



We await the coming of Christ! It gives me great pleasure to greet Cytûn's member churches and denominations and our local and regional groups with Advent blessings and encouragements. In so many ways, as Wales' national ecumenical instrument, Cytûn has been surprised by the fantastic generosity of God's grace not only in the arranging of high profile acts of witness and national celebrations but through those many things individual Christians have asked us to achieve during 2011. God has been with us in so many ways.

**Faith and Order – Witness** Our last newsletter highlighted the success of the churches' witness at the Urdd National Eisteddfod in Swansea. Cytûn moved on to greater encouragement at the Royal Welsh Show in Llanellwedd. Christians met for prayer and fellowship providing a solid platform for the developing work of the rural chaplaincy team. It was as if God had gone before us in providing contacts and conversations that were deeply pastoral and evangelistic. That work continues as Wales' churches have been encouraged to reflect on the possibility of developing a Christian Rural Centre. Conversations are on-going. The local churches in the Wrexham area worked exceptionally hard to provide support for the Cytûn Churches' tent at the National Eisteddfod. For that invaluable support, we give thanks. Christians met from all over Wales and beyond to share fellowship, to worship publicly and to welcome others in acts of evangelism. This year, Cytûn profiled the on-going work of a number of Christian agencies. Space was also given to profile the churches' work for the poor throughout the world through Christian Aid and CAFOD. Having CAFOD in the churches' tent provided encouragement to look beyond the issues discussed and raised at Eisteddfod gatherings. Once again, we marked the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and prayed for peace. Many thanks to Rhian Linecar for co-ordinating our witness at these national events.

Early in the new year, requests will be brought to your attention asking for volunteer support at Wales' national events in 2012. As the work grows the need for volunteers also grows.



**Thanksgiving** Our celebrations have been national and personal. Cytûn has rejoiced with Wales' Catholic community in the preparations for the retirement of Bishop Edwin Regan of Wrexham. We thank God for Bishop Edwin's ministry throughout Wales and for his long-standing commitment to ecumenism and the plight of the world's poor especially in Lesotho. The Mass celebrated in Dolgellau and the thanksgiving dinner at Rhiw Goch, Trawsfynydd on 24<sup>th</sup> September brought the Christian community in Wales together in a joyous act of thanksgiving. Rhiw Goch has strong associations with Saint John Roberts. We wish Bishop Edwin well for the future. He will remain in our prayers.

**Training** Cytûn has also been active in supporting Christian ministry in Wales. This year's Welcome to Wales course was once again successful. It was held in Saint Michael's College, Llandaff and provided ministers new to Wales with a sense of our nation's history as shaped by faith and politics. Updates were also provided regarding the latest ecumenical developments in Wales. The staff lead on the Welcome to Wales course is taken by Geraint Hopkins.

**Chaplaincy** Cytûn remains in regular contact with those who serve as chaplains in Wales' colleges, hospitals and prisons. In providing liturgical and pastoral support Cytûn also serves those engaged with providing pastoral care in the services. Working with partners such as the Free Church Council of Wales, Cytûn has sought to ensure that public funds remain available to chaplaincies, to bring a diversity of faith communities together to support chaplaincies and to have an awareness of the importance of their work as acts of public service. This work has been high on the agenda of the Inter-faith Council for Wales.

**The Covenant** As reported in Cytûn's last newsletter, the Commission of the Covenanted Churches is developing an exciting agenda covering ministry and worship. You are encouraged to place the Gathering to be held in the Great Hall, Aberystwyth on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2012 in your diaries. Further details can be obtained from Rhian Linecar on 02920464371. The keynote address will be given by the Norwegian theologian and pastor, the Reverend Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches. Naturally, the primary focus during the Gathering will be focused on the work of the Covenanted Churches in Wales: Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, United Reformed and Covenanted Baptist. Guests from all of Cytûn's churches and denominations are invited to the Gathering and to participate in its discussions and worship.

**Local** Cytûn, as well as covering national projects, seeks to support local churches at their regular acts of worship. Since the summer, they have included churches in: Pontypridd, Groesfaen, Cardiff, Trecynon, Pontyclun, Penarth and Wrexham. The signing of the Cardiff Bay Local Ecumenical Partnership Covenant and Constitution this October marked a significant achievement and a source of encouragement. Commitments have also been made to assist several churches in their focus on the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January.

**Inter-faith Activities** It was with great sadness that we received the news of Alan Schwartz's death. He had been one of the pioneers of the inter-faith process in Wales for many years. He will be greatly missed within the Jewish community in South Wales. Building on his legacy a major Christian – Muslim dialogue was arranged at the National Museum in Cardiff in late November. Others from outside Wales have marked how inter-faith dialogue has acquired a distinctive dynamic in Wales. Leaders in particular, have not only reflected with each other, but have also become friends.

**Other National Ecumenical Instruments** It was a pleasure to attend this year's Irish Inter-Church Meeting. Irish church leaders from across Christian traditions gathered to explore the theme of hope, in a day long inter-church meeting and an evening act of public worship in Belfast. The keynote speaker was the renowned New Testament scholar, Professor N.T.

(Tom) Wright, who is described by TIME magazine as one of the most formidable figures in the world of Christian thought



The Irish Inter-Church Meeting, which first began in Ballymascanlon in 1973, took place this year in Edgehill Theological College and was followed by an evening service of celebration and worship in Fisherwick Presbyterian Church, Belfast.

The theme of hope took place against the backdrop of increased disillusionment towards institutions such as the church, the challenges presented by the forthcoming decade of centenaries, global economic uncertainty and concerns for the future of our communities and young people. The visit to Belfast in the company of colleagues from Scotland, England and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland was inspiring and worthwhile. Refreshingly, Churches in Ireland have agreed to focus on a new sense of identity and purpose: “Connected in Christ.”

**Public Affairs – Migration** Currently, Cytûn provides the Chair for the Wales Strategic Migration Partnership which retains a strategic overview of issues such as asylum, economic migration, trafficking and the care of Wales’ traveller and Roma communities. Much of this work has been fed back to Cytûn’s Racial Justice Network which has kept a close eye on the needs of the persecuted Church globally and here in Wales. Concern has been expressed regarding the care of Christian converts from other faith backgrounds who have settled in Wales.

The plight of the Christian community in Pakistan was highlighted at the multi-ethnic Carol Service held in Cardiff recently under the ministry of the Reverend Irvan John. He was granted asylum in the UK, with his wife Raheela and their children Karam, Iram, Iraj and Daud Irfan, in May 2006 after fleeing persecution in Pakistan. They live in Cardiff, where Irfan is employed by the Methodist Church in Wales to work with ethnic minority congregations, act as a conduit between these churches and Synod, and support asylum seekers and refugees.

In late November, it was a pleasure, in partnership with Wrexham County Borough Council, to provide training on issues relating to asylum and migration for students at Ysgol Morgan Llwyd. During the morning session, Vitalis Kayirasora gave a powerful account of how he, as a Christian asylum seeker, had fled persecution in Zimbabwe.

**Faith Communities Forum** Twice a year, leaders from Wales’ faith communities meet with the First Minister, Carwyn Jones, to discuss a number a number of issues. At October’s meeting, Chris Jones, Medical Director for NHS Wales, gave a presentation on organ donation. The debate concerning the question of presumed consent continues. Wales’ innovative Hate Crime Research was also on the agenda as was the Welsh Government’s Program for Government.

**Wales a Moral Society?** Cytûn has begun the task of reflecting on how to revisit the substantive report published in June 1996 on the state of Wales as a moral society. Under the staff lead of Geraint Hopkins, a further report will be given to the Board in the spring on how to reflect back on the churches' previous analysis from a very different political and economic context.



**Nation of Sanctuary** Work on building the required partnerships and commitments to make Wales the UK's first Nation of Sanctuary has progressed well. New partners have engaged with the process in Cardiff and further work will be done in Newport and Wrexham in the new year. The matter will also be discussed at the next Faith Communities Forum with the First Minister.

**Cytûn Enabling Group and Board** In early November, the Cytûn Enabling Group and Board met in Newtown. Patrick Coyle was elected Chair of Cytûn and Deborah Rowlands, of the Society of Friends, was appointed a new director. All the retiring directors were thanked for their services to Cytûn and ecumenism especially Catherine James and Peter Baines. A number of local groups were received into membership of the Enabling Groups and encouraging verbal reports were given by representatives from Bangor, Merthyr, Neath and Waunfawr.

The Enabling Group was pleased to receive a report on the activities of CTBI from Bob Fyffe who discussed a number of developments: a visit to Israel and Palestine, the forthcoming Networks Conference, reflecting on the riots in English cities, preparations for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, materials for Lent 2012 and resources for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012. The challenges of preparing materials for this year's Racial Justice Sunday were also highlighted. CTBI are aware of the challenges of preparing Welsh language materials. Bob Fyffe also led an interesting conversation on future models of ecumenical working. It has been agreed that next year's AGM and Enabling Group will be held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> June in Shrewsbury.

**Maternity Cover** Cytûn is seeking to appoint a bilingual Administrative Officer to provide maternity cover from March to August 2012. It's a full time appointment. Further details can be found on Cytûn's website and applications are required in the form of a letter and CV to be emailed (aled@cytun.org.uk) by January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

Every Blessing,

The Reverend Aled Edwards OBE  
Chief Executive of Cytûn

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