

The 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

CONFIDENCE IN THE DIFFERENCE FAITH MAKES

Jon Kuhrt 28 December 2018

I read this in the Christmas Eve edition of *The Times* newspaper earlier this week – written by a journalist who is not a regular church-goer: 'Come with me...to the schools, hospices and care homes where thousands of Christians do good work every day. Seek out the grittiest, grimmest edges of British life and they are there. They are helping addicts limp to liberty from drugs with infinite patience. They are supporting families who are mired in debt. They are caring for those in prison cells whom no one else cares about any more. They are giving shelter and warm meals to the homeless. At one church I attended, a man who had slept rough for years was the clean-shaven collection plate-bearer, his set of shiny new teeth bought for him by fellow members of the congregation.'

It is good to read the compassionate acts of churches receive coverage like this because it rings true to the reality I see. Of course, Christians do not have a monopoly on kindness and many people of other faiths and none also give generously. But the impact of the Christian faith often goes unacknowledged. One reason is that churches often do not promote the good they do (partly because Jesus said not to) and the media prefer to focus on controversies and scandals. But, if we have eyes to see them, there are beautiful examples of faith-inspired compassion all around.

Last week, I visited a church in North London whose incredible work with homeless people blew me away. The man who welcomed me when I arrived was a former guest in their night shelter was helped to come off the streets and now works as the caretaker. He was a walking illustration of the difference faith makes. Faith had motivated those who helped him – but this went deeper – because faith had impacted him personally. It had given him meaning, purpose and a deep joy which was palpable and contagious.

On Christmas day, instead of just cooking for their own family, my brother and sister-in-law invited many others from their community who would otherwise be alone to join them. They ate together in the church hall with my nephews and my parents helping serving. It's a kindness and generosity which was replicated countless times in churches up and down the country.

It is easy for people to lament the declining numbers who attend church or focus on the institutional challenges and tribal politics. But despite these realities, faith continues to make a huge difference to people and society. We should have confidence in this – a confidence which flows from the inside out.

Firstly, faith has to make a difference to us personally. We should be ready to share with others why we have the hope that we have. And, it should be continually shaping our priorities and actions.

Secondly, faith should make a difference practically. Actions really do speak louder than words and faith without deeds is dead. This is why compassionate acts – of individuals or churches – illustrate the Christian message better than anything else.

Thirdly, faith should make a difference publicly. Faith should shine out and play a role in public life. Again this year, the Queen gave a great example in her Christmas speech: 'Only a few people acknowledged Jesus when he was born; now billions follow him. I believe his message of peace on earth and goodwill to all is never out of date. It can be heeded by everyone. It's needed as much as ever.'

It would be naive to pretend that faith can avoid controversy. In fact, just as Jesus promised, faith will bring conflict and difficulties.

Elsewhere in the same edition of *The Times* quoted above, another article focuses on criticism of Archbishop Justin Welby for speaking out about poverty and working conditions. They quote the response from his office: 'The Archbishop has been asked by some to stay out of politics. His response is that this is not what Jesus did. No wing of party politics, left or right, can claim God as being on its side. But Jesus was highly political and if we are to follow him then we must share his concern for justice and for the poorest and most vulnerable. That is always political. If Christians do not speak out about injustice in society then it's tantamount to ripping out whole sections of the Old and New Testaments.'

Authentic Christianity is transformative. It changes people personally. It changes communities practically. It changes the country publicly. By its very definition, faith is not focused on us. Our confidence is not based on what we can do. Faith has power because it draws from a source beyond this world – it is a confidence in what God has done.

Christians are not intrinsically 'better people' than others. Rather we are people who have accepted and received a gift. And of course, this is the real meaning of Christmas. It's a theme sung a million times this Christmas in familiar carols: God has come to be with us in the person of Jesus, to share our pain, lift our burdens and give us hope.

In 2019, let's be confident in this message – and show the world the difference it makes.

<https://gracetruth.blog/2018/12/28/confidence-in-the-difference-faith-makes/>

• Jon Kuhrt has worked with people affected by homelessness for 25 years. He is a former CEO of WLM and is now a government adviser specialising in how faith and community groups address rough sleeping. He lives with his wife and three children in Streatham, south London.

PAX CHRISTI INTERNATIONAL on 70th ANNIVERSARY of UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

11 December 2018: Today marks the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR), which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948. A milestone document, it enumerated, for the first time, a universal core of human rights that, as agreed upon, guaranteed the fundamental rights of every individual. The declaration is an essential component to our present-day foundation of human rights protection. (1) For 70 years, the UNDR has served as a roadmap for the advancement of human rights around the world.

The promotion and the protection of human rights, such as those recognised in the UDHR, are at the very heart of Pax Christi International's work as a global peace and nonviolence movement. Through activities grounded in the belief of the power of nonviolence, our member organisations and partners educate people and communities about their human rights, promote services to ensure that their human rights will be met, and cooperate with—as well as pressure—decision-makers to respect and advance human rights through their actions. The UDHR has truly served as a catalyst for human rights advancement at the local, national, regional and international level benefiting many of the people and communities with whom we work.

Pax Christi International believes that this anniversary should serve not only as a moment to celebrate the achievements of the UDHR but also as a pivotal time to examine the current challenges for its implementation. We have become acutely aware from our partners and friends that human rights and those who seek to protect them are increasingly under attack. The tireless guardians of these universal rights are faced with a shrinking space in which to do their work. Yet despite these challenges, we remain hopeful because human rights defenders, environmental and disarmament activists remain steadfast in their nonviolent struggle for human rights.

One of the major challenges to the implementation of the UDHR is the impact of violence and violent conflicts on the human rights of millions of people around the world. It is troubling that for the first time since the end of the Cold War, violence and violent conflict have increased due to inter- and intrastate tensions. (2) The most violent conflicts of the last years, such as in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Sudan, Congo, the Philippines and Mexico, have witnessed large scale human rights abuses as well as violations of international humanitarian and criminal law. These actions have had an especially devastating effect on vulnerable groups such as women, children and disabled persons.

Particular attention needs to be given to the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The ongoing violence over 70 years of conflict and 51 years of military occupation has resulted in the violation of human rights of women, men and children. To ensure that the rights as articulated in the UDHR are realised for all, the international community must remain vigilant, unbiased and thorough in their fact-finding and demand accountability for all violations of international law. It is equally important that they defend and protect human rights activists and safeguard the rights of their own citizens to free speech and the use of nonviolent strategies toward this goal.

As recognised in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was adopted at the United Nations on 7 July 2017, human rights are closely intertwined with nuclear disarmament. (3) Of specific relevance regarding nuclear weapons are the rights stipulated in the UDHR to life, to humane treatment, to health and to effective remedy. It is also necessary to identify and examine human rights violations which may occur in the pursuit of nuclear weapons. For example, uranium mining and processing have been shown to cause grave health and environmental risks. And, as nuclear tests are invariably carried out and countries must secure storage of their radioactive waste (required for thousands of years), the potential for ongoing human rights violations is significant. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons currently has 69 signatories and 19 states parties. Once 50 nations have ratified or acceded to it, it will enter into force. It is thus crucial that UN member states proceed swiftly with the signing and ratification of the treaty, also considering the value of its human rights provisions. The international community should urge states during the Universal Periodic Reviews at the UN Human Rights Council to join the treaty. Once the treaty enters into force, it can be used to gather evidence on how the human rights provisions, such as those related to the UDHR, are being fulfilled or violated.

Globally, many people's human rights are violated daily by the activities of companies exploiting natural resources, such as oil, gas, gold, silver, iron, copper and tin, as well as by other large-scale development projects. To illustrate, our Latin American member organisations and partners cite numerous examples of such violations: communities whose health and well-being are negatively affected by the contamination of their environment; individuals who are threatened or criminalised for speaking up; and the lack of access to effective remedies. All these realities violate their human rights as stipulated in the UDHR and other human rights instruments.

Full support should be given to local communities impacted by extractive projects by listening and respecting their opinions, making available human rights and nonviolence trainings, and implementing measures for their protection. The international community should strongly advocate for legislation and policies which would ensure that governments and extractive companies are transparent and accountable in cases of violations of human rights. It is crucial for communities to have access to courts and complaint mechanisms—a necessary step in accessing an effective remedy, a core right under the UDHR. All efforts must be made to have these stipulations strongly secured in the currently negotiated UN Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights.

This year we are also commemorating the 20th anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the General Assembly in 1998 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the UDHR. The urgency to reflect on both these documents could not be greater. As attacks on human rights defenders reach unprecedented levels, it is critical that special attention be given to their important work and the dangerous situations in which they often find themselves. In 2017 alone, over 300 human rights defenders across 27 countries were killed—double the numbers from 2015. (4) These statistics indicate that we are fast approaching a crisis across the globe that must be addressed for the safety and well-being of us all.

The shrinking space for human rights defenders, many of whom are colleagues and friends striving for the protection of human rights through nonviolent approaches, is alarming. They receive threats jeopardising their personal safety; they risk arrest and detention; their work is severely hampered by restrictive laws and funding cuts. At this perilous moment, the international community must step up their financial and political support to human rights defenders, their communities and organisations. It is only with the united commitment of the global community that their nonviolence work in pursuit of respect for human rights will be emboldened to resist powerful forces, including armed groups, repressive governments, and exploitive corporations. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ongoing work

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is firmly rooted in advancing universally recognised human rights as outlined in the UDHR. It offers the international community a blueprint to make further advances necessary for all people to enjoy their full potential and the exercise of their human rights. The targets, identified to achieve the SDGs by 2030, are closely aligned to the full expression of human rights. We must harness the energy of this moment to secure and expand resources and actions for human rights, so that the common values agreed upon in the UDHR can be upheld and thereby create more peaceful societies.

Over the last 70 years, the UDHR has been a great source of inspiration for the nonviolence work of Pax Christi International and it will continue to motivate the movement in its work to expand the understanding and protection of human rights around the world. The UDHR has been a landmark manifesto for the worldwide progress of human rights. However, as the human rights challenges outlined above show, there is still a great deal of work to do. Clearly the articulation and protection of human rights is as important now as when the UDHR was adopted. (Brussels, 10 December 2018)

Notes

1. The declaration together with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), adopted in 1966, constitutes the International Bill of Human Rights. This set of human rights has further been developed in subsequent international treaties, regional instruments, national constitutions, other laws and jurisprudence.
2. OECD, "2016 States of Fragility Report", online available at: www.oecd.org/dac/conflict-fragility-resilience/listofstateoffragi...
3. See text of the Treaty which can be consulted on the website of International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), of which Pax Christi International is a member: www.icanw.org/the-treaty/.
4. Frontline Defenders, "Annual Report on Human Rights Defenders at Risk in 2017", 22 January 2018, online available at: www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/resource-publication/annual-report...
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/36159>

FOSSIL FUEL DIVESTMENT FOR A ZERO CARBON FUTURE: A CONFERENCE FOR RELIGIOUS

Sponsors: CAFOD, Operation Noah, Global Catholic Climate Movement, National Justice & Peace Network, Conference of Religious and Association of Provincial Bursars. Thursday 14 February 2019, 11am to 4pm (Laudato Si' Mass at 3.30pm)
Mount Street Jesuit Centre, 114 Mount Street, London, W1K 3AY

More than 1,000 organisations around the world including the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, Caritas Internationalis, the Passionists in England & Wales, the Columban Missionaries and the Franciscan Sisters of Mary in the US have taken the step of divesting (disinvesting) from fossil fuel companies in response to the global threat of climate change.

Join us for a conference for religious to find out more about how Catholic institutions are responding to the urgent call on climate change launched by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*. The conference will provide an opportunity to learn more about fossil fuel divestment and how you can get involved in supporting the clean energy transition to ensure a brighter, cleaner future for everyone. It will also be a chance to find out more about joining the next Catholic divestment announcement in July 2019.

Speakers include Lorna Gold, Coordinator of the *Laudato Si'* Project at Trocaire and Vice Chair of the Global Catholic Climate Movement; Sr Sheila Kinsey FCJM, Executive Co-Secretary of the JPIC Commission UISG-USG in Rome; Fr Martin Poulson SDB, Senior Lecturer in Theology at the University of Roehampton; Sian Ferguson, Trust Executive of Ashden Trust, JJ Charitable Trust and Mark Leonard Trust (three of the Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts); Fr Martin Newell CP, Vice Provincial of the Passionists in England & Wales; Ellen Teague, JPIC Media Worker at Columbans in Britain; Maria Elena Arana, Campaign Coordinator at CAFOD; James Buchanan, Bright Now Campaign Manager at Operation Noah.

This conference is open to any members of religious communities with an interest in global justice and environmental issues, religious bursars and key advisors to religious hierarchy on financial management.

The event is free of charge, and participants are kindly asked to bring something to share for a vegetarian lunch. Places are limited, so please book early to avoid disappointment. Please confirm attendance by Friday 8 February by contacting James Buchanan on james.buchanan@operationnoah.org or call 07801 570653.

COLUMBANS SCHOOLS JOURNALISM COMPETITION 2019 - 'The Challenge of Climate Change'

Following on from the success of last year's inaugural Columban Schools Journalism competition, the Columbans have launched a 2019 competition with the title: 'The Challenge of Climate Change'. Students aged 15-18 inclusive are invited to write an article or make a video report that informs and raises important issues on the topic. Two separate competitions will be held, one for students in Ireland and one in Britain (England, Scotland, Wales). Each has two categories - writing and video. Closing date for entries: 8 February 2019. Details: www.columbancompetition.com

The objective of the competition is to encourage students to use their journalistic writing and mobile skills to look at a topical issue which is relevant to society today and resonates with both Catholic Social Teaching and Columban mission. The Pope's environment encyclical of 2015, *Laudato Si'*, is a major inspiration. The winning articles and videos will be announced in Columban media on 15 March 2018, and some will feature in the Columban Far East Magazine.

CAFOD: ACTION AND AMBITION NEEDED ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Source: Vatican Media/CAFOD Lydia O'Kane 5 December 2018

As the COP24 Climate Conference continues in Poland, CAFOD the official aid agency for the Catholic Church in England and Wales, stresses the importance of committing to renewable energy and what message it is bringing to this summit.

A new report launched on Wednesday, as the COP24 climate talks continue in Katowice, Poland, found that Denmark and Britain are the top countries when it comes to taking action to fight climate change. Denmark has decarbonised its electricity sector, moving away from coal, installing renewables and reducing fossil fuel subsidies by 90 percent over the last decade. Britain, meanwhile, plans to phase out coal-fired power generation by 2025, although it has lagged behind in phasing out fossil fuel subsidies. The report by researchers from Britain's Imperial College, noted that coal has provided two-fifths of the world's electricity for the past 30 years, barely changing over the last decade as the falling share in most developed countries is being countered by growing electricity demand in coal-reliant Asian countries.

Attending the COP24 summit is a delegation from CAFOD, the official aid agency for the Catholic Church in England and Wales. Speaking just before his departure by coach with supporters, in a bid to reduce their carbon footprint, the agency's Director of Advocacy, Neil Thorns said, "I think if you look at the signs of the times around us; if you look at the number of floods that we have seen. We've seen fires; we've seen higher temperature rises, all in this year. There's been consistent records broken across this year. I think if you look at the science, the science report which was released by the IPCC scientists; the inter-governmental panel of scientists, they couldn't have been clearer on the urgency of this issue."

Asked if there was a fear factor with regard to switching to renewable energy and if so, can it be overcome? Thorns said, it can be, and cited the UK as an example of a country committed to the use of renewables. "The real question is, I think when it comes to the question of renewables and the switch; so much of our economies are based on fossil fuels... it's a shift both in terms of attitude and the economics around it and it's a shift in terms of, there are some very vested interests who want to keep us using and exploiting, if you like, the earth's resources. He added, that from a scientific, economic or even a moral point of view, the shift to renewables "is actually a good one; it makes sense for all of our interests, whether you're in a rich country; whether you're in a poor country."

The Director of Advocacy said that CAFOD will be making its presence felt at this COP24 summit by calling for action for not only this generation but, also for future generations. "Our partners are already seeing the impacts of climate change on the ground and we know that the message that we need to bring there is ambition, so we need action and we need it quickly; we need money," adding that rich countries need to commit to the levels of funding they have pledged.

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/36130>

CAFOD: WORLD LEADERS AT COP24 HAVE FAILED TO LISTEN

Source: CAFOD 18 December 2018

In their final statement at the end of the COP24 UN climate talks, CAFOD said: "World leaders failed to listen to the cries of the poor and those on the frontline of the climate crisis at COP24 UN climate talks in Katowice, Poland. CAFOD believes countries' efforts so far has been inadequate to the challenge in front of all of us. Whilst the UN summit in Katowice, Poland agreed on most of the foundational aspects to implement the Paris Agreement the responses to the urgent and vital questions on increasing governments ambitions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions did not match the scale of the problem. At COP24, the leaders achieved the minimum of what is needed, but it is no way near what is required. The message before this COP from scientists, from poor communities across the world and from CAFOD supporters and Church leaders was that we need immediate and transformational action to keep global warming below 1.5°C. The IPCC report released in October from the leading scientists was clear and unequivocal on the need for urgent action and increased ambition.

Neil Thorns, Advocacy Director of CAFOD, said: "Once again, leaders have ignored the science and the urgent cries of the poorest communities who are on the frontline. Governments must go home, raise the ambition in their national plans and bring them to the UN Secretary General summit in September. As we've heard often in the last two weeks, tomorrow is today - we cannot wait."

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/36203>

See also: IPCC report - Climate change must be kept under 1.5 degrees to tackle poverty

<https://cafod.org.uk/News/Campaigning-news/IPCC-report-1.5-climate-change>

See also: Final statement from Vatican on COP24 <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/36217>

GLOBAL CATHOLIC CLIMATE MOVEMENT PRAYER FOR OUR EARTH based on *Laudato Si'*

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it,

that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation,

to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

NEW CHRISTIAN AID REPORT: WORLD COUNTS COST OF A YEAR OF CLIMATE BREAKDOWN

Source: Christian Aid 27 December 2018

Extreme weather, driven by climate change, hit every populated continent in 2018, killing, injuring and displacing millions and causing major economic damage costing billions of dollars, according to a report by Christian Aid. ***Counting the Cost: a Year of Climate Breakdown*** identifies 10 of the most destructive droughts, floods, fires, heatwaves, typhoons and hurricanes of 2018, each of which caused damage of over US\$1 billion. Four of the events cost more than \$7 billion each. These figures are likely to be underestimates - in some cases they include only insured losses and do not take into account the costs of lost productivity and uninsured losses.

All of these billion-dollar disasters are linked with human-caused climate change. In some cases scientific studies have shown that climate change made the particular event more likely or stronger, for example with Hurricane Florence and the summer's heatwaves in Europe and Japan. In other cases, the event was the result of shifts in weather patterns - like higher temperatures and reduced rainfall that made fires more likely or warmer water temperatures that supercharged tropical storms - that are themselves consequences of climate change.

While the report focuses on the financial cost of climate change-driven extreme weather events, in many developing countries the human cost of climate change to vulnerable communities is even higher than the financial cost, and there are many slow-onset droughts, weather change and sea encroachment that are progressively and devastatingly impacting millions of people worldwide. The most financially costly disasters identified by the report were Hurricanes Florence and Michael, which hit the US and parts of Central America and the Caribbean, causing damage initially estimated at \$17 billion for Florence and \$15 billion for Michael. Other disasters featured in the report include:

- Drought in Argentina, which slashed the soybean and corn crops, costing \$6 billion and helping tip the country into recession.
- Floods in Kerala, India - the worst for more than 80 years - which killed about 500 people and forced more than a million from their homes.
- Japan's extreme summer - floods killed at least 230 people, costing \$7 billion, and were followed by record-breaking heat and then Typhoon Jebi, the most powerful storm to hit the country for 25 years.
- Typhoon Mangkhut in the Philippines and China, which killed 133 people and destroyed 10,000 homes.
- Drought in Cape Town, South Africa, which brought the city to within weeks of "Day Zero", the date when authorities planned to shut off the water supply to 75% of the city, leaving residents only able to get 25 litres a day from water points protected by armed soldiers.
- Wildfires in California, US, including the Camp Fire in November, which was the deadliest and most destructive in the state's history, killing at least 85 people.

Dr Kat Kramer, Christian Aid's Global Climate Lead, said: "Climate change is something still often talked about as a future problem, not least because we know the consequences of the warming climate are so devastating and don't want to face up to what is already happening. This report shows that for many people, climate change is having devastating impacts on their lives and livelihoods right now. The great injustice of climate breakdown is that the people that suffer first and worst, are the world's poor that have done the least to contribute to the crisis. History will judge us on how we act now, as there is still a window of opportunity to avert more suffering. We must respond to the warning these disasters are giving us and avert more and worse ones, by accelerating the transition to a zero carbon economy: one run on clean, renewable energy that will deliver a safer climate for everyone."

Dr Saleemul Huq, Director of the International Centre for Climate Change & Development (ICCCAD), Bangladesh, said: "The year 2018 has proved to be a tipping point in the world seeing major climatic disasters that are now clearly attributable scientifically to human induced climate change having raised global temperature by around a degree already. Countries like Bangladesh are suffering the consequences of such climatic disasters. This makes it even more urgent for all countries, especially the biggest emitters, to reduce their emissions to keep global temperatures below 1.5 degrees."

Dr Michael Mann, Distinguished Professor of Atmospheric Science at Penn State University, said: "The impacts of climate change are no longer subtle. We are seeing them play out now, on our television screens, newspaper headlines and social media feeds. The unprecedented floods, droughts, heat waves, wildfires & superstorms we've seen in recent years - they are the face of climate change. The world's weather is becoming more extreme before our eyes - the only thing that can stop this destructive trend from escalating is a rapid fall in carbon emissions."

Dr Kevin Trenberth, Distinguished Senior Scientist at the National Center for Atmospheric Research, said: "The year has once again featured extremes of weather made worse by human-induced climate change, with major consequences, costs, and human suffering. It is a global problem, shared among all peoples of the world, and US leadership is wanting. Let's make the planet cool again!"

2018 was the fourth-hottest year on record, with average global temperatures nearly 1°C above the pre-industrial average. The warming trend is clear, with the last four years the hottest on record, and matches scientific projections of the results of human emissions of greenhouse gases.

Counting the Cost: a Year of Climate Breakdown is published by Christian Aid on 27 December.

Read the report here: <https://mediacentre.christianaid.org.uk/download?id=4170&pn...pdf>
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/36252>

CLIMATE DISRUPTION: TIME TO SPEAK UP

Paul Rogers 29 November 2018

To defend the realm, Britain's security nexus must rethink its line of duty. Change the security narrative.

An important climate meeting takes place on 3-14 December in Katowice, a symbolic location in that the city has long been the heartland of Poland's well established coal-mining industry. This latest session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations International Panel on Climate Change – COP24 is the useful shorthand – follows the publication on 8 October of a report from the IPCC's scientific advisors. By the standards of the bland, compromise-driven texts that often emanate from international organisations, the IPCC's report is remarkable for its pungent flavour. It is clear that the climate-science community is determined to tell the world just how serious the problem really is.

A recent contribution to the same debate by another organisation, the Oxford Research Group, argues that, to reflect the true picture of the times, climate change should now be routinely termed climate disruption. There needs to be a massive acceleration in efforts to control the burning of fossil carbon (coal, oil, gas), says the ORG: "The rate of progress has to be rapid in the 2020s and zero carbon economies have to be implemented by the mid-2030s, not the late 2040s as often currently assumed. The internal combustion engine should be seen as already obsolete, renewable energy capture and storage must be accelerated greatly, there have to be radical improvements in the efficiency of household heating and cooling and industrial use of fossil carbon as an energy source together with numerous changes in agricultural practice."

The ORG document points to the need for countries in the global south to receive substantial assistance in enabling carbon-zero development. Here, the intensified uptake of renewable-energy resources is a priority, and some positive trends are noted. But overall, the world's current security dynamics offer little encouragement to such trends, at least from the leaderships and policies of major states – the United States, Russia, India, China and Brazil, for example. The neoliberal economic system, with its powerful fossil carbon-energy corporations, also presents major obstacles to more rapid progress on climate policy.

In this respect the document highlights a crucial dimension missing from the current debate: namely, the responsibility of military establishments to promote radical action against climate disruption. If this sounds counterintuitive, it should be recalled that such action is actually part of the military's role in ensuring the security of a state, this being an aspect of conflict prevention.

To emphasise the point: if the United Kingdom's security community – the military, politicians, civil servants – is about "defending the realm", and one of the greatest threats to the realm is global climate disruption, then that community has the responsibility to demand sustained decarbonisation and related policies as a core element of ensuring security. If that too strikes an unfamiliar chord, it's not surprising. For this argument is rarely treated as a central, urgent priority by the security milieu, or even its favoured think-tanks and media. The military-industrial-academic-bureaucratic complex simply does not think this way. And it's that mentality, and its roots in culture and history, which comes under scrutiny from the Rethinking Security network.

The argument, presented in a discussion paper, is relevant because it questions the whole basis on which the currently dominant narrative of security rests: its assumptions "about what security means, whom it should benefit, and how it is achieved".

Rethinking Security believes that this narrative is outmoded, for four key reasons:

- Instead of recognising security as a common right, to which all have equal claims, the narrative privileges UK national security as the highest goal to which the needs of others may be subordinated
- It seeks to advance "national interests" as defined by the political establishment, including corporate business interests and the UK's "world power" status. Thus it dissociates the practice of security from the needs of people where they live
- The dominant narrative assumes a short-term outlook and depicts physical threats as the main risks. Thus it largely overlooks the long-term drivers of insecurity
- Its response aims to extend control over the strategic environment. This goal is to be achieved principally through offensive military capabilities, a superpower alliance, and restrictions on civil liberties.

This analysis of conventional ideas of security takes into account the many UK's problems of recent years, including conspicuous military failures in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya. In contrast to official thinking, the critique recommends a new strategic emphasis on long-term problems such as marginalisation, climate change, scarcity and weapons proliferation.

Why is the establishment so reluctant to accept creative approaches of this kind? The report offers five factors inhibiting a change of mindset:

- A small and exclusive group, drawn from a social elite, tends to have ownership of the security narrative. This leads to the general exclusion of other voices
- Business interests, particularly the arms industry, have a disproportionate influence on the policy-making process
- Institutional inertia and political calculations lean towards dismissing alternative agendas
- Values associated with hegemonic masculinity are to the fore. These reduce security discourse to a calculus of threats and coercive responses, at the expense of all-round conversation which takes into account security's social and ecological aspects
- Absent from the discourse are the people around the world who are affected by the decisions of Western states.

In a positive vein, Rethinking Security's paper outlines four principles to guide security as practice:

- **Security as freedom** Security may be understood as a shared freedom from fear and want, and to live in dignity. Thus it implies positive social and ecological health, rather than a mere lack of risk
- **Security as a common right** Embracing commonality is vital, for security should not (and usually cannot) be gained by one group at the expense of another. Thus, security rests on solidarity rather than dominance; it means standing with others rather than over them
- **Security as a patient practice** Security cannot be coerced into being. It grows or withers in tune with how inclusive and just society is, as well as how socially and ecologically responsible its citizens are
- **Security as a shared responsibility** Security is a common responsibility, whose challenges belong to everyone. For as long as common well-being is entrusted to a self-chosen group of powerful states, security worldwide will continue to deteriorate.

This thoughtful analysis by a group of practiced mediators, academics and activists provides a very different understanding of the UK security paradigm than the norm. And given its description of the establishment's security nexus, it looks unlikely that the latter will embrace the approach to climate disruption advocated by Rethinking Security and similar voices.

The security establishment does make cursory reference to a future military role towards climate disruption and its dangers. In practice, it devotes limited attention to the question. Talk about the military using renewable-energy sources or cutting down on waste is no substitute for the proactive focus that is needed. A minimal stance in no way obviates the need to prevent climate disruption in the first place.

Climate disruption is happening, and is a threat to people and life everywhere. Official security thinking now feels obliged to acknowledge this. In consequence, senior military and politicians have a duty to speak truth to power. If they do not, it can convincingly be said that they are failing to defend the realm. To act positively by speaking out would catapult them to the vanguard of the evolving security environment of the mid-21st century.

▪ **About the author:** Paul Rogers is professor in the department of peace studies at Bradford University, northern England. He is openDemocracy's international security adviser, and has been writing a weekly column on global security since 28 September 2001; he also writes a monthly briefing for the Oxford Research Group. His latest book is *Irregular War: ISIS and the New Threat from the Margins* (IB Tauris, 2016), which follows *Why We're Losing the War on Terror* (Polity, 2007), and *Losing Control: Global Security in the 21st Century* (Pluto Press, 3rd edition, 2010). He is on Twitter at: [@ProfPRogers](https://twitter.com/ProfPRogers)

▪ **openDemocracy** is an independent, non-profit global media outlet, covering world affairs, ideas and culture, which seeks to challenge power and encourage democratic debate across the world. We publish high-quality investigative reporting and analysis; we train and mentor journalists and wider civil society; we publish in Russian, Arabic, Spanish and Portuguese and English.

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/paul-rogers/climate-disruption-time-to-speak-up>

CELEBRATING PEACE SUNDAY: GOOD POLITICS SERVES PEACE

Source: CCN/Pax Christi 4 January 2019

Every year Pax Christi, the International Catholic Movement for Peace, promotes the Holy Father's World Peace Day Message on the Second Sunday in Ordinary Time. This is in the Liturgical Calendar cycle of prayer. The organisation sends resource materials to every parish in the country to help them mark and celebrate the day - falling this year on Sunday 20 January with a theme taken from Pope Francis's message '*Good politics serves peace*'. The press release from the Vatican states: "Political responsibility belongs to every citizen, and in particular to those who have received the mandate to protect and govern. This mission consists in safeguarding the law and encouraging dialogue between the actors of society, between generations and between cultures. There is no peace without mutual trust. Political commitment - which is one of the highest expressions of charity - brings concern for the future of life and the planet, of the youngest and the smallest, in their thirst for fulfilment."

The Archbishop of Liverpool, the Most Revd Malcolm McMahon OP, National President of Pax Christi's UK section said: "Once again Pope Francis invites us to start a new year with a reflection on our role as peacemakers. Drawing on the evolving teaching of our church and looking at the 'signs of the times', Pope Francis is uncompromising in his challenge to war and violence. In his 2018 message Pope Francis wrote that the 'endless and horrifying sequence of wars, conflicts, genocides and ethnic cleansings' are a major cause of the migration of thousands around the globe. Pax Christi has sought to keep these issues in the forefront of its work - challenging Britain's involvement in the global arms trade, questioning the morality of new technologies such as drone warfare - both here in the UK, and internationally, through our status at the UN."

See a full range of resources that can be downloaded here: <http://paxchristi.org.uk/news-and-events/peace-sunday/>

Visit Pax Christi's on-line shop for parish resources: <http://paxchristi.org.uk/product-category/peace-sunday-2019/>

Read an article published in *The Universe* on 4 January by Pat Gaffney, General Secretary, *Good politics serves peace*. <http://paxchristi.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Good-politics-serves-peace.pdf>

Pax Christi has written personal letters to Theresa May, Jeremy Corbyn and Vince Cable, with a full copy of the message from Pope Francis, inviting them to read it and reflect how it might inform THEIR work in the year ahead. Why not write to your own elected representative sending a copy of the Message.

You can read the full text of the Pope's World Peace Day Message here: www.indcatholicnews.com/news/36275

Here are a few key quotes: "One thing is certain: good politics is at the service of peace. It respects and promotes fundamental human rights, which are at the same time mutual obligations, enabling a bond of trust and gratitude to be forged between present and future generations... today more than ever, our societies need 'artisans of peace' who can be messengers and authentic witnesses of God the Father, who wills the good and the happiness of the human family."

www.indcatholicnews.com/news/36287

FOREIGN SECRETARY ANNOUNCES GLOBAL REVIEW INTO PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS

Source: gov.uk 27 December 2018

In the following op-ed, first published in *The Telegraph*, Jeremy Hunt explains why he has commissioned a review into the persecution of Christians.

Yesterday my family and I walked a short journey to our local church, and enjoyed an uplifting Christmas service. We attend as a simple matter of personal choice, but since being appointed Foreign Secretary, it has struck me how much we take that choice for granted: others around the world are facing death, torture and imprisonment for that very right. It is distressingly poignant at Christmas to hear recent warnings that the persecution facing Christians across the globe is now most stark in the region of its birth.

A century ago, 20% of the people of the Middle East were Christian; today the figure is below 5%. It is not hard to see why. On Palm Sunday in 2017, a suicide bomber in Egypt attacked a Christian Cathedral that has existed since the inception of Christianity, brutally killing 17 of the congregation. This is an extreme example, but it is by no means isolated. Last week, I met an Iraqi doctor who told me how patients had threatened her and her family with beheading when they heard she was a Christian who refused to convert. Step by agonising step, we are witnessing the erosion of Christianity as a living religion in its heartland.

Elsewhere, the situation is also deeply perilous. Across the world, about 215 million Christians suffer persecution, according to the campaign group, *Open Doors*. The International Society for Human Rights has found that Christians are the victims of 80% of all acts of religious discrimination. Like the Christian family I met recently who were accused of blasphemy in Pakistan; they told me how extremists targeted them, attacked their young sons by ripping school uniforms off their bodies, and shot at the mother. There were striking parallels with the case of Asia Bibi - a Christian Pakistani woman who was beaten, imprisoned, and despite being acquitted still lives under constant guard because of the threat of mob justice - whose plight has moved the hearts of the British public.

BBC News reports that the review, to be led by the Bishop of Truro, the Rt Reverend Philip Mounstephen, will look at government efforts to help some of the 215 million Christians who faced discrimination and violence last year, according to the Foreign Office. Officials say violence against Christians is rising dramatically, with an average of 250 killed every month. The Foreign Office said the review would "consider some tough questions and offer ambitious policy recommendations".

The Bishop of Truro is expected to report back by Easter. The review will have three aims:

- To map the persecution of Christians in "key countries" in the Middle East, Africa and Asia
- To provide an analysis of current UK government support
- To offer recommendations for a "cohesive and comprehensive policy response"

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/36247>

and <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-46682411>

JRS VOICES GRAVE CONCERN AFTER FOURTH PERSON DIES IN UK IMMIGRATION DETENTION CENTRE

8 December 2018 (Updated 10 December 2018)

News emerged last night of another tragic death on the UK detention estate, bringing the total number of known deaths in detention to four in 2018.

Sarah Teather, Director of JRS UK said, "We are deeply saddened to hear of another death in Harmondsworth this past weekend. Our thoughts and prayers are with the young man's family and friends who will be understandably deeply distressed by this news."

Beatrice Grasso, JRS UK Detention Outreach Manager said: "Our thoughts and prayers are also with those in detention as they adapt to yet another tragic death. When I was visiting Harmondsworth this week, it was clear that the news had deeply affected everyone there. A number of people came to see JRS this week to speak of their distress and upset about the death of their fellow detainee, as well as a failed suicide attempt of another person in the past week. This aggravates already high levels of stress and anxiety."

"This is not the first death in detention this year, and I fear it will not be the last time something like this happens. It is a testament to the detrimental effects on both physical and mental health that indefinite detention innately causes, often compounding existing vulnerabilities and corroding an individual's dignity. Whilst some people are held in detention for a short period, others can be detained for protracted periods before ultimately being released back into the community. The trauma of detention, coupled with the anxiety induced by this uncertainty, has a damaging effect on the physical and mental health of those who are put through it."

The UK is the only country in Europe that does not set a time limit on detention. Beatrice Grasso, JRS UK Detention Outreach Manager continued: "It is time to end the structural injustice of immigration detention, the negative effects of which last long after a person has been released. It's Time for a Time Limit."

JRS UK is a member of the Detention Forum and along with others are calling for an end to detention and an urgent introduction of a 28 Day Time Limit. The Jesuit Refugee Service UK is based at the Hurtado Jesuit Centre, 2 Chandler Street, London E1W 2QT Jesuit Refugee Service www.jrsuk.net
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/36144>

APPEAL TO RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS TO COME TOGETHER IN BATTLE AGAINST MODERN SLAVERY

Source: CoR Bernadette Kehoe 28 December 2018: Members of religious congregations in England and Wales are being invited to join a new network that is being set up to strengthen the fight against human trafficking. Two meetings are being held in January - one in London and one in Manchester - to lay the foundations of the network.

Organised by the Conference of Religious (the umbrella organisation for congregational leaders), the network aims to draw together the many members of religious institutes who are engaged in anti-trafficking work as well as others who'd like to offer support & increase their understanding. Those already involved are active in a plethora of ways, from preventative efforts to awareness raising, protection and assistance of victims. Some congregations have opened their homes to victims and a number of Religious work closely with the police, including Sisters who tip police off and also go out on raids to properties to help support those who are rescued. The help is immediate on the day with the most basic of requirements - clothing, food and accommodation - and can often continue for a lengthy period afterwards as the person attempts to rebuild their life.

The January meetings follow on from the recent major research conducted by the **Arise Foundation** which revealed the scale of the contribution, by Religious, to anti slavery. *Arise* sent a questionnaire to all Congregations in England and Wales, in the first ever attempt to map the work that is taking place. The report was launched, to much acclaim, at a well attended event in November. The Prime Minister sent a message to the *Arise Foundation*, praising the "extraordinary global contribution of Religious Sisters to the anti-slavery movement."

The Vice President of the Conference of Religious, Sr Jane Maltby RSCJ explained how this area of apostolic work has grown: "The development into anti-trafficking work of sisters and brothers in the UK has been influenced by pastoral needs on the ground which members of religious institutes were encountering in their ministries. The commitment of Religious is long-term, is inspired by traditions of service to those in need, and is an integral part of their spirituality. An important section in the report speaks about the intangible aspects of anti-slavery accompaniment. Aspects like love and trust which are so critical to this work, and yet feature so rarely in policy conversations on this subject. Love and trust takes time to build and to make manifest. It is the core strength of the work of Religious in this area."

The research revealed that 172 members of Religious Institutes - 144 women and 28 men - are providing frontline services to people who have fallen prey to traffickers. There has also been a huge contribution to the struggle in the very tangible contribution of properties and money. Sixteen Congregations have provided 29 properties at a book price of nearly £16.4 million - which is highly likely to be an underestimate of the value of these buildings. Some of these properties are used as safe houses where victims of modern slavery, including women with children, can find refuge. In addition, Congregations have donated more than £10 million to anti-trafficking in the last five years. 22 Religious have been involved in founding antislavery organisations; representing the full range of antislavery service provision: from prevention work to rescue, shelter and on-going accompaniment.

Sr Jane Maltby added: "Speaking from a personal perspective, my Congregation owns a property that we no longer need, and, rather than sell this commercially, we undertook extensive research and consultation in order to make the best decision we could, that would be in line with our priorities for mission. In the past, we ran schools and projects around the welfare of women and children, with others collaborating with us. Today, we are delighted to be able to turn that around, and we collaborate with others. In gifting the property and enabling women and children survivors to be cared for in a safe environment, we have entered a partnership which expresses the gospel values of tenderness and mercy, so much a part of our charism."

The new network will be affiliated to similar international groupings like **Talitha Kum** - a network which facilitates collaboration and the interchange of information between consecrated men and women in 76 countries. Founded nearly a decade ago, it arose from the shared desire to coordinate and strengthen the already existing activities against trafficking undertaken by consecrated persons in the five continents. Many respondents to the *Arise* research said that they would like the Conference of Religious to play a role in assisting Religious engaged in anti-slavery work. The new network aims to give support, resources & training, better communications and a stronger voice. A key principle is that the network will be by Religious, for Religious.

Details of the two meetings:

LONDON MEETING: 19 January 2019, 10.30am-4pm. Holy Apostles Church hall, Pimlico (47 Cumberland St, Pimlico, SW1V 4LY).

MANCHESTER MEETING: 26 January 2019, 10.30am-4pm. Manchester Universities' Catholic Chaplaincy (Avila House, 335-337 Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PG).

Those wishing to attend are asked to register their interest at this link: <https://arisefoundation.typeform.com/to/IKsjYJ> by 10 January 2019. There is no charge to attend. Lunch and refreshments will be provided. Please note that each individual needs to register. (Those unable to fill out the link are asked to contact Sr Dominica Popach OP on: 07880 771 707 arise@corew.org)
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/36256>

PAX CHRISTI NEWS

New Director You will be pleased to know that the Executive Committee have appointed a new Director, Theresa Alessandro. Theresa will join the team in March 2019 and will have a month-long hand-over period with Pat Gaffney.

Pax Christi Peace Awards 2019 Introduced in 2001, this award gives Pax Christi members an opportunity to nominate individuals working for peace at grass-roots level, whose work is often hidden and unrewarded. The Awards are given every two years, during our Annual General Meeting which, in 2019, will be on Saturday 18 May. Do you know of people in your community, parish who could be nominated? Nominations should be sent to the office by 15 March, accompanied by two references, marked FOA Arn Dekker, Award Team. Pax Christi, St Joseph's, Watford Way, London NW4 4TY 0208 203 4884

FAITH IN ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS: REFLECTIONS ON LEAVING WEST LONDON MISSION

Jon Kuhrt 12 December 2018

This coming week is my last at the West London Mission (WLM) after 8½ years leading their work with people affected by homelessness, poverty and trauma. It has been a deeply rewarding job. I have worked alongside many brilliant people and WLM has travelled a long way. In terms of this blog, it has been a unique place from which to reflect on faith, social justice and transformation.

A key reason I applied for the role 9 years ago was because WLM was a Christian organisation. Often, professional and spiritual approaches diverge down different paths and become disconnected from each other. I intentionally wanted to work in a space where specialist social care overlaps and converges with the Christian faith.

Working in this space is demanding because it requires managing an interface between worlds that have different perspectives, language and cultures. There is baggage to contend with – everyone has a story about bad religious experiences – and both sides are sensitive about the perceived power that the other side has. Conflicts arise and need dealing with. But, despite these challenges, it is also an exciting space to be in. The social care world is far less secular than it was 20 years ago and there are rich opportunities for a missional engagement with contemporary culture. I find it far more interesting than operating within a church-bubble or within an echo-chamber of people with similar views.

These are 3 reflections that I wanted to share about the role of faith in our work:

1. Faith should never be the elephant in the room. Often in organisations with a religious basis, especially those who employ staff with a wide range of beliefs, faith can become a subject that people are reluctant to talk about. It is understandable – faith is a sensitive subject which evokes strong feelings. But this is exactly why the issues need talking through.

At WLM we have had important sessions at staff conferences where we talked honestly about the kind of faith we wanted to see – and the kind of faith we didn't want to see. Whether people are firm believers or atheists, everyone benefits when an organisation is clear about what the Christian ethos means and what the expectations are.

We have helped develop *The Charter for Christian Homeless Agencies* which helps make expectations clear. And we have run regular sessions for staff called '*Thinking Things Through*' which directly address the relevance of the Christian ethos to our frontline work.

2. The importance of faith and spirituality to people affected by homelessness. In 2013, an important report was published by the research agency, Lemos and Crane called *Lost and Found: faith and spirituality in the lives of homeless people*. It concluded that the 'secular orthodoxy' of many charities was out of kilter with the importance that many homeless people attach to faith and spirituality. A key factor was that the author, Carwyn Gravel, was himself an atheist. This was no Christian propaganda but a well-researched and honest report - my review is here: <https://gracetruth.blog/2013/06/28/lost-and-found-faith-and-spirituality-in-the-lives-of-homeless-people-by-carwyn-gravell-review/>

The Secular Society disapproved of it but for us it provided external, independent evidence of what we believed to be true. And a key aspect of WLM's journey has been to employ a Chaplain who has revolutionised how we offer spiritual services to those we work with. She has put our ethos into action – not just in the implicit ways of being kind and available – but in the explicit ways of articulating God's love in ways which connect with those we work with.

I have seen many examples of how people affected by homelessness and addictions have found personal hope in the Christian faith. *The Recovery Course* is an exciting example of the combination of explicit Christian beliefs with the wisdom from the **12 Step** movement. In many ways, social care is increasingly a post-secular space, with far more openness to faith and spirituality than 20 years ago.

3. The Church has unique resources to create change. The last 8 years have given me countless more examples of the unique contribution that churches bring. In 2011 I was part of a group who started a church-based Night Shelter in Westminster – at first there were just 4 churches involved. Now we have 13 churches (plus a mosque and a synagogue) partnering and the shelter runs for 8 months of the year. Last year the scheme helped more than 60 people into accommodation. And this Night Shelter is just example of over 100 similar schemes up and down the country. As well as being the inspiration for older organisations like WLM, faith has continually been the motivating factor for new initiatives which tackle poverty and homelessness.

The Church should therefore be confident in its message and in what it has to offer. Housing Justice is the national network for Christian homelessness initiatives. They offer support in both practical action and in political advocacy about the underlying causes of poverty and homelessness.

My new role is as a Specialist Advisor with the government's Rough Sleeper Initiative team. The government have committed themselves to a target to reduce rough sleeping by 50% by 2022 and my role focuses specifically on the partnerships with faith and community groups. Churches and faith groups have an incredibly important role. Just as at WLM, my aim will be to build strong bridges which help maximise the impact that faith has to end the tragic reality of rough sleeping and homelessness. <https://gracetruth.blog/2018/12/12/faith-in-addressing-homelessness-reflections-on-leaving-wlm/>

MUSLIM RAPPER SENDS MESSAGE OF LOVE TO YOUNG URBAN JEWS

Abigail Frymann Rouch 8 December 2018 *The Times*

Mohammed Yahya uses hip-hop to bring youths from both religions together to learn about each other's faiths

When Mohammed Yahya converted to Islam he "didn't know about the tensions" that existed between his new religion and Judaism. On being told, he put his naivety to good use and vowed to create an "alternative narrative". Not long afterwards, he was introduced by an Islamic scholar to Daniel Silverstein, then a student at the University of Cambridge, who is now an Orthodox rabbi in Israel. Yahya and Silverstein formed the hip-hop duo *Lines of Faith*.

"We had the same vision: to create more community cohesion," says Yahya. "We became friends, and started delivering workshops, making music and performing it." The duo's success in uniting young urban Muslims and Jews in a love of music inspired Yahya to become a founder member of an initiative called *Peace by Piece* with the West London Synagogue and the Sunday School from the Muslim An-Nisa Society in Wembley. The scheme, now in its eighth year, brings together Jewish and Muslim teenagers to discuss identity, stereotypes and each other's religion. At the end of lessons, "based on the words we've written down, we try to create a rap together," he says. The course ends with a trip to Morocco, home to North Africa's largest remaining Jewish community. "From that, amazing relationships and friendships have started," he says.

Yahya, now 37, was one of 21 young leaders recognised last month at the interfaith awards organised by British Muslim TV, *Jewish News* and the *Church Times*.

Even without religious differences, *Peace by Piece* participants would have obstacles to overcome. "The children from West London Synagogue, a lot of them are from wealthier backgrounds, they're a lot more travelled; I tend to find the young people from An-Nisa are quite shy," he says. They discover more in common than they expect: feeling stereotyped, the shared teachings and morals of their faiths, and often "some kind of migration". He pauses. "A lot of people feel they don't know if they feel British, but they feel like they're Londoners. I can relate to that."

Yahya's songs have tackled racism, slavery, war in Iraq and Afghanistan, and poor governance in Somalia. He co-curated an album for Refugee Week this year for which he worked with another musician, the British-Iraqi rapper Lowkey, and is now finishing a solo album and an album with his duo *Native Sun*.

His family fled Mozambique in 1982, when he was two. They settled in Portugal and he, his parents and his two elder sisters initially squatted in an abandoned block of flats near Lisbon. Portugal was suffering from a weak economy, and a housing shortage made acute by the arrival of asylum seekers escaping wars in Mozambique and Angola and the return of hundreds of thousands of nationals descended from Portuguese settlers. "I didn't have toys; I would play doctors and nurses with abandoned heroin needles," he recalls.

Once Yahya was out of danger, post-traumatic stress took its toll on his family relations. The displacement, as well as daily racism and discrimination, fuelled anger, he adds. Creativity was his lifeline. "As soon as I started learning how to write, I used to write poetry," he says. His parents divorced and when he was ten his father brought him to west London, where he "fell in love" with hip-hop while trying to learn English. "I saw people who looked like me and they were being portrayed in a dignified way."

Yahya became a Christian at the age of 13. Some years later, while on holiday in the Gambia - a staunchly Muslim country - he was impressed by the generosity he saw; in the UK he asked more about Islam "and my heart was inclined to that".

Yahya draws on poetry in his work not only with *Peace by Piece* participants, but also with refugees and inmates. Through the charity Music Action International he uses his story to encourage schoolchildren to empathise with the refugee experience, and encourages teenage asylum seekers to put their stories into poetry. "A lot of them are really traumatised by their experiences . . . Me sharing my experience with them allows them to open up." Lis Murphy, the charity's creative director, says: "He's got such a gentle but encouraging approach. He's been through so much himself, but he's transformed that into something really positive, [and] because of the style of music he does, young people relate to that, especially boys . . . he's really cool."

Yahya's latest venture with the West London Synagogue is called *Feeding Folk*. Muslims and Jews come together once a month to cook 150-200 vegan meals for central London's rough sleepers, and hand out hats, scarves and toiletries. Yahya is proud that they have teamed up with the Sikh Welfare and Awareness Team (Swat) as well. "He is driven by an idealism and a deep faith," says Rabbi Sybil Sheridan of the West London Synagogue. "He is so genuine, there's no agenda." Or perhaps a straightforward one. He says: "I feel like there's a lot of negativity in the world and it's, like, the more stuff I see that's negative, I work twice as hard to try to counteract that."

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/muslim-rapper-sends-message-of-love-to-young-urban-jews-c69g99wzl>

RAISE FUNDS TO LOOSEN THE GRIP OF POVERTY - JOIN US FOR THE 2019 GREAT MANCHESTER RUN

Could you run 10 kilometres to raise funds to loosen the grip of poverty in the UK?

Join Church Action on Poverty's team for the Great Manchester Run on 19 May 2019. We ask runners to pay the entry fee of £38, then collect donations from sponsors to help tackle poverty. We have online tools available to help you recruit sponsors.

If you would like to be part of our team, please email me at liamp@church-poverty.org.uk or call 0161 872 9294.

Liam Purcell, Communications Manager, Church Action on Poverty

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THOSE CROSSING CHANNEL IN SEARCH OF SAFETY IS DEEPLY TROUBLING

Source: JRS UK 2 Jan 2019

JRS UK is deeply troubled by the Government's comments and response to those individuals crossing the English Channel to reach the UK in search of safety and security. Our thoughts and prayers are with all those individuals around the world who are struggling to find safety, as we welcome in this New Year. As was widely reported today (Wednesday 2 January), Mr Javid spoke to reporters during a visit to Dover. He appeared to address those individuals making the treacherous journey across the Channel directly, saying: "if you do somehow make it to the UK, we (the UK Government) will do everything we can to make sure that you are often not successful (in your asylum claim)."

In response to these comments, Sarah Teather, Director of JRS UK, said: "The comments made by the Home Secretary today amount to the government pre-judging an individual's claim for sanctuary, something to which every individual has a legal right. This is likely to have disturbing implications for the fairness and credibility of the UK asylum determination system as a whole. Somewhere in all this we seem to have forgotten that those men women and children making the treacherous journey across the Channel are our fellow human beings who are in need of our care, support and compassion."

It is especially disappointing to see a Home Secretary, who initially expressed high ideals about changing the culture of the Home Office, resort so quickly to the standard fare of inflammatory rhetoric that stokes fears and prejudices and results in a system which views all migrants with the hermeneutic of suspicion. A person's asylum application must always be assessed and determined on its individual merit, regardless of how the individual arrived in the country not be pre-determined ahead of their claim being heard, as implied by Mr Javid."

In his Message for the 2019 World Day of Peace for 1 January 2019, Pope Francis focused on the role of politics as "an essential means of building human community and institutions, but when political life is not seen as a form of service to society as a whole, it can become a means of oppression, marginalization and even destruction." Singling out the problem of contempt for those seeking exile, His Holiness continued, "Politics also has its share of vices, whether due to personal incompetence or to flaws in the system and its institutions. Clearly, these vices detract from the credibility of political life overall, as well as the authority, decisions and actions of those engaged in it. These vices, which undermine the ideal of an authentic democracy, bring disgrace to public life and threaten social harmony."

Sarah Teather continued: "The tendency of senior politicians to whip up mistrust against the small number of men, women and children seeking sanctuary in the UK is a long-running story that predates the current Home Secretary. The Pope's essay on politics should be essential reading for anyone serious about changing the culture and approach."

Read more about Jesuit Refugee Services here: www.jrsuk.net
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/36281>

GALLERY OLDHAM

We are delighted to be a partner in the Asia Triennial Manchester 18, with exhibitions and events taking place across the city on the theme of *'Who Do You Think You Are?'* For this exhibition we are hosting artist Jai Chuhan with *'Refuge'*, premiering new paintings which take inspiration from her position as an Indian-born British artist.

More details available at www.asiatriennialmanchester.com

Taking us through into spring *'Mahtab Hussain: You Get Me'* will explore the critical question of identity among young working-class British Asian men through a series of 24 portraits taken over a nine year period in Birmingham, Nottingham and London. *'You Get Me?'* investigates the dynamic relationship between identity, heritage and displacement.

For all the latest updates to our programme and activities please check our website: www.galleryoldham.org.uk

DECEMBER FAIRTRADE TOWNS NEWS: SHE DESERVES A LIVING INCOME

Fairtrade Fortnight 2019 materials are now available to order. Orders will be sent out from the first week of January.

Fairtrade International announced some big cocoa news this week too. Next year (2019), the Fairtrade Minimum Price for cocoa is going to increase by 20 percent to \$2,400 per tonne as part of Fairtrade's strategy towards enabling living incomes for cocoa farmers. The Fairtrade Premium will increase from \$200 to \$240 too, the highest fixed premium of any certification scheme. Read more here, to see why this is a critical step to provide greater protection to cocoa farmers from low and unstable prices:

http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/Media-Centre/News/December-2018/Cocoa-farmers-to-earn-more-through-a-higher-Fairtrade-Minimum-Price?utm_medium=email&utm_source=engagingnetworks&utm_campaign=Dec+18+newsletter+to+communities&utm_content=December+newsletter+to+towns+07/12/2018+

Although this is good news, our combined efforts are still needed to reach our goal of a living income for cocoa farmers. This is why we're launching our new *She Deserves a Living Income* campaign for Fairtrade Fortnight. Check out the action guide and other information about the theme at fairtrade.org.uk/fortnight – including how to request a Fairtrade Foundation speaker for your event, why are we focusing on women farmers, and ideas to get the message across in your area. Through Fairtrade, many farmers and workers have been able to improve the lives of their families and communities. But it's not enough, fast enough. And so from Fairtrade Fortnight 2019, we'll be concentrating our efforts to go further and faster for farmers to achieve living incomes.

Adam Gardner, Communities Campaigns Manager (Fairtrade Foundation) volunteer.towns@fairtrade.org.uk

REFLECTION

'I'm very fond of Jesus Christ. He may be the most beautiful guy who walked the face of this earth. Any guy who says 'Blessed are the poor: Blessed are the meek' has got to be a figure of unparalleled generosity and insight and madness ... a man who declared himself stand among the thieves, the prostitutes and the homeless. His position cannot be comprehended. It is an inhuman generosity. A generosity that would overthrow the world if it was embraced because nothing would weather that compassion. I'm not trying to alter the Jewish view of Jesus Christ. But to me, in spite of what I know about the history of legal Christianity, the figure of the man has touched me.'

Leonard Cohen, poet, author and singer

NATIONAL JUSTICE & PEACE CONFERENCE 2019

BOOKING FORMS AVAILABLE EARLY 2019 for Annual Justice & Peace Conference, 19-21 July 2019

'Forgotten People, Forgotten Places: Being Church at the Margins'

Speakers: Keith Hebden (Urban Theology Unit), Robert Beckford, Professor of Theology and Culture in the African Diaspora, Canterbury Christ Church University. **Chair:** John Battle.

Contact NJPN, 39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX 020 7901 4864 admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk, or see <https://justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference>

ACTA WESTMINSTER REPORTS

Laurie Clarke 4 December 2018 (Updated 5 December 2018)

On 14 November, A Call to Action (ACTA) Westminster held an evening meeting to discuss **'Clericalism - Out from Under'**. The event took place at Maria Fidelis School in north London. Speakers were: Michael Walsh and Michael Murphy. Laurie Clarke also reports on the recent **ACTA National Conference** in Cardiff.

'Reflections on Pope Francis and Clericalism' - Excerpts from a talk by Michael Walsh

From the seminary to the grave, very many Catholic priests have a close relationship only with their colleagues in the ministry. They form a tightly-knit brotherhood, so it is not surprising that they defend each other, and that their failings, which may be well-known to their fellow clergy and the bishop, are covered up both out of loyalty and misplaced friendship as well as out of a desire to preserve the reputation of the only institution which gives their lives meaning.

Pope Francis was elected in 2013 with a mandate to reform the papal administration. A blogger, writing for the *National Catholic Reporter* some six weeks after Francis's election, commented about the Pope's lifestyle, that "He is preaching almost daily a powerful, silent sermon denouncing the scourge of clericalism. It's the simple way he lives; his decision to move into the visitors' quarters and eat his meals with them; his lack of interest in pomp and pageantry."

In October 2016 the Jesuits held a General Congregation to elect a new Superior for the Order. During the course of it, the Jesuit Pope came along for a question and answer session, during which he spoke about clericalism: "Clericalism, which is one of the most serious illnesses that the Church has, distances itself from poverty. Clericalism is rich. If it is not rich in money, it is rich in pride. But it is rich: there is in clericalism an attachment to possession. It does not allow itself to be nurtured by mother poverty. It does not allow itself to be guarded by the wall of poverty. Clericalism does not allow growth, it does not allow the power of baptism to grow."

In Buenos Aires, Pope Francis said at a meeting of women religious: "I had this experience: a good priest came to me and said, 'I have a very good layperson in my parish: he does this and that, he knows how to organise things. ... Shall we make him a deacon?' Francis said he emphatically rejected that idea. 'No! Let him remain a layperson.'"

In a *Crux* piece, Jack Valero, quotes Pope Francis from an interview he gave in 2011 when still archbishop of Buenos Aires: "we priests tend to clericalise lay people. And the lay people - not all of them, but many - ask us on their knees to clericalise them, because it's easier to be an altar server than a protagonist in a lay vocation."

Some might feel that the laity are well represented through ecclesial movements, but the vast majority of the laity do not belong to any of these groups and have no means of representing their views to the Church hierarchy either at the national or the international level. Italian theologian Massimo Faggioli comments in the latest issue of *Commonweal*: "there is little point in replacing the old clericalism of the ordained with a new clericalism of lay men and women who have proven themselves as extra Catholic by belonging to some favoured group within the church."

If I may return to the remarks I made at the beginning, about how tight-knit clerical camaraderie has perforce become. This is partly because of celibacy, perhaps, but more so, I would suggest, because of the seminary system. Seminaries were an important innovation at the Council of Trent, but they have by now served their purpose. Like cardinals, they too have become an anachronism. Priests should be educated, not in seminaries, but in a university context alongside lay people. That was, of course, the Heythrop model. It was a model that, with some honourable exceptions, the bishops of England and Wales were loath to support.

How do we proceed? Another favourite word of the Pope is 'Synod' I propose that ACTA campaigns nationally for a synod of the Church in England and Wales. One that has lay representation as well as clerical, one that mirrors the synod on youth which has just taken place in Rome though, if I may say so without appearing ageist, with a touch less emphasis on youth.

Clericalism - the Death of Priesthood by George B Wilson SJ - A Summary of the book for discussion - Excerpts from a talk by Michael Murphy

'Clergy' is a sociological term which refers to people whom society recognises as having expertise in a particular area. Society develops a whole range of such groups covering the wide variety of needs of that society - doctors, lawyers, military, religious leader, etc. Clergy are a group who have power, based on knowledge. A clerical culture includes ritual practices, beliefs and language as well as a number of sometimes unconscious attitudes. A clerical culture can either enable or imprison people. The culture is maintained not only by those within the group but also by those (laity) outside the group who need them. 'Clericalism' is a state of affairs in which the worst aspects of the group culture flourish. The irony of having this system within the Christian community is that Jesus questioned it among the scribes and Pharisees.

In the New Testament, the word 'priest' is only used to refer to the whole community of believers or to Jesus himself. The community did single out individuals who were gifted to be apostles, teachers evangelists - but never priests. The community had leaders for example for assemblies - Eucharistic or otherwise - not called priest and not set apart from the other. Priesthood involves actions flowing from a conversion brought about by the Holy Spirit and the taking on of the mind and heart of Jesus. Priesthood is a way of life, and as the Second Vatican Council in *Lumen Gentium* taught that everyone by their baptism is called to be holy, this means that they all share in the priesthood of the community.

Clericalism enabled the abuse tragedy. Abuse begins with a single act involving only two participants. The same clerical culture that shaped the actions of the offending priest also shaped the reaction of the child. The parents and others had told the child to put the priest on a pedestal. The victim confides in another person - a parent, a friend or another priest. They may go to the authorities, or they may not. Then the Bishop becomes involved. Many Bishops acted appropriately and wisely. Others acted after taking what they judged to be sufficient steps to minimise the likelihood of further acts of abuse, but the steps they took were often naïve and misguided. The victims enlist the aid of another guild, the lawyers. A whole new set of parameters become involved - the civil law versus ecclesiastical law. And the approach of civil lawyers is different from a pastoral approach. Then the media become involved. Their reporting shapes our perceptions.

The final chapters of the book explore approaches to transforming the Church and eliminating clericalism. There are preventive measures - eg a charter and zero tolerance approach agreed in relation to future claims of sexual abuse. Such a charter is preventative but provides no deeper analysis of the cultural patterns that enabled the abuse in the first place. Secondly there are attempts to change organisational structures and encourage greater dialogue and an atmosphere of shared responsibility. Finally, the author's preferred approach is cultural transformation which aims at transforming the clerical culture itself. Everyone will have to stop playing old roles; transformation will take time; it is a shared responsibility; and the transformation will involve conflict. We should draw on good practice among clergy and laity today.

Finally, there are some key areas where the ordained and the laity have complementary roles which could slowly shift and become more mutually inter-active, mutually supportive and shared. These areas include:

- Proclaiming the Word and Studying the Word
- Presiding at Common Worship and participating in common worship
- Guiding in matters of the spirit and growth in spiritual maturity
- Leading the Faith Community and active participation in the Faith Community

ACTA National Conference - Report by Laurie Clarke

The ACTA National Conference took place on 20 October 2018 at St David's Sixth Form College, Cardiff. The theme was '*It will always be a Pentecost in the Church*'; and refers to a sermon of St Oscar Romero in which he called for a process of continuous spiritual renewal. The Church needs to be open to the Spirit, to read the signs of the times and respond to the new challenges of the age.

The first speaker was Gemma Simmons who is a sister of the Congregation of Jesus and a very good communicator - she spoke easily and simply. She reminded us that we are all priest, prophet and king and she enlarged on these roles - all underscored by Pope Francis' writings. The Church had suffered a devastating loss of credibility because of the sex abuse scandals and the solution could only come from a Church that embraced the poor and the marginalised.

Anna Abrams spoke on the need for a commitment to ecclesial ethics to mirror the professional ethical standards that are an essential part of the secular. Anna said there was a need to review some aspects of the training of priests, religious and permanent deacons to ensure that they understood the expectations of wider society in terms of transparency and accountability.

We then heard from four young people - two said there was not the natural recognition of equality for women in the Church that was reflected in the secular world. The third young person was more positive and felt the synod was creating the expectation of progress in making the church more responsive to the aspirations of young people. A fourth young person said that in her experience 'the Church does not sow seeds - it shoots bullets at us.'

In the afternoon we split into three random groups and the speakers moved from group to group discussing a range of issues linked to the morning's presentations.

The conference was held in St David's Sixth Form College and I must say that we were well looked after by three student ambassadors who guided us from one venue to the next.

For more information about ACTA see: www.acalltoaction.org.uk

DIARY DATES

JANUARY

15 CWDF Forum 6:45pm-9pm The Unity Centre, Cuppin Street, Chester, CH1 2BN. The first Forum gathering of the New Year. Speaker Helen Tandy on the theme **Ethical Investment/Divestment**. NB: This meeting is on the 3rd Tuesday of the month in place of our customary 2nd Tuesday.

15-18 & 22-23 Jan – I Gas Public Inquiry 10am, Chester Town Hall, Chester, CH1 2HQ. Public Inquiry concerning the Appeal by I Gas into the planning refusal for gas well testing at Portside, Ellesmere Port. The scheme raises broad issues of climate change as well as significant local environmental and amenity concerns. The Frack Free Dee group are presenting evidence, and hope that as many people as possible come in for an hour or two, or stay with the Inquiry team to support them. Further information at www.facebook.com/FrackFreeDee

18 CAFOD Quiz Night Our Lady's Parish Centre Ellesmere Port Town Centre 7.30 pm. Admission: adults £3 children £1 which includes Fairtrade refreshments at the interval. All money raised will go to the CAFOD project in Ethiopia Connect 2 .Contact Tony Walsh on 0151 355 6419

18-25 Only Justice Week of Prayer for Christian Unity originates from the churches of Indonesia, where there is a strong emphasis upon the need for unity alongside the nation's ethnic and religious diversity. Resources also highlight issues of economic injustice and how religious pluralism can face challenges in the face of radicalisation. The theme is based around Deuteronomy 16:18-20, 'Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue...' <https://ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer>

20 Peace Sunday Good politics serve peace <http://paxchristi.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/2019-Peace-Sunday-Booklet-final.docx> (See page 7 of this bulletin)

20 Archdiocese of Liverpool Justice and Peace Commission Annual Memorial Lecture 2019. Nowhere to lay their head: responding to homelessness. Speaker Hettie Miles from the Whitechapel Centre in Liverpool. At LACE, Croxteth Drive, Sefton Park, Liverpool L17 1AA. 2- 4 pm. Doors open 1.30pm. Details Steve Atherton 0151 522 1080/1 s.atherton@rcaol.co.uk

23 What is happening to our common home? A series of talks on the issues raised in Pope Francis' Encyclical, *Laudato Si'* Concert Room, Liverpool Cathedral, 7.30-9pm. **I. Pollution and Climate Change: Dom Goggins, Environmental Consultant.** Each talk will give an overview of the issue and examples of positive action that is being or can be taken. No booking required. Enquiries to Hilary Russell hilaryrussell@gmail.com or 07811950 213

26 Quiet Day for everyone 10am-4 pm at The Convent of Our Lady of the Cenacle, Tithebarn Grove, Lance Lane, Wavertree, Liverpool, L15 6TW. Input and time for individual quiet prayer and reflection. Cost £10 Tea & coffee provided. Bring your own lunch. For more information or to book: Tel 0151 722 2271 email: winniecenacle@mail.com

27 Holocaust Memorial Day <https://ctbi.org.uk/holocaust-memorial-day-27-jan-2019/>

30 What is happening to our common home? II. The Issue of Water: Hayley Sheard, Water Aid – See 23 January

FEBRUARY

6 What is happening to our common home? III. Loss of Biodiversity: David Beattie, A Rocha and Lancashire Wildlife Trust – See 23 January

9 NJPN Open Networking Day 10.30-4.30 CAFOD, Romero House, 55 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7JB. Speaker **Phil Kingston, Christian Climate Action: 'With Extinction Rebellion at the November Actions in London'**
Contact NJPN, 39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX 020 7901 4864 admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk or see <https://justice-and-peace.org.uk/njpn-meetings>

12 'Eritrea and Human Rights' 7.30-9pm, Best Building, University of Chester, off Parkgate Road, Chester, CH1 4BJ. A talk by a speaker from Eritrea for Amnesty International. For further information contact Gill Miller 07941 629236.

12 Quiet Day at the Cenacle – see January 26

13 What is happening to our common home? IV. Decline in Quality of Human Life and Breakdown of Society: Cllr Jane Corbett – See 23 January

14 Fossil fuel divestment for a zero carbon future: A conference for religious : Mount Street Jesuit Centre, 114 Mount Street, London, W1K 3AY 11am to 4pm (*Laudato Si'* Mass at 3.30pm) Sponsors: CAFOD, Operation Noah, Global Catholic Climate Movement, National Justice & Peace Network, Conference of Religious and Association of Provincial Bursars. The event is free of charge, and participants are kindly asked to bring something to share for a vegetarian lunch. Places are limited, so please book early to avoid disappointment. Please confirm attendance by Friday 8 February by contacting James Buchanan on james.buchanan@operationnoah.org or call 07801 570653. (see page 3 of this bulletin for more info)

15 CAFOD Quiz Night – see January 18

19 Climate Change – update from COP24 Poland venue and timing to be announced. Arranged jointly between CWDF and Chester Sustainability Forum, and will include a report from Catherine Green who attended the climate conference in Katowice as part of the CAFOD delegation. It will also include any observations relating to the I Gas public inquiry.

23 Quiet Day at the Cenacle – see January 26

25 Feb – 10 March Fair Trade Fortnight fairtrade.org.uk/fortnight

27 What is happening to our common home? V. Global Inequality: Clara Burton, CAFOD – See 23 January

MARCH

1 Women's World Day of Prayer "Come, Everything is Ready" written by the Women of Slovenia based on Luke 14:15-24

3 Church Action on Poverty Sunday Look at poverty in a different light www.church-poverty.org.uk

5 Rising National and Personal Debt and the Impact on Aid talk by Nick Dearden 7.30-9pm, Best Building, University of Chester, off Parkgate Road, Chester, CH1 4BJ. Nick Dearden is Director of Global Justice Now, formerly World Development Movement. Their campaigns include Aid issues – urging the adoption of a new progressive vision for UK aid, focused on principles of social justice and the redistribution of economic and political power in the world.

9 International Women's Day 11am-3.30pm Chester Town Hall. Chester Women's Aid's annual celebration of IWD provisionally to be held on Saturday 9th March in the Town Hall. They are looking for entertainers, stall holders and volunteers, please let them know if you are interested. www.chesterwomensaid.org

12 Quiet Day at the Cenacle – see January 26

13 CWDF Forum 6.45pm-9pm The Unity Centre, Cuppin Street, Chester, CH1 2BN. The second Forum gathering of 2019. Open session on local responses to the concerns of climate change and climate justice including an update from Jude Limb on Christian Aid's *Big Shift* campaign (away from fossil fuels) and the lobby of HSBC. (Details to be confirmed). 01244 350323.

15 CAFOD Lent Family Fast Day

22 CAFOD Quiz Night – see January 18

24 The first **Romero Mass** after the canonisation of our patron saint will be the 11 o'clock Mass at St John's as part of their 200th anniversary celebrations. St John's, 13 Powell St, Wigan WN1 1XL 11am

- Many items taken from the daily e-bulletin Independent Catholic News www.indcatholicnews.com an invaluable free resources for up-to-date J&P news, events and in-depth articles.
- Sign up for weekly e-bulletins from NJPN (plus copies of this newsletter & back issues) and resources at www.justice-and-peace.org.uk or contact admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk 0207 901 4864

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