

The monthly e-bulletin for the North West, linked to the National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN), is produced jointly by the dioceses of Lancaster, Liverpool, Salford, Shrewsbury and Wrexham. Please send diary dates to anneoc980@hotmail.com

REPORT WARNS CHRISTIANITY ON COURSE TO DISAPPEAR FROM IRAQ AND SYRIA

by Jo Siedlecka, Editor ICN, Thursday, October 15, 2015

Christianity is being systematically wiped out in many part of the Middle East. In 20 countries around the world Christians face major discrimination, imprisonment and death for their faith - those are the findings of a new report launched by Aid to the Church in Need, at a reception in the House of Lords hosted by Lord Alton. ***Persecuted and Forgotten? A Report on Christians oppressed for their Faith 2013-15***, concludes that if the exodus of faithful from Iraq continues at existing levels, the Church could all but disappear within five years. An even faster rate of attrition is noted in Syria whose faithful have reportedly plummeted from 1.25 million in 2011 to as few as 500,000 today.

In a message read out at the launch, the Prime Minister stated: "Every day in countries across the world, Christians are systematically discriminated against, exploited and even driven from their homes because of their faith." Highlighting the UK Government's commitment to promoting religious freedom, he described ACN's work as "crucial", adding: "This report serves as a voice for the voiceless, from their prison cells, and the places far from home where they have sought refuge."

The First Minister of Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon, also sent a message of support for the charity's report. She said: "Only by publishing reports such as this and identifying the extent and scale of the problem can we hope to take steps to address the persecution of minorities that sadly still exists across the world."

Archbishop Silvano Tomasi, the Holy See's Permanent Observer to the United Nations read a message from Pope Francis in which he said: "His Holiness deeply appreciates the efforts of all involved in producing this report and in keeping before the world the plight and suffering of Christians persecuted for their faith. The Pope prays that those in positions of authority will diligently strive not only to eradicate religious discrimination and persecution in their own nations, but also to seek ever more effective ways to promote international cooperation in order to overcome these offences against human dignity and religious freedom."

There were moving testimonies from Melkite Catholic Archbishop Jean-Clement Jeanbart from Aleppo; Victoria Youhanna, a slight young woman from northern Nigeria, who escaped from Islamist terror group Boko Haram earlier this year; and Timothy Cho, a Christian student who experienced persecution in North Korea.

Archbishop Jeanbart gave a harrowing account of life in Syria. He pointed out that in Turkey three days of national mourning had been declared after the recent bomb attack. What should the authorities do in Syria where thousands have been killed or displaced, he asked. The Archbishop lamented the destruction of Syrian antiquities, particularly the ancient city of Palmyra. He described the 82 year-old archaeologist murdered by ISIS as a "Muslim martyr." He praised Britain's pluralistic society and appealed for British support. "We are facing our worst crisis in 2,000 years. We are suffering floods of blood" he said.

Read the full report here: www.acnuk.org

See also Independent Catholic News 15/10/15 Lord Alton: *'Syria and Iraq - a genocide that dares not speak its name'*
<http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=28563>

SAVE MY PEOPLE FROM THE HANDS OF EXTREMISTS, SYRIAN ARCHBISHOP BEGS ENGLISH CATHOLICS

Speaking in Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral on 14 October at the NW Launch of the *Persecuted and Forgotten?* Report, Greek Melkite Catholic Archbishop Jean-Clement Jeanbart of Aleppo said that Christians would not be tolerated by jihadist factions poised to replace President Bashar Al-Assad if his regime collapsed. He warned the meeting organised by the NW branch of Aid to the Church in Need that a Church which began with the baptisms of Syrians on the "day of Pentecost" could be obliterated by the religious-cleansing of Christian minorities at the hands of jihadis who will persecute them.

Archbishop Jeanbart urged his audience to "pray for peace" because "with peace everything is possible" – and he also encouraged them to ask their MPs to reconsider the facts of the war in Syria, "to see again, the study again, the situation in our country". The British people, he explained, had been "misinformed" that the Syrian conflict was a struggle for freedom and democracy against a ruthless dictatorship. "All that was just lies," Archbishop Jeanbart said, adding that it was in fact a war between a modern secular state and extremist Islamist groups utterly opposed to its pluralist and religiously-tolerant culture. Of course the government, the regime, is bad and it needs to be reformed," he said. "But the problem is not there. The problem is that if this government, this regime, goes away we will have a fundamentalist regime."

The extremists ready to seize power, he argued, were not willing to tolerate anyone who was not like them or who did not share their fundamentalist Islamic beliefs. This regime is secular, it's pluralistic, and accepts that all (religious) denominations have all their rights. It makes the distinction between religion and politics which is important not just for us but for all the countries around us," he continued. The success of a solution which will give us the possibility of full citizenship will be a big advantage for the whole region."

Source: <http://www.dioceseofshrewsbury.org/news/latest-news/save-my-people-from-the-hands-of-extremists-syrian-archbishop-begs-english-catholics>

SUBMISSION FROM LIVERPOOL ARCHDIOCESE re RESPONSE TO REFUGEES

The situation in the North West and in Liverpool in particular is complicated by the history of dispersal into the region. In Liverpool there are currently over 1,000 known asylum seekers awaiting a decision and a large but unquantifiable number of refused asylum seekers. Asylum Link Merseyside (ALM) which was set up nearly 15 years ago sees about 250 people each week, offering legal services, housing advice, food, clothing, language classes and other services.

The food bank at the two cathedrals reports that 75% of its clients are asylum seekers/refugees. By the end of the summer they had provided over 300,000 meals and given out 20,000 food hampers.

In Wigan, Support Wigan Arrivals Project (SWAP), a much smaller organisation that has developed over the same sort of time frame, offers individual support to about 20 people per week and provides, food, clothes and some opportunities for socialising to about 70 each week. SWAP began as a church project but now has very little church support.

In Leigh, Leigh Asylum and Refugees (LASAR) provides a social space and advice one afternoon a week. It is largely staffed and supported by local churches.

SUMMARY

1. Local agencies have been consulted
2. National agencies have been consulted
3. A diocesan group has been convened to conduct an analysis
4. Ecumenical discussion have begun
5. Discussion has begun with local authorities
6. An analysis has been produced of the different strands of the refugee situation
7. Information has been shared with clergy
8. Information has been put on the diocesan web site
9. A series of local networks are being set up.
10. Some meetings have been held in parishes
11. A pilot programme is being considered

During the last month the **See-Judge-Act** model has provided the framework for a series of conversations to try to find accurate information about the refugee situation and what it's possible to do:

SEE: What's the problem?

Initial analysis identified five strands of refugees:

Those in the camps in the borders of Syria. 20,000 are to be invited into the UK over five years under the governments Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS). These people will be nominated by UNHCR. They will be given refugee status, financial support for one year and 'leave to remain' for five years. They will be provided with housing, a national insurance number, registration with the NHS, and school places where necessary. We are disturbed by the unfairness of a scheme that chooses a small number from the millions who are in need.

Those in the same camps who will not be invited into the UK. Under the Private Sponsorship scheme people can be invited into the UK by a group that is able to look after them. Sponsored people will be given refugee status, etc, but will not be supported financially. The UNHCR will be involved in the selection process. The same worries about the selection process apply to this category of refugee as to the above.

Those we have seen on our TV screens who are on the move to and through Europe. They include the professional and middle-classes who have the initiative to make their escape and the finance to pay for travel, including to people smugglers where necessary, but they are finding fewer safe points of entry into to Europe and increasing reluctance from host communities. Some of these people are stuck in camps in Lesbos and elsewhere.

Those we have seen on our TV screens who have left Syria and have crossed Europe to reach the camps in Calais, Boulogne and Dunkirk. These camps also include the people who are fleeing from conflicts, climate change and endemic poverty in Iraq, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Somalia, Congo and Sudan. 3 out of every 4 people in the camps are waiting for housing in France. The main problem for the others is that there is no safe means of entry into the UK.

Those who are in the UK and have registered as Asylum Seekers. Estimates of numbers vary widely but are probably around 20,000 each year for the last ten years. Once they have registered (which can only be done at the point of entry or in Croydon) they are dispersed across the country, to areas where the housing is cheaper, especially into the North West.

Those whose applications have failed. Each time their claim is denied they lose all benefits and become destitute. After a refusal they can make another appeal, up to three appeals. The final appeal has to be heard in Liverpool, by which time they are destitute with no money to pay for their travel to Liverpool. (At the moment the children are still entitled to support but there a bill is currently before parliament to remove support from the children of failed asylum seekers.)

During the process it became clear that there is a further strand:

Destitute newly accepted refugees. Those who have been given leave to remain but become destitute because of inbuilt failure in the system, ie. They continue to receive support for 28 days, during which time they need to find new accommodation and register for work. They can often wait longer than 28 days to receive NI registration, to access a bank account and even longer to find employment. Without a bank account they can't access work or housing, without savings they can't pay the deposit for accommodation.

JUDGE: What would help?

1. VPRS: Tell the Local Authorities that our parishes are willing to welcome refugees and will help them to integrate into the local community. Gather volunteers to prepare to welcome refugees.

2. Private Sponsorship: Endorse the scheme, raise money to support it and look for pilot parish.

3. On the move: Support the people in the camps in Lesbos, etc, via Caritas Internationalis

4. In camps: It is not helpful to send clothes, instead we can offer send money directly via CAFOD or CSAN (Caritas Social Action Network). CAFOD and CSAN are both agencies of the Bishops Conference.

5. In UK: Encourage more support for local organisations eg ALM, SWAP, LASAR These are organisations who have been looking after some of the poorest people in our diocese for at least fifteen years, lurching from one financial crisis to the next but always keeping going. They need money and they need volunteers.

6. Failed: This group is in desperate need of support. They are already here. Many have failed to meet the criteria for asylum but it is not possible to return home.

7. Destitute new refugees: Change the system to allow for better and less stressful transition from Asylum Seeker to Refugee.

ACT: What has been done?

Two letters were sent by the diocesan Chancellor to all clergy to inform them that the diocese was beginning to get organised and to set out the thinking behind the response.

Comments from pulpits and in newsletters produced offers of help from many parishioners, including some who are local councillors and members of housing associations. This has helped to open conversations with local authorities.

Conversations with other Christian churches, especially Together Liverpool in the Anglican diocese.

Conversations with the Local Authorities and with Housing Associations.

Conversations with local organisations that look after asylum seekers.

Conversations with Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS).

Conversations with CitizensUK, the organisation that is fronting the National Refugee Welcome Board and the Private Sponsorship aspect of the VPRS.

As the understanding of the situation has developed,

- There have been three updates of information on the diocesan website.
- The elements needed to provide support towards integration are being mapped
- Offers of available help are being collated (by geography and type of help)
- Local networks are being established.
- Existing refugee and asylum seeker organisations are being contacted and consulted.
- Deacons have been identified as a possible focus of support for local organisation at deanery and parish level.
- Trainee deacons have had input as part of their training and a group of practicing deacons were gathered for an information evening.
- Several parishes have called meetings to discuss how to respond to the complexity of the situation; although there is legitimate concern that the problem is so huge and complex that we can't address it properly.
- There has been an outpouring of generosity from across the diocese.

The existing issues of destitute asylum seekers are emerging as the most urgent need.

The parishes in Huyton Pastoral Area (deanery) have identified an empty presbytery that could be offered to a family under the private sponsorship scheme.

ACT: what will we decide to do?

We will continue to offer support to local councils.

We will continue to work ecumenically.

We will continue to call local meetings.

We will continue to organise locally.

The Archdiocesan trustees will be asked to consider the legal implications for change of usage of properties.

Updates will appear on the archdiocesan website.

Questions we would like +Pat Lynch to put to the Minister

1. While we applaud the government's decision to care for the most needy, we are concerned about the level of vulnerability of the Syrian refugees who will be brought into the UK under the VPRS scheme. Will details of needs be available before refugees arrive and will adequate resources and funding be available to meet these needs?
2. Will local authorities across the UK be levied to support the financial burden being placed on those authorities that are chosen to receive refugees under the VPRS scheme?
3. What steps will be taken to match arrivals with the host communities? Will profiles be available in advance to allow for appropriate planning?
4. Proposals contained in the new Immigration Bill will leave refused asylum seeking families entirely without food or shelter. The Home Office received 850 responses to their consultation on this issue, including from Local Authorities who argue they will be forced to step in on the basis of their duties under the Children Act 1989 and warn they will not be able to cope. In light of these concerns, will the Minister consider removing these measures from the Bill?
5. The Immigration Bill also proposes to withdraw the right of appeal against Home Office decisions to withdraw or refuse support. More than 50% of these decisions are currently overturned on appeal, pointing to huge inconsistencies in decision making. It is vital that the right of appeal be maintained. Will the Minister consider removing this from the Bill?
If the decision to withdraw support from families is pursued, will the Minister commit to a minimum 90 day grace period before this support is cut off?
6. Will the Minister consider raising the level of asylum support in line with inflation in 2016?
The Home Secretary's recent speech on immigration at the Conservative Party Conference appeared to imply that we should be suspicious of people who apply for refugee protection after arriving in the UK. Is she suggesting that the UK should only help refugees who arrive here via the Syrian VPRS programme? People are fleeing persecution in many countries other than Syria (from Eritrea, Sudan and Somalia to name a few). They are fleeing countries where resettlement programmes may not exist so many have no choice but to make dangerous journeys to apply for asylum. It is hard to see how the UK will meet its international obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention or its moral duties towards vulnerable refugees if these ideas become policy and we adopt the Australian model. Will the Home Office reconsider this approach?

JESUITS URGE PM TO PUT PEOPLE BEFORE POLITICS

The head of the Jesuit Order in Britain, Fr Dermot Preston SJ, has written to the Prime Minister (4/10/15) to urge a change in policy towards refugees in the light of the current crisis in Europe and the Middle East. <https://www.jesuit.org.uk/fr/node/3109>

Fr Preston urges the Prime Minister to have the courage and ambition to use his leadership to set a tone of welcome and hospitality to those seeking our help at this desperate time. He believes the Prime Minister has a unique opportunity to lead Britain in a way that can awaken Gospel values of compassion, decency, responsibility and charity, and that to do so would lay the foundations for a lasting legacy that would outlive any election cycle. His letter calls for Government action on three key needs:

- To work for peace in the Middle East
- To work together with other European countries to respond humanely to those who seek sanctuary
- To lead collaboration on long-term planning for the region

Fr Preston strongly advises against damaging isolationism in Europe. He notes with regret that the many attempts at tightening border controls in the UK and in Europe have had the effect of forcing people to seek dangerous routes for sanctuary with tragic consequences. While Fr Preston welcomes the new Government commitment to resettle 20,000 refugees over 5 years from camps in region, he urges a more generous response more in keeping with Britain's values and traditions as a beacon of freedom, openness and sanctuary. He asks Mr Cameron to be a better neighbour to the poorer European countries, which are shouldering the burden of caring for huge numbers of vulnerable people, by cooperating with others to relocate refugees within Europe, by adopting humanitarian visas to allow people to enter the UK safely and seek asylum, and by making the rules on family reunification more flexible. Fr Preston believes such changes would reduce the number of people relying on people smugglers and therefore would save lives.

Through Jesuit Refugee Service UK (<http://www.jrsuk.net/>) the Jesuits in Britain support destitute asylum seekers and those in detention in London. Jesuit Refugee Service International (<http://en.jrs.net/>) operates in 50 countries and is working with Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Syria, Greece, Macedonia, Croatia and Hungary, supporting families in camps in region, and offering humanitarian relief to those in transit in Europe. Jesuit Missions UK (<http://jesuitmissions.org.uk/>) supports a food kitchen in Damascus, and family support teams for displaced people in Iraq. Through our 20 communities and 45 pastoral, educational and social justice ministries we are lobbying local authorities, mobilizing our constituencies and collaborating with Caritas Social Action Network (<http://www.csan.org.uk/>) to map the time, talents and resources (including accommodation) which we could put at the service of refugees arriving among us in order to make them feel welcome.

Fr Preston's letter responds to the appeal of Fr John Dardis SJ, President of the Conference of European Provincials, to all European Superiors to take action in solidarity with refugees, (<https://www.jesuit.org.uk/node/3107>) and to Pope Francis' appeal to all dioceses and religious orders in Europe.

Read the letter here: http://issuu.com/jesuitsinbritain/docs/2._letter_to_prime_minister_3_oct_2?e=11360914/30498051

CHURCH OF ENGLAND BISHOPS CHALLENGE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO REFUGEE CRISIS

The Church of England has published a letter (18/10/15) sent to the Prime Minister in early September signed by 84 of its bishops calling for the Government to increase the number of Syrian refugees being resettled to this country "to a minimum of 50,000" over the next five years. Referring to the situation in Syria as "one of the largest refugee crises ever recorded" the Bishops write that "a moral crisis of this magnitude calls each and all of us to play our parts."

Calling directly on the Prime Minister to increase his current offer to accept 20,000 refugees over the next five years to 50,000, the Bishops write: "We believe such is this country's great tradition of sanctuary and generosity of spirit that we could feasibly resettle at least 10,000 people a year for the next two years, rising to a minimum of 50,000 in total over the five year period you foresaw in your announcement. Such a number would bring us into line with comparable commitments made by other countries. It would be a meaningful and substantial response to the scale of human suffering we see daily." In addition to "recognising and applauding" the announcements made by the Prime Minister the Bishops offer help from the Church of England in encouraging their churches to provide welcome, housing and foster care to refugees as well as to support the Government in its ongoing efforts.

In their letter the Bishops also called for the creation of a National Welcome and Resettlement Board, mirroring the successful work of such boards created by Government in response to past refugee crises in the 1950s and 1970s. Since the writing of the letter the board has been created with the Bishop of Durham serving as co-chair of the board. Speaking on behalf of the bishops, the Rt Rev Paul Butler, Bishop of Durham said: "The Archbishop of York recently said that the current situation has rightly been described as a refugee crisis but it is also a time of opportunity for us as a country and for our wider continent. The opportunity before us is to rise above narrow self-interest, however defined, and to embrace the highest parts of our humanity."

"We recognise that both the Prime Minister and his Government responded to calls from the country for there to be a programme of resettlement and we are grateful to him for responding to those calls. However there is a real urgency to this issue with those increasingly being forced from their land as their homes are literally bombed into the ground. As the fighting intensifies, as the sheer scale of human misery becomes greater, the Government's response seems increasingly inadequate to meet the scale and severity of the problem. It is disheartening that we have not received any substantive reply despite an assurance from the Prime Minister that one would be received. There is an urgent and compelling moral duty to act which we as bishops are offering to facilitate alongside others from across civil society."

Read the text in full: <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=28582>

HOLY ROWS: WHY DISPUTES BETWEEN CHURCH AND GOVERNMENT WILL INCREASE

Posted 18 October, 2015 by *Jon Kuhrt*

This weekend saw another avalanche of media coverage about a row between the Church and the government. This time it relates to the refugee crisis. The Bishops have accused the government of dragging its feet and not responding adequately to their offers to help mobilise the churches.

Stephen Cotterill, Bishop of Chelmsford, said: *"The mean-spirited response of the government goes against the spirit of our nation... This is a matter of real urgency. Winter is coming. It seems crazy that the government is not listening."*

Despite widespread assumptions of its decline, the Church continues to stand up against the government more effectively than any other institution. And we should expect to see more and more disputes between Church and State in the coming years. This is for two main reasons, one political and the other theological:

1) Further public funding cuts and deepening austerity

Virtually everyone agrees that the cuts have only just begun. On top of what has already been slashed, this summer George Osborne instructed all government departments to plan for cuts of between 25-40% over the next 5 years. Many are predicting that in the near future, local authorities will be running virtually nothing apart from the most basic elements of adult social care and child protection.

As the state rolls itself back, to cover deficits and promote the ideology of small government, more and more people and communities will be left exposed. Two of the most obvious indicators, food poverty and homelessness, will increase. As there'll be fewer resources to tackle it, voluntary-run food banks and night shelters will be busier than ever. An example is the Day Centre for homeless people run by West London Mission (where I work). Every day we see more and more street homeless people (today it was 114) but, mainly due to cuts, we now receive no government funding. We have to organise events like the sponsored Sleep Out that my wife and daughter did this week, to make up the shortfall.

2) The growth of Christian concerns for social justice

In the last 20 years, there has been a marked increase in the amount of social action run by churches. It has been the vibrant faith of churches that has provided the capacity to grow the network of food banks, night shelters, Street Pastors and Christians Against Poverty's Debt Centres.

One element in this growth has been the shift in the social awareness of evangelical churches. Significantly, this is the part of the church which is growing. The surge of activism has been backed up by a wide range of books, courses, initiatives and events which have embedded a biblical theology of social justice. Increasingly, the traditionally *personal* emphasis of evangelical theology is being fused with a deep commitment to social justice. And this has affected political views. Before the election last year, a major survey of UK evangelical Christians, showed how different their political views were from the US stereotypes. It found that the Labour was the party most UK evangelicals would vote for. And what did they feel was the single most important issue facing the UK? Poverty and inequality.

These views show how the Church is reflecting theologically and politically on its social action. The Church cannot be dismissed as some liberal-leaning think tank. Rather, it is a vast network of people who *know* what is happening in their communities and feel deeply concerned about what they are seeing.

Beyond ambulance work

Running food banks, drop-in centres and night shelters is all about meeting emergency needs. It is ambulance work. In the past, this kind of charitable work has been applauded by Conservative governments. After all, it doesn't use government money and represents 'the Big Society' in action. What rattles their cages is when people question why people are poor in the first place. The words of Brazilian Archbishop, Dom Helder Camara, are still relevant:

'When I give bread to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask, 'Why are poor hungry?' they call me a communist.'

It seems that the government wants Christians to be busy pulling drowning people out of the river. What it doesn't like is when people start questioning who is pushing them in.

The Church already does a huge amount to help those in crisis. And this is why it has a right and a responsibility to speak out about political and economic decisions which make the situation worse.

Source: <http://resistanceandrenewal.net/2015/10/18/holy-rows-why-disputes-between-church-and-government-will-increase/>

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THE RIGHT TO FOOD?

Beyond foodbanks? Tackling the scandal of food poverty in 21st century Britain

- Do you care passionately that no one in the UK should go hungry?
- Do you think that Government could do more to tackle food poverty?
- Do you want to be part of building a food justice movement in the UK?

The explosion in food poverty and the huge numbers being forced to turn to food banks undermines the UK's commitment to ensuring that all its citizens have access to food – one of the most basic of all human rights. Whilst hundreds of thousands of people have had to turn to foodbanks in recent years, emergency food aid cannot be a long-term solution. A growing list of organisations including Church Action on Poverty, Oxfam, the Sustainable Food Cities Network, Trussell Trust, the Feeding Britain Inquiry have all called for stronger and more coordinated national and local government to take action to reduce food poverty.

Church Action on Poverty is organising a series of events across the UK to start bringing together a broad range of groups across the country into a more powerful national campaign to end food poverty and hunger in the UK in 2016.

We invite you to join us at a 'Right to Food' event this November. Hear about the findings of the Fabian Commission on Food and Poverty - due out at the end of October – and have your input into shaping the growing campaign to tackle food poverty and hunger in the UK. NW Venue: **Bridge 5 Mill, Manchester M4 7HR. Time:** 3:00–5:00pm. **Date:** Monday 23 November.

Details: <http://feedingmanchester.org.uk/civicrm/event/info?id=3824&reset=1>

We are in the process of organising more events in other parts of the country. If you'd like to find out what's happening in your region - or if you might be able to host a regional event yourself - please contact us. **Visit:** www.church-poverty.org.uk/righttofood

Source: Church Action on Poverty 2015 www.church-poverty.org.uk

TIME FOR UK GOVERNMENT TO LEAVE COAL BURNING IN PAST, SAYS CHRISTIAN AID

Christian Aid has called for the Prime Minister to fulfil his promise to phase out coal power ahead of the global climate change summit next month. With momentum towards a low-carbon economy growing around the world, Christian Aid and MPs from all the main parties have called on the UK Government to publish a concrete plan to phase out coal power in the UK energy sector by 2023. At the launch of the '**Big Shift**' campaign on 22 October in Westminster, MPs from all the major parties joined the call to act. Outside Westminster today campaigners and MPs shovelled coal into a Victorian themed coal cart to highlight that coal power belongs in the past.

Christian Aid's Tom Viita said: "Coal helped to power the industrial revolution and propelled Britain to become the fifth richest country in the world, but coal must be part of our history not part of our future. The Prime Minister has recognised that coal is the most polluting fossil fuel, and rightly promised to phase out coal from our energy system. Now it is time to make that promise a reality ahead of the Paris climate summit in December. Already over 150 countries have made climate change pledges this year, including historic commitments from the USA and China. The future is not polluting energy from fossil fuels, but investment in new low carbon revolution. The UK will need to move fast to stay ahead in the global competition for investment, and the next step is ending coal and giving the green light to new jobs in renewables."

MPs of all the major parties and from across the UK supported the campaign. MPs attending the event included Conservative MP Neil Carmichael, Labour MP Ian Murray, leader of the Liberal Democrats Tim Farron, SNP energy spokesperson Callum McCaig, Green MP Caroline Lucas, and Northern Ireland's Mark Durkan MP for SDLP.

A report today ranked the UK third among G7 countries for ending its dependence on coal, and recognised a clear opportunity for the UK to go further and drive political momentum for the broader transition away from coal. Mr. Viita said: "Not only is coal's polluting carbon emissions a driver of climate change, our energy landscape is now very different from the 19th century. Modern renewables are getting better all the time and recent research by Bloomberg showed wind power is now the cheapest form of electricity to produce in the UK. But the longer coal lingers on, the less incentive there is for companies to invest in low carbon alternatives. The sooner coal plants close, the sooner we can see investment in a 100% clean power sector."

Low-carbon is not just the future for the UK. Developing countries have major opportunities to leapfrog over dirty development pathways to cleaner, more cost-effective options. Mr Viita added: "Billions of people lack access to electricity and the best option for them is not to wait for a huge grid infrastructure and polluting coal plants. Decentralised renewable energy is healthier, cheaper and can be installed today."

Next month OECD countries will meet to agree greater restrictions on their coal technology. The UK should join other countries in putting pressure on Japan to cease promoting the most polluting forms of coal. Mr Viita said: "Some OECD countries continue to promote coal use abroad, even as they move to phase out coal domestically. The UK should also ensure its own policies are consistent across departments, and ensure the Department of Business stops supporting any coal projects abroad too."

To join the call to the UK Government for a big shift away from fossils visit www.christianaid.org.uk/bigshift

LIVERPOOL *LAUDATO SI'* DAY WITH COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES

Ellen Teague writes: Around 140 people attended a '*Faith and Creation*' day at Liverpool's LACE Centre on 24 October, organised by Columban missionaries and Liverpool Archdiocese Justice and Peace Commission. They represented more than 30 parishes of the Liverpool Archdiocese, and some in Shrewsbury, Lancaster and Wrexham. Other groups present included the Liverpool University Chaplaincy, CAFOD, Pax Christi, Pauline Media, Traidcraft, and Faiths for Change.

The day explored responses to Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si'*, and the hymn of the same name was sung during the day's Mass, where the chief celebrant was Archbishop Malcolm McMahon of Liverpool. Music was led by Liverpool born hymn writer Mike Anderson, with his music group from Our Lady of Good Help, Wavertree.

The Columban team leading the day included four priests, two Filipina lay missionaries, two members of the Columban JPIC (Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation) team and office staff from the Columban house at Solihull. The day was chaired by Columban Education worker James Trewby. Columban Fathers Jim Fleming and Tom Ryan led prayers at the beginning and end of the day, thanking the parishes in Liverpool for their warm welcome to Columban missionaries visiting for mission appeals during 2015.

With the encyclical *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis has brought the Catholic Church to the forefront of the ecology movement, according to speaker Ellen Teague of the Columban JPIC team. Pope Francis has added his extraordinary moral leadership to the fight against climate change, she said, quoting Pope Francis that, "the climate is a common good" and "there is an urgent need to develop policies so that, in the next few years, the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced, for example, substituting for fossil fuels and developing sources of renewable energy". She reported that Columban eco-theologian Sean McDonagh was a consultant to *Laudato Si'* and that the Columban missionaries support Pope Francis when he says that, "living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience".

In his sermon during Mass Archbishop McMahon underlined concerns in *Laudato Si'* about the commodification of natural resources, particularly water. *Laudato Si'* suggests that, "caring for ecosystems demands far-sightedness, since no one looking for quick and easy profit is truly interested in their preservation". The Church is involved internationally in tackling social and environmental crises. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.

Dominican John O'Connor spoke to the section of the encyclical on '*The Gospel of Creation*', pointing to scriptural references warning about the threat to human wellbeing if justice, peace and the natural rhythms of Planet Earth are ignored. Absolute domination of other creatures and blind plunder of natural resources is condemned in *Laudato Si'*. The Church is open to dialogue with any groups in the international community working on environmental sustainability, said Fr O'Connor. He also urged the audience to reflect on their personal lifestyles and calculate their own carbon footprints, considering reducing flying, meat consumption and energy use in the home.

There was group work using the Columban *Laudato Si'* study programme of six meetings. Action ideas emerging from that were picked out by Steve Atherton of Liverpool Archdiocese Justice and Peace Commission. Participants' commitments ranged from political action, such as lobbying the present UK government not to reduce subsidies to solar and wind energy, to bringing back saying grace before meals in the home to appreciate the source of our water and food. There was a commitment to bring the study programme to parishes to raise awareness of the challenges in *Laudato Si'* and to lobby for serious action to tackle climate change at the Paris UN Climate talks, which begin in late November.

Source Independent Catholic News: <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=28662>

POSTERS APPEAR ALL OVER THE TUBE AFTER BARRISTERS RAISE £50K TO 'ACT FOR THE ACT'

by Katie King 16 October, 2015

Posters campaigning to save the Human Rights Act have appeared across the London Underground, thanks to a successful crowdfunding campaign run by a number of well-known lawyers. The emotive posters have been funded by the £55,870 raised by 'Act for the Act' — a campaign launched by Doughty Street Chambers' barristers Caoilfhionn Gallagher and Martha Spurrier to combat the Conservative Party's promise to scrap the Human Rights Act. Human rights lawyer Clive Stafford Smith OBE and children's rights campaigner Anna Edmundson, amongst others, have also shown their support for the project.

The initial £50,000 target set by the group was surpassed in just a month — emulating the highly successful billable hours for refugees campaign by Sean Jones QC — thanks largely to generous donations from law firms. The posters feature real-life stories from ordinary people who have relied on the Act to challenge the law. Now that the initial target of £50,000 has been reached, Act for the Act has set a stretched target of £100,000, which will enable the campaign to spread both beyond The Tube — and the M25 — into the regions.

Tweet your support for the campaign using the hashtag [#ActfortheAct](https://twitter.com/ActfortheAct) – **find out more here:** <http://www.actfortheact.uk>

Source: <http://www.legalcheek.com/2015/10/pro-human-rights-act-posters-appear-all-over-the-tube-after-barristers-raise-50k-to-act-for-the-act/>

VMM SHORT TERM VOLUNTEER PROJECTS LAUNCHED FOR SPRING 2016

Liverpool based Volunteer Missionary Movement (VMM), is launching an exciting new programme to enable individuals to volunteer overseas for much less time than the usual one to two year projects. The initiative will allow volunteers of all ages to work directly alongside local people for 3-6 weeks in a developing country on projects to assist underprivileged communities in several countries in Africa. Contribution will assist development in the overseas host community, as well as broaden the horizons of volunteers. (A variety of projects are focused on those 18-25 years of age for initial development experience.)

VMM was formed by local teacher Edwina Gately and has links with mission and development dating back over 45 years. To date VMM has placed over 2,600 specialist personnel, such as doctors, nurses, teachers, engineers, agriculturists, accountants, builders, mechanics and currently has over 40 volunteers in Africa. We continue to build our links mainly with Diocesan organisations that are responsible for the health, education development and empowerment of communities and its people. VMM's role is and always will be to respond to real need. VMM cannot solve the issues of inequality, injustice and abject poverty or make huge inroads in to the original Millennium Development Goals (MDG), but it can, does and will continue to make a positive difference where it is called upon to do so.

Ultimately for VMM this is all about people; we will contribute through our actions, together with our funders, donors and partners to make the new SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals – an internationally agreed set of targets relating to international development) a reality. We will do this in accordance with our own unique and compelling reason to exist, by helping through the transfer, understanding and exchange of skills, the giving of wider bespoke support and our own initiatives, to build the capacity of individuals, communities and partners to make their own decisions about their future. Short Term initiatives will include delivering primary teaching workshops and assisting in environmental and health projects with our partners. We also plan to assist specific mission organisations in the near future. Limited experience is required for most projects.

Van Garber, UK Manager, stated, "This is an exciting new short term initiative for lay people of all ages to get involved and witness the challenges that exist for people in poverty. Even more, it is chance to help others in need and perhaps begin a journey of mission or volunteer work with VMM."

For additional information contact the Liverpool office at recruit@vmminternational.org or visit our brand new website at www.vmminternational.org. Alternatively, call our office at Liverpool Hope University 0151 291 3438.

PREVENTING POVERTY BEYOND DEATH: tackling funeral poverty - time for the Churches to act

People on low incomes are increasingly finding that the death of a loved one plunges them into serious and long-term debt. Those on low incomes or benefits are hardest hit, because they have little or no savings and have to spend a much larger proportion of their income on funeral costs than those on an average income. Church Action on Poverty's new report *Preventing Poverty Beyond Death* exposes the scale of this problem.

Find our more: http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/funerals?utm_medium=email&utm_source=engagingnetworks&utm_campaign=funerals&utm_content=2015+10+12+Funeral+poverty+action

The cost of funerals has risen dramatically over the last 10 years, and funeral directors often fail to make their options and pricing structures clear. Bereaved people feel under pressure to organise the funeral quickly, and often have little or no experience of organising a funeral. 47% of English funerals were performed by the Church of England, Roman Catholic or Methodist Church in 2012. The Church of England alone takes around 3,000 funerals every week (around 34% of the UK total). This provides a significant opportunity for clergy and church ministers to help reduce the impact of funeral poverty. By talking to bereaved families when planning a funeral service, ministers can provide information about affordable funerals and alternative credit options, before the family commit themselves to an over-priced and unaffordable funeral.

You can help make sure your church takes a pastoral responsibility for helping bereaved people avoid funeral poverty. Use our e-action to send an email to a leader in your denomination - click here now:

<http://action.church-poverty.org.uk/ea-action/action?ea.client.id=128&ea.campaign.id=42190&ea.url.id=470722>

Source: Church Action on Poverty 2015 www.church-poverty.org.uk

TRANSFORM LIVES WITH WILL AID

Having a Will makes good financial sense, as well as giving you peace of mind. It ensures that your wishes are carried out and you are able to take care of your family and friends. Writing a Will also gives you the opportunity to remember charities and other causes about which you have been passionate during your lifetime. Every November, solicitors across the UK country take part in Will Aid month. They give their time and expertise to draw up your will without charging their normal fee. Instead, you are invited to make a voluntary donation to one of the nine participating Will Aid charities: Action Aid; Age UK; British Red Cross; Christian Aid; NSPCC; Save the Children; SCIAF; Sightsavers and Trocaire. <http://www.willaid.org.uk/will-aid-charities>

How can I find my nearest participating solicitor? The Will Aid website - www.willaid.org.uk - has a list of all the solicitors in your area. Alternatively, you can call our team on 020 523 2173 and we can help to arrange a convenient appointment for you. Appointments under the scheme are often booked up very quickly, so we do advise you to contact solicitors as soon as possible.

PAX CHRISTI CONFERENCE - WOMEN AND PEACEMAKING 1915 – 2015

"Bassa Jang!" "Enough War!" This was one of the clear messages that 45 delegates at a conference on Women & Peacemaking heard in London on Saturday 26 September. It came from children in Kabul who are involved in a peace education programme at the BorderFree Centre for Nonviolence in Kabul.

Mary Dobbing, one of the speakers at the conference, has made two solidarity visits to Kabul to visit the Afghan Peace Volunteers. She recounted that on one visit they set up a SKYPE link with groups in the UK working on drone warfare to enable the young people in Kabul to be involved in a question and answer session. #Enough! was set up as part of a global day of listening, which takes place on 21 of each month from 5-8pm Afghan time, linking schools and universities around the world with the young people in Kabul.

Marie Lyse Numuhoza shared her personal story as a refugee from Rwanda. Like thousands of others, her family was torn apart by the war in early 1990s and fled the country, spending years in refugee camps. Searching for answers Marie-Lyse began to ask questions: Why did the war happen? Whose interests were being met by the war? For her the answer was that the original conflict between Rwanda and DRC was fuelled by a desire to control natural resources. This, she explained manufactured divisions between Hutus and Tutsis. Today Marie Lyse is an active member of the Women's International League for Peace & Freedom UK and among other things works to promote UN Resolution 1325 which reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations and peace-building.

Virginia Moffatt is a writer, runner, Chief Operating Officer of Ekklesia and a mother and wife. Her presentation helped participants to better understand some of the tensions in peacemaking and family life. How does one create security for one's own children while challenging wars that destroy the lives of other children? How does one balance the need to be at home and sometimes work away or be imprisoned. Virginia and her husband Chris Cole have also had to negotiate the implications of taking part in nonviolent direct actions that lead to imprisonment or bailiffs turning up on the doorstep. Virginia has used her running to help peace projects including "Circus to Palestine" and writes a Diary column in Peace News.

Mia Tamarin became involved in peace activism at 14, as a curious teenager. Living in Tel Aviv, Israel, she became aware of the injustice of the occupation after a visit to the West Bank and meeting Palestinians. With other high school students she decided that she would resist military conscription (which is compulsory in Israel). Applications for CO status were rejected and Mia served four short terms in military detention. Mia admits that being a CO in Israel is easier than in many other countries. However, militarism is such a key feature of Israeli society that non-cooperation can have consequences for a whole family and Mia's own family moved to the UK.

The presentations of these women helped to flesh out the aim of the conference, to explore the personal and political in peacemaking and to be energised to continue the task today. The day opened with the film "These Dangerous Women" produced by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom about the women who tried to stop the First World War and who took part in the international peace conference in The Hague in 1915. Participants were asked to complete the sentence: To make peace we need to... Here are some of the responses: "Raise our voices", "Be educated about the horrors of war", "Prioritise people over profit", "Stop talking sentimentally about peace & human rights while selling weapons." The Conference was organised by Pax Christi and WILPF and supported by Ekklesia and the FWW Peace Forum.

Conference report: Ekklesia <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/22120>

Pax Christi www.paxchristi.org.uk

Women's International League for Peace & Freedom UK www.wilpf.org.uk/

Centre for Creative Nonviolence/Border Free <http://vcnv.org/borderfree>

Global Day of Listening <http://globaldaysoflistening.org/pages/home>

SHALE GAS LOBBYIST SPARKS FURY BY SUGGESTING WOMEN DON'T 'UNDERSTAND' FRACKING

By Jessica Shankleman 23 Oct 2015

The new chairwoman of UK Onshore Oil and Gas (UKOOG), the trade body that represents the nascent fracking industry, has said women are less likely to support fracking because they do not understand it, sparking accusations of sexism. Speaking to *The Times*, Professor Averil Macdonald said women are more likely to draw on instincts to reach a view on fracking.

A survey of 7,000 people by the University of Nottingham recently found only 31.5 per cent of women back fracking compared to 58 per cent of men. Macdonald blamed the higher levels of opposition to fracking amongst women on the low uptake of science further education among women. "Frequently the women haven't had very much in the way of a science education because they may well have dropped science at 16. That is just a fact," she said.

Macdonald, is also a board member of Women in Science and Engineering, and said women are less likely to be persuaded by facts than men. "[Men] will say, 'fair enough, understand'. But women, for whatever reason, have not been persuaded by the facts. More facts are not going to make any difference. What we have got to do is understand the gut reaction, the feel. The dialogue is more important than the dissemination of facts, she said.

Her comments sparked anger from a number of politicians and industry insiders who branded the comments sexist and patronising. Writing on Twitter, Shadow Cabinet Office Minister Louise Haigh said she understood fracking but was still opposed to it.

<http://www.businessgreen.com/bg/news/2431812/shale-gas-lobbyist-sparks-fury-by-suggesting-women-dont-understand-fracking>

WOMEN'S SURVEY SLIPS UNDER THE RADAR

The Church is "out of touch" with the reality of women's lives, according to the responses to a Vatican questionnaire circulated by the National Board of Catholic Women (NBCW), writes Joanna Moorhead in *The Tablet*.

The survey, which seems to have gone under the radar in many countries including the United Kingdom, was put together by the Pontifical Council for the Laity in Rome and sent to the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, which passed it on the NBCW in February.

The survey included questions such as: "In what ways does the Church support women in the challenges they meet in life?"; "What value is given to women's presence and participation in the life of the Church at all levels?"; and "In what way could the presence and contribution of women in the Church receive greater acknowledgement?".

According to NBCW president Maureen Meacher, there was very little time to report, and the questionnaire was forwarded to only around 200 individuals and groups, of which about 150 responded (although most of these were groups rather than individuals).

The key points made by respondents included: the Church is "out of touch" with the reality of women's lives; women are present in every aspect of the life of the Church and especially in daily parish life; women seek respect and inclusion rather than acknowledgement from the Church; women's financial contribution is now essential to the family income; equality between men and women is now the expected norm at home and at work, roles and responsibilities are shared, and gifts and skills matter more than gender.

Ms Meacher said that Bishop Peter Doyle of Northampton and Cardinal Vincent Nichols, who are the Bishops' Conference's delegates at the Synod on the Family, attended at least two meetings with women to "test the temperature" ahead of their trip to Rome. Pat Brown of the radical reform group, Catholic Women's Ordination, said she knew nothing about the survey, but would have liked to have provided some input.

Read at: <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/downloadpdf/171015issue.pdf>

- I had no knowledge of this survey prior to reading this article in *The Tablet* 17/10/15. I wonder whether other readers have heard of it? Yet another case of women being side-lined? Comments please – Editor anneoc980@hotmail.com

RESOURCES

BOOK: *CATHOLIC WOMEN SPEAK: BRINGING OUR GIFTS TO THE TABLE*

Catholic Women Speak: Bringing Our Gifts to the Table was launched at the Pontifical Antonianum University on 3 October, just ahead of the opening of the Synod of Bishops on the Family. The book is an anthology of Catholic women's perspectives from different age groups, nationalities and backgrounds on a wide variety of issues regarding family life and relationships. At a symposium accompanying the book presentation, contributors expressed their concerns that many of the Synod Fathers were unable to hear the real life stories of so many women struggling to raise families in contexts that are not always in line with the ideals of Church doctrine.

Professor Tina Beattie from Roehampton University in London is a past president of the Catholic Theological Association of Great Britain and one of the editors of *Catholic Women Speak*. She says the book includes contributions from 44 women from across the globe, including a number of the best known names in Catholic women's theology, plus other contributors telling their stories of trying and failing to live up to Catholic teaching on contraception, divorce and remarriage or same-sex relationships. She stresses the volume is not intended to discredit voices of women who find it easy to conform to Church teaching, but the authors of this book believe the majority of Catholic women are not living such "neatly packaged lives"....

Catholic Women Speak: Bringing Our Gifts to the Table by the Catholic Women Speak Network, published by New York: Paulist Press, 2015.

Source Independent Catholic News: <http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=28459>

PEACE RESOURCE: *FLY KITES NOT DRONES*

Fly Kites Not Drones is a creative non-violence project for young people - a collaboration by Pax Christi, Voices for Creative Nonviolence UK, Quaker Peace and Social Witness, and Drone Campaign Network. At its heart is the true story of Aymel, a boy who never really knew his father because of a drone strike. Teachers and anyone who works with young people can find resources here to learn about human rights and the effect of armed drones in the skies above us.

A kite in the sky is a beautiful image wherever you are. Whether pieced together from bin bags and string, or manufactured with high-tech fibres, when we see a kite fly, part of us flies with it. The lives of the people holding the string can be very different, however. In Afghanistan, the perfect blue skies children would use to fly kites are feared because they are also perfect for armed drones. **Download the resource at:** flykitesnotdrones.org.uk

PEACE SONG

If I had my way - a new peace song for choirs for 2015. Polly Bolton uses the words of Harry Patch (1898 -2009) - last surviving British soldier to have fought in WW1. **Hear it** on Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/songsfor2014-2018/if-i-had-my-way>
Download the sheet music and lyrics: <https://soundcloud.com/songsfor2014-2018/if-i-had-my-way>

PEACE NEWS AND EVENTS

The September edition of *Justpeace* – the Pax Christi members' newsletter – focuses on peace education and includes articles by Ben Griffin of Veterans for Peace UK, and John Harding, Head of RE at St Bede's school in Lytham. The newsletter also highlights ways that members can support, encourage, and promote Pax Christi's peace education work in schools and with young people.

Read in full: <http://paxchristi.org.uk/2015/09/22/latest-justpeace-is-a-peace-education-special/>

The Movement for the Abolition of War have their **Remembrance Day Lecture** at London's Imperial War Museum on Sunday 8 November – see Justice and Peace Calendar for more news (page 12)

Pax Christi Liverpool will have a stall at *Embrace Liverpool*. **Embrace 2015** will take place in Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral on 21 November, the weekend of Christ the King & National Youth Sunday. The theme for this year's conference will be **Build my Kingdom**. Based on the lyric in the Embrace Anthem "Build my kingdom here and now" and from the readings of the day "My kingdom is not of this world" **John 36** we will be looking at the role we all have in Building the Kingdom of God on earth by sharing our faith with others and caring for all, through using our own God given talents.

There will be fantastic Keynote speakers, workshops, youth testimonies, praise & worship, adoration, reconciliation, concluding with a Mass at 4pm presided by Archbishop Malcolm. The event will run from 9.30am -6pm. Admission is free – register now www.embrace-liverpool.org.uk 07944 287 690. *Embrace Liverpool* is a not for profit organisation which organises Catholic Youth Events. Such events give people a chance to deepen and learn about their faith and network with likeminded people. Annual conferences take place in Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral and they are organised by young people for young people to prove that the church is still alive. <http://www.embrace-liverpool.org.uk/embrace-2015/>

PEACE SUNDAY will be celebrated on 17 January 2016 - the theme is **Overcome Indifference and Make Peace**. There will be assembly/liturgy resources available nearer the time for use in schools. www.paxchristi.org.uk

PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

Send a greetings card to show your support - for many prisoners a religious card can cause problems so be sure to follow the guidelines. Names and addresses available in the next few days from Liverpool J&P Office tel: 0151 522 1080 s.atherton@rcaol.co.uk

GIFT IDEAS - Some of the many charities offering alternative gifts:

SHOP ETHICALLY - SUPPORT WAR ON WANT

Statement t-shirts, mugs and bags plus a wide range of ethical goods for everyone from www.wow.ethicalshop.org. Every purchase will fund our campaigns for human rights and against the root causes of global poverty, inequality and injustice. You can find our exclusive and provocative Christmas cards, plus fairly traded, recycled, organic and eco-friendly products. Beautifully crafted and delightfully designed gifts as well as practical items are on offer. It's an easy way to support a cause you care about.

WORLD GIFTS FROM CAFOD

Our World Gifts range of alternative presents make a huge difference to people in developing countries, because they do something no pair of socks can ever do – they help people break free from poverty! Check out our new range of World Gifts on our website. You can buy World Gifts for your friends and family, or get our help to fundraise towards World Gifts as a school or parish to help make even more of an impact. <http://www.cafod.org.uk/Give/World-Gifts>

PRESENT AID FROM CHRISTIAN AID

Present Aid is an alternative gift website that supports the work of Christian Aid. From goats and chickens to bicycles and wells, show a loved one you care and help transform communities in need by buying a unique gift on Christian Aid's Present Aid website. <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/give/other/presentaid.aspx>

OXFAM UNWRAPPED

The money that you spend on Oxfam Unwrapped gifts can support the full range of Oxfam's work around the world, from emergency responses to advocacy projects. Every year, our programme teams work out what the communities we work in need the most. It's these must-have items that get featured in our gift catalogue. The gifts are grouped into categories according to their theme. We've added two-letter codes to the end of each product code to show which category they belong to. Your gift could fund any of the activities within the category. Oxfam Unwrapped supports four project categories in total:

ML - Making a Living - enabling people to generate a sustainable income, put food on the table and learn to cope with the impacts of climate change. Example activities: training farmers, distributing livestock, teaching business skills.

IN - Investing in The Future - ensuring people have the best opportunities to succeed. Example activities: training teachers, ensuring children can go to school, helping to bring about improved healthcare services.

RE - Respond in an Emergency - providing much needed assistance quickly. Example activities: providing access to safe water and sanitation facilities, ensuring that people have access to food, as well as helping people to reconstruct their communities.

WA - Water for All - providing access to safe water and sanitation facilities to keep communities safe from disease. Examples include: creating and repairing water points, building toilets and teaching people the importance of health and hygiene practices.

<http://www.oxfam.org.uk/shop/oxfam-unwrapped/ouhome>

EXHIBITIONS

BROKEN LIVES: *Slavery in modern India*

International Slavery Museum Albert Dock, Liverpool Waterfront, Liverpool, L3 4AX 17 26 June 2015 to 24 April 2016 Free entry

Slavery still exists. Even though it is illegal throughout the world today, contemporary forms of slavery can be found in almost every country. Up to half of the victims of modern slavery globally are in India, most of these are 'Dalits'. The word 'Dalit' means broken, crushed or oppressed. Dalits used to be known as 'untouchables', indicating how many others avoided physical contact for fear of tainting their religious purity or social superiority. Many still experience marginalisation and prejudice, live in extreme poverty and are vulnerable to human trafficking and bonded labour.

Broken Lives: slavery in modern India provides a window into the experiences of Dalits and others who are being exploited and abused through modern slavery in India. Delivered in partnership with the Dalit Freedom Network, this powerful and moving exhibition reveals stories of hardship, survival and hope for broken lives mended.

<http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/exhibitions/broken-lives/>

NEW CONFIRMATION RESOURCE FROM CAFOD

Be Revolutionary: A CAFOD Confirmation resource. Inspired by Pope Francis' call to young people 'Be revolutionary', these adaptable resources, focusing on practical activities and taking action, can be fitted into an existing Confirmation programme.

Download at: <http://www.cafod.org.uk/Education/Youth-Leaders/Confirmation2>

THEATRE

RIDING LIGHTS THEATRE COMPANY: 'BAKED ALASKA'

Baked Alaska "high-energy, 'seriously funny' style... extraordinary theatre for these extraordinary times."

Tickets: Box Office 01904 613000 or <http://ridinglights.org/baked-alaska/>

A show about global warming staged by The Riding Lights Theatre Company as part of a national tour sponsored by Christian Aid. The company aims to create unforgettable, entertaining theatre in response to current issues and the hopes and fears of the world we share. The show was commissioned by the Diocese of Lichfield, Christian Aid and Operation Noah. **The Riding Lights Theatre Company** is one of the UK's most productive and long-established independent theatre companies. Founded in York over 30 years ago, partly through the initiative of a city-centre church, the company continues to take innovative, accessible theatre into all kinds of communities far and wide. It aims to create unforgettable, entertaining theatre in response to current issues and the hopes and fears of the world we share. While the company's roots are in a Christian ethos, its work is open to everyone, using faith as a springboard to explore all aspects of life.

Tour dates in the NW area – All performances at 7.30pm

02/11/15 Wirral Hoylake Chapel, Station Road, Hoylake CH47 4AA. Venue phone: 0151 678 6201

03/11/15 Church Stretton Church Stretton School Theatre, Shrewsbury Road, SY6 6EX. Venue phone: 01694 722296

04/11/15 Rochdale St Chad's Church, Sparrow Lane, Rochdale OL16 1QT.

09/11/15 Preston St Cuthbert's Church, Lytham Road, Fulwood, Preston PR2 3AR.

10/11/15 Old Trafford, Manchester St John's Centre, St John's Road, M16 7GX.

11/11/15 Lancaster, Lancs Lancaster University Chaplaincy Centre, Lancaster University, LA1 4YW.

13/11/15 Manchester St Andrew's Methodist Church Hall, Brownley Road, Wythenshawe, M22 0DW. Box office: 0161 485 1605

JUSTICE AND PEACE CALENDAR

1-7 November Living Wage Week

A UK-wide celebration to raise awareness of the Living Wage and the Living Wage Employer Mark. The Foundation holds events, organises media activities and shares new research about the impact of low pay. <http://www.livingwage.org.uk/living-wage-week>

8 November Remembrance Day

'*Lest we forget.*' A message of support from the world's second largest arms manufacturer, BAE Systems, conveniently sited in the underground station below Portcullis House where Members of Parliament have their offices and round the corner from the Cenotaph. Making war is a big and highly profitable business; little wonder then that financiers, manufacturers, trade unions and of course the military and now the growing band of support charities are loath to call for peace and disarmament rather than demanding more body armour, tougher boots and more helicopters to rescue the wounded.

<http://ppu.org.uk/remembrance/index.html>

White poppies to promote a culture of peace

The White Poppy symbolises the belief that there are better ways to resolve conflicts and embodies values that reject killing fellow human beings for whatever reason. Our work, primarily educational, draws attention to many of our social values and habits which make continuing violence a likely outcome. From economic reliance on arms sales (Britain is the world's second largest arms exporter) to maintaining manifestly useless nuclear weapons Britain contributes significantly to international instability. The outcome of the recent military adventures highlights their ineffectiveness and grim consequences. Now nearly 100 years after the end of the 'war to end all wars' we still have a long way to go to put an end to a social institution, which in even in the last decade contributed to the killing of millions. <http://www.ppu.org.uk/whitepoppy/index.html#sthash.eWxnQSAu.dpuf>

16-20 November Anti-Bullying Week, coordinated by the Anti-Bullying Alliance

The theme is *'Make a noise about bullying'* with the #antibullyingweek.

The key aims of the week are ...

- To empower children and young people to make a noise about bullying – whether it is happening to them or to someone else, face to face or online
- To help parents and carers have conversations with their children about bullying – both as a way of preventing bullying, and to help children who are worried about bullying
- To encourage 'talking schools' where all children and young people are given a safe space to discuss bullying and other issues that affect their lives, and are supported to report all forms of bullying
- To equip teachers to respond effectively when children tell them they're being bullied
- To raise awareness of the impact of bullying on children's lives if they don't tell anyone it's happening – or if they are not given appropriate support – with a focus on the impact on mental health

How can I get involved?

- Download the official Anti-Bullying Week campaign pack
- Buy Anti-Bullying Week merchandise (coming soon)
- Plan activities for the week where you are and make sure you share them with us aba@ncb.org.uk

ANTI-BULLYING

Anne O'Connor writes. Perhaps, like me, you are unfamiliar with the names Sophie and Sylvia Lancaster. Sylvia was guest speaker at an open meeting on 20 August in Manchester's John Rylands Library.

In August 2007, her 20 year-old daughter Sophie and boyfriend, both Goths, were assaulted by a gang of teenagers in a Lancashire park. They were kicked, stamped on and left unconscious for nothing more than looking different. Sophie later died from her injuries. Sylvia has set up an educational charity inspired by the initials of Sophie's name to: *'Stamp Out Prejudice, Hatred and Intolerance Everywhere.'* Working in conjunction with politicians and the police, it promotes respect for and understanding of subcultures in our communities. www.sophielancasterfoundation.com

Sophie's story has touched many: responses include a music festival; songs dedicated to her memory; an award for experimental film-making; a novel; and two plays broadcast on Radio 4 - *Porcelain: the Trial for the Killing of Sophie Lancaster* by Ian Kershaw and *Black Roses*, by Simon Armitage which subsequently transferred to the stage with acclaimed performances in Manchester and London's South Bank. The title *Black Roses* refers to Sophie's gothic tastes and the violet bruises on her face following the attack. The play unfolds using Sylvia's words and poems written by Armitage in Sophie's voice. Alan Gibbons, author of *Hate*, a work of fiction inspired by the attack, says: "That someone could be murdered purely for expressing their personality is so upsetting, harsh and bleak ... We have to celebrate difference."

The teenage years can be the cruellest and the most isolated. For members of the 'in crowd' life is generally fine, but for those who stand on the margins anxiety and low self-esteem beckon. And for anyone noticeably different there can be bullying and despair. The superb new animated film *Inside Out* graphically illustrates this. 12 year-old Riley has to move area because of her Dad's job, leaving behind her old way of life, her friends, everything that is comfortable and familiar. The scene where she enters her new class for the first time will reawaken painful memories for anyone who has had to change schools at puberty. Riley is mortified when her well-intentioned new teacher invites her to introduce herself to the class. She feels out of place, only too aware of the strong friendship groups already established there. She is wary of the 'cool' girls whose judgemental attitude she quickly senses. Gradually her life gets back on track, but only after various mishaps and, interestingly, through responding to the empathy personified by the character *Sadness* who is ultimately given space to counter-balance the relentlessly upbeat nature of the character *Joy*.

Riley's situation, as for many, improves as she settles into her new environment but for some this may not be so. Persistent bullying, leading to a sense of worthlessness, can make life a misery for many young people. School counsellors and youth leaders can play a valuable role in addressing this, as can groups such as the national Anti-bullying Alliance www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk a coalition of organisations and individuals working together to stop bullying and create safe environments for children and young people. Established in 2002 by the NSPCC and NCB, the coalition is hosted by the leading children's charity, the National Children's Bureau www.ncb.org.uk The ABA coordinates Anti-Bullying Week each November. This year's theme is *Make a Noise about Bullying* (#antibullyingweek) and runs from 16-20 November.

The profile has been raised by Prince William's recent announcement to champion the cause of young people who suffer bullying or mental illness. Lauren Seager-Smith, national co-ordinator of the Anti-Bullying Alliance said: 'hopefully it will give more children the courage to speak out.'

- This article first appeared in *The Universe* published on 14 August 2015 in the regular weekly column written by members of the **National Justice and Peace Network** and is reprinted with kind permission.

15-21 November Prisons Week *A new and living way*

Hebrews chapter 10 tells us that by God's will, "we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all", and that his body has become a curtain, through which we can enter his presence and begin a new and living way. A new way of life with hearts cleansed and our guilt washed away. A new way of life in hope, holding on to the promises of God, spurring each other on to do good, meeting with and encouraging one another. Let us pray, this Prisons Week, for all people affected by prison, that we will walk this new way, this new life, so that with confidence we can come together as God's people, companions on the way, to spur each other on and encourage the good in us, whoever and wherever we are. www.prisonsworld.org/

Yellow Ribbon Community Chaplaincy

Yellow Ribbon Community Chaplaincy provides support for people on release from prison in Staffordshire, West Midlands, Shropshire, Hereford and Worcester, through one to one mentoring, guidance and practical help. Yellow Ribbon works with people seeking change in their lives, so that they do not return to prison. We meet clients in prison, listen and build a relationship. We aim to be the difference that makes people want to change their way of thinking and ultimately their lives. Established in 2013, Yellow Ribbon works with short-sentenced prisoners, seeking to be the bridge between prison and the community. Believing forgiveness and reconciliation are key to welcoming people out of prison and back into society we befriend, challenge and change the behavior that leads back to prison. By offering one to one mentoring, building a relationship and addressing individual issues, we believe that lives can be turned around and positive outcomes achieved. <http://www.yellowribbonuk.org.uk/>

15-21 November Inter-Faith Week

In Britain today, people of many different backgrounds live side by side as part of a shared society. Inter Faith Week provides an opportunity to discuss and debate how we 'live well together' and to celebrate the distinctive contributions that faith communities bring to the wellbeing of our shared society, both in Britain and globally. <http://www.interfaithweek.org/> Inter Faith Week:

- **Highlights** the good work done by local faith, inter faith and faith-based groups and organisations
- **Draws** new people into inter faith learning and cooperation
- **Enables** greater interaction between people of different backgrounds
- **Helps** develop integrated and neighbourly communities
- **Celebrates** diversity and commonality
- **Opens** new possibilities for partnership

25 November International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

Violence against women is a human rights violation. Violence against women is a consequence of discrimination against women, in law and also in practice, and of persisting inequalities between men and women. Violence against women impacts on, and impedes, progress in many areas, including poverty eradication, combating HIV/AIDS, and peace and security. Violence against women and girls is not inevitable. Prevention is possible and essential. Violence against women continues to be a global pandemic. Up to 70 per cent of women experience violence in their lifetime.

<http://www.un.org/en/events/endingviolenceagainstwomen/>

27 November Buy Nothing Day

Friday 27 November is Buy Nothing Day (UK). It's a day where you challenge yourself, your family and friends to switch off from shopping and tune into life. The rules are simple, for 24 hours you will detox from shopping and anyone can take part provided they spend a day without spending! Everything we buy has an impact on the environment. Buy Nothing Day highlights the environmental and ethical consequences of consumerism. The developed countries - only 20% of the world population are consuming over 80% of the earth's natural resources, causing a disproportionate level of environmental damage, and an unfair distribution of wealth.

#BUYNOTHINGDAY - FRIDAY NOVEMBER 27th 2015 - #SHOPLESSLIVEMORE www.buynothingday.co.uk

FILM: *THE STONES CRY OUT* - Sincere apologies to John Logan and to any of you who had trouble making contact due to an incorrect email address in the October e bulletin – here is the item again with the correct contact details:

Friends of Sabeel UK are still ordering copies of the film '*The Stones Cry Out*' on a regular basis. While still happy to sell, we will set up a system where we mail out a copy to people who ask for it to view for themselves and if they then want to retain it to show locally that will be fine, returning it when that is done. We hope this will encourage more viewings. We are still asking for £3 per head from those who view it but we prefer to ask for this as a donation as the director is still trying to recoup the money she invested in the venture some time ago. From showings around the region we have so far sent over £900 to the director, Yasmine Perni. We ask for £1.50 P&P. **Please contact John Logan** if you want to view a copy on this basis: logan-j@btconnect.com

ALSO wrong for the following diary date (corrected here):

27 November Advent Reflection Day Luther King House, Manchester. 10am-3.30pm. **Rev. Raj Bharath Patta**, a Lutheran pastor from India, involved in setting up Kairos India, and currently studying at Manchester, will speak on the theme of Pilgrimage, his PhD focus. Further info: logan-j@btconnect.com

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER

Baked Alaska Performances: (Tickets: Box Office 01904 613000 or <http://ridinglights.org/baked-alaska/>)

2 Wirral Hoylake Chapel, Station Road, Hoylake CH47 4AA. Venue phone: 0151 678 6201

3 Church Stretton Church Stretton School Theatre, Shrewsbury Road, SY6 6EX. Venue phone: 01694 722296

4 Rochdale St Chad's Church, Sparrow Lane, Rochdale OL16 1QT.

9 Preston St Cuthbert's Church, Lytham Road, Fulwood, Preston PR2 3AR.

10 Old Trafford, Manchester St John's Centre, St John's Road, M16 7GX.

11 Lancaster, Lancaster University Chaplaincy Centre, Lancaster University, LA1 4YW.

13 Manchester St Andrew's Methodist Church Hall, Brownley Road, Wythenshawe, M22 0DW. Box office: 0161 485 1605

OTHER EVENTS IN NOVEMBER

2 Stop the Transatlantic Trade Deals Central Hall, Oldham Street, Manchester M1 1JQ at 6:30pm. Part of a speaker tour across the UK. The speakers will be: **Maude Barlow**, national chair of The Council of Canadians. Maude is an award winning household name in Canada. The Council of Canadians does more than any organisation to hold the government there to account. **Yash Tandon**, Ugandan trade expert and author of Trade is War. Yash is a former member of the transitional government in Uganda (1979-80). He has represented Uganda at WTO meetings and is widely regarded as a leading global expert on trade. **Nick Dearden**, director of Global Justice Now (formerly known as WDM). Nick has been a prominent feature of the campaign against TTIP in both the UK and Europe. He has spoken on innumerable platforms and has ensured the issue is constantly in the spotlight – both in the media and for activists. Free event with tickets from Eventbrite: <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/stop-the-transatlantic-trade-deals-learn-about-ceta-and-ttip-tickets-18996133948>

4 -6 Christian Meditation in Cumbria *There is nothing so much like God as silence* - Meister Eckhart. Boarbank Hall, Grange-over-Sands, LA11 7NH. With Liz Watson. For more information contact: Richard Broughton, Wythedale House, Dean Workington, Cumbria CA14 4TJ T:01946 862990 cmcwccm@fastmail.fm

10 Chester World Development Forum (CWDF) 6.45- 9pm, The Unity Centre, Cuppin Street Chester, CH1 2BN. Speaker Becky Reeve about her recent work in Togo, volunteering with the International Citizen Service, the ICS scheme. 01244 383668. www.chesterwdf.org.uk

10 Ministry Day at The Cenacle 10am-4pm ecumenical day for people in any ministry – input, sharing and time for quiet prayer and reflection - cost £10. Tea & coffee provided. Bring your own lunch. The Convent of our Lady of the Cenacle, Lance Lane, Wavertree, Liverpool L15 6TW. For more information or to book : Tel 0151 7222271 email: winniecenacle@mail.com

12 Preston Housing Justice Roadshow 9.30 -3.30 Plungington Community Centre, Brook Street, Preston PR1 7NB. Free, must book <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/housing-justice-roadshow-lancashire-housing-and-homelessness-event-tickets-17830073229>

12 Lancaster Diocese Domestic Violence Awareness Training - for all involved in pastoral care in the church. Venue: Appleby. More information from Helen Tel: 07503 931196; [email: hbctic@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:hbctic@tiscali.co.uk)

14 What makes a Good Society – and how we can work together to make it real? Church Action on Poverty's Liam Purcell and Amanda Bickerton will join Rebekah Turner (Regional Co-Ordinator for Christian Aid) to lead an exciting workshop on the theme of the Good Society. You're warmly invited to join us! With training and resources, churches are coming together with local people and community groups to listen to their hopes and concerns. We're developing a shared vision of how to build a Good Society in our communities and across the UK. Through discussions, group sessions and training, this workshop will inspire you to work for change, and equip you to start working together to build the Good Society right here. Cost £20 including teas and coffees. Luther King House in Manchester <http://lutherkinghouse.org.uk/events/the-churches-role-in-a-good-society/>

19 The Maurice Brunner Memorial Lecture 7.15pm at the **Manchester Jewish Museum**, 190 Cheetham Hill Road, Manchester M8 8LW organised by The Council of Christians and Jews Manchester. **God in Government: The Faith of Prime Ministers** Speaker **Zaki Cooper**, Assistant Press Secretary, Buckingham Palace (2009-12). He is a CCJ Trustee, who has also worked in the Chief Rabbi's office. **Advance booking essential.** A donation of £5 will help us cover costs. Please email ccjsecretary@yahoo.co.uk or telephone 07791 733 980 to book your place. www.ccjmanchester.org

21 NJPN Open Networking Day, with Vincentians in Partnership, CAFOD office, Romero House, 55 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7JB. 10.30-4pm. Speaker: Sr Caroljean Willie on *Laudato Si' – Blueprint for the 21st Century*. Contact NJPN: admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk, 020 7901 4864

27 Advent Reflection Day Luther King House, Manchester. **Rev. Raj Bharath Patta**, a Lutheran pastor from India, involved in setting up Kairos India, and currently studying at Manchester, will be one of our contributors on the theme of Pilgrimage, his PhD focus, and we are hoping to confirm a second speaker very soon. We will get a leaflet together when details are confirmed, but please book the date now! Further info: logan-j@btconnect.com

28 ACTA Shrewsbury Diocese 11am-3pm at St Columba's Church Hall, Plas Newton Lane, Chester CH2 1SA with speakers Fr Kevin Kelly, a moral theologian and experienced pastor from Liverpool Archdiocese and Eileen Fitzpatrick, National Chair of ACTA. Come along and find out more about ACTA and meet others who are committed to promoting dialogue within the Church. Details: Martin Higgins martinandmaria@lineone.net

30 CAFOD Quiz Night to raise funds for CAFOD's Connect2 Ethiopia project. Organised by Ellesmere Port LPA J&P Group 7.30pm Our Lady's Parish Centre. Fee £3 for adults £1 for children including interval refreshments. Fair Trade stall and Fair Trade refreshments provided at the interval. Teams are welcome or join a team on the night. Details Tony Walsh: 0151 355 6419.

30 Talk on the Dalits of India by visiting speaker Malcolm Egger of the Dalit Freedom Network. 5-6pm, Best Building, University of Chester, Chester Campus, Chester CH1 4BQ. Open to all. 01244 512190.

30 Nov-11 Dec COP 21, United Nations Conference on Climate Change, Paris. "The objective of the 2015 conference is to achieve, for the first time in over 20 years of UN negotiations, a binding and universal agreement on climate, from all the nations of the world." www.cop21.gouv.fr/en

DECEMBER

6 Advent Retreat Shrewsbury Commission. Wistaston Hall, Crewe

6 VSO Christmas Concert 7-9.30pm Chester Town Hall, Northgate Street Chester, CH1 2HJ with *Handbag of Harmonies* and visiting Italian choir *Coro Calycanthus*, tickets will be available at £10.

10 Hunger and Malnutrition in an Affluent Society: Influencing Public Health Policy and Practice - an Inaugural Lecture by Professor Lynne Kennedy 6.30pm Beswick Lecture Theatre CBE017, University of Chester. Tea and coffee from 6-6.30 pm in Beswick Foyer. A complimentary drink will be available after the lecture. Tickets are free of charge and can be obtained from Jenni Westcott, T Corporate Communications: Ext 1344; Email j.westcott@chester.ac.uk

STOP PRESS! Tax Credits: House of Lords vote to delay cuts by three years

George Osborne's plans to reduce tax credits for low-paid workers are in chaos after the House of Lords shrugged off warnings of a constitutional crisis and voted to delay the £4.4bn package of cuts. In a humiliating rebuff for the Chancellor, his proposals were twice defeated after peers queued up to condemn the measures for hitting the worst-off and attacked the Government for not coming clean in the Tory manifesto about the proposals. The double defeat follows a growing rebellion among Conservative MPs over the impact of tax credit cuts on their constituents. Letters warning more than three million families that their tax credits would be cut next year were due to be sent out in December.

- Many items taken from the daily e-bulletin Independent Catholic News www.indcatholicnews.com an invaluable free resource for up-to-date J&P news and events. Sign up for comprehensive weekly e-bulletins from National J&P Network 020 7901 4864 admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk

The views expressed in this bulletin are not necessarily those of NJPN