



Invest
in Peace

5



Meet
our new
Director for
Justice and
Inclusion

12



Egyptian
Church
Resilience

20



Ecumenical
Accompaniers

22

Contents

Welcome	3
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity	4

DIALOGUE

Invest in Peace	5
Mission Theology Advisory Group	6
Lent	7
Churches' Response to Terrorism	7
Inter-Faith Theology Advisory Group	8

Brexit	10
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JUSTICE

Serious Youth Violence	11
Meet Richard Reddie	12
Asylum and Refugee Work	14
Church of Sanctuary Programme	15
Centre for Theology and Justice	16
Environmental Issues	17

RECONCILIATION

Korean Church Peace-building	18
Changing China	19
Egyptian Pilgrimage	20
Ecumenical Accompaniment	22

CTBI Online	23
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Welcome



At an important Brexit consultation in Belfast, Bishop Noel Trainor spoke about “talking in the continuum of remembering”. We understand ourselves, and understand our identity, in the context of this wider European history. Bishop Noel urged us to decipher, interpret and discriminate the times we are living through.

This is important for so many issues confronting us today and in these pages you will find an outline of the work being undertaken by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland to resource some of these discussions and dialogues.

You will also find a report outlining a pilgrimage to express solidarity with Christians in Egypt. It is remarkable how the Church has strengthened through its non-violent response. The growth of Christian religious life in that country emphasises the importance of a spirituality that underpins everything that we do together as Christians. We witnessed the 2011 revolution on our television screens. It prompted the creation of The Egypt Council of Churches. Not an ecclesiastical structure for its own sake, but a recognition by Christians and church leaders that we are stronger when we stand together, through good times and bad. Churches in Egypt have been doing that for millennia: the continuum of remembering.

So CTBI is refocusing its work to resource a number of important issues facing churches and congregations, to assist in the process of deciphering, interpreting and discriminating the times we are living through.

“talking in the continuum of remembering”

Issues such as Brexit will be significant to our work, but so too will serious youth violence alongside racial justice. The way we engage with people of other faiths will be crucial in building local communities, so programmes such as Invest in Peace in partnership with the Board of British Deputies is still crucial. Similarly, our work on anti-Semitism and Christian Zionism along with Islamophobia is central to resourcing informed dialogue. We will also continue to support the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel. Alongside our ongoing work around Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and Lent, new work is planned around encouraging dementia-inclusive congregations.

I have no sense that ecumenism is diminished or less important than in the past. We must continue to move forward looking to serve God, in and through one another, realising that none of us can tackle the great issue of our time alone. None of our churches can work without reference to other churches, other faiths, and wider society.

While meeting a group of young unemployed people, one of the Coptic Bishops on the Egyptian pilgrimage asked our group: “in the dark, do we give them a light or a hand?”

We have to give a hand first. It’s part of the continuum of remembering.

Bob Fyffe
CTBI General Secretary

44 member churches

**collaborating with
4 national ecumenical
instruments**
(across England, Ireland
Scotland, Wales)

**working with 38 other
ecumenical organisations**

**linked to
8 charitable agencies**

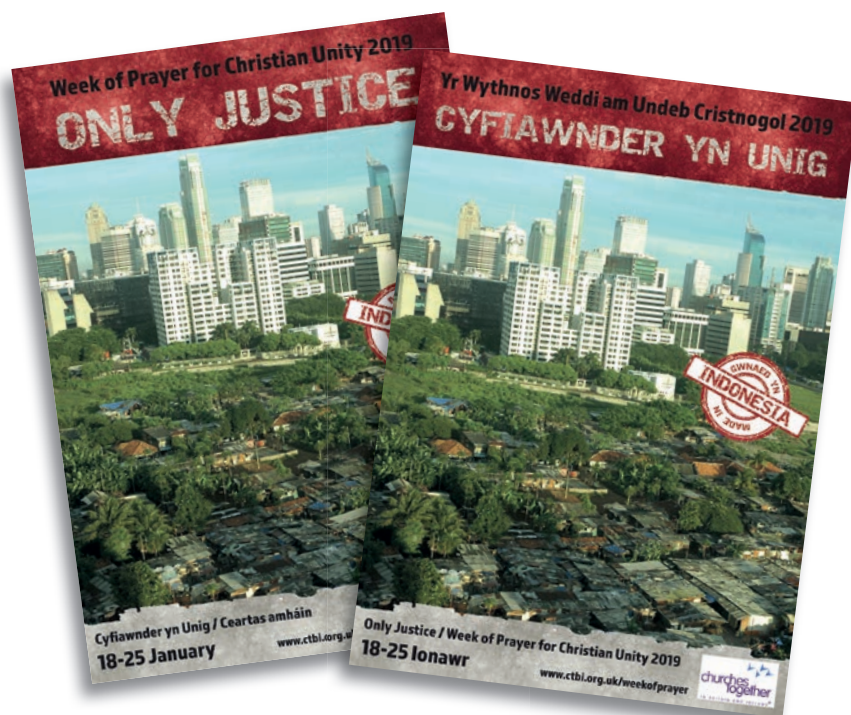
**107 news stories
published on website
in 2018**

**at least 168
formal meetings in 2018**

and many cups of tea ...

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Only Justice was the theme for 2019's Week of Prayer of Christian Unity based on material produced by churches in Indonesia and adapted by CTBI's writers group.



For the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (WPCU) in January 2019, we joined with Christians in Indonesia to pray for unity. With more than 17,000 islands, 1,340 different ethnic groups, and over 740 local languages, as well as different faiths, unity amongst diversity is an important part of Indonesian national identity. Holding such diversity together is an enormous challenge with growing inequality between rich and poor, and growing religious radicalisation that threatens to set Christians and Muslims against one another.

The Indonesian tenet of *gotong royong* means to live in solidarity and by collaboration, but today this harmony is fragile and threatened in a country which is rich in resources but bears the burden of many people living in poverty.

For churches seeking to witness to God's love and justice, unity between Christians is vital and means there is a clear connection between our



International Writers Group working on 2020's resources on Unusual Kindness

prayers for unity and the need of reconciliation and justice in our world. Whilst recognising our own complicity in systems of injustice, Jesus' prayer that his disciples be one empowers us to combat injustice.

The text at the heart of this year's devotions came from Deuteronomy 16:18-20 and included the phrase "justice and only justice you shall pursue." The British and Irish Writers Group adapted the worldwide resources produced in Indonesia adding extra reflections along with suggestions for further action from Christian Aid.

Work is already underway to produce the 2020 WPCU material. The theme Unusual Kindness is led by the churches of Malta who pick up on St Paul's visit to the island recorded in the Acts of Apostles where he, and those shipwrecked with him, experienced the "unusual kindness" of the local inhabitants. Daily reflections will explore reconciliation, enlightenment, hope, trust, strength, hospitality, conversion and generosity.

Booklets containing a liturgy for an ecumenical service and reflective materials for each of the eight days of WPCU can be downloaded in advance for free from the CTBI website from September each year or purchased in hardcopy (in English or bilingual Welsh-English). ROOTS for Churches also produce resources for all-age worship.



Find out more at
ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer



Israeli Meron Guttel (left) and Palestinian Yasser Khaldi (right) addressed an Invest in Peace event in Cardiff Reform Synagogue.

Invest in Peace

For the last three years, CTBI has partnered with the Board of Deputies of British Jews to roll out UK-wide meetings of the Invest in Peace programme.

The two major faith community umbrella bodies work together to hear the stories of Israelis and Palestinians who are looking for alternative ways to engage with one another, rather than violence and aggression.

Each event is jointly hosted by a synagogue and a church and is attended by members of those congregations along with a diverse range of people from the locality, and quite often joined by local MPs and councillors. Invest in Peace has already visited Glasgow, Leeds, Manchester, London, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff and Oxford.

CTBI's Deputy General Secretary, Revd Peter Colwell, explains: "At each meeting there has been an overwhelmingly positive response. People are moved and challenged by what they have heard. For some this is the first time they have listened to one or other of the perspectives – Palestinian or Israeli.

"The meetings in 2018 were arranged, in partnership with the organisation Solutions Not Sides and heard from young people from the region who spoke powerfully about their experiences: one out of a need of security for their country and for an

For some this is the first time they have listened to one or other of the perspectives – Palestinian or Israeli.

end of militarisation, and another for the end of the occupation, the ending of settlement expansion and to become a flourishing nation state.

"One man spoke of his experience in the Israeli army, coming to the aid of wounded civilians as a result of the Syrian civil war, and losing friends in military incursions into Gaza. The other spoke of all that his family had lost under occupation and of his shock at encountering an Israeli interested in the same sport as him, when 'Israelis' usually meant soldiers and checkpoints rather than common culture.

"Invest in Peace has encouraged Christians, Jews and some Muslims who were present to be in listening mode rather than declaring existing firmly-held points of view, hearing the stories of young people from the region about what matters to them, and we discern how things might change for the better."



Find out more at ctbi.org.uk/latest-invest-in-peace-events



Mission Theology Advisory Group

Mission Theology Advisory Group (MTAG) is an ecumenical group of mission academics and practitioners, which resources churches in the areas of spirituality, theology, reconciliation, evangelism and mission.

MTAG continues to look into a wide range of projects and delivers resources to support churches. We have considered the theology of military chaplaincy, as well as looked at what it means to be physically, spiritually and psychologically lost in our society.

Reliance on technology such as smartphones has caused the missiologist Mike Frost to coin the term 'excarnation'. People nowadays may choose to live more through their technology, taking selfies and videoing events and looking at those later, rather than experiencing the moment. MTAG's excarnation

project explored what it means to be human and made in the image of God alongside the rise of Artificial Intelligence and our increasingly reliance on smart technologies.

Revd Ben Edson addressed the 2018 residential meeting in Birmingham. Using metaphors from beekeeping he explained how the work of St Peter's House, the Christian chaplaincy for the Manchester Universities and the Royal Northern College of Music has been invigorated.

St Peter's House has a simple but challenging vision – Everything is Connected – reflecting the belief that



God is at work before us in all things and that the chaplaincy's task is to journey with people as they explore what this may mean. That includes students volunteering as beekeepers to care for the two hives up on the roof. It's a mindful activity and often a helpful conversation starter!

A remarkable picture of how to do mission and really make a difference.



Find out more at
ctbi.org.uk/mtag



The Mystery of God

The theme of CTBI's 2019 Lenten material arose from a piece of work marking the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

Based around the five marks of mission, the '95 Missional Theses'

project published a new statement of missional aspiration about the sort of

- Ash Wednesday – The Mystery of Life and Death
- Lent week 1 – The Mystery of Good and Evil
- Lent week 2 – The Mystery of God's Glory
- Lent week 3 – The Mystery of Sin, Suffering and Hope
- Lent week 4 – The Mystery of Parenthood and Adoption/The Prodigal Son
- Lent week 5 – The Mystery of Love and Sacrifice
- Palm Sunday – The Mystery of Joy and Salvation

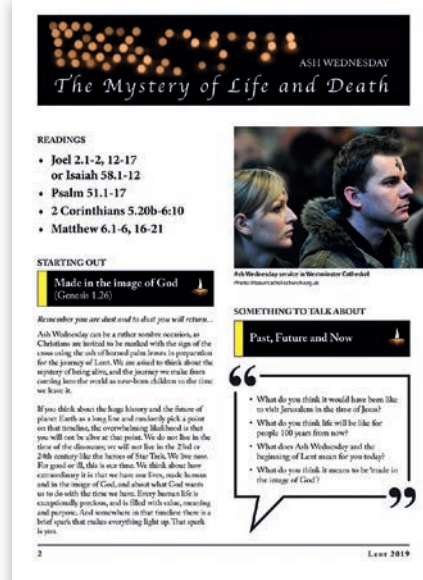
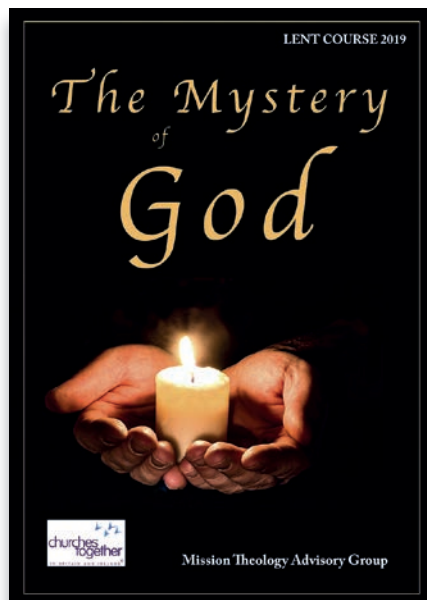
Church we might believe in on social media every day for just over three months in the lead up to 31 October 2017.

One statement garnered the most attention: "we believe in a Church that is more concerned with the mystery that is God than with its own success."

The Lent resource took this as its starting point, delving more deeply into the mystery of God to rediscover what draws us to search for God. Produced by Dr Anne Richards and the Mission Theology Advisory Group.



Find out more at
ctbi.org.uk/lent



Churches' Response to Terrorism

CTBI member churches have been reflecting on how to respond to terrorist incidents

Often there is a need to join together with people of other faiths, sometimes through joint statements or silent vigils, to stand alongside the victims and the bereaved. But is this response sufficient? Is it too reactive?

How do we respond to those in our society who, in increasing numbers, view what they deem to be 'religion' as the cause of much violence in the world? What should the churches be saying to our society, and our world, when there is so much fear around?

How can we engage with people of other faiths more intentionally, knowing that terrorism promotes the spread of negative attitudes toward some faiths and sometimes leads to an increase in hate crime?

The Inter-Faith Theological Advisory Group is working on a range of resources that attempt to address some of these issues and will help churches to reflect more deeply and self-critically on how they view difference and deal with the fear of the other.

Inter-Faith Theology Advisory Group

Theological resources that explore aspects of the Church's relationship with people of other faiths are produced by the Inter-Faith Theology Advisory Group (IFTAG).

Acting In God's Love is a study guide based on the international guidelines Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World, exploring them in a UK context and helping groups develop deeper theological reflection on inter-faith engagement.

Engagement between faith communities is the stuff of everyday life, but it tends to gain greater attention when considered as a source of conflict. When conflict happens, faith is at times not only called to blame as the harbinger of extreme ideologies, but people of faith are expected to pick up the pieces, to act as peacemakers, and to bring about change. Stories in the study guide reflect the lived experience of those living and working, ministering on the ground in UK communities. Stories of uplift, of pain, but most of all, of the life we share together.

An IFTAG discussion paper explored the issues that arise when other faith scriptures are used in Christian acts of worship. In considering the challenges and opportunities of liturgical hospitality, it examined the nature and significance of interreligious ritual from both historical and theoretical perspectives, drawing on liturgical theology and ritual studies, as well as analysing the tension between reciprocity and hospitality, drawing on studies in interreligious dialogue.

Papers were also published from a conference exploring aspects of theology and land in the Holy Land, include contributions from

Acting in God's Love

Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World



A Practical Theological Resource using the document Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World, prepared by Bonnie Evans-Hills, Barbara Glasson and members of the Inter Faith Theological Advisory Group within Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

Holy Land Pilgrimage Study Guide

CTBI's Deputy General Secretary Revd Peter Colwell asks how do you prepare for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land?



Thousands of Christians make pilgrimages to the Holy Land every year. Many people have mixed emotions about what to expect from their first visit. They anticipate a feeling of excitement walking in the footsteps of Jesus, but also feel a sense of nervousness that this land is also a place of conflict today.

Pilgrims often want to visit the ancient stones of places associated with the Bible but don't often meet with the "Living Stones". There has been an unbroken Christian presence in the region for centuries and Palestinian Christians express their feelings of disappointment that their experiences are rarely

heard by those on pilgrimages.

The Holy Land is also a holy place for two other religions: Judaism and Islam. How does one visit this region and not treat its land and its people merely as a tourist destination or a faith museum?

The Inter-Faith Theology Advisory Group are preparing a short study guide that will be published online to address some of these issues and offer suggestions on how to make a truly ethical pilgrimage that honours the lived experience of those that live in this land – Christians, Jews and Muslims – as well as allowing an encounter with a land rich in the stories of our faith.



Palestinian theologian Munther Isaac and IFTAG members Dr Elizabeth J Harris, Dr Clare Amos and Revd Peter Colwell.

In the pipeline are resources and publications on women and inter-faith dialogue, a study guide for churches preparing to undertake pilgrimages to the Holy Land, and a discussion document exploring the relationship between evangelism and inter-faith dialogue.

IFTAG are also organising a conference on ritual participation to discuss occasions when people of one faith find themselves participating in the rituals of another religion.

 Find out more at ctbi.org.uk/iftag





Brexit: breaking down the borders of the heart

“This is a time at which many feel anger and anxiety over the future, and so we need to pray that those who have the heavy burden of political leadership find a unity that brings our communities together in the task of serving the common good. We hope and pray that every person of faith will join us in prayer across our nation, and beyond.”

*Moderator of CTBI, Archbishop
Angaelos of the Coptic Orthodox
Church*

CTBI’s General Secretary Bob Fyffe comments on the political process that has spun the political establishment into turmoil and left churches genuinely conflicted.

As the UK works through the process of leaving the European Union, how can churches develop an inclusive conversation and create ‘spaces for conversation’ where we bring out people’s fears, half-truths, apprehensions and dreams in a way that can be heard by all who participate?

How do we articulate the unspoken words and how do we recognise the unsayable words we sometimes bottle up in our deepest selves?

Spaces are needed to build shared understanding of what our future is together. We need to use a language of appreciation, both for what has been achieved together, and what still needs to be built for the future of our society. We need to regain a language of dialogue that is more kind and less harsh.

Some have described it as the need for churches to open up the ‘borders of our heart’ and engage in a truly prophetic way to build a shared future together.

CTBI wants to share in that journey of opening the borders of our hearts by bringing together those on the edge who can speak into the larger place of dialogue. CTBI will be working with partners including the Corrymeela Community to resource these vital discussions that need to place in local communities, local churches, and sometimes within families. Their Spirituality of Conflict programme together with a set of Bible studies on the Book of Ruth can help us to consider the theology of Brexit.

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The Prayer for a Shared Future can be downloaded in English and Welsh from the CTBI website. Rev Brian Anderson, President of the Irish Council of Churches commented: “As we come together in prayer at this time of uncertainty, we are mindful of the importance of protecting relationships in the interest of the common good. We particularly want to encourage public representatives, and all others who give leadership in our society, to weigh their words carefully, to respect the integrity of those who conscientiously differ from them and to speak with grace.”

A Prayer for a Shared Future

God of past,
present
and future,
be with us as we take our next steps as nations together.
May we strive to love
our neighbour as ourselves
Listening and speaking
with respectful kindness,
embracing difference.
Remembering how much all have been forgiven by you,
May we offer friendship,
grant mercy,
And seek peace and justice
in our shared future.
Amen



Find out more at
ctbi.org.uk/brexit-prayer

Serious Youth Violence

2018 was the worst year for a decade in terms of the numbers of young people killed in knife attacks in England and Wales. What is the churches' response?

In 2018 a spate of knife-related crimes resulted in over 100 deaths, mostly young men living in urban areas. Unlike previous years, these incidents garnered significant media attention and a demand for authorities to take action. Serious youth violence is complex, entrenched, and cannot be resolved quickly or cheaply.

Leading practitioners argue that only a joined-up, multi-agency approach involving the police, schools, social services, youth and community workers along with other civil society actors can tackle the problem. Churches have a key role to play. But how can they harness the latent skills among their congregations in the most efficacious way?

Christian-related responses to serious youth violence tend to be local or regional

in their remit, operate on shoe-string budgets, and are often led by people not considered to be expert practitioners. Due to their church and denominational affiliations, there have been some capacity issues, little scope for joined-up working or partnership, and limited sharing of best practice.

The new Director for Justice and Inclusion at CTBI, Richard Reddie, has been tasked to address serious youth violence as part of his portfolio.

The eight-metre high Knife Angel sculpture by Alfie Bradley is a tribute to victims of knife crime and is touring the UK during 2019. It was made by the British Ironworks Centre in Oswestry out of the 100,000 knives confiscated or surrendered to police.

Photo by Terry Kearney.

“In a previous job I liaised with the government and civil society groups to devise ways of raising the attainment levels of underachieving students. Many of the strategies I devised in that role are transferable to this task, as the evidence suggests that many of those caught up in this life of violence are invariably not in work or education (NEET).

“It’s going to be important to encourage greater collaboration and information sharing among Christian organisations and church-related groups active in this area. I want to ensure that there is a four nations dimension to my work and will be particularly liaising with churches in Glasgow to share how that city is bucking the trend in addressing knife crime and serious youth violence.

“Jesus said that he had come ‘that they may have life, and have it to the full.’ Tragically those who should be tomorrow’s doctors, teachers, lawyers, artists and preachers are buried in graveyards or incarcerated in jails. CTBI will work with Christians, churches, civil society organisations, councils and the UK Government to ensure that all those made in the image of God can enjoy the abundant life that Christ offers.”

Many churches mark Racial Justice Sunday in February each year and CTBI lists resources specifically-developed by member denominations on its website.



Find out more at
ctbi.org.uk/racial-justice





In conversation with Richard Reddie

CTBI's new Director for Justice and Inclusion, Richard Reddie worked as Deputy Head of London Region for Christian Aid, and was Head of Community Engagement for the London Mayor. We caught up with Richard to ask him about his new role.

Tell us something about yourself?

I was born in Bradford, West Yorkshire. My parents were part of the Windrush Generation who migrated to this country from Jamaica in the late 1950s. I grew up in a very religious home and the church played a central role in my upbringing.

When I completed my A Levels, I moved to London to study and never properly returned to Bradford. After graduating, I tried to only work for organisations that allowed me to use my skills, experience and passions to effect change on a range of socio-economic and political issues. I see my current role in a similar vein.

What motivates you?

Growing up in our family home, the Revd Dr Martin Luther King Jr was second only to Jesus in importance!

So I have always taken a keen interest in justice-related matters, particularly those involving any fight for the rights, respect and contributions of vulnerable groups or communities.

I view our world as being profoundly unequal on a number of levels, and believe it is the responsibility of every Christian to struggle to make our world one in which "justice roll[s] on like a river [and] righteousness like a never-failing stream!" I must confess that I am baffled by those who create a false dichotomy between the 'spiritual' and the 'secular'. Jesus' teachings clearly show us that the two are intertwined and that Christians must be at the heart of any struggle for justice, irrespective of where it is and who is involved.

What's top of your to do list in work?

The first few months in the role have been an exciting and hectic combination of meetings, getting up to speed with my brief and scoping out areas of work. Among other issues, I will bring serious youth violence into focus and how the churches in Britain and Ireland can better respond to this appalling phenomenon. I will also pick up

CTBI's existing work on asylum and refugees. The whole conversation around immigration and identity – in the light of Brexit, the Syrian refugee crisis and the Windrush Generation scandal – is one in which the churches must engage and the Churches' Refugee Network, which I now coordinate, is an excellent forum to take this forward.

What do you do when you are not working?

I've always been someone who likes to keep himself busy, and I use my spare time for writing and researching.

Over the last decade I have written several books on everything from the Transatlantic Slave Trade to a history of the New Testament Assembly Church in the UK (to tie in with their golden jubilee in 2011). However, I'm particularly proud of my publication *Black Muslims in Britain* which was the first scholarly research exploring the rising numbers of Black conversions to

Islam in this country. I'm considered an expert in this area, which is quite flattering but totally untrue!

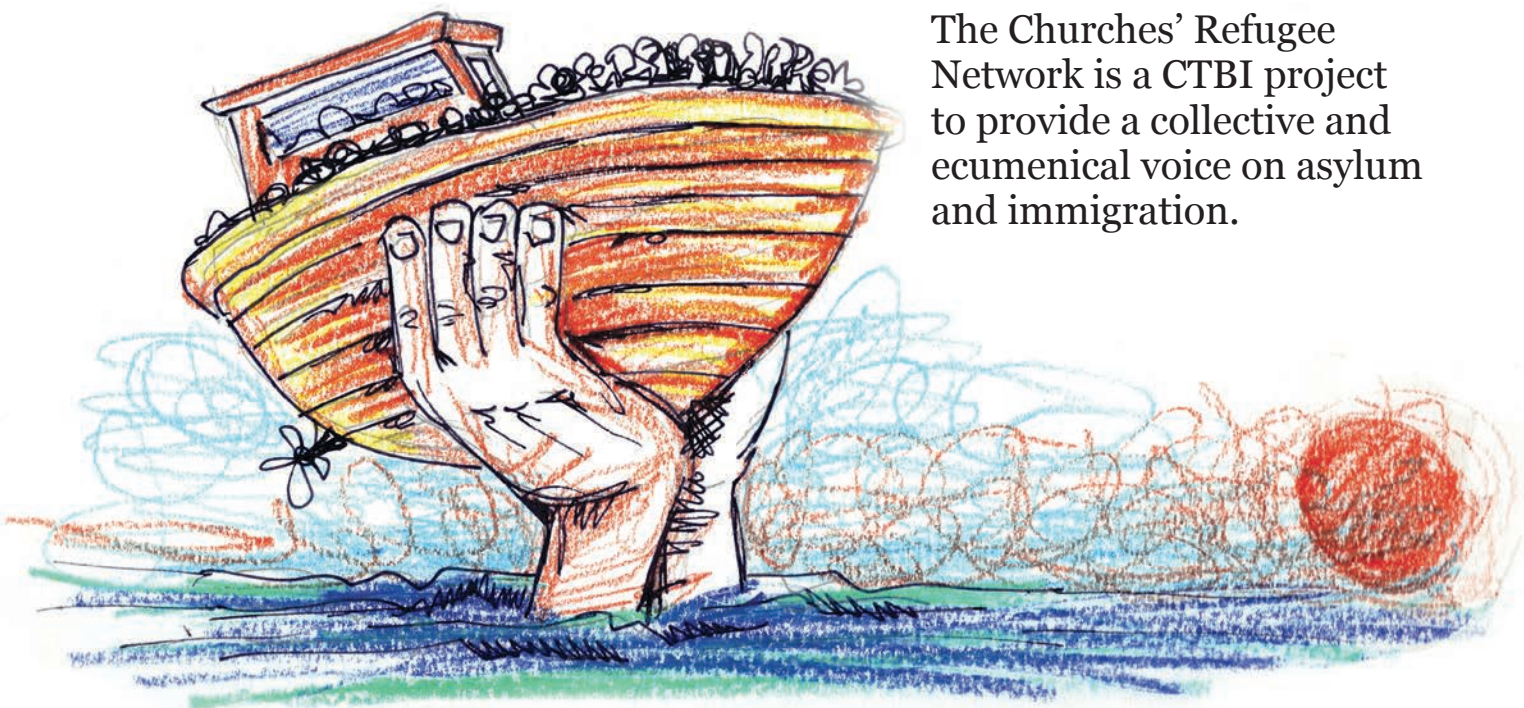
...Christians must be at the heart of any struggle for justice, irrespective of where it is and who is involved.

As Director of Justice and Inclusion, Richard Reddie will coordinate CTBI's asylum, refugee and immigration activities, focusing on the further development of the Churches' Refugee Network and the emerging Church of Sanctuary movement.

He will also bring a fresh focus to issues of inclusion, including racial justice and the faith response to serious youth violence. And he will liaise with CTBI colleagues on spirituality, conflict and reconciliation issues involving identity, nationhood, unity and theology.

Richard will input into the collaborative Centre for Theology and Justice and its work on Belonging. The Centre's artist in residence project seeks to understand the role art and faith can play in serving a city that has witnessed terrorism recently, as well as in the past, and has stark inequalities between rich and poor.

Asylum and Refugee work



The Churches' Refugee Network is a CTBI project to provide a collective and ecumenical voice on asylum and immigration.

While the Churches' Refugee Network (CRN) formalised its structure in 2004, CTBI archives show that its predecessor organisation, the British Council of Churches, had an Ecumenical Refugee Committee in operation from the end of the Second World War. Since then it has taken a keen interest in asylum and immigration-related issues and sought to provide guidance to churches at a time when all things 'immigration' seemed to only be the preserve of far-right organisations and politicians.

However, the UK Home Office's 'hostile environment' policy (introduced in 2012 under the Conservative–Liberal Democrat Coalition Government), the Syrian refugee crisis from early 2015, the EU Referendum in 2016 and the Windrush Generation scandal last year, have seen these issues take centre stage in parliaments, the media, and around dining tables across Britain and Ireland.

Churches and their leaders have sought to keep abreast of these issues, and in response to the Syrian refugee crisis, CTBI organised a church leaders' visit to Greece in September 2015 to observe at first-hand the efforts to support



migrants and refugees. A further visit to Greece took place the following May, involving a dozen women who encouraged and showed solidarity with church-related efforts in that country, and acquired a female perspective on asylum and migration.

The most recent visit saw a team of young men travel to the Italian islands of Sicily and Lampedusa in April 2017. They witnessed the work of the Mediterranean Hope charity and small churches helping the migrants who made the treacherous Mediterranean crossing to reach southern Europe.

Those who took part in these trips



became advocates for everything immigration-related, sharing information about their experiences with churches, the media, and anyone prepared to listen. The onus has been on encouraging practical action: asking Christians to show Christ's compassion and mercy to those seeking sanctuary anywhere in Europe.

CRN has complemented these aforementioned visits by educating, informing and inspiring churches to take action. It has also been a forum for discussion and information sharing, as well as a repository containing a range of resources such as Bible study and worship materials for churches working with refugees.

There is little doubt that Brexit and the issues around it will keep asylum and immigration at the forefront of public discourse. It is vital that the CRN continues to facilitate conversations and provide resources and support which enable churches in the UK and Ireland to respond in an informed, measured and compassionate way.



Find out more at
focusonrefugees.org



organise national services in each capital city on 23 June 2019. Liturgy material and Bible study resources for Sanctuary Church Sunday can be found on the new Church of Sanctuary website.

Sanctuary – or hospitality-with-safety – is a long-standing theme of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, the foundation of which is found in the law books of the Old Testament, and echoed in Jesus’ teaching about how we treat the neighbour and the outsider. Dr Bhogal explains:

“The Hebrews enshrined sanctuary into the legal codes of their new society when six cities of refuge were established according to the legislation set out in Numbers 35:6-34 as well as Joshua 20:1-9 and Deuteronomy 4:41-43.

“These cities were to give refuge or sanctuary to anyone, including a foreigner, who was accused of manslaughter, to prevent the automatic use of revenge as a rough, ready and unfair route to justice ‘until there is a trial before the congregation’ (Numbers 35:12). Cities of refuge provided protection to vulnerable people whose lives were in danger.

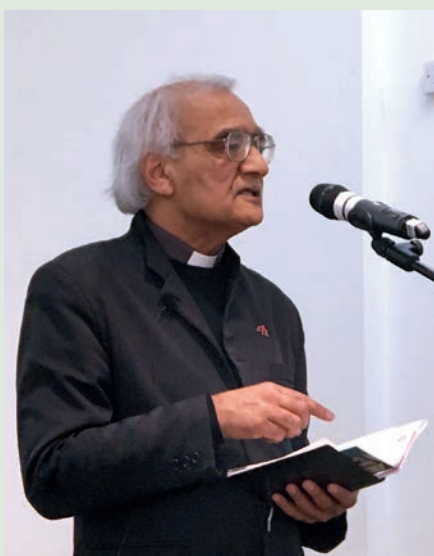
“This is not a new concept in Britain and Ireland. Sanctuary was available around a thousand years ago in churches including Battle, Beverley, Colchester, Durham, Hexham, Norwich, Ripon, Southampton, Wells, Winchester, Westminster and York. They offered protection to debtors and criminals.

“In Ireland there is the ancient idea of *tearmann*, a Gaelic word literally meaning sanctuary, and practically every monastery contained a space for refuge, a place free of political and religious feuds. The sanctuary cross in Glendalough, County Wicklow is well known. People seeking safety touched the rock to claim sanctuary.”

With the refugee crisis showing little sign of abating, the church community is encouraged to put these scriptural imperatives into practice to help those who are also made in the image of God.

Church of Sanctuary Programme

Calling on congregations to develop a welcoming, hospitable and inclusive environment in which strangers feel genuinely wanted.



CTBI is working with the former President of the Methodist Conference, Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal, to deliver the Church of Sanctuary programme which encourages churches in Britain and Ireland to meet and greet new arrivals fleeing from war and hunger.

This initiative has its roots in the City of Sanctuary movement, which was also pioneered by Dr Bhogal, and calls on congregations to develop a welcoming, hospitable and inclusive environment in which strangers feel genuinely wanted. The programme also encourages Christian communities to be equipped with the skills and know-how to help those requiring assistance.

To promote the Church of Sanctuary programme, churches can mark Sanctuary Church Sunday at the end of Refugee Week. CTBI is helping to



Find out more at
churchofsanctuary.org.uk



Connecting Faith & Action



The Centre for Theology and Justice is a collaborative initiative to encourage, support and share theological reflection on current issues of justice.

The need for theological reflection has been acutely raised by the refugee crisis. Many other pressing areas of social justice also demand our attention.

The Centre for Theology and Justice is a network of partner bodies and collaborators. It is a joint initiative of Christian Aid, Church Action on Poverty, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, and Luther King House in Manchester.

The Centre's vision is to be a Christian community committed to sharing a prophetic voice arising from a deep concern for theology and justice. It will:

- **enable theological reflection on issues of justice;**
- **map, connect and explore what it means to work for justice;**
- **identify the gaps and address them;**

- **name what is real and ask difficult questions;**
- **enable a stronger prophetic voice on issues of justice within the public sphere.**

Along with Luther King House, the Centre hosts the annual David Goodbourn lecture, held in memory of the former general secretary of the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland, and the first full-time president at Luther King House.

Professor Elaine Graham, Grosvenor Research Professor of Practical Theology, University of Chester, delivered the 2018 lecture in Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral. She spoke about the *Theology for a Learning Church: Christian Education, Lay Formation and the Language of 'Discipleship'* and picked up on the challenge of setting God's people free from clericalism in order to exercise a wider ministry as the church in the world.

Her stimulating lecture examined the perennial tension between Christian education for the 'gathered' and 'scattered' church and considered what patterns of learning and formation are best suited for the challenges facing the church in the world today. A video of the lecture can be viewed on the Centre's website.

Sweet Charity is the title of the 2019 David Goodbourn lecture to be delivered by Professor Michael H Taylor in Luther King House, Manchester at 7pm on Tuesday 30 April. Michael is Emeritus Professor of Social Theology at the University of Birmingham.

With charities coming under increasing scrutiny in recent times, this lecture will focus on their capacity, or otherwise, to bring about social justice by incremental and structural changes. The role of faith and theology in doing so will also be considered.



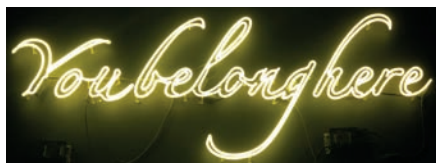
Find out more and register at theologyjustice.org

Artist in Residence

PassionArt is working with the Centre for Theology and Justice to explore the role the arts can play in enabling engagement in theological reflection on issues of social justice.

The theme of 'Belonging' – a word which holds together two fundamental aspects of life, being and longing – is being explored with Manchester Cathedral, St Ann's Church and Methodist Central Hall to curate a city-wide arts project and festival that tells the story of 600 years of faith and belonging in Manchester to coincide with the cathedral's 600th anniversary of being established as a collegiate church in 2021.

Through their creative partner PassionArt, the Centre has commissioned graphic word artist



Micah Purnell to help kick-start the creative side of the Belonging project to spread word across the city. He will meet regularly with theologians to reflect – creatively and theologically – on the theme.

How can the arts help re-imagine mission through listening and communicating compassion and forgiveness to the most vulnerable?

How can our cities reflect on and engage with justice themes by the retelling of stories that relate meaningfully to the lives of their inhabitants through music, film, literature, drama, dance, art and galleries, museums, libraries and theatres?

These are questions that the partnership will address through conversations it



will host between artists and theologians from all faith backgrounds as well as those working within the cultural sector (including gallery and museum curators, composers, poets and writers). Recordings of the conversations will be made available online.

As part of the collaboration with the Centre, PassionArt are commissioning a series of essays by theologians and those working in the cultural sphere to encourage theological and cultural reflection on various issues of social justice and the role the arts play.



Find out more at passionart.guide/belonging

Mobilising Churches on the Environment

Church-based environmental agencies along with member churches came together at a consultation event hosted by CTBI to discuss and share how best to promote a more robust and urgent sense of the importance of church engagement around the ecological crisis.

Cytûn's Revd Gethin Rhys commented on the consultation: "Quite apart from the existential nature of the issues discussed, it seems to me that this is what the Churches Together family should be about – being the means to bring people together from across churches and Christian organisations to support one another and to share both agreements and disagreements. The striking thing...is that they are not dependent on the details of 'ecumenical architecture'. Their driving force is the oneness already given to us by Christ,

rather than something we might strive to build for ourselves."

The group heard about A Rocha (an international network of environmental organisations with a Christian ethos) and Eco-Congregations along with



Eco-Congregations Scotland, which are increasing awareness among congregations about the global scale, and seeding local initiatives that contribute to the building of a grass roots movement for change.

The integrity of creation is central to how Christians understand and serve the gift of creation. But this consultation heard that this is not universally understood outside church circles with confusion about why Christians are involved in ecological and environmental concerns.

Churches engage in the globally-observed Creation Time initiative each September. CTBI resources are available to help plan worship services and access other material. CTBI also supports the Environmental Issues Network which brings together those most concerned to develop programmes and resources for the Church.



Find out more at ctbi.org.uk/environment

Supporting K peace-bu

CTBI's Director of International Elliott, writes about the Korean international support as they s healing, reconciliation and peo

The US and USSR divided the Korean peninsula following the Second World War. Plunged into a North-South war only a few years later, up to three million people died, accounting for a tenth of Korea's pre-war population. The war ended when an armistice was signed in 1953. The Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) along the border was the most heavily militarised strip of land on the planet.

Aided by the US, diplomatic efforts intensified after the 2018 Winter Olympics in PyeongChang. Following meetings between South Korean President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, landmines have been cleared, gun towers demolished, and guards are no longer armed.

These are the kind of trust building measures that the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCKK) has called for as part of its Peace Treaty Campaign that would formally end the war between North and South, enshrine peace-keeping to prevent further conflicts and build peaceful co-existence. They have drawn up basic principles for a peace treaty and have asked international partners to join with them in lobbying for its negotiation.

The NCKK wish to see the DMZ transformed into an Eco-Peace Zone, normalising diplomatic relations, reducing arms and denuclearising the peninsula, and replacing military exercises with joint North-South peace-building initiatives. They also seek the relaxation or lifting of the sanctions against North Korea which were tightened by the US and UN in response to the development of weapons of mass destruction. Sanctions have hampered

Korean church building

*al Programmes, Christine
n churches' call for
seek to bring about
peaceful reunification.*

humanitarian assistance, stymied economic development, and have contributed to material poverty in the country, as well as impeded efforts aimed at dialogue and the reduction of tensions.

We remain concerned about the human rights situation in North Korea, including the right of religious freedom. We are also looking at ways to support the Korean Christian Federation (KCF), the official Protestant church in North Korea which has around 400 house churches along with a small seminary to train ministers. Kim Il-sung's maternal grandfather, the founder of Democratic People's Republic of Korea, was an elder and his mother, Kang Ban Sok was an active member. Perhaps the presence of this small church today is because of Kim Il-sung's Christian family heritage?

CTBI hosts a network of member churches and mission agencies who have responded to NCKK's call for international support with a programme of dialogue, education and advocacy for peace. Building a culture of peace requires us to foster relationships and build trust, even if they lead us into ambiguous territory.

The common view in the world is dualistic. Freedom or bondage. Liberal market or command economy. Democracy or autocracy. Capitalism or communism. Good or evil. Life or death. We divide things that belong together and think of them as extreme opposites. This sort of dualism makes us think of winners and losers. Every war is such a contest, so we think that peace is synonymous with victory.

In our search for certainty and desire to be on the side of 'right', we are frightened of ambiguity. We suppose that war eliminates ambiguity: one side in a conflict must capitulate or be destroyed.

Peace is messier than that, much more ambiguous. It requires relationship, one to the other. It requires us to be as critical of ourselves as we are of others. The Hebrew word *shalom* doesn't just mean peace; it encompasses wholeness and the joining together of opposing sides.



Christine Elliott



Find out more at
ctbi.org.uk/korea

China is changing

China Day Conference looks at the contemporary trends in China, its church, and Chinese engagement in Britain and Ireland.

This is the moment to learn more about China, the country with the largest number of Christians. Its major Belt and Road Initiative is building infrastructure and boosting trade across the routes of the old Silk Road and further afield to grow China's global dominance and stimulate its slowing economy.

Sinification – where non-Chinese practices and organisations come under the influence of Chinese culture, language, societal norms and ethnic identity – is expected to be reflected in all areas of the work and witness of the church in China.

A day conference at Westcott House in Cambridge on Tuesday 2 July will consider the theological and sociological impact of these changes in China and the relationship to inculturation of the gospel.



More information at
ctbi.org.uk/china-day-conference





Pilgrimage delegates meet Pope Tawadros II in Cairo

Resilience in the face of persecution

CTBI's General Secretary Bob Fyffe writes about his time on an ecumenical pilgrimage to Egypt in late January.

Over a very moving week, I witnessed the resilience and determination of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt. Coptic Christians make up about 15% of the population of Egypt and are the largest and most prominent Christian presence in the Middle East.

The blood of martyrs was graphically displayed in the places we visited where attacks had taken place. It is the seed and inspiration of today's church. Rather than going underground, into decline or seeking retribution, I saw how Coptic Christians are undergoing renewal and responding in faith and with love to those who seek to persecute them, bringing the words of Jesus in Matthew 5 to life as they "love those who persecute the Church".

The graciousness of the Coptic Christians and the daily living out of their faith should be an inspiration to Christians outside Egypt, and receive our encouragement and prayerful support. Yet publicity in the west needs to avoid being seen merely as an attack on Egypt, as this would have adverse consequences for the church.

Archbishop Angaelos, the Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London, was part of the delegation. He noted the importance of the twin pillars of monasticism and martyrdom which sit alongside a third pillar of theological teaching and ecumenical engagements as experienced by the early Church and continuing today. These were in evidence everywhere we went, at the shrines to those who have lost their lives, in the churches and cathedrals, and in the desert monasteries.

In Egypt's St Bishoy, we met 200 monks who were on average in their mid-40s. The church's difficulty in coping with the number of people seeking the monastic life is a wonderful case study for elsewhere in the world where monasticism is in decline. Countries like Syria and Iraq

which have suffered greatly during their conflicts are other examples of Churches where resilience, mercy and forgiveness have proven vitally important to the process of restoring trust within the community.

Christianity goes back further than the birth of Islam in Egypt, right back to St Mark, who came to Alexandria in AD58 and was dragged through the streets to witness to his faith through martyrdom. Today, Christians are being asked to give similar witness and it is clear that they have a vital role to play in building bridges in Egyptian society.

Christians in Egypt realise that the vast majority of Muslims are their friends and do not support terrorism. When the 2017 attack took place in Alexandria, the security officers who lost their lives seeking to protect the church were Muslim. So too were those who stepped in to help the victims after the attacks.

Calling in with HG Bishop Thomas in Anafora we heard the wise and perceptive cleric explain that “to lift someone up, you must bend down” and “in the dark, would you prefer to have a light or a hand?” A window in the shape of an eye faces the congregation in his simple church building, a constant reminder asking “how does God see me?”

We stopped for two days in the monastic wilderness of Wadi El-Natroun. Its historical name *Scetis* translates as ‘the (weighing) scale of hearts’. Monks and nuns have done just that over the past 1,500 years. We need to weigh all our hearts and look at our own lives, faults and motives as we respond to the challenges facing our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Egypt has faced many political challenges in recent years



Monastery of Saint Bishoy, Wadi El Natron

and someone reflected to us that “the Government can be a third party in the solution”. Archbishop Angaelos provided perspective, reminding us that “a country is more than a President” and the Coptic Church is “patiently optimistic”.

The Egypt Council of Churches was created during the political upheaval and civil unrest in 2011, recognition that Christians have a more powerful witness when they stand together across traditional and denominational boundaries.

Facing the challenges and tragedies of martyrdom and persecution, some of us expected to find a church in decline. Instead we observed an inspirational and resilient faith. Coptic Orthodox Christians show a deep faith and hope in the face of adversity. Returning home from my visit, I won't forget that they truly are a light shining out in the darkness.



Mosaic at The Hanging Church, Cairo



Seeking a just peace through ecumenical accompaniment

The World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) began in 2002 as the result of a call from church leaders in Jerusalem.

Volunteers travel to the Holy Land to act as impartial observers and a protective presence for civilians. These Ecumenical Accompaniers live in local communities and witness life under occupation in the Palestinian territories, engage with local Palestinians and Israelis pursuing a just peace, serve at checkpoints, accompany school children, observe and monitor actions and activities. They are continuously on the ground and are often the first to respond to human rights violations, bringing eyewitness accounts to the world's attention.

They also engage with other organizations – Palestinian and Israeli – working for justice and peace in the area. This supplements the accompaniers' understanding of the range of peace building desired in the Holy Land. The EAPPI has more international human rights monitors on the ground than any other organisation in Israel and Palestine. A similar methodology has been employed in the context of conflict and widespread human rights violations in Colombia.

Ecumenical Accompaniers are neither pro-Israeli nor pro-Palestinian. Instead they are pro-human rights and adherence to international humanitarian law.

In Britain and Ireland, the EAPPI is administered by the Quakers whose energy and commitment has been critical to the high level of preparation, support and encouragement for Ecumenical Accompaniers since its inception.

Additionally, their staff have been instrumental in establishing good practice for advocacy across the world-wide programme. Support from member churches and aid agencies – both financial and through service on the EAPPI management group – is highly valued.

Each year there are four opportunities to volunteer to spend three months as an Ecumenical Accompanier. On their return, accompaniers are available to speak to churches about their work and witness.

Ecumenical
Accompaniment
Programme
in Palestine
and Israel



World Council
of Churches

Theology of Accompaniment

The word 'accompaniment' derives from the Latin words *com* and *panis*, meaning 'with bread.' It implies sharing bread with someone. We see this in action in Luke 24 when Jesus found two travellers devoid of hope on their way to Emmaus. "We had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel," they said. Their hope had been extinguished by the Romans in alliance with local religious authorities.

Defeated and distraught, the travellers were ready to give up and move on from the painful events. Jesus accompanied them down the road to Emmaus, showed them that hope was alive, and accepted their invitation to stay for a while. When he blessed and broke the bread, he vanished from their sight.

This narrative gets to the heart of Ecumenical Accompaniment: preaching a word of hope, sharing the basics of life, and departing at the right moment to carry on the work elsewhere.

Adapted from eappi.org



Find out more at
quaker.org.uk/eappi

CTBI online

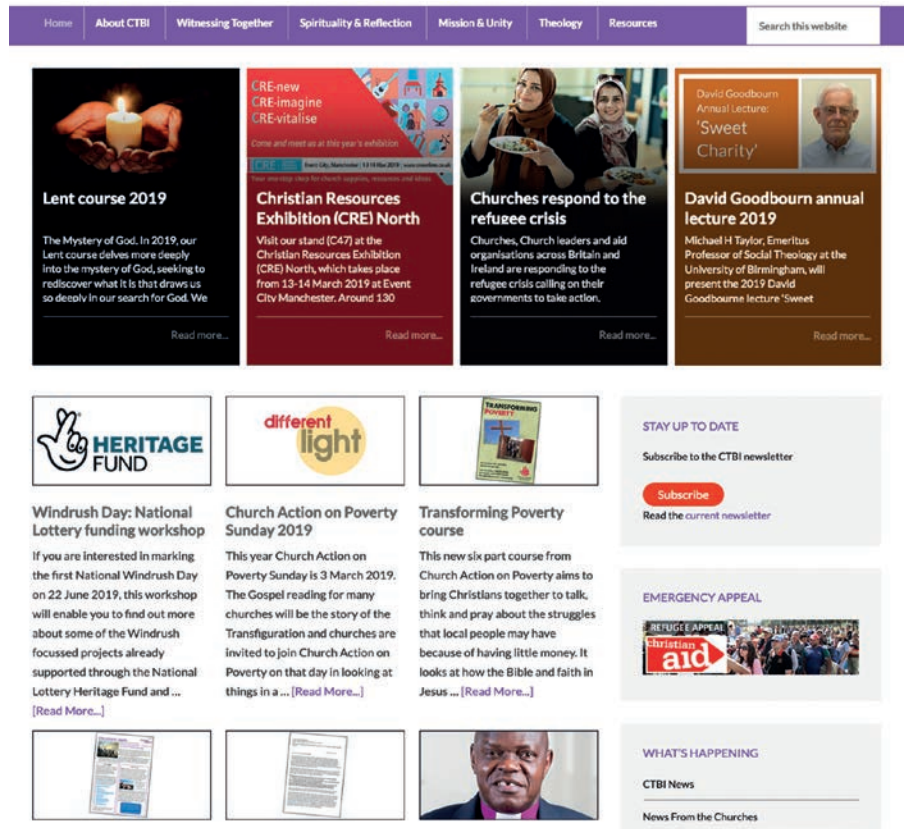


twitter.com/ctbi



facebook.com/ctbishare

The ctbi.org.uk website continues to grow in popularity with the downloadable resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Lent and Remembrance Sunday in highest demand. There is strong interest in how churches are responding to issues such as refugees, poverty and the environment. The website also covers key areas of CTBI's work in justice and inclusion, inter-faith and international programmes.



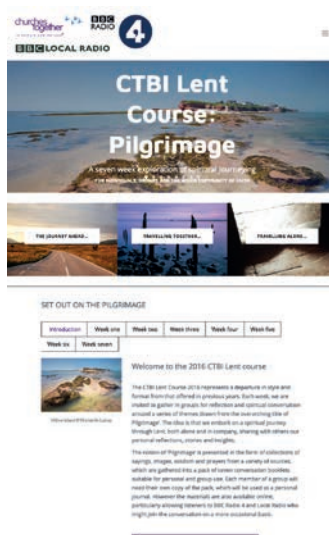
CTBI maintains a portfolio of other websites.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
twitterwall.weekofprayer.org

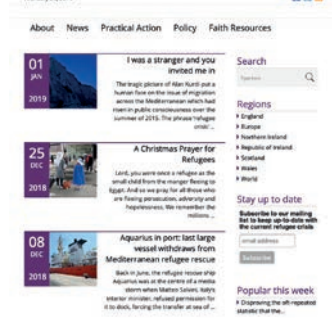
Centre for Theology and Justice
theologyjustice.org

Lent Pilgrimage
lentpilgrimage.org.uk

Churches Together group website
directory.churchestogether.org



Dispossession Project
dispossessionproject.org



Focus on Refugees
focusonrefugees.org



Elections and Hustings
churcheselection.org.uk

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland believes that ecumenism is an urgent evangelical imperative. It is time we cease projecting the image of a dismembered Body of Christ, which is a counter-witness to the Good News we proclaim.

The ecumenism we seek is dynamic and responsive not a monolith resulting from one powerful church swallowing the others, but a mega-community composed of churches (local, national and international) that complement one another, each with its own historical identity, its unique tradition, its own doctrinal emphasis, and its particular worship form; in short, a Pentecostal communion of communities that understand and speak one another's language.

CTBI STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

