



Cytûn Summer Newsletter 2019

The past few months have been a time of encouragement and blessing for Cytûn as Wales' national ecumenical instrument. The trustees and staff team have invested considerable time and energy in seeking to ensure that Cytûn is run well and uses resources wisely. The work achieved with others over the past few weeks, by God's grace, has been significant.

Resources have been pooled with ecumenical partners such as Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, the Commission for Covenanted Churches and the Free Church Council of Wales. This has provided Cytûn with additional capacity especially in its public square and faith, order and witness work. Much of this work has been further developed by our newest staff member, Peredur Owen-Griffiths.

Cytûn's staff team has continued to attend the meetings of the National Assembly's Cross-Party Group on Faith and has sought to work alongside David Emery of the Salvation Army as he offers pastoral care at the Senedd.



The mission at the Royal Welsh

National Mission

Our work of witness at the three major national festivals, two national eisteddfodau and the Royal Welsh Show is constantly rooted in worship and fellowship. Cytûn's witnessing work is sustained by hard working volunteers and the commitment of denominational staff and the workers of several bodies in association. The three large national events can attract over 500,000 visitors.

Local Mission

Cytûn remains in contact with over 70 local groups encouraging occasional ecumenism, specific projects and more advanced Local Ecumenical Partnerships and Community Pastorates. Much of this work has been furthered from the staff team by Sally Thomas. Advice has been offered concerning constitutional and administrative support. Use has also been made of resources provided by other national instruments in Britain and Ireland.

Through newsletters and direct contact, support has been given to local groups in their mission by providing speakers, insurance cover and publicity through social media and denominational periodicals. Through occasional preaching engagements and specific ecumenical events Cytûn staff have supported local congregations of differing denominations throughout Wales.



The Inter-faith Associates remembering Rhodri Morgan

International Work



The Mizoram choir in Wales

In terms of its international work, Cytûn has continued to deepen its working relationship with Christian Aid supporting the Wales Committee and working together at the large national events such as the two national eisteddfodau and the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show in Llanellwedd. Working closely with the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe has enabled Cytûn to keep abreast of developments internationally. The wider Christian family has also been kept informed about Wales' distinctive contribution to the care of displaced people by embracing the concept of becoming a Nation of Sanctuary.

It has been a joy to support a growing number of ethnic minority churches seeking Cytûn membership, including our newest member the Church of Pentecost UK. We sometimes encounter individuals who have been trafficked into Wales and Cytûn has gained from working alongside the Welsh Government's Anti-Slavery Co-ordinator, Stephen Chapman. We have also gained from working alongside faith-based experts in the anti-trafficking arena such as the Santa Matra Group.

It was a pleasure to co-operate with the Presbyterian Church of Wales to ensure the success of the visit to Wales by the Mizoram Synod Choir.

Training – Welcome to Wales 2019

“Welcome to Wales” is a residential training course, run by Cytûn, for ministers of religion and also for lay people who are transferring into Wales from other parts of the UK or further afield. Held 2–4 October 2019 at Sports Conference Wales in Cardiff, the course includes an insight into the ecumenical and political context of Wales, the

contemporary and historical cultural context and the place of the Welsh language amongst other religious issues and Interfaith work in Wales. An application form to book a place on the course is available on the Cytûn website. Applicants can also attend in a non-residential capacity.

Please contact Sasha Perriam for more information: post@cytun.cymru

Public Square Partners

Cytûn has enjoyed an effective working relationship with a number of outside agencies. A major achievement during 2019 has been the establishment of a Partnership Agreement with the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society placing the chaplaincy at the Llanellwedd showground on a more robust footing. Aled Edwards, Cytûn's CEO, gave the 2019 Gethin Abraham-Williams at the Senedd reflecting on Faith, Devolution and Global Politics. The lecture formed part of the National Assembly's 20 Years commemorations.



Remembering Srebrenica

Policy Work

Cytûn continues to serve our member churches and organisations in dialogue with Welsh Government and the National Assembly, and with the office of the Secretary of State for Wales in the UK Government. We also provide the lead representative for the engagement of all faith communities in Wales with the Welsh Government through the Third Sector Partnership Council and the Faith Communities Forum.

The three key foci of our work during 2019 are:

- **The new curriculum for schools in Wales**, to be introduced fully for children up to year 7 by September 2022. Cytûn has been a full participant

in the Stakeholder Group which has travelled with Welsh Government and pioneer schools as the draft curriculum has been devised in classrooms around the country. Church schools, both Catholic and Church in Wales, have been amongst the pioneers. Cytûn produced a briefing paper on the draft curriculum, which can be read on our website at:

www.cytun.co.uk/hafan/en/new-curriculum-for-schools-in-wales/

While the official consultation stage ended on 19 July, there will be further opportunities to respond during the Government's national #TalkLearning conversation starting in September.

The curriculum requires each school to engage with its local cynefin (a Welsh word meaning neighbourhood, community, environment), so there are great opportunities for local churches and other local organisations to strengthen and build close relationships with their local schools. The Open the Book scheme run by Cytûn member the Bible Society is a great example of what is possible. The scheme celebrated its 20th anniversary (and its 10th anniversary in the Welsh language) during 2019.

- **A Christian response to the climate crisis**, officially declared by Welsh Government and the National Assembly in May 2019. The extent of the damage being done to God's Creation by human activity must be a source of shame and action by all people of faith. Cytûn member Christian Aid is focussing on climate change during 2019–20 and extensive resources are available at:

www.christianaid.org.uk/campaigns/climate-change-campaign The EcoChurch movement, sponsored by Cytûn member ARocha UK, provides a wonderful opportunity for local churches to take small but significant steps to help – ecochurch.arocha.org.uk Cytûn will be convening an open meeting of all our member churches and organisations to discuss what more we are doing, and how we can go further, on Monday 14 October 2019 at 9.30am–2.15pm in Community House Church, Eton Road, Newport NP19 0BL. Please register to attend by contacting gethin@cytun.cymru by 7 October 2019.

- Cytûn established, at the request of our members, a **Wales & Europe**



Gethin Abraham-Williams Memorial Lecture, May 2019

Working Party following the 2016 referendum. This group has met with politicians of all parties and members of the House of Lords, and corresponded extensively with both UK and Welsh Governments, the National Assembly and its Committees and the UK Parliament committees about various aspects of the withdrawal process. Along with other faith representatives, a liaison group has been established with Welsh Government to

discuss how we might best respond in faith to any further spikes in hate incidents around Brexit and to any civil emergencies which might arise. The Working Party remains deeply concerned about the situation of UK citizens in EU countries, and has corresponded with UK Government about this, as well as about the Settled Status scheme for EU, EEA and Swiss citizens living in the UK. We strongly encourage our member churches to offer support to European citizens in their congregations or with whom they have pastoral contact in coming forward for this scheme.

A Laser Group of officers from member churches and organisations, together with the Evangelical Alliance in Wales, meets regularly to monitor what is happening in the Assembly and Welsh Government and to keep one another 'in the loop' about our campaigns and activities. Each church and organisation retains its autonomy in deciding how and when to respond to public issues, and we continue to support one another even when we do not fully agree on every policy.

Cytûn also liaises with the property officers and equivalents of our member churches and plays an active role in the Welsh Historic Places of Worship Forum which is run by Cadw on behalf of Welsh Government. This provides a valuable space for exchanging information and ideas about maintaining, funding and developing the thousands of listed church buildings across Wales. The Forum is currently seeking ways to fund a support officer who could take this work to the next stage.

News of all Cytûn's work in the policy field is published in our regular Policy Bulletin. This can be read or downloaded in Welsh or



Working with Christian Aid at the Eisteddfod

English on our website – www.cytun.co.uk.
If you would like to receive the bulletin direct to your inbox, free of charge, please drop a note to gethin@cytun.cymru and we will add you to the mailing list. The same address should be used to contact our Policy Officer, Revd Gethin Rhys, who is always keen to hear from local churches and groups about what they are doing in the public square and to offer his support where possible.

Social Cohesion

Cytûn works closely with Welsh Government, interfaith friends and other stakeholders in seeking to ensure that communities relate well with each other in Wales. Contributions are made at the Welsh Government's Faith Communities Forum, Race Forum and Equality Advisory Board. Cytûn has continued to provide secretarial support to the Interfaith Council for Wales and sought, with others, to uphold the Christian faith in that engagement. It has done so at significant national events such as Holocaust Memorial Day and the commemoration of the 1919 Cardiff Race Riots held in the Norwegian Church, Cardiff Bay. Staff work closely with colleagues from the Evangelical Alliance.

We have also enabled Christian leaders to participate fully in the Welsh Government's Faith Communities Forum which meets at least twice a year. Preparations are well in hand to enable Cytûn member churches to prepare more effectively and strategically for Forum meetings with the First Minister. The Forum has focused particularly during 2019 on the consultations around relationships and sexuality education.

Much of this work, through prayer and reflection, has been supported and encouraged



Some of the leaders of the Faith Communities Forum 2019

by our involvement with the Focolare Movement whose aim is to contribute to building a more united world in which people value and respect diversity.

Working Bilingually

Cytûn works fully in both Welsh and English. Frequently during 2019 Cytûn staff found themselves highlighting the needs of Welsh speakers in the context of broadcasting, devolved policies, immigration policies and civil freedoms.

Cytûn played its part in supporting the Urdd (Welsh League of Youth) in spreading its 2019 peace and goodwill message, focused on knife crime, to over 35 nations. The Message reached over 2.2 million people around the world through #Heddwch2019.

Cytûn was also pleased to support the work of the National Centre for Welsh Learning in enabling refugees to learn Welsh.



Supporting refugees

Press and Media

Cytûn has its @CytunNew Twitter account providing regular updates and a sense of what the member bodies are profiling in their work. On an annual basis Cytûn staff now make some 40–50 media interviews on a range of faith related issues. Almost on a weekly basis, journalists are signposted to the appropriate sources within the churches or bodies in association for comments on matters of public interest.