



Easter Season 2010 Newsletter

Warm greetings during the season of the resurrection. As the signs of new life grow from the soil around us it gives me great pleasure to send word concerning the hopes and aspirations Cytûn has set out for the coming months. There is cause to celebrate much that has happened of late.

Links with Syria

But first of all, some disappointment. For several weeks, members of Cytûn's International Committee have worked hard to further our links with the leaders of the churches in Syria. We have already enjoyed two exchange visits. Much to our disappointment, because of the ash spewed out by the Eyjafjallajökull volcano, our delegates could not fly over to Syria. Despite this disappointment we look forward to developing future links and to hearing from the Reverend Chris Gillham who succeeded in reaching Syria.



A New Way of Working

The past few months have been very much a time of working through our work plan and receiving encouragement and a sense of direction for the future. The sense of direction has come directly from the churches served by Cytûn. Our work pattern is also developed in partnership with the Commission of the Covenanted Churches and the Free Church Council.

A growing emphasis is now being placed on the local. For me and my colleagues, this has been an opportunity to proclaim the Gospel from pulpits under the invitation of churches in Pwllheli, Cardiff, Aberdare, Dinas Powys, Efail Isaf, Radyr, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Pont-y-clun, Caerphilly and Pontypridd. We thank God for the opportunities given.

Cytûn's Enabling Group met for the first time in February. A good number of representatives from every part of Wales and from beyond met to discern good practice from Churches Together in England, to hear what has been achieved by Conwy Borough Cytûn and to hear of the hopes for the Lightship in Cardiff Bay. An

opportunity was given to churches and local groups to offer comment on Cytûn's draft work plan before it was received formally by the Board.

Three objectives have been agreed for 2010: to renew Ecumenism in Wales, to enable shared Christian witness in Wales and to be the place of conversation between Welsh churches. Full details of our work appear on our website.

A National Sponsoring Body and Covenant Plans



Crucially, it is hoped to produce an initial draft of how to set up a national sponsoring body of local relevance by the next meeting of the Board in May. This should encourage and support local partnerships in all their complex diversity. This work rests well alongside the new energy observed in the work of the Commission of the Covenanted Churches that is platformed administratively by Cytûn through Rhian Linecar.

The Commission's Faith and Order Panel has been proactive in bringing strong recommendations for the future to the Covenanted Churches. Among many other forward looking plans is an aspiration, after biblical and theological reflection, to produce a document jointly agreed by all five member churches encapsulating the Commission's understanding of pastoral oversight and stating clearly what model would be acceptable to all the churches. We will see what response is given.

These recommendations, if accepted by the five member churches, would form the basis of a 'road map' for the Commission for the coming five years and, it is hoped that, that as a result of following up these recommendations, progress may be made towards establishing a Church of Wales that shares one faith, one structure, one ministry and one governance but that honours and celebrates the different theological emphases and worship traditions that constitute and enrich the greater whole.

National Festivals

The work of furthering the witness of the churches at the national festivals is proceeding well. A number of requests have been received from newer Christian groups for Cytûn to include them in the churches'



tents. We rejoice, following Sasha Perriam's good work with the National Eisteddfod during the past two years in that admission on the Eisteddfod's first Sunday will be free of charge. Tickets, however, have to be obtained from the Eisteddfod. Another source of rejoicing has been the successful partnership working with the Bible Society and others appealing for funds towards providing a Welsh language Braille Bible. Many thanks particularly to friends from Priordy Chapel, Carmarthen for their fantastic efforts.

Church and Society

There have been a number of key developments in our public square work. Geraint Hopkins takes the lead for this work for Cytûn. He has been sending regular briefing notes to our churches regarding the Welsh Assembly Government's policies and consultations. The Welsh Language Measure is currently demanding some attention.

With the giving of evidence before the Welsh Affairs Select Committee in January, my responsibilities concerning the All Wales Convention on Cytûn's behalf came to an end. There was an opportunity to reflect on the importance of appointing officials at Westminster with the responsibility of understanding devolution and Wales. These reflections were highlighted in the Select Committee's final report.



Reflecting the pioneering work achieved by Cytûn of bringing faith communities together locally and nationally, I was privileged to receive the Welsh Assembly Government's Recognition of Achievement Award for services to community relations from Wales' First Minister, Carwyn Jones. The Inter-faith

Council's capacity building work in partnership with the Equality and Human Rights Commission throughout Wales is progressing well. This work was discussed at Cytûn's Racial Justice Committee. Already, discussions have taken place with other faith community leaders concerning arranging a vigil the evening before the anticipated protest of the Welsh Defence League in Cardiff at the beginning of June. The churches were very active around similar protests in Swansea, Newport and Wrexham.

Every support was given to Christian Aid especially around fundraising for the Haiti Appeal. It is anticipated that we will work closely with Christian Aid's new Wales Committee. It is also pleasing

to see Cytûn re-establish its traditional relationship with Dolen Cymru. We look forward to deepening this relationship.

General Election



Last but not least, Cytûn has prepared materials for the General Election in partnership with Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. Details can be found on the web. One of the main campaigns of the churches is the Sanctuary Pledge focusing on

getting candidates to support those who have come to these islands seeking sanctuary. Notes have also been prepared discussing issues such as the environment, education and Trident.

Financial Perspective

One of modern Cytûn's main aims is to provide the churches with value for money in a difficult economic environment. All this work completed by Cytûn is done so within budget, which on average, costs each member of Cytûn's member churches less than 85p per year.



We hope and pray that these brief notes will be a source of encouragement and benefit to those churches we seek to serve in Christ's name.

Every Blessing,

The Reverend Aled Edwards OBE
Chief Executive of Cytûn

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