

The Window

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STOUT SHOES, NOT WARM GLOVES, NEEDED FOR THE NEXT STEPS ON THE ECUMENICAL PATH



Pope Francis being greeted by Dr Olav Fykse Tveit in Geneva
Photo : Albin Hillert (WCC)

In December eight years ago when Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC), went to visit Pope Benedict XVI at the Vatican he gave him a pair of warm gloves.

'In winter they protect you from the cold,' Dr Tveit told the Pontiff, and he should know because he is used to winters of snow and ice in his homeland, Norway. 'So,' he went on, 'in these times, which according to some people are a season of ecumenical winter, they are a symbol of the possibility to go ahead, despite the difficulties.'

Eight years later, when Pope Francis visited Geneva at the invitation of the WCC to help celebrate its 70th anniversary he did not speak about winter. He said that he was looking forward to the 'flowering of a new ecumenical spring.' He went on to

assure the WCC he had come to Geneva 'as a pilgrim in quest of unity and peace.'

Professor Martin Bräuer, of the Institute for Ecumenical Research at Bensheim, Germany, says that the Pope is 'convinced that Christians must act and bear witness together and must speak with one voice on the great challenges facing humanity, challenges such as solidarity, peace, the environment and justice.' Writing in *The Ecumenical Review*, he stated that Pope Francis 'relies on personal encounters: on talking *with* one another, not *about* one another.'

According to Prof Bräuer, 'Francis also wishes to set things in motion as far as ecumenism is concerned and thereby create a new dynamic intended to change the way that all Churches communicate internally and externally.' The Pope is developing, he suggests, 'a model of unity in which the identity of the different Churches is preserved without obscuring the identity of the whole.'

In his address to WCC leaders in Geneva, Pope Francis seems to have taken a step further. He spoke of journeying together as 'a reconciled communion aimed at the visible manifestation of the brotherhood and sisterhood that even now unites believers.'

So perhaps, for the next stage in the season of ecumenical spring, it will not be warm gloves but stout walking shoes that are going to be needed.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LISTENING AND HEARING

Recently published results of a survey conducted by the BBC and Manchester University in the UK suggested that young people aged 16-23 are the most likely sector in British society to experience loneliness. Whereas 27% of over-75s reported often feeling lonely the figure among the younger age group was 40%. Whilst statisticians question the survey's methods, it is a worry that anyone should feel lonely.

What the survey does is to suggest some underlying causes of loneliness. You may consider the ages 16-24 as a time of new freedom, of leaving school and gaining more control over your life, enjoying yourself. But it is also a time of transition; you move away from home, go to college or start a new job - things that take you away from friends you have grown up with. It is also the period when you are trying to work out who you are and where you fit into the world. On top of that, you are probably unaccustomed to feelings of loneliness. You may not yet have realized that such feelings often pass, or developed coping strategies.

Becky Cohalan, a 17 year-old Anglican from the diocese of Nova Scotia and PEI, suggests another possible cause for loneliness among the young. She took part in the Canadian

Lutheran Anglican Youth (CLAY) gathering on the campus of Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario in August. After four days packed with worship, presentations, Bible readings and entertainment of all kinds, she reflected, 'I was surrounded with young people worshipping God and just praising him. I found that really powerful. I was able to grow in my faith, too, but also my confidence ... We don't really get to interact with a whole lot of people nowadays. We're all kind of glued to our cell phones.'

'Social Media' can be wonderful, but they can all too easily become 'Anti-social Media', taking the place of real face-to-face encounters. The theme of the CLAY gathering was "Threads", and focused on the stories woven throughout each person's life. The speakers were called "storytellers". They all shared their own life stories as they taught about the importance of storytelling in sharing the Christian faith.

Becky said that this teaching on storytelling had taught her a valuable lesson about meeting with others and careful listening. 'I feel that this whole week they're testing us - to listen. Everyone is telling their stories, and we all have to listen, and not just hear. I feel there is a big difference between listening and hearing.'



Some of the 515 young people aged 14-19 who attended the CLAY gathering in Thunder Bay from 15th-19th August

ARCHBISHOP JUSTIN WELBY TO WELCOME DELEGATION FROM THE EKD

In November 2018 the Archbishop of Canterbury and Dr Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, Presiding Bishop of the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD), will host a colloquium at Lambeth Palace on "After Brexit: European Unity & the Unity of the European Churches".

The colloquium is being organised by the Church of England's European

Ecumenical Round Table with assistance from the Church of England's Council for Christian Unity.

The colloquium will focus on the question of what the unity of the Church might contribute to the unity of Europe as a geographical, cultural and political entity in the current and post-Brexit context. The key areas to be addressed will be the

Church and the unity of society, the Churches and the unity of Europe, and the unity of European Churches.



ENCOURAGING MOVEMENT IN ROMAN CATHOLIC, LUTHERAN AND ANGLICAN RELATIONS

WALKING TOGETHER

A ground-breaking document has been released on how Anglicans and Roman Catholics can learn from each other

An agreed statement produced by the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC III) in the city of Erfurt in Germany back in May 2017 has been hailed as "ground-breaking" and an "important step on the pilgrimage towards fuller unity in Christ".

'Walking Together on the Way: Learning to be the Church - Local, Regional, Universal' is the first document produced by ARCIC III and is the culmination of seven years' work. It is shaped by the Durham University Centre for Catholic Studies' method of "Receptive Ecumenism" which promotes the approach not "What do the other traditions first need to learn from us?" but "What do we need to learn from them?"

Anglicans and Roman Catholics are encouraged to learn from each other's differences, rather than concentrating on common ground. For example, Anglicans are invited to examine models of unity within the Catholic tradition and Catholics to look at empowering local church leaders and the laity in decision-making.

One commission member, Dr Paula Gooder, says, 'The agreed statement ... takes another step along the path of ecumenical dialogue which Anglicans and Roman Catholics have been treading together for over 50 years. The method models conversation at its best. The conversation here is rich, though also challenging – calling us to travel onwards into the future in mutual companionship and hope.'

Professor Paul D Murray, Director of CCS, said that the Anglican Diocese of Durham and the Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle had been co-sponsors of the International Receptive Ecumenism Conferences of 2006 and 2009. 'The work done by local churches in the North-East of England is bearing fruit in this new phase of ARCIC work,' he said.

Bishop Christopher Hill, another member of the Commission, said, 'The statement makes a new departure – a very practical, mutual examination of our respective authority structure. This gives Anglicans and Roman Catholics a timely opportunity for both self-criticism and mutual ecclesial learning – with authority questions high on our mutual agendas.'

The dialogue's Anglican Co-Secretary, Dr John Gibaut, stressed the significance of the work. 'The fullest reception of this document will require changes in both communions,' he said. 'It will be particularly interesting to the Anglican Communion as we move forwards to the next Lambeth Conference in 2020.'

FRUITS FOR REFLECTION

The Lutheran-Roman Catholic Study Commission on Unity to produce a new study report.

The Commission met in Klingenthal in France last July to focus on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, building on earlier ecumenical dialogues on Baptism, Justification, Eucharist, Ministry and Apostolicity of the Church. The issue under discussion was the kind of ecclesial communion that might arise from the shared understanding reached by Catholics and Lutherans on baptism during the Commission's earlier meetings.

The Rev Dr Kaisamari Hintikka, who is Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Relations and Director of the Department for Theology and Public Witness of the LWF, said that finding an answer to this question was important in view of the commitments Lutherans and Catholics have already expressed in "From Conflict to Communion" in 2013, and the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, 2016. There is also deep concern at the pain felt in ecumenical communities and families that otherwise share their lives but cannot gather round the same Eucharistic table.

Commission's report will be finalized and then published early next year and presented to the LWF council at its next meeting.

DEVIZES CHOIR IN RIGA CATHEDRAL



The Choir of St John's Church, Devizes, in the English Diocese of Salisbury gave a concert in Riga Cathedral, Latvia, as part of a tour of that country during the summer holiday period. Twenty-two children and nineteen adults were helping to strengthen the links between their diocese and the Lutheran Church in Latvia. They also sang Evensong in Cesis, an historic town considered by many to be the most beautiful in Latvia.

SPARROWS AND CRUMBS

'This is my window of fragments,' says Anne Boileau as she recalls the Conference in Durham



Did you see the large window, opposite the steps to Saint Cuthbert's Shrine, composed of fragments of very old glass? These fragments were salvaged from the Rose Window when it was enlarged; they are arranged at random to form a glass patchwork quilt: faces, hands, flowers, angel's wings, birds' wings, clouds, and a duck's foot.

Stories, myths, legends, dreams, songs, poetry – handed down through the generations.

Even the great cave of Durham Cathedral tells an almost unbelievable story, in the language of limestone, sandstone, marble; designed and constructed with audacity, inspiration and faith. Our lives are brief, like the sparrow that flits through the Saxon Hall during the dinner celebration; but this building has endured for almost a thousand years. And many of the stories we heard during our stay in its curtilage are older still.

We all brought home with us fragments of conversations, insights, stories. Here are a just a few of mine.

Jürgen Johannesdotter told me that he had a sore head after bumping into a low beam soon after arriving; it did nothing to diminish his sunny smile, which spreads a sense of wellbeing wherever he goes.

John Arnold interprets for me the beautiful Annunciation sculpture in the Galilee Chapel. This Mary is universal, he says; her head is African, her eyes Asian, her mouth European, her body like a musical instrument. There is just an intimation of pregnancy. She stands in quiet acquiescence, accepting her role. John acquired the statue for the Cathedral when he was Dean; she seems to glow and has surely found her optimum position in this chapel with its hint of the Alhambra.

*It is the turning
aside like Moses to the miracle
of the lit bush*



Also in the Galilee Chapel, Canon David Kennedy shows us a sculpture of a rustic table with a wooden jug, a plate, a goblet and a loaf; he opens it up to reveal a much larger table with intricate marquetry, laid for the Last Supper. It was made from the wood of the old belfry before it was replaced with steel. The piece is seldom opened up now, as it is fragile.

Richard Stephenson invites me to look up at a modern window on the north side above the font. It depicts brightly coloured spheres around a red rectangle. He teases out of me the meaning of it. Of course, it's the Last Supper, seen from above! If he were not a horse vet he would make fine teacher.

Wiebke Smith recalls as a girl in 1945 the sight of thousands of refugees fleeing before the Russians, abandoning their homes in Pomerania. At Saint Ann's church in Newcastle we hear about refugees today, seeking asylum in the UK, and the good people who support and advise them in their anxiety and distress.

Mark Engdahl is on the bridge of an aircraft carrier in a violent storm. The wind is howling, waves are crashing over the deck. The Captain says: 'Padre, can't you do something about this?' 'No Sir,' he says, 'I'm in Sales, not Management.'

A girl called Grace Darling is rowing with her father in the life boat into the teeth of a gale, through mountainous waves, to rescue sailors from a wreck on the Farne Island. They manage to save nine men. Her monument in Bamburgh Churchyard is resonant of Cuthbert's destroyed shrine. She is a kind of Northumbrian saint too.



The Angel of the North stretches out its vast wings not far from an open cast mine; beneath the rolling landscape, coal, coal, coal; the remaining seams will never be worked. The last lump of coal brought up from Bearpark Colliery in 1984 is displayed in the Cathedral Treasury. In the Cathedral itself, there's a monument to the coal industry, a miner's lamp, and the Book of Remembrance; it is open at a double page where all the men died on the same date in 1951 in an explosion at Easington Colliery.

Women, why are we still weeping?



We are shown a black marble line in the cathedral floor, across which women were not allowed to go. Sally Barnes says we still have work to do!

In one of the four depictions of Supper on the Road to Emmaus, shown to us by Hannah Cleugh, we see a maid at work in the kitchen, half listening to the conversation next door; in the Caravaggio painting, the pristine damask tablecloth has been laundered, starched and pressed; women have been busy preparing and presenting this meal. And a woman probably looks after the little dog that waits under the table for crumbs.

When the Canaanite woman deflects Jesus's unkind rebuff by saying even the little dogs may gather up the crumbs under their master's table Jesus turns and notices her; and grants her request to heal her sick daughter. Bishop Munib advocates "The Gospel of Crumbs".



A small boy is crouching with his family in the Church crypt in Jerusalem, in the chaos and violence of 1967. Mrs May cannot find it in her heart to apologise for the Balfour Declaration and the misery it continues to inflict, mainly, but not exclusively, on the Palestinians.

In the coach coming back from Bamburgh we pass the home of Earl Grey of the Great Reform and his descendant Lord Grey of Falloden, Foreign Secretary at the outbreak of World War One. He says: *The lamps are going out all over Europe. They will not be lit again in our lifetime.* He was a passionate naturalist, and loved birds. So did Cuthbert and Aidan. Phillip wonders why so many talented people seem to spring from this region. Perhaps it is the wide spaces, and the tranquillity.

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame.

I'm *plodgin* [the 'Geordie word for paddling] with Dick Lewis in the shallows on Bamburgh beach and the swirling water sparkles with silica and also black grains of what he tells me is sea coal. The poor used to come down to the beach with barrows looking for lumps of coal. Dick keeps his shoes on.

Oh surely Bamburgh Castle must be Gormenghast? Do you suppose that Mervyn Peake was a guest of the Hudsons at Lindisfarne Castle?

I'm sitting in Gertrude Jekyll's garden on Holy Island, eating a sandwich and gazing at the castle; it is still dressed in scaffolding; the team of craftsmen have just finished the refurbishment and speak in a short film about their experience of working in this remote place. Dramatic sunrises and sunsets; migrating birds; young kestrels learning to hover; the rhythm of tides; seals and otters; the difficulties of access, not only to the island but up to the castle itself. The project manager says: this has been the most challenging task of my whole life but also the most satisfying.



*And the thought comes
of that other being who is awake, too,
letting our prayers break on him
not like this for a few hours,
but for days, years, for eternity.*

(Continued next page)

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What do you suppose the team of builders and craftsmen must have felt when they finally (after a mere forty years) completed Durham Cathedral? I'm sure they had a jolly good party.

Sweet peas, santolina, a riot of colour and fragrance. Helen and Madeleine join me and we talk about handbags, fuchsias in the hedgerows of Ireland, the pleasure of gardening.



Five fledgling sparrows are pecking crumbs round our feet. Perhaps they are the descendants of those sparrows that chirruped and pecked around Gertrude as she gardened. Or, more to the point, they're probably descended from those sparrows that Saint Aidan and Saint Cuthbert loved and threw crumbs to; along with the puffins, gannets, guillemots and geese.

We came together from far corners of the earth, looking for Christ who is alive; and I believe we found Him, not only in our Bible studies, workshops and worship, but also in one another; at mealtimes, at the bar, on the coach, in the chapel; in laughter, conversation and in times of stillness.

The key ingredient has to be love; love for the world in all its beauty and its brokenness; love for one another; and a thirst for Christ, who is alive in the cosmos, in conflict, conflict resolution, in liturgy, in the saints of Northumbria, in poetry and music.

Heaven in Ordinary. Something Understood.

OUR CONFERENCE IN DURHAM : THE GATHERING

Durham, in the North-East of England, turned out to be a wonderful place to hold a conference. It attracted what must be record interest from our members and, in the event, 71 people were there for the whole event and 26 stayed on afterwards for a two-day Post-Conference programme of visits. St Chad's College could accommodate us at a very economical rate which meant that we were able to offer the conference at a very affordable price. That is important because everyone who attends a conference has to take into account their travel costs. The College comprises a group of period houses stretching along the street leading to the cathedral. The rooms were not of hotel standard, but they were almost all ensuite and served their purpose. Being able to simply cross the road to enter the cathedral was a real bonus. The dining hall was very crowded for the first two days because we were sharing it with 'Cantores Vagrantes', a choir singing the services in Durham Cathedral during the summer when the cathedral choirs are on holiday. But everyone seemed to enjoy the food, and the kitchen staff, the housekeepers and office staff could not have been more friendly and accommodating.

Durham is built on a hill and that proved something of a challenge to some of our members. 'It goes up and down rather a lot!' commented one member from the plains of Germany. 'It has a kind of verticality!' remarked someone from USA. It was also a bit cold and damp as we assembled. The very warm weather that Britain had been enjoying for several months ended as our conference began. However, on the plus side, despite the fact that August is normally the wettest month in Durham, it only rained on us on the Sunday.



The conference seems to have been well received and in this issue of *The Window* you can find summaries by our editor of all our sessions and activities. The presentations and Bible Studies are all available in full on our website.

‘CHRIST IS ALIVE! REALLY? WHERE DID THEY FIND HIM?’

The conference began, as it should, in chapel where we enjoyed a quiet act of opening worship which focused on our theme, ‘Christ is Alive! Really!’, and included our first Bible Study, led by the Ven Christine Allsopp.

Christine wanted us to address the question, “Christ is alive! Really? Where?” She directed us to two of the resurrection appearances of Jesus, **Matthew 28.1-10 and 16-20** and **Luke 24.36- 53**. In Matthew first an angel, and then Jesus himself, instruct Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to go to his brothers and tell them to go to *Galilee* where they will see him, whereas in Luke, Jesus appears to the disciples in *Jerusalem* and tells them to stay there.

Matthew, Christine began, shows Jesus as the new Moses giving his teaching on the mountain. His gospel has always been regarded as the most “Jewish”, of the four, yet it ends with the Great Commission to the disciples in chapter 28. Matthew aims to answer a crucial question which the Biblical scholar Richard Burridge put like this: “How does a good Jewish boy like Jesus of Nazareth set out to be a Teacher of Israel and yet ends up founding a Gentile Church?”

Whereas Mark’s Gospel is open-ended, shrouded in mystery, with no actual appearance of the Risen Lord, Matthew tries to overcome doubt with evidence. He mentions that “some doubted” (28.17), for example, but this is immediately resolved by the appearance of Jesus on the mountain, designed to dispel all doubt. Matthew has Jesus’ ministry beginning in “Galilee of the Gentiles” and that is where it ends. ‘Yet this is less of an end than a new beginning,’ Christine commented, ‘Jesus told the disciples: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.” Jesus has taught them; they are to become teachers themselves.’

Matthew does not tell us how the disciples reacted to this appearance of Jesus. Instead, we are left with Jesus’ promise “I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

‘At the beginning of the Gospel an angel appeared to Joseph describing the child Mary will bear as Emmanuel, “God with us” (1.23). At the end, Jesus himself assures the disciples of his continuing presence,’ Christine said.

She then turned our attention to **Luke**, a Gentile writing for Gentiles, yet steeped in the Hebrew Scriptures. ‘Whoever he was,’ she commented, ‘he was clearly an educated man writing for a wider audience than an existing Christian community.’ He is the only one of the four evangelists to write a sequel to his gospel. Luke and Acts, taken together, set out the story of Jesus as a prelude to the story of the origin and growth of the early Church. ‘So his account ends not with the appearances of the Risen Jesus but in Rome,’ she said. ‘God’s plan of salvation triumphs with the good news reaching the very heart of the Roman Empire.’

Luke provides three accounts of the resurrection. First, Mary Magdalene and other women find the tomb is empty. Then at Emmaus Jesus is made known in the breaking of bread. Finally, the disciples give Jesus fish to eat, demonstrating that he is not a ghost, but flesh and bones.

Christine reminded us that a recurrent theme in Luke is joy, and after Jesus has been carried up into heaven, in the penultimate verse of the gospel, the disciples returned to Jerusalem “with great joy”. Luke also demonstrates that the life, death and resurrection of Jesus were foretold in Scripture and, as Jesus himself said in Nazareth, “Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing”. ‘In his final meeting with his disciples (24.44-47) he reminds them that everything written about him in scripture must be fulfilled,’ Christine said, ‘not only his suffering, death and resurrection but also, he now adds, that “repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem”.’

The theme of journey is important to

Luke. ‘It seems that Luke wants to encourage a sense of the life of faith as a journey with the Lord Jesus,’ said Christine. Another of his themes is the centrality of the Temple. Jesus is presented in the Temple by Mary and Joseph (2.22-38); aged twelve, he is lost for three days and found in the Temple by his parents (2.41-52); before his death he teaches daily in the Temple; and after his ascension his disciples were continually there in the Temple blessing God.

Christine said that she was not interested in the geographical question of where the Risen Jesus was to be found – Galilee or Jerusalem – but why Matthew and Luke constructed their accounts as they did. Matthew’s central idea seems to be that, since the Jews have rejected Jesus a new Israel has come into being which will grow, especially from among the Gentiles. ‘It is natural, therefore, for the disciples to meet Jesus in Galilee, earlier described as “Galilee of the Gentiles”, and for the disciples to be commanded to make disciples of *all* nations,’ she said.

Luke, on the other hand, orders his Gospel account as a journey which begins and ends in Jerusalem. His disciples remain in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit comes and then the message begins to be proclaimed to all nations, and the journey continues, finally reaching Rome at the end of the Acts of Apostles. ‘Yet for Luke the heart of the real world is neither Jerusalem, the centre of the Jewish world, nor Rome the centre of the Roman world, but in heaven,’ she said.

So, whether we are called to remain in the same geographical place or called to go elsewhere, Jesus by his Holy Spirit promises that he will be with us, often in the most unlikely places. ‘May we be encouraged and challenged in these few days together as our speakers explore with us the question “Christ is Alive! Where do we find him?”’ she concluded.



'CHRIST IS ALIVE! WE FIND HIM IN THE COSMOS'

On the first evening, after supper, we reassembled in the Chapel, which doubled as our meeting room for the first two days. Bishop Michael Ipgrave, our Anglican Moderator, welcomed everyone to the conference. Then Dr Jaakko Rusama, our Lutheran Moderator, introduced our first keynote speaker, Professor David Wilkinson, a theoretical astrophysicist, a Methodist Minister and Principal of St John's College next door to St Chad's.

Introduction

One of Professor Wilkinson's interests is in bringing science and Christian theology into dialogue. However, he does not believe that the two can be fully integrated; they are separate disciplines. 'We have to respect their dissonance,' he said. But he promised to offer us some themes within the Christian doctrine of creation and allow them to talk to some recent scientific discoveries, the kind of conversation that needs to be played out in everyday life. It is part of the mission the Church is engaged in.

To illustrate how important it is to do this he played three short video clips; first, Dara O'Braian sharing his understanding of creation, which you can watch for yourself at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wdi_uIZenRw; second, young Sheldon challenging his pastor at church, which you can see at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vbfgE0YIPPs>; third, Richard Dawkins and Lawrence Krauss talking about their view of theology which you can listen to by clicking the link on the Home Page of the website. (Professor Wilkinson asks you to forgive Richard Dawkins' reference to "the Transubstantiation of the Trinity"!

Those clips, he said, form part of the background against which Christians engage in mission. He then offered a number of insights from Christian tradition that might inform people's thinking about Creation.

1. The Christian doctrine of creation is never an abstract academic concept

Many people read the first chapter of Genesis as science, but Professor Wilkinson prefers to see the opening of the Bible as a place of worship. 'It's not meant to tell us how old the universe is,' he said. 'It's meant to excite us about just how great this Creator-God is, and to catch us up into a liturgy of worship about goodness and extravagance and beauty.'

Rather than starting with Genesis Professor Wilkinson turns to St Paul: 'Christ is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.' (Col.1.15) Whatever else that statement may be addressing, he said, Paul is emphasizing the special, unique nature of Jesus. There seem to have been people in Colossae teaching that Jesus was not that special, and Paul is using the doctrine of creation to say just how great and supreme Jesus is.

The problem with regarding the doctrine of creation as an abstract concept is that our mission is undermined because we fall into the old trap of trying to prove God through the Design Argument, the Ontological Argument or the Cos-

mological Argument. A Christian doctrine of creation is better understood by asking, 'How do we draw people into worship?' Professor Wilkinson declared.

At the Methodist church he usually attends, he told us, 'our music group seems to me to use worship songs that are only about six months old. If they're older than that then they're thrown out!' To illustrate this he played 'So Will I' by Hillsong United. [You can listen to it yourself at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GfVd5x9WlXc>]

'As we sang that in church I was sitting beside a man, a second-year undergraduate, a biologist, and tears were streaming down his face. I said to him at the end of the service, "Did God speak to you in any particular way?" and he replied, "It was the first time I was able to connect my science into worship",' he told us.

This young biologist clearly did not know the rich vein in Christian hymnody that has already done that, but Professor Wilkinson emphasized the need to 'rediscover awe and wonder, and to connect that into worship. An awful lot of people in every culture have a sense of awe and wonder when they look at the universe. What they don't do well is to connect that sense of awe and wonder to worship.'

2. The Christian doctrine of creation has Christ at the centre

To say that Christians put Christ at the centre might seem obvious, but often within the history of the Church it has been forgotten. Along with the scientific revolution came the rise of Natural Theology, Professor Wilkinson reminded us, with Newton's suggestion that the universe was a bit like a clock, John Ray's book on the fly's eye and how it gave evidence for belief in God, and William Paley walking across a field, picking up a watch, recognizing that that watch must have been designed, and applying the same approach to the natural biological world: it is beautifully designed and therefore there must be a designer.

While Kant and Hume criticized this Argument from Design it was only when Darwin appeared that the design argument began to fall. 'What Darwin brought to the Church was a challenge,' Professor Wilkinson said. 'He asked "What does it mean to be human?" Are we unique or not, if we are descended from a common ancestor to an ape?' In effect, what he did was to offer an alternative to the argument from design, and that was his Theory of Natural Selection.

For Christians like B B Warfield, who believed that Christ reveals who God is, evolution was not so much of a threat,

and in the twentieth century Karl Barth was to say that “I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s Son our Lord, in order to perceive and to understand that God the Almighty Father, is Creator of heaven and earth. If I did not believe the former, I could not perceive and understand the latter.”

Returning to Richard Dawkins for a moment, Professor Wilkinson suggested that ‘Dawkins is primarily criticizing a doctrine of creation which is still based on the Argument from Design and the Cosmological Argument. Once you take away the Christian understanding of Jesus Christ you’re left with a very shallow understanding of creation.’

To illustrate his point he turned to ‘intelligent design’, a theory that has huge power among students, not least those here in Durham, he told us. Professor Wilkinson’s problem with ‘intelligent design’ is that, not only is it a god-of-the-gaps’ type of argument, there is no real mention of Jesus in it. ‘It goes “let me prove to you that the universe is intelligently designed and therefore there is a God, and then let’s go and talk about Jesus - and I think that’s the wrong way round,’ he protested. ‘I think that as Christians we’re called to offer Christ and then see the universe from that perspective.’

He went on to mention another idea in science and religion dialogue – what Paul Davis calls ‘The Goldilocks Enigma’. It is the idea that the universe is just right for you and me to exist in its law and its circumstance. ‘Now this is separate from intelligent design,’ he said. ‘It sounds a bit like it, but it is not saying, “Let me prove to you God”; it says, “Perhaps there’s a deeper story”.’ One of those deeper stories, he suggested, might be Martin Rees’ multiple universe theory.

‘I don’t want us to re-engage with design arguments,’ commented Professor Wilkinson. ‘I think we can say, as John Polkinghorne and others have very well said, that these may be pointers towards a deeper conversation; they are not proofs of the existence of God.’

He then cited a Durham Professor, Temple Chevallier, who was a contemporary of Darwin. His Hulsean Lectures, ‘On the proofs of Divine Power and Wisdom, derived from the study of astronomy and the evidence, doctrines and precepts of Revealed Religion’ (1827) were, he said, mistitled, because Chevallier did not do that. In his first five lectures his approach was “Wow! Gosh! Isn’t this interesting from science. Let me just excite you a little bit!” Then he used the Scriptures to provide the overall framework by which he interprets the science. ‘My contention is that most of the design argument was not of the Paley variety,’ Professor Wilkinson argued. ‘It was of a “Gosh! Wow! Look at this! Let’s have a conversation about it” variety. As we engage in the conversation, let’s do so from the point of view of the Christian Scriptures, with Christ at the centre.’

3. The Christian doctrine of creation affirms that God is the sole Creator of the Universe

Pursuing this “Gosh! Wow!” approach Professor Wilkinson turned back to Paul who tells the Colossians, ‘All things in him were created.’ His favourite galaxy at the moment, he told us, is GN-z11, a small galaxy the furthest out in the universe that we have ever seen. Its light set out towards

us 13.2 billion years ago. The light from the sun takes about 8 minutes! And GN-z11 is only one of some 100 billion galaxies in the universe and each of those galaxies contains on average about 100 billion stars!



‘Now, fold that into Psalm 19,’ he said, “‘The heavens declare the glory of God”, or Psalm 8.3, “When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers”. What are human beings in the midst of all of this? And the Christian doctrine of creation says that God is the source of everything in the universe.’

Professor Wilkinson drew a timeline from today back to the origin of the universe. It was not to scale!! ‘Our current age is 13.8 billion years,’ he said, ‘and our physical laws give a good description of what the universe was like an hour into creation. In fact our present laws take us all the way back to $1/10^{43}$ of a second. That’s virtually zero, but not quite! At that point our current laws of physics break down, and I’m interested in that simple fact, that our laws of physics break down. Quantum theory and general relativity don’t fit together very well at that very early moment in the universe’s history. Scientists are looking for string theory or a theory that will bring these two together. But at the moment we haven’t got one!’

In a Christian doctrine of creation God is not a divine firework lighter who reaches out his hand and lights the blue touch paper. Paul writes in Colossians 1.17, “In him all things hold together.” God is the source of all the physical laws, keeping the universe in existence moment by moment, whether it is 6000 years, 13.8 billion years or just $1/10^{43}$ of a second old, it is God’s sustaining activity that we understand as the source of creation.

‘One of the fascinating things for scientists,’ said Professor Wilkinson, ‘is that underneath the complexity of the universe are beautiful, simple, elegant physical laws.’ He told us how, not so long ago, he had been hugged in the street by a physicist with tears in his eyes. It was the day on which the discovery of gravitational waves was announced. ‘A hundred years ago Albert Einstein had said that in his theory of General Relativity if two black holes a long way away collide then they’ll send out ripples in the space-time of the universe. And then he added; “By the way – you’ll never see them!” And just a few months ago we did see

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them, because that ripple of space-time stretched space by less than the diameter of a proton and yet we were able to see it. And you go “Gosh! Wow! Thank you, Lord” that the order that we see in the gravitational force on the earth is the same that describes two black holes many millions of light-years away.’

4. The Christian doctrine of Creation holds together our understanding of creation and new-creation

Paul in Colossians parallels creation and new-creation with Christ at the very centre. Too often Christians talk about creation without reference to new-creation, and about new-creation without reference to creation. The New Testament describes new-creation as a transformation of this creation, not discarding it and starting all over again. ‘John Wesley’s understanding of new-creation was that it wasn’t just about the individual believer being transformed, or the Christian community being transformed, but was about a new heaven and a new earth,’ Professor Wilkinson told us. ‘That’s why in his sermon “The Great Deliverance” he talks about the future for animals in new-creation. It seems to me that there’s a lot of work to be done in that.’

5. The Christian doctrine of creation sees humanity as the gift of intimate relationship with God

Professor Wilkinson suggested that ‘the core question of the next ten years is not going to be my area of cosmology: the core question is going to be, “What does it mean to be human?” So, how do we understand the difference between artificial intelligence and humanity? Or if the human genome project shows that I share some 67% of my genes with cauliflower, what makes me different from cauliflower? Or if we discover life elsewhere in the universe what will that mean for our humanity?’

Conclusion

A Christian contribution towards questions like these will include recognition that everything is a gift given by God: intimacy of relationship with God and neighbour; responsibility about living in community and in the creation; insights into being transformed into the image of Christ.

When he thinks about Christ in Creation the Professor wants to start with wonder and awe and worship, he wants to avoid thinking in abstract terms, but rather to see the heart of the universe as being Christ who is the source and sustainer of all that there is, including the physical laws themselves, to see Christ as the fulcrum between creation and new-creation, and to say how it is in Christ that he finds what it is to be fully human.



Professor Wilkinson enjoying a joke with Tom and Mimi VanPoole while signing copies of his books after his presentation

‘CHRIST IS ALIVE! WHERE DO WE FIND HIM? IN GENTLE JESUS, MEEK AND MILD? MAYBE NOT!’

After Saturday Morning Worship led by Pastor Bill Sappenfield from Austin, Texas, which included some hearty singing for such an early hour, and then breakfast, we enjoyed a Bible Study facilitated by the Rev Judi Hattaway.



Judi invited us to think about conflict, and consider what we might learn from the way Jesus handled difficult situations. You might like to try this yourself. She suggested that you start by reading Hebrews 2.18; 1 Peter 2. 23; 2 Timothy 1.7; Matthew 3. 13-15; Luke 2. 41-52; Luke 10. 38-42 and John 2. 1-11.

Next, she suggested that when people face conflict they often have a default response – a strategy for dealing with it. She suggested a few:

- Tight lipped argument?
- Shouting matches?
- Awkward silence?
- Trying to work out what others are thinking and feeling?
- Hard negotiation?
- Worrying what is happening behind your back?

She asked us to think and then write down some awkward conflict situations that we have faced and how we handled them. Can we see what our default way of dealing with conflict is? Is it the best way?

Next she asked us to return to the Bible texts. What do we notice about Jesus' handling of these situations? What in Jesus' style would we rather ignore? What sorts of situation do we find most perplexing and difficult?

Judi encouraged us to share our thoughts with our immediate neighbours, remembering that all was to be done in the strictest confidence.

We were then asked to reflect on an incident where we may have jumped too quickly to conclusions – or to the rescue – and to ask ourselves what was motivating us.

Next, Judi invited us to reflect in groups on an incident where someone tried to get us on 'their side' against another person, and how we responded.

Calling us back to order she asked us to consider if we need to respond immediately, or whether there were situa-

tions in which no answers were actually required, and whether we need to accept the role or terms that others are thrusting upon us?

When is it necessary to manage conflict so as to prevent unnecessary escalation? When is it appropriate to bring it to a head? What might be the price of doing so? This led to more animated discussion!

Judi then asked us to consider what it was like to embrace, purposefully, the role of the scapegoat. She explained the meaning of the term – someone who is unjustly blamed for the faults of others – and the Biblical background.

Then she invited us to consider how all these things affect our sense of well-being and finally gave us work to do in our own time. Ask yourself, she said, 'What is the present "work in progress" for you as you seek to model yourself on Christ?'



'CHRIST IS ALIVE! WE FIND HIM IN CONFLICT'

Following a coffee break Pastor Mark Engdahl shared some of his experience as a Chaplain in the United States Navy.

Mark began by telling some Sven and Ole stories. He is from a Swedish background and became known as the 'Sven and Ole Chaplain'. Here is just one of his stories

Every year Sven and Ole went hunting. They lived in Ely, Minnesota, so they rented a plane and the pilot took them to a remote lake. He landed on the water and moored by a little pier. Then he said, "OK, I'll see yah!" and he flew off. Sven and Ole hunted and hunted and Bang! they got a beautiful big moose. They dragged it by the antlers back to the little pier. When the pilot came back and landed he exclaimed, "What do you think you're going to do with that?" Sven replied, "We're taking it home, back to Ely, Minnesota!" The pilot was aghast! "How are you going to do that?" Ole already had the solution. "We'll put it on top, spread the legs out, hang the head and the antlers over the front and take it home!" The pilot protested but Sven reminded him that he'd been paid big money. He had to do it. Moose firmly tied on, and plane gassed up, the pilot started taxiing round and round the lake trying to get up speed.

Eventually he took off and went Wham! into the trees. Silence! Little bits of pine floating down. Little bits of moose! There was a cry from one end of the clearing to the other. "Sven, are you there?" Silence! "Sven, are you there?" A voice from far away: "Yes, I'm here!" Ole cried out again. "Where are you?" Sven called back. "I think I'm about 40 yards further than we got last year!"



Some conference members began to wonder what the relevance of these stories might be. But Mark was using a well-tried preacher's trick. Get your audience laughing and then make your point! So his account of his early life, his home background and his father

pastoring the congregation of the second oldest Swedish church in the USA was laced with humour. He told about his journey to ordination, about his discovery of liturgy with pomp and ceremony in the Episcopal Cathedral in Davenport, Iowa; of one of his brother's going off to the Second World War; how gifts of a German helmet and a bayonet transported him to teenage heaven; and how his interest in the military, especially the Navy, was developing. He told us how he joined the pre-medical programme at university because doctors made lots of money, but how a casual remark of an atheistic Professor of English, "You have to have some values in life..." struck him, and he abandoned medicine and headed towards the ministry.

He then explained the structure of Naval Chaplaincy and how he began his ministry in the Navy. 'Chaplains are officers in the Navy,' he told us. 'They are officers first, clergy second. They are under the Uniform Code of Military Justice and they function at the will of their endorsing agency (in my case the Lutheran Church) and the Navy. They are governed militarily by the Chaplain Corps and assigned to the Navy, the Marines or the Coast Guard. I was always with the Navy.'

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Mark explained how Navy religion can be summed up as “Cooperation without Compromise”. Chaplaincy is by nature both ecumenical and pluralist, he told us. Whilst a chaplain of someone’s own denomination will be found if practicable, often on small ships there is only one chaplain for everyone. ‘On board smaller ships, you’re everyone’s padre,’ he said, ‘you preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments and, in combat situations or when going towards a combat area, you face life and death situations and so help young people to prepare themselves for what might come, offer comfort and support. There is a lot of spiritual counseling to be done, and you are dealing with frightened young people whose life directions may suddenly change dramatically.’

Mark offered a comparison between parish and chaplaincy ministry. ‘A parish offers a unified ministry,’ he said. ‘You are preaching to people you know; you have a long-term commitment and vision for the congregation; everything is denominational so you know where you are. But military chaplaincy is not like that. Everything is short-term, people coming and going, on watch and off watch, so that preaching is Gospel oriented, but has to take more of a universal approach. It is NOT easy, but it is rewarding!’

Yes, chaplaincy can be rewarding, and there are times when military people see and feel the Good News; as life flashes before them, they respond! It’s often about rifles, bombs, and the Eucharist... But there are those who don’t respond, and it’s no use being downhearted. ‘That’s the way of the Gospel, isn’t it?’ Mark observed. ‘The Gospel always works; it is just that sometimes WE DON’T!’

Our theme was ‘Christ is Alive! Where do we find him? We find him everywhere, in all circumstances, Mark reminded us, there beside us sharing our joy and our suffering. We find him in people. People like his fellow-chaplain, Roman Catholic Fr Vincent Capodanno, who was willing to be Christ for the men in his care and to save them and die for them. And Mark ended his presentation with this moving citation:

On the morning of September 4th, 1967 [during the Vietnam War] Fr Vincent Capodanno volunteered to go out with Marine units that were being flown in to relieve a battalion in the hotly contested Que Son Valley. Knowing that an attack was imminent, he had spent most of the night praying for those who would lose their lives.

Soon after landing, Capodanno’s unit was hit hard by a force of nearly two thousand North Vietnamese. As the Marines came over the crest of a hill, they were bombarded with mortar shells and automatic weapons fire. “We’re being wiped out!” one platoon radioed back. “There are wounded and dying all around.”

Hearing the message, the chaplain ran to their aid. He went back and forth, bringing in wounded men and giving Last Rites to the dying. Even though hit twice - once in the face and also in the right hand - he continued to look for wounded, telling them, “Jesus said, ‘Have faith. Jesus is the

truth and the life.”

One of the men he helped, Ray Harton, was bleeding heavily and feared that he was going to die. Then he looked up and saw Capodanno. “I can’t explain it, but when he touched me and I heard his voice, I had a calming feeling that I have never had before or since.” Capodanno reassured Harton that “God is with us all this day”, and blessed him with his still intact left hand.

Then a wounded corpsman screamed in pain, and Capodanno ran to help. As he knelt there, a burst of machine-gun fire killed both men instantly. One of the soldiers who brought in Capodanno’s body hours later said, “He had a smile on his face, and his eyelids were closed as if asleep or in prayer.”

Fr Vince Capodanno was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his bravery that day.



*Fr Vincent Capodanno praying with some Marines before going into action
CNS photo/courtesy Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers*

TIME TO RELAX AND TO EXPLORE

During our conferences we try to give people plenty of time to explore the area they are visiting, and on our first afternoon everyone was free to explore the city. The weather was kind, plenty of sunshine taking the edge off a cool wind. There were restaurants and cafés of all kinds so everyone was able to find something suitable to enjoy for lunch, and Durham offers plenty of sight-seeing and shopping! Then, after tea, we reassembled for our next session at 4.45pm.

CHRIST IS ALIVE! WE FIND HIM IN TIMES OF CRISIS!

After tea Bishop Munib Younan, formerly Bishop of ELCJHL and President of the Lutheran World Federation, took our thinking a step further. This is a summary of his address. The full text of his presentation is on the website.

Bishop Munib first asked us to read John 20.19, 24-29, the appearances of Jesus in the upper room and Thomas' reactions. Then he said that, as a Palestinian Christian he can testify to the fact that Christ is alive, and he is in our midst! 'Even in the midst of 51 years of military occupation we encounter him today,' he said.



Turning to "Doubting Thomas" he suggested that we might assume that faith came easily to the disciples of Jesus, but Thomas shows that it did not. 'Thomas represents all of us. I personally do not blame Thomas for his doubt. If I were in his place, living in fear, conflict, insecure and undecided, I would be the same.'

In our contemporary age it is hard to become a believer. We cannot prove the resurrection to everyone's satisfaction. It defies logic. 'Are we in danger of creating more Thomases in our world than believing Magdalenes?' the Bishop asked. Is there too much religion and too little faith?

But a week later, when Jesus appeared again, things were different. Jesus did not blame Thomas for his questions; he knew that faith cannot grow unless at some point there is serious doubt. 'Faith is not certainty,' said Bishop Munib, 'Faith is about what God is capable of doing, not what humans are capable of doing.'

Thomas confesses Jesus as God when he sees the crucified one is alive. It is through crucifixion that God makes himself known to us, for God is love, and love is about laying down one's life for one's friends. (Luke 4.8-15) Today the Church must address the many Thomases who sit in the pews, and the many more in society who wonder and doubt, the Bishop told us. 'We need to share the Good News that Christ is not only present on Easter morning, but also on Easter evening, and a week later, whenever we find ourselves locked in rooms of fear and doubt. The Risen Christ comes to us, and brings us peace.'

Bishop Munib then reflected on four places where Christ may be found in times of conflict and crisis.

1. He is Alive in the persecuted and oppressed

In our modern world, the issue of persecution of Christians is coming more to the fore, he told us, and he issued a note of warning. All too often, he said, talk of religious freedom is not a genuine expression of concern for the persecuted peoples, but simply obscures a politically or even an apocalyptically motivated agenda. 'When leaders use the persecution of Christians for political gain, we must be very cautious. Often the struggles of our brothers and sisters in Christ are used as proof that our religion is good, and all others are bad, especially Islam. Their very real suffering is

used to score points in a political battle that has nothing to do with them but has everything to do with preserving power and privilege.'

The danger is that using Christians as a political tool actually endangers minority Christians, who may find themselves being thought of in their countries as agents of Western power. We should never forget that Christ is more alive among those who suffer for the faith than anywhere else! 'When twenty Coptic Christians were martyred on a beach in Libya in 2015, Christ was alive with them,' Bishop Munib asserted. 'Christ was with them as they prayed the Lord's Prayer. Christ was with them as they refused to renounce their faith. And Christ was with the 21st martyr, a Muslim who chose to die with his Christian brothers, although he could have saved himself had he said he was a Muslim.'

After that terrible event a Coptic priest said, 'The blood of these martyrs is the seed of the growth of the Church in the Middle East.' Bishop Munib agreed. 'Christians who steadfastly maintain faith in the face of persecution must be our teachers... They meet Christ where we cannot.'

But Christ suffers with all who suffer; he is alive among the Rohingya people, and among the Muslims of India and of Central Africa, who are persecuted by our fellow Christians. 'The Living Christ may be encountered in the lives of all who are persecuted or oppressed in our world,' said the Bishop. 'Therefore, we must never allow politicians to use either Christ's name or the suffering of his followers for political and apocalyptic purposes.'

Bishop Munib reminded us that, although Christians and Muslims have lived together in the Arab world for 1400 years without any major problems or any kind of syncretism, the issue of mission remains a difficult topic. Both Christianity and Islam are missionary religions. What is essential is to continue to preach the living Christ whilst at the same time respecting the traditions of our neighbours. 'We never want mission work to be a tool of conflict in society. Maintaining peace in a holistic society is a key to guaranteeing religious freedom,' he said.

So Christians must speak out against religious persecution of any kind, whether it is the Pakistani penal law, or when the Malaysian parliament forbids Christians to name the Triune God "Allah", or if some Western countries deny entry to immigrants based on their beliefs.

'When I first met Pope Francis,' Bishop Munib told us, 'I took a small gift to His Holiness. It was a rusted teapot from Dadaab Refugee Camp in Kenya where more than half

a million Somali refugees live. Pope Francis jumped off his throne to grab it and said, "This is so precious to me! I will put it in my office where I can always see it and remember the refugees." And he praised the work being done by the Lutheran World Federation in Dadaab camp and said, "You see, this is what we need today. Now is the time for ecumenical martyria." I asked him for clarification: "Do you mean the white martyria – the martyria of witnessing and sharing our faith? Or do you mean the red martyria – the martyria of giving our lives for the sake of the Gospel?" Pope Francis replied, "We of course prefer the white. But if necessary, we are ready for the red." To be a Christian is to be ready to be faithful to the theology of martyria in its full sense.'



The Pope cradling the rusted teapot which he put in his office

Bishop Munib concluded this section of his address by asserting that the world has no use for a divided Church. 'They want to meet the Risen Lord! They want to see his hands and his side, encountering both his death and his life through the global and ecumenical Church today. Is the Church ready for this ecumenical martyria?'

2. Christ is alive in the prophetic Church

Lutheran pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer once wrote: "It is part of the Church's office of guardianship that she shall call sin by its name and that she shall warn men against sin; for "righteousness exalteth a nation," both in time and in eternity, "but sin is perdition for the people," both temporal and eternal perdition (Prov. 14.34). If the Church did not do this, she would be incurring part of the guilt for the blood of the wicked (Ezek. 3.17ff.). This warning against sin is delivered to the congregation openly and publicly, and whoever will not hear it passes judgment on himself."

There are many instances, even in the Bible, when religion has done nothing but legitimize the political powers of the day in return for certain privileges and benefits. But there have always been true prophets protesting against social structures and political powers and social injustice. True prophets seek benefits for all people, not for America first, or Sweden first, or Finland first, but for all countries.

'The Church must be asking if perceptions of national security or national interest truly justify the harm our actions in other countries may cause,' the Bishop said. 'It seems to me that all too often some Churches today choose the path of the court theologian rather than of the true prophets.' They have vested interests to protect and so they often choose the path of least resistance.

Bishop Munib lived through the Six Day War of 1967. When it ended, and East Jerusalem was facing the reality of occupation, an American pastor from West Jerusalem had brought his family some food. 'He told my parents: "Don't be sad. You must understand that this was God's will. This is a fulfillment of prophecy!" He was quoting Daniel chapter 7, in which the "small horn" has beaten the three "large horns." In his interpretation, the small horn was Israel and the large horns were Syria, Jordan, and Egypt.'

'I was in a spiritual crisis,' the Bishop continued. 'I did not want to believe in a God who was one-sided, a real estate broker, a military general, one who stands with the powerful over and against the oppressed and occupied. The false interpretations we had been taught by court theologians simply had no relevance for those living under occupation and helped me lose my faith and not believe in God ... Some years ago a group of Palestinian Christians crafted the Kairos Palestine document, to tell Palestinian Christians that the fulfillment of prophecy is Christ and him crucified. Fulfillment of prophecy does not equal oppression or occupation, dispensationalist scenarios, or any other extremist interpretation of the Bible.'

'The pastor who visited my parents thought he was being biblical,' the Bishop sighed, 'but in fact this is an example of the Church choosing the side of the empire rather than of Christ. This is sick idolatry – using the Bible to oppress the poor.'

The Bishop ended this section of his address by quoting from "Searching for God in the City of Angels" by Professor Cecilia Gonzalez-Andrieu (*"America Magazine"* 27 July 2018). She writes of the prophetic role of the Church quoting Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King, Oscar Romero, St Teresa of Ávila, and continues: "This uncompromising requirement of God's vision for the building of God's reign has divided Christians throughout history. There are those who retire from the turmoil and speak of the kingdom of God as a future place, somewhere in 'heaven', where the wrongs will finally be righted. Getting there is just a matter of piety, patience and, well, dying.

"And then there are those who try to assuage their consciences by doing the minimum for others as 'charity' while building spiritual spas: luxuriant parish complexes that reinforce their separateness from the vulnerable. The result is places of comfort and security that drown out the pain of the world with elevator music.

"But there are also those who, like Mary, see God acting in the world for the lowly and vulnerable and boldly take up their cause, which is God's cause. One could say that these are three different approaches to living as a Christian in a troubled world, all equally valid. One could, but one should not unless one is ready to walk away from the Gospel."

'Thanks be to God,' said Bishop Munib, 'although I have seen when the Church chooses power over the prophetic, I have also seen how the Church can be the place where people encounter Christ ... This happens when the Church speaks truth to power, when the Church challenges every barrier to peace, justice, and wholeness, when the Church lets nothing stand in the way of life and life abundant for all people ... when the Church speaks and acts prophetically and boldly, choosing to be the guardian and conscience of the state rather than its puppet. Then the world encounters Christ alive through us.'

3. Christ is alive in the ecumenical movement

In 2010, Anglican theologian Andrew McGowan suggested that we are now experiencing an "ecumenical winter" in which the movement toward visible Christian unity has reached a low point. Bishop Munib does not agree. 'Recent events have pointed the way toward an ecumenical spring,' he told us. He cited as evidence 31st October 2016, the beginning of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, when he, Dr Martin Junge, General Secretary of the LWF, and His Holiness Pope Francis co-hosted the historic service of reconciliation held in Lund, Sweden.

'During that service in Lund,' he told us, 'Pope Francis and I signed a joint declaration saying that "through dialogue and shared witness we are no longer strangers. Rather, we have learned that what unites us is greater than what divides us." No matter how difficult and long it is, I encourage the global Church to continue ecumenical dialogue, for it is Christ's call that the Church be one, as he and the Father are one. I believe that the ecumenical movement is one place where the world encounters the Living Christ.'

Lund has had remarkable effects beyond the Christian world. Dr Muhammad Al-Sammak, Secretary General of the Christian-Muslim Committee for Dialogue in Lebanon and Co-President of Religions for Peace, who said that "the task of the Muslims today is to defend and purify our faith from the criminal exploitation of the jihadists," has also suggested that Sunni and Shi'a Muslims must learn from the energy of Lund to explore reconciliation between their communities as well as Lutherans and Catholics have done. The energy of Lund will create more energy and trust, and not just among Lutherans and Catholics.

Bishop Munib quoted other examples before concluding this part of his address, 'In a time when extremists threaten to hijack religion, and when populism, xenophobia, and even fascism are on the rise across the world, the Church can offer a powerful antidote. When Churches speak and act ecumenically as one Body, rather than focusing on historic and theological differences, then the world encounters the Living Christ through us and says, "Look how they love each other!" Can they say that today?'

4. Christ is alive in our love for the Other

Bishop Munib ended his address with a note of encouragement. Having lived his entire adult life under occupation he can testify to the fact that however bad a situation might be it does not mean that Christ is not with us. 'On the contrary,' he said, 'in times of conflict and crisis I have seen Christ clearly, and have come to know that the God of justice and

of peace is always at work wherever we find injustice and conflict.'

He told us that the Arabic word "sumud" can be translated in English as "steadfast resilience." 'Having "sumud" means that in times of crisis or conflict I look to God,' he said, 'and I find God in the conflict. I pray for the strength to work for justice and to live into my identity as a baptized Child of God.'

'The answer to prayer I often receive,' he continued, 'is that Christ comes near to us through the otherness of the other. When I see the image of Christ in the occupier, I see Him in me ... We are always to see the enemy as a human being, with just as much right to dignity and equal rights as I have, who am occupied.'

The new Nation-State Law in Israel treats the Christians and Muslims as if they do not exist, and this has led some Christians to suggest that it is time to emigrate. But Bishop Munib says emphatically 'No!' While governments may change, history does not, and Palestine is where Jesus lived and where he remains – as does the witness of the Church.

'I maintain my faith even under occupation,' said the Bishop, 'because it was in Jerusalem that hope was raised from the dead. Not in Washington, not in Berlin, not in London or in Paris. Yes, it was in Jerusalem that God overcame all evils by raising Jesus from the dead ... and he will continue to do so ... and I will continue to hold on to this hope, whatever the price and for as long as I have breath.'

With Christ, he concluded, the Church can turn hatred to love, animosity to friendliness, oppression to justice, racism to seeing the image of God in the other – even the enemy – extremism to robust moderation and depression to hope. This is what it means to be the prophetic Church. If Christ is living in us we will be willing to pay the price.

A REFLECTIVE EVENING

After supper on both Saturday and Sunday the conference split into two groups. The first went into the cathedral on a pilgrimage led by Canon David Kennedy. It was a very moving experience and as night fell there was a very special atmosphere as we were reminded of St Cuthbert's 'pilgrimage' and we said our final prayers at his shrine. Here you can see Sunday's group at the high altar!



CHRIST IS FOUND IN THE SAINTS OF NORTHUMBRIA

On Saturday and Sunday evenings Dr John Arnold, our Anglican President, spoke passionately about the men and women of faith who have lived and worked in the North-East of England. This is the briefest of summaries. You can read his full text on the website but if you have no internet connection contact the Editor who will send you a paper copy.

Dr Arnold began by telling us that, although the north-East of England is today one of the most secularised places in Europe, people here still hold their saints in great affection. He began with **Bede**, who was born at Monkwearmouth near Sunderland in 672 AD, dedicated at the age of six to the monastery there and to 'the love of learning and the desire for God'. He never travelled further than Jarrow, 12 miles away but, with access to a good library and good teachers, became one of the greatest scholars in Europe. His *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* reveals him as a real historian and a wonderful raconteur, and is the source of much of our knowledge of early Christianity in England.

Cuthbert was born about 638 AD of noble birth, a strong, vigorous and attractive young man. Learning habits of solitude as a shepherd, he was thoroughly at home with his environment. Dr Arnold reminded us of the story of sea otters warming Cuthbert's feet on the shore, showing how 'men and women who are at peace with God and themselves are capable of living in harmony with God's other creatures and with the creation itself.' Aged about thirty Cuthbert became Prior of Lindisfarne where, as well as looking after the spiritual and bodily health of the other monks, he made journeys into the villages to preach the gospel. His endurance and exceptional physical strength helped to commend the good news of Jesus Christ to the Germanic country folk, who admired Odin and Thor and who could only be led by stages to appreciate the virtues of meekness and gentleness. Though a monk by inclination he was persuaded to leave his island retreat and minister as Bishop of Lindisfarne to a Church which was distracted and in need of saintly leadership. But just two years later he died, on 20th March 687, and his tomb became a place of pilgrimage. However, in the ninth century, marauding Danes made Lindisfarne unsafe and so the monks took his coffin on a two hundred year pilgrimage until they came across the wooded peninsular in a bend in the River Wear which was to be the last resting place of the saint's body. It is ironic, smiled Dr Arnold, that the love of the Northumbrians for this modest man, and their faith in Jesus Christ, led to the building of a small Anglo-Saxon cathedral and then of the wonderful Norman Durham Cathedral, and the erection of a great castle, symbols of Church and State side by side. The tension between rendering to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's, without us really knowing which is which or what to do when they overlap, has beset the Church for centuries. 'Luther had a good go at this with his theory of the Two Kingdoms,' Dr Arnold commented.

Wilfrid aimed to establish a Church in England strictly on the Roman model, with its own power and possessions, its own dignity, laws and administration, over against those of the King. Dr Arnold commented: 'He is the chief representative among the northern saints of the tendency which

was to prevail in Western Europe until the Reformation, namely the development of a supra-national Roman church as the successor to the Roman Empire.' **Willibrord** converted the Friesians and by missionary expansion the Church actually made Europe, Dr Arnold suggested, but it almost unmade itself as a Church by its entanglement in the worldliness of the world it had made! When Anglo-Saxons like Wilfrid visited Rome, they were dazzled and overawed. 'They wanted to be part of the splendour that was Rome, but more than that they wanted to be part of a universal society, to belong to something bigger, more sophisticated than the intensely local, tribal, Celtic and Anglo-Saxon churches, for all that they were so brave, lyrical and winsome,' he said.

King Oswald, the Godly Prince *par excellence*, and Alfred, Aethelflaeda, Athelstan and Edgar who followed, made the English into a nation under God. **Aidan** was a powerful missionary who could only speak the Celtic language, so Oswald translated for him, a young king doing the work of a deacon, not standing on his dignity but simply ensuring that his people heard the Gospel in their own tongue from the lips of their own king. Then came **Chad** and his brother **Cedd**. 'It is hardly surprising that most of the saints were men,' Dr Arnold commented. 'After all, it was a warrior society, characterised by constant, internecine warfare between petty kingdoms, vying for supremacy.' But women of royal or noble birth, and widows of whom there were many, could enjoy freedoms in Anglo-Saxon society, and could exercise leadership like the Abbess **Hild** at Whitby.

Bede says of Hild: 'All who knew her called her mother, because of her outstanding devotion and grace.' Under her, Whitby produced five bishops, including two saints; and everyone, kings, bishops and the common people, came to her for advice. Small wonder, then, that King Oswiu of Northumbria chose Whitby to host a Synod to settle the disputes about the date of Easter and the future shape of the Church in England. Under her guidance the Roman date and customs were adopted and a single *Ecclesia Anglicana*, which in turn enabled the eventual establishment of a single Kingdom of England. Hild is also famed for her discovery and patronage of the talent of **Caedmon** (657 – 684), a simple lay brother at Whitby and the author of the oldest piece of connected poetry not only in English but in any Germanic language. Caedmon was never formally canonised but was widely regarded as a saint. That seems to me enough to include him in this survey. Indeed, from the earliest times, before the Roman system developed, saints were simply people whom the local church delighted to honour, a good tradition which has been re-adopted by the Church of England in our day.

But Northumbria did not only produce saints up until the seventh century. Dr Arnold reminded us how one of his

predecessors as Dean of Durham, Dean Alington, was to write his great hymn for saints' days, "God whose city's sure foundation/ Stands upon his holy hill" which, he said, 'purports to be about Zion but is in fact about Durham!' One verse goes: 'Some there were like lamps of learning/ shining in a faithless night, /some on fire with love and burning/with a flaming zeal for right, / some by simple goodness turning/ souls from darkness into light.'

Godric, who was never formally canonised, came from East Anglia to live as a hermit at Finchale, a few miles north of Durham, a sign of how successful unification of Anglo-Saxon England had been, and of the spiritual magnetism of Northumbria. He is remembered for his simple goodness and humble sanctity. 'As for "lamps of learning", we are spoiled for choice,' Dr Arnold declared. Two particularly attractive figures from the sixteenth century are Archdeacon **Bernard Gilpin** (known as 'the Apostle of the North') and Dean **William Whittingham**, the leader of the Marian exiles in Geneva and the chief translator of the Geneva Bible. They were followed by a stream of learned bishops, unparalleled in any other see: among them in the eighteenth century **Joseph Butler**, whose epitaph may be seen in the Cathedral Quire; the New Testament scholars **Westcott** and **Lightfoot** in the nineteenth century; and **Michael Ramsey**, the priest-scientist **John Hapgood**, and **David Jenkins** in the twentieth. Westcott and Jenkins were characterised by 'a flaming zeal for right' on behalf of the Durham miners. They were following in the footsteps of **Granville Sharp**, a leader of the abolitionist movement before Wilberforce and Clarkson.

'Now, if I were to write a romantic novel with a heroine who was beautiful, strong, courageous, modest and virtuous, who died young and was called **Grace Darling**, you might think I wanted to be published by Mills and Boon,' smiled Dr Arnold. 'But she really existed and I cite her as an example of everyday, feminine and Northumbrian piety. Born in 1815, the daughter of a lighthouse keeper, she came to fame for her heroic contribution to the saving of passengers from the wreck of the *Forfarshire* in 1838.'

Durham Cathedral has a policy of refusing to house monuments with two notable exceptions: the Chapel of the **Durham Light Infantry** and the **Miners' Memorial**. 'In almost every church in County Durham there will be two memorials; one to those who fell in the wars, the other to "the men and boys of this village, who died in the pit," Dr Arnold told us. 'Every year I used to conduct the annual service for the **Mothers' Union**. From the Nave pulpit I looked out over a sea of white hair and had to hold back my tears as I reckoned how much toil and sorrow, how much faith and hope and love was gathered there.' Once, a visitor to the Soviet Union said to a young Russian bishop, "I see that your churches are full of old women. What will happen when they are gone?" The bishop smiled through his beard and said, "There will be more old women." Dr Arnold smiled. 'After the captains and the kings, the saints and scholars, the champions and the evangelists have departed, of such are the saints of Northumbria, in a sense closer to the use of the word in the New Testament than perhaps it became in the course of ecclesiastical history.'

BROKEN GLASS OF HOPE GROWN OUT OF RUBBLE



*Inger Jonasson holding an angel of peace made from scrap glass
Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC*

When an Israeli tank slammed into a gift shop in the Art and Culture Centre in Bethlehem back in 2002 it left in its wake thousands of pieces of broken glass. Someone had the bright idea of making little angels of peace out of the glass, and the idea took hold.

Today glass angels of peace are being made out of used bottles by a small business enterprise employing around 50 people in the Bethlehem area. Since the incident with the tank thousands of angels have been produced and sold worldwide.

Inger Jonasson, a Swedish missionary and art teacher, worked at the Art and Culture Centre from 2004 - 2012, and she explained the theological reasoning behind the angel project:

'Broken glass can be seen as a sign of the brokenness in our world, which is also a reason why God became a human being. Through incarnation, God brought the divine and the human together. He embraced what seemed worthless and hopeless and transformed it to something beautiful and complete. This incarnation, which took place in Bethlehem more than 2000 years ago, is what gives us strength to seek people with broken lives and lost hope.'



The Rev Dr Mitri Raheb

Inger Jonasson works as a teacher one month each year at the Dar al Kalima University College of Arts and Culture in Bethlehem, founded by the Rev Dr Mitri Raheb, Pastor of the Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem. 'He has always been a driving force for art and culture and he has launched numerous programmes. Art and culture are crucial for building a democracy, especially in times of hopelessness,' she says.



CHRIST IS ALIVE! WE FIND HIM IN LITURGY

Our first session on the Sunday morning was led by the Rev Dr Hannah Cleugh, Senior Chaplain to the Bishop of Ely. Her presentation can be found in full on the website but is summarised here.

Supper at Emmaus

Dr Cleugh suggested that the first liturgical encounter with the risen Christ might have been on the evening of the first Easter Day when two disciples had supper with him at Emmaus. She invited us to read Luke 24.13-35.

Everything in this passage is specific, she suggested, the day, the time and the place are spelt out. Whenever we encounter Christ it is just as specific – it takes our ordinary everyday and makes it extraordinary. Of course, it can be hard to recognise Christ when he meets us. Cleopas and his companion didn't. For some reason they cannot recognise the person with whom they are so familiar. As they walk they are telling a story, they are trying to understand it, and Jesus enters into the story with them.

'There's something about our liturgical encounters that's an engagement with the story,' Dr Cleugh said. 'We place ourselves in that story.' It is significant that these disciples invite Jesus in. "Stay with us!" they say, and those words along with "remain with us" and "abide with us" are so important in John's Gospel. 'Christ stands at the door and knocks,' she said. 'He doesn't force himself to go to supper with the disciples; they don't have to invite him in. But they do, and Jesus goes in to stay with them. They go to the table and he takes bread, blesses, breaks it and gives it to them.'

She showed us Titian's picture called "Supper at Emmaus" which particularly references Last Supper paintings. We've got disciples here. There is a dog under the table referencing Jesus' conversation with the Syro-Phoenician woman. It is a deliberate echo.

At Emmaus Jesus takes bread, blesses, breaks it, and gives it to them. That is what liturgical scholar Gregory Dix called "the four-fold action of the liturgy". It is what Jesus did at the feeding of the 5000 in John; it is what he did at the Last Supper; it is what he does here. 'Liturgical language – that's what the disciples heard', Dr Cleugh told us. 'It deliberately references back to the promises Jesus had made when he shared bread with them before.'



The disciples recognise him. Their encounter is transformative; all the pieces fall into place; they recognise Christ who is just beyond their grasp; suddenly other things – the conversations they've had – make sense in ways they had not previously understood. This transformative encounter with the risen Christ in bread and in word sends the disciples back to Jerusalem as changed people; they are Christ's witnesses.

At that point Dr Cleugh invited us to reflect in small groups on when we have encountered Christ in the liturgy, being specific about date, time and place. 'What did it feel like?' she asked. 'What changed for you?' She then asked us to reflect on the other side of the coin - what has made it difficult for us to encounter Christ in liturgy?

People set about the task enthusiastically and there was a lively feedback session which you can find reported on the website.

'The Liturgy': What is it?

Liturgy, as you'll all know, is the work of the people,' Dr Cleugh told us. 'It is something that, as God's people gathered as Christ's body in a particular place, we do together. But how can we participate in "liturgy" if it is something that is being done **to** us, of which we are simply passive observers?'

"The Liturgy" to many people means the Eucharist, the Lord's Supper. But she wanted us to think about liturgy and worship as set forms and actions that work together; words and actions that inform one another, which are set for particular times of day or for particular times in the Church's year. 'They are words and drama, music and action, liturgical silence as well, to tell particular stories and to enable fresh encounter,' she said.

When we talk about liturgy we often talk about particular books, particular set forms and particular agreed sorts of worship as if they belong to us. But Liturgy is something that belongs to the Church, in different times and places and across the centuries.

Dr Cleugh quoted Trevor Huddleston who, in his book "Naught for your Comfort", movingly described the liturgy of Maundy Thursday when the celebrant washes the feet of the faithful and the centuries are swept away and you are gathered with the disciples in the Upper Room on the first Maundy Thursday. Liturgy enters every time and place and sweeps away the centuries and takes us out of now and into eternity.

When we think about liturgical worship, she continued, we sometimes think of it as very formal with ceremonial, but liturgy can be very simple, like a service to mark the beginning of the new school year, for example. 'Liturgy is a set form that belongs to a particu-

lar time or place or occasion that transforms it and enables a different sort of encounter. It doesn't need to be complicated,' she said.

The Liturgy: then and now and when

Whilst not having time to do an historical survey of liturgies, Dr Cleugh reminded us that there is evidence of set prayers in the New Testament and in the first century *Didache*. 'Early liturgical documents tell us that there are set prayers to be used in set ways, and they are always used to tell a story and to enable an encounter.' In the Early Middle Ages monks' libraries were filled with books giving the antiphons, anthems and responses for every day of the Church's year. They tell a story; they mark our time. In the Middle Ages the presence of Christ in the liturgy was primarily understood as being sacramental, in the Eucharist. Liturgical drama was important in the Medieval West. 'In England,' she told us, 'on Maundy Thursday evening two hosts would be pre-sanctified for the next day. One would be used at the Good Friday liturgy, but the second consecrated host would be buried in the Easter Sepulchre. The presence of Christ, which was mainly understood to be in the sacrament, had been buried and Christ was liturgically dead, to be resurrected again during the Liturgy of Easter Day.'

At the Reformation there was great debate about how the Church should conduct its worship. What language should be used; can anything not found in scripture be admissible? In the Church of England Cranmer's Book of Common Prayer forms what we today call "Anglicans". Eamon Duffy in *The Stripping of the Altars* writes: 'Cranmer's sombrely magnificent prose read week by week entered and possessed [people's] minds and became the fabric of their prayer, the utterance of their most vulnerable and solemn moments. And more astringent, strident words entered their minds and hearts too; the Book of Homilies and a thousand 'no Popery' sermons, a relentless torrent carrying away the landmarks of a thousand years.'" Duffy shows how liturgy in the reformation Church of England was much more word-based,

had very little ritual, and how that the power of those words was protestantising England.

Dr Cleugh drew our attention to a curiosity about Liturgy: in Early Modern England nobody uses the word! 'I don't think it appears again in English until the 17th century, to the 1620s at least,' she said. People talked about "Orders" and "Uses". However, when the Book of Common Prayer was abolished after the Civil War what replaces it is not an "Order" at all; it is a set of instructions about how worship should be done. 'It tells you that the minister will say words "like this" but not these words; he will do something "like this" but not that he will do this!' she said. But the depth of the shaping of the English Church by the Prayer Book Liturgy was such that when the instructions said "say words like this" the minister, in many cases, simply recited the words from the Book of Common Prayer, so deeply had it shaped the culture and practice of English Protestantism!

Anglicans need to remember that the Prayer Book, in the context of the proliferation of church 'orders' and practices across Protestantism, is not something particularly unique or special; it is one solution among many to the question of how scriptural, Protestant, pure worship might be done.

We are shaped by our liturgies, and they give us what Rose Macauley, a 20th century novelist, refers to as "spiritual capital". For people who grew up in the Church and then left it, liturgies provide a way back in.

Liturgy as a way (back) in to encounter with Christ

But this presents a challenge to the modern Churches. The more varied liturgy becomes the less it is able to inhabit us and for us to inhabit it. When people want to introduce new liturgies, or change old ones, they must ask two fundamental questions: How do we do it? And how do we make things both familiar and fresh?

'Liturgy is part of the Church's mission,' Dr Cleugh impressed upon us. 'It is the way we tell our story.' She referred to the tremendous growth in cathedral attendance in England (18% between 2005 and 2015). 'There is something about entering a special physical space, a liturgical space out of our ordinary time, and hearing words and music, seeing drama, seeing ritual which speaks into something culturally that we need,' she said. 'People want something solid and rooted, something that we don't have to invent every time, that is bigger than ourselves and that gives us a story to enter into.'

She showed us another painting of the Emmaus scene, Diego Velázquez' "Kitchen Maid with the Supper at Emmaus" painted in 1617/18.



The kitchen maid is working away, but look at what is happening behind her. It reminds Dr Cleugh that a liturgical encounter with the risen Christ can all be going on and we are oblivious to it. But even then it can transform our everyday. 'The way the light falls on her [the maid's] face leads me to think that the light of the risen Christ, made known in bread as he sits with his friends, is spilling over onto her cheek. The kitchen maid is illuminated with the light of the risen Christ. She is made different, her everyday made holy.'

'As we prepare to meet Christ in Word and Sacrament...'

Dr Cleugh helped us to prepare for the Sung Eucharist in Durham Cathedral. Where shall we find Christ? Well, first there is *The Greeting* - The Lord be with you. It is not just holy 'good morning' it is saying *the Lord* be with you. We see the image of Christ in one another and we trust that he is present in our gathering.

Continued on next page

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Next we acknowledge the ways in which we've separated ourselves, have failed to notice the risen Christ in our midst, and in one another. In our *Prayers of Penitence* we encounter Christ, both as King and Healer and we are drawn back to the Christ we have not noticed, and we know that we *are forgiven*. Then we meet Christ in the *Liturgy of the Word*. 'Were not our hearts burning within us as he talked to us on the road?' says the disciple at the Emmaus supper. We tell the story together of what God in Christ has done, and of what Christ has done and is doing in our world today, and we bring the needs of the world to him. Then we share *The Peace* – 'And the risen Christ came and stood among his disciples and said, "Peace be with you!", and they were glad when they saw it was the Lord.' Next comes the *Liturgy of the Sacrament*, and we meet him in

bread and wine, as did those disciples at Emmaus. But then we're *Sent out* to tell what has happened in the breaking of the bread. In one version of the Post-Communion Prayer we say, 'We who share Christ's body live his risen life; we who drink his cup bring life to others; and we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.' The light of Christ sharing supper with his friends spills over into our everyday world.

Conclusion and a Question

So where do we find the risen Christ in our liturgy? In the new light in the darkness at Easter; in the new life in the water of baptism; in words of hope and consolation at the graveside; in the bread and wine as at the supper table at Emmaus on the first Easter day. But it's not straightforward. 'The challenge is to find liturgy that helps people to encounter Christ, that invites Christ into where we are, that speaks both of

the here and now and of the eternal, that is "apt" for its context, and is accessible without being patronising,' Dr Cleugh suggested. 'I don't know if you have come across the work of Sharon Moughtin-Mumby in Southwark Diocese of the Church of England, and her "Diddy Disciples" and the idea that even with very small children we can invite them into liturgical formation, and a profound encounter – and we don't need to baby them.'

Dr Cleugh ended with a challenging question: "How do we make fresh what is thought to be familiar, so familiar that it doesn't need to be thought about?" (Rowan Williams, *The Lion's World. A Journey into the heart of Narnia* SPCK 2012, p. 19).

How do we keep encountering, and helping others to encounter, the risen Christ alive in our liturgy as well as in the rest of our lives?

CHRIST IS ALIVE! WE FIND HIM IN BREAD

After morning coffee we went across to the cathedral for the Sung Eucharist.

The visiting choir sang beautifully, and the Rt Rev Irja Askola, former Bishop of Helsinki, who was attending our conference, was invited by the Dean to preach.

The Gospel reading was John 6.56-69 and she took as her text Jesus' words, 'I am the living bread.'

The full text of her sermon can be found on the website.



'What does it mean when Jesus says, "I am the living bread"?' Bishop Irja asked. Jesus doesn't preach using complicated concepts or moral statements. He says very simply that he is the bread!

Everyone knows what bread is. We use bread daily – it's in the kitchen, in our lunch boxes, on the dinner table. We can taste it, touch it – and we are nourished by it. Jesus makes himself present in our living rooms, cafeterias and market places. Jesus is not just for Sundays, but for every day of the week, just as bread is part of every single day.

Jesus is bread for everyone, not just for us. He's for people we don't even know. He's for people we dislike. 'I hear Jesus whispering to me, "I trust you to make this bread available to everyone, not just your own friends. Let my language, concrete and simple, be translated into your own culture",' Bishop Irja said.

As we eat our daily bread we may be surprised by the invisible friend. The taste of the heavenly bread is full of

promises: **forgiveness** for all that is in the past; **joy** because we are now and always in God's hand, and we have so much to celebrate; **hope**, because we are created by God's will and are always part of God's good plan and so have a meaningful place on this planet; **community and togetherness**, because no member of the church should ever feel left alone.

Whatever our ethnicity, whatever borders may separate us, God's most beautiful words are, "You are welcome." So, Bishop Irja continued, we who have this bread must make the move from hostility to hospitality. 'God is a God of welcome. So how then can we be anything other than a people of welcome?' she asked.

Can we keep this divine bread for ourselves? Shall we hide it in our parish halls? Are we to keep it only for Sundays, even when women, men and children are hungry from Monday to Saturday? No, she said. 'The bread we share must be fresh. The Church cannot keep it in the deep freeze! It is

to be shared in every hour, every day. We are to share its promise of forgiveness, joy, hope and freedom from prejudice and hate.'

A selfish and unwelcoming Church is a sleeping Church, she continued. The Church must talk in ordinary language that people understand, as Jesus did. We are to share the Living Bread on Sunday as we celebrate together, and then from Monday to Saturday in our different contexts. 'We are invited to share the richness of the gospel with those who are dear to us, and even more with those whom we dislike or are afraid of, whether they are near or far away. This bread is to be shared, not to be kept for ourselves.'

'Today we will share the divine bread at the Lord's Table,' Bishop Irja concluded. 'There we are nourished, forgiven, blessed. This Eucharist Bread empowers and encourages us to then share the ordinary bread as well as the promises of the Living Bread every day.'



CHRIST IS ALIVE! WE FIND HIM IN NEWCASTLE

Following the Sung Eucharist in the cathedral we enjoyed a buffet lunch in the Prior's Hall, a very gracious building, and then went to find our double decker bus to make the journey to Newcastle. It was raining hard, and when we got to the meeting place the bus was nowhere to be found. But, just as we were beginning to wonder if we would ever get to Newcastle, the bus appeared and there was a rush to try to find seats on top! The view was largely obscured by the mist and rain, but there was great excitement at seeing the Angel of the North. We lost our way in the city but thanks to some directions from local people we arrived safely at St Ann's Church, Battlefield, just 15 minutes late.

A word of welcome and an introduction to the churches

We were welcomed by the Curate, Fr Anthony O'Grady (left), who told us a little about the Church in which we were meeting. It is celebrating its 250th anniversary and worship takes place there every day.



He introduced Fr Colin Carr from St Dominic's Roman Catholic Church, and Pastor Thomas Jantzen (right), from the Martin Luther Kirche German congregation. Fr Colin told us about the cooperation between the congregations in Churches Together in Shieldfield and Battlefield (CTSB). Pastor Thomas then welcomed us himself and promised we would learn more about the German Church in Newcastle later in our visit.



Dick Lewis then introduced representatives from two local organisations; Lindsey Cross from The West End Refugee Service (WERS) and Liz Archibald and Veronica Whitty from the Justice and Peace Coordinating Council of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.



Veronica Whitty, Lindsey Cross and Liz Archibald

West End Refugee Service (WERS)

Lindsey Cross told us how she met her first asylum seeker in 1988 and quickly realised that people coming to Newcastle were receiving very little by way of a welcome. With the support of her congregation in the United Reformed Church, and the cooperation of the then Bishop of Newcastle, Martin Wharton, WERS gradually came into being. Today they have more than 1000 people on the books from 60 different countries, but the big five are Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Eritrea and Sudan.

The clients fall into three groups, she explained. The first are asylum seekers waiting to hear if their application to stay has been approved; the second are those whose applications have been successful; the third are those whose applications have been refused. 'This third group will have lost the small amount of money they had been receiving and will have been turned out of their accommodation,' Lindsay told us. 'I think it is one of the greatest faults in our country that people are put out onto the streets.'

Lindsey then showed a short animated film which clearly describes the asylum process. You can find the film on the WERS website at <http://www.wers.org.uk/videos>. It is the first one. Her audience found it both powerful and informative.

WERS aims to make people feel welcome and safe, to give them time and to listen carefully to them. 'The ultimate aim of the Service is to empower these people,' we were told. People generally arrive alone, or with at the most just one or two family members. 'The press in this country often portrays asylum seekers as people in search of a better life,' Lindsey said, 'But when you sit in a shabby flat, listening to someone's story, you realise that these people have had to make the hardest decision they will ever make, to leave the country they love, their family and their friends, and to undertake a very perilous journey into the unknown.'

Continued from previous page

WERS cannot usually change a person's situation. 'We can't give them a house, we can't change the decision if they've been refused asylum,' Lindsey told us, 'but it's all about having someone to go on the journey with them. When any of us is going through a rough patch the worst thing is to feel that we're going through it on our own.'

WERS spends a great deal of time raising awareness of the plight of the asylum seekers, visiting schools and university groups. 'The aim is to stop people lumping asylum seekers, refugees and economic migrants into one amorphous mass, and to see them as individual human beings with their own individual lives,' she said.

Lindsey concluded by reminding us that WERS is not a Church organisation. But churches have given amazing support over the years with money, prayers and encouragement. 'It would be impossible for us to be where we are today without the churches,' she said.

Hexham and Newcastle Diocesan Justice and Peace Coordinating Council ('the Council')

Liz Archibald and Veronica Whitty had come to tell us a little about the Council's work. Liz began with a confession. 'As a Christian,' she said, 'Justice and Peace is what has always driven me.' She quoted the prophet Micah 6.8. 'Every person has equal value and dignity,' she said, 'and so we all have a responsibility to care for one another and work for a fair society.'

Since it was set up in the 1970s the Council has NOT tried to tell people how to work for Justice and Peace, we were told. Different groups across the diocese respond to the different needs of their area. What the Council DOES is to coordinate support, and put groups in touch with the kinds of resources that might be of use to them.

Hexham and Newcastle Diocese is very diverse, with extremes of poverty and wealth. So the Council runs study days, holds an annual Mass in the cathedral to raise the profile of Justice and Peace and produces a quarterly newsletter, distributed by email to reduce costs, which also appears on the diocesan website. It also publicises things being organised by the national Justice and Peace Network, which holds a conference in Derbyshire every summer, something that is the high spot of many people's year.

Alongside WERS the Council has two projects supporting migrants and refugees, one in Newcastle and another in Stockton-on-Tees. Liz endorsed everything that Lindsey had said about raising awareness and countering prejudice. Both of the Council's projects offer a drop-in centre, provide English classes, clothes, food, information and advice, and give a cash payment of £10 per week to those whose asylum applications have been refused.

Veronica then spoke of the importance of little things. In their diocesan office, for example, they now use bio-degradable coffee cups and are reviewing their use of paper – can they cut down? If milk is delivered in bottles the bottles can be recycled, whereas milk cartons cannot. Exploring ideas like these is ongoing.

One Council project focuses on the relationships between Christian and Muslim women. 'The bridge here is the Virgin Mary,' Veronica told us. 'There is more about Mary in the Koran than we have in the New Testament.' Meetings are arranged, sometimes just one-to-one, where women pray for peace together and learn so much from each other. Each year Christian and Muslim women, and women of no religion, are invited to meet in a ruined church where there are no images, and they each pray their own prayers. Afterwards they have tea and cakes.



Some of the Christian and Muslim women at Jesmond

Using Citizens UK as a model, Tyne and Wear Citizens was established by the Roman Catholic and Anglican Diocese, the Quakers, the Islamic Diversity Centre and many others, and at the moment, Veronica told us, they are working on issues surrounding mental health, Islamophobia, the living wage and Child Poverty.

Refreshments and a wet walk

After a time of lively discussion and questioning we had to stop and pray. Then, after enjoying the refreshments supplied by St Ann's Church, we set off on the short walk in the rain to the Martin Luther Kirche for our time of worship together. Our visit to St Ann's had been a real delight.



WELCOME TO THE MARTIN LUTHER KIRCHE

Dr Anthony Hellen, a member of our Society and Trustee of the German-Speaking Church in Newcastle, welcomed us on our arrival for Evening Worship.

A German Congregation first met in Newcastle in 1861, Tony told us, and was formally established in 1881. 'Most early members were pork butchers from Swabia, to be followed by shopkeepers and industrial workers - immigrants who wanted to worship in their mother tongue,' he told us. They met in a terrace house at 43, Lovaine Place, purchased in 1906,

After the First World War, during which many of the men were interned, Lovaine Place did not re-open until 1930. Then the Second World War came along and the congregation was only re-formed with a new pastor in 1952. But since then things have gone well. Bishop Hanns Lilje of Hannover, President of the World Lutheran Council at the time, presided at the 75th anniversary celebrations in 1955, and in 1965 the present Martin Luther Kirche was built.

The British Army of the Rhine became a significant recruiting agency for church members. German women who had married British servicemen found a second home in this German-

speaking congregation. But today, Tony told us, they are far from being a purely German congregation. 'We are remarkable for our ethnic diversity; Germans, Austrians, Swiss, Poles, Hungarians and even South Africans are regular members, while some English-speakers, usually men, join through marriage.'

Events like the annual Christmas Fair, the work of the German Seamen's Mission at South Shields, and cultural events, particularly music-focused, raise the congregation's profile in the city, and Danish, Norwegian and Swedish congregations hold regular services in the building.

'Change, however, has become the norm everywhere,' Tony said, 'and the church leadership in Hannover is restructuring and reducing the number of



clergy. Newcastle is now linked with the Edinburgh congregation and run from Scotland. Our joint pastors, Thomas and Verena Jantzen, now commute from the Edinburgh base to their congregations in Glasgow, Aberdeen and Newcastle, with less regular services held in Inverness and Tees-side. While no-one knows what will be the final outcome of so-called *Brexit* next year, we are used to change, even uncertainty, and will survive, just as we did during two long periods of enforced closure and the wartime internment of German nationals.'

CHRIST IS ALIVE! WE FIND HIM IN DEEDS OF LOVE

The Martin Luther Kirche was packed for our Evening Worship. Pastor Thomas Jantzen's sermon is summarised here by our Editor.



Pastor Thomas preaching to an attentive congregation packed into the church

Pastor Thomas began by telling us that the Bible verse for this week, "Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of my brothers and sisters you did it to me," shows that there are no limits to doing good. 'Love is universal,' he said, 'and it doesn't matter to whom you are doing the good deed, and it doesn't matter who is doing the good deed to you. It is the good deeds that matter.'

'It might sound strange for a Lutheran theologian to emphasise good deeds,' he continued. 'But you cannot separate faith and good deeds, because our faith itself is focused on a deed - it is Jesus's deed on the cross which we have to believe and trust, and which sets us free to do deeds of love.'

You cannot separate love from loving deeds or help from acts of kindness. So it is unthinkable that God would say, "I love you," but not do it! Christ's whole existence is about being there for other people. 'It doesn't start with us, it doesn't depend on us; love has already been done to us, and that love sets us free to do good things because God first did good things for us,' he declared.

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So to the question, "Christ is alive in Newcastle! Really? Where?" we would answer that it is every individual deed of love, independent of size or reputation, that shows us Christ is alive.

'Christians caring about refugees, someone caring for his elderly mother, a teacher who ties a pupil's shoelaces, a person who gives a stranger a smile – all these things show us that Christ is alive,' Pastor Thomas said. 'The snag is we don't see all the little deeds, or we overlook them. How alive Christ would seem if all deeds of love were as visible as the sunlight itself. That would be an overwhelming statement of love against all the bad news that surrounds us.'

The German Church enables people who are citizens of Newcastle to also live out their German identity. This is important, he said, because we are told that counting and praying are both things that people do in their mother-tongue, even if they have lived abroad for a long time. And Christians all have a dual identity, as citizens of this world and of the Kingdom of God.

Pastor Thomas gave a little example of love in action. 'A couple from East Germany, not very secure English speakers, were in a serious car accident on holiday in Scotland. They were taken into two different hospitals, one in Aberdeen and the other in Inverness. A police officer, who was actually German, decided to look after them, but it was

difficult because of the distance between the two cities. She contacted us and Verena went to Inverness to ensure that the man had everything that he needed. Later a German-speaking nurse was found in Inverness who took over. This was nothing special – just talking, bringing some German books and asking if he needed anything. All this happened because of this woman Police Officer and the fact that she cared about these stranded Germans who were in such a vulnerable situation.'

'It is something of a luxury to have someone available who speaks your language when you are living abroad,' Pastor Thomas smiled. 'But there is another language which helps here, a language that everybody can speak, and speaks every time they care about somebody else. This is the language of love, which is universal, independent of heritage, religious belief, age or sexual orientation.'

Love is something we share whatever our background or religious affiliation, he concluded. 'This has become my ecumenical approach, celebrating not that we are on the way to unity but the unity we already have. We learn from each other, of course, from each other's differences, but we celebrate what already connects us, the living and eternal love of God which is poured into our hearts by Christ our Lord. So what I wish for us as churches in Newcastle, and you as the Anglican-Lutheran Society, is that we celebrate what connects us and share the love that is already given to us.'

When the service in the Martin Luther Kirke had ended it was back onto the bus, past the 'Angel of the North' to Durham and supper in St Chad's after which those who heard John Arnold on the Saints of Northumbria last night went to the cathedral for their evening pilgrimage with Canon David Kennedy whilst the others enjoyed John's lively account of the saints of yesterday and today and ended their day with Compline – and then a visit to the bar or to bed!

NEXT YEAR'S ANNUAL MEETING

Your committee has been busy making preparations for the next Annual General Meeting. It will be held on

Saturday 23rd March 2019

**St George's Roman Catholic Cathedral
Westminster Bridge Rd, South Bank,
London SE1 7HY**

from 10am until 4pm

The theme will be

**LIVING IN DIVERSITY:
Anglican, Lutheran and Roman Catholic
Spirituality and Experience**

There will be speakers from the three traditions
Lunch and other refreshment will be provided
Closing worship will be a Taizé service

Fuller details in the next issue of The Window

DO YOU KNOW A 'PASTAFARIAN'?

Our American Coordinator, Tom VanPoole, writes: My wife Mimi and were impressed that on the outskirts of many German towns you find standard, colour-coded, highway signs announcing the times of church services at each place of worship in the town (see top of sign).

Then I learned, much to my amusement, that these *Gottesdienstschilder* are not limited to Christian churches. Here is a real sign announcing the "Nudelmesse" of what we might call "pastafarians", the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster. Do devotees wear ritual colanders on their heads, I wonder! Enjoy the giggle!



CHRIST IS ALIVE! WE FIND HIM IN THE CRUMBS

Monday, our last full day at the conference in Durham, started at 7.30am with Morning Worship in the college chapel. Then, after breakfast, Bishop Munib Younan led a Bible Study.

Bishop Munib invited us to read Matthew 15.21-28, the encounter of Jesus with the Canaanite woman. He then recalled an incident in the Augusta Victoria Hospital on the Mount of Olives where he was praying with an elderly Christian patient. As he blessed her, a woman sitting next to her asked, "Please, pray for my sick granddaughter." But her daughter, the mother of the sick girl, said "No! He is a Christian! Don't ask him for that." This family was Muslim. But the grandmother replied, "But God hears his prayers! Why shouldn't he pray?" 'I did just that,' Bishop Munib told us, 'and after I prayed, the Muslim grandmother seemed pleased and at peace. But the sick girl's mother continued to protest. "Why?" she said, "should a Christian priest pray for my daughter?"' That grandmother was treading in the footsteps of the Canaanite woman, Bishop said.

The Canaanite woman is desperate for healing for her daughter. She calls out to Jesus. At first, he ignores her. To the disciples she is nothing more than a nuisance. What does a gentile woman want with their teacher? Why is she calling him the Son of David? This story is often repeated in our churches today. People are quick to decide who is "in" and who is "out", who belongs and who is just a nuisance. We like to see ourselves as inclusive of everyone, Bishop Munib said. We write mission statements and form outreach teams. 'We become so focused on what we think our mission to be, that we don't even see the ones actually coming to our doors in need of help, in need of embrace, in need of prayer, in need of healing, in need of Good News,' he told us.

However, everything changed when Jesus saw this mother's faith in him. He was surprised too by her boldness and audacity in asking for what she needed. And that Canaanite woman was both brave and humble! When Jesus called her "little dog" or a poodle, she could have protested: "I'm not a dog! I'm not a gentile! I'm not a foreigner! I'm a woman with a child in need of healing! I'm a believer! I'm a normal human being with normal needs! One who says such things cannot be a man of God. I don't need you!" But she did not. Jesus might call her a poodle, but her faith was unshakable. "Yes, Lord," she replied, "yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs from the master's table."

The Bishop feels that this strange encounter marks a change in Jesus' mission. St. John says: "He (Jesus) came to what was His own, and His own people did not accept Him" (John 1.11). In rejecting him you could say that the Jews let the bread fall from the table. And here is a gentile, ready to receive even a small crumb of what Jesus has to offer. 'This was a great surprise to Jesus, and to the disciples,' he said, 'and it changed both his behaviour and his ongoing mission.'

The Church today needs a theology of the crumbs, Bishop Munib told us. We must ask ourselves if we have such love

for God and such faith in Jesus that we are eager for a few crumbs. Or do we look for more before we will trust him?

A theology of the crumbs means that Christ is not contained in our churches. We meet him in people desperate for healing, for just a tiny portion of God's grace and mercy. A theology of crumbs is about mission at the margins.

Bishop Munib issued this challenge: 'Does the church dare to do it? Or do we stay in our comfort zones, not wanting to cross to Sidon and Tyre and meet Canaanites or Syro-Phoenicians or others who are different? Are we afraid of the otherness of the other because of their gender, religion, race, colour, ethnicity, tradition, culture and so on?'

The Church can be so wrapped up in itself it fails to hear the cries of people in all kinds of need: "Give us Jesus! Even a crumb will do! We don't need protocols or perfect liturgies. We only need healing. We need some Good News today." There is often greater faith on the periphery than in the pews!

Christianity is growing fastest today in China and on the African continent, places which once seemed far removed from the centre of Christianity. 'Can you imagine that one day Chinese and African missionaries will come to re-evangelise the former centre of Christianity?' the Bishop asked. 'This means that Christ is present in our world and uses different logics than ours.'

But, he wondered, is it enough to offer refugees, displaced people and migrants, and all who are in need, just crumbs of assistance rather than the whole loaf of justice? We must combat growing extremism, populism, and xenophobia. The conversation between Jesus and the Canaanite woman shows that he came for every race, every colour, every nation, for every lost person in need of salvation - in other words, for all humankind.

Bishop Munib ended by reminding us that Palestinians cry for justice, and they know from the story of Exodus that God hears the cries of the oppressed. 'This is the reason we continue, like the Canaanite woman, to ask Jesus, "Give us the crumbs of justice!" Her cry is our cry. We hope that the world leaders will hear our cry, and bring hope to a hopeless situation. I promise you, as long as there is a Living God, there is hope. Have mercy on us! Give us the crumbs of justice.'

Bishop Munib left us with these questions to discuss:

1. How is the Canaanite woman a role model for us today?
2. Who are the forgotten ones in your community today?
3. How is your church responding?
4. Does a theology of the crumbs find a place in your churches?
5. What can we learn from people on the margins of society?
6. How can we understand mission at the margins?

CHRIST IS ALIVE! WE FIND HIM IN CITIES OF SANCTUARY

A summary of the presentation by Sam Slatcher, North-East Regional Coordinator of City of Sanctuary, accompanied by Eliza Colins Hodge and Rania Al Ali, which you can find in full on the website

City of Sanctuary, a grassroots movement, was started in 2005 in the city of Sheffield by a Methodist Minister, Inderjit Bhogal, and Craig Barnett in response to a growing need at that time to support refugees fleeing war and conflict. They believed that the UK should be a welcoming place of safety for all fleeing violence and persecution.

'Today, there over 100 cities, towns or regions across the UK and Ireland that have signed up to the City of Sanctuary Network,' Sam told us. 'We need to be talking about people as seeking sanctuary, not asylum.'

Sanctuary is an ancient concept and is deeply embedded in different faith traditions, including Judaism ("God loves the stranger, and remember, you were strangers in Egypt" - Deuteronomy 10.19), Islam ("Do good - to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are near, neighbours who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer" - Quran 4.36) as well as Christianity ("I was a stranger and you welcomed me" - Matthew 25.35).

Durham, he said, is a very ancient city deeply embedded in ideas of sanctuary. Durham's most famous 'sanctuary' feature is the Sanctuary knocker on the door of the cathedral. He reminded us how the monks who were on Sanctuary Watch would ring a bell indicating that someone had arrived seeking sanctuary, who would then have 37 days to face whatever they were fleeing from, make peace with God and society, before either standing trial or being given safe passage to the harbour in Hartlepool so they could flee the country.

Sam and Eliza sang a song focusing on Durham as the place where Cuthbert's body found sanctuary and rest and where people have turned to in times of distress. You can find the song, "City of Sanctuary", at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=auCmemjDluk>

Sam then provided some statistics. Globally there are over 65 million displaced persons of whom 25.4 million are refugees, half of them under 18 years old. In the UK there has been much talk of a "Refugee Crisis", but the truth is that less than 1% of them make their way in to Britain. Most simply go to a neighbouring country to their own, and at present Pakistan, Iran, Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey are the world's top five hosts of refugees according to the UN. He told us of some of the perilous journeys and modes of transport that people are forced to take, and how many thousands perish on the way, lost in desert sands or the desolate sea.

In September 2015, one refugee arrived in the UK after a difficult journey across land and sea. His story was told in a song, "Shadow and I", sung by Sam, Eliza and Rania which is shortly to be released on an album. It ends "I may have lost it all but I've not lost my soul".

City of Sanctuary seeks to build bridges between the local people and refugees. People seeking sanctuary need proper legal representation because the UK government sub-contracts its responsibility to house people to private companies like G4S, who offer them cheap housing stock. Many seeking sanctuary are highly qualified as doctors, surgeons and academics, but they are forced to live in over-crowded housing, sometimes being forced to share a room, and they are on the lowest level of welfare support (just £37.50 a week, which is almost half the amount if you are on Job Seekers allowance). They are not permitted to work while they await the result of their request for asylum status – and that can take years, so they become very vulnerable.

City of Sanctuary enlists the help of community groups like schools, sports clubs, hospitals, charities, and faith groups, sharing with them the ideas of sanctuary so that they welcome the stranger in their midst. Durham became a City of Sanctuary in 2006, and "Stories of Sanctuary" is a project launched in June this year. Groups of 30 people – two thirds of whom are refugees – complete workshops in which they write songs about their experiences of seeking sanctuary in the North East of England.

Sam, Eliza and Rania ended the presentation by singing one of the songs, "Like a Butterfly", which Eliza and Rania had helped to write. He urged his audience to follow the project on social media and to purchase their album, to be released on 9th November (it will be on iTunes and Spotify).



Eliza, Rania and Sam singing "Like a Butterfly" which will feature on their album. They are performing all the songs in Durham Cathedral on the 19th October 2018, with Raghad Haddad, viola player from the Syrian National Symphony Orchestra, and other members of the Stories of Sanctuary project.

CHRIST IS ALIVE! WE FIND HIM IN FREEDOM

Following the morning sessions we were given freedom to choose how we spent our afternoon. First we found some lunch in the city. It was teeming with visitors due to the Bank Holiday, but everyone succeeded in getting fed. During the afternoon some people decided to relax while about 20 went to see the Meissen Collection in the Bill Bryson Library, part of the University Library, and 14 took part in a poetry workshop coordinated by Anne Boileau. People read their own choice of poem and explained what it conveyed to them about the presence of Christ. Then, after tea, it was time for our last formal session.

CHRIST IS ALIVE! WE FIND HIM IN MUSIC

Our final presentation was given by the Rev Paulina Hlawiczka, Pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Nottingham and an opera singer. It was a rich presentation, backed by science and theological reflection, and this summary can only provide a taste. You can find Paulina's full text on the website.

Energetic Introduction

Paulina began by getting her audience to stand up and do the kinds of exercises that all singers do before they can perform. Bending and stretching gets oxygen into all parts of the body. Whilst not everyone took it very seriously, everyone joined in!

What and Where is Music?

She then offered a dictionary definition: "Music is a vocal or instrumental sound (or both), combined in such a way as to produce beauty of form, harmony, and expression of emotion." Music forms the background to many people's lives, she said, bringing joy and motivation, or calming our worries and stress. 'Music is much more than an entertainment,' she told us. You find it in every known human society. Some psychologists claim that music predated language. Pythagoras used music to heal different psychological and physical illnesses, as did David when he played for King Saul. Everyone, even little children, knows the sound of music.

What does Music do for You?

Music, whether it be a simple melody or a complicated symphony, speaks directly to your heart in a language that you don't know, but one that your emotions understand. 'I did a little research,' Paulina told us, 'and the majority of people said that music gives them goose bumps, helps them relax, transports them to a different world.' Music is a meeting with something which transcends us, something from outside us, or within us, but often beyond our understanding.



'If something is not your kind of music, you get rather upset and easily get a headache. You consider it as a noise!'

Music has structure, progression and syntax, just as language does. The brain processes musical syntax using the



same area it uses to process language. 'Next time you hear someone speaking emotionally,' Paulina suggested, 'listen to the acoustic characteristics of their voice. They'll mirror music of the same emotion: fast, loud and high for excitement and happiness, slower and softer for melancholy, and so on.' This is because, at a very basic, physical level, loud and fast noises excite us more than slow and quiet ones because our brain-stem is tuned to attend to these kinds of noises in the environment. Certain chords sound pleasant while others are harder to distinguish and so we find them dissonant. But these automatic brain mechanisms are only the beginning of how we read meaning into music.

'Much of the emotional significance that we find in music comes from our own life experience,' she said. Western cultures have a very different appreciation of dissonance compared with Arabic music, or with Indian ragas. This is because of different associations or perceptions. One suggestion is that music activates a population of brain cells called mirror neurons. They help us with social understanding and empathy and, in the case of music, trigger the same emotions in us by activating the limbic system, the emotional hub of the brain. 'Humans are expert predictors,' Paulina told us, 'we are always trying to figure what's going to happen next and why. As we listen to music, our brains are continuously trying to guess what's coming up,

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based on what we've just heard and on our experience of music over our lives. Our brains try to calculate what's coming next, and to judge the accuracy of those predictions we use the brain's reward system – dopamine. A correct guess gets a little, pleasurable puff of dopamine; an incorrect guess gets nothing! Science tells us that a particularly beautiful musical moment acts on us in many ways. A chill runs across your skin – and that's the dopamine at work!

So why did humans become musical? No other animal is, so far as we know. Perhaps communication of our emotional worlds, through music, might be as important for social cohesion as communication about the physical world is through language. Was there perhaps a mixture of the two – “musilanguage” – that sounded across the savannah? Did that “musilanguage” split into two different forms of communication – one for ideas, one for emotion? We don't know! But what we do know is that our ancestors have been playing music for a long time. Recently a bone flute was found near the Danube in Germany, dating from over 40,000 years ago. Music is in our blood, our bones and our brains.

‘Some people tend to think they have no ability to learn or perform music,’ Paulina remarked. ‘But I am here to tell you that there is no such thing as someone who is “musically deaf”, otherwise such people would never like music, never use it in their lives and never enjoy attending a concert.’ Unhappily, it is often a matter of socialisation. If you are told you are unmusical you will believe it! ‘There is a beautiful saying: “Music in us is God's sparkle!”,’ she said.

Music and the Bible

There are plenty of examples of music being used in the Bible, and not only in Psalms. In 1 Samuel 16 King Saul, suffering from depression, is comforted by David. Before David became a warrior and king he was a music therapist! In the Apocrypha 7-year-old Serach Bat Asher (a wise daughter of Asher, the son of Jacob) brought Jacob out of a 22-year depression by playing/singing a melody repeatedly while he was praying. Paul tells the people of Colossae, “Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.” (Colossians 3.16) ‘Without music there was no worship. This is the essence of praising the Lord,’ Paulina remarked. ‘Unfortunately, joyful singing and dancing disappeared from the Church for some time in its history, but the Reformation recovered it.’

Music and the Reformation

Martin Luther (1483-1548) was not only a theologian and a reformer, he was also a musician and a composer. He said, “Next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world.” St Augustine said, “He who sings, prays twice!” Paulina added, ‘While you are singing you are not able to fight!’

Luther, in reforming the liturgy, gave the congregation a renewed singing role. Only trained musicians and clergy trained in music normally sang in church. But Luther and

Melanchthon and many of their contemporaries learned music and dancing. Luther's big idea was to transcribe folk melodies or bawdy songs from the taverns, harmonise them and give them new religious words. He also wrote new melodies on psalms in everyday words. He wanted everyone to have access not only to God's grace and salvation, but to music as well! This is why he called his first hymn book, published in 1529 in Wittenberg, a “parish song book”.

Oddly enough in his first liturgy, entitled *Formula Missae* (1523), Luther advocated the continued use of Latin chant, arguing it would encourage the young students to learn Latin. But for the congregations he set about translating chants from Latin into nearly 40 new German hymns. Bach developed these simple songs polyphonically. “Notes make the text come alive”, Luther said. Bach infused his chorales, masses, passions and cantatas with Lutheran teaching. Felix Mendelssohn, also a Lutheran, revived Bach's *St Matthew Passion*. His *Reformation Symphony* commemorates the 300th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession. After Schumann's death, Brahms found consolation in the Lutheran Bible, from which he adapted the text for his “A German Requiem.”

The Catholic Counter-Reformation took up Reformation ideas about music. Palestrina (1525 – 1594) left hundreds of masses, offertories, madrigals and motets. His “*Missa sine nomine*” seems to have been particularly attractive to Bach, who studied and performed it while writing the *Mass in B minor*.

What type of music is closer to God?

Do the angels in heaven play Mozart, who for some was/is a god himself? This is what the Protestant theologian Karl Barth assumed. Others favoured Bach. In heaven, they guess, choir pieces are sung, accompanied by timpani and trumpets. ‘Martin Luther would probably have had his doubts,’ commented Paulina. ‘He did not like timpani and trumpets and called them “heavenly battle cries”, a terrible “shouting to the honour of God”. He also disliked organ pipes and said that “they scream and shout!”’ Luther loved gentle instruments. He played the lute – and he had the *Revelation of St John* on his side, where the angels sing new songs accompanied by a similar kind of stringed instruments: harps (*Revelation 5.8 f.*)

Paulina confessed that she is a devotee of Thomas Mann who described music as “a manifestation of the highest energy — not at all abstract, but without an object, energy in a void, in pure ether — where else in the universe does such a thing appear? We ... use it every day without much idea of the metaphysical. But here you have it, such music is energy itself, yet not as idea, rather in its actuality. I call your attention to the fact that is almost the definition of God. *Imitatio Dei* — I am surprised music is not forbidden!” (*Doctor Faustus*, 1947)

Paul Tillich, a great theologian and academic, but also somebody who understood human doubts and darkness, says that sometimes we need to find a new language to speak

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THE CONFERENCE DINNER

Our Society's conferences always end with a dinner to which we can invite guests. This was no exception.

St Chad's did a fine job preparing the dining hall for our dinner. The tables were sparkling with candlelight and shining glasses and tableware. We were joined by the Rev Verena Jantzen, wife of Thomas who hosted us in Newcastle yesterday, by our guest presenters, and by Dr Margaret Masson, Principal of St Chad's College.



After the meal Dr Masson told us a little of the College's history and its hopes and plans for the future. At the heart of the college community is hospitality and a desire to enable young people who have often grown up with low self-esteem to achieve their full potential.

Thanks were expressed by Bishop Michael, our Anglican Moderator, to the College staff for making us so welcome and to everyone who had contributed to the organisation and delivery of the event. It seemed to have appealed to all who took part because of the unity of theme, the variety of approaches, and the challenging nature of most of the sessions. The worship in the chapel, the cathedral and the German Church had been rich and sustaining, and the Bible Studies were varied in approach, illuminating and also challenging.

Bishop Michael reminded us that the AGM will be in St George's Roman Catholic Cathedral in Southwark (London) on 23rd March 2019 (please get that date in your diary) and the next international conference in Rome in 2020.



WORDS OF APPRECIATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT FROM OUR READERS

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about the Church, God and the religion. And maybe it could be, or it is, music. Sometimes our talk about God distances us from people who have not yet experienced His Grace. Perhaps God anticipated our failing in communication and gave us music instead. For music teaches us to listen, for without listening there is no music.

How do you share It?

Music has been used therapeutically, as we have seen. Our brains are hardwired to experience music as a therapeutic agent, and it should be the mission not only of today's musicians, music therapists and psychologists, but teachers, church ministers, leaders and church members, to master the use of this healing modality.

Paulina ended with Thomas Mann's Dr Faustus: "In music there are things for which there is no real characterizing epithet in the whole realm of language, nor any combination of adjectives; you cannot find an adequate name for the mind, the posture, the gesture of this theme. Because there are a lot of gestures in it [music], something unconditional. There is God..."

It's always nice to know that people do read The Window, and that they appreciate the content. One of our members from Tanzania, Dr Josephat Rweyemamu, contacted the Editor the other day. He is working as a missionary in The Philippines at the moment, and he wrote, "Thank you a lot for sharing The Window Magazine. It is really helpful. Last May, here at Silliman University, Philippines, we organized an International Conference about 'Mission in the Time of Terror'. I was one of the plenary speakers – in fact a key note speaker."

Then quite independently, Hilda Kabia, Principal of Msalato Theological College in Dodoma, another Tanzanian member, wrote, "Thanks for sending me this newsletter and as I have gone through it I am so much encouraged and nourished Spiritually, Mentally and Minded. I thank God for all contributors and highly commend and appreciate their presentations. A huge number of important teachings and constructive thoughts can be drawn from them for the Church of God world-wide. I wish I could be there among the participants of the conference in Durham for the contributions and my reconnection with other members of the Society."

OUR FINAL EUCHARIST

After breakfast on Tuesday morning we assembled in the College Chapel for the last time for our closing Eucharist. The preacher was our Roman Catholic Observer, Fr Phillip Swingle. This is a summary of his sermon which you can find on the website.

Readings: I Kings 8; John 6

Our conference, Fr Phillip began, has contemplated the vital human question, “Where is God? Where is Christ alive? And how do we find him today?” It’s the perennial human question, of course; ‘Where is God to be found today? And what is he really like?’

We began with a concern for Christ’s presence in the processes of creation and redemption, he said. ‘So many of our divisions and separations have developed from a failure to hold creation and redemption in a dynamic living and loving tension, and our ways of being humans in a created and recreated world. For the prophet Elijah, we heard, the word was not in the earthquake, not in the big things, not in the dramatic wind, fire – but in the sound of the gentle, refreshing breeze. And it was in that that he found the message of God. He was seeking justice and righteousness and he now knew that this came only from focusing on God and then putting it into action.’

The gentle breeze of the normal world of matter infused by the Spirit of the creative and redeeming God and held together in Christ is one of the things we have been taught this week, he continued. Theillard de Chardin claimed that we can only believe in the supremacy of the divine spirit if we also believe in the reality of the matter which it informs. ‘De Chardin famously observed that Christianity is the most materialistic of all religions.’

We know that Christianity is fundamentally materialistic, yet over the centuries spiritualisation has repeatedly obscured just how physical Christianity really is. Incarnation sets God firmly within his material creation. St Helena, mother of the Emperor Constantine, took a load of soil back to Rome to spread on the floor of her private chapel so that she could pray on the ground on which she thought the feet of the Saviour had once trod. ‘You can’t get much more materialistic than that!’ Fr Phillip smiled.

Orthodox Christianity affirms that the utterly transcendent God, which he is, containing all things yet not contained, was not ashamed to get the divine hands dirty creating the material world, which meant that what was created was not dirty at all, but sacred – every bit of it, every human being. ‘I was particularly moved by an example of that yesterday when we heard the young people from different religious and non-religious backgrounds talking about how they were really concerned to welcome people as if they were welcoming Christ,’ Fr Phillip remarked. ‘The ordinary stuff of the earth, bread and wine, you and me, is sacred, as are all those who populate this earth.’

The seventeenth century Anglican metaphysical poet and cleric Thomas Traherne speaks of the image of God in all

humanity as well as the image of God in all creation, and of the way the creating Spirit of God draws us to nature in reverence and wonder.

With the privilege of sharing in the humanity of Christ, Christians come to share too in his divinity, witness in this kind of living, as Traherne says, “As the fullness of the God-head dwelleth in our Saviour, so it shall dwell in us.” When we act towards others with generosity and grace it is as though Christ were ministering to Christ, a moving picture of the essential unity between all living things.

‘So, where is Christ alive today?’ Fr Phillip asked. ‘Dr Martin Luther famously argued for Christ’s ubiquity, and that the scriptural and creedal claim that the risen, ascended Christ “sits at the right hand of God” describes not a literal, confining presence as if he is stuck miles away on a glorious throne, but describes the quality and state of being everywhere, or in an infinite number of places at the same time, and in an infinite number of people at the same time, the all-presence of his creative and justifying presence. There it is – the promise and assurance of reconciliation with God and so also with all creation, and the first taste of that righteousness and justice which the prophet Elijah was given and found in ordinary life.’

But God cannot be reduced to time or place. Saving knowledge is only possible because God has accommodated his divine self to the human level in the self-emptying of Christ on the cross, crucified for you and me to reconcile us to his world and to God. Luther says, “See the bright rays of the sun are so near to you that they pierce into your eyes or your skin, so that you feel them, yet you are unable to grasp them and put them into a box, even if you should try for ever. So too,” he says, “Christ, although he is everywhere, does not permit himself to be so caught and grasped and controlled.”

What makes the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper different from everything else is that it is accompanied by the spoken word of the creative and redeeming God. Here and now this morning God allows himself to be known personally. As the bread is broken for you, so God arranges that the mouth eats physically for the heart, and the heart eats spiritually for the mouth, and thus both are satisfied and saved by one and the same food, as Dr Luther says.

‘So, where is Christ today?’ Fr Phillip concluded. ‘Well, the reading we had in the cathedral on Sunday said, “My flesh, says Jesus, is real food; my blood is real drink; whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in them.” And it’s not just for ourselves but for others. And we prayed, “Blessed be God by whose grace creation is renewed, by whose love heaven is opened, and by whose mercy we offer our sacrifice of praise.” Thanks be to God.’

PILGRIMAGE IN ESTONIA BRINGS TOGETHER YOUNG AND OLD

A pilgrimage organised by the programme of the Youth Council of the Estonian Council of Churches was held from 7th to 9th September at the picturesque island of Kihnu on Estonia's Baltic coast. Around 80 pilgrims included young people as well as church leaders from Lutheran, Orthodox, Catholic, Baptist and Methodist churches active in the country.

They walked 20 kilometres through beautiful villages, meadows, woods and beaches, enjoying fellowship and the hospitality of the local people, and joining in the common prayer.

The pilgrimage had a particular Orthodox characteristic resonating with the religious background of the people of the Kihnu island. Metropolitan Stefanus, primate of the Orthodox Church of Estonia, spoke at the Sunday Liturgy reflecting on John 3.13,17. He said to the pilgrims, 'Where is the ladder on which to reach the heavens, where the Son of Man has come down? It is in our own hearts, and we will discover it when we turn to Christ in love and without pride, to Him who is in heaven, and not towards ourselves. This is true for all of us, and we experience it in a special way on such enriching days of pilgrimage.'



The first pilgrimage of this nature was organised in 2015, and they have continued to be held every year exploring different parts of Estonia.

ST ALBAN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH HAS LARGEST SUNDAY ATTENDANCE IN COPENHAGEN

St Alban's Anglican Church in Copenhagen describes itself as a growing, diverse and inclusive Christian community. Children and adults from every part of the world form the congregation, and unite in Eucharistic worship in English, according to the rites of the Church of England.

The ministry team is also diverse. The Rev Smitha Prasadam recently arrived as Chaplain. She comes originally from

Bangalore, India, though she has spent most of her life in the UK. There are two auxiliary priests; the Rev Canon Ulla Monberg, a Dane who is a priest of the Church of England, and the Rev Palle Thordal, also a Dane but a priest of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark. Then there is a Deacon, the Rev Christophe Ndikuriyo from Burundi, three licensed Readers, Victoria Wadsworth-Hansen, Ursula Sonnewald and Graeme Lloyd-Roberts, two UK nationals and one Norwegian, with two more people studying for this Licensed Lay Ministry, and there is also a children's, youth and student worker, Joakim Steiner-Johnsen.



Palle Tordal, Smitha Prasadam, Anglican Bishop David Hamid and Ulla Monberg

The Bishop of Copenhagen, the Rt Rev Peter Skov-Jakobsen, is a good friend of St Alban's parish and during a recent visit he graciously described it as the best attended church of any tradition in the Danish capital.

St Alban's is very close to one of the "must see" sights in the city - the Little Mermaid - so there is plenty of visiting tourist traffic. Volunteer members of the congregation are on hand every day to welcome visitors into the church for a look around, to enjoy some silence, say a prayer or light a candle.

WHAT IS THE CHURCH? ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION: A CHURCH FOR AND WITH EVERYONE.

Sally Barnes reports on a journey shared with Swedish Lutherans

Last April a delegation from Inclusive Church (IC) in the UK was invited by Swedish Lutheran friends from the Diocese of Stockholm to take part in a conference being held on their pilot project, "Accessibility and Inclusion - a Church for and with Everyone". We were also to visit churches that are part of the project to see the work they are doing and meet members of their communities. This was a follow-up to a visit last year by a Swedish group who we hosted in Manchester and Liverpool Dioceses where they saw schools and churches that are working on Inclusion.

We received magnificent hospitality and friendship. Nothing was too much trouble. Our itinerary was planned to encompass every aspect of our time: the official programme, sight-seeing, dining out, time for discussions and meeting the Bishop of Stockholm, Eva Brunne, who received us with much warmth.

The project

The project was set up in 2015 to develop and maintain churches for and with everyone. If no-one was to be thought of as 'a minority' or a 'specific group' changes in attitudes would be needed both in parishes and throughout the diocese, so an on-going programme of training would be needed.

To help get the project off the ground one full-time and two part-time officers were appointed, paid for by the Church of Sweden.

All the employees in five churches took part in a pilot project, numbering 35 people in all - in Sweden the number of employees attached to churches is far greater than in the UK!

The project organisers made visits to the parishes to develop an awareness of their different situations, needs and viewpoints. In each one, church employees and their youth groups were asked seven questions:

- What norms do you see in your parish?
- Do your norms shut anyone out?
- What individuals are missing?
- Can you provide an example of someone breaking a norm?
- Can you provide an example of an activity or place where it is considered natural for everyone to meet?
- The goal of our project is to have a church for and with everyone, so if you had complete freedom to decide what support you might need now and in the future what would that be?

Once the results had been assessed a conference, "Norm Breaking", was held in 2016 which resulted in a clear Plan of Action, and a document outlining the theological reasons why, in a diverse world, everyone is responsible for inclusion.

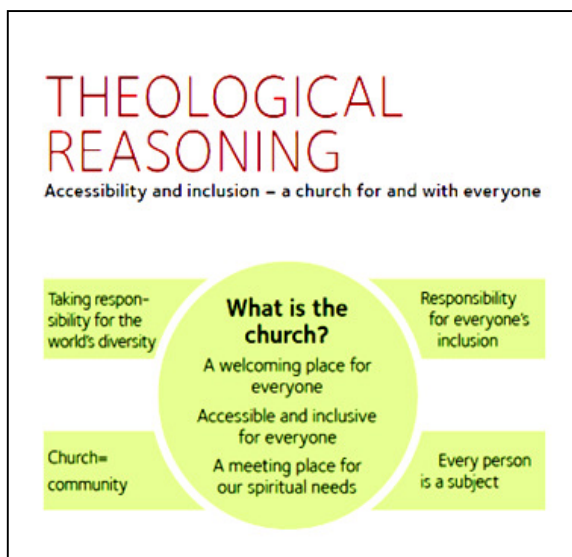
community that included 70 different nationalities and around 200 languages, many of whom were vulnerable, through poverty and unemployment and a whole range of different needs. A social worker is an essential member of the staff. They work closely together with Roman Catholics and Muslims with the aim of creating a peaceful, friendly, integrated, positive and harmonious society for the people living in the suburb.

A number of different Islamic traditions are found, and an open dialogue is maintained with them all. The Imam and a number from the Muslim community joined us for the meal and for other activities. A plan to build a mosque behind the church with a linking glass tunnel is proposed.

'We come together for those things with which we are in agreement and join in activities,' said the church's Pastor, Pia. 'We are supported in the work we do by our diocesan bishop and archbishop, and pastors who are studying come here.' An annual festival of cultures takes place and prayers for world peace. National Swedish TV transmits programmes from Fisksättra conveying the spirit of collaborative co-existence they all work so hard to maintain.

We talked about the extremist parties arising in Sweden, as they are in many European countries, and their opposition to this kind of collaborative love. One comment I received was, 'They hate us because so much love comes from this place.' We all experienced that love and were moved by it.

The next day we were taken to meet the staff and some young people in the parish of Högalid. Their church building, its twin spires dominating the surrounding area of Södermain, contains the highest pulpit I have ever seen!



By the time we arrived (24th April 2018) the project had been going for three years. Our first visit was to the church at Fisksättra in the Stockholm suburbs, where what was described as "unique interfaith work" was being undertaken. When we arrived we went into the community centre attached to the church where supper was available for anyone who wished to come. The food was free and in abundance. Guests came from a local



The pulpit in Högalid Church

Again the church is well staffed, with qualified colleagues working with a wide variety of groups and individuals. Gunilla, their pastor, explained that their philosophy of inclusion regards no-one as having "special needs". All are considered full members of the community with access to everything. Two of the younger members showed us cards they were using to help members learn sign language, we all joined them in the art activities, and they told us about their Youth Camps during the holidays which, among many things, focus on preparation for confirmation. Gunilla conducted a Eucharist in supportive sign language, which is normal practice for the service. We learned that the Högalid staff and community recently received an award from the City of Stockholm for their work on inclusion.

That evening, the Bishop of Stockholm, the Rt Rev Eva Brunne, welcomed us to her home and we exchanged views on the differences and similarities between the Church of Sweden and the Church of England over an extremely delicious meal.



Bishop Eva (and Luther) with Sally

"Who is missing at the Table?"

Our third day was spent at a conference at Vårfrukyrkan entitled, "Who is missing at the Table?" Delegates from many parts of Stockholm came either because they were part of the project or because they were interested in it. It was so good to see such a wide range of people from different disciplines sharing their feelings about inclusion and their contributions towards it, sharing expertise, and

demonstrating how learning together is a key element in supporting and developing knowledge that can be put into practice. No one person, group or church can do everything in isolation because situations and people are so diverse.

We were all invited to share our own experiences and so the Rev Dr Nick Bundock, Rector of St James and Emmanuel, Didsbury, Manchester, spoke on "The Congregation - obstacle or opportunity", and the Rev Dr Stephen Edwards, Team Rector of Wythenshawe in Manchester, and Area Dean, talked of the stages his deanery went through on their way to becoming what is now the first inclusive deanery in England. I talked about Women and the Church (WATCH), its aims and my long involvement of working with others towards the full inclusion of women, ordained and lay, at every level in the Church. Although our Society is not linked with IC I took the opportunity to talk about the Anglican-Lutheran Society, what we do and what our aims are. I had brought information along with copies of "The Window" to put on display and they had all gone by the end of the day!

The Very Revd Dr Jonathan Draper talked of his role as General Secretary of Modern Church. It is an organisation that encourages a non-dogmatic approach to Christianity and supports liberal voices in our churches. Modern Church works ecumenically through regular publications and a pattern of annual conferences.

Ruth Wilde, newly appointed National Coordinator of Inclusive Church, spoke about her part in social justice activities including peacemaker teams, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender campaigning.

Stockholm's Diocesan Consultant, Eva von Eckermann, then led a session on "What do we do now", which related to the project, how it was progressing and the hopes for the next stage, and

in which people were given time to give their views and talk with each other.

We could see how impressive the work of the project is, and the difference it makes to all those taking part and to the people in their care. The experience of the original five pilot churches will be invaluable to, and supportive of, those who will be joining in the future. We gained the impression that in many ways Sweden is way ahead of us in England, but our discussions revealed some negative experiences of some women pastors, for example, who can find themselves silently ignored and/or rejected, or have their gifts overlooked in some parishes. 'If you don't accept everyone who comes you are denying the gifts of God. What does that mean when you are made in the image of God?' was a comment that we could all affirm. Both our Churches in our different ways still have a long way to go, but go on and get there we will!

PEACE PRIZE FOR ANTI-RAPE ACTIVISTS

*A Congolese gynaecologist and
a German-based Yazidi-Iraqi
human rights activist,
share 2018 Prize.*

Archbishop Panti Filibus Musa, the President of LWF, has congratulated Dr Denis Mukwege Mukwege, who shares the Peace Prize with Nadia Murad Basee, on this well-deserved recognition of his tireless opposition to gender violence. In a keynote speech at last year's 12th Assembly of the LWF in Windhoek, Namibia, Dr Mukwege linked the theme "Liberated by God's Grace", to his work telling Lutherans from around the world: 'Lutheran theology, especially as regards women's place in society, is a message of hope for all the women in the world who are victims of violence, whether moral, physical or sexual.'

The Norwegian Nobel Committee states that Dr Mukwege and Ms Nadia Murad have been awarded the prize 'for their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict.'

THREE CONFESSIONS CONFERENCE

In April this year, 28 people gathered at Holland House in Crothorne, Worcestershire, UK. About one-third were from the Diocese of Worcester, a third from the Protestant Church of Central Germany, and a third was Roman Catholics from their dioceses of Birmingham and Magdeburg. One of the English Catholics, Jim Quinn, writes his account of the event.



Last April Anglicans, Lutherans and Romans Catholics gathered at Holland House for conference focusing on ecumenism. The weekend was to be lived ecumenism, with shared prayer, liturgy, meals and visits to ecumenical social action projects.

It began with a presentation on the joint pilgrimage to the Holy Land last year undertaken by the Church of England Diocese of Worcester and the Archdiocese of Birmingham. It had clearly been a success as an ecumenical activity and, interestingly, in the pilgrims' final reflections there was no mention of denominational differences – just a delight in the various people they had met. How often it is that we meet God in others!

Then Guido Erbrich, a Catholic from Magdeburg, spoke about the ecumenical fruits from last year's Reformation commemoration events. There had been high level reconciliation between the Roman Catholic and Lutheran Churches; more Churches agreeing with the joint Lutheran-Catholic Statement on Justification; and growth in mutual trust and spiritual closeness. He drew attention to an exhibition entitled "Ecce Homo / Behold the Man" and to the premier of an orchestral work specially composed by Sir Colin Mawby also called "Ecce Homo", performed by an inter-denominational orchestra and choir conducted by Sir Colin himself, who described our lack of unity as an unfinished symphony.

Saturday morning saw us in the north of the county visiting some ecumenical

projects. Firstly in Stourbridge we made our way to the Vines Café, a social enterprise venture whose upstairs space accommodates the LIFE Centre Debt Advice service, and is also the base for the Street Pastors. These serve the mainly young users of the late night clubs and pubs in the town. The Pastors take to the streets at 10pm offering whatever help they can to those in need, including by providing flip-flops (a challenge for those translating into German!) for women who have become separated from their shoes – 631 pairs have been given out so far. One of the pastors was told "you are just like my Gran, always there when I need her".

At the lovely 17th century Friends Meeting House we learnt about their support for local ecumenical social action, and then we moved on to Stourport-on-Severn where, after lunch kindly provided by the Methodists, we heard about Fairtrade Stourport, the Justice and Peace Group and the local Refugee Support Group, all of them fully ecumenical and splendidly witnessing to gospel values.

Here we are having tea and cakes at Harvington Hall, a beautiful moated manor house built in the 1580s during the reign of Elizabeth I by Humphrey Pakington, a recusant Catholic. The house is now

owned by the Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham and open to the public. Archdeacon Robert Jones said it is 'a constant reminder of the pain of the Reformation'.

A highlight for me was the extended Eucharist on Sunday morning. After the Liturgy of the Word, small groups prayed and reflected on the day's readings and produced their own two-minute sermons and intercessory prayers. After a coffee break we reconvened in the chapel for the "sermons" and prayers, five creative and prayerful interpretations of the readings. We then continued with the rest of the Eucharist conducted, like all our worship, in both German and English.

Following group photographs in the grounds, Sunday lunch was our final meal together, with grace once again sung as a round, before we went our separate ways. The weekend gave me much to reflect on but limited space prevents me from sharing it all with you, but my overarching reflection is the importance of witnessing to gospel values through what we do as Christians, rather than as Lutherans, Anglicans or Catholics.

Grassroots international ecumenism and Christian social action formed the heart of the weekend and perhaps with Brexit looming, and an increase in narrow nationalist attitudes, the international dimension is even more important. We are parables of hope, as one participant put it.



EDUCATING PASTORS FOR ECUMENICAL LEADERSHIP FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

As part of the 70th anniversary celebration of the World Council of Churches (WCC) member churches contributed stories of people, events, achievements and even failures, all of which have deepened the collective search for Christian unity.

Dr Melanio L. Aoanan of Brokenshire College, Davao City on the island of Mindanao, Philippines, wrote a contribution which has been edited for The Window.

Wit, a sense of humour, humility, and openness to new ideas, combined with hard work, are the sure formula for successful and effective church leaders. Every Christian believer in the twenty-first century, whether Anglican or Alliance, Baptist or Methodist, Roman Catholic or United Church of Christ, has a calling to promote the unity of the Church because of Christ's earnest desire that his followers be one (John 17.20-21). 'We must be engaged actively in what I call "the ecumenical enterprise";' Dr Aoanan wrote.

God's reign is characterized by peace, justice, freedom and abundant life for all. 'We are part of the Church, a community of God's people called out of darkness into God's marvellous light, and we must tell all the wonderful things that God has done (1 Peter 2.9),' he says.

The ecumenical movement is not so much an organization as a process, in Dr Aoanan's view. Phase one in the process led to the formation of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1948. The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) was the start of phase two, with the Roman Catholic Church's increasing involvement leading to significant points of convergence that might enable that Church to join the WCC as a full member in the near future. However, Dr Aoanan is adamant that the ecumenical movement should not be equated with the WCC even if it does include the Roman Catholic Church.

Two pioneering books he referred to are "Christian Theology: An Ecumenical Approach" by Walter N. Horton, (first published in 1955 then revised and expanded in 1958) and "Ecumenics: The Science of the Church Universal" by John A. Mackay, published in 1964. Horton's book deals with the "seven fundamental doctrines": the knowledge of God; the nature of God; God and the world;

God and the human; Christ the Saviour; the Church and the means of grace; and the Christian hope. The reports of ecumenical conferences are used to determine the emerging agreements within the ecumenical movement. He suggests that the quest for Christian unity should be guided by three principles: it should have a missionary character; it should be truly worldwide in scope; it should combine 'catholic' unanimity with 'protestant' liberty and variety. These principles define the basic concern of ecumenical theology.

Mackay's book deals primarily with the doctrine of the church or ecclesiology. It describes ecumenics as the study of "Christian churches within the context of God's purpose declared in the Bible, and the human situation as it is today, with a view to the development of a Christian strategy worthy of the mandate of Jesus Christ to bring all nations to His allegiance, and receptive to the infinite resources made available by God to Christ's followers through the Holy Spirit." For the Church to be the Church three things are required. First, it is a community of Christ, that is, "the fellowship of all those for whom Jesus Christ is Lord." Second, it is a worldwide community, that is, "it is global in its geographical extension, and all embracing in its human inclusiveness." Third, it is a missionary community. This means that the church "is to live in the frontiers of life in every society and every age." All Christians are "to make the Gospel known to all nations and live the Gospel in every sphere and phase of their earthly life."

Bible as the motivating force is a significant factor in the rise of the modern ecumenical movement, Dr Aoanan says. Therefore, 'our motive force in the search for a life-giving ecumenical theology is none other than the Bible ... Our cry and struggle with our people is for life, as we in-

volve ourselves in the people's struggle for life, we experience God's empowering Spirit, inspiring, comforting, sustaining with inner strength our actions to preserve and pursue justice and peace. People saying NO to forces and systems that try to diminish their humanity and their assertion of their rights as human beings are steady signs of God's redemptive activity.'

Dr Aoanan says that by identifying ourselves with the suffering 'we enter into the cycle of life where the cross precludes the resurrection and the resurrection draws us more into the well-spring of life to enable us to bear the cross when it comes again. This way we get a glimpse of the new life that is to come; we are given a foretaste of God's reign.'

In conclusion Dr Aoanan says that Church leaders must be educated in ways relevant in the 21st century. This means first, striving for clear theological foundations for the life and work of the Church; next, sensitivity to, and awareness of, the realities that impinge deeply upon the life of people in Church and community; third, identifying essential needs and thereby establishing priorities; fourth, keeping the spirit aflame in unity and collegiality among those who must work in solidarity with the victims and the marginalized in our society.

The emerging ecumenical consensus on doctrinal and theological issues is something that pastors preparing for ecumenical leadership in the 21st century must explore, alongside awareness of the emerging contextual spirituality. 'We eagerly anticipate the fullness of God's reign and intensify our commitment for its realization ("May your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven"),' he concludes. 'We will not settle for less than the glorious reign of God. In accordance with God's promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where justice dwells.'



The Window

supports members of the Anglican-Lutheran Society in better understanding our different traditions and social contexts so that we can more faithfully proclaim God's love and justice together in the world

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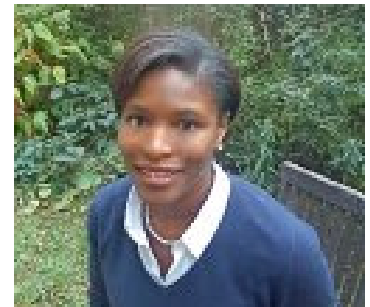
WHEN THE WORDS SAY I AM WELCOME BUT THE REALITY SUGGESTS I AM NOT.

Encouraging diversity in our churches is essential if the Church is more readily to reflect the population it seeks to serve. That was the conclusion of a one-day conference in the Diocese of St Albans, England, at which the main speaker was the Church of England's National Minority Ethnic Vocations Officer, Rosemarie Davidson-Gotobed.

The reported experience of many in the Church who do not fit the mould of white, male and middle class is: "Your words say I am welcome but the situation says I am not." So the conference considered how diversity and inclusion might be encouraged.

Canon Tim Lomax, St Albans Diocesan Director of Mission, said, 'If we believe we are made in the image and likeness of God, we can also believe that we can show his extravagant hospitality to others. God includes us without missing a beat, and is motivated by the conscious bias of loving all of creation. We urgently need to rediscover this spirit of hospitality in both nation and church.'

Rosemarie Davidson-Gotobed, pictured here, said, 'The subtlety of bias is often so slight as to be unnoticed by those actually perpetrating it, which makes it all the more important that we identify our own unconscious bias. This applies to everyone, but particularly to those who act as gatekeepers in the Church. Unknowingly turning away talent hinders the excluder as well as the excluded. Bias must be overcome, and our leadership must be demonstrably more inclusive, if the Church is to fulfil its mission to be a light to all people.'



'Here's the science bit. Our brain is continually required to make a vast number of decisions. To cope, many judgments are made unconsciously and instantaneously. This is generally a good thing. Very little would get done if all unconscious behaviour required the careful consideration associated with deliberate decision making. However, the problem is that these instant assessments are just assumptions, based on background, cultural environment and personal experience, and they often end up being flawed.'

'Take a look at this video produced by the Royal Society to see what I mean: <https://youtu.be/dVp9Z5k0dEE> [Do watch it. It is a very useful video to get people thinking about unconscious bias – Ed]

'As a Church, we preach that all are welcome, but the lack of visible role models can make it difficult for people to feel they truly belong. The video was presented to General Synod of the Church of England two years ago and it captures this feeling well. All of us have a perspective; none of us is immune from it; it doesn't make you a bad person, but it is something you should reflect on. A good test then to overcome it is to take a step back and ask yourself, would I have thought the same if this person looked or sounded like me?

'By asking this question we move towards inclusion. Inclusion is different to diversity. Diversity is the mix, inclusion is how we make it work. Diversity is a given, inclusion is a choice.'