

REFLECTING ON 2000

It seems an age ago. All that activity and hype: fireworks, crowded streets, candles, wall-to-wall TV coverage, parties on a dark winter's night...

The churches put their mark firmly upon the Millennium weekend. Many reported very large attendances at special services on December 31st, and the broadcast media included large sections of Christian material from the Holy Land and around the UK. The Archbishop of Canterbury's prayers at the Dome on New Year's Eve were watched by millions of people, and his New Year sermon about the 'topsy-turvy values' contained in the Sermon on the Mount was front-page news.

After saying all that, many people (including Christians) did sigh with relief and think "it's all over". By mid-January, they put the lid back on the box and put the Millennium away. It was all so much effort!

'The Millennium' was more than a weekend. The whole year 2000 presented the churches with a window of opportunity for outreach, mission and united work and action.

It has been a year that included concerted effort on behalf of the Jubilee 2000 Coalition. July 23rd did not bring the kind of results expected - but the work goes on.

Pentecost - *All Together in One Place* - for many provided the biggest Christian gathering they have ever taken part in.

Good practice prevailed as Christians worked and witnessed together making use of resource material that a large number of organisations provided: from bell ringing to tree planting, from the musical *Hopes and Dreams* to the *Jesus Video Millennium Adventure*, from *Making Sunday Best* to 18,000 schools putting Jesus centre-stage in *JC2000*, and finally - a jointly-produced *Resource Pack* for Christmas 2000.

What did you do? What did you learn? This leaflet is prepared to give us all the opportunity to reflect on issues surrounding this year 2000 as we remind ourselves of the New**Start** themes and see how we have travelled the journey together.

Let there be
respect for the earth
peace for its people
love in our lives
delight in the good
forgiveness for past wrongs
and from now on a new start

NewStart with God

Worshipping Together at the dawn of the Millennium

- What new opportunities for worshipping in common did you identify over the Christmas / New Year period?
- How do you intend to make the most of these opportunities in future?

Worshipping Together in One Place - Pentecost 2000

- What was your involvement in an ecumenical service or event locally, or across your town or county?
- Why do you think it was "successful" (if it was!)?
 - because of the power of the Pentecost message?
 - because it was a one-off, once in 1000 years?
 - because it was novel?
 - because it was on neutral ground, not in anyone's church building?
 - because of national encouragement for a nation-wide event?
 - or for what other reasons?
- If it was "unsuccessful", why was that?
- Do you expect to be involved in future similar occasions? Why?

Witnessing Together

- What occasions have there been when churches and Christians from different traditions have witnessed (or evangelised) together?
- What common factors have you experienced?
- What benefits have you experienced from witnessing together?
- What differences (or divisions) between Christians have you detected which have made common witness more difficult?
- If you undertook house-to-house distribution of candles/ cards/ Gospels -
 - how did you agree what to distribute?
 - were the considerations theological? practical? financial?
- How are you going to build upon the experience of witnessing together?
- What have you learnt about the nature of English society today?
 - Is it more spiritual/ secularised/ searching/ - than you thought?
- So, what conclusions have you reached about the way you witness and evangelise?

NewStart for the World's Poor

Responding to human need

- What millennium initiatives were taken for the poor, whether at home or overseas?
- Were these initiatives fully discussed and shared among the churches, or were they a single-church response?

Campaigning Together

- What benefits have you found in campaigning together for Jubilee 2000?
- What difficulties have you experienced in campaigning jointly with other churches? - with other agencies?
- How are you going to harness the energy and commitment?

NewStart at Home

Working Together

- What new contacts have you made -
 - with other churches?
 - with secular bodies?
 - with the press? with local radio?
 - with groups in the local community?
- What have you discovered as churches have worked together?
- What new partners and allies have you found in the local community?
- What are your plans to maintain and develop your new contacts?

Journeying Together

- Has the experience of the millennium year helped you -
 - to understand your fellow Christians better?
 - to understand other local churches better?
- How much have your activities been extra "add-ons" to the usual life of your church?
- How much have you done your usual things ecumenically?
- What have you discovered about journeying together in a common life?
- What barriers or blockages have you detected?
- Have they been -
 - Theological?
 - Practical?
 - Personal?
 - Historical?
 - Financial?
- How far has the experience changed, or could the experience change, the way your local churches -
 - Take initiatives
 - Plan
 - Do things together?
- So, how has the millennium affected the way your Church is the Church in your neighbourhood?

NewStart among the Churches

Marking the Millennium has opened up unique opportunities and challenges.

This leaflet raises some questions for local churches and ecumenical groups, to encourage you to reflect on the past twelve months, and to draw out some lessons for the future.

Before memories grow dim, you are encouraged to spend some time analysing what happened, how it happened, and what can usefully be taken forward as we together worship and serve Jesus Christ, yesterday, today and for ever.

- *Not every question will be appropriate to your local setting.*
- *Your situation can produce further questions of its own.*
- *It's probably better to talk in depth about some of these questions than to skim through them all.*
- *Perhaps ask a small group to look at a few questions.*
- *Perhaps ask each local church council or committee to look at this leaflet, before pooling ideas.*
- *Jot down some conclusions and resolutions, and check them in a year or two's time. (Put someone in charge of reminding everyone else.)*

Your response:

- This leaflet is primarily intended to stimulate local discussion.
- A national process of reflection is also taking place, and the aim is to share the results widely. So, you are invited to send your comments to Common Life 2000 at Churches Together in England, 101 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4V 4EN, or email to commonlife2000@churches-together.net. Your response can then be incorporated into the website, www.churches-together.net. Responses grouped under the headings set out inside this paper would be particularly helpful. Copies of the leaflet may be obtained from Churches Together in England, 10 for £2 incl. p&p.
- You may photocopy this leaflet, download it from the website, or obtain it as a rtf file by email from commonlife2000@churches-together.net. Feel free to adapt the text for particular local situations. Please acknowledge Text © Churches Together in England 2000.

**JOURNEYING
TOGETHER
in a COMMON LIFE**

*O God, Holy and Eternal Trinity,
We pray for your Church in all the world.
Sanctify its life; renew its worship;
Empower its witness; heal its divisions;
Make visible its unity.*

*Lead us, with all our brothers and sisters,
Towards communion in faith, life and witness
So that, united in one body by the one Spirit,
We may together witness to the perfect unity of your love.*

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