

## **Reflection of the Month: Strength in Partnerships**

This Reflection is based on an article from Karis Kolawole from Action for Children, a new Body in Association with Churches Together in England.

In a world where there are many needs but limited resources to meet them, working in partnership is really important. Here are some examples.

### A Body in Association.

At Action for Children, we have been delighted to be accepted as a Body in Association of CTE this year. Action for Children was founded by Methodist minister Thomas Bowman Stephenson, who just could not ignore the poverty he saw among children on the streets of London. In 1869, with the help of his friends, he set up the National Children's Home taking in two young boys. Today, we help over 370,000 children, young people and families each year through one or more of our 611 services – from supporting families at risk of breakdown, youth employment programmes to residential care for disabled children. Through Churches Together in England we hope to build more partnerships. It opens vast opportunities to form strong partnerships with churches and other Christian organisations to impact the local community.



### Action together

It's not enough to be resolute. We must take the right action. For us in Action for Children, that is ensuring that we are doing what's right, doing what's needed and doing what works for children. It means basing our decisions on sound evidence and ensuring that we can demonstrate that what we do works. It also means being innovative and working in partnership with others.



One of our partnerships is the [Disabled Children's Partnership](#) (DCP). Currently, there is an unacceptable contrast between the quality of life and the opportunities available to disabled children and their families, compared to those without disabilities. DCP exists to address this and campaigns for improved health and social care for disabled children, young people and their families. The Disabled Children's partnership has a current campaign, '[Secret life of us](#)', which uses a series of films to tell real life stories. We encourage Christians as well to [sign up to the campaign](#) to make a lasting difference to the way disabled children are treated in society.

### Churches Together

There are so many other ways churches can work together and partner with us, such

as providing premises where we can run children's services, support school programmes, campaigning to change Government policy to improve children's lives, volunteering and giving. Nationally, the Methodist Church has particularly been an exemplary and inspirational partner in that respect over the years. We look forward to working with even more churches and Christian organisations to change the lives of thousands more children, young people, and families.

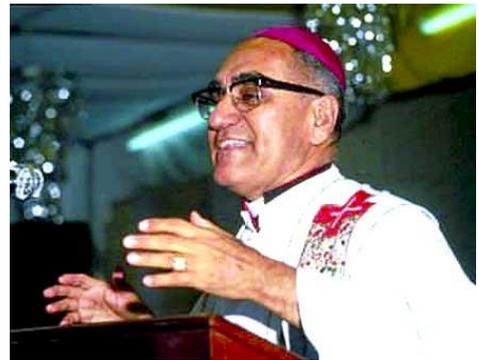
The needs we tackle daily are more varied and more complex than when we started; but, our vision to ensure that any child who needs help gets help and our inspirational partnerships strengthen our resolve. We are happy to have conversations with Churches Together groups and other ecumenical organisations about how such partnerships can develop. Together, there is indeed, 'Strength in Partnership'.

Karis Kolawole is Head of Faith Partnerships. To learn more about Action for Children's work and how you can get involved, visit [www.actionforchildren.org.uk](http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk) or get in touch with [Karis via email](#).

## **Rowan Williams preaches for Romero Service and an invitation to attend**

Jenny Bond writes:

The former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, will preach on *The hope that inspires Christians* at a special national ecumenical celebration of the birth of Oscar Romero on Saturday 23 September at 3.00 pm at Westminster Abbey.



The special extended evensong will include readings and music reflecting the Romero centenary and the premiere of a Romero Anthem composed by James MacMillan.

Churches Together in England is co-sponsoring this event and all are welcome. More information is available on the [Romero Trust website](#) and the free tickets can be [booked via Eventbrite](#).

It is hoped that the celebration will be preceded by [RISE Theatre's](#) performance of [Romero, the Heartbeat of El Salvador](#) at noon at a nearby venue. Information will be posted [on this page](#) when it becomes available.

- [About Oscar Romero](#)
- [Resources for Oscar Romero](#) including [We are prophets of a future not our own](#)
- [CTE Presidents reflect on contemporary Christian martyrs](#)
- [Download an A4 poster for the 23 September celebration](#)
- [Download an invitation card for the 23 September celebration](#)

## **AIF weekend 2017**



The Association of Interchurch Families  
A Body in Association of CTE

Faith and the Next Generation  
October 21-22 2017 at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick Derbyshire

Doral Hayes writes:

Why come? This year the AIF weekend will explore issues surrounding the handing on of our faith to future generations. There are many factors that influence church communities (and families) in this process, the outcome of which has a significant impact on both the churches as a whole and the families concerned. For Interchurch families the question of how (or whether) to pass on two traditions presents a different context, but how far are Interchurch children different from their peers in the way they receive the message from church and family?

During the weekend we will listen to and learn from each other as well those working alongside young adults on their spiritual journey. We also hope to be joined by a number of young people (the next generation about whom we are talking) who will share with us their stories and experiences of how their faith was formed. Together we will consider the roles of schools, society, church and of course the family in faith development and ask ourselves: How do we hand on our faith? What are we handing on? How is it received by others?

There will be space for making and renewing friendships; reflection; time to attend a range of discussion groups and also bible study.

This year we will also be joined by Rach Collins from the Student Christian Movement and Fr Dominic Robinson SJ National Director of Landings, a programme for returning Catholics as well as Brenden and Laura Thompson from Catholic Voices.

Who is it for? All couples in an interchurch family or those thinking about such a marriage, and interchurch children of any age. Clergy and others interested in the pastoral care of interchurch families are also most welcome.

Children are welcome and will enjoy their own separate, but integrated programme, those aged 15 and over may elect to join the main programme or take part in the Young Adults Group (YAG).

[Download flyer with more information](#)

## 'We are One in Christ'

Charles Parker writes about a prayer walk in Manchester on 10th June 2017:

Christians from all over Greater Manchester came together for a great walk of witness through the cities of Salford and Manchester on Saturday 10th June, to proclaim that what unites us as Christians is greater than what divides us into our different denominations. Anglicans, Methodists, Roman Catholics, Baptists, Coptics, Pentecostals and members of the Salvation Army and other movements gathered for a service in Salford Cathedral (RC) then processed through Salford to Manchester holding banners proclaiming "We are ONE in Christ" and "One Lord Jesus" with many people carrying placards proclaiming the titles of Jesus, eg "King of Kings" (each with a scripture reference).



This was organised by members of the Maranatha Community, a scattered community of Christians from all traditions who are committed to Unity, Renewal and Healing, and which encourages its members to be more effective Christians wherever they worship, live and work. The planning was started and the date booked over a year ago, and it was unfortunate that the day started with heavy rain which meant that there were fewer participants than in the similar walks in 2000 and 2009. However the fact that it came just 3 weeks after the MEN Arena bomb, meant that several hundred people took part and we were blessed with dry air for most of the walk and the open air worship in Cathedral Gardens, where God's blessing was proclaimed over the city.

The walk concluded with a service in Manchester Cathedral during which Roger Sutton, leader of Gather Network, challenged us to do more in forging friendships across denominational boundaries, working together to speak with one voice and coordinating christian action. Other speakers included John Arnold - RC Bishop of Salford, David Walker - Anglican Bishop of Manchester, James Aladiran - Prayer Storm, John Manwell - Maranatha Community; and prayers were led by Andrew Lunn - Chairman of Manchester and Stockport Methodist District.



A summary video can be seen on the Maranatha Community website [www.maranathacommunity.org.uk/watch](http://www.maranathacommunity.org.uk/watch)

and on YouTube  
<https://youtu.be/ydzX5-DbQEI>

## Receptive Ecumenism Researcher

The Centre for Catholic Studies, Durham University, have announced the appointment of their new researcher for Receptive Ecumenism.

The Rev. Dr Gabrielle Thomas, an ordained priest in the Church of England, recently completed her doctorate at the University of Nottingham on the theological anthropology of Gregory Nazianzen. Over the course of two years, she will be working closely with NBCW-sponsored regional ecumenical discussion groups, together with interviewing key individuals, in order to explore, using the methodology of receptive ecumenism, the diverse experiences women have of participating and ministering within the UK churches, the difficulties and challenges which arise, and what fruitful learning might occur across the traditions. She will also begin a complementary longer-term personal research project, focussed on how women may be both image of God and image of Christ according to the thought of Augustine of Hippo and Gregory of Nazianzus.



Gabrielle Thomas said, "I am delighted to be involved in a research project which addresses the experiences of women in U.K. churches through the lens of Receptive Ecumenism, since I am committed both to the unity of the Body of Christ and to the flourishing of women in a variety of ministries. As the birth place of Receptive Ecumenism, I can think of no better place for this project than Durham and it is a privilege to be working in such an excellent and innovative department."

Janet Ward, Convenor of the Ecumenical and Interfaith Committee of the NBCW said, "We are delighted to be partnering the Centre for Catholic Studies at Durham University on this innovative project. We are confident that Gabrielle Thomas will bring energy, sensitivity, and insight to its realisation. We look forward with interest to working and learning together."

## President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference meets the Archbishop of Canterbury

The President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference visited Lambeth Palace on Friday 14th July for a meeting with the Archbishop of Canterbury.



Accompanied by senior figures from both churches, the President, the Revd Loraine N Mellor, and the Vice-President, Jill Baker, met Archbishop Justin Welby to discuss matters of mutual concern and were encouraged by reports of Anglicans and Methodists working together in mission, evangelism, witness and service all over England.

Their wide-ranging discussions also took in the future of Europe, prayer, evangelism and witness, and the churches' engagement with political and public issues.



The President, Vice-President and the Archbishop commended the report 'Mission and Ministry in Covenant' to both churches for study and reflection together. This report sets out a proposal for a full relationship of communion between the two churches and a reconciled ordained ministry. The proposal, contained in a report requested by the 2014 Methodist Conference and Church of England General Synod, builds on the existing relationship between the two churches expressed in the 2003 Anglican-Methodist Covenant.

Images courtesy of Lambeth Palace.

## Prisons Week 2017

*'Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.'*  
*Philippians 3:12 (NIV)*



Justin Welby writes:

The Apostle Paul here speaks as someone who knows the pain of endurance and hopelessness. Tortured and beaten, in prison many times for his faith, he nonetheless spoke to fellow prisoners about the hope he had found in Jesus. He had started as offender, hurting and maiming others, but found forgiveness and new life in Jesus. Yet life did not magically grow easier; instead he had to learn to live with his past, and face an uncertain present of false accusations and persecution for his faith. He was someone kept alive by hope, who endured and persevered in the face of desperate circumstances.

What better inspiration for all those connected to the criminal justice system, than Paul's words? For the victims who struggle day by day to live with memories and scars, and hope for a better tomorrow; for the staff, who patiently come alongside broken men and women, and walk with them the slow road towards change; for prisoners themselves, trying to make sense of their lives, fighting against the scars and choices of the past and fear of the future; and for the families and friends of those in prison, faithfully visiting and supporting. Paul encourages all not to give up hope, but keep their eyes on the goal, keep going. Yet this isn't about making efforts and working harder. It is about recognising that in Jesus, God has already 'taken hold' of us. That victims, prisoners, staff and families, are not walking this road alone, but God, who loves them, is ready to walk with them. In Prison Week, we stand in prayer with all who carry on in hope, that they would know they are loved by God and have the faith and courage to press on towards new life.

The Most Rev. and the Rt Hon. the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby

**The Prisons Week Prayer** - Lord, you offer freedom to all people. We pray for those in prison. Break the bonds of fear and isolation that exist. Support with your love prisoners and their families and friends, prison staff and all who care. Heal those who have been wounded by the actions of others, especially the victims of crime. Help us to forgive one another, to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly together with Christ in his strength and in his Spirit, now and every day. Amen.

[Download the Prayer leaflet](http://prisonweek.org/) and more information: <http://prisonweek.org/>

## **Movement Day UK 6/7th Oct 2017 Churches Together Seminar**



MOVEMENT\_DAY\_UK\_

Jim Currin writes:

500 delegates have already booked for a major conference called Movement Day UK (MDUK) and Churches Together in England will be contributing in several ways, including through a stream with the theme *Transforming Our Communities*.

CTE is working closely with Roger Sutton, Director of the Gather network and the host of MDUK. Some CTE Presidents and staff are attending. I'll be leading a seminar with a team of contributors to which you are particularly invited. That will be on Friday 6th October under the heading, *Churches Together Groups: Transforming Our Communities*.



There are several CTE Presidents involved in Movement Day in a variety of ways. Revd Canon Billy Kennedy is involved in some of the planning as a leader of one of the *Gather* groups, while His Grace Bishop Angaelos is a main key note speaker. CTE has agreed to be one of the many organisations working in partnership to co-badge the conference.

The seminar will include contributions from several people including:

- Callan Slipper the new national Ecumenical Officer for the CofE re what 'ecumenical' means in terms of mission and transformation
- David Cornick, General Secretary of CTE, will report on the current Theos review and its recommendations re CTE and mission.
- Jerry Marshall from Germinate and the Churches Rural Group, will give a rural perspective and talk about mission as enterprise
- Danny Stupple, Chair of Churches Together in Eastleigh will be illustrating 'Transforming Our Community' with video and testimony.



The speakers will form a panel for questions.

## **A personal invitation**

I want to invite all members of Churches Together(CT) groups to be delegates 6th and 7th October at Westminster Methodist Central Hall (WCH) in London. Information, the whole programme and how to register to attend is on: <http://movementday.uk/>.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss how Churches Together groups can engage in mission as transformation, do [email Jim Currin](mailto:email@jimcurrin.com). It would be great to see you at Movement Day UK in October.

## **They Also Served**

### **Remembering the contribution of African Caribbean soldiers in WW1**

For the centenary of WW1 a service and exhibition to honour the contributions of African and Caribbean Servicemen took place in the New Testament Church of God, Handsworth, Birmingham with 600 people present on Sunday 2nd July 2017. Now you can see the whole service on video.



**>>> VIDEO of the whole service now available from KWTMedia <<<**



## **And finally, ...**

### **Bible Sunday.**

Bible Society, a Body in Association with CTE, has produced resources including Notes, Sermon outline, Children's Activities, Drama scrips, PowerPoint slides and other options for Bible Sunday on 29<sup>th</sup> October, or another Sunday if preferred.

[Bible Society Resources for Bible Sunday](#)

## **Joint Public Issues Team: Sainsburys Fairtrade Campaign**

Baptists Together, the Church of Scotland, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church have launched a campaign saying: Sainsburys have just ceased selling Fairtrade own-brand tea and are threatening to drop the Fairtrade label from all other produce. A 'pilot' project will instead set up a new Sainsbury's 'fairly traded' scheme under terms defined by the company and not accredited by the Fairtrade Foundation. Other supermarkets could follow suit. This is a huge setback for producer groups that have benefited from the accredited Fairtrade terms and for the Fairtrade mark in the UK. The Methodist Conference has asked that Methodists and others who share their concern to write to Sainsburys today. Link to JPIT website campaign page: <http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/sainsburys/>

## **Writing a CTE Reflection of the Month**

We are currently planning the list of writers for 2018. If you would like to be considered for writing a Reflection one month, please email [website@cte.org.uk](mailto:website@cte.org.uk) for more information. We are open to discussion about written text, poetry, images, sound files etc that encourage, inform, and inspire the fulfilment of Jesus' prayer in John 17: 20,21.

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