

OCTOBER 2015



(Rev Steve Wild and Sarah Yardley of CreationFest)

Time taken together at both the Bodmin and Truro CTC Day Conferences gave delegates the opportunity to debate in workshop settings their responses to various questions. What are we doing outside our normal church buildings and established structures in terms of social action projects? Examples highlighted were:- Bibles for Schools, School Chaplaincy, Walks of Witness, Open air Feast week service, Great Big Christmas Sing, Street Pastors, Memory Café, Safe Spaces, "Live" Nativity, Homeless breakfasts, Shared worship, Open the Book, the Youth Café, Food Bank outlets, Charity shops and many more.

More recently the creation of Training and Education sessions between Methodist and URC churches, developing understanding of each others' traditions, getting to the point that 'you can't tell what flavour of Christianity people are,' exchanging of pulpits – shared worship and the refugee crisis which brings people together.

The Bibles for schools project focuses on all Reception age children receiving a copy of the Bible on entering schools in St Austell and Mevagissey. The Bibles are taken home and used in schools. Money for the scheme is raised by the churches but also by individuals.

Hayle and St Austell both operate "Open the Book." The more established Hayle project has developed the delivery to include pupils in a more positive manner, such as getting the children to act the parts as opposed to the adults. What is key, though, is that pupils know that the adults are from different churches working together in the town. Newquay and Penzance also have active "Open the Book" teams.

It was noted that churches in Camborne do work together but not always under the aegis of a formal Churches Together group. This was particularly true in relation to town events such as: walk of witness on Good Friday, the town nativity play in the town square and the town passion play. A number of CT Groups have had live nativities and Passiontide events.

Chairman - Bishop Tim Thornton
Vice Chairman - Reverend Steve Wild
CTC Missioner - David H Smith
Treasurer - Paul Durkin
Charity No 1053899
www.churchestogetherincornwall.org.uk

Hayle has a community carol service and St Austell the Christmas Big Sing. Both Hayle and Newquay have an annual "Songs of Praise."

One initiative was the Safari Supper where the starter is eaten in one church, the main in another, the sweet in a third and cheese, biscuits and coffee in a fourth. This enabled people to encounter different churches/chapels in a non-threatening way but in a way that built community.

Rural churches have their own problems as congregations decline. A real opportunity for churches to join together depending on:-
relationships:

- exploring something different
- celebrating difference
- joint worship trying to 'please' everyone – by building relationships can lead to discussion. Sunday meeting.
- go with the flow and be relaxed
- relationships – laughter! Support and Prayer
- day retreat – 'dream dreams'

Pray and Prophecy

- a week of 24/7 Prayer
- supporting lots of projects
- relationships – social events – safari suppers
- Movement Festival – free family community day with Creationfest
- Filling Station – not in a 'church' building
- events – for all denominations
- Catholic Church in England is very traditional (compared to France)
- enjoy the ecumenical work
- sharing experiences together

1. Concerns and frustrations were expressed relating to what does not work quite so well.

There was deep frustration about how bureaucracy gets in the way of further meaningful unity – Upton Cross was offered as an example. We need to learn how to motivate people, to meet and encounter each other meaningfully.

The question was asked: what has happened with the Anglican-Methodist covenant of 12 years standing, and the ecumenical agreement signed two years ago in Bodmin?

- a. There needs to be structural changes, especially in the intermediate levels below Bishop Tim/Rev Steve and above the grassroots activities of lay people locally. Tim/Steve model seems not to be replicated lower down between clergy of different traditions. The need to get commitment from all levels of churches locally.
- b. Sharing ministries, oversight, worship in churches. The way that some find it difficult to negotiate the traditions of others, putting people outside of their comfort zone – people didn't want to feel embarrassed by not knowing what to do.

- c Getting Pentecostal or Free churches to join local CT groups, especially if they already participate in local CT arranged mission activities - they will often engage in supporting social projects but not in worship, giving the sense that 'they are the real church' but others weren't. There were theological issues outstanding which compounded this situation.
- d Getting younger people involved. Discussion ensued about what this means - do we want them just to replace 'us' - or are we happy for them to do their own thing?
- e How do we take on board the 'critical' educational approach students have been taught?
- f Simply not wanting to go to others' churches. This wasn't just an issue with inter-denominational events. This was also true of Circuit services in some Methodist areas or Anglican Clusters where identity was felt to be lost or where such services were rarely well attended.

Some solutions had been tried, such as going to see the traditional service of another denomination and this had some limited success. On the whole, though, neutral venues appeared to work best.

2. What folk would like to explore and see develop further?

- Prayer should be higher on the agenda and we should find ways of spending more time in prayer together – to learn the languages of prayers from different traditions.
- Opportunities for theological reflection – learning how we do theology differently and enriching our own knowledge and understanding.
- The development of a chaplaincy to those working in Tourism. This would be cross denominational reaching out to people often on zero hours contracts, long and irregular hours and low wages.

3. What needs to change?

- a) Getting Pentecostal groups involved
- b) Appealing to young people
- c) Use of social media

Structural changes allowing ministry vacancies in rural areas to be filled by ecumenical clergy.

Getting websites running well and keeping them up to date. If we want to do more together we may have to face up to the reality of having to do less on our own.



More work with schools – easier if there is a church school in an area, but where there is none, need to make more impact - excellent work is already happening in Prayer spaces for Schools and Open the Book.

What do we need to move things forward?

We are one church – we have diversity within that church Sunday 15 November (2 yrs since Declaration) service of unity? Bodmin, St Austell – where next – rolling service – move around the District.

4. Each group was invited to share one issue. This resulted in the following points:-

The importance of making 'church' accessible

- Through our buildings: advertise that we are DDA friendly
- Through our language: cannot take our vocabulary with us; it is not known or understood
- Through our age groups: young as well as old
- Through our disabilities: those with any difficulties through to those with none
- Through all social levels: not just affluent but those who are struggling

If we could address accessibility issues we would have taken the church outside itself, because Church here does not just mean buildings but our institutions, structures and groups.

Unfortunately, our current structures get in the way of all this.

Four other suggestions were made:

There was a need to do something for children and young people across the member churches. Helping them develop friendships that could last into the future and help shape the future church. Have a more interactive and intuitive website, especially for local CTs linked to the Cornwall CT website. Such websites need to be fit for purpose.

Investing in non-traditional ways of being church so everybody is on a level playing field when coming together. There needs to be better communication as to what is going on and why. Often people in the pews don't get to hear about what is happening until it is too late or it has happened. Identifying who the gatekeepers are is essential. There needs to be a flow of information up and down the structure in an efficient way.

The creation of a common, joint, CT prayer for all members of CT groups in Cornwall to use everyday and pass on to other church members to help raise awareness and to launch our future work in prayer.

Would value more opportunities to discuss CT work outside own CT groups, maybe on an area basis rather than whole County.

Could CTC have a shop window of what advice and facilities are on offer for local CT groups?

Would love a course on pastoral visiting to those with dementia!

By far the majority attending the conferences stated they enjoy meeting with others, the fellowship together and the content. They heard from each church leader in turn, along with Martin Follett on gaining Charitable Status, Peter Moody on the importance of affiliation and insurance for activities and events, Christine Todd and Bren Stuart-white on Dementia Awareness and future 2016 plans.

We also had the youngest CT Group Chairperson from Callington with us, Morag Stolton and members of the Chemin Neuf Community.

Many thanks to Transformation Cornwall staff, Debbie Croucher, Lois Wild and Rosey Sanders in helping with the overall planning and organising of the event.

Also to Rev Steve Wild, who even with his very busy schedule found time to be with us as Churches Together in Cornwall as the work that CTC undertakes in Cornwall is very close to his heart.

ACTIVITIES - DOWN YOUR WAY

6th November at 6.30 pm Truro Baptist Church have asked us to advertise a **Jackie Pullinger Youth Event at Truro Methodist Church**. Aged 22, in response to God's call, Jackie Pullinger went from England to Hong Kong. She started sharing the love of Jesus Christ with gangsters and the poor in the Kowloon Walled City, seeing them set free from drug addiction and starting new lives.

Friday 13 November at the Palace Gate Centre, Exeter - a follow up to the Mental Health Roadshow.

Saturday 14th November 2015 Spiritual Companions Network in Devon annual conference from 10.30am - 3.15pm at South Street Baptist Church, Exeter. It will be led by Liz Watson from the World Community for Christian Meditation. Further details on our What's On page.

On the same day **Saturday 14th November** Teignbridge Circuit have a Quiet Day 'The waiting place of God'.

Wednesday 18th November Plymouth City Transformation Conference Contact Chris Clewer for more details or speak to Chris Forster. ctipchair@gmail.com

Much later in the year and in to 2016

The Ugly Duckling Company are again running their initiative for Christmas: "The Big Christmas Table Talk App Giveaway". Find out more www.table-talk.org.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 18th-25th January 2016 <https://ctbi.org.uk/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2016/> material prepared by the Christians of Latvia, adapted by the Britain and Ireland writers group, based on 1 Peter 2:9-10 -an encouragement to the newly baptised to live holy lives and to answer the calling shared by all the baptised to proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord.

Monday 22nd February- Friday 26th February 2016 – Growing the church. See www.growingthechurch.org.

Women's World Day of Prayer

As you know, a number of preparation events are held every autumn to help branches plan for the service in March 2016. These are not solely for branch secretaries but anyone who is interested in WWDP or Cuba is welcome to attend. Our nearest ones are normally held in Cornwall and in Plymouth. Unfortunately, owing to illness, the Plymouth one has had to be cancelled.

Anyone who was planning to go to that one is warmly invited to go to the Cornwall day which will be held at the Salvation Army Hall, Crantock St. Newquay TR7 1JR on Saturday 24th October from 10am to 3pm.

The cost is £2.50 per person, tea & coffee will be provided but you need to bring your own lunch. Please let Mary Cook know if you are going - 0794 6516888 or marycook1970@btinternet.com

A full list of preparation events can be found in our magazine Together in Prayer or on our website <http://www.wwdp.org.uk/preparation-days/>

Elizabeth Burroughs
(Methodist representative, National Committee for England Wales and Northern Ireland)

CHRISTMAS IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER



At a time of year when Christians around the world celebrate the birth of Jesus, thousands of children in Nigeria are longing for a precious gift, that of life. In the west African country, where 60 per cent of people live below the poverty line, 250,000 children under the age of five die as a result of malaria every year. This one country accounts for a quarter of all cases of malaria in Africa.

Women with malaria are particularly vulnerable, as they have a higher risk of miscarriage, premature delivery, stillbirth, severe anaemia and delivering babies with low-birth weight – a leading cause of child mortality. And as pregnancy reduces a woman's immunity to malaria, a pregnant woman is three times more likely to suffer from serious disease as a result of malaria infection than a non-pregnant woman. A lack of knowledge and poor access to information on health issues make the situation worse and malaria accounts for 11% of all maternal deaths in Nigeria.

Malaria claimed the lives of two of Mary Patrick Odey's children. Both Mary's four-year-old son Kenechukwu and six-year-old daughter Anah suffered the headaches, thirsts and fevers of malaria – and both lost their lives.

This Christmas, we're asking for help to deliver the precious gifts that could save lives: long-lasting, insecticide-treated mosquito nets and an effective public education programme delivered by trained community health agents.

With support from Christian Aid, Mary and her community, in Ora-Eri, south-eastern Nigeria have now been provided with life-saving mosquito nets and shown how to use them effectively by community health agents. Mothers have been taught how to spot the symptoms of malaria so Mary is able to protect her daughters Kosi and Christiana, as well as her grandchildren.

Community Development Committees have been set up to ensure the government provide quality healthcare and free malaria treatment to clinics. Only by holding the government to account in this way will we help communities get what they are entitled to and stop yet more people dying needlessly from malaria.

No child should die from a preventable disease. Your donation could help Christian Aid prevent many thousands of unnecessary deaths from malaria. Just £3 could buy a life-saving net and £60 could train three community health workers to deliver the nets and life-saving health advice in their local area.

With support from the UK Government, who will match every donation made to the Christmas Appeal between 6th November and 5th February up to a total of £5m, your donations can make a difference to children's lives in Nigeria. For more information, visit www.christianaid.org/Christmas

CHRISTIANS TOGETHER IN LINKINHORNE

We are a fellowship that includes active members of the Anglican, Methodist and Quaker denominations who have journeyed spiritually to joint worship and union in Christ in Upton Cross, Rilla Mill and Linkinhorne.

Historically the parish is called Linkinhorne and is centrally placed between Launceston, Liskeard and Callington and our churches and chapel link us to clusters, circuits and parishes centred on these towns.

Its history, however, has probably encouraged a sense of independence and self reliance going back to the early Celtic Christians, of whom St Mellor the patronal saint of the parish church was one. Like many of the Celtic saints whose names are lovingly preserved in the Cornish landscape, little is really known of him except that he must have been a worthy Christian.

This serves to remind us that it is the Lord's name that we bear and work towards promoting rather than any one denomination. The explosion of the population in the area during the mining days attracted and created many Christians of many different labels. Places of worship were built at virtually every crossroads, some were no more than tents, literally. If the song is right, "the creed and the colour and the name..." don't matter because the Lord was present with those struggling to alleviate the evils and ignorance that blighted many lives.

It is quite likely that it is because of this diverse history that worshippers at the remaining chapels and the two churches came together over the later years of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries.

Strong friendships were forged and joint ecumenical events such as harvest suppers and services and fellowship group were enjoyed. These were not however sufficient to stem the decline in numbers attending services or to upkeep buildings that had been too big even before completion as in the case of the Rilla Mill Methodist Chapel.

God pulled a few heads out of the sand, so to speak and once freed from worry about the building, the small Methodist fellowship returned to its historic small group or class type meeting and did so in the village hall.

With the other hand He disposed of the said building to two Baptist Christians who entered into and enriched the worship of the three remaining congregations.

The affirmation was clear that there was a future, a journey to be embarked on although without a destination revealed. What was also sure was that there were a few intrepid pilgrims ready to set out on it from all corners of the parish.

Support was readily forthcoming from Anglican and Methodist clergy and from both organisations and this was appreciated and will be gratefully used. The two offer handrails to guide and hold us up and on course along the path we seek to climb. Most of us feel that they have got us safely here and can be relied on in the future.

In recognition of the intention of the main Churches to make their own journey together on converging paths we signed our own copies of the document signed at Bodmin two years ago. This makes our intentions and that of our parent Churches clear. We are also echoing the national call to use the title Christians Together rather than Churches Together to say that we really will welcome all and any who seek to wear that badge.

We are far from ashamed of the institutions ourselves but recognise that we may travel further and faster with some if we park the baggage that they might associate with establishment and history. We belong to a family that recognises that we have made mistakes and that we don't always see eye to eye, similar words have been used by Pope Francis and we are in agreement that we can show love and respect and sit around the table together.

Calling for peace

Despite the action that Christian Aid and our partners are taking, a political response is the only long-term solution to the devastating conflict in Syria that is destroying the lives of millions of people. There are four aspects to this:

- We believe that the UK has to take a lead in bringing all those involved in waging war to the negotiating table. Those caught in the crosshairs of violent conflicts deserve nothing less.
- There has to be cross-European agreement on responding to the needs of refugees who have sought our help on European shores. We welcome the positive moves in Europe to relocate 120,000 of those seeking refuge. While this new action does not go far enough, it does set a positive precedent that must now be built upon. The response so far from the UK government has not gone far enough.
- The UK needs to constructively engage in developing a strategy involving the whole of Europe. We need a resettlement and relocation scheme that is balanced, mandatory and adequately funded.
- The UK has a proud history of working with other governments to protect the rights of refugees and of those fleeing conflict, and we are confident that this tradition will be upheld.

In addition, Christian Aid believes that the UK must resettle its fair share of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees who are still living in the region. We consider that 20,000 over five years is simply inadequate. We urge the UK to put in place safe and legal routes by which those seeking asylum from the region can do so. We believe this needs to be done quickly and not over 5 years.

Over 12 million people inside Syria are reliant on lifesaving aid. Over 4 million Syrian refugees have been living in often dire conditions in neighbouring countries for up to more than four years now.

These people still need our help and support, and more so now as winter approaches. The UK government can be proud that it is leading the way in pledging funds to meet some needs, but it must do more in encouraging other states to fulfil their pledges too. The international donor community must step up to the mark

Refugee Crisis Appeal update



The images of desperate refugees from countries like Syria and Iraq crossing the Mediterranean in unstable boats are a distressing reminder of the shocking refugee crisis that led to the founding of Christian Aid in 1945.

Meanwhile, in Syria itself, millions of people remain trapped in besieged areas, displaced internally and in need of humanitarian assistance. In neighbouring Lebanon, more than 1 million Syrians are living as refugees, while in Iraq there are now a quarter of a million Syrian refugees.

Christian Aid is working with our ACT Alliance agencies in supporting humanitarian efforts taking place in Europe, as well as with our partners in the Middle East. Our partners can provide essential humanitarian supplies such as food, water, baby kits and hygiene kits, as well as psychological and social support for those who are suffering as a result of the conflict.

The numbers seeking sanctuary will grow as long as the conflicts in Syria and Iraq continue and, as winter approaches in all countries of refuge, their needs will increase. As a result of your generosity we are able to continue supporting existing vulnerable families, as well as preparing to help thousands more. It's not only the devastating civil war in Syria that has displaced millions. In Iraq, successive waves of armed conflict by the so-called Islamic State (IS) has forced more than 3 million people from their homes and has led to more than 8 million people being in need of humanitarian assistance.

How we're responding - Supporting refugees in Europe

In Europe we are working with our ACT Alliance sister agencies to support refugees who are arriving at some of Europe's borders. We've released £100,000 in emergency funding. Often exhausted, hungry and with little in the way of possessions, our partners are providing much needed relief and support to refugees. In Serbia, our partner Philanthropy (Charitable Foundation of the Serbian Orthodox Church) is working on the Macedonian-Serbian border, registering up to 1,700 refugees a day. They are providing health checks, as well as relief items – asking refugees what items are useful to them. In Greece, our partner IOCC (International Orthodox Christian Charities) is working on the Greek Islands with refugees arriving from Turkey. They are providing sleeping bags, food, water and baby kits, and are working to improve conditions in reception centres.

Supporting Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Iraq

In Lebanon and Iraq, our partners continue to support Syrian refugee communities. Working in host communities and informal settlements, and with refugees who aren't often receiving other aid, they have provided food, hygiene items, infant kits, fuel for cooking and cash assistance, as well as much need psychosocial support to help people process what they have seen and experienced. Our partners have been supporting Syrian refugees since the beginning of 2013. For a more detailed understanding of how we have been responding to the Syria conflict, please visit our Syria Crisis Appeal pages.

Supporting displaced Iraqis

It's not only Syrians who have been forced to make the difficult and often dangerous journey out of their homeland in search of sanctuary. Millions of Iraqis have been displaced by the violence in Iraq, as a result of the so-called Islamic State (IS). Our partners have been responding to this conflict since the beginning of 2014 and continue to do so. As well as providing humanitarian essentials, they have also provided psychosocial support for children and young people in the way of music, art, drama, English and local Kurdish dialects, and a workshop on conflict and peacebuilding with children from displaced Iraqi, Syrian refugee and host communities. For a more detailed understanding of how we have been responding to the Iraq conflict, please visit our Iraq Crisis Appeal pages.

