



January 2012

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Shall we be victorious?

Each year the Churches of a different country choose the theme and Bible passage for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and compose an initial draft of liturgy for a united service and prayers for the eight days. This is then sent to an international conference of the WCC and the Vatican. Their agreed text is then sent to national editorial teams which, translating where necessary, adapt the text for their context. The editorial team for Britain and Ireland, co-ordinated by CTBI, prepares material in English and Welsh and, when asked, in Gaelic.

For 2012, it was the Churches of Poland which chose the theme 'We will all be changed by the Victory of our Lord Jesus Christ' and the biblical passage 1 Corinthians 15:51-58. One reason for their choice is that Poland, like Great Britain, is hosting a major sporting event this year. We both hope to be efficient and generous hosts and to bring victory to the host nations, the Olympic Games for us and the European Cup for Poland.

When we look at the Church around us, victorious is not the word which springs to mind. As I recall my schooldays, the nearest I ever got to a sporting victory was not being last! The state of the Church is not much better. The Methodist Church is less than half the size it was when I joined it 45 years ago and some days I feel personally responsible! At least it suggests that my ministry has been more about coping with defeat than celebrating victory.

Our ecumenical journey has also seen its disappointments, if not defeats, as well as its achievements. The resources offered to you by the Britain and Ireland WPCU editorial team reflect the paradox of the victory of the Cross, at the same time both the darkest hour of defeat and the fulcrum of the only victory that really matters. If you haven't yet [ordered printed material](#), download them from the [CTBI website](#) and see also a [leaflet](#) from the Catholic League reflecting the ecumenical vision of Paul Couturier.

John Bradley

John has mentioned the Olympic Games, so here is a further Reflection on the amazing opportunities we have as churches together in 2012.

I have already heard of 20, 30, and even 40 churches working together in various parts of the country on plans to serve the local community and celebrate our faith this summer. Whether it is a mini torch relay between schools or a major festival in the park, we are going to see churches working together in ways they have not done so before. (Perhaps at our own point of weakness we might be displaying our greatest strength?)

Before that, of course, we also have the Queen's Jubilee weekend and the anticipation that 6 million people may be involved in the Big Lunch. Again churches are already planning to work together – in one example a Cathedral is the focus for 2000 lunches provided with help from the Army! (An example of a church taking the lead and celebrating the gifts others bring?)

So, a comment then about 'victory' for both the Jubilee and the Games

'Send her victorious' we shall sing as a prayer for the Queen, and 'Winning Gold' we shall shout in jubilation for the athlete – but I am reminded of the biblical principle that God loves us all, and no one human being is more or less important than another. We are all children of God and – which puts success and failure in to context.

We often use the phrase 'celebrating diversity' in Churches Together, and love the phrase of Archbishop Tutu about being the 'rainbow people of God' – each has a contribution to the whole.

When 20, 30, or 40 churches work together there is bound to be some element of competition – even if at the simple level of comparing who puts in the most money or turns up with the most volunteers. Thinking of the paradox John refers to above, we should be like Christ and then consider these very telling words from St Paul in Romans 12, 'For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them'

True, we shall need the Queen to have a Jubilee, but we shall only have a celebration if everyone joins in. And, yes, we shall need the best athletes to have a competition, but we shall need everyone to make the Games all that they can be. The same is true in the Body of Christ: – like the Magi at Epiphany, we all have a gift to bring.

Jim Currin
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Consultation calls churches to advocate for the rights of stateless people

A consultation organized by the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) of the World Council of Churches (WCC) called for the church to become involved in wider advocacy initiatives to protect rights of the stateless people.

According to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, more than 12 million people are stateless around the world, and not considered a national by any government. This consultation focused on "human rights of stateless people" in Asia, and was held from 16-18 December in Dhaka, Bangladesh, attended by thirty participants.

Dhaka was a significant venue for the event, as Bangladesh is a country with a large number of stateless people, including the Rohingyas, ethnic minorities from Myanmar and the Urdu speaking Biharis from Pakistan. Therefore, a communiqué issued by the participants said that the "Bible itself bears witness to the stateless condition of the Hebrew people, and God's involvement to provide them with a homeland, and therefore statehood." "Biblical and theological bases motivate us to express our Christian commitment and engagement of our prophetic witness, to speak for the rights of the voiceless, and the marginalized stateless people, who live in our midst," stated the communiqué. The consultation also stressed the need for churches to be sensitized about the problems of stateless people, and their role in advocacy on the basis of theological perspectives.

The participants recommended that churches should be encouraged to enter into alliances with like minded civil society organizations, working for the rights of the stateless people, especially trying to lobby with the governments to ratify the 1954 and 1961 United Nations Conventions on Statelessness. "The consultation was organized as part of the CCIA's advocacy on stateless people as it was mandated by the working group on stateless people, which met in Kingston, Jamaica in May this year," explained Dr Mathews George Chunakara, director of the CCIA. "The report and recommendations of the consultation will be presented at the next meeting of the CCIA, which will be held in China in June 2012," he added.

The participants also visited camps and special zones, where stateless people are forced to live due to government imposed restrictions. [Back to top](#)

A Church that excludes cannot be holy

"Churches that practice or remain silent on caste discrimination cannot ascribe themselves the status of holiness", said Metropolitan Dr Geevarghese Mor Coorilos, Bishop of the Malankara Jacobite Orthodox Church in India, and moderator of the World Council of Churches (WCC) Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME).

Coorilos was speaking at the WCC joint consultation for Dalit and indigenous theologians, addressing the theme "New theologies for a new church and a new world", which took place from 13-16 December in Kolkata, India. The event was organized by the WCC Just and Inclusive Communities programme in partnership with the National Council of Churches in India, the SCEPTRE and Bishop's College, Kolkata. Coorilos asserted that caste-discrimination is sinful and churches must endeavour to root out this evil system that denies life with dignity and justice for many. This stance makes Coorilos, one of the few Indian church leaders from dominant community backgrounds to have openly condemned casteism and its presence in the church.

Theologians who participated in the consultation came from Adivasi backgrounds, a tribal and ethnic population in India, who has experienced a history of discrimination. Together they stressed the need to think of mission as transformative tool for the cultures of discrimination and exclusion. Dr Wati Longchar, a pioneer in Asian indigenous theology, and a facilitator at the meeting highlighted the importance of dialogue in indigenous theology. "With both its own varied and variant expressions, and the whole variety of global and theological issues, indigenous people's reflections are of particular significance," he said.

The Dalit theologians also worked on developing a document, which will reflect an ecclesiological vision from the perspective of the excluded and marginalized. A report based on these reflections will soon be published. Revd Philip Vinod Peacock, a leading Dalit theologian and a facilitator of the consultation, called for the theological necessity of "dismantling dominant perspectives of ecclesiology". He said, "Such perspectives need to be replaced with subaltern agency, as the church in India has historically been an emancipatory space for Dalit liberation."

"Communities of the discriminated excluded and silenced are the ones who formed the first Jesus community," said Revd Dr Deenabandhu Manchala, WCC programme executive for Just and Inclusive Communities. "These identities and their experiences must continue to guide churches so that their preferences and actions remain authentic and credible."

At the consultation attended by theologians from Myanmar, Taiwan, Norway, USA and India, the participants resolved to work together for a more visible alternative vision of the world and the church. [Back to top](#)

African National Congress Centenary

The Christian roots of the African National Congress (ANC) were cited during weekend celebrations in South Africa marking the centennial of Africa's best known liberation and political movement. More than a dozen African heads of state and representatives from around the world attended to honour the movement that eventually overcame the apartheid system of racial segregation.

On 8 January, hundreds packed into the recently-renovated Waaihoek Wesleyan Church in Bloemfontein, where the ANC began. The church echoed with the haunting sounds of the anthem "God Bless Africa" and stomping feet before ANC Chaplain General Vukile Mehana began an hour-long service.

The movement was founded by Christian pastors, mission-educated journalists, lawyers and social workers on 8 January 1912. Bloemfontein, about 200 miles southwest of Johannesburg, was the centre of white Afrikaner power in a country ruled exclusively by Europeans until ANC leader Nelson Mandela became president in 1994. Mehana noted that "we are ... having the main service for all religions here. We are all one family of the ANC, all of us from various faiths." During a radio broadcast delivered on the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), retired (Anglican) Archbishop Desmond Tutu, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate for his efforts against apartheid, said he hoped the ANC would remain true to its origins

In a telephone interview with ENInews, the Revd Mautji Pataki, general secretary of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) noted that "the people who in 1912 founded the South African Native National Convention [known after 1923 as the African National Congress] were all Christians." He added, "Christianity is embedded in our movement. The first four Presidents of the ANC were devout Christians and one of the best known of all was the late Oliver Tambo (1917-1993) who remained a devout Anglican all his life."

However, outside the church, South African President Jacob Zuma reminded his followers that Africans had religious beliefs long before the arrival of Christian missionaries in the 18th and 19th centuries. Zuma, a traditional leader from Natal and scion of the once powerful Zulu nation that dominated central and southern Africa in the early 19th century, led the slaughter of a black bull during a "cleansing and thanksgiving ceremony" conducted by traditional healers who are known in Africa as "n'angas." The site featured a giant portrait of Mandela, who at age 93, was too frail to attend the celebration. Last month, Zuma blamed 19th century Christian missionaries for Africa's main problems, saying they had dismantled traditional ways. "As Africans," he said, "long before the arrival of religion and the (Christian) gospel, we had our own way of doing things."

"We have heard criticisms about Christianity from President Zuma many times," Pataki told ENInews, "and always answered them. Today, South Africa is a secular society with a wonderful constitution extending full democratic rights to all religions, all people, all ways of life. But our roots are Christian and they will shine through whatever our present problems." He said that the centennial coincided with the death of Ilse Naude, the 98-year old widow of Afrikaner theologian and anti-apartheid activist the Revd Christian Frederick Bayers Naude, who died in 2004. "I attended her funeral [on 7 January] at a Dutch Reformed Church in Johannesburg and the South African Council of Churches honours this great Christian woman who gave such support and strength to her husband at a time when whites who supported the black struggle for freedom were few and far between and whose lives were constantly in danger," Pataki told ENInews.

About 73 percent of South Africa's population of 50 million identifies as Christian, with about 15 percent following traditional religions. (ENInews)

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Searching for a new financial and economic architecture

"To date, measures adopted by governments and international institutions in response to the current economic crisis have been palliative and short-sighted at best, and at worst ineffective and unjust," said World Council of Churches (WCC) general secretary Revd Dr Olav Fykse Tveit. "There is a need for a new discussion on morality and ethics in respect of the financial systems". Tveit was speaking at a meeting, where the WCC along with World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) and the Council of World Mission members from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America and Europe got together to plan for a conference on proposing a criteria and framework for "new financial and economic architecture". The meeting took place from 12-14 December at the John Knox Conference Center in Geneva, Switzerland.

At the meeting participants addressed issues triggered by the global financial crisis, and devised ways of working together to find ethical and theological responses to the current flawed financial and economic system. "The ongoing and deepening turbulence in our global financial and economic system, together with expanding and multiplying pockets of social unrest around the world, clearly demonstrate that important parts and dynamics of the current international financial and economic architecture is fundamentally flawed," said Tveit.

Tveit was referring to several protests in European cities including Madrid, London and Athens, in the United States with the "Occupy Wall Street" movement, as well as the democratic uprisings among several Arab nations. This issue

is of great concern for the ecumenical movement, on behalf of which, the WCC has been engaged in the field of justice and service for many years, he said. He also pointed to and thanked the 2010 WCRC General Council at the Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA which proposed the need to organize a conference on advocating for a criteria and framework for "new international financial and economic architecture". He explained how important this step is, given the recent political turmoil and eruption of people's protests around the world.

Since the 1980s, the work of the WCC Advisory Group on Economic Matters (AGEM) conducted, among others, studies on the new international economic order (NIEO), The International Financial System: An Ecumenical Critique and the current work with its report on Justice Not Greed addressing the 2008/9 financial crisis. Recent work on the Alternative Globalization Addressing People and Earth (AGAPE) also has indicated that without regulation of financial markets, bubbles and crashes will appear. This indication in 2006 during the WCC 9th Assembly in Brazil became a sad reality afterwards.

The WCC Central Committee Statement on Just Finance and an Economy of Life issued in September 2009 also emphasized that the crisis warrants a new global financial architecture. To bring together studies on structural and developing greed indicators, as an ecumenical contribution to new economics, the WCC will organize a Poverty, Wealth and Ecology Global Forum in China in June 2012. [*Back to top*](#)

CTE Presidents sign Personal Covenant

The current Presidents of Churches together in England have signed a [Personal Covenant which you can see and download here](#). The Presidents of Churches Together in England are:

- The Most Revd and Rt Hon Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury
- The Most Revd Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster
- The Revd Michael Heaney, Moderator of the Free Churches Group
- The Rt Revd Jana Jeruma-Grinberga of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain.

The Covenant reads:

'Make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all'. (Ephesians 4:3-6)

We **believe** in the Triune God; the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Because we confess 'one, holy, catholic and apostolic church' our paramount ecumenical task is to show forth this unity, which is always a gift of God. Jesus Christ revealed to us on the cross his love and the mystery of reconciliation; as his followers, we intend to do our utmost to overcome the problems and obstacles that still divide the churches.

We **rejoice** that the Churches in England are steadily growing closer in mutual trust and respect. As Presidents of Churches Together in England we have in common many joys and hopes, and we have much to offer and receive from one another in the rich diversity of our traditions.

We **believe** that in our common pilgrimage we are being led by the Holy Spirit, and that God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, is calling us to deeper unity and to a greater sharing of our mission in his world.

We therefore **commit** ourselves

To persevere in seeking common understanding of God's message of salvation in the Gospel;
in the power of the Holy Spirit, to work towards the visible unity of the Church of Jesus Christ in the one faith, expressed in common discipleship, worship, witness and service.

We **undertake**

To develop our mutual friendship and support,
to pray, study and work together for the unity and mission of the Church,
to consult together on issues affecting the common good,
to promote justice, integrity and peace,
to speak with one voice to give common witness to Jesus Christ, as far as we are able.

We pray God to lead us, with all our brothers and sisters in Christ, towards communion in faith, life and witness; so that, united in one body and by one Spirit, we may together witness to the perfect unity of his love.

Signed:

+Rowan Cantuar

Michael Heaney

+ Vincent Nichols

+ Jana Jeruma-Grinberga

This Personal Covenant was signed at Jesus House on 21st November 2011. The first Personal Covenant was signed at Windsor Castle on 2nd June 2002. The Personal Covenant is a current expression of the [Swanwick Declaration](#) which was signed in 1987. [*Back to top*](#)

Diamond Jubilee Beacons

Britain's churches will light celebratory beacons to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in June in an ambitious initiative organised in conjunction with Premier Christian Radio. It's an historic event, a unique opportunity to gather our communities together and light a beacon to demonstrate our support and thanksgiving for Queen Elizabeth's reign.

Churches all across the country are getting behind this initiative. There is a long and unbroken tradition in our country of celebrating Royal Jubilees, Weddings and Coronations with the lighting of Beacons whether they be on the top of mountains, churches, castle battlements, town and village greens, country parks, estates and farms and along the beaches surrounding our shores. In 1897, Beacons were lit to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. In 1977 and 2002 Beacons were also lit to celebrate the Silver and Golden Jubilees of The Queen.

As part of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Beacons - churches, chapels and cathedrals up and down the country will be joining the celebration by the lighting of Church Beacons. In 1953 Church bells rang across the whole country to herald the Coronation of The Queen and it is fitting that on the 4th June 2012, the Church should again give thanks for her reign by lighting these beacons.

We are encouraging every church with suitable buildings or land to take part in this nationwide event. Our vision is that thousands of churches up and down the land will gather their communities together for this happy occasion. Premier Christian Radio is working with the organisers of this unique project to assist in the co-ordination of the Church Beacons throughout the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

Bruno Peek OBE MVO OPR, Pageantmaster, The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Beacons
Peter Kerridge, Chief Executive, Premier Christian Radio

See <http://www.churchbeacons.org.uk/>

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Reclaiming London Together

Reclaiming London Together aims to promote collaboration for London's young people after the 2011 disturbances. This forum will offer an opportunity, six months on, to reflect on the causes of the riots and the efficacy of responses to them, bringing together some of the key community leaders, academics, journalists and public officials who have been engaged with these issues. It will be on Monday 5th March 2012, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm at a Central London venue to be confirmed.

Conference speakers include Boris Johnson, Mayor of London, Camila Batmanghelidjh, Founder of Kids Company and Rt Rev Christopher Chessun, Bishop of Southwark. Please contact info@fayresharefoundation.org for more information. [*Back to top*](#)

When Lutherans met Anglicans

In late October a group of Danish Lutherans embarked on a study tour of London to see how the Lutheran church is faring there and to become better acquainted with the Anglican Church, the new Porvoo partner. The fact-finding, interactive trip was for members of various Danish diocesan councils and was arranged by the secretariat of the Council on International Relations.

The first meeting was with the Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain, Jana Jeruma-Grinberga, and Rev Torbjørn Holt, who is the Norwegian student chaplain in the UK as well as in France, Spain, Italy and Ireland! They spoke about the pastoral care of the 180,000 Lutherans living in the UK, of the ten different Lutheran churches that have congregations or chaplaincies there, and how, surprisingly, the first Lutherans in the country were deemed heretics by Henry VIII, despite his fourth wife, Anne of Cleves, being herself a Lutheran when they met.

The group then visited the Danish Lutheran Church of St. Catherine's off Regent's Park, where Pastor Else Hviid explained how the church was a home from home for many Danes and was also a thriving language centre for English spouses and their children. A good deal of her time goes with fundraising, since the church is self-financed.

Low church and high church

The following morning the group visited Church House Conference Centre to meet Dr Anders Bergquist – a native Swede now Vicar of St. John's Wood Church of England church and a member of the Church of England Porvoo Panel. He spoke warmly of the arrival of the Danes into the fellowship and explained that among the differences with the Danish set-up is that the Church of England is a private organisation; that it runs 25% of all primary and middle schools in the country (and 6% of all secondary schools), and that the emphasis for all churches is on serving the

community. On the negative side Dr Bergquist lamented the increase in management philosophy in the Church of England and the lack of scholarship among priests, e.g. an increasing number cannot read the Bible in its original languages.

The afternoon began with a visit to an 'Emerging Church', namely St Peter's Barge, London's only Floating Church at West India Quay in the heart of the new docklands. Here the evangelically orientated Pastor Marcus Nodder spoke of how busy workers found a breathing-space from their busy pursuit of financial success in the lunchtime services on the barge. Late in the afternoon the contrast between low church (on the barge) and high church (Evensong at Westminster Abbey) emphasised the breadth of the Church of England.

The Tent as meeting-place for sharing faith experiences

The final morning was spent at St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace near Liverpool Street in a medieval church almost completely destroyed by an IRA bomb in 1993. Rebuilt as a peace centre it welcomes over 10,000 visitors a year who "share stories, skills and insights about how we can build relationships across divisions of conflict, culture and religion." Of particular interest was the round Bedouin Tent, a meeting-place for people of different faiths to explore their differences and share their experiences. [*Back to top*](#)

Reconciliation, Healing of Memories and Mutual Commitment

The Church of England and the United Reformed Church are to hold a historic service in Westminster Abbey, marking a significant step forward in the development of a shared relationship. Anyone can apply for a free ticket to attend. The timing is significant; it will take place in 2012, the 350th anniversary year of the Act of Uniformity and the Great Ejection. It will also be the 40th anniversary of the United Reformed Church coming into being.

The service arises from a joint report – Healing of Memories – which has been before General Synod and the United Reformed Church Mission Council, and it will be a Service of Reconciliation, Healing of Memories and Mutual Commitment. There will be testimonies about martyrs of the past and stories of shared work in the present, leading to an act of commitment for the future.

The Revd Elizabeth Welch was URC co-convenor of a study group that produced the report. She said: "I'm delighted that in a doubly significant anniversary year, when we remember both the separation of churches and the coming back together of some (through the founding of the URC), we can meet for such a historic service. I hope this is but the beginning of a closer drawing together, as we seek to commit ourselves to further shared work."

It is hoped that people from across the URC – and in particular from around 25 local ecumenical partnerships involving the URC and the Church of England – will be present in Westminster Abbey on Tuesday 7 February 2012 beginning at 6.15pm.

The Revd David Tatem, URC secretary for ecumenical relations, said: "Right across the country in villages, towns and cities our two denominations work together in a whole variety of ways. At the heart of that cooperation is the friendship between us that both heals the past and enables the future. Friendship is the inspiration for this service and I believe that will lead us, along with our other ecumenical partners, into exploring new possibilities together."

The Act of Uniformity required all ministers and schoolmasters to give their "unfeigned assent and consent" to The Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England by 24 August 1662. On theological grounds, almost two thousand Presbyterian, Congregational and Baptist ministers refused to comply. They left their livings and (apart from some who later conformed) joined those Congregationalists and Baptists already serving outside the Established Church. This significantly increased the ministerial strength of Dissent in what became known as the Great Ejection or Ejection. Many of these men and their families suffered much hardship; the United Reformed Church, as well as present-day Baptists and Congregationalists, are their heirs.

Tickets for the service are available from the United Reformed Church ecumenical office ecumenical@urc.org.uk or via the [Westminster Abbey web-site](#). More details are [here](#). The report "Healing of Memories" is [here](#). [*Back to top*](#)

New support scheme for homeless people using winter shelters

Two leading homelessness charities – Thames Reach and Housing Justice – are teaming up to help homeless men and women using winter shelters across London to escape homelessness. Staff from the two charities will provide advice, housing and reconnection services to the guests in ten winter shelters in a bid to help them get their lives back on track.

Last year the winter shelters involved in the scheme provided temporary accommodation to 1,200 people, with approximately half of them returning to rough sleeping, using squats or sofa surfing once their stay ended. The new project has received £174,086 funding over two years from the Homelessness Transition Fund.

Alison Gelder, Housing Justice Director, said "It's really exciting for Housing Justice and Thames Reach to be working together to help the winter shelter guests. Rather than moving out on the streets when the shelters close, we very much hope this will help the guests to move on with their lives. It's also an extremely important step in getting faith groups to work in partnership with statutory agencies like Thames Reach."

Audrey Mitchell, Thames Reach's Director of Street and Hostel services, said: "We are extremely delighted to receive a grant from the Homelessness Transition Fund to work alongside Housing Justice to provide an advice and reconnections service in winter night shelters across London. We believe this presents an invaluable opportunity to provide specialist workers to assess rough sleepers whilst they are in the shelters, link them into agencies and ensure that they receive help to get off the streets. We are pleased to be working with Housing Justice on this project which will be a major boost to our efforts to end rough sleeping in London." [Back to top](#)

Churches can break the barriers of poverty and homelessness

[Housing Justice](#), with [Church Action on Poverty](#) and [Scottish Churches Housing Action](#), is using online videos to show how a range of barriers trap people in poverty and homelessness and how churches can help break these barriers. The videos are integrated in an online 'Prayer Calendar', which may be viewed [here >>](#)

Designed for use during [Poverty & Homelessness Action Week](#) (28 January to 5 February 2012), each day of the calendar includes a video story with accompanying ideas for prayer as well as practical action. The videos include powerful stories of people's experiences of exclusion and inspirational ideas for how churches can respond. They look at the barriers created by housing benefit cuts, stigmatisation, lack of support and affordable housing, high pay ratios, rough sleeping and unfair taxes.

The prayer calendar can be followed using email, Facebook or Twitter. The videos are also available on DVD, for use in church services, and can be ordered at www.actionweek.org.uk.

Alison Gelder, Director of Housing Justice, commented: "By being born as a baby in a stable, Jesus broke the barrier between God and humanity. We are calling on churches to be inspired by these videos and to use Poverty & Homelessness Action Week to break down the all too real and tragic barriers that exist in our own country right now. Using the Prayer Calendar, as well as the resources on the website, everyone can do something to make a difference." [Back to top](#)

Challenging injustice, promoting stewardship

The Annual Report of ECCR, the Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility, a Body in Association with CTE, is available [here](#). New members are welcome and should contact helen.boothroyd@eccr.org.uk ☎ 07503 931172

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2012 Mission Possibilities

With all of the given opportunities of the Queen's Jubilee and Olympic Games in 2012, Jim Currin is preparing a resource for churches together. This is a work in progress and is aimed at helping churches work together. If anyone has any material that could be helpful to local CT groups and new networks coming together for the Jubilee and Games, could you have a look at the new web 'gateway' and send me material for consideration to add to it? Have a look at www.cte.org.uk/2012MissionTogether and email jim.currin@cte.org.uk with any material suggestions – then point people to the 2012 Mission Together gateway in two weeks time when complete! Thank you. [Back to top](#)

National Curriculum Review Update

On 20 January last year Mr Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Education, announced a review of the National Curriculum in England. The review is looking at the National Curriculum for both primary and secondary schools. The new National Curriculum will set out only the essential knowledge that all children should acquire, and give schools and teachers more freedom to decide how to teach this most effectively and to design a wider school curriculum that best meets the needs of their pupils. A suite of documents - setting out the evidence gathered to date by the National Curriculum review - was published on 19 December 2011. These can be found at www.education.gov.uk/publications. They comprise:

- the report of the review's expert panel - setting out their recommendations in relation to the framework for the new National Curriculum;
- a summary of the evidence gathered about curricula for English, mathematics and science in high performing jurisdictions;
- a research report looking at subject breadth in the curricula used in other education jurisdictions; and
- a summary report of the responses to the review's call for evidence.

The Secretary of State also announced that in light of the far-reaching and complex nature of the expert panel recommendations, and to allow for more radical reform of both curriculum and qualifications, he has decided to change the planned timetable for the introduction of the new National Curriculum. Instead of new curricula for English, mathematics, science and PE being introduced from 2013 - and any other subjects in 2014 - the new curriculum for all subjects will be introduced in 2014. A detailed timetable for the conduct of the remainder of the review - including a refreshed remit - will be published early in 2012.

The Ministerial statement can be found [here](#). Those wishing to be in touch with the Department regarding the documents or other aspects of the Review can email NationalCurriculumReview.Feedback@education.gsi.gov.uk.

Whilst the review is called the National Curriculum Review, much of what it covers relates to the whole curriculum. Religious Education is a statutory subject but not part of the National Curriculum; it does, however, make a significant contribution to the whole curriculum. On this basis, the Religious Education Council for England and Wales has met with, and written to, Schools Minister Mr Nick Gibb to ask that Religious Education's contribution be taken into account and is awaiting a decision on whether RE can now become a part of the Review process. (IFN) [Back to top](#)

Council of Christians and Jews 70th anniversary

This November marked the start of the 70th Anniversary Year of the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ). CCJ was the first national inter faith organisation in Britain. The idea for it was conceived in Manchester in November 1941, and the inaugural meeting took place under the auspices of Chief Rabbi Hertz and Archbishop William Temple – the Council's co-founders – in March 1942. A message from CCJ Chairman, the Rt Revd Nigel McCulloch, which gives more of the past history and present work and also looks to the future of CCJ can be found [here](#). A copy of BBC Radio 4's *Thought for the Day* by the Chief Rabbi that was broadcast on 14 November to mark the start of the anniversary can be found [online](#). The anniversary was also featured on the BBC's Sunday Programme on 12 November. Further information from cjrelations@ccj.org.uk. (IFN) [Back to top](#)

An MBE for Giving

Jenny Edwards, coordinator of the Disabled Christians Fellowship programme for Christian disability charity Through the Roof, has been awarded an MBE in the Queen's New Years Honours. Jenny was honoured for her years of service to disabled people, particularly in Surrey, though her work has taken her all around the country.

Jenny Edwards joined Disabled Christians Fellowship in 1978 as a volunteer, moving from Bristol to Thames Ditton when the charity joined Through the Roof. Before contracting meningitis in 1976, which left her paraplegic, Jenny was a state registered children's nurse. She currently works as the coordinator for DCF, supporting and creating groups that provide fellowship to disabled people, organizing holidays and nurturing and developing individuals.

Jenny had received many congratulations from old colleagues, friends, contacts and clients from through the years, with people saying that "it's really exciting, perhaps one way God would like to show you his recognition and appreciation of all you have given out during your lifetime", that it is "so well deserved, for all (your) hard work and dedication" and thanking her for her years of support and giving. To find out more about Jenny's work, and the ongoing mission of DCF, visit www.throughtheroof.org/dc-fellowship.

Through the Roof is a founder partner of [Churches for All](#), a co-ordinating group of CTE. [Back to top](#)