



## Planning major mission events

This is a personal paper from Jim Currin, Secretary for Evangelisation at Churches Together in England. It is not a policy paper but a discussion document.

The purpose is to:

- A) Harness the insights gained in planning the Queen's Diamond Jubilee weekend<sup>i</sup> and the churches engagement in the 2012 Games.<sup>ii</sup>
- B) Contribute to the legacy of 2012 mission together. [www.cte.org.uk/2012missiontogether](http://www.cte.org.uk/2012missiontogether)
- C) Suggest principles and values for planning future major mission events in England.<sup>iii</sup>

### INSIGHTS

- 1) Churches working together at national, regional and local level bears fruit, often far more than initially anticipated or expected.
- 2) Churches and agencies can mutually benefit each other. The churches have national coverage of networks, and agencies have resources and initiatives to serve the churches in mission.
- 3) Churches work together in mission better when they have a common purpose. 'Being' together is energised when 'doing' something together.
- 4) Practical and theological difference can be celebrated when serving others in the wider community. Variety is a gift when mission is inclusive.
- 5) All churches and agencies have something to contribute to the whole. Encouraging each to bring their gift expresses the body of Christ, and enables mission to happen.
- 6) The driver should be the churches as they are the chief expression of the body of Christ. Agencies exist to serve the churches in mission.
- 7) Employed staff can make a big difference to the delivery of mission initiatives. Major events deserve dedicated time from gifted, released, and resourced individuals who work for the wider church.
- 8) Consultation is a key to building good relationships. Partnerships develop when people know and trust each other.
- 9) Whatever else is planned, prayer is critical at every stage and for every dimension of planning.
- 10) The Holy Spirit continues to be the main motivator for reaching out in mission and evangelism. We should pray for the Holy Spirit to send and guide us.
- 11) 'Creating community' is a mission imperative and kingdom value. It is part of the what the Holy Spirit does, and should be the rock bed on which the gospel is shared.
- 12) In the context of mission, specific evangelism is a privilege. The best model of evangelism is that provided by Jesus. 'Sharing the good news' needs to be heard as 'good news', if it to be likely to be heard at all.
- 13) 'Word and deed' is now a mainstream model of doing mission. 700,000 New Testaments given away through the Big Lunch / Jubilee weekend illustrates how 'word and deed' belong together. Social action and the gospel message should not be separated.
- 14) A great way to do all of the above is to hold a festival - with a wide variety of events that make up the whole. This is best done as part of the ongoing life of the churches, and as an expression of them. Resources are available to help.<sup>iv</sup>

- 15) The 'Golden Rule' – 'do to others as you would have them do to you' - should be the key text, especially in interfaith context. It is a principle shared by all. Cards reminding volunteers of this principle are available from CTE. [www.cte.org.uk/goldenrule](http://www.cte.org.uk/goldenrule)
- 16) 'Mutual respect and interdependence' (MRI) is a principle for churches working together in mission, both in terms of church / church and church / community.
- 17) In the context of service, we take all the opportunities to demonstrate and share the gospel message of God's love, forgiveness and new life. We should explain as the other person understands and enable them to take steps to follow Christ<sup>v</sup>.
- 18) The churches in England are served by the Christian Enquiry Agency which provides a follow up service for all enquiries through the website [www.christianity.org.uk](http://www.christianity.org.uk). All activities, especially mission events, are free to advertise this resource using the material available from [www.christianity.org.uk/link](http://www.christianity.org.uk/link).
- 19) We should always making sure there is access for all: see <http://churchesforall.org.uk/> for advice.

## PRINCIPLES and VALUES for FUTURE events

- Prayer should be central to all planning and projects undertaken
- Perceive the 'mission moment' after praying together.
- Exercise 'double listening' to God, the context, and what the churches are saying.
- Be driven by 'their need ' > 'our plan'
- Work together as churches in diversity (MRI principle)
- Form partnerships with agencies who can provide specific resources
- Have a focus that is understood and appreciated by the wider community
- Be prepared to change as the planning develops
- Share the gospel in a way people understand and follow it.

## DISCUSSION

This paper is for discussion and may be updated further in the light of comments.  
To comment email [jim.currin@cte.org.uk](mailto:jim.currin@cte.org.uk)

Written by Jim Currin (Capt. CA.)  
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<sup>i</sup> The main agency serving the churches in mission for the Jubilee weekend was Hope:  
[www.hopetogether.org.uk](http://www.hopetogether.org.uk)

<sup>ii</sup> The main agency serving the churches in mission for the 2012 Games is More than Gold.  
[www.morethangold.org.uk](http://www.morethangold.org.uk).

<sup>iii</sup> As a summary, by 'mission' I mean everything that God 'sends' us to do. Mission' during the Jubilee weekend was well demonstrated in the 'Big Lunch' when churches were reaching out and working in partnership with neighbours and communities. Evangelism is a part of mission (eg the first 2 of the 5 'Marks of Mission' often quoted. At CTE, the working definition for evangelism is 'sharing the good news of Jesus Christ together'.

<sup>iv</sup> A Grove booklet illustrating how a group of churches in a market town ran a year long mission festival is: [http://www.grovebooks.co.uk/cart.php?target=product&product\\_id=17415&category\\_id=286](http://www.grovebooks.co.uk/cart.php?target=product&product_id=17415&category_id=286). Share Jesus International is a Methodist based mission network which have produced a Festival planning guide: <http://www.sharejesusinternational.com/resources/community-festival-guide> Fusion YAC have helped many Churches Together groups plan 'open crowd festivals', and have a resource pack: [www.2012.fusionyac.org](http://www.2012.fusionyac.org)

<sup>v</sup> A resource is 'Sharing faith the Jesus way', Bible Reading Fellowship: [www.jesus360.org.uk](http://www.jesus360.org.uk)