

Life Beyond
Borders
Conference

4



WCC
11th
Assembly

18



22

The
Pilgrim
Road



32

Week of
Prayer for
Christian
Unity

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Cover image: Dundu, a giant light puppet, greets people on the streets of Karlsruhe, Germany, where participants in the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches gathered from August 31 to September 8, 2022.

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Welcome

The work of Christian unity

constantly calls us to look outward and to be ambitious for the contribution we can make through our collective witness to the work of reconciling communities and healing the wounds of identity-based conflicts in society. In this edition of the CTBI Magazine we reflect on the eightieth anniversary of the foundation of the British Council of Churches (BCC), which would later develop into the Churches Together organisations that support ecumenical relations within Britain, and between British and Irish churches today. The foundation of the BCC was inspired by the creation of the World Council of Churches (WCC) several years before and was motivated by a desire to facilitate the collective engagement of churches in Britain with the WCC, in close collaboration with those in Ireland.

It is fitting, therefore, that this significant anniversary now coincides

with the much anticipated 11th Assembly of the WCC, and in this magazine you will have the opportunity to gain insights into the significance of that event for British and Irish church representatives. From these reflections and from the other areas of work highlighted in the various articles, it is clear that our ecumenical dialogue continues to lift our gaze to the big questions about relationships in society and the protection of the dignity of the human person and the whole of God's creation.

Just as that Assembly concluded we received the sad news of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, someone who has set such a strong example in the way she used her leadership and influence to help overcome divisions, heal the wounds of the past and bring people together. In the tributes that followed her passing, it was evident that she was recognised around the world as an inspiring model of servant leadership. In the stories that have been shared, we see how the Queen demonstrated in words and actions her respect for others, her compassion for suffering and her dedication to the work of building a better future for all. Christians and other faith communities have been encouraged by her support for their work and the example of her strong personal faith. At the same time, we have been challenged to do more by engaging together in the work of building community and restoring hope, especially in those areas that were particularly close to Queen Elizabeth's heart, such as peace and reconciliation, inter-faith dialogue and care of creation.

The articles that follow offer prompts for reflection and suggestions for action to help develop the contribution of our ecumenical dialogue and efforts to bring communities together. This work is not easy, and it challenges us to reach out to those who find themselves on the margins of our society with hearts and minds open to difficult truths about imbalances and abuses of power. We are called to self-critical reflection about the role of the Church and those times when we might benefit from privilege. There are many opportunities to extend our table to include those who are struggling, whether that is in terms of their sense of belonging or their ability to access basic necessities, recognising that these challenges will often go hand in hand.

We hope that you will find support and challenge in what is offered in this magazine to help take forward the vision from the coming together in the global Church in the 11th WCC Assembly, and as you reflect on the legacy of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and seek to apply the learning and ideas in your work.

Dr Nicola Brady
General Secretary
Churches Together in
Britain and Ireland

NEWSLETTER

Subscribe to the Monthly CTBI Newsletter to be the first to find out the latest news, events, new resources and webinars from CTBI and its member networks. Sign up at bit.ly/3QQaDnn



Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI)

CTBI serves the churches of Britain and Ireland on the shared journey towards full visible unity in Christ. It provides information and guidance to bridge understanding of issues in today's society, and creates an ecumenical space for Christians to listen and work together for peace and reconciliation.

It develops publications and resources with other organisations and members to offer reflection, prayer and study materials to celebrate Christian events, as well as opportunities to learn and address key issues. It seeks to value the contribution of each church, respectful of relationships at all levels and recognising the diversity and difference within churches and nations.

we are
39
member churches

linked to
8
charitable agencies

collaborating with



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

working with
38
ecumenical organisations

Stephen Lawrence@30

Racial Justice Sunday 2023

Next year (22 April 2023) marks the 30th anniversary of the killing of the Black, London-born teenager, Stephen Lawrence in Eltham, southeast London. In many respects, this murder was Britain's 'George Floyd moment' for the church as it kickstarted racial justice efforts in many denominations and parachurch groups. Indeed, Racial Justice Sunday (RJS), which is now marked on the second Sunday in February, began as a result of this tragedy. The Methodist Church began marking the date in 1995, and also supported the family's fight for justice to catch Stephen's killers. RJS was subsequently mainstreamed by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland's (CTBI) Churches Commission for Racial Justice (CCRJ), which was led at the time by Methodist minister, Revd

David Haslam, who also encouraged CTBI-supporting churches to continue the justice struggle.

Pat White, a current CTBI trustee and a CCRJ stalwart at the time, points out: 'We recognised the appalling nature of what had taken place and the need to support the Lawrence family. In many ways, their struggle became our struggle and both David (Haslam), and his successor, Revd Arlington Trotman, ensured that the churches got behind the Lawrences' fight for justice, making various representations to church and society to not only find Stephen's killers, but to also address the racism that led to his death.'

CTBI will be working with member churches and parachurch organisations to produce resources for RJS that mark the 30th anniversary of Stephen's

death, which is now known as Stephen Lawrence Day in the United Kingdom. Pat adds: 'This anniversary is a reminder of the fact that we have come a long way since 1993, but that we still have a long way to go before Britain and Ireland are truly equitable, justice-driven countries. Stephen Lawrence dreamed of becoming an architect: I would argue that he has become the architect of race equality. One of his legacies has been the way Black, Brown and White Britons have been inspired by him, over the years, to address the racism that cost him his life.'



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





The SS Empire Windrush brought the first immigrants from the Caribbean to Britain on 22 June 1948

were declining congregations. The anniversary year will be a fantastic occasion to celebrate the outstanding efforts made by those brave people, especially in terms of the Church. However, the year will also be an occasion to address the ongoing 'Windrush Scandal' which still sees many people fighting for justice, having lost livelihoods, after being wrongly threatened with removal to the Caribbean.

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) is part of a group of parachurch organisations and church denominations working to organise a service at the iconic Westminster Abbey on 22 June 2023 to mark this significant anniversary. CTBI is also part of a group that will be organising a conference to explore the issue of slavery reparations within the context of Windrush.



For more information on both events, please see the CTBI website for updates ctbi.org.uk

Windrush@75

June 2023 marks the 75th anniversary of 'Windrush', a milestone that celebrates the Caribbean men, women and children who arrived in Britain on 22 June 1948, onboard the iconic vessel, the SS Empire Windrush. These pioneers blazed a trail for the many millions who have subsequently made their homes in Britain and Ireland down the decades.

From a church perspective, these individuals brought with them a Christian faith that has totally transformed the spiritual climate of Britain and elsewhere. History shows that these pioneers planted churches that provide spiritual, social and moral leadership and assistance to the communities in which they are based. Other trailblazers joined historic denominations and reinvigorated what



To get your
FREE
tickets go to
creonline.co.uk/tickets
and use code
CTBI

Come and meet us at
CRE National 2022:
Stand B8

Sandown Park, Surrey
11-13 Oct 2022



Join Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) and Churches Together in England (CTE) at the Christian Resources Exhibition.

CTE's General Secretary, Bishop Mike Royal, will also speak on **Beyond Windrush: driving change in UK churches** on Tuesday 11 October 2022.

With over 70 sessions and around 200 organisations exhibiting, the CRE aims to provide a one-stop shop for church supplies, resources and ideas.

Sandown Park, Surrey
11-13 Oct 2022

CRE

CHRISTIAN
RESOURCES
EXHIBITION



Ruslan Lytvin/Shutterstock

Life Beyond Borders

Book now for this important Conference and Networking event on 8 November 2022

The Churches' Refugee Network (CRN) and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) will be hosting the 'Life Beyond Borders' conference and networking event on Tuesday 8 November 2022 at Liverpool Hope University, Liverpool, England. Events of recent years have brought renewed attention to borders. We've been conscious of changing requirements and entitlements arising from Brexit and checking regulations relating to COVID-19. The pandemic also effectively closed borders in many contexts.

For people who arrive at a border seeking asylum, their impact can be life-changing, and all too often, life-shattering. When Russia's invasion of Ukraine created a movement of European refugees on a scale not seen since World War II, people across the continent responded with urgency and generosity, opening their homes and community centres while governments sought to facilitate travel. Meanwhile refugees of other nationalities, races and faiths face destitution on the margins of our societies or perish on perilous journeys.

This 'Life Beyond Borders' event will challenge and support churches to look at the issue of borders in a new way, recognising that our current circumstances are the result of policy decisions that can be changed and that our Christian values can contribute to a reimagining of these spaces – from places of separation to encounter.



To find out more and to register via Eventbrite visit: shorturl.at/dlmW8

CONFERENCE AND
NETWORKING EVENT

LIFE BEYOND BORDERS

8 NOVEMBER 2022 |
11AM - 4PM |
LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY

FREE EVENT



Join us at this day-long, free event exploring the local, national and international implications of borders on communities, including their impact on refugees and asylum seekers.

An assortment of speakers from across Ireland, Britain and Europe will explore the philosophical, religious and historical significance of borders and how they relate to issues of nationality, identity, faith, culture, ethnicity and politics.

This event is for those with a key interest in issues linked to faith, identity, justice, sanctuary and asylum.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Key speakers from Ireland, Britain and Europe
- Forum bringing together an array of organisations and groups in Britain and Ireland who are engaged in asylum and refugee work
- Marketplace for resources
- Take part in workshops
- Network with peers
- Share information and best practices
- Learn ways to take action within your church and community

REGISTER VIA EVENTBRITE



The Bible shapes who we are and what we do

Racial Justice Advocacy Forum launch

The **Racial Justice Advocacy Forum**, which is an ecumenical Christian entity that seeks to speak prophetically on behalf of Black and Brown Christians to the government on racial injustice challenges and reparations, will be officially launched on 12 October 2022 at Bloomsbury Baptist Church in London. The Forum comprises of representatives from various Christian institutions and parachurch groups in Britain and Ireland, including Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), which was a founding member.

The launch will take the form of a church service at which attendees will hear about the various activities and engagements in which the RJAF have been involved since its inception, such as responding to the British Government's 'Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities Report (March 2021); the Metropolitan Police Service's (MPS) treatment of 'Child Q' (January 2022); the British Government's 'Nationalities and Borders Bill' (February 2022); the racial discrimination faced by Black and Brown peoples amidst the Russian invasion of Ukraine (March 2022); and a meeting with MPS to discuss police engagement with Black

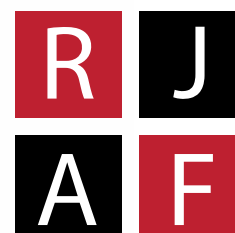
communities (July 2022). The RJAF has also successfully hosted half a dozen webinars focusing on reparations for African chattel enslavement from theological, economic, educational, and restitutive perspectives.

Revd Wale Hudson Roberts, Justice Enabler for the Baptist Union, and one of the founders, alongside CTBI's Richard Reddie, says: 'The RJAF works in partnership with our churches and other relevant bodies to be a bridge between the Church, Black and Brown communities and the government. Our work is undergirded by our collective theological positions on justice for those who experience racial or ethnic discrimination. The Bible shapes who we are and what we do.'

The service will be celebratory in nature; commending the RJAF's work into God's hands, and be an opportunity for would-be justice seekers to join it, and share in its vital work. The service will also provide a platform for younger advocates to discuss what racial justice means to them, and emphasise how they must be part of the ongoing movement for equality, dignity and freedom. The launch will also include the announcement of the RJAF's 'reparations' conference in June 2023 to mark the 75th anniversary of Windrush.



Find out more at:
rjaf.org.uk



Pressing issues

The Synergy Network Standing Together Weekend

This summer the Synergy Network (SN) launched its 'Standing Together Weekend' (16 and 17 July 2022), which encouraged churches, parachurch groups and others to provide practical action to young people and their families whose lives are being devastated by the realities of serious youth violence (SYV). The school summer holidays, which are meant to be a time for rest and enjoyment for all, are often fraught with danger for some teenagers. The school break often sees an increase in SYV, and the SN was encouraging churches to open their buildings during these times so that young people could have safe spaces to frequent.

On 'Standing Together Saturday' (16 July), there was a large church service at St Mark's Church, Kennington, south London, at which attendees had an opportunity to pray and reflect on the tragedy of young lives lost to violence, and to hear about the good work churches and others are doing to bring hope to desperate situations. Those in attendance were youth workers and practitioners from Christian youthwork organisations, Borough Commanders from the Metropolitan Police Service, leading clergy, community leaders and interested parties. There was also a hybrid dimension to the meeting which saw pre-recorded contributions from senior clergy from various church denominations.

The following day, on 'Standing Together Sunday' (17 July), churches in cities and regions such as Belfast,

Bradford, Buckinghamshire, Cardiff, Coventry, East Sussex, Luton, Manchester, Northampton, joined with a plethora of congregations in London, to focus on SYV. Churches from a range of denominations and traditions included a segment, or chose to give over their entire service, to this issue. The SN produced a range of excellent resources that equipped these churches to pray and take action on what is one of the most pressing issues of our time. These resources will remain available on the SN's website: www.wearesynergy.org.uk/events.

As a founding member of the SN, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) was encouraged by the interest in the inaugural Standing Together Weekend activities. The feedback from participants has been extremely positive, and the SN team

is already working on next year's events. The SN would like the Standing Together event to be a regular fixture in the Church's calendar in Britain and Ireland, taking its place alongside other ecumenical activities.



Find out more at:
<https://wearesynergy.org.uk/>



© Lily Redds



Bottom row: CTBI's Richard Reddie (second from right) on the Pilgrim Team Visit; Lampedusa Cemetery - plaque to Yusuf Ali Kanneh who died at sea while making the crossing to Lampedusa; Refugee holding centre in Lampedusa.

A real sense of hope

CTBI's Pilgrim Team visit to Italy

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland's (CTBI) Richard Reddie took part in the Pilgrim Team Visit to Italy that took place from 20-25 May 2022, and which focused on migration and refugee matters in that country.

The trip was facilitated by the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), and hosted by the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy (FCEI), and was part of the wider World Council of Churches (WCC) Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace (PJP) programme that revolved around the WCC Assembly theme: "Christ's love

moves the world to reconciliation and unity". The Pilgrim Team Visit, which was led by the WCC's Dr Agnes Abuom and CCME's Dr Torsten Moritz, aimed to express solidarity and accompaniment with the refugees and migrants arriving in Italy, and to affirm the ecumenical family's solidarity and commitment to the marginalised and those vulnerable to human trafficking.

The visit encompassed sojourns in Sicily, Lampedusa and Rome where the group met with refugees, particularly survivors of trafficking, and the church-related organisations working with them.

On reflection Richard says: 'The visit was extremely challenging in so many ways; it allowed us to see firsthand the enormity of the issue, and the personal impact that government policies in Europe have on individuals fleeing persecution and poverty.' He adds: 'As sobering as this experience was, I came away with a real sense of hope, as it was encouraging to see how the churches, working together, were making a difference in this dreadful situation.'



Read the full report at:
ctbi.org.uk/pilgrim-team-visit-to-italy-report-and-reflections



Building trust and confidence

Working towards compassion and justice for a wounded community

Trust and confidence should be the watchwords that characterise all human relationships; without them, little of substance can be achieved. It is a similar scenario with the police service and sections of the Black community in Britain and Ireland. Churches Together in Britain and Ireland's (CTBI) work with the Racial Justice Advocacy Forum (RJAF) has centred around working with Black communities (and the churches who

represent them) in their engagement with the police to develop those much-vaunted traits.

Indeed, its work took on added impetus following the Metropolitan Police's shooting of 24-year-old Chris Kaba in Streatham Hill, south London, England on 5 September 2022. The killing of the unarmed Black man while driving a car in a quiet London street, sent shockwaves throughout sections of the Black community; the young man in

question was set to become a father for the first time and was planning to marry his fiancé.

Mindful of his former church connections, and the disquiet that his killing was causing locally, the RJAF convened a meeting to discuss how best to respond to what has become a justice issue. It issued a statement calling for the churches and Christians to support the family and friends of the young man, and a speedy, yet thorough investigation into the shooting. It also took part in a vigil at the site of the incident where prayers were said, candles were laid, and a minute's silence was observed.

The RJAF will be holding a series of webinars that will equip churches to better respond to critical incidents such as the shooting and upskill leaders on how best to engage with the police via their accountability fora. All this work follows on from the RJAF's response to the Police's 'Race Action Plan' that came out in May 2022, and which aims to tackle racism and build confidence and trust.

The organisation is also working with the National Black Police Association and the Christian Police Association to establish a 'know your rights' programme, which will inform communities, especially young people, on what they should do when 'stopped and searched' by the police.'

The statement issued by churches following the shooting of Chris Kaba can be found on the CTBI website: ctbi.org.uk/church-statement-on-shooting-of-chris-kaba

NEW CTBI PUBLICATION

A COLLECTION OF VOICES ON RACIAL JUSTICE ISSUES FROM ACROSS THE CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS.

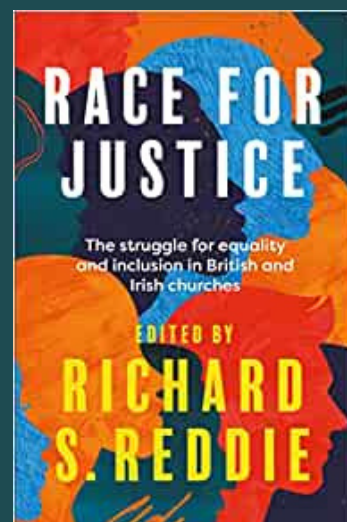
AVAILABLE FROM:

LION HUDSON:

www.lionhudson.com/product/race-for-justice

AMAZON: <https://amzn.to/3RKGoOV>

PRICE: £9.99



Climate Displacement:

A Pacific Perspective by Rev Dr Seforosa Carroll

Rev Dr Seforosa Carroll is an ordained minister of the Uniting Church in Australia and a theologian. She is an Australian-Rotuman, originally from Fiji. Sef is currently Programme Executive for Mission from the Margins/Ecumenical Indigenous Peoples Network, World Council of Churches in Geneva.

It is widely recognised that those most at risk in the emerging environmental crisis are not those who belong to countries and cultures which are economically privileged but rather the poor, those without a powerful voice, and the most vulnerable. They are often the least responsible for the effects of climate change and are dependent on those responsible for climate change to own and fulfil their ethical and moral responsibility to the environment.

The Pacific region has been identified as one of the world's climate change hot spots and as such is prone to extreme environmental events such as tsunamis, earthquakes, cyclone, landslides, floods and droughts. Climate change increases the frequency and intensity of these weather extremes. Within the last five years Tonga, Vanuatu, Fiji and Samoa

have experienced destructive category 4 and 5 cyclones as well as tsunamis. The effects of El Niño are currently being experienced in the highlands of PNG, parts of Vanuatu and Fiji. Several coastal communities across the Pacific have already been relocated due to environmental degradation. In Fiji, for example, up to 40 coastal villagers have been identified to be relocated inland due to rising sea or river levels.¹

In the Solomon Islands, five islands have already been lost to the rising sea.² The people of the Carteret Islands in Papua New Guinea have already experienced the complexities of resettlement in Bougainville. For the low lying atoll communities of Tuvalu, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Tokelau and the Maldives time is already running out. The rising sea level is drowning

them out. For these low-lying atoll countries, external migration looms large as internal relocation is limited. Migration in the form of forced relocation is an imminent option that they will need to consider.

The importance of the imminent plight of countries like Tuvalu and Kiribati raise a number of complex theological questions and conceptual problems in relation to home, migration, identity and the role of the church. Just as there is a pressing need to address climate-induced migration and displacement, there is also the equally urgent need to ensure that questions of climate justice keep at the forefront the historic injustices that have caused ecological devastation and forced people and non-human species to migrate in the first place. In the Pacific



Main photo: Low lying communities at Auki harbour, Malaita Province, Solomon Islands; right: Marshall Islands; below right: both industrial and illegal logging is widespread across South Pacific Islands, reducing land fertility and allowing topsoils to wash on to coral reefs, further damaging biodiversity

big sea/Shutterstock



istock



it is difficult to conceive culture, land and state apart from religious claims when embodied in so many constitutions – the *Vanua* (land), *Lotu*(church) and *Matanitu* (government). Climate induced migration in the form of displacement, relocation and resettlement will continue to compel or drive movements of people across and beyond the Pacific. For this community of people, forced relocation will mean the permanent loss and eternal absence of a physical home. In the absence of a physical home, how can home be reimagined and culture preserved? How can this community continue presencing (being present, visible, hopeful) in the absence of home and loss of culture? How might the church both local and global be a bearer of hope and a formidable voice for justice in such a crisis?

- 1 Loes Witschge, "In Fiji, Villagers Need to Move Due to Climate Change," Al Jazeera, 15 February 2018, bit.ly/3AEapdg; Alister Doyle, "Fiji to Move More than 40 Villagers Inland as Seas Rise," Reuters, 17 November 2017, reut.rs/3QXct5u; "Fiji Villagers Face Relocation as Sea Levels Rise," ABC News, 16 August 2013, abc.co/3QzH5Kx.
- 2 Simon Albert, et al., "Interactions Between Sea Level Rise and Wave Exposure on Reef Island Dynamics in the Solomon Islands," *Environmental Research Letters* 11 (2016).

Sam Lawrence Photography/Shutterstock





Heeding the voices of the people

Reconciling land issues in Sri Lanka

“Taking into consideration the dire political and economic situation of our country and in heeding the voices of the People, we the Heads of Churches...request all the leaders of all political parties and parliamentarians to place the interests of the country as foremost and to immediately work towards forming an All-Party Government, as an interim measure to collectively address the challenges confronting the country, including the ‘ethnic issue’; so that all may rightfully live as citizens with equality and dignity.”

(Extract from Statement of the National Christian Council of Sri Lanka, 20 July 2022)

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) has developed a partnership with the National Christian Council of Sri Lanka (NCCSL) to deliver a project entitled: ‘The Reconciled Land? A Theology of Land at the Nexus of God, People and the Environment’. This partnership builds on a long history of relationship which

can be traced back to the engagement of the British Council of Churches with churches in Sri Lanka through study visits and UK-based support groups for the Church in Sri Lanka.

The project pre-dates the current crisis, which has made headlines around the world, but with its focus on land and reconciliation takes on a new relevance

in this context. Much of the media coverage has focused on the economic crisis and the social unrest in a context of shortages of basic necessities such as food and fuel. The churches, working together through the NCCSL, have been keen to ensure that important questions of political failure, corruption, and the responsibilities of political leadership



are given due priority. On 14th July they issued a joint statement calling on all parliamentarians ‘to respect and heed to the “voice of the general public” and to place the interest of the country as top priority in the discharge of their duties and responsibilities’.

At the heart of the joint CTBI-NCCSL project is an awareness that Sri Lanka is a deeply divided society, and those divisions are complex and deep-rooted, with many groups in society experiencing multiple forms of exclusion and disadvantage — such as women from ethnic minorities living in rural areas that are vulnerable to climate change. Its core methodology is a grassroots community dialogue approach, underpinned by a Christian theological reflection which seeks to highlight the contribution of spiritual resources to community wellbeing and resilience, alongside an awareness of the role of churches as civic leaders with a responsibility to ensure their ministry is grounded in an awareness of the lived reality of those who are most vulnerable. At a time of seemingly overwhelming challenges the project offers a hopeful message by demonstrating the value of investment in women’s leadership, youth leadership and those of marginalised socio-economic or ethnic groups as a contribution to building a more just and peaceful society for all.

From a CTBI perspective, the experience of churches and communities in Sri Lanka offers rich insights for many areas of our



CTBI is working in partnership with NCCSL to help deliver a project focusing on land and reconciliation.

current work. In the area of climate justice, the engagement with farming communities provides evidence of the challenges faced by some of the poorest food producers globally who are vulnerable to the impact of climate change on their land and also facing higher costs arising from the transition to more climate-friendly agricultural practices. It underlines the responsibility of churches to advocate for a just transition that protects the world’s poorest as we work to combat pollution and reduce carbon emissions. The issues around land ownership and use in Sri Lanka have parallels with other societies emerging from conflict, and especially those with a history of colonial occupation and its exploitation of people and natural resources.

We look forward to continuing our learning exchange with colleagues in NCCSL, mindful of the very serious challenges they face. At our last virtual meeting they were working against the challenges of military curfew, power cuts, the threat of protests turning violent, and some project participants were unable to join the call because they had to join long queues for food and fuel. We encourage member churches to follow and pray for the work of the NCCSL at this difficult time.



Find out more at:
nccsl.org/webnccsl.org/web

Taking action on the climate crisis:

Ideas from the Environmental Issues Network
by Hannah Eves, Researcher at A Rocha UK



The world is in the grip of multiple crises: in the UK we have a cost of living crisis, in parts of the Global South a hunger crisis, both in part caused by the war in Ukraine; the global climate crisis is now clearly impacting the UK with recent heat waves and flooding.

All are driven by continuing dependence on fossil fuels – coal, gas and oil. It's easy to feel helpless. But now is the time for the church to speak prophetically, to demand bold action from our political leaders to turn these crises round and protect the marginalised and most vulnerable, everywhere.

This is the belief of the Environmental Issues Network (EIN), representing more than 30 Christian organisations and denominations. EIN was established by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) to mobilise the church on climate and environmental issues.

A coalition of EIN members established the Climate Sunday campaign to mobilise churches to engage with the climate crisis ahead of COP26 in Glasgow.

Urgent and ambitious action by governments remains necessary, and the church's prophetic voice remains

vital. EIN members have identified three key issues on which we urge churches to act: an end to fossil fuel extraction, investing instead in green energy; funding the irretrievable loss and damage caused to climate vulnerable communities; and an ecological conversion – turning our hearts and minds towards creation care.

As Christians we are called to challenge the injustice of climate change, and to care for our common home. Change happens when we come together to raise our voice, so join us in the growing movement and take action.

Get involved:

Campaign for an end to fossil fuels with Warm this Winter

Warm this Winter is a new campaign run by Green Alliance, Uplift and others, calling on the UK government to enable a rapid transition to green energy while supporting the most vulnerable households. Such transformation will dramatically reduce the emissions which drive climate change.

You can speak out on social media using **#warmthiswinter** and follow the campaign on twitter, facebook or instagram. Look out for a corresponding campaign in Wales, which will be led by **Climate Cymru**.

Campaign for climate justice with Christian Aid and Tearfund

Loss and Damage:

Extreme weather events and slow onset events result in permanent loss and damage to communities, which cannot be adapted to. Christian Aid's petition calls for the establishment of an international fund to help people recover from disasters and to compensate them for permanent losses. Find the petition at bit.ly/3pz6BDF

Climate finance:

Higher income countries promised in 2000 to give \$100 billion a year from 2020 to help climate vulnerable nations adapt to the impacts of climate change. They have not done that. Tearfund are campaigning for the UK government to influence higher income nations to deliver on this pledge. Support this campaign at bit.ly/3AhI23n



Find out more about these campaigns and others at: climatesunday.org/speak-up

Church of Sanctuary

The Hospitality of Host, Guest and Stranger

In these challenging times it is encouraging to report that the **Church of Sanctuary network, supported by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), is growing across Britain and Ireland.** This year saw the publication of a Bible study resource to support churches in engaging with Sanctuary Sunday on 26th June 2022 and exploring what it means to be a Church of Sanctuary. Entitled **Sanctuary: The Hospitality of Host, Guest and Stranger**, the resource was launched with a webinar on 9th June which, in addition to presentations from the authors, included contributions from those carrying out sanctuary-related

activities in Wales, Ireland, England and Scotland.

This initiative aims to support individuals and worshipping communities to connect stories of travel and travail within your worship, prayer, action and theological reflection. It offers bite sized, seven days of meditations, prayers and action points, and can be used any time, though it is especially useful for refugee week, which ends with Sanctuary Sunday. There is a call here to prophetic Christian witness, and expression of **hospitality** as a clear challenge to hostility.

Throughout our engagements for Refugee Week and Sanctuary Sunday this year, we were conscious of the

sharp and accelerating increase in the numbers of refugees globally. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, there are now more than 100 million refugees in the world. We were concerned also about the inadequacy of support systems and the sometimes hostile public narratives that can leave refugees on these islands in positions of severe vulnerability and isolation. At the same time there were constant reminders that the work of sanctuary is hope-filled and grace-filled. One significant encouragement was the interest of media — both religious and secular — in the message of sanctuary and solidarity.

The publication of the resource was covered by BBC Radio Ulster's 'Sunday Sequence', United Christian Broadcasters (UCB), and Premier Radio's 'Sunday Night Live' programme. Opinion articles were published by the *Irish News* and *Irish Times*.

Church of Sanctuary founder Rev Dr Inderjit Bhogal says "I was heartened by the outreach from congregations and groups of local churches and greatly valued the opportunity to preach at St Albans Cathedral, whose patronal day coincided with Sanctuary Sunday. The 2022 Annual Conference of the Methodist Church in Great Britain passed a resolution to encourage all congregations to consider becoming a Church of Sanctuary. Other denominations may wish to explore how a high-level commitment of this nature can contribute to transforming the narrative around refugees and asylum and help the Church to be ready to respond to what will inevitably be an enduring challenge, but also great opportunity, for communities on these islands."

The 'Sanctuary in Faith' online meetings allow us to ask questions, swap ideas and connect with those located nearby.

Below, the Revd Canon Elaine Murray speaks about the Carrigaline Union Sanctuary Experience, in Cork, the Republic of Ireland.

'Since our parish committed to becoming a Church of Sanctuary, we have tried to learn more, from the theological understanding of sanctuary to listening to those who relocated here. Our parish social media profiles try to be a voice for the voiceless refugee population in our locality.

With our neighbouring Roman Catholic Parish, we have sponsored the resettlement of a Refugee family. During World Refugee Week the parish hosted an exhibition of photos taken by members of the Alrahal family, documenting their journey from war-torn Syria, through refugee camps in Lebanon to settle here in Cork Harbour.

In addition to helping with seasonal needs in the local Direct Provision Centre, recently we collected items for the Red Cross for incoming Ukrainian



Above right: Bishop Alan Smith, Bishop of St Albans with Venerable Dean Jo Kelly-Moore and Inderjit Bhogal (centre).

refugees, and with others have helped kit out a local house for a family.

The Irish Sanctuary Network are a great support to us, organising trauma-informed pastoral care seminars and sharing useful resources about refugees, migration and sanctuary. The 'Sanctuary in Faith' online meetings allow us to ask questions, swap ideas and connect with those located nearby.

At our diocesan synod in June of this year, a motion urging that all the parishes in our diocese think about becoming a Church of Sanctuary was passed unanimously. I have great hope that there will now be a growing network of Churches of Sanctuary.'

If you would like to explore how to

begin or develop the journey towards becoming a Church of Sanctuary you will find resources and ideas on the Church of Sanctuary and CTBI websites including:

- A copy of the resource *Sanctuary: The Hospitality of Host, Guest and Stranger* available for download; churchofsanctuary.org/resources
- A video of the webinar of the launch with reflections and experiences from different jurisdictions; ctbi.org.uk/sanctuary-resource-launch-for-refugee-week/
- A mailing list to which you can subscribe to receive news of any new resources and initiatives: bit.ly/3cdeVGm



“United by a common purpose”

Encouraging global ecumenism

Nicola Brady, General Secretary of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland attended the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) which took place in Karlsruhe, Germany, from 31st August to 8th September with the theme ‘Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity’. Here some of the participants from Britain and Ireland share what the experience has meant for them in their work.

Nicola Brady



Youth delegate Annika Matthews from the Church of England has been inspired by the international atmosphere:

“The opportunity to meet people from many different countries has made this a really important learning experience. It is a privilege to be here and listen as Christian brothers and sisters from all over the world share about their experiences and bring their

concerns to the Assembly.

“I attended the ecumenical youth gathering, a pre-assembly event, which over four days brought together young people from different churches and different national contexts. We reflected together on different themes, such as ‘celebrating our gifts’, ‘examining our wounds’, ‘transforming injustice’, finishing with a focus on peace. I had the opportunity to speak and lead Bible study on the last day and there was a great atmosphere with incredible energy.

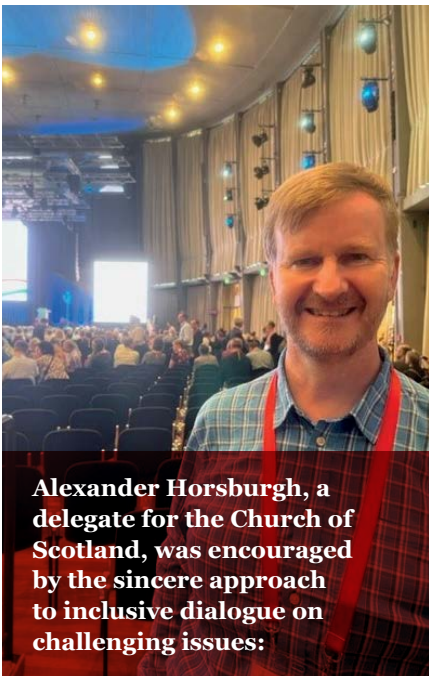
“What has made a lasting impression on me is the importance of being in solidarity with one another. In our individual denominations we can sometimes be very insular in our focus and neglect the need to look outwards and consider the concerns of other people. The experience of this Assembly underlines the fact that as Christians, together worldwide, we are one. The local context — in my case in England — will always be of vital importance to the Church, but we need to connect this to the wider world issues and remember this context in our work and mission and in our wider Church life.”

© Sean Hawkey/WCC



Prof. Azza Karam, General Secretary of Religions for Peace addresses the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches.

Nicola Brady



Alexander Horsburgh, a delegate for the Church of Scotland, was encouraged by the sincere approach to inclusive dialogue on challenging issues:

“It is wonderful to be among so many people from all around the world. I really commend WCC for the preparations on every level — from the organisation and logistics to the choice of speakers. It has all helped

create a welcoming atmosphere and a thoroughly worthwhile experience. The worship has been creative, mindful and inspiring. The keynote addresses have been thought-provoking. The opportunity to go deeper into dialogue in small groups has been significant.

“In a major international gathering of this nature, there will always be a certain element of predictability about the programme. Consequently, those of us who are experienced at this level can become cynical about the real impact and value of this kind of large-scale event, but this WCC Assembly demonstrates that with effective organisation they can provide space for meaningful encounter and dialogue. Of course, this happens more easily in the small group context and I will be interested to see how the plenary dialogues develop over the course of the Assembly, because we have not yet reached the point where we are really seeing an exchange of views at that level. The interventions are still quite formal and prepared, rather than spontaneous. The quality of the reports

before us has been excellent so that provides a helpful starting point for the identification and strengthening of consensus. I am hopeful that this Assembly will produce, amongst other things, a strong Unity Statement that will be a valuable resource for the continuation of the work after the Assembly.

“In the Church of Scotland, as in other denominations, we are concerned about contracting, lack of funds, lack of ministers and lack of members. Unfortunately, this can lead to an inward-looking focus and a neglect of the wider global context. I hope to be able to communicate something of the experience here when I go back. Globally, we are one Church, although we express that in different ways. Seeing that here so clearly in the Assembly reignites hope. It strengthens faith. I would like to see people at home have the opportunity to get a sense of some of that and to see that while we may be struggling in some ways in Scotland, there is so much vibrancy in the Church throughout the world and a hopeful future.”



“I dream of a world where the economy is based on a relationship of respect and harmony towards the land. I dream of a church that plays its role of light in the world and walks in defense of life and harmony. A church that denounces evil and death towards Indigenous peoples. A church that recognizes that the richness of the wealthy comes from extractivism and violence against mother earth and its inhabitants. A church that confesses and repents for its complicity in the tragedy of colonialism that took place yesterday and still takes place today.”

– Jocabed Solano

Nicola Brady

For Georgina Coptly, representing the Irish Council of Churches (ICC), diversity and justice have been major areas of focus:



“Having grown up in Israel/Palestine, I was aware of the work of the WCC from a young age as it has played a vocal role in the region speaking out against injustice. Therefore, when the opportunity came up to represent ICC at the 11th Assembly, I jumped at the chance. I am glad to say that I have not been disappointed. Seeing people from all over the world coming together united by a common purpose to reach consensus on practical solutions to current complex challenges, is awe-

inspiring. I have been uplifted in my faith and transformed by the people I have come into contact with. Casting my eye around the vast space occupied by the Assembly, I am encouraged to see so many people gathered from all over the world, some in their traditional costumes, united in their passion for ecumenical work.

“The climate crisis has been one of the main topics at this year’s Assembly. Concerns have been expressed by scores of delegates, especially from youth participants who have articulated their anger and frustration at the lack of action being taken by their governments. They also expressed strong disappointment in the churches for their lack of engagement on this issue. I will reflect that back to the ICC as a challenge and encouragement to our member churches.

“In this Assembly, there has been a lot of discussion regarding the Israel/Palestine conflict. The historical Christian presence in the Holy Land is under threat due to the continuation of violence in the region. The ICC has begun the process of engaging with churches across Israel/Palestine in the hope of building stronger ties and responding to the needs and concerns of the local Christians. This experience affirms the importance of progressing that work.”

© Simon Chambers/WCC



Above: Judy Bailey and Band performed during an evening of entertainment and fellowship for assembly participants and Karlsruhe residents in the Marktplatz on the first night of the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches

Nicola Brady

Gethin Rhys, who is representing Cytûn, Churches Together in Wales, highlights how the inclusion of perspectives from around the world alters conversations:



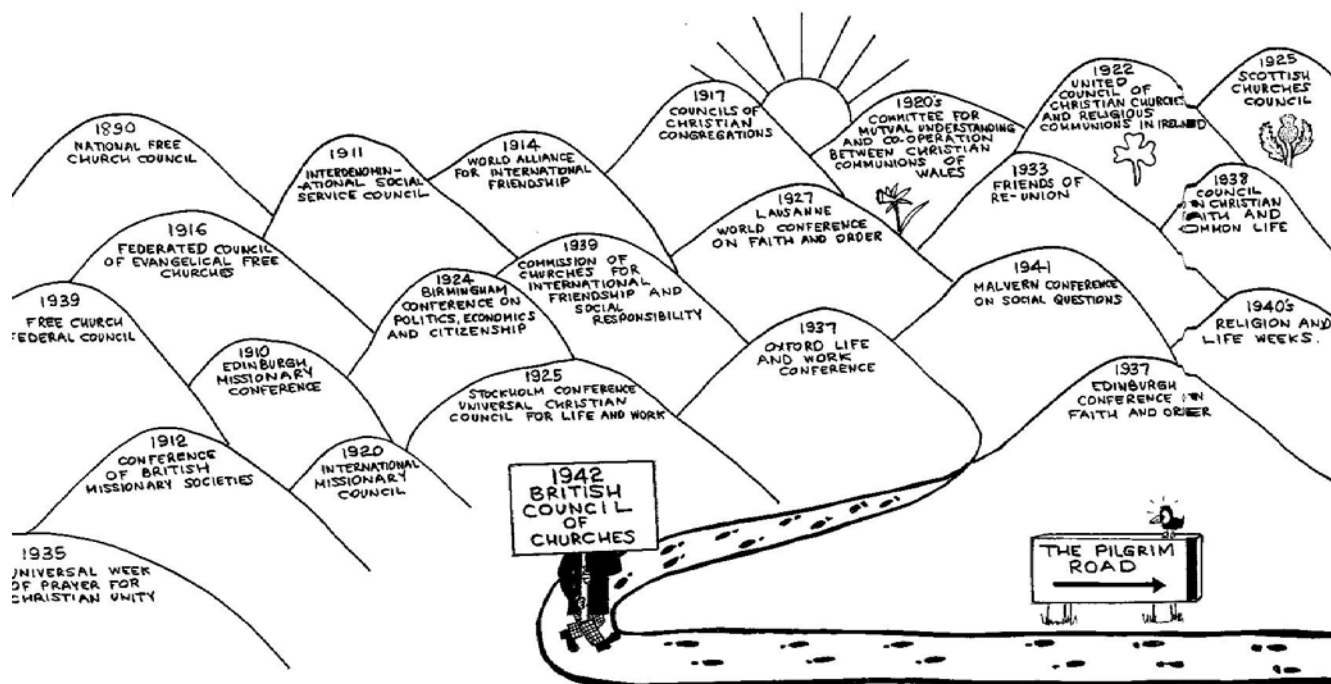
“It is an incredible experience to be in the company of so many Christians from around the world with such a range of experiences and stories to share. I’m co-facilitating a Home Group and we’ve already had some very profound experiences shared in that. It’s been

deeply moving, both in the way in which people have been able to trust total strangers so quickly, and also in the content of the stories that have been shared — which have included stories of welcome of refugees in a European context, and responding to violence and abuse in an African context.

“Of course, as is to be expected in a major international ecumenical event, there is a certain degree of formality, and consequently a predictable element to much of the programme. At the same time, however, the Assembly has provided space for profound encounters and insights, particularly in the informal exchanges. The significance of this should not be under-estimated. We are, after all, grappling with the major crises facing the world at this time. In my Home Group, for example, we are discussing the climate crisis in a group that includes people from Indonesia, for whom the climate crisis means the disappearance of many of their islands. That awareness and experience alters the conversations — as it rightly should.

“I think the agenda of ‘Christ’s love moving the world to reconciliation and unity’ is one that every country needs and therefore it is certainly a relevant focus for Cytûn in the Welsh context. It is encouraging that one message that is coming through strongly across all our exchanges — formal and informal — is the continued relevance of traditional ecumenism. The value of sitting down together, talking together, listening to one another, trying to understand one another and then acting together really comes across. I think we may have lost sight of the continued relevance of that basic ecumenism in recent years and that’s something I hope we could become better at following this Assembly.”

Opposite: Jocabed Solano from Panama, an Indigenous theologian from the Gunadule people, director of Memoria Indigena (Indigenous Memories) and a missionary serving the United World Mission; speaks to a thematic plenary on ‘Affirming the Wholeness of Life’



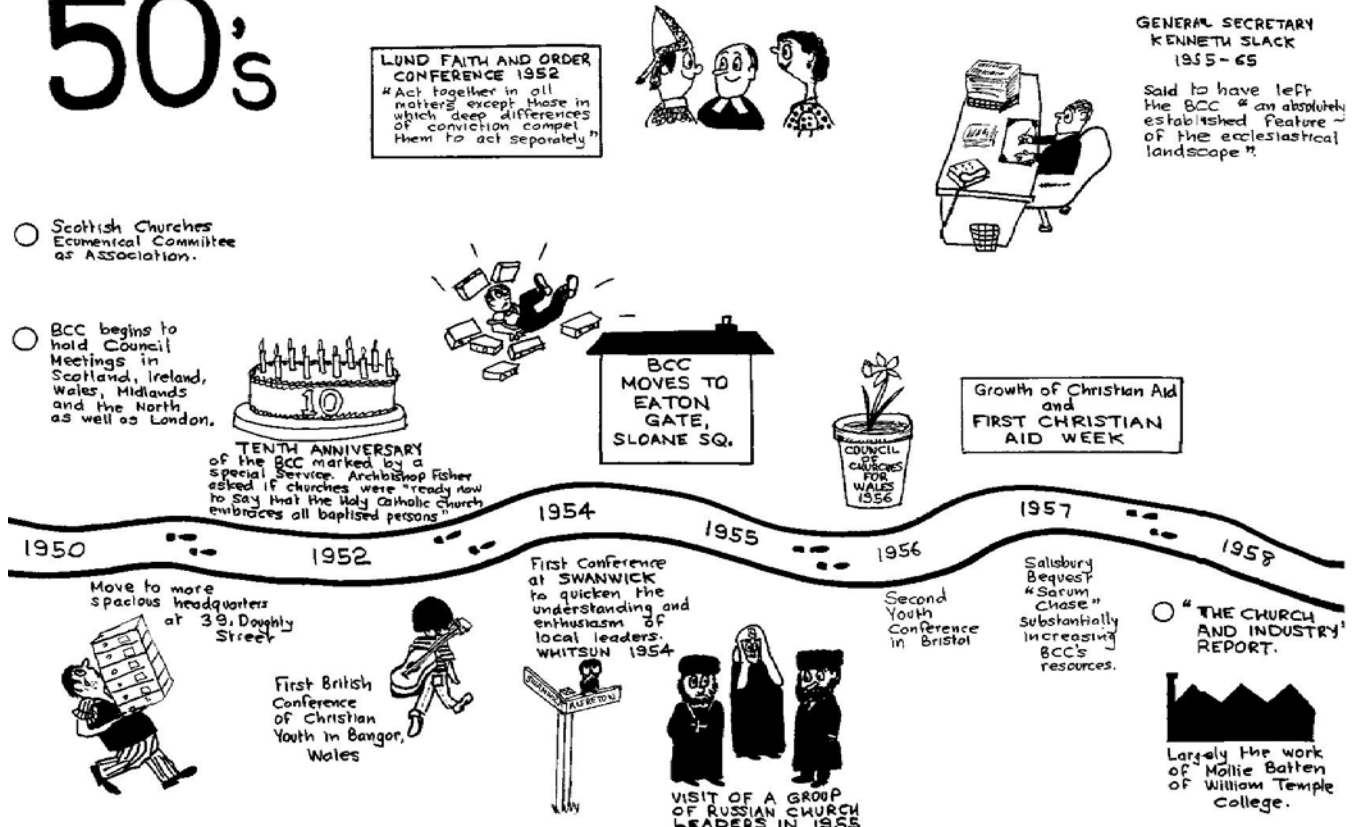
THE STORY OF THE BCC • FOLLOW THE PILGRIM ROAD

The Pilgrim Road

Looking to the past and learning
for the future in the National
Ecumenical Instruments

We are in a period of significant anniversaries for the ecumenical movement on these islands. This year marks the eightieth anniversary of the foundation of the British Council of Churches (BCC) in 1942. The BCC would later be transformed, via the historic **Swanwick Declaration** of 1987, into the Churches Together structure which was made up of **Churches Together in England (CTE)**, **Cytûn – Churches Together in Wales**, **Action for Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS)** and with **Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI)** taking forward the British-Irish dimension of the work of the BCC. The **Irish Council of Churches (ICC)** predates the BCC by two decades and will mark its centenary next year, together with the 50th anniversary of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting – the formal structure for dialogue and cooperation between the ICC and the Catholic Church.

50's



It is a time for looking back, reflecting on the journey we have been on so far, and looking forward to apply that learning, conscious of how much work there is still to do. CTBI works in close partnership with the National Ecumenical Instruments (NEIs) and in this article we bring together some of the key questions and priority areas of focus from the different contexts.

Bishop Mike Royal took up the post of CTE General Secretary in March 2022. He says of his appointment: "I have to say that there's very little that could have pulled me away from the ministry I was engaged in, supporting churches in transforming lives through community outreach, but with my lifelong commitment to ecumenism this was an opportunity I could not pass up and it is a great privilege to have been appointed to the role."

Mike's parents came to the UK in the late 1950s as part of the Windrush generation. His family background

and later professional experience as an urban planner has meant that "participation is the golden thread that runs through my thinking and values." This focus was evident in Mike's first address to the CTE Forum as General

Now more than ever it is vital to do things together if we are going to respond effectively to the current and emerging needs of our communities.

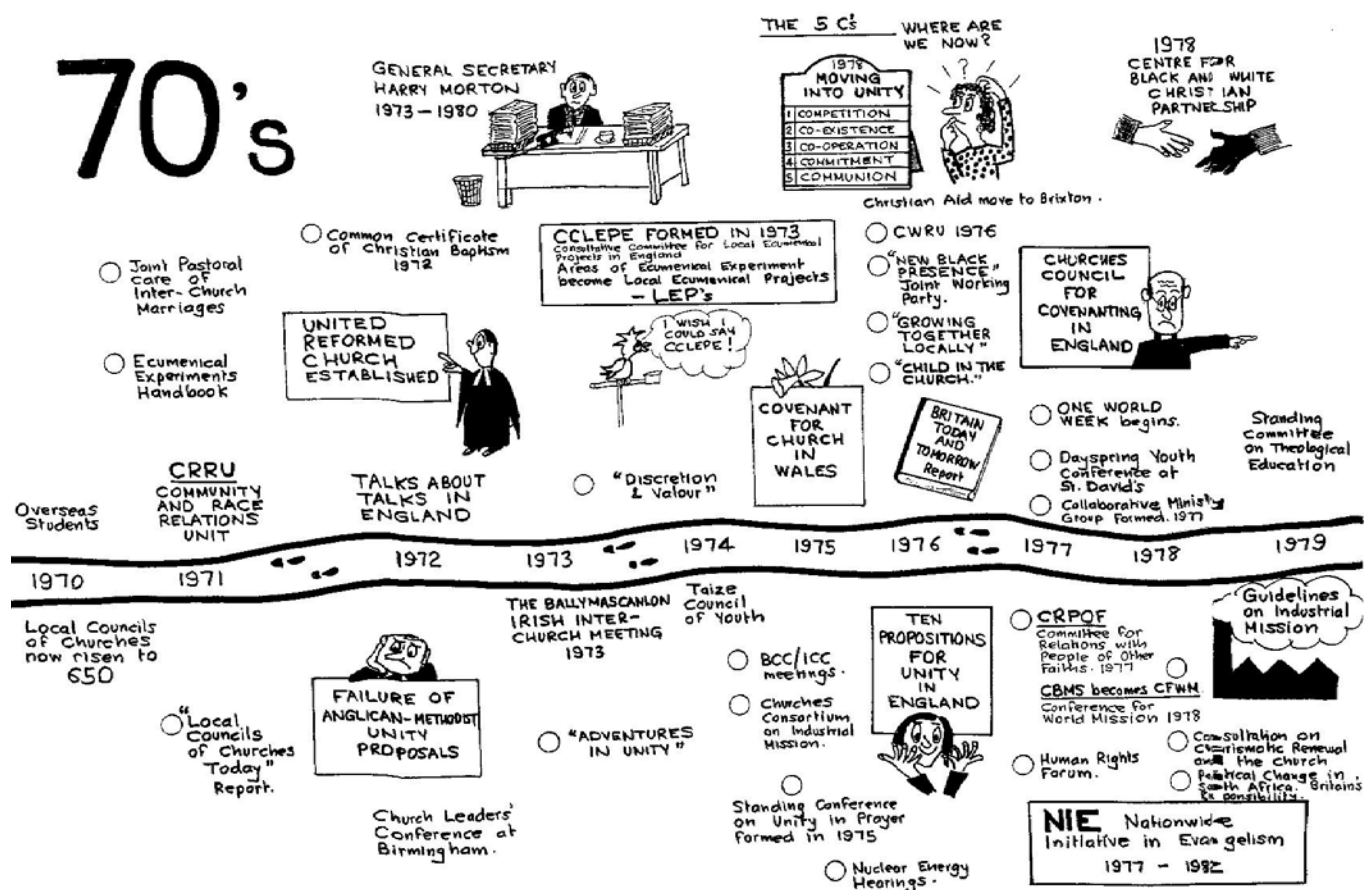
Secretary: "As we look around now we see lives blighted by isolation through the impact of the pandemic, the mental health crisis, and now a cost of living crisis that is pushing increasing numbers of people to the margins of our society. Churches have a lot to offer in responding to these challenges, but we also need to be mindful that

people are weary from the prolonged uncertainty and struggle. Now more than ever it is vital to do things together if we are going to respond effectively to the current and emerging needs of our communities."

Proposing that, in this time of transition, we create space for reflection, Bishop Mike offers three questions to help guide that reflection:

- What do we as churches need to stop doing — recognising that we can't do everything?
- What do we need to start doing — beginning with making space to hear what God is calling us to do together?
- What can we continue to do in a sustainable way?

May saw the appointment of a new General Secretary for the Irish Council of Churches (ICC) and Irish Inter-Church Meeting (IICM). **Dr Damian Jackson** had previously served for five



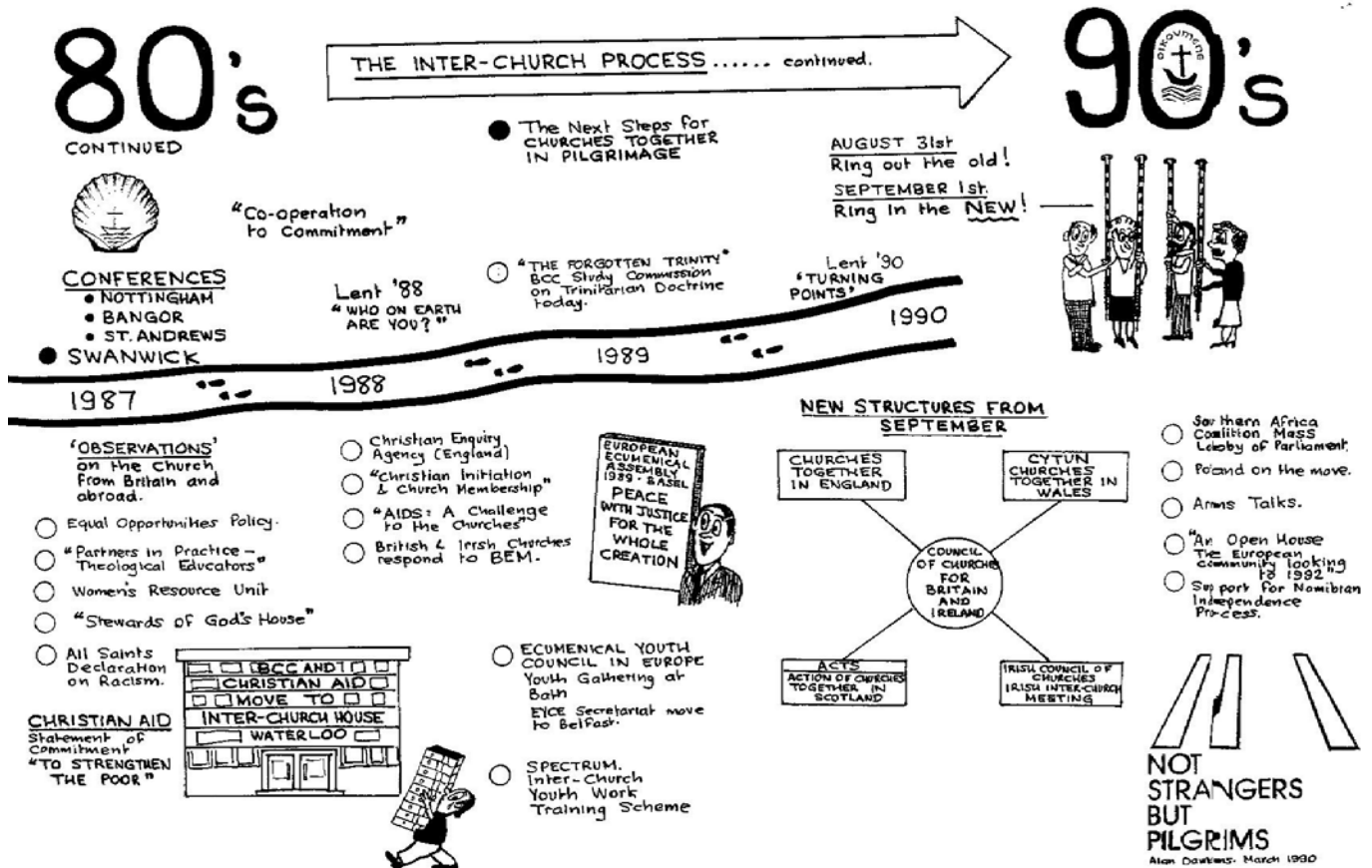
years as Programme Officer working to develop the outreach of ICC/IICM to under-represented and marginalised groups. Reflecting on his new role he says: "I believe that we as churches have a calling to bring hope to those who are marginalised and healing where there are fractures in our society. Fulfilling this calling is as urgent as ever in Ireland at this time, with many divisive dynamics emerging in our society which threaten to awaken old animosities and create new ones between established and newer communities. Modelling an alternative way of being together in our differences is a powerful contribution churches can make and is what we seek to convey through our mission statement of 'Churches in Ireland — Connecting in Christ'."

Damian finds inspiration in the churches' collective contributions last year to the challenging centenaries of the partition of Ireland and the formation of Northern Ireland. Preaching at the Service of Reflection

and Hope, then Methodist President Rev Dr Sahr Yambasu said: "By the grace of Jesus, we can see and treat different others as people like ourselves. Hope for a better future must be rooted in that possibility." Damian says: "My prayer is that we can better live out that vision as we come to another centenary next year, that of the foundation of the Irish Council of Churches. It will also be the 50th anniversary of the Ballymascanlon talks which led to the establishment of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting. We will be reflecting on the circumstances of those initiatives, using them as inspiration to see how God wants us as churches in the 21st century, facing different challenges, to bear witness to the hope that comes from that vision."

Similarly, in Scotland, the **Saint Margaret Declaration of Friendship** between the Catholic Church and the Church of Scotland, formally announced in May of this year, demonstrated the powerful

contribution churches can make by being intentional in sharing about their ecumenical journey. For **Dr Leo Cushley**, Archbishop and Metropolitan of St Andrews and Edinburgh, Catholic Church in Scotland, the St Margaret's Declaration represents a conscious re-imagining of the path of Christian Unity: "We realised that, while there are many areas in which we differ, and will continue to differ greatly, we had become friends and that fact had gone relatively unnoticed. In a society where people are still divided by different experiences of the past, different aspirations for the future, and different challenges and opportunities in the present, we felt there could be a value in making a public statement about our friendship and the way in which it allows us to focus on what we have in common — our shared identity in Christ." Reflecting on the response to the Declaration, **Rev John McPake**, Secretary of the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum said:



Images and details can be found on Churches Together in England (CTE) website:
www.cte.org.uk/about/history/the-british-council-of-churches
www.cte.org.uk/app/uploads/2021/09/BCC-story-panels.pdf

"The reaction to the Declaration of Friendship, both from within and beyond the participating churches, has been really encouraging. This is also coming at a time when the development of the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum has helped to broaden our ecumenical engagement and enhance the visibility of that dialogue and engagement in the public square. This was particularly evident during the pandemic when the coming together of church leaders conveyed a message of hope and solidarity in challenging times."

An important element of the work of the NEIs across the jurisdictions is to build on the dialogue and collaboration between churches and extend that work beyond the faith sector, particularly in support of those who are most vulnerable. In March, CTBI trustees visited Cardiff and had an opportunity to learn from Cytûn's experience in contributing to the commitment, led by the Welsh Government, to make Wales a 'Nation of Sanctuary'. **Revd Canon**

Aled Edwards OBE, General Secretary of Cytûn, explained that, since the fall of Kabul in Afghanistan, Cytûn has worked tirelessly in partnership with others in providing a distinctive Welsh response to the plight of families and individuals fleeing this global catastrophe, followed soon after by refugees from Ukraine. Highly effective partnership working with the Welsh Government and the Urdd (Welsh League of Youth) enabled Cytûn to play a crucial role in opening up facilities in Cardiff and west Wales to refugee families. Since the Urdd, with its 60,000 strong membership in Wales, is primarily youth-focused, a distinctive Welsh 'wrap around' approach was crafted which enabled refugee families to spend time together, becoming familiar with new lives and new places, before moving on to different parts of Wales and the UK.

Reflecting on the learning from this experience Aled says: "The challenges have been huge and significant issues remain unresolved. Being able to move

Ukrainian families from Welsh welcome centres to new homes and lives, remains a huge task. As in Scotland, Wales has embraced the role of acting as a super sponsor. The initial work has been done but providing long term options for families who may never return to their homes in Ukraine lies ahead. Churches will provide a crucial contribution in that process – especially Ukrainian-speaking congregations. The individuals involved in this work have had their lives changed. Seeing young Urdd staff speaking Dari to Afghan children carries a healing gift. As does seeing Afghan children speaking Welsh. God has called us all to be more than one thing. Ecumenism has also now embraced a new face in the Welsh context."

To find out more about the work of the NEIs, visit:

cte.org.uk
cytun.co.uk
www.irishchurches.org
www.acts-scotland.org

Respecting diversity

Renewing focus on freedom of religion or belief

The international Ministerial Meeting on Freedom of Religion or Belief took place in London in July of this year, hosted by the UK Government. An extensive programme of fringe events was put together to give space for civic leaders to outline concerns and facilitate dialogue, with particular focus on issues of gender and the development of youth leadership in the field of freedom of religion or belief.

Together with some of our member churches, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) participated in the UK Forum for Freedom of Religion or Belief. The UK Government's work in this area has been informed by the independent review of support for persecuted Christians, led by Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen, Bishop of Truro, completed in 2019. The report recommends, as part of a wide-ranging package of measures, the adoption by governments across the world

of a Special Envoy position for the protection of Freedom of Religion or Belief, with particular emphasis on the protection of minorities. The current UK Special Envoy is Fiona Bruce MP and she has been proactive in encouraging and supporting faith communities in the UK to engage with the Ministerial, as well as engaging with government more broadly on questions of Freedom of Religion or Belief.

The opportunity presented by this Ministerial prompted renewed attention to Freedom of Religion or Belief in the work of CTBI and the National Ecumenical Instruments. Our discussions highlighted the value of collective engagement in this vast and complex area. We also explored the tension that can exist between, on the one hand, approaches that consider it necessary to take a wide lens to issues of religious freedom, as this is best protected in a context where there is strong adherence to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in its entirety, and, on the other, those who argue that the severity of Christian

wide array of hate crimes and gender-based violence. At the same time, we have been challenged to think about the ways in which the relatively privileged position of Christian churches in the Western world might cause us to underestimate the threat to the existence of Christian communities in other parts of the world and to be complacent, rather than attentive, to these vital rights protections.

Dialogue events organised in support of the Ministerial conference demonstrated how the issue of Christian persecution could be raised in a multi-faith context and within a wider human rights-based approach. Revd Aled Edwards of Cytûn was one of the speakers at an event organised by the Interfaith Council for Wales looking ahead to the Ministerial on 30th June. With contributions from the Welsh Minister for Social Justice, Jane Hutt, and the Prime Minister's Special Envoy Fiona Bruce, the panel reflected on experiences of persecution from different faith communities around the world and the responsibility of political and civic leaders in the UK to be informed about the situation of religious minorities around the world. At a prayer breakfast hosted by His Eminence Archbishop Angaelos, Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London, and the Bishop of Truro, in London as part of the Ministerial programme Archbishop Angaelos reminded participants that: "Violations against people on grounds of religion or belief are an indication of violations of many other human rights within the same context."

The Ministerial has provided a timely reminder of the need to keep issues of Freedom of Religion or Belief on the agenda of our Ecumenical Instruments, and the potential for the learning from our ecumenical dialogue, grounded in respect for diversity, to help inform best practice in this area, in both domestic and international policy.

"So much progress has been made on FORB this year, and there is so much more we can look forward to in 2022..." – Fiona Bruce MP

persecution at present demands a specific and targeted approach. Our examination of the issues to date would suggest that these positions are not incompatible. Christians have a particular responsibility to show solidarity with the persecuted Church around the world, and in examining the nature of that persecution we can see that it takes many forms — in addition to loss of life and liberty we also find examples of loss of land, destruction or confiscation of property, barriers to employment, a



**Keep checking the CTBI website for more information: www.ctbi.org.uk
Statements from the Ministerial Meeting on Freedom of Religion or Belief
can be found here: shorturl.at/dloZ7 or by searching the gov.uk website**



Ecumenical Accompaniers

Cheryl Kipping on a protective presence in Israel and Palestine

“We feel safer when you are there...” This is the view of a Palestinian headteacher regarding the presence of ‘Ecumenical Accompaniers’ at the military checkpoint that his students and staff have to cross to get to school.

The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) is a World Council of Churches programme that was set up in 2002 in response to requests from church leaders in Jerusalem. Israel’s military occupation of the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza had been in existence since 1967. Continued and increasing violence and human rights violations prompted the church leaders to call for an end to violence (from both sides) and for the international community to provide human rights monitors, hence EAPPI was established. EAPPI provides training and support for ordinary people to serve as human rights monitors. They are known as Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs). They come from all walks of life, from over 20 countries. In Britain and Ireland the programme is co-ordinated by the

Quakers in partnership with Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI).

EAs witness life under occupation; they live within the communities that they are serving. They monitor and report on human rights violations, provide a ‘protective presence’ – the presence of EAs often deters the Israeli military and violent settler groups from violating the human rights of civilians and makes local communities feel safer, as evidenced by the headteacher’s comment above – and they work with Israeli and Palestinian groups that are seeking a non-violent end to the occupation and a negotiated peace where everyone can live in safety and with dignity.

In practice this might mean that EAs are observing procedures at checkpoints, escorting children to school, supporting Palestinian farmers and shepherds to access their land, reporting on house demolitions, monitoring protests/demonstrations, and reporting on any violations of international law that they witness to the United Nations and other agencies.

EAPPI believe that everybody can do something to help bring an end to the military occupation of Palestine and a just peace for Palestinians and Israelis.

What can you do?

- Follow EAPPI on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter @ **eappiukireland**
- Ask for an EA to give a talk at your church or other community group
- Consider becoming an EA yourself
- Make a financial donation
- Pray for a just peace in the region
- Visit the Holy Land to see the situation for yourself eg. with Amos Trust, Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, Zaytoun

For more information on actions you can take and to read the latest eyewitness stories from EAs in the Holy Land, visit: **www.eyewitnessblogs.com**

Cheryl has recently returned from Israel/Palestine serving as part of the EAPPI programme.



A vision for peace

In the outpouring of grief that followed the announcement of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on 8th September 2022, it was clear how much her leadership had meant to people across, and beyond, the United Kingdom. Here we reflect on the significance of her legacy for faith communities.

Conveying Churches Together in Britain and Ireland's (CTBI) condolences to the Royal Family, Moderator Revd Graham Sparkes stated:

"As we mourn her passing, we give thanks for an extraordinary legacy. Throughout the decades of her reign Queen Elizabeth provided exemplary leadership inspired by her Christian faith and her unfailing sense of duty.

As CTBI we wish to acknowledge in particular her personal commitment and contribution to peace and to the healing of relationships, which has inspired people across these islands and beyond to continue and deepen the work of reconciliation and building a

better future for all."

Through her words and actions, offered in a spirit of faith, love and hope for the future, Queen Elizabeth created a space in which relationships could be renewed.

Paying tribute to that leadership, Most Rev John McDowell, Archbishop of Armagh and Church of Ireland Primate of All Ireland, reflected that:

"Her affection for Ireland as a whole was clear for all to see during the memorable State Visit to the Republic of Ireland in 2011, and her speech at the State Banquet ranks in political foresight and Christian conviction with the Golden Speech which Queen Elizabeth I made to the House of Commons in 1601.

That in the past "we would have done things differently or not done them at all" and that "we should bow to the past but not be bound by it" have been little gems of hope to many peacemakers in the following years. That they came from someone who had felt the tragedy of Ireland so close to hand and who had lived through the uncertainties of a World War, when the outcome was often far from clear, gave her words an unchallengeable authority."

It is worth reflecting on the text of that remarkable speech in its entirety. At a time when the outworking of Brexit has brought new tensions to British-Irish relationships at the political level it provides an important reminder that:

"Together we have much to celebrate: the ties between our people, the shared values, and the economic, business and cultural links that make us so much more than just neighbours, that make us firm friends and equal partners."

Queen Elizabeth did not seek to minimise or ignore the painful legacy of the conflicts that have scarred our shared history. On the contrary, she inspired confidence by naming them honestly and, above all, by keeping the focus on those who have paid the highest price for our divisions:

"These events have touched us all, many of us personally, and are a painful legacy. We can never forget those who have died or been injured, and their families."

Her vision for peace extended into many other areas of her work and engagement, notably inter-faith relations. The Council for Christians and Jews, an organisation of which she was Patron, described her as "a beacon of understanding and tolerance in British society between different faith and ethnic groups". They have highlighted how, inspired by her deep personal Christian faith, she reached out to others "across the boundaries of faiths and nations". Similar views were expressed by the different faith communities of the UK, expressing appreciation for the Queen's interest and outreach, encouraging all to play their part in building healthy communities and an inclusive society.

It was a fitting tribute to a life dedicated to the work of peace, unity and reconciliation to see how people came together in paying their respects. Churches opened their doors to people of all faiths and none to provide a space for prayer and quiet contemplation and shared information and resources to help respond to the different grief reactions that such a moment of national loss can generate. Community leaders from all backgrounds came together to create moments of collective remembrance and open books of condolence to provide ways in which people could give expression to their feelings publicly and together. World leaders from across the globe paid tribute to her leadership, with particular reference to her strong sense of duty, her deep compassion, her warm personality and her sense of humour. In a time of great uncertainty and deep divisions, this shared remembrance

© PA Images/Alamy Stock Photo



The Queen delivers her landmark speech at Dublin Castle, watched by An Taoiseach Enda Kenny (seated left) and Irish President Mary McAleese (right).

called us back to reflect on the values that should underpin leadership and our responsibility to communicate and live out those values to help shape a vision for society and for our global community.

It is to be hoped that this reflection will leave a lasting impact, with leaders from all backgrounds taking personal responsibility for the continuation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's example and legacy, as well as supporting King Charles III and the other members of the Royal Family as they take on new responsibilities at a time of great loss.

While the challenges we face can seem overwhelming, and the divisive and polarising forces in society insurmountable, her leadership demonstrated the power of personal encounter and respectful engagement in creating space for healing and reconciliation.

Statements, prayers and resources are available on the CTBI website in response to death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, including the publication *Out of the Depths* which explores how the churches respond to occasions of public grief.

Loving God,

We give thanks for the selfless and tireless leadership of your servant Queen Elizabeth II.

She was someone who understood that the Christian call to be peacemakers, is a call to sacrifice.

Help us to find inspiration in her example of humility in leadership and courageous outreach in the search for understanding.

As people across these islands and all around the world are brought together in their grief at her passing and their respect and admiration for the achievements of her reign, we pray that her legacy will be carried on and that people will choose to do the hard things for peace, to extend the hand of friendship without counting the cost to ourselves.

May her strength, compassion and legacy live on through King Charles III as he takes on his discipleship in serving others.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen

**This prayer is offered by Dr Nicola Brady, General Secretary of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) following the death of Queen Elizabeth II.*

Be-Longing:

Praying for Unity amidst Injustice

**Week of Prayer
for
Christian Unity**

Photo: Mazur/cbcew.org.uk

Byd-berthyn: Gwdeddio am Undod Ynghanol Anghyfiawnder
Pobal a lorg: paidir na haontachta in aghaidh na héagóra
Caidreabh: Ag Urnaigh airson Aonadh am-measg Ana-cheartas

18-25 January 2023

www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer



Be-Longing

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: Praying for Christian Unity during the struggle for racial justice

The Week of prayer for Christian Unity has become an established part of the ecumenical calendar. It is marked traditionally in the month of January (18-25) and Christians all over the world come together from different traditions to pray for unity.

In the post-World War Two era Christian unity has been seen as critical to the church's mission in the world for unless we are reconciled to one another as Christians the church cannot be an agent of reconciliation in the world. So, when we pray for the unity of the church we do so praying that the world too

might find reconciliation and justice.

Each year the theme of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (WPCU) is delivered to us by a different international context or nation when we hear what Christian unity means in that context.

Increasingly churches in contexts as diverse as Indonesia, the Caribbean region, the Middle East, Malta, Latvia and India offer us prayers for unity that arise out of their context where social and political challenges impact the churches' witness and mission. What these testimonies from the world church

tell us is that we cannot divorce our prayer for unity from the challenging realities in our world today.

The resources for 2023 will however be somewhat different to previous years. The churches of the US State of Minnesota were invited to reflect upon their journey of unity in a context of rising racism and white supremacy.

It is an invitation not only to stand in solidarity with Christians there but also to reflect upon our own context where racism is pervasive and where there are many challenges to the churches' witness and mission. We have responded to their invitation and have reflected upon our own context.

2023 will be an important anniversary as it will be 30 years since the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence in South London. There will be numerous initiatives that will mark this anniversary and it is an important part of the story of the struggle for racial justice and equality in our society. And so, the WPCU resource in 2023 will be focused on our own prayer for unity in a context not dissimilar from that faced in the United States.

Racism is a challenge for us too. Our prayer for unity in 2023 is a declaration that if we commit ourselves to praying and working for unity then we must acknowledge the barriers that prevent us from doing this.

The resource is will once again be made available in hard copy and these can be ordered via the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) website or directly from Church House Bookshop chbookshop.hymnsam.co.uk. These are available in English-Welsh bilingual and English only versions.

They are also available to download from the CTBI website where there will also be versions in Irish Gaelic and Scots Gaelic as well as additional resources including all age material and PowerPoint presentations.



For more information, visit
ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer

Prayer

God of all,
Because of your great love
our sins have been washed away
and we are part of the beloved community.
We come before you, a holy family,
a rainbow people,
united in the beautiful diversity of your creation.
We celebrate the rich tapestry of the human family.
We commit ourselves to overcome prejudice and disunity
wherever we find it
and to walk humbly in your presence.
Amen

*This prayer has been taken from the new WPCU resource for 2023,
'Be-Longing: Praying for Unity amidst Injustice'*

Changing rhythms of life

The lasting effect of COVID-19 on young children

The pandemic continues to have long reaching and lasting consequences on our society. Whilst emerging from the initial trauma, we are still very aware of the prevalence of Coronavirus, and the many ways it affects people.

Children and young people have not been isolated from all this. Disrupted schooling, change in routine, reduced social interaction, the experience of death and long-term illness – these have made an impact which will continue to have consequences for some time.

This impact is seen in many of our church communities. Whilst many churches found creative ways to engage with children and families during lockdown, habits have changed, and several churches report that numbers returning are much lower than pre-lockdown. There's a general sense of exhaustion, fewer volunteers and reduced engagement from families – so how can we approach our ministry with and among children and families in this new season?

Dr Sarah Holmes, from the Nurturing Young Faith Unit at Liverpool Hope University, conducted several research projects amongst Christian families and churches during and after the pandemic. Her findings offer some interesting observations and key messages:

KEY MESSAGES

1 Faith in the home has strengthened during and since the pandemic

Parents report that they want to be partners with the church in encouraging their children's faith, but they aren't always sure or confident that they (as parents) are equipped. Churches need to consider if what they were offering before is what is needed now.

Key message: Church communities need to facilitate ways to better help parents and carers grow in confidence, skills and knowledge so that they can share faith at home.

2 Relationships are important

Where children and families felt a strong relationship with a person before the pandemic, and those relationships were maintained during it, there was an increased likelihood of them returning in person.

Key message: Continue to develop that sense of belonging and community across the generations.

3 Church is not just about Sunday

Even before the pandemic, numbers of children and families in church on Sunday were falling. Now, with rhythms of life having changed, we need to consider what and when are the best times and places to connect (or reconnect) with children and families.

Key message: Don't just go back to what was before – step back and rethink. Don't over-complicate what you are offering, and reconsider whether Sunday-focussed, programme heavy sessions are the best way to encourage faith and discipleship.

The good news is that you are not on your own! **The Children's Ministry Network** is here to help support you in ministry with and among children and families. So, if you would like to explore these issues further, please **get in touch**.



Find out more at:
www.childrensministrynetwork.org/
www.nurturingyoungfaith.org/



THE PAULINE WEBB FUND

SUPPORTING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

ECUMENICAL UNITY

Through the Pauline Webb Fund, CTBI awards grants to support women's participation in ecumenical work.

WHO CAN APPLY?

The fund is open to people who meet the following criteria:

- Women, normally resident in Britain or Ireland, and
- Members of a church that is in membership of CTBI, or one of the national ecumenical instruments. (Evidence of support from a sponsoring church or ecumenical body is required as part of the application process.)
- In accordance with the focus of this fund on enabling early career leaders to have an experience of ecumenical engagement, preference is given to women under forty years old.
- We particularly encourage applications from women from minority ethnic communities in Britain and Ireland, and those working in areas where access to funding and other resources limits opportunities for engagement.

BACKGROUND

This programme was established with the support of the late Dr Pauline Webb of the Methodist Church in honour of her leadership in ecumenism, internationally and closer to home. Throughout her career Dr Webb held a series of significant leadership roles in the World Council of Churches and the Methodist Conference of Great Britain. She played a key role in significant ecumenical dialogues and campaigns and in the world of religious affairs broadcasting. She was a powerful advocate for women's rights and leadership through her speeches and publications, but above all through her example.

Pauline was keen to support and encourage the participation of women in the ecumenical movement, especially through support for younger leaders to gain ecumenical experience early in their careers. The Fund was established before her death in 2017 and since then has continued in her memory. CTBI wishes to acknowledge with deep appreciation the personal contribution of Dr Webb to this fund through a legacy donation.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

- The fund awards grants of up to £1000 as a contribution towards travel or other costs to enable women to:
 - Attend an intentionally ecumenical event
 - Undertake a course or study visit in the area of ecumenism
 - Conduct research in the area of ecumenism
- As part of the application process participants are asked to provide details of how they will use the experience gained to contribute to the promotion of ecumenism.
- Please note that grants are only awarded where other financial support for this activity is unavailable.
- Grants do not normally cover more than 75% of the total cost.

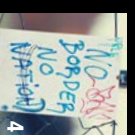
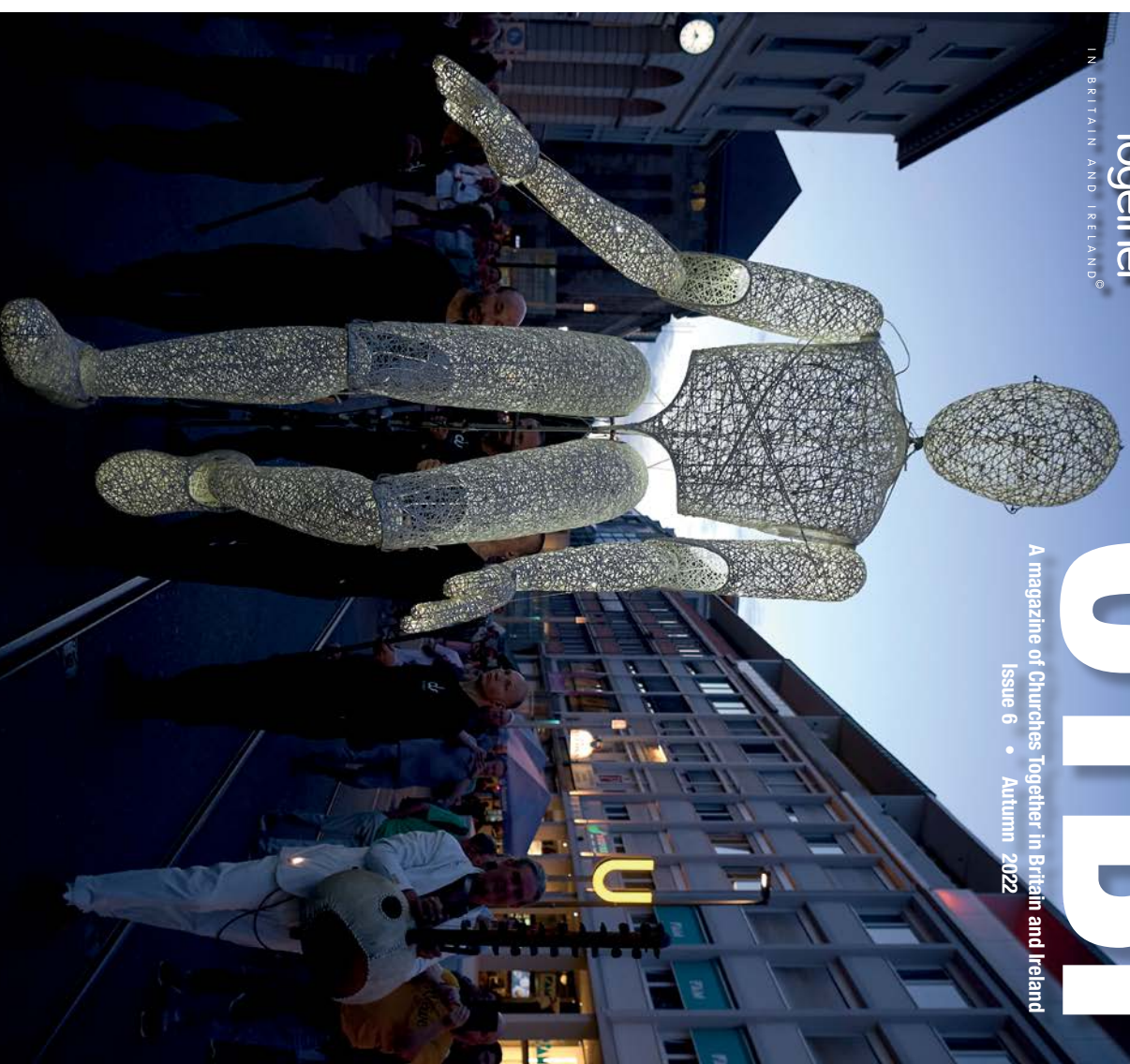
HOW TO APPLY

For more information, or to request an application pack and confirmation of the deadline for the next funding round, visit ctbi.org.uk/pauline-webb-ecumenical-fund email: info@ctbi.org.uk

CTBI STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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.



Life Beyond
Borders
Conference



WCC
11th
Assembly



The
Pilgrim
Road



Week of
Prayer for
Christian
Unity