

Reflection of the Month: All are called

Some find their way easily.
Some hug together and huddle.
Some share with others a careful route.
Some need to cluster and cling, others divert.
Some are of the same persuasion, colour and aim.
Some mingle, jostle and love.
Some show energy, enthusiasm, so their light shines.
Some are pale and gentle, often lukewarm.
Some are held, captured tight.
Some push, struggle and survive
Some avoid the empty spaces, twist and turn about.
Some are lonely, lost and wander.

All meander, journey, strive.

Then caught and gathered safely, they pray.

St Charles' RC church in Swinton, Manchester, was 60 years old last year. Joan Burgess, a parishioner who faithfully attends the monthly unity services, wanted to mark that anniversary in a special way which would include the other churches in the area. This is how she told her story at the ecumenical celebration of the St Charles anniversary:

This evening we are here at St Charles with you – our friends from various local churches – **and I think that is worth celebrating!**

In our 60th anniversary year of the building of this church we are having many celebration occasions with special times of prayer. The opening of our community garden was a recent highlight and was such a joyful event.

Churches Together in this area is special – and so had to be included in a memorable way.

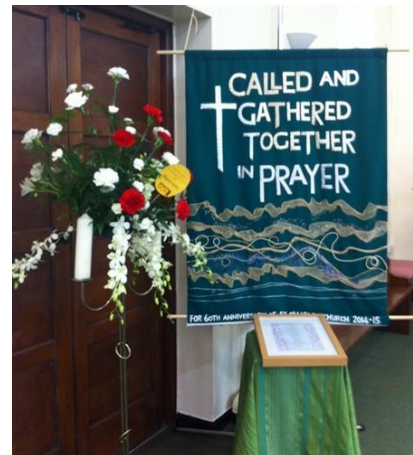


Last year I wondered how to help towards that celebration, and felt (being the person I am) that I had to contribute something visual. I admit to some hesitation at first and I felt rather nervous. I quickly abandoned my first project with fabric and paint because I thought it was rubbish and because it would not have said what I wanted to convey. My second attempt was this embroidered banner. When I was asked to say what motivated me to make it and how I did it, I felt that I needed to go back to my childhood, to my earliest Christian experiences. They help make sense of why I so enjoy *Churches Together!*

I was born and brought up at Roe Green and when I was a little girl I played with several little friends. I was very aware that we were all Christian children. I remember one little girl reprimanding other children by saying: 'that isn't Christian!' I still know her well.

Most of us went to church. Some used to attend the local chapel twice on Sundays – Sunday school and evening service. Some went to the local parish church. I especially remember 'Sermons Sunday' when some families (the girls wearing white) would hurry, not to be late, in the direction of St Marks', Worsley.

And I remember the Methodist Chapel's annual procession of witness around Roe Green – colourful, with a brass band, and I used to wish I could join in – I used to walk on the pavement alongside. My family experienced with immense gratitude the extreme kindness of the Methodist community at some particular



times of great sadness for us. I was, of course, very secure in the Catholic faith in which I was being nurtured – I was brought here to St Charles' church to early Mass every Sunday morning by loving parents.

When I was with my friends, playing or skipping, I can recall quite clearly 'talking about God'. We had our own opinions – looking back I'm really not sure what they were – but I am sure a fly on the wall would have been amused! I'm sure our conversations were very childlike, but one thing I do know, the always seemed to be very important! and very earnest. We shared how our prayers were a bit different, and being so young we did not yet know how to challenge those differences. Indeed, the thought probably never crossed our minds! Aged about twelve, I had one good friend who taught me to sing *The Lord's my Shepherd*. This was my very first introduction to Crimond – and we sang it to the rhythm of playing two-ball against the wall of the community centre.

But – we never actually prayed together. The opportunities were never really there.

I also have a very dear friend, Anne who went to her Quaker meeting at the Society of Friends. Our families lived very close to each other and enjoyed much mutual respect. Anne, who is now 92, has been a tremendous inspiration to me throughout my life. And she has followed the working of this embroidery with great interest.

Having met other close and valued friends from other denominations, it is all these years later, with lots of confidence and hope, that we are able to come together in our various churches, to gather and pray. It is a particular joy for me – I feel such gratitude – and **I believe that is worth celebrating!**

So it was with this gratitude that I began this project, with a sense of purpose.

Unusually for me, I was not quite able to visualise how to embark on it or what the result would be... It was a prayerful process. Each day as I worked on it, bit by bit, my thoughts would take me in a particular, and sometimes different direction, which occasionally surprised me – and I observed carefully what was emerging.

I began by wanting to demonstrate the various journeys, paths and lifelines of prayer and worship that people follow during their lives, and how to depict and symbolise them.

These ideas formed the basic structure for my work – and I used cords of varying thickness, - some are stronger and more robust than others – some weave a steady path, some are pure gold – some twist and turn and even go round in circles before finding the right direction again.



Perhaps we can relate in some way to those sorts of movements in our own prayer life?



Between these paths and roads are empty spaces – lonely times when we need the support of others. But a safe way is never too far away! The embroidered knots and stitches represent all of us – of different persuasions, colours and religious commitments – working closely together and often struggling to find the right ways to go – avoiding the empty spaces and coming together on our own different faith journeys – in spite of the twists and turns and occasional circles. I hope that perhaps you may see other things in this work that are meaningful to you.

Finally, when considering the lettering, choosing and selecting the words for the banner – four important words emerged to stress and emphasise: called – gathered – together – prayer.

The message is clear: We are called. We gather together and we pray – the cross of Jesus Christ with us.

And **I believe that is worth celebrating!**

Joan's banner, adapted with permission, is the logo which CTE is now using for its [Forums](#). It will be launched at the [2015 Forum](#).

Update on CTE Forum 28/29/30th Sept 2015



CTE's [Forum in September](#), Churches Listening Together, is a unique meeting place, the largest representative gathering of the Churches in England.

[Jenny Bond](#), who is co-ordinating it for the first time, writes:

Nail-bitingly slow...

They told me it would be nerve-racking, and it is! Will we have spare rooms or will we run out of them? I still don't know as registrations are coming in frustratingly slowly. In mid August, if those with a right to attend have not booked, we shall open the Forum to whoever wants to come, even if we will then have to turn others away. So if you are a delegate and intend to come, [register now](#) please! If you are not a delegate and would like to come, [register your interest](#) now and we'll e-mail you in mid August. If you want to come just for the Tuesday, we're accepting [day delegates](#) now.

Wednesday morning worship at the Forum will consist of different options which we hope delegates will offer in advance. Again, [offers of help](#) are coming in rather slowly and we may have to rethink this if they are not forthcoming. I sit at my desk wondering if everyone is holding back, thinking that I swamped by offers. Not so...

And there will be a marketplace. In the past this has been a vibrant part of the Forum with many aspects of church life represented. We are still accepting requests for space but, again, these are coming in more slowly than I had anticipated.

... and exciting!

Despite everything, the Forum is also very exciting. Archbishop Doyé Agama, Forum Moderator, was instrumental in giving this Forum its shape and its emphasis on Orthodoxy, Pentecostalism and Young People. Arrangements for the young people have taken up a disproportionate amount of my time recently but tomorrow, Saturday 1 August, twelve of them depart in a coach for the [Chemin Neuf 'Welcome to Paradise'](#) experience. We've set up a private Facebook page for them and they're introducing themselves there, discussing the best radio to take for the simultaneous translation service and wondering about the availability of showers! They'll come back to lead the Tuesday evening session which I think will be a highlight of the Forum.

We're hoping to have more young people at this Forum than before and Churches have been asked to consider including a young leader in their delegation. Churches Together in England is committed to this emphasis and we are welcoming young people as day guests on the Tuesday. If you are under 35, please join us at no cost. You do, however, have to [register for a place](#)...

Please keep the Forum in your prayer, whether or not you are able to join us.

'Sing Christmas' Lancashire shortlisted for media award

Lancashire Sings Christmas has been [shortlisted](#) for a [Jerusalem Award](#) 2015.

These awards promote Christian involvement in broadcasting from both national and regional radio stations and it is a huge achievement even to reach the [shortlist](#). The 2015 winners will be announced at the awards ceremony at Bafta in October.



Lancashire Sings Christmas has been running since 2010. *Sing Christmas* is a highly visible and successful project for Intermediate Bodies and [Leicestershire](#) has been doing it for even longer.

- Read [an account of Lancashire's first attempt](#)
- Download [a report from the then County Ecumenical Officer](#)

Orthodox Church Conference on Ecumenism Today



31 August - 2 September 2015 at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge

The Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies will be holding a conference on 'Christian Faith, Identity and Otherness. Possibilities and Limitations of Dialogue in Ecumenical and Interfaith Discourse'.

International Speakers will address the approach of the Orthodox Church today to ecumenical goals and engagement. [A flyer with information and programme can be found here.](#)

The conference is open to anyone who has an interest in this subject, including our ecumenical partners from other ecclesial communities.

ACAT Annual Conference & AGM Balancing Stewardship with Mission -



Saturday 17th October 2015

Topics

- Opening Devotions - *Reverend Davey Falcus, Lakeshore Christian Ministries*
- Balancing Stewardship with Mission - *Canon Doctor Christina Baxter CBE*
- Putting your money to good use - *Doctor James Corah, Deputy Head of Ethical & Responsible Investment, CCLA*
- Employing People - A step by step guide - *Leann Dawson, senior HR Manager, Church of England*
- Keeping on the right side of the Charity Commission - *Greyham Dawes, Technical Director of Crowe Clark Whitehill*
- Issues for Smaller Churches - *Allan Hargreaves, Director of OMNIS Tax Consultancy with other ACAT Trustees*
- Issues for Larger Churches - *Greyham Dawes*
- Legal and Charity Update followed by "Any Questions" - *ACAT Trustees and Presenters*

Key Speakers

- Davey Falcus is a former gang member who is now an ordained minister in Ashington, Northumberland.
- Christina Baxter is a theologian and former Principal of St John's College, Nottingham.
- James Corah is Deputy Head of Ethical and Responsible Investment, CCLA and Secretary to the Church Investors Group.
- Leann Dawson is Senior Human Resources Manager to the Archbishops Council of the Church of England.
- Allan Hargreaves and Greyham Dawes are Trustees of ACAT with many years' experience at HMRC and the Charity Commission respectively. Allan and Greyham also work in private practice advising charities on their tax and accounting issues.

The conference will take place on Saturday 17th October 2015 at The Jeffrey Hall, The Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL from 10.00am - 4.00pm

To book a place you may either [complete and return the booking form](#), visit the ACAT website and [book on-line](#) or book over the telephone by calling 0333 123 0880. The cost is a modest £35 as a means of covering some of the outgoings.

Closing date for receipt of bookings is 10th October or earlier if our maximum number is reached.

The Taize Community: A Symposium at Sarum College

Friday 30 October 2015, 12:00 to Saturday 31 October, 16:00

CALL FOR PAPERS

Sarum College is the venue for an academic symposium that will explore and review the significance of the Taizé Community in the 75th year since the founding of the Taizé community (also the centenary anniversary of the birth of its founder, Brother Roger).



1940 - 2015

The symposium aims to create the opportunity to assemble a wide variety of contributors whose work and study relates to the unique phenomenon of the Taizé Community. It is hoped that the Taizé Community will be represented at the symposium and that a selection of the papers will result in a publication.

Proposals for papers are invited which will provoke engagement with the Taizé Community. Long (35 minutes) and short (20 minutes) papers are welcome on the following or other related topics:

- The life and work of Brother Roger Schütz
- Taizé and reconciliation in the post-2nd World War period
- The influence and life of Taizé brothers e.g. Max Thurian
- Taizé and its liturgical life e.g. music, communal daily prayer, silence
- Taizé and its attraction for young people
- Taizé and Christian witness in secularised society
- Taizé as a monastic community
- Taizé as a place of pilgrimage
- The relationship of Taizé to historic Christian traditions
- Taizé worldwide e.g. 'Pilgrimage of Trust on Earth'
- Taizé as a community of virtues
- Commentators on Taizé e.g. Olivier Clément, Paul Ricouer

Short abstracts of up to 250 words, accompanied by a brief (up to 100 words) author biography are to be sent to [James Steven](mailto:James.Steven@taize.org.uk)

Proposals are to be submitted by Monday 5 September 2015.

Connecting Church-Based Social Action and Church Growth

A report on church-based social action and church growth has been released today by Jubilee+.

The 2014, 2012 and 2010 [National Church and Social Action Survey Reports](#) show that churches in the UK have responded significantly to the social challenges in their communities. In 2014, it is estimated that 1.1 -1.4 million volunteers participated in church-based social action in the UK, touching millions of people through various initiatives. The number of volunteer hours on social action increased to 114.8m per annum. This is an increase of 16.8% compared with 2012 and 59.4% compared with 2010. Funds given by UK Church members that were spent on social action initiatives increased to £393m in 2014. This is an increase of 14.9% in two years and 36.5% in four years. The average number of social action initiatives undertaken by individual churches has risen to 8.9. This represents an increase of 20.3% compared with 2012 and 81.6% compared with 2014.



However, is all this effort helping to grow the Church or is this just social work?

The leading two encouragements in the 2014 and 2012 Surveys were 'Community Involvement' and

'Attendance at Events/Growth'. This is exciting news for the Church as it shows that social action is helping it connect to local communities and has resulted in Church growth. Social action seems to enable connection to people who are not at a place where they would be interested in Alpha or equivalent courses.

All social action initiatives have an effect on church growth

Looking at responses to the question in the 2014 and 2012 surveys, "*Thinking of organised activities of your church in the local community in the last 12 months, how do you rate their effectiveness in seeing people added to the church?*". Answers to the question could be; Poor, OK, Good, Excellent. If we look at the responses to 'Ok', 'Good' and 'Excellent', ALL initiatives have some effect on church growth, some a lot more than others.

Some initiatives seem to consistently result in church growth; Parents and toddlers, Caring for elderly (apart from church members), Special needs adults, Cafe open to public, Children's club - up to age 11 (apart from church children's ministry), Bereavement counselling (apart from church members), Youthwork - 12-18 (apart from church youth ministry). Others seem to be sample dependent.

One might be tempted then as a church leader to just pick the most fruitful on average, but is that the whole story? No: some churches running the same social initiative respond with 'Poor'; some respond with 'Good' and 'Excellent'. What could be the reasons for this?

Relationships, prayer and invitations are important

To help answer this, in the 2014 survey, we asked the additional question, "What made the difference between activities rated as 'good' or 'excellent' in seeing people added to the church versus those rated 'poor' or 'OK'?". We listed some factors that could be reasons and asked respondents to tick all that applied as well as giving a text box for other reasons. The leading factors mentioned by 50% or more of the sample are:

- We were able to build a long-term relationship with people
- We were able to spend time with individuals
- The initiative is regularly prayed for
- The volunteers are welcoming
- We invited people to other events

This is very encouraging as these behaviours point to building good relationships – 'evangelistic gifting' was well down the list of factors.

[Click here for more details and to download the summary report](#)

Association of Interchurch Families Survey: Please Respond



The Association of Interchurch Families (AIF) is trying to find out how much church membership means to people today. Whether you are a member of a church or just attend church services without being concerned about membership please do take just a couple of minutes and fill in our [anonymous survey](#).

The results will inform discussion at our conference in August with the theme "Belonging and Believing" and help AIF as we support couples and families and in planning support services for the future. The survey is open till the end of August 2015.

Thank you for your help and the results will be posted on our website later in the year.

Thousands Gather for Trumpet Call 2015

Christians gathered from across the nation on July 4th for a day of worship and prayer, and to blow the trumpet in the land. Trumpets are blown to mobilise people and over 2000 Christians from across the denominations, cultures and ages came together with a wide range of Christian organisations to get ready for change.



Ian Cole, founder of the World Prayer Centre commented, "We believe God is calling us into new times – we need a deeper relationship with Jesus and a passionate desire for his presence. It's all about Jesus – his name, his authority, his grace and compassion. At the end of the event we sent people out to the four corners of the land and into Europe and beyond with a powerful prayer declaration. We have already had feedback from towns and cities and even countries where this is being followed through."

There were five key areas of focus and WPC is encouraging all Christians to continue to pray into these areas: the supremacy of Christ, the message of the cross, unity in the Body of Christ, for our children and young people, and for our towns, cities, nation and Europe to be transformed. The trumpet call message and the passion for change now moves to Romania with a European trumpet call from 31 August to 4 September.

Notes for Editors

For photos from the event or interview opportunities, contact [Natasha Ruddock](mailto:Natasha.Ruddock@wpc.org.uk). [Click here for more information on the prayer points from the day and to download the declaration](#)

And Finally ...

Daily comment and prayer is provided by the Milton Keynes Mission Partnership and anyone can subscribe and see each day. Here is the link: <http://www.missionpartnership.org.uk/start-praying/>

A screenshot of the Milton Keynes Mission Partnership website. The header features the organization's name and tagline "Effective Mission through Partnership". A navigation menu includes links for Home, Prayer, Events, News, COMPASS, Links, Vacancies, and About Us. Below the navigation, there are three main sections: "FOLLOW:" with a Facebook icon, "START PRAYING..." with a "Praying for Peace" article featuring a cross and a candle, and "MORE" with "PRAYER RESOURCES" including a paragraph about resources launched in June 2014.

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