br. Roger in 2006 is still fresh in adherent's minds and has influenced later events. **Moot**, like the others has extensive web-site coverage. It is based in Mary Aldermary in the City of London and now has formal Anglican recognition. It presents as slightly posh, aimed at the commuting population, which what one would expect in that location.

These organisations are children of the twenty-first century and far away from the traditions of the Desert Fathers or long established monasticism. However some of the Internet material specifically suggests warnings to the uninitiated. Firstly like all 'community' organisations there is the danger of the dominant personality, who could be autocratic or foster a personality cult. Secondly, and this has been a problem in traditional orders all religious groups tend to attract unstable people who can be either manipulative or easily manipulated. But provided proper research is carried out and sound advice received these New Monastic groups and others offer promise and perhaps a light at the end of some dark tunnels?

Overall it was a very interesting and informative day, for which Derek Collins is to be thanked for both the research and presentation.

**Primrose Peacock.**

## Methodists step up commitment to covenant with CoFE

*Note for prayer; the Church of England discuss this at General Synod this week*



News July 2014

The Methodist Church has made a commitment to taking a major step forward in its relationship with the Church of England.

The two Churches are committed to making their unity more visible through the Anglican-Methodist Covenant signed in 2003.

Today the Conference received a report, entitled *The Challenge of the Covenant*, which recommends that both Churches take action to enhance unity between them, with the work being fully embedded in Church structures.

Professor Peter Howdle, Co-Chair of the Joint Implementation Commission, which produced the report, said: "I think that now is an auspicious time in ecumenical relationships and that the Methodist Conference has taken a courageous and historic step in endorsing our recommendations. A similar bold step by the Church of England will completely change the relationship between our two Churches and make our joint mission much more credible and deepen our communion together."

[Read the whole article on Methodist Conference website](#)  
[Anglican-Methodist Covenant website](#)

### Early Alert 16<sup>th</sup> November 2014 - One year on from Declaration of Intent

The annual "follow up and reporting back" plus workshops and Ecumenical Service all being held one year on from the November 2013 Declaration of Intent.

We will be meeting at St John's Methodist Church, St Austell on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> November starting at 3pm and we invite all those Christians throughout Cornwall to come, participate and attend and to hear from their church leaders the progress that has been made.

At 6pm (after tea together) a closing act of ecumenical worship with the URC Moderator Rev Ruth Whitehead giving the "thought for the day." All are invited to join us.

## 100 groups of churches are planning a Silent Night Community Carol Service



Churches Together groups are working with Hope in organising Silent Night Carol Services for 2014, as part of the commemoration of World War I remembering the Christmas truce around a game of football.

Hope 2014, through the initiative **Greater Love**, are resourcing groups of churches holding a community carol service in a football stadium or equivalent sports venue.

**This information is from the website of Hope 2014:**

HOPE is working with Sports Chaplaincy UK to equip local clubs, community groups and churches to stage the events. Pilot events have been held in several stadia - indoors and out in the stands. In 2011 Bournemouth, Portsmouth, Aldershot Town and Shrewsbury Town football clubs held carol events at their stadiums with the help of sports chaplains, local school choirs and Salvation Army bands. In 2012 the idea spread to 15 clubs, and in 2013 more than 50 sports stadiums around the country hosted a carol event for fans and other members of the community.

Full article and resources:

[http://www.cte.org.uk/Groups/242301/Home/Resources/Mission/Hope\\_2014/Silent\\_Night\\_Carol/Silent\\_Night\\_Carol.aspx](http://www.cte.org.uk/Groups/242301/Home/Resources/Mission/Hope_2014/Silent_Night_Carol/Silent_Night_Carol.aspx)

### Sailing by for Church Funds.

Thunder rain following 'the hots' threatened to upset the annual trip in the Princessa Party Boat for 'The Friends' and other people from the parish of St. Michael's Penwerris on 24<sup>th</sup> July. Sadly once again Helford was "off" owing to a heavy swell.

So we went up the river to Malpas and back. The reward was some outstanding photographic opportunities owing to a low sun above banks of storm cloud reflected in rising mists. The river and small boats at anchor became almost translucent. There are now fewer large vessels 'laid up' and *Windsor Castle* a feature in the river for nearly ten years has been taken to Falmouth Dock to be refitted as a café!

Mrs Mary Miller and team organised the excellent 'home-made' buffet with hot pasties. Mr Trevor Jones oversaw a raffle that included some very useful and attractive prizes. Thanks to them and especially the boat owners, Skipper John and Mrs Fiona Pill without whose gracious financial kindness we would have never left the Town Quay.

**Primrose Peacock.**

## Par District Churches Together

are holding activities on Par beach during the week of August 25th to 29th. We are calling it "Family Fun on the beach" (unless we come up with a better title before then!)

It is basically a beach mission with children's activities on Bank Holiday Monday 25th, Tuesday 26th, Wednesday 27th and Friday 29th with a beach labyrinth on Thursday 29th. Timing: 11am to 3pm (Setting up from 10am).

There will be stories, races, games, competitions and songs based on a different biblical theme each day. We are asking parents to stay near their children - it is not a holiday club where people can leave their children.

We are also holding:

- a Songs of Praise in the garden of the Ship Inn at Polmear Par on Sunday 24th August at 4.30pm and
- a pilgrimage on Saturday 30th August starting at 10.30am at Spit Beach car park in Par.

This will involve about 4 miles walking over the day, meditating on Luke chapter 12. It will finish with the building of a cairn and a short act of worship on Spit beach at about 2pm. to end by 3pm

## Kids Holiday Club

Kids' Holiday Club organised by Churches Together in Wadebridge and District

Wednesday 29 - Friday 31 October 2013,  
10am - 1pm each day at St Breock Primary School, Wadebridge.

For children aged 4-11.

**The holiday club is exactly as described:**

"children doing craft activities, playing games, singing songs and hearing a bible story."

Leader: Carol Holmes

This was a very informative, if at times harrowing, day, showing some of the persecution of Christians which is going on in the world today, what is currently being done by various NGOs and what we can do practically, politically and spiritually to help alleviate the situation. It was set within a framework of worship to begin and end with.

In the first session, "**Setting the scene. Persecution – a historical and geo-political survey**", **Andy Dipper**, from Christian Solidarity Worldwide, provided some statistics on religious, and in particular Christian, persecution, and **Rupert Shortt**, Religion Editor of *The Times Literary Supplement*, gave further details of religious persecution, including the persecution of Muslims in some areas. Andy Dipper drew our attention to the 200 million Christians who are persecuted for their faith in 60 countries worldwide, while Rupert Shortt maintained that in a globalised world interfaith relations will be the dominant political force in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and if the six main religions are not part of the solution they will be part of the problem.

In the second session, entitled "**What can we do practically? The role of the NGOs**", four speakers described scenes they had witnessed during their work for four different NGOs. **Baroness Caroline Cox** described some of the places she had visited as Chief Executive of HART (Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust), which provides aid and advocacy for those suffering oppression and persecution who are largely neglected by the major aid organizations. She showed pictures of violent scenes in several countries, but emphasised that despite terrible attacks on churches and individuals Christians continue to worship and the most important thing we can do is pray for them.

Next, **John Pontifex**, Head of Press & Information for the Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need, spoke about its work from its inception 50 years ago and described some specific instances of the persecution of Christians, particularly in the Middle East. He stressed that Christianity is being emptied from its ancient heartlands, a fact largely ignored by the western media. The Head of Ministry at Open Doors, described its training and aid work as well as its work making churches in this country aware of the needs of persecuted Christians through volunteer speakers, 2 of whom are based in Cornwall.

Finally, **Caroline Kerslake**, International Director of Projects and Senior Editor for Barnabas Fund, described its work as a Christian aid agency for the persecuted church, providing a channel for giving towards projects helping Christians discriminated against because of their faith, including food aid, education, leadership training and Christian literature.

Next, two speakers addressed the topic "**What can we do politically?**". Truro and Falmouth MP **Sarah Newton** spoke about the British political process and how to use your MP, the work of the All Party Parliamentary Group on International Religious Freedom and how we can help to ensure that the Government follows through on its commitments. **Dr. Patrick Sookhdeo**, the International Director of Barnabas Fund and Director of the Institute for the Study of Islam and Christianity, gave a "behind the scenes review of geo-political and diplomatic realities".

One of the results of the military interventions of the last few decades, he said, is the threat of an end to Christianity in the Middle East: governments had to learn to deal with religious sensibilities and work out where to draw the line. He listed five topics which our government should continue to address, which included affirming the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the responsibility to protect minorities.

The brief lunch break provided an opportunity to look at the resources supplied by all the organizations represented and we reconvened for a session entitled "**What can we do spiritually?**". **Sheikh Dr. Muhammad Al Hussein** spoke on the role of Islam and inter-faith dialogue, stressing the importance of prayer and the command to "Love your neighbour as yourself", because Christians and Muslims had started to demonise each other and people of faith need to engage in debate with others. But the body of his talk was about hermeneutics, because the use or abuse of sacred texts has been a mandate for both hatred and toleration. Traditional scholarship has been heavily put upon by the arrival of "Sheikh Google". The challenge is to bring original texts into the mindset of present day Muslims.

Next **Dr. Russell Blacker**, a retired psychiatrist and campaigner on behalf of the persecuted church, spoke about the theology of persecution, with biblical references, stressing that to follow Christ means "taking up our cross", renouncing self, and giving up comfort and safety as our ultimate goals in life. He stressed that Jesus was talking about a real cross, but in the West we have lost sight of this side of discipleship. He played interviews with the survivors of a church in Pakistan bombed in September 2013, but it had not destroyed their faith. The church here must see itself as *part* of the persecuted church: we have lost sight of our corporate responsibility because we have seen our faith in personal terms.

Finally, another speaker spoke on "What we can learn from those who undergo persecution and what they need from us". He stressed that our role is to support our persecuted brothers and sisters and in view of the ignorance or apathy of the church here regarding the persecuted church our job is to raise awareness of it and to pray for it in an informed way.

There was then a question and answer session with responses from the speakers to written questions submitted previously and the day concluded with a powerful worship session. It was a very worthwhile day to have attended and I hope that we can build on it in our church.