



West Yorkshire Ecumenical Council

TAKING A LEAP OF FAITH

Christian unity is taking off! That is the message coming loud and clear from churches and Christian partnerships across Yorkshire.

West Yorkshire Ecumenical Council (WYEC) recently held celebrations of Christian unity in Batley, Bradford and Leeds, hearing numerous stories of cooperation and working together from around the region – see inside. We heard about churches from different traditions that pray together, read the Bible together, take part in amazing mission projects together – feeding the hungry, giving shelter to the homeless, freeing people from debt, counselling people seeking sanctuary in a strange land.

WYEC has also produced a book, *Unity in Process* – ideal for your Lent group... - which not only tells stories of unity in your area, but links them with all that is happening to bring the churches together nationally and beyond. (Order your copies now; see page 20.)

Unity makes a difference – no wonder Jesus prayed for it (John 17.20-23). It's not an optional extra; it enables us to be and do what God wants for us. Let's believe in church unity, take that leap of faith, and discover what is possible when we worship and serve God together.



*Hope in the Park – part of a mission fortnight hosted by Horsforth Churches Together (see page 19).
Much more Churches Together news inside!*

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Committing to young people

West Yorkshire Church Leaders of different Christian traditions have established a pattern of coming together on Ash Wednesday in a context of common concern, and with youth unemployment now standing at more than a million, the decision was taken by WYEC last year to focus on young people.

A consultation of students showed that family life, commercial pressures and unemployment are among the main concerns for young people with the highest priority being stability, security and support in family life.

Senior Church Leaders met in Bradford College to pray for young people and ask forgiveness for failures by the church in the past to support and welcome young people. They were joined by regional church youth officers from several denominations.



Postcards with twitter length prayers for young people were tweeted by @WYEC. A new poster 'Faith in Young People' was produced by youth leaders working across Yorkshire.

The then Chair of WYEC, the Revd. Dr. Liz Smith, said: "For Christians with a message of the unique value of every person, young people are not a wasted generation but a wanted generation. Church Leaders are listening to young people, praying with them and speaking out alongside them."

[The 2013 Ash Wednesday witness of Church Leaders will be in Dewsbury, building community in a town where racists have threatened division. Meet at Dewsbury Minster at 12.30pm on Wednesday 13 February.]



Mgr. Michael McQuinn, Anne Carter and the Rt Revd. John Packer with the Faith in Young People poster.

Thank God for youth workers, young leaders, faithful volunteers. Thank God for music, drama & paint. Thank God for digital media. Thank God.

Prayer of Church Leaders @wyec1



Church Leaders and church youth workers at Bradford College, with the 'Faith in Young People' poster.

Comings and Goings

Membership of WYEC has remained quite stable in recent times. We have, however, said goodbye to the Rt. Revd. Arthur Roche, former Bishop of Leeds, who moved to Rome to become an Archbishop and Secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments. This means he will have responsibility for the liturgy and worship of the Catholic Church. His successor has yet to be appointed, but his place on WYEC has been taken by Mgr. John Wilson, Administrator of the Diocese of Leeds.

We also welcomed the Revd. Graham Ensor, Regional Minister for Ministry in Yorkshire Baptist Association, who signed the WYEC Church Leaders' Covenant, as did the Rt. Revd. Tony Robinson, Bishop of Pontefract, who succeeds the Revd. Dr Liz Smith as Chair of WYEC for 2013 and 2014.

We have also been joined by John Mothersdale, Denominational Ecumenical Officer for West Yorkshire Methodist District; John worships at St Matthew, Rastrick, an Anglican-Methodist Local Ecumenical Partnership, where he is also churchwarden.



Signing the WYEC Covenant: Tony Robinson...



... and Graham Ensor

WEST YORKSHIRE ECUMENICAL COUNCIL COVENANT

WE REJOICE in our growing partnership of trust as we share at a personal level in worship, friendship and consultation.

WE RECOGNISE that we have in common many similar responsibilities, joys, problems and hopes, and that we have much to offer and to receive from each other in the rich diversity of our traditions, which complement and challenge each other.

WE BELIEVE that in our common pilgrimage we are being led by the Holy Spirit, and that God the Father,

through our Lord Jesus Christ, is calling us to a deeper unity and to a greater sharing in our mission to His world.

WE UNDERTAKE to work towards doing everything together except that which, in conscience, must be done separately, and in particular:

TO ENCOURAGE appropriate initiatives for local co-operation.

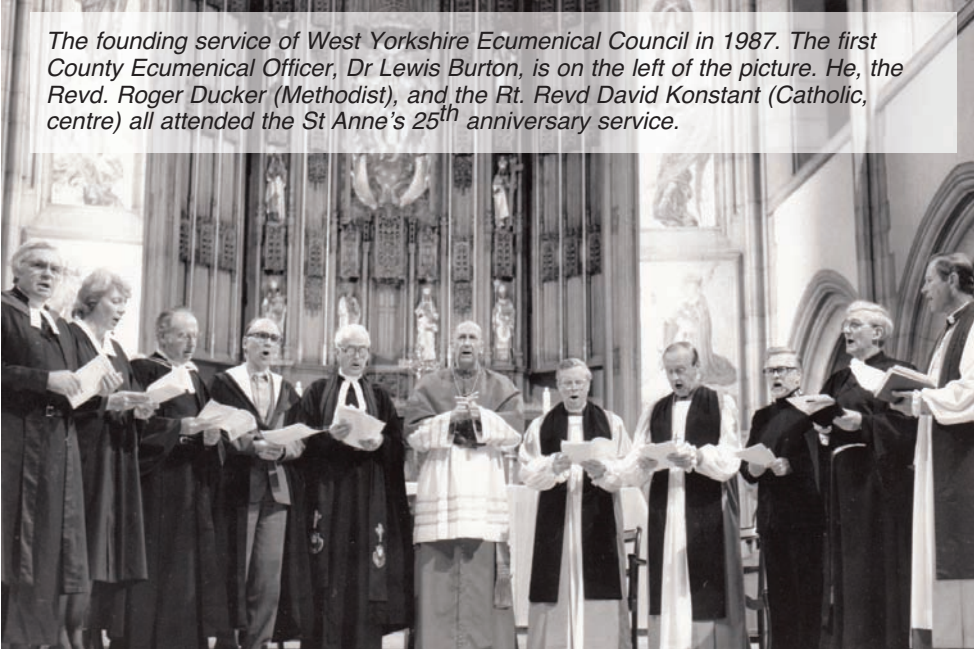
TO CONFER together over pastoral appointments

and buildings which affect the mission and ministry of the Church in West Yorkshire where we consider the circumstances call for such co-operation.

TO ACT together on public issues wherever need and opportunity arise.

WE INVITE our congregations to support us in this Covenant to which we commit ourselves, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

From Silver To Gold



The founding service of West Yorkshire Ecumenical Council in 1987. The first County Ecumenical Officer, Dr Lewis Burton, is on the left of the picture. He, the Revd. Roger Ducker (Methodist), and the Rt. Revd David Konstant (Catholic, centre) all attended the St Anne's 25th anniversary service.

Last year West Yorkshire Ecumenical Council celebrated 25 years of promoting church unity in North and West Yorkshire. How things have changed in that time! Back in 1987, Tim Berners-Lee was still two years away from inventing the world wide web, and now the internet is such a part of everyday life that we cannot conceive of living without it. 2013 is the first year of WYEC's next phase. What will our society look like in 25 years time? What will our churches look like then? How will we understand Christian Unity in 2037?

The next few pages report the special services that WYEC held last autumn, looking back on its first quarter century, and telling countless stories about the amazing work being done today by churches and Christian groups working together. In Batley, we wrote prayers for unity; in Bradford we tied ribbons together; in Leeds, we were covered by a huge banner representing the whole inhabited earth – the root meaning of ecumenism. We can't tell where it is all leading, but we do know that the picture of Unity is changing all the time. It is for each of us to paint the next scene, in the way we work together in our Churches Together groups, our joint mission projects and ecumenical partnerships.

The former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, once said that 'Your neighbouring church is God's gift to you.' How you get on with your neighbouring church will determine what Unity means where you are, and will help to shape unity across the country. For 2013, resolve to pray, work, act together with the people in your neighbouring church, and help to shape the future of Unity.

Clive Barrett



From Our New Chair

In October 2012 we celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the West Yorkshire Ecumenical Council we three services in Batley, Bradford and Leeds. In many ways the fact that we gathered together on those occasions is nothing short of remarkable.

Fifty years ago, if someone had stood up in this church and predicted that Christians representing all the mainstream denominations in England would gather together like that, in church, for an act of worship without fear, anxiety or apprehension, and simply because we wanted to celebrate together, then they would have been treated with a significant degree of

scepticism. Yet here we are, and we have reached the point where we are sufficiently comfortable together that we take occasions like this for granted.

At the more local level, we now have sharing agreements with other denominations for a number of church buildings. There are in existence quite a number of Local Ecumenical Partnerships, even if in practice these have not always gone as smoothly as we might have hoped, and when it comes to developing specialist chaplaincies, ecumenical co-operation is the name of the game.

So everything is hunky-dory then? Well, there is a real danger that we can become complacent; that the ecumenical journey has in fact become becalmed, and that we can too easily forget the very real challenges which we still have to face. So, whilst it is very easy for us to share services which do not involve the celebration of the Holy Communion, it also reminds us of some of the more obvious issues which still divide us, and which hold back progress towards that one, united, church for which our Lord prayed. We are a long way from a complete mutual recognition of ministerial orders and interchangeability of ministry of many different kinds. We also have a plethora of ecumenical agreements in which we explore, bilaterally, our relationships with other denominations, and on many occasions reach solemn agreements, yet sometimes one set of conversations may not seem to be clearly related to process and outcomes of another set of conversations.

So, looking at our ecumenical progress, I see these two different strands of development. On the one hand, we have national and international agreements of one sort or another which formalise what we can and cannot do, and how we understand each other, how we understand our Church teaching. On the other hand, we have local grass-roots initiatives which just get on with things and sometimes has to wait for the agreements to catch up. Both have impacts which can be for good and for bad.

I wonder what our successors will say about how WYEC has developed by 2037. What will the situation be? What celebrations will there have been to celebrate 50 years of working together?

What's it like for you?

WYEC has recently held two consultations, to listen to the real experience of local unity. A consultation at Normanton brought together representatives of Churches Together groups across the wider Wakefield area. We heard stories of good practice and frustration, examples to encourage each other and opportunities for mutual support.

A slightly different consultation was held at West Bretton, in conjunction with Churches Together in South Yorkshire. This included ministers and members of Local Ecumenical Partnerships for a training morning looking at what was important in denominational traditions that were not their own. Do we really know what it is like to be from another church, and what matters to our neighbours in faith?

Similar events will be held again in 2013. Watch the WYEC website, www.wyec.co.uk, for further details.

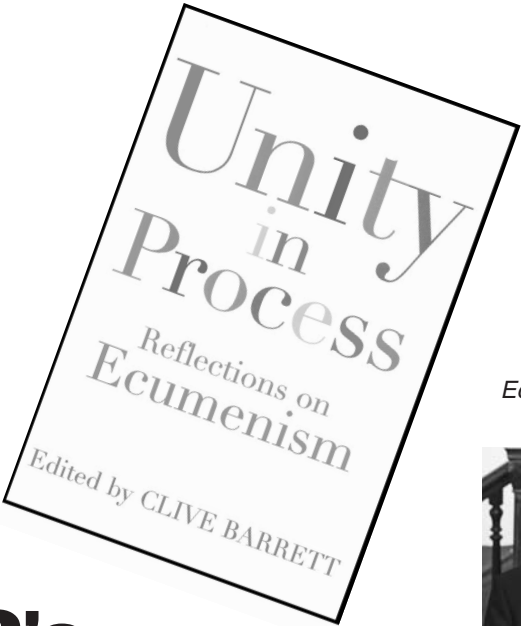
Relationships matter

Senior church leaders have recently held a 24 hour residential at the Briery, Ilkley. It was a time to pray together, eat, listen and talk together, to get to know each other better. Such foundations help with their working together through the rest of the year.

The denominational ecumenical officers from each of our churches have also had a 24 hour residential, at Holy Rood House, Thirsk. Exploring each other's journey in this way enables them to work together more effectively as a team.

Do you ever go away with members of other churches in your area? It can be a hugely beneficial way of getting to know each other better, and of laying the foundations for effective work together. Highly recommended.

WYEC Ecumenical Officers



Clive Barrett, County Ecumenical Development Officer



WYEC's NEW BOOK

The story of Christian Unity in West Yorkshire is placed in the national story of growing unity between the churches, in a new book sponsored by WYEC. Find out more, and fill in the order form on page 20.

Three in One: Think

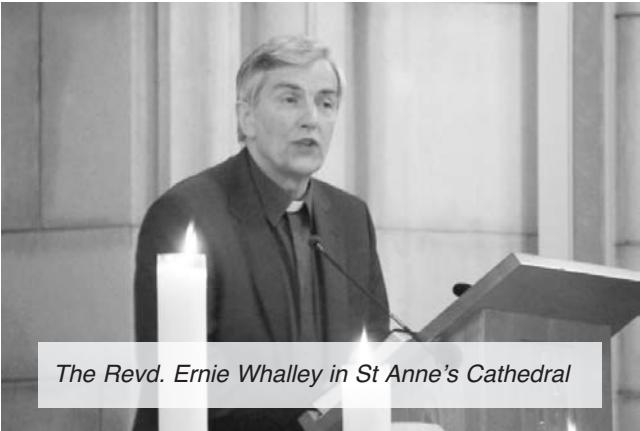
The preachers at WYEC’s special services in Batley, Bradford and Leeds helped us to think about unity in different ways. Each spoke after a series of presentations from various Churches Together groups and other ecumenical partnerships and initiatives.

Batley Central Methodist Church: Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster

My brothers and sisters, it is a great pleasure for me to be here this afternoon and to share in this very lovely celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the West Yorkshire Ecumenical Council. I’ve learned a lot; I think we all have. One of the things I have learned is that Batley is a place of uninterrupted sunshine and clear blue skies, and that will be forever my impression of Batley! *[It was lovely weather outside]* 25 years is a long time and as we have heard there is a great story to tell. 25 years ago there was that quite remarkable ecumenical meeting in Swanwick which produced the Swanwick Declaration *[a major ecumenical statement in 1987.]* Now, for my sins, I was part of the working party that helped to develop that process and I will always remember the way we went on pilgrimage round the three countries with preliminary meetings before we all arrived in Swanwick. Eventually we got back to Swanwick, and that marvellous meeting did take place. Clive Barrett, in his book *[Unity in Process; order yours on page 20]* - no, I am not a salesman for Dr Clive Barrett, but it’s a very good read - he describes that Swanwick meeting as marking the end of what he described as an “ecumenical winter” in 1984 to a Spring of 1987, and it did give new impetus and a new model of churches together and a pattern which I think is serving us well and will still bear its best fruit perhaps in the future.

Second Vatican Council

Looking back a bit further, let’s go back 50 years. 50 years ago some of you will remember, I certainly do, was the year of the publication of the first Beatles’ song; it was “Love me do” - you don’t need reminding; and it was also, as we know from the present commercials, the publication of the first James Bond film; but it was also the opening of the Second Vatican Council in the Catholic Church, which certainly made such a difference to our lives as Catholics and I think to the whole of the Christian community as well. Those 50 years are a long story; they take me back to my student days as a young seminarian in Rome. Now many of those memories were revoked for me on Thursday of this week when I was privileged to be in Rome for the Mass to mark that 50th anniversary. Many of you know some of the changes in the Catholic Church which were put in place by the Second Vatican Council. I think they concerned particularly our stance towards others. So, for example, it confirmed within the Catholic Church a different stance towards society and towards secular institutions, a willingness, a desire to dialogue with those institutions. It changed our stance towards science, recognising the proper autonomy of science in its own role. It changed our stance towards other religions. It changed our stance towards Judaism, and of course our stance towards our fellow Christians. And so we celebrate this anniversary today, rejoicing together in the positive and open relationships of regard and respect and affection that we have for each other in our shared commitments to service, activity and prayer, which we make to each other, and in recognition of the need for an on-going exchange of gifts, and of our deepest convictions, which is surely an important part of our way forward. And



The Revd. Ernie Whalley in St Anne’s Cathedral



Lutheran Bishop Walter Jagucki (left) with Archbishop Vincent Nichols

again, a little bit of advert, as Clive says in his book, perhaps we need to look for shared means of communication so that the story that we have heard and seen this afternoon might be told more consistently as a single story that many would be encouraged to hear. So there is plenty for us to do.

Encouraged by Paul

Let me turn to the readings that we have heard. We look at what St Paul said to us in 1 Thessalonians 5.12-18. It’s like a string of jewels of good advice for us if we wish to be together the disciples of the Lord. He says, “Be at peace”. Simple, profound, so important. He says, in this translation, “admonish the idlers”; in another translation, “warn the quitters that they shouldn’t be quitting”. He says, “encourage the faint hearted”, or in another translation, “encourage those whose souls are small”. In other words, be brave so that others can be brave, be bighearted so that others can draw courage from your example. And, at the same time, he says, cling to the weak, help the weak, don’t let them drift away. Be patient with everyone. And then he goes on and he gives us, I think, three key marks of a church, of a gathering of disciples such as are here today. He says be happy, or rejoice always; be happy as we were as we came into the church this afternoon knowing that we are bathed, not just with the sunlight, but with the light of the Lord. He says be full of prayer always, seeing ourselves in the presence of God and always wanting to remove from ourselves self-satisfaction or any sense of self achievement, and he says be thankful for there are always blessings to count, and how often we have to struggle against our natural instinct which is to count our difficulties and our frustrations rather than our blessings. But I’m sure that if we, in our different communities and together, can have those marks as our hallmarks, marks of being happy of being full of prayer and of always being thankful, then that work of drawing others to the invitation of the Lord would be made so much easier.

We are His Body

In the gospel, John 17.20-23, I think John takes us a little further, because, as he makes clear in the text, the prayer of Jesus reaches out beyond the circle of his disciples. It’s a prayer of great confidence. It’s a prayer that the Holy Spirit will work through those whom Jesus gathers to himself. It is, in other words, a prayer about the work of evangelism, the work of evangelisation. Jesus is always the first evangeliser, the new evangelisation, and we have a part in it only because we are joined to Him, because we are His body, because we are touched by His spirit, and therefore sent with the message that it is never us, it’s never our church, never our achievements, but always and only Him.

The glory of Jesus lies in the relationship He has with His Father in the Holy Spirit; this is the glory shining in the face of Jesus. And, we hope, the glory reflected in our faces, in as much as we live in Him, and move in Him, and have our being in him.

Witness to God’s Horizon

So we pray today, as we celebrate these anniversaries, and particularly this one: that our witness to Christ will be strong in the face of suffering and pain, a witness to God’s providence; in the face of the shortened horizons which often mean that people’s sight goes no further than today, a witness to God’s horizon of heaven; and, in the face of so much isolation, a witness to the joy of our relationship to the Father in the Church, both as the Church is now and as we hope and pray that it will become. Amen.

Bradford Cathedral: Alison Tomlin, Past President of the Methodist Conference

Amazing stories, and wonderful to hear all that huge and amazing and colourful variety. I have this enormous privilege of standing here with a hugely colourful window in direct line of sight, so take a moment to turn and see the colours of that window reflecting the colours of your stories.



The Coat of Many Colours

The coat of many colours (Genesis 37.1-3) is a fascinating thing, not least because current translations tell us that actually it should be translated as the coat with long sleeves, so that we don’t get to do any work! I thought you might like that. I’m not sure which is correct. We prefer the coat of many colours because most of us know the technicolour dream-coat idea. What we are not told is what the young man did with it. Did he wear it with gratitude in the depth of his heart that his father loved him, and not only for what it was doing to the rest of the family? Or did he wear it with enormous pride that he was so important? Like so much of scripture we don’t get told. Have you ever noticed how often we don’t get the end of the story? We do know that the rest of the

Thinking about Unity

family got pretty cross about it, but we don't know what was going on in that young man at all. Long sleeves, many colours, whatever it was, it was meant to be a symbol of how much he was loved, however unwise some of that loving may have been. Presumably, and please God, the colours that you weave together and have woven together over these 25 years, you must have meant to weave these colours together not because you're proud of yourselves but because you're proud of the God who loves you. So often in the story it was about sharing who God is, even if we don't actually agree who God is; and if you noticed there was reference to different faiths as well as to different approaches within the Christian church. And we want to share the love of God, and that is what the coat of many colours is about for us, isn't it? I hope it is and pray it is.

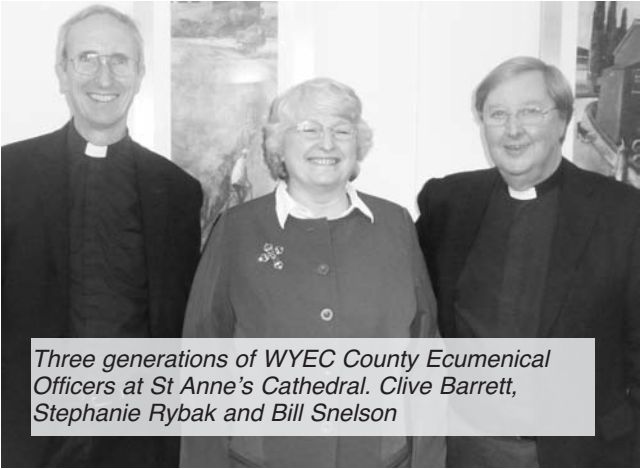
Gathered to be God's People

So what are we doing with the colours we wear? I wear this cassock alb because when I was designated President of the Methodist Conference, which was quite a while back now, the people from Traidcraft reminded me that they make fairly-traded clerical shirts. They don't make fairly-traded choir robes, but they do make fairly-traded clerical shirts and I just said jokingly, "I have enough of those; what I really need is a fairly-traded cassock alb", and this delightfully kind and generous man went to all the trouble of getting one made for me. Now, the question then is, do I wear it because he did that and showed love, or do I wear it because I think it makes me look good (don't answer that)? What matters is not just that this is fairly-traded and represents so many things that are dear to our hearts. What matters is that we are gathered together to be God's people and this particular cassock alb represents that fact for me, and I invite you to share that representation as you invited us to share the representations of your stories. How many of us stopped and changed before we came out today? I'm not asking you to admit it publicly, but some of you will have changed. Some of us changed when we got here - let's be honest, church leaders! Some of us put on extra clothes, extra robes, different things. Within all of our denominations, within all of the range of things we share, there are different ways of dressing that mean different things. And sometimes we think it matters. (*Aside, to the choir*) After all, if you're going to be a choir you might as well be a choir, and it's lovely. Other times it doesn't, does it? And as we seek to serve God, does God mind?

Put on Compassion

So there's all that variety, and you put that variety with the idea of many colours, and then you say that what God said (Colossians 3.12-17) was to "put on, as God's chosen people, compassion"; isn't that a wonderful word? Compassion, humility, kindness, and that amazing and incredible word that gets translated "mercy" and that also gets translated "steadfast love"; it is a God quality, it's much bigger than we sometimes make it. So with all our many colours, from whatever tradition, from whatever faith or background, from whatever faith in the end, all our many colours are meant to be woven together to show the love of God for all that God has made, regardless. So whether we dress up or whether we don't, whether we wear colours or whether we think that is not appropriate for wherever and whoever we are, whether we wear uniforms, or whether we don't actually stop and think about what we are wearing at all and put on what comes first, none of that matters. What matters is whether we are weaving together the many colours of God's glowing love, for all that God has made.

What NEW Stories Will There Be?



Three generations of WYEC County Ecumenical Officers at St Anne's Cathedral. Clive Barrett, Stephanie Rybak and Bill Snelson

And I rejoice with you that you have been doing that for 25 years. I rejoice with you in all those amazing stories. But I do ask the question, "What next?" What next? When in another 25 years, maybe in another cathedral or maybe some other church altogether, you celebrate the next stage, what **new** stories of all that God is doing will you have to tell? What is God inviting you to next? To go back to Joseph for a minute, from a coat of many colours to a pit, to a prison, to ruling in a foreign country and finally to reconciliation. What's the next stage of your journey that will end in the reconciliation of all things in the love and the truth and the mercy and the praise of God? I don't know, but you are invited to that next stage of the journey.

St Anne's Cathedral, Leeds: Ernie Whalley, President-Designate of the Baptist Union of Great Britain.

I still enjoy children's stories. One favourite is 'Wind in the Willows' by Kenneth Grahame. 'A spirit of divine discontent and longing' urged Mole, who has spent his life in a hole, out into the sunshine. In his newfound freedom, he discovered a river and he 'entered the joy of running water'. *"The angel showed me the river of the water of life as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city ... and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations."* (Revelation 22: 1-2)

Today we celebrate WYEC as part of that 'river'. Rivulets have come together down through these years: denominations, networks, a wide variety of outlooks, united as disciples of Jesus Christ. Many of you who helped to form and shape it through the years are here today. 25 years ago, WYEC was launched here in this Cathedral. I have had the privilege of being part of WYEC for just over half that time. We have been well-served by executive secretaries down through these years and we give thanks to God for all who have contributed to our life together. It's a great joy today to celebrate the richness of our diversity. The West Yorkshire African-Caribbean Council of Churches (WYACCC) is a vital part of our life together.

The river of the water of life

In the book of Revelation, 22.1-5, we go the scenes of history to glimpse the Living God in the story. Imagine standing on a bridge, across a flowing river. The seer draws on the prophecy of Ezekiel 47.1-12. He sees the source of the river, flowing from the throne of God, from the heart of the Eternal, under the bridge, transforming the whole of humanity.

And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations

The things of God and the transformation of the earth are part of the **one** stream. So often we try to separate the sacred from the secular. But Psalm 24 declares, 'The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world and all who live in it.' The origin of the word 'ecumenical' means the whole inhabited earth. The temple is the source of life, healing and fruitfulness. Fresh water is brought to the stagnant ponds and dried-up streams. So today we celebrate this river of the water of life – the joy of running water. Jesus the Lamb of God was thirsty in the middle of the day and asked a woman for some water. He reached across the divide of gender, race and moral behaviour ('Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again but those who drink the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed the water I give them will be a spring of water, welling up to eternal life')

Celebrate Living Water

This water cleanses us, washes us from our sins. We are given a new start. It is amazing grace – and this world desperately needs it today. Christ lived, died and rose again. The stale becomes fresh and there is transformation. This living water from God in Christ seeks to flow into EVERY life, OUR unique circumstances – both personal and in the whole world, as we are open to it to bring healing grace. This is the good news of joy for the world. We thank God for the living water that we celebrate within WYEC. There's been a growing recognition that we are stronger together for life and mission. We have heard some great stories today and these are just a handful of the tales that need to be told and heard.

What of the future?

We are called to go with the flow of the Spirit. We can't force the river to flow more quickly but we can slow it down. Logs and rocks can restrict the flow. We can be too strong with our independent mindedness. We need structures but how can we be more of a MOVEMENT? We quote the Lund Principle of 60 years ago about acting together in all matters except those in which conscience compels us to act separately. Of course, we must respect conscience - but this can still leave too much space for preserving OUR way of doing things – and preventing ecumenical possibility. Trust between us has increased but we still have a long way to go. We need to keep listening to each other through the pain of difference. My prayer is that in the next 25 years, WYEC will continue to discern the prophetic nudges of the Spirit.



Debt, Tax and Asylum Justice

WYEC has made many public statements on a number of 'rocky' issues over recent years. We have stood together – particularly on recent Ash Wednesdays. I name just two examples: There is the rock of the debt crisis – as the gap between rich and poor widens. As one aspect of this, like many of you, I boarded the Tax Justice bus last month in Huddersfield. Only last week, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs reported that there is £32 billion of uncollected tax last year – more than the £30 billion that the Government is cutting from public services each year. A rock in the stream affecting the dignity and quality of life across the world and within the UK. A second example: WYEC has spoken out about the plight of asylum seekers and we have had discussions with the UK Borders Agency about the shortcomings and failure of the asylum process, especially regarding children. Recently, I have got involved in Huddersfield in a drop-in for asylum seekers and just last week, Peter from Africa was cheered as he shared the news he has been granted full residency. This was after waiting over 4 years – a short period compared to some. There is still much to be done as we work with others for justice. May WYEC still take a prophetic stand on Kingdom issues.

Racism

There is also the rock of racism: all around us - and still within the church – Anthony Reddie's powerful chapter in 'Unity in Process' is very challenging. One observation for British Baptists – including Yorkshire - is that sometimes the church can feel 'more like a hotel than a home' for many black and minority ethnic Baptists. And Martin Luther King, a Baptist and ecumenically committed, still inspires us to work for justice. His 'I have a dream!' speech continues to bring a tingle to my spine but still awaits fulfilment.

Be More than Spectators

We have many challenges. Rocks and sticks restrict the flow of the running water from the throne of God - but **there is Hope**. We are called not just to be a spectator on the bridge but a participant - to be **IN** the water. Ezekiel reminds us of the water that trickled then flowed more deeply – indeed deep enough to swim in. Where the river flows, life will flourish. So each of us in Christ is IN this river of life!

Be Led by the Spirit; Glimpse the Kingdom

'Divine discontent and longing' urge us to be led by the Spirit, tackling injustice, seeking to model fairness, celebrating diversity, learning to live with difference, to listen to and embrace the pain of the other and, patiently, building relationships of trust, leading to joint action. Jesus Christ still changes situations and people. We need the confidence to hold on to that. Today in this place, we dream our dreams and all around us have a wonderful glimpse of Kingdom life. We work towards the fulfilment of a vision where one day all humankind will flourish, where – as we read in Revelation – there is a place for every tribe and language and people and nation. Under the magnificent banner of 'Hope for the Nations', may each of us recommit ourselves TOGETHER to go with the flow of the Spirit so that ALL will celebrate the JOY of living water. Amen.



Bishop Doye Agama of the Apostolic Pastoral Association will convene the 2015 Forum. Photo by Chris Dobson

FORUM FOR US

Churches Together in England (CTE) has just held its once-in-three-years Forum. This is one of the biggest and most diverse gatherings of Christians in the country, with representatives from mainstream Anglican, Catholic and alongside Orthodox priests, Pentecostal congregations and countless African and other international churches.

That might sound like just another conference that someone else went to, but it gave a first glimpse into what the future church in this country might look like, and that will affect us all. Up to 25 years ago, we thought of unity in terms of church mergers into a single organisation. Then we moved on to Churches Together, essentially the ‘big 5’ (Anglican,

Baptist, Catholic, Methodist, URC) getting on together. Now it’s clear that in multi-cultural areas like , there is huge diversity, and far more chances to build relationships with other Christians than we had every thought before. Our new understanding of ‘church’ has to include variety.

David Cornick

General Secretary of CTE, gives an overview of Church Unity in England



There is good news. The ecumenical rainbow is brighter now than it was in 1987, its colours more vibrant and exciting. The journey is no longer the prerogative of the Church of England and assorted Protestants, but is peopled by the Orthodox of the East, the Catholic Church, Pentecostals, African, Caribbean and English and an increasing number of community churches. In 1987 we could barely have dreamt of such variety, such diversity. There is good news. In many places co-operation amongst Christian churches is normal and unremarkable. This year we were all part of More Than Gold, which enabled the largest ever Christian response to the Olympics - over half a million people attended church-run community events, and demand exceeded supply...

There is good news - the churches continue to be deeply engaged with each other in bi-lateral dialogue, of which (the Anglican-Roman Catholic) ARCIC III and the Anglican-Methodist Covenant are only the most visible instances. That slow, gentle work of deepening understanding of each other continues unabated, despite reduced budgets. There is good news. The dynamics of English Christianity have changed in the last quarter of a century. Broadly speaking the gentle decline of mainstream Protestant churches has continued unabated, balanced by a rise in immigrant congregations... As David Goodhew puts it, “British churches are experiencing both decline and growth”. The growth is found mainly but not exclusively amongst immigrant and new churches.

Goodhew notes that “...The more multicultural and the more economically bouyant an area, the more likely it is to have growing churches.” There is good news - we are not living in the last days of English Christianity. So, what does love require of us?

Love requires of us that we strive to reflect the wholeness of God’s people, that we seek to discover that of Christ in the other.

I have a dream of a Churches Together in England as an umbrella under which all kinds of enterprises of Christian co-operation, from Fresh Expressions to (the Anglican - Roman Catholic) English ARC, from church leaders’ meetings to Christian Aid and CAFOD are willing to stand. Not because I have any desire to build an empire, not because we want to own or control - we don’t and we can’t - but because I want the people of God to grasp the unprecedented breadth of their present ecumenical engagement, even if they don’t call it that, and the potential for what might be. The problem with ecumenism is not that it has failed but that its success has gone unheralded because in its glory days the churches set themselves an almost impossible ideal - and then failed to celebrate what they have actually achieved - the replacement of enmity with friendship, competition with fellowship in Christ. And that was a very considerable achievement.

In other words, be faithful, don’t lose the vision, hold on to the truth that your allegiance is to Christ and none other. Hold on to the vision that your oneness in Christ is a profounder reality than the ebbs and flows of ecclesiastical politics and philosophical fashion. Hold on the vision that in God’s good time the church of God will be one, and that its unity will embrace the whole of humanity and indeed the whole created order.

Valerie Jenkins

sees the Forum through West Yorkshire eyes



Path to Unity, from the closing worship of the Forum

It was stimulating, thoughtful, reflective and inspiring...and fairly exhausting too!

A great opportunity to meet and talk with people involved in such an astonishing variety of ecumenical projects makes one aware of how far behind ecclesiastical hierarchies are on the ecumenical journey. They need to sprint to catch up with people who have just been getting on with being church together.

In an exhibition space there were some well-known organisations represented, like the ecumenical communities at Corrymeela and Iona. I had heard of Premier Radio but had no idea of the scope of the work being undertaken under their auspices, including on-line protection for children using the internet.

Then there was the lady who was prayerfully knitting scarves and shawls for those who had been involved in trauma and bereavement particularly in road accidents; and a Salvation Army Officer, employed by the Diocese of St. Albans, who provided chaplaincy along the canals, with lay people being trained to take up a similar ministry in other places.

The worship was moving, and challenging. In the final act of worship, all the candles and shawls, that had been a focal point of our group work, were brought together, and they formed a poignant symbol of all that we had shared. The haunting music of violin and guitar that led all the worship times will echo long in the memory...

Janet Scott

Quaker, Forum Moderator, sums up: What does love require of us?

We live in a world of great need, with poverty and inequality... There is a need for the good news and the life of the kingdom to be brought to our nation and our world so that our own and future generations may live life in its fullness. There is much evidence of churches already working together, of local cooperation in projects and the building of strong and trusting relationships....

There are still issues which divide us, in ethics and in faith and order issues. We need to celebrate each other, and to accept the gifts which each brings. Our variety is a God-given gift which we need to appreciate and honour... Love requires us to listen to each other, to continue in dialogue even when it is difficult, to share what we have and to learn from each others’ traditions... We need patience and wisdom...

We are not only called to be one but also sent to be one. This is risky, for we open ourselves to our lives and our

churches being changed... God journeys with us and the Holy Spirit holds us and leads us and provides for

our needs. Love comes from God’s gift to us of himself. Let us receive it and live it together.



Lutheran Bishop Jana Jeruma-Grinberga, Catholic Archbishop Vincent Nichols, and Quaker moderator of the Forum, Janet Scott. Photo by Chris Dobson



In Trinity Methodist Church, Harrogate, witnessing the Covenant signing, were (standing): Clive Barrett, James Bell (Bishop of Knaresborough), Julian Pursehouse (Vice Chair of District), Mark Wakelin (President of the Methodist Conference), Walter Jagucki (Lutheran), Eva Pinthus (Quaker).

Leeds is the first place in the country to become an Area Partnership under the auspices of the 2003 national Anglican Methodist Covenant. With the approval of both synods, the Diocese and District, in the places where they overlap, commit themselves to shared planning for mission and shared cooperation

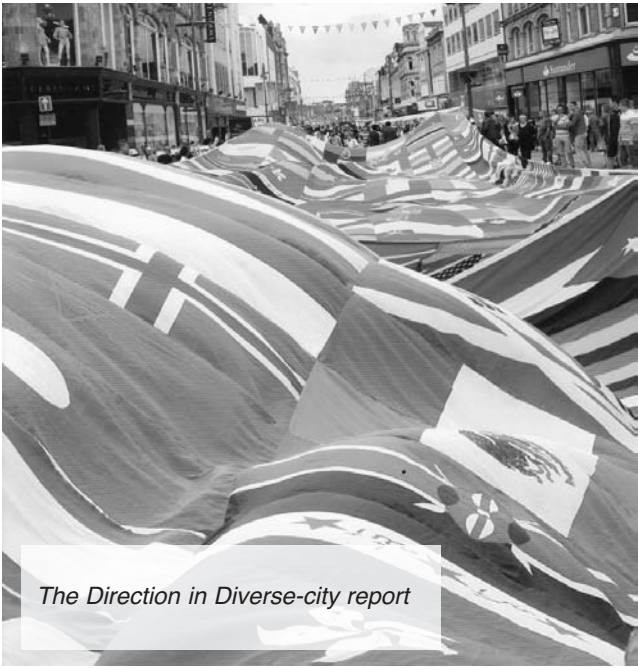
between churches, parishes, circuits and deaneries. They would affirm each other's lay ministries, and ordained ministries within existing legal frameworks. The unique dimension comes with a commitment to ensure that each is involved in the other's planning of deployment of ministers and staff, with specific recommendations about

how that might be done. This would enable imaginative sharing of resources in the cause of joint mission. This sort of joint approach to mission is a new departure for both Churches, and is being watched with interest by other areas of the country to see whether the model might spread.

LEEDS LEADS!



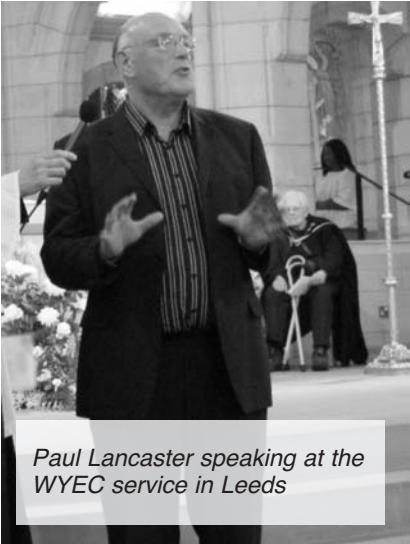
John Packer, Bishop of Ripon and Leeds, and Liz Smith, Chair of Leeds Methodist District, sign the ground-breaking Area Covenant.



The Direction in Diverse-city report

Connection and Diverse-city

A new report is calling for recognition and welcome for as many as seventy new congregations in Leeds which have sprung up in the past five to ten years. The Leeds group, Hope for the Nations, has carried out a survey of international churches and fellowship groups meeting around the city, often using other church premises for their meetings. The results are summarised in the report 'Direction in Diverse-city' which says that over the past ten years people of an estimated 120 nationalities have arrived in Leeds, many of them with a strong Christian faith. International congregations and groups have sprung up including Caribbean, African, eastern European and South and East Asian nationalities. It wants to raise awareness of the growing number of churches across Leeds and encourage greater connection in mission between people of different nationalities. The report's author, Paul Lancaster writes, "Hopefully it (the report) will be useful to all who recognise that this broad diversity is to be valued, and have a desire to work with it for the positive good of the city and the extension of God's kingdom."



Paul Lancaster speaking at the WYEC service in Leeds

CONNECTing the Diverse City

Strapped to the floor of the City of Leeds School Gymnasium is a giant carpet map of the city. Around the side of this impressive flooring are around 30 stands manned by eager representatives of charities, organisations and outreach programmes, decorated with vibrant fliers and posters. Milling about are the 200+ delegates that have come from communities across Leeds and its surroundings to learn about the day-to-day initiatives combating affliction, indifference and intolerance and to find out how they can help.



This is the 3rd annual Connect event and this year's theme is 'Connecting across our DIVER-city', emphasising the importance of connections in a world often segregated by cultural and regional circumstance. Leeds is a fiercely multicultural city and with that mantle comes the difficult problems arising from a society that is simply trying to come to terms with itself. Connect 2012 is all about giving organisations the opportunity to step out and find people with the same calling, enabling them to receive practical encouragement and continue more boldly. This year's event also has an international focus, highlighting international issues in our city and drawing attention to a report by Hope for the Nations detailing the progress of initiatives formed to unify churches of different national identities in their efforts to pursue the Kingdom. [You can download a directory of international churches from www.networkleeds.com and searching for "international congregations".] "Chatting to representatives and delegates," writes Tim Hearson, "it was a relief to hear from passionate people who are striving to be the Father's hands and feet in the world. A relief to know that for every challenge our society is faced with, God has raised up gifted people with the skills and heart for just those challenges. A relief, simply, that something is being done. There is still much to do but part of the Connect experience is finding your calling

among the many causes." The carpet map was put to good use as delegates were encouraged to step onto the regions they live, work and felt they were called to serve. This allowed them to meet and pray with other people with the same heart and passion for seeing God at work in their communities. The atmosphere was hopeful as those gathered were lead in prayer and worship. People left encouraged, invigorated and comforted in the knowledge that the living God was very much on their side.



A MOMENT TO SHINE



Brenda Thomson (right) hands over her Olympic torch to Diane Hadwen (Head of the Peace Museum), and Clive Barrett

Little Lane Church in Bradford, a Baptist / Methodist / United Reformed partnership, had special reason to remember the Olympic torch. One of their number, Brenda Thomson, was chosen to be a torch carrier, during the Batley part of its route.

Brenda, formerly an education adviser, has many years experience of promoting good community relations, from setting up a multi-faith education centre, being associated with the Commonweal Peace Library at Bradford University, to coordinating local festivals like the Big Lunch which attracts 200 church and community members.

Brenda takes up the story: "We hired a red Routemaster, an ex-London Transport double-decker bus, from the Keighley Bus Museum to take family and friends to Batley. for the morning.

My memory of 'the moment' is now rather hazy. There were police motorcyclist outriders. The minibus dropped me off with my unlit torch half way up Batley Field Hill – very steep. Much to my relief I was second to go, so I only had a short uphill section to cover and then it was downhill – very steep. As I left the minibus I was given my unlit torch. Family and friends were waiting. Hugs, kisses, camera flashes, no time to be nervous; time to begin to enjoy the day! The cavalcade began to arrive slowly up the hill. There were decorated coaches carrying people from each of the sponsors. I seem to remember being high-fived by red clad, yellow clad, green clad well-wishers and lots of noise!

Much excitement when a torch was actually brought in to the room. We wanted to hold it – oh dear, it's quite heavy!

The first torch bearer, came running up the hill with the golden car behind her. The Kiss – torches together to pass on the flame. A 'wow' from me as mine burst into life – and a cuddle for us. More photos as she sent me on my way. I was really not aware of the TV or the rest of the convoy, just the crowds lining the streets, cheering and cheering as I held the torch high in the air, waving wildly with the other hand.

I found the hill bit of my run quite tough and was relieved to reach the brow and begin to focus on the people and enjoy the downhill stride.

In no time it was over. My face was aching with smiling. My arms were aching with waving. It was time to hand over the Olympic flame. It had travelled all the way from Greece, with its message of peace and goodwill to all, for me to carry it for those few minutes and was now on



Left to right: Joan Edbury (Anglican), John D Anderson (Methodist), Mary Knight (Anglican) and Stephanie Wright (Moravian) who represent two pairs of visitors.

Two By Two: The Fellowship Of St Andrew

Churches Together in Baildon set up the Fellowship of St Andrew three years ago. It sends out interdenominational pairs to tell everyone living in of the over 5000 houses in Baildon about the Church - and the individual churches.

Through the summer months, with the backing of a vital interceding group, pairs go out to different areas of Baildon. Because this joyful group is working together in praying and visiting, not just talking, the members build up a wonderful group feeling. The Fellowship is a band of 10 to 16 folk from the Church of England, Moravian and Methodist Churches. Printed information also publicizes the Roman Catholic Church in Baildon. .

Over 1000 homes have so far been visited; most were given well-produced information about Baildon churches. The pairs usually spent a few minutes at each house; most people visited were friendly and welcoming and there have been no unpleasant incidents. A similar number of people have prayed for the venture as have visited.

The Fellowship of St Andrew is building community. It is expressing unity. The members are following Jesus' command in Mark 6:7 to go out two by two.

John D Anderson

From St Peter's to St Peter's

This is a multi-faith walk through history down Leeds Road, Bradford 3.

Each first Saturday of the month, the Bradford Faith Trail starts at 10.30am from St Peter's (RC) church on Leeds Road, Bradford, and finishes at St Peter's (C of E) cathedral in the mid afternoon. On the way it takes in The Abu Bakar Masjid (mosque), the Shree Lakshmi Narayan Hindu Temple, and the Guru Gobind Singh Ji Gurdwara (Sikh temple). At each end of the trail, Christians welcome visitors and explain the meaning of church. In between they join in the question and answer discussions at each venue about issues such as prayer, sacred books, and the importance of hospitality. We always enjoy the free 'langar' lunch at the Gurdwara.

The route down Leeds Road is rich in Christian history, particularly over the last 150 years. Many of the church buildings have now gone, or been de-commissioned and used for other purposes. Their memory lives on amongst the Christian remnant who continue to worship in this area. Maintaining a Christian presence and engaging in inter-faith interaction are complementary not contradictory.

Several of the Leeds Road Christian centres were built with accommodation over 1,000. The centres now attracting the faithful to prayer in those sort of numbers are now no longer Christian. So God is



being worshipped; but not in the way any of us imagined in the days when as youngsters we attended full churches. We must look to the future with faith and hope. For as the Vatican II document Redemptoris Missio put it: 'Whatever the Spirit brings about in human hearts and in the history of peoples, in cultures and religions serves as a preparation for the Gospel'. In the meantime we take Christ with us as we walk and talk down Leeds Road. It is His plan, not ours that is unfolding.

Inn it Together

Inn Churches – Bradford's 3 month winter shelter for the homeless – provided 115 beds last year for 74 different individuals.

The project was supported statutory agencies and by over 420 volunteers – cooking, washing, listening, playing... - from over 70 churches of various denominations. One host church was regularly supplied with samosas by their local mosque.

Many of the guests were moved on with the support of other organisations. Some went into permanent accommodation, or into health care or even were helped to return to their home abroad. (Some had originally been trafficked to Bradford, in appalling conditions.)

As one of the Inn Churches organisers said, "I have no doubt that Christ came among us during our care for the vulnerable. We discovered again that we receive more than we can ever give."

Juli Thomson from Bradford Inn Churches describes its achievements at the WYEC service in St Anne's Cathedral, Leeds



Manningham Remembers

Last Remembrance Sunday in Manningham, Bradford was special as for the first time it was marked by a joint service. People from Trinity Methodist, Westgate Baptist and the Parish Church of St Paul's were joined by representatives of community groups and people of other faiths. The service was led by clergy from the three churches and included music, poetry and the Radio 4 broadcast from the Centotaph in London.

The three churches have worked closely for several years on a regular Friday Drop In Lunch, but this was the first time they had held a neighbourhood service to mark an important civic occasion.



its way to London. I was to hand the torch over to Liam, a soldier who had been wounded by a bullet to the head in Afghanistan. I touched my torch to his. A quick cuddle and he was walking away – a miracle man who had been given one in a million chance of ever being able to walk again – and my torch was extinguished as I was ushered on to the following convoy bus.

We drove back to Bradford in the big red bus, still waving enthusiastically to passers-by.

ON YOUR MARKS!

The Olympic spirit helped to bring the churches together, in Ilkley, Settle and Wakefield.

Members of 5 churches in Ilkley ran an annual holiday club for primary school age children, a project of Churches Together in Ilkley. The venue changes each year. This time, the club was based in the beautiful Victorian Anglican church of St Margaret's. It was led by the community worker from Christchurch, a Methodist/JRC partnership, and other leaders came from the Catholic church and the other Anglican churches.

Over 60 children attended each day, some who go to church and many who don't. The theme was 'On your Marks', an Olympic focussed programme looking at Mark's gospel. The aim of the adults was to make Jesus known to the children who attended through teaching, games and their own caring love.

Churches Together in Settle and District picked up the same international theme. They also ran 'On Your Marks' in their three day summer club – one of three children's holiday clubs they run during the year. These events attract a good proportion of Primary aged children who do not have other church contacts. Many children have become regulars at the clubs.

In Wakefield, there was great interest in the Olympic Torch when it passed through the city, with crowds lining the streets. A number of events were held by a More than Gold group, organised by ecumenical group Wakefield for Jesus with the support of Churches Together in Wakefield. This culminated in a day of Family Olympic Fun held in the Arena of Thornes Park.



Keighley on Fire!



When the Olympic Torch came through Keighley, the Churches Together group laid on a welcome on Church Green, outside Keighley Shared Church (an Anglican/Methodist partnership). Each church built on its own strengths, and together they provided:

- A free barbecue, organised by a separate ecumenical group, which served 700 beefburgers, 660 hot dogs and 146 vegeburgers were served, with an associated worship group
- children's 'mini-Olympics' run by a full-time youth worker
- face-painting, with volunteers from several Churches.
- inside the church, children made 200 Olympic torches; a schools worker with Christian Links in Keighley Schools (CLiKS – a charity started by Churches Together) was among the helpers
- laying on hands for healing was offered by an ecumenical 'Healing on the Streets' team, which regularly offers this ministry outside the bus station.
- the Salvation Army offered free tea and coffee from their emergency wagon, with young people producing a puppet show at the rear.

As the torch passed the Church bells rang, then 700 people stayed for an open-air service led by Derek Walmsley, Vicar of St. Mark's, and Airedale Church Music Group.



Torchbearer Margaret Cooke with children at the Churches Together in Ilkley Holiday Club



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CELEBRATING WYEC: CELEB

West Yorkshire Ecumenical Council has just marked its 25th birthday with three special services around the region. These acts of worship gave us the chance to thank God for all the things that bring together Christians from different backgrounds. Every picture tells a story...



The story of an amazing community project by the Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP) in Newsome, Huddersfield, is told by Pam and David Kent. The Anglican-Methodist LEP includes a community shop which is both a meeting place and a recycling centre, which helps to fund Pam, the community worker. In the picture they are showing off one of their awards.

BATLEY CENTRAL METHODIST



Archbishop Vincent Nichols preaching at Batley Central Methodist Church



The Wesley Singers



Some of the WYEC senior church leaders reaffirm their Covenant together.



Churches Together in Dewsbury tell the story of their CARE Dewsbury project, which includes a drop-in centre, providing refreshment and advice for homeless people and people with addictions.

RATING LOCAL UNITY

ST ANNE'S CATHEDRAL, LEEDS



The congregation disappeared under a huge 'Hope for the Nations' banner representing all the nationalities of Christians in Leeds.



Young people clowning: CREATE youth club supports young people from different churches.

BRADFORD CATHEDRAL



The congregation wove ribbons onto a net to make a colourful symbol of unity in diversity. On the left is a banner from Christ Church, Windhill.



Hearing about the International Students' Club at the Universities in Leeds Chaplaincy



Music from the Chapelton Community Khoral



This tableau includes: a Street Angels jacket from Halifax; a banner from Gillington, Heaton and Manningham Council of Churches; a Bible from East Bradford Churches Together; items from Denholme Shared Church, Little Lane Church, Halifax Food Drop-In; and a set of small posters representing different dimensions of Churches Together in Settle and District – some of the activities featured in the service.



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Angels at the Festival

Over the last 2 years Churches in Thorner and across Leeds have set up a Prayer Tent at Leeds Festival, led by the local vicar, Andy Nicholson. This year they added a new name, 'Festival Angels' to make the link between what was happening at the Festival and the Street and Club Angels work that many of the volunteers are involved in throughout the year.

Volunteers were drawn from a variety of churches, with Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists, and youth leaders and students from Leeds University Christian Union.

The tent ran 24 hours a day selling teas and

coffees and inviting festival-goers to write their prayers on post-it notes to be displayed across the tent. Many of the prayers spoke of heart-ache, loss, hopes for the future and concern for loved ones.

One volunteer, Mark Tiddy, said, 'As I recovered from my lack of sleep over the weekend, I was blown away by how a prayer tent in the midst of a festival somehow created the most authentic 'church' I have ever experienced.'

If you interested in being involved with Festival Angels in 2013 please contact Andy Nicholson on 0113 2892437.



Huddersfield Street Angels

Street Angels Skipton are the Community Group of the Year

Street Angels in Skipton have won a Craven Community Champions Award for making an outstanding contribution to the community.

The Award recognises a group who has shown positive benefits and impact on their community. The award recognises the difference Street Angels have made to the Craven community and the improved well-being of people in Skipton.

At the award ceremony, attended by 200 people, chairman Eileen Appleby said "I am delighted to have received this award on behalf of all the Street Angels here in Skipton. The project has brought together a diverse and committed group of volunteers, mainly from across the local churches. Street Angels enables

us to serve our local community by bringing a friendly face to the streets of Skipton on Saturdays and helping people have a safer night out."



Huddersfield Street Angels are Excelling

Huddersfield Street Angels continue to go from strength to strength, and they would like to thank Huddersfield Churches Together for their continued interest and support. Speaking before a meeting with the police, Dianne Hughes said, "We are to be awarded an Excel Award from the Divisional Commander of the West Yorkshire Police, and we are so proud of our achievements in this work."



APLEY GRANGE

Apley Grange, on Oatlands Drive, Harrogate, is the care home of the Sisters of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. Completely refurbished

within the last five years, it provides for all levels of care from semi-independent living to complete nursing. All bedrooms are en-suite; there is a sitting room in each of the three wings of the building; and a chapel for the use of all residents. The home has a large and beautiful garden, fully accessible, and also has guest accommodation for visitors. Most of the current residents are Holy Child Sisters; we are now welcoming paying residents and would be happy to receive enquiries from women in need of some form of care as permanent residents or who need emergency, convalescent or respite care.

For further information, please see the Apley Grange brochure on our website:

<http://www.shcj.co.uk/news/index.html>

or contact the Home Manager,

Mrs Wendy Korcu, on 01423 885101,

email - wendy.korcu@btconnect.com

or call in at 35 Oatlands Drive, Harrogate, HG2 8JT

Party in the Park

Live music (a brass band, choirs and worship groups), an open air service with the Bishop of Bradford, craft activities for children and adults, have-a-go community dancing, and free fruit: these were all enjoyed by people in Lister Park Bradford on Pentecost Sunday last year.

And we were blessed by one of the few warm and dry weekends in a wet summer. The event was put on by Churches Together in Girlington, Heaton and Manningham. We had good participation by a range of ethnic groups and age groups. Many people passing were interested and engaged. We were grateful for a grant from Near Neighbours and for voluntary contributions of many kinds. We think this Party was even bigger and better than the 2008 and 2010 Pentecost events, and planning for 2014 begins soon after Easter this year.

Heather Grinter



Love Calderdale thinks big!

The main Love Calderdale event, the Big Celebration, took place in the Piece Hall on a rare sunny Saturday. Over ten thousand people came through the gates. The 2013 event, the Big Birthday Party, will be on Saturday May 18, Pentecost weekend – book the date now! See www.lovecalderdale.org.uk

By way of thanksgiving, Love Calderdale The Big Celebration took place at Halifax Minster with nearly 300 Christians from the Calderdale area coming to a time of praise and celebration for all the things that God is doing in the area. Paul Macmahon (Kings Church) Paul Welch (Illingworth Methodist Church) Hilary Barber (Halifax Minster) and Karen Helliwell (Christ Church Pellon) all spoke about the different ministries going on in their churches. There was a particularly moving time when people were able to share what God had done in their lives through using board testimonies.



Enthusiastic South Halifax!

South Halifax Churches Together consists of four churches: two Anglican, one Roman Catholic and one Methodist. Our most successful events over the years have combined the social and devotional.

In the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity we have a lunchtime service at each church in turn, using the material provided nationally. Readers come from different churches, giving a greater sense of participation. After the service, we get to know each other better at a soup lunch. Each year, the noise level increases as people greet friends from other churches. Although we don't usually have a collection, when one church had to partially close because of a dangerous roof,

we all contributed enough to pay their surveyor's bill.

Each church supports the weekly Drop-in centre in Halifax town centre, run by Christians Together in Calderdale. Separately we have regular food collections and twice we have organised a fundraising concert for the Drop-in. Last July the concert was combined with a farewell for two of our much-loved ministers who were moving on. St Andrew's Methodist church hall was filled with an enthusiastic audience (pictured) who enjoyed various acts from each of the churches. The Drop-in Centre benefited by over £300.



DREAM BIGGER

The aim of Christians Together Calderdale is to help support churches and Christians to dream bigger for God. Many people are sensing that God is saying that we need to dream bigger as individuals within our churches and charities. God is doing something special in Calderdale and the strategy is to move with Him and support initiatives that draw His people into serving our community together.

The Food and Support Drop In

Every Saturday morning about 110 guests arrive for food at the New Ebenezer Centre, Cow Green, Halifax. With the support of nearly fifty volunteers, over 18,000 food parcels have been given out. Lidl provide all their excess bakery items from Friday, and local hotels and restaurants give support too. See more on this huge operation at www.foodandsupportdropin.org.uk. A number of people attending have also

explored coming into faith, and mentors are being sought to connect these people with churches in the area.

Inn Churches Calderdale

Lots of churches and volunteers came together to help the homeless in Calderdale last winter and the Inn Churches Project was just an amazing achievement. The organisers are currently working towards finding longer term solutions for homeless people in the area. It is expected that the number will rise significantly in 2013 due to the Government's Welfare Reform programme. Prayers are asked for everyone involved in Inn Churches.

Coming up in 2013

Plans are advanced for two new initiatives. The Hub will be a website bringing together all the activities of the Christian community in the area.

A double-decker bus has been purchased by Calderdale Methodist Circuit. Churches and Churches Together groups are asked for volunteers to help with the bus (not only drivers) in its work among communities. It has hot water, a loo and electricity; the intention is to add games consoles, plasma screens and facilities for all age groups. To get involved call Paul Welch on 01422 244418.

Angels Love the Streets

Street Angels started in Halifax. The expanding work of Street Angels – Christian Nightlife International Network and Love Your Streets are two of the ministries featured in a new book, "Neighbours Transform Your Street!"



Compiled by Rebekah Brettell, this is part of the legacy of the National Day of Prayer event at Wembley Stadium. The aim of the book and www.neighbourhoodprayer.net is to see every street in the UK covered in Christian prayer and action.

Love Your Streets encourages every one to #Do1NiceThing every day. From shopping locally to being a nice driver, calling in on elderly neighbours to community clean up days. Our web site - www.loveyourstreets.org.uk - offers inspiration that will help make your neighbourhood nicer.

Visit the Neighbourhood Prayer Network web site and sign up to offer prayer and love for the streets in your neighbourhood.

Paul Blakey
Founder Street Angels / CNI Network

Installed

It was that cold December morning with the black ice sheets across the pavements. People from different congregations and Christian groups in Leeds headed to Leeds Kirkgate Market to host an Advent Market Stall. Charities were being offered two days free space, but instead of collecting money, our aim was to bring festive cheer and share the story of why Christians celebrate Christmas.

It's amazing what you can do with a gazebo, fairy lights, holly, tinsel and willing volunteers. We produced a welcoming venue which was visited by a steady trickle of children and adults, who coloured festive masks, posted prayers on a Christmas tree and had their gifts wrapped for free. Santa and his elves gave children a chocolate and a small booklet to hang on their tree at home telling the Christmas story.

In quiet times we had conversations with nearby stall holders. Many struggled to make ends meet. With fewer shoppers than expected – an indication perhaps of people having less money to spend this year – stall holders were working long hours for little money.

The initiative was coordinated by Leeds Churches Together in Mission (LCTiM), in partnership with City Centre Churches Together and Voice of Revival Ministries. Volunteers from over 12 groups or congregations took part, including Gateway Church, St George's Church and the Methodist District. If you would like to be involved in the 2013 stall, contact Sue Hoey at LCTiM: 07946 085 575, info@leedschurchestogether.org.uk

[Away from the city centre, Churches Together in Headingley had a daily cafe and shop, open through Advent, based in the community room of South Parade Baptist Church. As well as refreshments, they included a fair-trade gift stall and reading matter from Acorn Books.]

Cottingley Youth Project

Cottingley Youth Project had a busy summer, with the start of a youth forum (a voice for young people to improve life on the Cottingley estate), an awards night (parents invited to celebrate what their children had done) and an Olympic-themed family fun day, with food and games for over 200 residents bringing valuable conversations and opportunities for prayer.

There is a homework club, and young people took part in raft-building, also building teamwork and confidence. They themselves organised a trip out horseriding, including speaking with the stables and writing letters home.

Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain & Ireland
www.thomasmertonsociety.org.uk

.... with its new hat on

‘Well, it is poetry hour again. It is the moment of truth, the moment of effort. The unexpected word will suddenly be there with its new hat on.’

Thomas Merton – from notebook for Cables to the Ace

An Exploration of Thomas Merton’s Poetry
with Canon David Scott & Stephen Dunhill

Thursday 21st March 2013

Monastery of Our Lady of Hyning
Warton, nr Carnforth
Lancashire

11.00am – 4.00pm
Coffee from 10.30am

This day will include talks, the opportunity to attend the Midday Office, lunch, and a chance to meet and share.

ALL are welcome
Cost: £22 – includes lunch & refreshments.

To register please send a cheque (payable to The Thomas Merton Society) to:

Stephen Dunhill
3 Seaview Cottages
Spittal
Berwick upon Tweed TD15 2QS

Details about the venue, its location & facilities can be found at:
www.bernardine.org/hyninge.html

David Scott is an Honorary Canon of Winchester Cathedral. After many years as a parish priest in that diocese, he now lives in retirement in Cumbria. He was a founding member of the Thomas Merton Society, and a regular contributor to the Society’s conferences. He has published 4 books of poetry, his latest collection being *Piecing Together* (Bloodaxe, 2005).

Stephen Dunhill is a retired teacher living in Northumbria and has had a life-long interest in Thomas Merton ever since his father, an Anglican priest, gave him a copy of *The Seven Storey Mountain* when he was 27, with the words, ‘I think it is about time that you read this’. For the last eight years he has been a committee member of the Thomas Merton Society.

InterACT Partnership

“Let us run with determination the race that lies before us. Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus on whom our faith depends” – the memory verse which underpinned the Champions Holiday Club shared last Summer by community children and children from Stainbeck United Reformed Church and Holy Trinity, Meanwood, two of the partners in InterACT Church and Community Partnership, in Meanwood and Chapel Allerton.

Olympic fever caught us all as we shared in 4 days of story, drama, songs, games and crafts. We made Olympic flaming torches, silver trophies and even edible gold medals. There was so much sharing, helping and fun that we decided to do it all again!

Around 40 children met for a lunchtime Light Party on 31 October, with no trace of witches,



ghoulies or ghosties anywhere. Young and old shared food, made friends and had fun. They went on their way wearing friendship light bracelets and carrying tea-lights, safe in their very own thumb pots. Light to hold but also light to share! - “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.”

It was a taste, a sign, of what we can do when we work together. Activities are as varied as an open Youth Club and a parenting course, carols around the estates and a job club, craft and sewing skills and after school activities. See interactleeds.wordpress.com

Faith in Each Other

Displays by nine world faiths with dancing, music, drumming, video displays and prayers offered by the different faiths, filled the ground floor of the Merrion Centre in Leeds for Interfaith Week. Among the faiths represented, and leading prayers on the hour, were Hindus, Muslims, Jain, Bahai and Jewish representatives, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Pagans

Canon Charles Dobbin, one of the organisers, said, "Leeds Faiths Forum exists to give faith communities in Leeds a voice with the council, to develop mutual understanding between faiths, and to help faiths work together for the community. An event like this aims to overcome prejudice and hostility by introducing people to the Faiths and to the people who hold those faiths. People will see that people of different faith can get on well together."



There were activities for children, henna painting, and a chance for passers-by to write messages of peace. Members of each faith were present and welcomed people with white roses, balloons, bios and greetings cards.

Supporting International Staff



The ecumenical Universities Chaplaincy in Leeds hosts an International Staff and Friends Coffee Hour. It is so good, that the national Equality Challenge Unity has written it up as an example of good practice of institutional support for international staff.

The coffee hour, now in its 4th year, is a simple monthly lunchtime event to provide a relaxed atmosphere for international staff and their friends. The Chaplaincy provides food and drink. Members make presentations on their home cultures, engage in dialogue, network and share information. Recent events have included: international folk songs, informal discussion about a Pakistani short story and exploring our hidden talents.

Contact chaplaincy@leeds.ac.uk for more details, or see the international pages of www.leeds.ac.uk/chaplaincy.

Otley Godspace

A Saturday afternoon children’s activity run by Churches Together in Otley is known as Godspace – a place set aside for God. It is run by volunteers from local churches, including Anglican, Methodist, Salvation Army and United Reformed, and other Christians with a heart for mission in the area they live in.

Godspace happens each half term, with activities/ story telling/ games and craft for children of primary school age. It is all supported by a prayer room which is staffed for the whole time , and a “mission in a mug” area for parents who want to stay where friendship is growing and meaningful discussions can take place.

Ailsa Cummins says that “We’ve felt blessed and encouraged as Christians come together to pray, serve and worship in unity,” and by the growing interest in Christ from the Mums and children.



Leeds 11

Teachers and pupils enthusiastically welcomed the Church Together in Leeds 11 annual tradition of giving almost 400 copies of the Scripture Union booklet ‘It’s Your Move’ to primary school leaver in ten schools preparing to move to high school.

Two packed house of 120 people enjoyed a nativity pantomime, ‘A Lad in a Manger’ at Beeston Hill United Free Church. Performers and audience from ten churches in South Leeds benefited from sponsorship from Aire Valley Home, Leeds Federation Housing and the community development funds of Beeston, Holbeck and City and Hunslet wards of Leeds City Council.

The Church in West Bretton is 30...

The Church in West Bretton celebrated the 30th Anniversary of the Inauguration of the Anglican/Methodist Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP). It was the first LEP in the Diocese of Wakefield and in the West Yorkshire Methodist District.

In 1982 local Anglicans and Methodists promised to share the use of the Methodist Chapel for worship and to work together to serve the local community. Later they rebuilt the small cottage chapel to provide a

lovely new church with better facilities. After a successful Gift Day, a special service was held to renew the Covenant to work together. This was led by the Revd Baroness Kathleen Richardson, former President of the Methodist Conference, and the Rt Revd Stephen Platten, who preached. A special guest was Dr Veronica Pearson whose husband, Canon Stuart Pearson was Vicar of Woolley with West Bretton in 1982. He and Kathleen, who was the local Methodist Minister at that time,



worked together to set up the LEP. The service was followed by lunch in the Village Institute. After the meal, Baroness Richardson spoke of her travels and work. During her visit, Kathleen Richardson also attended Emley Methodist Church,

presenting a certificate to Bernard Jaggar, organist there for 60 years, and who is well known beyond his own church.

Diana Franklin, Church Steward



David Hall (Methodist Minister), Veronica Pearson, Kathleen Richardson, Stephen Kelly (Priest in Charge) and Stephen Platten

... and so is Churches Together in Silsden!



The Revd Ken Beardsley, one of the founder members of CTIS examining some of the memorabilia at the 30th Anniversary Coffee Morning.

In September 1982, John Nowell, Vicar of St James, Silsden, hosted a meeting with clergy and laity from the Methodist Church and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Roman Catholic Church. Together they became Silsden Christian Council, later renamed as Churches Together in Silsden.

Their first event was carol singing in groups around the streets of Silsden, then meeting up by the Christmas tree in the town centre to go to the Methodist church for mince pies. They asked Bradford Council for the Christmas tree, and the trunk was used as the upright of the cross at the next Good Friday open air service.

From these beginnings, a cycle of events developed through the Church year, from the Octave for Christian Unity in January to Community Carols in December, with Lent, Holy Week, Songs of Praise and Harvest in between. There have also been night schools, plays, and musical events. Enduring ventures include the Christmas card delivery. A card designed by a child from one of our churches, showing all the Christmas services is delivered to every home, and is much appreciated.

Since 2003 they have held a short Shoppers' Service every Friday morning at the Methodist church, taken in turn by members of all three churches. The people are unable to attend church on a Sunday.

Silsden Churches Together looks forward to its fourth decade, writes Pam Lloyd, Secretary.

Gomersal Day of Prayer

Every year Churches Together in Gomersal, Birkenshaw and East Bierley elects a new President. The President organises a special event within their year in office. This year it was a Day of Prayer, held at Gomersal Moravian Church.

It was supported by all the churches, Anglican, Methodist, Moravian and United Reformed. The President described the day:

"What a wonderful blessing this day turned out to be! The venue was extremely welcoming and we found it was an oasis of peace away from the hurly burly of life. Reflections were well led by ministers from Birkenshaw Methodist and Gomersal Moravian churches.

"There were various books laid out in quiet corners. There was a prayer pool where one could write a prayer on a piece of paper and fold it in four.



Gomersal Prayer Labyrinth

When it was floated on the pool of water it opened up our prayers to God - very emotional. There was a wonderful quiet room in the loft where light streamed in from everywhere; a really tranquil place in which to reflect

the day's events.

"There was a Labyrinth out on the floor of the main hall and we were given a short talk about its origins and many people walked the paths into the centre and back again."

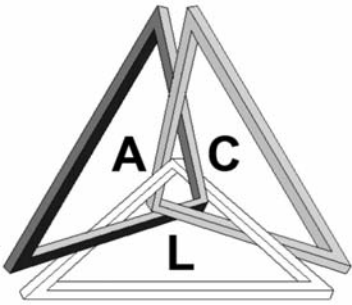
Tackling Addiction

Addiction can drain people's finances, relationships and physical and mental health. People with addiction can then experience relationship breakdown, high levels of debt, periods of homelessness and overall reduction in health and well-being.

Addiction Consortium Leeds (ACL)

The Christian community in Leeds has addressed this in various ways. Different projects have emerged to tackle the problem and release people into recovery. These include Spacious Places, New Hope and St Georges Crypt's Faith Lodge Hostel. Chaired by Unity in Poverty Action, these three projects have now come together to be part Addiction Consortium Leeds (ACL). The Consortium aims to help the projects engage with new NHS structures, giving more chance for NHS staff to refer those in addiction on to the services they provide. ACL will also allow the three projects the chance to access funding.

To help the Consortium, and to prepare for a presentation in 2013, we are trying to connect with Christian involved in the NHS/Addiction services. If you work in this field, please contact Dave Paterson, 07903 123 283, addiction.consortiumleeds@gmail.com.



Alpha House, Calderdale

Alpha House supports and houses men who have had long-term drug and/or alcohol addictions, have become drug-free in prison and who want remain abstinent and learn how to build a new lifestyle. Our residents often have a history of offending, mental health issues and frequent periods in care, prison and other institutions.

Alpha House rents four small houses close to the Sefton Christian Community, giving a sense of community and the chance for residents to support each other in various stages of recovery. The first 18 months have seen lives transformed beyond recognition. Each resident undergoes a full assessment, has realistic goals, and with groupwork, counseling and links with other agencies, there is a wide range of resources and help.

Recovering from addiction can be a long and difficult road. Alpha House works with residents to help them progress towards their personal goals and achieve their potential

SUPPORTING ‘TAX JUSTICE’

West Yorkshire Church Leaders are preparing to write to Members of Parliament asking them to tackle tax avoidance – legal and illegal. This has a serious effect on the lives of millions of the poorest people in the country – it is, in effect, a theft from those people in greatest need.

Church Action on Poverty has provided some comparative figures.

The World Bank estimates deficit £70 billion illegal tax evasion. (An independent research suggests up to £120 billion uncollected UK tax)	£127 billion – the UK’s current budget
£25 billion – Government estimate of illegal tax evasion in the UK	£30 billion – the amount the Government is cutting from public spending each year
£18 billion – the amount of tax avoided by UK companies using tax havens	£18 billion – the amount cut from welfare benefits in the government’s first round of cuts
£4.75 billion – amount of tax Vodafone was let off by HMRC in 2010	£4.5 billion – what it would cost to eliminate child poverty from the UK

[Question: does this mean Vodafone alone has the ability to eliminate UK child poverty? What might be achieved if all trans-national corporations paid their fair share?]

The culture of tax avoidance by the richest corporations affects people in the poorest countries in the world. Christian Aid has been campaigning for ‘Tax Justice’ on behalf of these people. It estimates that aggressive tax avoidance and tax evasion deprives the developing world of billions of dollars of corporate tax, enough to save the lives of 350,000 children under 5 every year.

Settle for Trade Justice



For One World Week, Churches Together in Settle and District hosted an evening focussing on Trade Justice, which was widely advertised to invite interested people. The main speaker was Liz Taylor, a volunteer with CAFOD, who had attended the G8 Summit at Rostock, Germany in 2007.

Father Tony Boylan submitted an article to our local Community News, giving an overview of the need for fairer trading laws to enable the ending of global poverty. Our local MP, Mr Julian Smith attended, and spoke at the beginning of the evening, encouraging our involvement. He is PPS to the overseas development minister at Westminster.

Sally Waterson, Secretary

CAMEO in Ingrow

“Come And Meet Each Other”, (CAMEO) is a group established by Churches Together in Ingrow to respond to the presence of asylum-seekers housed in the locality by the UK Borders Agency pending the outcome of their claims.

CAMEO’s monthly social meetings enable asylum-seekers to get to know each other and start to help each other, instead of being isolated and fearful.

Keighley has recently made great strides in starting to provide the necessary resources to help asylum seekers locally.

While CAMEO’s main purpose is to provide a social space for conversation and children’s games, volunteers and supporters are aware of the bureaucratic challenges faced by asylum-seekers in the course of

their applications and appeals. The volunteers are constantly learning new skills to help them in this.

Non-Christian asylum-seekers are sometimes mystified as to why they are being helped. When asked this question, a Christian helper replied “because we believe in God ...” The response was: “I am a Muslim and I also believe in God. The difference is, **you** believe in Jesus.”

CAMEO has not set out to proselytize; however, non-Christians will spontaneously ask Christians for prayer, and receive it, and lives are changed. What a privilege! Likewise, Christian volunteers and helpers are constantly sustained by the prayers of supporters, which we rely on because we could not do the work in our own power.

BOOK REVIEW Nevertheless, by John Kirkby

Irecently visited an open-plan office in Bradford. At noon a bell was rung and staff gathered round. Three people told stories about the latest clients to have given their lives to Jesus. This organisation has a budget of millions, 200 centres around the country, and a headquarters staff of 200 (mainly young) committed Christians. It is bigger than many Churches in CTE, and many of the dioceses and districts of larger Churches. And the Sunday Times says it one of the best employers in the country. It is Christians Against Poverty.

CAP (pity about the initials, causing confusion with Church Action on Poverty) is amazing, helping 20,000 people each year escape from debt. When your finances are out of control, a local church representative visits, takes your details and gets the Bradford headquarters to work out a budget; you pay an affordable sum to cover essentials – rent/mortgage, electric... (and even some money for savings) - and they negotiate arrangements with all your other creditors to set you back on a path to an ordered life. And they will tell you about Jesus on the way.

CAP was created by John Kirkby, and a new edition of Nevertheless tells his story. It is a classic evangelical account of an individual’s empty, broken life before “being saved,” recounted in traditional evangelical terms (“God helped me resurrect my career in the consumer finance industry”...)

Kirkby had seen both sides of the fence, having sold loans and himself faced the trauma of unpayable consumer debts. This experience meant he could help others to see through and beyond their own debt. But how could someone as unreliable in his own finances run such a responsible company as CAP? What was that about the foolishness of God being wiser than

the human wisdom? Or, in search of relentless expansion, can “stepping out in faith” be a euphemism for financial irresponsibility? One colleague said Kirkby “does life fast and he does life big”.

This is a book of numbers, with constant references to debts run up by Kirkby and CAP, and crises averted by last minute donations. Despite repetition, it is a readable account of CAP’s stunning growth, and insight into how it transforms the lives of tens of thousands of previously hope-less people, in practical ways. There are many inspirational personal stories to bring home the importance of CAP’s desperately-needed work.

Our society has an epidemic of personal debt, with hungry children, vulnerable families in trauma and distress, broken marriages, homelessness, plummeting self-esteem, suicide, and so many ruined lives. Whoever contacts CAP is somewhere on that spectrum. (Are you in debt? Get real help: www.capuk.org.uk.)

As Kirkby says: “That is what CAP is about. It’s about giving people a future hope and watching as their lives change before your eyes.” That means the release that comes from being free from money worries and debt. It also means the opportunity to hear about Jesus. Is that exploitation of the vulnerable? Or, literally, bringing the Good News to the poor?

The core of the book finishes in 2006, when CAP handled £20 million of client debt; an appendix brings the story up to date. There are now 1000 CAP “Money Education” courses around the country, and 200 CAP Centres with evangelists doing debt counselling. CAP wants more churches to set up Centres, so people are not turned away because of a lack of local support. Could you become part of this story? See www.capuk.org.

Clive Barrett

Charity and Justice

The St Vincent de Paul Society and Leeds Commission for Justice and Peace brought together an enthusiastic and ecumenical group to reflect on current issues of poverty. They heard that the recent budget has added to the pressures on people already dependent on benefit. There was concern at the Immigration Authority’s handling of people seeking sanctuary: applicants for asylum rely heavily on charity as they are not allowed to work or claim benefits.

Charitable responses include a group called St Monica’s, which uses property formerly used by Catholic Care to provide a lifeline for some. St Vincent’s Support Centre teaches English to immigrants and carries out counselling in education and debt management.

Christ’s teachings on loving our neighbour lead us both to offer practical help to people in need, and also to raise issues with those in power.

Dewsbury as One

Dewsbury’s Christians may be less than 2% of the population, but they punch above their weight when it comes to Christian unity.

Local characteristics of high unemployment and a strong Sunni Muslim population (Dewsbury has a seminary famous throughout the Muslim world) lead Christians increasingly to work alongside each other. Co-Moderator, the Revd Kevin Partington, has suggested drafting a covenant to recognise that “We can’t take this unity for granted; it’s been hard won.”

The churches operate a twice weekly drop-in centre from the hall of Dewsbury Baptist Church, now in its fifth year; they

have taken over a shop for a joint mission week in Holy Week, getting 2000 visits for coffee and children’s activities; they have washed shoppers’ feet on a Saturday morning and supported the town’s Christian radio station. Branch FM (www.branchfm.co.uk) streams 24 hours a day; it was set up by the local Gospel church and now has an ecumenical board of trustees and has both Anglican and Methodist presenters.

[West Yorkshire church leaders will be in Dewsbury on Ash Wednesday 13 February 2013, to support local people in the face of right wing extremist attempts to divide the community.]

Poverty and Homelessness Action Week

Can you and your church join in Poverty and Homelessness Action Week, 26 January – 3 February 2013? Church Action on Poverty has prepared resources for individuals and churches to get involved, including an online prayer calendar with a daily video showing real stories of people experiencing poverty and homelessness. See www.actionweek.org.uk.

Women’s World Day of Prayer



In the 19th Century, Christian women in the USA and Canada were encouraged to lead communal prayer, within their Missions and associations. This led to annual Days of Prayer within individual denominations.

By 1897 women from different denominations were organising days of prayer for missionary work. In 1922 united days of prayer were held at the same time in Canada and the USA. Four years later, the women of North America distributed the Service to many countries and the worldwide response saw the birth of the World Day of Prayer. In 1928, Grace Gorgan from Scotland went to an international meeting in Jerusalem and heard about the Day of Prayer. The first UK service was held in Scotland in 1930, followed two years later in England. Originally on the first Friday in Lent, it's now always on the first Friday in March.

After the Second World War, the movement quickly grew; by 1968, 127 countries were taking part. An international committee was set up in 1970, meeting normally every four years, in different parts of the world, last autumn's meeting being in New York. After the Second Vatican Council, Roman Catholic women were able to participate, too.

Themes and writers are chosen by the international committee. This year's Service will be written by women from France, and in future years, Egypt, the Bahamas and Cuba.

Women's World Day of Prayer is now a truly international and interdenominational World Day of Prayer. Today, more than 170 countries and

islands take part; the International Order of Service is translated into more than sixty languages and 100 dialects.

Pashminas: from the 2013 Prayer Leaflet



Our National Committee – covering England, Wales and Northern Ireland - edits and publishes all the service material, which is sent to over 3000 local branches.

There will be many services held throughout Yorkshire on Friday 1 March, with the theme, "I was a stranger, and you welcomed me". Many will include colourful pashmina scarves. Find out more from www.wwdp-natcomm.org.

It's more than a single day of prayer: each year members come together, to

pray, to learn, and to give thanks for the vision of those women many years ago, who found another way of giving praise and glory to the Risen Christ in the giving of love, and support to those in need.

Joan Cheetham, Huddersfield Roman Catholic Representative, National Committee, Women's World Day of Prayer.



The international logo was originally designed in Ireland when members from the Republic and Northern Ireland came together to produce the 1982 service. The cross is formed by four praying figures enclosed within the circle of the world.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Woman Leader in Brazil

For the first time, a woman has been appointed the leader of CONIC, the ecumenical movement in Brazil. The Rev. Romi Márcia Bencke said of her appointment, that

"A key demand of us as women active in the ecumenical movement has been that women should also start to occupy positions of leadership in the ecumenical bodies and churches. The fact that a woman is the general secretary of CONIC also emphasizes that the ecumenical movement must expand its commitment to women and their struggles."

In Search of Tolerance

"We believe that the role of religion is to create a climate of peace, stability, tolerance, reconciliation and respect for human dignity and the human rights of all people and not to promote conditions that create intolerance and hatred."

So begins a statement from an international hearing on the misuse of the Blasphemy Law in Pakistan, held by the international affairs commission of the World Council of Churches. Religious Minorities, and especially Christians, are vulnerable to accusations of blasphemy from those moved by intolerance and hatred. We are urged to keep Christians in danger in Pakistan constantly in our prayers.

A New Coptic Orthodox Pope

The 118th Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of All Africa is Bishop Tawadrous. He was recently enthroned at a ceremony at the Grand Cathedral of St Mark, Cairo. The reaction of Bishop Angaelos, General Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the UK was very positive. He asked for God's grace upon Bishop Tawadrous "to lead our beloved Coptic Orthodox Church as it continues its mission to be light and salt in Egypt and throughout the world." See www.CopticCentre.Blogspot.com

Covenant in Wales

Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary of the World Council of Churches has addressed the Covenanted Churches in Wales:

the Methodist Church, the United Reformed Church, the Presbyterian Church of Wales, the Church in Wales and some Covenanted Baptist congregations. "Christian unity is an intrinsic dimension of God's grace to us," he said. "It belongs to our faith, as we also confess it together in the creeds of the early church. To belong to Christ means to belong to the body of Christ, the church."

Tveit also referred to the 2013 Assembly of the World Council of Churches, "God of life, lead us to justice and peace", to take place in Busan, South Korea.

Russian Orthodox and Polish Catholic leaders in reconciliation appeal

The head of the Russian Orthodox Church, visiting Poland for the first time, and the president of the Polish Catholic bishops' conference have signed a joint message of reconciliation.

"We enter a path of honest dialogue in the hope that it will heal the wounds of the past, facilitate our overcoming mutual prejudice and misunderstanding and strengthen us in our pursuit of reconciliation," said Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and Archbishop Jozef Michalik of Przemyśl.

German Public Figures call for Church Unity

Public figures from the fields of politics, sport, culture and entertainment in Germany have made an urgent call for unity between the Catholic and Protestant churches. "Today, the church schism is neither wanted nor justified politically," the statement entitled "Ecumenism Now - one God, one faith, one Church" reads.

The statement said that both Vatican II, which opened 50 years ago next month and the Reformation, which is approaching its 500th anniversary in 2017, had a major impact that continues to be felt across different denominations.

The initiative calls for lay members of the churches to play an active role in taking these anniversaries as an opportunity for change. "We cannot and should not allow the problem of church unity to rest until the church leaders have reached an understanding of the Holy Communion and administration," the statement said. "And we cannot be satisfied with simply having the churches recognize each other."

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Looking to Lent

ARE YOU PLANNING LENT 2013?

RECOMMENDED FOR LENT GROUPS

Do you get together with friends from other churches during Lent? We recommend that together you read from **UNITY IN PROCESS**, the book written from our churches, for our churches. There's an order form on page 20.

'Seek the welfare of the city' Lent 2013

Leeds Churches Together in Mission is coordinating Lent packages for Churches Together groups and congregations, as part of the Scandal of Inequality.

Leeds is one of the most unequal cities in England. Alongside its great wealth and prosperity there are many communities that are amongst the poorest in the country. The Scandal of Inequality is about cultivating outrage, challenging inevitability and creating alternative possibilities to reduce inequality in Leeds.

'Seek the welfare of the city' Lent packages will help you to explore this theme in a way that is appropriate to your group. Each package will be bespoke and can include: Biblical reflection; learning about issues and organisations; experiences of the city

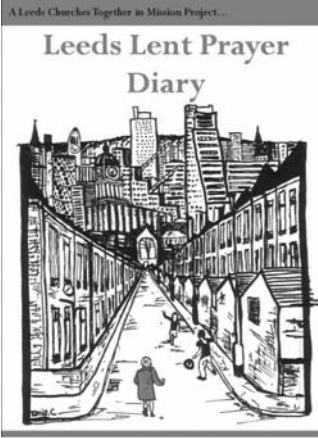
Issues may cover a wide range of topics, such as: Loan sharks; Debt; Welfare reform; Healthcare reform; Scandal of inequality map – focusing on the whole city

If you have already had the Scandal map, we can tailor a presentation to focus on your local area.

Speakers can be invited from a range of organisations, to bring insight into areas of particular interest to your group. Visits can also be arranged to projects.

Whether you need a one-off speaker or a whole Lent course, please contact Sue Hoey at info@leedschurchestogether.org.uk or on 07946 085 575 to explore how we can support your group during Lent 2013.

And remember! The "Leeds Lent Prayer Diary 2013" will also be available for your group, featuring daily entries from social action, youth, justice and arts projects across the city. Email prayerdiary@leedschurchestogether.org.uk to place your order (state number of copies required).



The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity



The theme of the 2013 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is “What does God require of us?” When that question is asked in Micah 6.8, the answer is “To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

The international material for this year originated with the Student Christian Movement of India, who decided that in a context of great injustice to Dalits in India and in the Church, the search for visible unity cannot be disassociated from the dismantling of caste-ism and the contribution to unity by the poorest of the poor. So, during the Week of Prayer, Christians all over the world will explore in ecumenical fellowship what it means to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with God (Micah 6.6-8), symbolically walking with the Dalits, and with all who yearn for justice, towards both liberation and Christian unity. The walking theme is also developed over the eight days to communicate the dynamism which characterises Christian Discipleship. See www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer.

International material is developed each year by the International Committee for the Week of Prayer composed of members of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. This is used as a basis for our national resources, developed by writers from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales on behalf of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

The aims of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity are twofold: to pray as Christ prayed, “That they may be one”; and to pray for the unity of all Christian people as we share in Christ’s ministry.

The Week of Prayer offers opportunities to meet and pray with fellow Christians of different denominations in your locality. Often new local initiatives emerge out of such meeting and praying together.

Christian Ecology Link Conference 2013

16 March, Oxford Place Methodist Centre, Leeds LS1 3AX

"The Stream of Life – Tributaries and trails of thanksgiving, vulnerability and radical choice". A CEL day of celebration with Philip Roderick: Director of the Quiet Garden Movement, Leader of Contemplative Fire and Adviser in spirituality for the Sheffield Diocese. www.greenchristian.org.uk/stream

In the morning Philip will help us to explore with body, mind and spirit the relationship between God, nature and the human. We hope to deepen our discipleship and prophetic practice in church, community and daily life.

In the afternoon we will run two sessions of group discussion, leading to action. The first session looks at different aspects of Christian environmental action: in prayer, contemplation and intercession; in worship, liturgy and preaching; in church life and buildings; in engaging with politics and politicians; as a member of a secular environmental group or movement.

The second session focuses on current debates and campaigns around issues of: climate change; agriculture; transport; technology and investment; finance and economics

Cost: £15 (£10 for CEL members). Early bird price for all: £10 until end of January.

Students under 26: £5-00 Limited Travel Bursaries offered to Students under 26years.

IMPOSSIBLE? NOT IN PONTEFRACT!

When Churches Together in Pontefract held an Advent Service at St Mary Chequerfield, with proceeds to Christian Aid, one of the prayers was:

God of the impossible,
we pray for justice, peace and reconciliation.
And when the challenges seem too many,
remind us of your resurrection power,
and the miracles of your love that happen
whenever injustice is dismantled and rebuilt with peace.
Help us to hope that the impossible can happen
and live as if it might do so today

CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

Required by the Universities in Leeds Chaplaincy Trust. If you think you may have the necessary experience, please contact Clive Barrett at 0113 2618053 or clivebarrett@wyec.co.uk for further information.

DATES for 2013

From 11 January

Fortnightly on Fridays to 22 March, Mark Roques will be leading six free workshops on “Ways of Knowing: biblical wisdom for Christian learning”. Intended for anyone involved in education. www.wysocs.org.uk/booking/.

18-25 January

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Sunday 20 January

3pm Unity Service at All Saints Roberttown; preacher, Clive Barrett
6pm Churches Together in Rothwell and District Unity Service at Rothwell Methodist Church; preacher, Clive Barrett
6.30pm Churches Together in Pontefract Unity Service at Darrington Church, Pontefract; speaker, Jacob Kaiga (Methodist Minister)

26 January – 3 February

Poverty and Homelessness Action Week. See www.actionweek.org.uk/downloadresoucrs.html

Sunday 27 January

2pm Holocaust Memorial Day commemorative event in Leeds Town Hall with contributions from young people and Holocaust survivors.

16 March

“The Stream of Life”: Christian Ecology Link Conference, Oxford Place Methodist Centre, Leeds, LS1 3AX.

13 April

Sabeel is an ecumenical liberation theology centre working for justice, peace and reconciliation in Palestine-Israel. The Yorkshire group of Friends of Sabeel UK will hold a Reflection Day on Palestine at Mill Hill Chapel, City Square, Leeds, Saturday 13 April, 12 noon – 5pm. Speakers include Richard Lewellin and Bridget Rees. Details: Shelagh Fawcett, Leeds Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission, 0113 261 8055, shelagh@leedsjp.org.uk

1-5 May

Kirchentag In Hamburg, Germany

The Archdeacon of Pontefract is taking a group to Hamburg in May for this bi-annual event in the life of the Protestant Church in Germany. Thousands of people of all ages come not only from Germany but throughout the world to worship together and join in various inspirational and thought provoking activities. Hamburg, “gateway to the world” and with more bridges than Venice expects over 100,000 people for this event. The five days of a Kirchentag come alive through free, open participation. Bible studies or large concerts, Taizé worship or socio-political panel discussions – the events are as varied as its visitors.

If you are interested in going, contact the Ven Peter Townley on 01924 896327 or 01924 434459 or at archdeacon.pontefract@wakefield.anglican.org, www.wakefield.anglican.org/people/page/archdeacons

Saturday 18 May Party in the Piazza

Churches Together in Huddersfield Town Centre plan to celebrate Pentecost with: live music, drama and testimony; refreshments; children’s activities; literature; prayer ministry; and Fairtrade goods.



CHAPEL ALLERTON YOUTH PROJECT

Methodist, Anglican and Baptist churches in Chapel Allerton started a joint youth project six years ago, with Oasis gap year volunteers, later moving to a full-time youth worker. Hannah Dey trained at the Centre for Youth Ministry at St John’s College, Nottingham.

Hannah works with volunteers from the churches to develop our activities alongside young people. Young people are encouraged to take a lead in all the groups.

Activities include weekly groups for Years 6 - 8 [Totally Tuesday] and Years 9 and above [WOW - We’re on Wednesday] plus two cell groups. All groups have an annual residential weekend, and some attend Soul Survivor. We are also involved in Romance Academy, mentoring work in schools and a lunchtime Rock Solid group.

Our vision statement is “Working with young people across the three churches and the community in a growing project that inspires, releases and gives opportunity to share our faith in Jesus.”

Chapel Allerton young people

Wakefield Passion



Every Good Friday, Churches in Wakefield meet together in an act of witness.

Last year, as the Cathedral was being refurbished, Churches Together continued to hold the silent Walk of Witness around the City Centre, stopping at various points along the way to pray and sing. Several hundred people started in the new Trinity Walk shopping centre and, led by the Mayor, followed crosses to the space outside the Cathedral for a closing service.

In the evening, Churches Together in South Wakefield followed three crosses to converge on Sandal Castle, with its extensive views, holding a short service of devotion. Being out in the open air, often in cold or blustery weather, is a powerful witness to the commitment of churches to follow Jesus together. (More pictures page 20).



South Bradford Breakfast

Churches Together in South Bradford is embarking on a novel variation on a traditional pulpit exchange. In 2013, the St Andrew’s Oakenshaw Breakfast Church is going out to other churches in the Churches Together group.

Andrew Griffin, Chair of Churches Together in South Bradford, says “it will be a really good time to share fun and worship, with fellow brothers and sisters in Christ from other churches”.

The Breakfast Church started 18 months ago, to meet the needs of young families, to create

something that was lively and interactive, but also spiritual, worshipful and worthy of God. Andrew Griffin thinks they have found the right balance: “by prayer and word of mouth we have grown. We have around 60 members coming regularly and we are still growing. We have ages from 12 months to 70+ and everyone seems to engage with it. We have put fun into worship, meeting people where they are with their journey with Jesus Christ.” And, as Andrew adds, “Jesus said, ‘Unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven’”. (Matthew 18.3)

Hope in Horsforth

Hope in Horsforth’s fortnight of twenty events engaged around two thousand people. Hosted by Horsforth Churches Together, it sought to celebrate messages, actions and stories of hope.

It was topped and tailed by a cinema-style showing of *Invictus*, and Mark Topping’s one man passion play *Impossible God*.

What were the hopes and dreams of the community? Students from St Mary’s and St Margaret’s schools took part in an exhibition on how to develop a piece of land for good use; they presented their ideas in art form at Cragg Hill Baptist Church, which will work with them to see if their hopes can be turned in reality.

There was a Christians in Sport pub quiz, a moving drama on Mark, a Harvest Messy Church, a debate on whether charities do any good, even a night of competitive table tennis. ‘Fischi Music’ performed children’s songs, and Taize services were hugely oversubscribed.

The big events went very well. Harvesting Hope launched a successful farmers’ market (to be monthly on the 1st Saturday morning at St Margaret’s School car park), and Hope in the Park drew 800 people.



The puppets stole the show at Horsforth’s Hope in the Park. (See also page 1)

“We have helped our community come together, celebrate the wonder creation and engage with the questions of justice and sustainability,” said Duncan Stow, one of the organisers, “issues the church believes God cares about deeply.”



Ossett Christians Together Prayer Bus

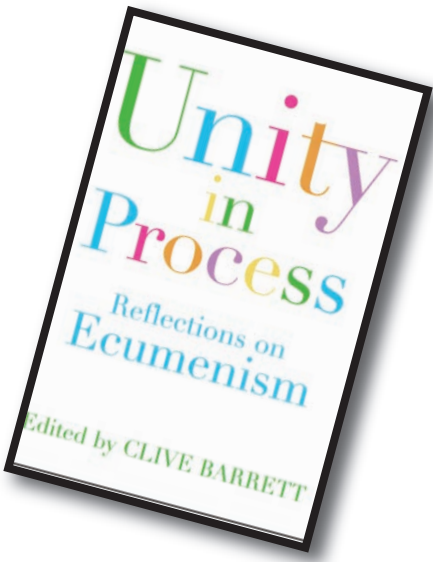
Ossett Christians Together Prayer Bus

One August Wednesday some 45 Christians travelled round Ossett on what has become our Annual Prayer Bus. All denominations were represented, and we visited 8 churches praying at each for their current needs.

We visited: King’s Way Church (Methodist and United Reformed), Salvation Army, Holy Trinity and Christ Church (Anglican), South Ossett Baptist Church, St John’s (Methodist), St Ignatius (Roman Catholic) and Dale Street (Evangelical)

We had a wonderful evening of fellowship, complete with sunshine, storm and a rainbow!

Unity in Process - available now!



‘*Unity in Process*’ is the exciting new book celebrating all that is happening to bring the churches together in West Yorkshire and throughout the country. There is prayer and scripture, local stories and the national context, so many dimensions of our relationships together. It is an ideal book for study in Lent (or any time), so order copies for your church groups now.

“A jolly good read!”
– The Rt. Revd. Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster

To understand more about the fast-changing ecumenical scene, locally, nationally and internationally, and to appreciate the opportunities ahead, you need to read *Unity in Process: Reflections on Ecumenism*. Edited by Clive Barrett, it is the first overview of English ecumenism for ten years, and the most up to date look at relations between the churches, as seen by the most closely involved national and regional expert contributors.

They include: David Cornick, Christopher Foster, Barbara Glasson, Kirsteen Kim, Mike Love, Val Morrison, Paul and Andrea Murray, Vincent Nichols, Stephen Platten, Anthony G Reddie, Helen Reid and Celia Blackden, Neil Richardson, Liz Smith, Mary Tanner, Alison Tomlin, Kathryn Turner and Catherine McElhinney, Ernie Whalley. Order your copy now! Complete the form below, save £4 per copy from the standard retail price, and be one of the first to receive *Unity in Process*.



Contributors signing books at the Churches Together in England Forum. Left to right: Christopher Foster (Bishop of Portsmouth); Val Morrison (General Assembly Lay-Moderator of the URC), Mary Tanner (President of the World Council of Churches), Vincent Nichols (Archbishop of Westminster, sat), and David Cornick, (General Secretary of Churches Together in England, stood).

Please send me
_____ copies of *Unity in Process*, at £14.99 each, including postage.
Name: _____
Address with postcode: _____

I enclose a cheque payable to ‘West Yorkshire Ecumenical Council’.
Send to: WYEC, Hinsley Hall, 62 Headingley Lane, Leeds, LS6 2BX

Wakefield Passion





ASBESTOS Management

ASBESTOS Surveys



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ASBESTOS Removals HSE Licensed






ASBESTOS Management

Property Register & Executive Management System

Contact Paul Bates Asbestos Technical Surveying Manager for more information on:
01274 601 021

Email: pbates@mcp-environmental.co.uk





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