

NJPN North West Justice & Peace E-Bulletin July 2022

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

HOPE AND A POLITICS OF CARE (1): THE MORNING AFTER PARTYGATE

Posted on 6 July, 2022 by **David Gee**

Hello friends. It's been a little while since the last post. Here's the first of a pair on hope and a politics of care. It's a 10-minute read. [On the afternoon of the day I posted this, the Tory party's mass attempt to oust their leader from office was already making it look a bit dated.]

After all his lockdown lawbreaking, the case against the prime minister majors on his habit of saying one thing and doing another. But this is a politician's weakness, hardly unusual. More disturbing is his want of care.

I think of the moment he was shown a picture of a toddler left on a hospital floor for a lack of beds and he snatched it away. And one of his speeches: people of low intelligence must go without, he said, so that people like himself may prosper. I'm reminded of his hero Winston Churchill, who told his war-weary public to dig for victory and do without while he tucked into steak tournedos topped with a truffle.

Toxic

A good leader is many things, but some conviction of care – that life beyond their own circle makes a claim on what they do – really can't be missing. As it is, the leader we have was schooled in 'strategic duplicity' from the moment his parents dumped him at Eton's gates. A gnawing need for success, the status it brings, has trained him ever since, it seems, to treat care as a handicap.

But I don't think we can hurl the (other) c-word the prime minister's way and have done with it. We might well wonder why the prime minister doesn't have more care. But the question that presses is how someone so marked by its lack can rise to power with ease, even in our serially unrepresentative representative democracy. He didn't give himself the country's top job after all, we the public surprised him with that one, nuclear codes and all.

Though surprise it doesn't. It's no mystery, given our political diet, that care seldom swings our collective political choices. Our parliamentary representatives sit on either side of a room literally to moo at each other, like cows but without the grace. The press we most often consume treats our times not as a cluster of challenges that need facing but as a deluge of threats to keep at bay by pelting brickbats at anyone on the margins. Our social media is fast becoming the democracy of every needling meanness, a daily pile-on thousands of tweets deep. Boris Johnson didn't cook up this slumgullion*, he's just the truffle on top of it. When he rolls off, a jarful more are ready to take his place to the fanfare of a fresh start, and round we go again.

* Slum (slime) + gullion (cesspool). 'Slumgullion' is stew made with whatever you have. The word comes from the 19th century, when it was used to mean a foul, watery tea (in Mark Twain's *Roughing it*), or discarded fish offal (in Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*).

As to how toxic leaders seduce so successfully, the psychoanalyst Hanna Segal offers the most persuasive account I know. We're drawn to leaders who offer to do the violence that we ourselves harbour but are too ashamed to enact, she writes, or perhaps too squeamish. Hence the eternal return of the 'strongman' leader, promising to bludgeon a better future into being. The appeal of their ruthlessness, their dereliction of care, grows particularly attractive in societies under strain, anxious and liable to lash out. Think of Putin's rise to power through the ruins of the Russian economy after the fall of the Wall. Think, for that matter, of Armed Forces Day on the island fortress of Brexit Britain.

But our prime minister is no strongman. He's more 'showman', closer to Trump than Putin. His psychic allure issues not from his hunger to destroy – though destroy he does – but from his whim to distract. For as long as the maverick clown entertains, we can shrug off the demands of attention that the life of the world makes of us. Don't worry about all that, we're gonna make life great again – so promises the showman, though all he gives us is permission to self-destruct in peace.

Triage

I've often heard said that the body politic wouldn't make such destructive choices 'if only people were more educated', but then our prime minister was incubated at Oxford University. More hothouse schooling with its 'culture of contest' – its competitive, economically-driven preoccupation with the accumulation of knowledge over the cultivation of wisdom – can't plug the hole where care should be. The assuredness of clever, as a matter of thorough drilling, and the openness of thoughtful, are almost opposites.

Many pin our political somnambulance more precisely on a dearth of critical thinking. Why else would we so struggle to sift difficult truths from the slew of comforting lies spilling from the mouths of mendacious leaders, the drawing boards of marketing executives, the pens of our billionaire-owned press? Clearly, a democracy without criticality of thought isn't one, but thinking clearly doesn't amount to a politics of care. What counts most is not how lucid the thinking, but in whose favour the thinking is done. Some of the sharpest minds, and Churchill was a razor, are also the architects of oppression.

The matter of how clearly we think may not be as important as how deeply we feel. Some research suggests a long-term decline in empathy, even a dimming of emotion itself. But fellow-feeling hasn't dried up; injured animals release compassion in torrents. It's just no guarantor of care. Most of the public is OK with melting down Moscow with all its children – because if you buy into nuclear weapons, that's what it says on the tin. Justice stands uneasy on empathy's shifting sands.

When I call to mind the people who most inspire me, what lands first is not how critically they think or fulsomely they emote, but how faithful they are to the life in and around them. They feel involved with it. It matters to them, so its integrity matters also, urging them towards attentiveness. I think of the Czech dissident and playwright, Václav Havel. His criticality and empathy ran deep, but his dignity as a leader lay in recruiting both to his fidelity to the people and the land. His care as a political actor melded with his congruence as a person, and then you couldn't miss it. It showed up in his bearing, in all senses of that word: directedness, poise, persistence.

Havel's own view on leadership was simple: it's an exercise in responsibility. More than the indulgence of one's own ego, class or nation, the leader who genuinely serves their public cleaves to 'something higher than my family, my country, my firm, my success'. That's why the people chose him to lead.

Could we choose that too? It's what we say we most want, just not what we most vote for. Over and again, leaders showing some solidarity get slammed by people of power who stand to lose out. Antagonism also builds among those who stand to gain, as the fears that Hanna Segal identified take hold. The leader who would have us face the world as it is becomes a sticky prospect; better the honcho who doesn't trouble us with all that.

Perhaps this accounts in part for the unlikely alliance that emerged in the last general election between the monied classes and many – though importantly, not most – of those they marginalise. With millions of others, I'd hoped that I'd finally be able to point to a new prime minister as the only in my lifetime whose care has inspired me. Instead, we sent our showman leader stumbling back to Number 10 for another crack at the whip. Here and abroad, care in politics remains patchy indeed, or worse.

Antidote

And yet care isn't rare, its tokens are everywhere. The Havels of the world may be few, though my hope attaches more to the very many more people who struggle fitfully to push their circle of care outward – the outcome of the effort matters, but the effort itself counts for more. For in that effort is something politically precious indeed: a presumption against voting for the pain of others.

When the circle of the life that matters reaches further than the front door, we may grow inured to the appealing lies that energise violence against the stranger and the earth. We may hold back from strewing such casual blessings over the injustices of our day. Indeed, we may hold an antidote – possibly the sole antidote – to the poisonous, pied-piper charm of any showman leader or screaming headline.

I wonder what might lead that way. At the least, a politics of deeper inclusion, socially and ecologically, won't emerge unless we test what we hear from politicians and read in the press – and what we say and do ourselves – against a simple, cautionary query: *Where's the care here?*

But the query I'm left with is the altogether slipperier one of whether we can learn to want to care in the first place. I mean – how do you learn a desire?

I have no recipe, I even hope there isn't one. I only notice that the desire to care grows stronger in those not quite so captivated by the greedy institutions of our socio-economic system. They're unconvinced by its well-marketed, peculiarly privatised hopes of a comfortable retreat to the suburbs, two cars in the drive, and so on. That would mean living 'within the lie', as Havel once wrote, when the choice needs making to live 'within the truth', or at least to try. Better to run feral than labour to contain the dissonance; better to revolt – Havel's word again.

Yet that revolt is more than a merely instinctive recoil from ‘the lie’ and all its hurts. Certainly, care’s caution stands against harm, but its desire moves for the life in harm’s way. Such considered, active love of the life to which we belong, so bell hooks insisted, teaches us to transgress for the sake of a common freedom. And so care hitches to hope. Hope, that is, attending to the harm that care might prevent, but also to the inclusive prosperity it might allow – the very thing our aristocrat prime minister dismisses with a wave of the hand.

Care’s hope

I’ve occasionally asked people how their care took root in them. They reply with little more than that they kept bumping into it. ‘Oh, it was after I met...’ ‘Well, my mum taught me early on to...’ ‘It’s in the stories our people tell...’ ‘Nature’s been my teacher all along, I suppose...’ ‘I just prayed, I mean I really prayed, and it came...’

None learnt care from a script. Apparently, it propagates less by planning than by the grace of coincidence (coincide: lit. ‘to fall upon together’). It’s not much of a strategy, but the nodding heads of summer grass at my window need nothing more as they loose their DNA to the breeze. There it drifts until it meets what it didn’t know it was looking for. Then it makes. The rest is history, literally. (Forget my streaming hay-fever for a moment.)

Care likewise lives, it seems, by a sparse ecology of life-inviting, life-releasing encounters: moments when life might just tilt us in its direction, and we might just tilt to meet it in turn. If, that is, we can remember who we mean to be – recall our fidelity to the living, grow our democracy from that place. It’s a slender kind of hope, but not weak. In the choice to sink into care’s ways, in the fellowship of that choice, and in the filament threads of story and ritual that carry it through time, we can at least lean into the wind.

<https://hopeswork.org/2022/07/06/partygate/>

About David Gee

‘Without hope, people can’t live.’ - Mohammed (poet, waiter – Bangladeshi)

[Hopeswork.org](https://hopeswork.org) is a small window on the work that people are doing all over the world to practise their hope. I’m working with groups in the UK to explore the practical meaning of hope for their own work, and writing about it here and elsewhere. The project is intended as a supportive response to many people who say they feel a lack of hope for the world.

I’ve been in the peace movement for about 20 years campaigning, writing, and supporting groups working for social change. My new book, *Hope’s work*, is published by Darton, Longman & Todd.

I’ve put together a sheet showing the six ‘core conditions’ of conscious hope <https://hopeswork.org/core-conditions-of-hope/> that emerged from my conversations with various people who persist in struggling to face the world as it is. Download this page as a handout here: <https://hopeswork.files.wordpress.com/2022/06/hopefulness-handout.pdf>

I also now have some simple book group guidelines <https://hopeswork.org/study-guide/> for reading through ‘Hope’s work’ together, with thanks to Tim Stead for some of the queries I’ve used there.

If you’d like a copy of the book, you can get one half-price (£5) if you order direct from the publisher and use the code SUMMER at checkout. <https://www.dartonlongmantodd.co.uk/titles/2319-9781913657031-hopes-work>
I have a few left too, for £10 inc. postage, if you’d like a signed copy – just get in touch.

And finally, an audio version of the book, read by me, should be out in the autumn. If you’d like to know when, just subscribe to this blog <https://hopeswork.org/follow/> and I’ll send a message.

PRISON FELLOWSHIP EVENT ON FRIDAY 22 JULY

Prison Fellowship is a Christian organisation whose volunteers undertake various roles, such as writing letters to prisoners, supporting a free prayer line for prisoners, coordinating sending gifts to prisoners’ children at Christmas or for Mother’s Day, and facilitating Sycamore tree, a highly respected restorative justice course.

Their website states ‘We believe no one is beyond hope. Do you?’ and the work is extremely rewarding. There is an online volunteer information/recruitment event (no obligation to volunteer immediately) on Friday 22 July 8–9pm. Find out more at <https://prisonfellowship.org.uk/> or register for the event at <https://prisonfellowship.org.uk/joinus>

PLASTIC FREE JULY

Join millions of people reducing their plastic waste. Plastic Free July® is a global movement that helps millions of people be part of the solution to plastic pollution – so we can have cleaner streets, oceans, and beautiful communities. Will you be part of Plastic Free July by choosing to refuse single-use plastics?

Find out more here: <https://www.plasticfreejuly.org/get-involved/what-you-can-do/>

FORCES WATCH NEWS

Dear Supporters, I think we can say Boris Johnson has finally gone. As the Conservative Party pivots towards a new leader at least three of the potential candidates are ex-military. At the top of the list is Defence Secretary Ben Wallace, who Ladbrokes were giving odds of 7-1 at the time of writing. The Russian invasion of Ukraine certainly presented Wallace with an opportunity to burnish his leadership credentials - his MoD picture was even briefly switched to one in which he was wearing military fatigues - but when the walls were crumbling good old Ben still put his weight behind the Prime Minister (despite their supposed rift over defence spending). Considering recent high-profile resignations were catalysed by Johnson's handling of sexual assault allegations this is hugely worrying. With such a stance, can we really be confident Wallace is capable of tackling the continuing problem of sexual violence in the armed forces? A much less likely, though no less militaristic, candidate is Tom Tugendhat - an ex-Lieutenant Colonel in the Territorial Army who served in Iraq and Afghanistan. And today, it emerged that climate change denier and ex-RAF engineer officer Steve Baker is also considering a run. Other MPs allegedly throwing their hat into the ring include Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme graduate Suella Braverman.

I. *Top Gun: Maverick* - the military in Hollywood

At the end of June the delayed UK-release of *Top Gun: Maverick* hit cinemas up and down the country. A summer blockbuster release that did not come from the Marvel or DC superhero franchise, it brings into sharp relief the ongoing relationship between Hollywood and the military. And while Tom Cruise and the cast relied on support from the Pentagon, less than 12 months ago it was the MoD and Royal Navy lending their weight to the release of *Live and Let Die*, the latest installment of the James Bond franchise. The RAF also sent a representative to meet Cruise at the UK premier of *Top Gun: Maverick* - which the tabloids lapped up. With Kate Bush topping the charts, and the threat of strikes across Britain, our chief blog writer Joe Glenton dusted off the cobwebs to explore childhood nostalgia and the links between Hollywood and the military.

As Joe notes, it is a mutually beneficial relationship. Productions get access to high-tech military equipment and the people to operate it, whilst the military can parse over scripts and soak up the recruitment potential that comes with an action thriller in which the good guy (and it is always a guy) wins. The 1986 release of the first *Top Gun* allegedly led to a 500% increase in sign-up rates - with the Navy taking the opportunity to set up recruitment stands in cinema foyers across the United States. It's too early to tell if similar increases will happen this time around, but reports from across the pond suggest recruitment stalls are once again popping up to try and tempt movie-goers. You can read Joe's analytical trip down memory lane here: <https://www.forceswatch.net/comment/the-military-entertainment-complex/>

II. Hollywooding Recruitment

Whilst we focus a lot on the military's influence on Hollywood, the July 1st release of the British Army's latest recruitment advert shows the impact runs both ways. With the tag-line '*Nothing Can Do What a Soldier Can Do*', it features a Terminator style robot (think the metal skeleton underneath Arnie and not the man himself) moving through a dystopic landscape. The twist is that the robot is being operated by a soldier: the message being that, whilst machines may replace certain aspects on the battlefield there are things that can only be carried out by a soldier. There is definitely an element of gamification to the video - the battlescape looks like it has been lifted from *Call of Duty* - and it seems gamers might be at least a segment of the target audience. Industry reports on the release mention plans to show the advert in cinemas, so the high-budget blockbuster element will also suit the big screen (maybe it will appear before *Top Gun: Maverick*). But perhaps the most striking element is the complete departure from the 'Made in the Royal Navy' or 'belonging' adverts that have been ubiquitous over the past decade. We're currently analysing the new campaign as well as the impacts of the pandemic on recruitment, so keep an eye on our social media and website for updates.

III. Unpacking Armed Forces Day - The Podcast

This June - as with every June - saw the return of Armed Forces Week, a 7-day period where the British public are encouraged to remember and reflect on the women and men who serve in the nation's military. At the apex of the week was the Armed Forces Day celebration, with a national event hosted in the seaside town of Scarborough. But what does it all mean? As ForcesWatch have reported before, Armed Forces Day is part of a wider charm offensive that the MoD and military took following the PR disasters of drawn-out wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Events conveniently present a sanitised vision of life in the armed forces, operating as both a recruitment opportunity and a way to garner wider public support for the services. To unpick some of the problems and meanings behind Armed Forces Day, we invited Dr. Ross McGarry to record a special episode of our Warrior Nation podcast. In a fascinating discussion with Joe, the Liverpool University academic reflects on his own experiences when the national event came to his home town in 2017. Using an ethnographic and embodied approach, Ross offers a unique perspective that definitely opened our eyes to new ways of understanding the experiential aspect of Armed Forces Day.

You can listen to the episode on Spotify <https://open.spotify.com/episode/2gDYBtk4rCTBofDtGAEJyv?si=4blnqia-S76pekomLrLQ4w&nd=1> OR iTunes <https://open.spotify.com/episode/2gDYBtk4rCTBofDtGAEJyv?si=4blnqia-S76pekomLrLQ4w&nd=1> or your favourite podcast app. Please give us a rating or follow us on Spotify to keep up to date with all our new releases (we have a fourth series in the pipeline!).
<https://www.forceswatch.net>

CAFOD NEWS FROM LANCASTER DIOCESE

The cost of living is rising and the world produces enough food to feed everybody, yet more and more people don't have enough to eat. The way we grow and distribute food is broken, so people go hungry and the planet suffers, while the climate crisis makes the situation even worse. The Catholic community stands in solidarity with people in poverty and has recently been trying to Fix the Food System. Thank you for your volunteering which is helping us respond to the world food crisis. Read below about our latest campaign Fix the Food System, the World Food Crisis Appeal, Family Fast Day, an exciting online talk and more...

Fix the Food System is the new food campaign through which CAFOD is urging the UK government to keep the promises it made at the COP26 climate talks last year and support agricultural systems that tackle the climate crisis as well as putting local communities first. Our parish resources, which you can order from the CAFOD online shop <https://shop.cafod.org.uk/> invite small groups to learn about the global food system over seven 'stations'. Groups have been incorporating the stations into walks, holding an event in a garden and some are including sharing food. Some groups are using the seven stations over seven weeks. <https://shop.cafod.org.uk/products/fix-the-food-system-leaflet>

Here's details of an event happening in Preston deanery: Our CAFOD group invites you to learn more about the "Fix the Food System" campaign on Saturday July 16, 11am at St Mary's Newhouse followed by a family picnic – hopefully in the garden. Please come along and join us so that we can all work together to help those millions of people who are already facing starvation. For more information contact Stephen Garsed 01772717376

For a simple explanation of the problems with the global food system you can watch our short animation here: <https://cafod.org.uk/Education/Secondary-and-youth-resources/Step-up-to-the-plate-secondary> And you can read about how the crisis unfolding in East Africa and the issues raised in our Fix the Food System are linked here: <https://cafod.org.uk/News/International-news/East-Africa-crisis-food-system> Also, could you gather a group to pray the rosary for an end to hunger? <https://cafod.org.uk/Pray/Pray-the-rosary/Rosary-for-an-end-to-hunger>

World Food Crisis Appeal and Family Fast Day

All around the world – including here, in the UK – families are finding it harder than ever to put food on the table. The food crisis is particularly severe in East Africa, where the humanitarian need is immense. It is a serious situation but together we are far from powerless. <https://cafod.org.uk/News/Emergencies-news/World-food-crisis> We launched the World Food Crisis Appeal in June <https://cafod.org.uk/Give/Donate-to-Emergencies/World-Food-Crisis-Appeal> and it will be the focus of our Family Fast Day appeal in parishes in the first week of October.

Important dates for your diary: Family Fast Day 7 October with the weekends of 2 and 9 October for giving the Fast Day talk and holding the collections in church.

Please do look out for invitations to webinars to hear more from our partners in East Africa. Watch this video about the impact of the food crisis in Kenya, featuring CAFOD Director Christine Allen and Isacko Jirma, Director of Caritas Marsabit (CAFOD's partner) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2kaW-AXzggE&t=6s>

A reminder that you can order a contactless device <https://cafod.org.uk/Fundraise/Parish-fundraising/Contactless-device-FAQs> from us to use in your parish. This can be used for the Harvest collection and CAFOD emergency collections and fundraising events for CAFOD like cake stalls or selling tickets for parish social gatherings.

Family Prayer Activities

Please share our family prayer ideas and activities with the people in your life who have children or who regularly look after them. With ideas for children of all ages they are a great way for families to come together, share their faith and have fun throughout the summer holidays <https://cafod.org.uk/Pray/Family-prayer-ideas>

Step into the Gap – please share with any young people you know.

We offer the unique opportunity for 18-30 year-olds to develop leadership skills within a full-time gap year volunteering UK placement. Placements are based in the UK, either in a youth retreat centre or Catholic Secondary school and include accommodation, food, and living within a caring and supportive community. Work-based travel costs and stipend included. Please share this info with any young people you know and encourage them to apply.

For more info visit: www.cafod.org.uk/gapyear or contact Arianne at: youngleadership@cafod.org.uk

The Great North Run

Do you or anyone you know want to take on the Great North Run on the 11 September for CAFOD. This iconic event is the world's biggest half marathon. Whether you have already registered or want to register with us, you can find more information here <https://cafod.org.uk/Fundraise/Sponsored-challenge-events/Run-for-CAFOD/Great-North-Run>

Patrick Gardner & Emma Nolan Community Participation Coordinators – Lancaster Diocese
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NJPN CONFERENCE: 'HOPE! A VERB WITH ITS SLEEVES ROLLED UP'

Ellen Teague 10 June 2022: After months of sadness and uncertainty, the NJPN Conference '*Hope! a verb with its sleeves rolled up*' aims to inspire us to look for signs of hope in our communities and in our wider world. It will be held 22-24 July 2022 at Swanwick in Derbyshire. Our hope is that, following the Conference, we will all return to our communities with enthusiasm and increased commitment to work for a more just and peaceful world for all God's creation. We will consider, how, as activists and people of faith, we might support those in most need and enable them to envisage a more hopeful future. Over the weekend we will be identifying hopeful possibilities in our world. We will listen to inspiring keynote speakers, take part in interactive workshops and liturgical celebrations. There will be time to relax, enjoy meeting friends old and new. The peaceful atmosphere of the surroundings will provide a space for reflection and enjoyment.

Here is an outline of the programme.

Friday evening:

Philip McDonagh will speak of a hope that requires courage - upright action for the sake of the future. Hope is rational - an escapist fantasy does not qualify as hope in action.

Philip is co-author of the recently published work, '*On the Significance of Religion for Global Diplomacy*' (Routledge 2021), Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Humanities at Dublin City University, and Director of the Centre for Religion, Human Values, and International Relations.

As a serving Irish diplomat, as Political Counsellor in London, Philip played a part in the Northern Ireland peace process in the build-up to the Good Friday Agreement. He later served as Head of Mission in India, the Holy See, Finland, Russia, and the OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe).

Philip has published poetry and works for the theatre, including *The Song the Oriole Sang* (Dedalus Press, Dublin, 2010) and *Gondla, or the Salvation of the Wolves* (Arlen House 2016), a translation of Nikolai Gumilev's Irish-themed play written during WWI.

Saturday morning:

Fr Patrick Devine, SMA, Shalom Centre for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation, which works to mitigate conflict and poverty in Africa. Fr Devine serves as the organisation's executive director, leading an international team of conflict resolution experts from various religious backgrounds and disciplines who are based in Kenya and neighbouring countries. In 2013, he was honoured with the International Caring Award, whose previous recipients include the Dalai Lama, Bill Clinton, and Mother Teresa.

Workshops will include:

- Issues of domestic poverty and universal credit
- Guardians of Creation
- Restoring Dignity to Prisoners and their families
- Interfaith working
- Church Action for Tax Justice
- Synodal listening
- The work of Stella Maris Chaplains

Saturday afternoon:

Andy Flanagan is the Executive Director of Christians in Politics, which draws together Christians from across the political parties and beyond, and from across the breadth of the Church. Andy yearns to see a just rewiring of the global economic system. He juggles his political work with his career as a singer-songwriter and we hope to have the opportunity to listen to his music on Saturday evening. Andy is also author of '*Those who show up*' (Muddy Pearl, 2015). In the forward Archbishop Justin Welby writes that, "Andy is reaching out, inspiring and equipping us to become engaged with a system that affects us deeply, and through which we in turn can effect radical and transformational change across our society"

Saturday late afternoon:

Rev Ruth Gee, Assistant Secretary of the Conference of the Methodist Church in Britain, and Patron of NJPN will lead an Ecumenical service. Fr Dominic Robinson SJ, Chair of Westminster Justice and Peace, will preside at Mass on the Sunday.

Sunday Morning:

Signs of Hope will include four short presentations from representatives of organisations working for peace and non-violence, nuclear issues, peace education with young people and working for climate change.

Moving forward:

In the final session we will consider progress following our important 2021 Environment Conference and look to move forward as we continue with our commitment to justice, peace, and care for all creation.

Conference Chair, Tim Livesey, is CEO of Embrace the Middle East, which works with Christian partners in Egypt, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Syria and Iraq serving marginalised and excluded communities including refugees, people living with disabilities, vulnerable women and girls, very poor rural and urban slum communities. Previously Tim has worked as Director of Public Affairs for Dr Rowan Williams when he was Archbishop of Canterbury, and was Chief of Staff for Ed Milliband, Leader of the Labour Party. He had 19 years in a variety of roles in the Foreign Office and Downing Street, including four years running the UK's development programme in Nigeria.

A Just Fair will provide a marketplace for organisations wishing to share information and opportunity for action on a wide range of issues.

There are special programmes for children and teens. Some bursaries for young people still available.

For booking information and forms see: www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference/
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/44870>

PEACE-BUILDING MISSIONARY TO ADDRESS NJPN CONFERENCE

Matt Moran 6 July 2022: The 2022 Conference of the National Justice & Peace Network due to be held in Swanwick, Derbyshire on 22-24 July will hear a presentation on Transforming Inter-Ethnic Conflict and Religious Ideological Extremism and how an empowering methodology is being used in Eastern Africa to secure positive peace. The speaker will be Fr Patrick Devine, Founder and International Chairman of the Shalom Center for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation which is based in Nairobi, Kenya.

In his presentation, Fr Devine will discuss his experience of working with communities in Eastern Africa to promote peace, justice, security, reconciliation, and conflict transformation. In particular, he will focus on Shalom's approach to its work with tribal and community leaders on education, empowerment and transcending ethnic and religious boundaries to get to the root causes of conflict.

Shalom has had considerable success in replacing conflict and violence with peace and co-operation in renowned conflict areas catalyzed by negative ethnicity, long-standing animosities, cultural differences, resource competition, and institutional deficiencies. It is comprised of an international team of conflict resolution experts from various religious backgrounds and disciplines.

Shalom seeks to identify, understand and address the underlying causes of conflict rather than just address the symptoms. This deep-rooted approach allows for social and religious values like peace, truth, justice and mercy to take root, enable sustainable development evolve, and progressively enliven people to actualise their potential. The training that Shalom imparts to grassroots representatives and stakeholders of the various ethnic groups incorporates intensive research and analysis of issues and contextualised conflict transformation approaches. Communities are empowered in their understanding and application of various non-violent techniques that they can use to resolve their own conflict, and once taken through a series of training, they are brought together for inter-ethnic trust building aimed at slowly re-building and healing deep wounds. <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/45043>

Further information about the peace-building work of Shalom can be found at <https://shalomconflictcenter.org/> Readers in the UK wishing to support the work can contact Andy Rogers at andy@rogersassociates.org or 077-85920810.

Matt Moran is an author and writer based in Cork in Republic of Ireland.

'CHRISTIANS IN POLITICS' HEAD AND SINGER-SONGWRITER AT NJPN CONFERENCE

Ellen Teague 7 July 2022: The 2022 Conference of the National Justice & Peace Network, due to be held in Swanwick, Derbyshire, on 22-24 July, will hear a presentation from the Executive Director of Christians in Politics as one of the keynote speakers. He is also a sing-songwriter and will be performing some of his music.

Andy Flanagan believes that decisions are made by those who show up, striving to put kingdom values to the forefront of discussions. Christians in Politics draws together Christians from across the political parties and beyond, and from across the breadth of the church. Andy yearns to see a just rewiring of the global economic system. He is author of *'Those who show up'* (Muddy Pearl, 2015). In the forward, Archbishop Justin Welby writes: "Andy is reaching out, inspiring and equipping us to become engaged with a system that affects us deeply, and through which we in turn can effect radical and transformational change across our society."

Andy juggles his political work with his career as a singer-songwriter and on the Saturday evening of the conference Andy will lead a musical evening entitled, *'Songs of Pain, Justice and Hope'*.
<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/45051>

A CALL TO UK CHURCHES: FORGE NEW PARTNERSHIPS AND MAKE CHANGE HAPPEN

Church Action on Poverty 8 July 2022:

News of an exciting new partnership... and a call for churches to re-immense themselves in their community relationships.



“Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much.”

That quote by American author and activist Helen Keller is a timeless and vital message to anyone who wants to make change happen. None of us can achieve much by acting alone. But when we unite, the opportunities are huge.

As Church Action on Poverty this week turns 40, we look ahead with optimism. Not because of what we do ourselves, as one charity, but because of the larger, inspiring, tenacious and thriving movement that we are one part of, and the partnerships we cherish.

A new partnership with Co-op

This week, we are particularly delighted to announce that we have signed a new national partnership agreement with Co-op, to help strengthen the voice and power of people in poverty. The Co-op will support a new Speaking Truth To Power programme and the growth and development of the Your Local Pantry network, enabling people on low incomes to start redressing Britain’s power imbalance and to have a greater impact over the decisions and systems that affect their lives.

A growing movement for change

We know that across the UK, there is a vast movement of wonderful people, proactive neighbourhoods, community organisations, residents’ associations, faith groups, charities, activists, campaigners and many others, working to improve everyday life. And it’s when we do so together, in partnership with people in poverty and across organisations, that we see the most remarkable results.

That’s why Church Action on Poverty’s task for the coming years is to focus on working with a wide array of partners to promote initiatives in which local people and communities struggling against poverty can come together, and take collective action to reclaim their own dignity, agency and power. In this way, we can together mitigate the impact of a further economic squeeze but also build a movement against poverty.

Some of our new partners will be very localised and relatively small: individual church congregations, or neighbourhood community groups. Others, like the Co-op, are much larger. All can make a difference, and if you want your group or church to start having more impact, then start by looking at who you can partner with.

PARTNERSHIPS IN PRACTICE

Here are some of the partnerships that we are going to be part of in the year ahead:

1: Poverty Truth Commissions

Poverty Truth Commissions bring together people with direct experience of poverty in a town or city, and decision-makers whose professional position enables them to quickly effect change. Everyone works together as equals over 18 months or so, to identify local solutions that will make a real difference. No individual commissioner could make informed and effective change happen on their own. But by working together, and focusing on what they can change, commissions can make a difference.

We are now working in partnership with the Poverty Truth Network, to help to set up more commissions around the country.

2: Speaking Truth To Power

Church Action on Poverty has a long history of supporting people whose voices had previously been drowned out, to ensure people with personal experience of poverty are heard by people in power.

We have now teamed up with local partners in Liverpool and London and with the Co-op and Joseph Rowntree Foundation nationally, to develop a new programme launching this summer. This will support a new generation of activists, including people personally struggling against poverty, to further develop their skills and confidence to speak their own truths to power.

Being *heard* is not in itself enough, however. We want the truths people speak to have an impact, and to help change the broken systems that hold people back. We want people to be heard *and their messages* heeded. In partnership with other organisations, including media partners, we will work to truly engage people in power in meaningful discussions about how we can work together to solve poverty.

3: Your Local Pantry

The Your Local Pantry network was launched in 2014, and has grown especially quickly in the past two years. Today, there are 75 pantries nationwide, supporting more than 60,000 people to build community and save on their essential outgoings. Pantries soften the blow of high living costs, and create the conditions for communities to grow and thrive, by bringing people together around food. Members pay a small amount each week, and choose groceries worth many times more. Each of those 75 Pantries is a partnership. Church Action on Poverty provides logistical support and national oversight and coordination, but it is the local partnership that makes each Pantry thrive. Pantries are all about dignity, choice and hope. Each one operates as a member-led neighbourhood hub and a springboard to other community initiatives, opportunities and ideas. As we all continue to press for lasting change, pantries are an immediate positive step.

4: Self-Reliant Groups

Self-Reliant Groups are small groups of people who meet save together, and use their savings together in a joint venture. Many involve craft-making, or cookery, and they bring dignity and power back to people who have often been - by the mainstream economy. Around 80% of the members are women.

Church Action on Poverty works in partnership with organisations in Scotland, Wales and North West England to help the network of SRGs to grow, and we are also now partnering with an organisation in Leeds, to spread the movement there as well.

5: Challenge Poverty Week

Challenge Poverty Week is a moment when all the myriad groups and partnerships in the movement to end UK poverty can come together. The week in October is a time for us to hear loudly and clearly the voices that are too often ignored. It's a chance to show that it is possible to build a better, more compassionate society in which everyone can live life to the full. And it's a chance to widen our perspective, and see the vast amount of inspiring hope-filled work that is going on across the movement. Church Action on Poverty coordinates the week in England and Wales, working closely with local authorities, community groups, charities, and the Poverty Alliance in Scotland, where the idea had first begun,

The role of churches - locally and nationally

Alongside all of these partnerships, Church Action on Poverty will continue to work with the churches, at local and national level. Churches are ideally placed to play a key role in improving UK society, but that requires selflessness and an institutional, theological and cultural shift away from models of rescue and 'service provision'. Churches must avoid any temptation to do things *for* people in poverty, and instead do things *with* people in poverty.

Churches nationally will also need to invest in models of mission, leadership and discipleship which affirm the importance of social engagement and transformation (the missionary goal of transforming the unjust structures of society). Through our existing church partnerships and Church on the Margins programme, Church Action on Poverty can play a modest role in advocating for these new ways of working, and in challenging the institutional churches to invest accordingly.

Widening our lens, and self-reflection

Churches will also need to recognise the links between poverty and other social justice issues, including institutionalised prejudice on the basis of race, gender, disability and class. The churches and the anti-poverty sector (within which we include Church Action on Poverty) need to recognise and actively re-dress our own biases, and take seriously the challenge of intersectionality if we wish to be seen as part of the solution rather than part of the problem in future.

Time for churches to take this opportunity

The past few years have been tumultuous for all of us, and in response many radical voices are calling for a new social revolution, rekindling democracy or a shift towards a wellbeing economy, or circular economy. All of these ideas, in their different ways, rightly seek to place local people and communities at the centre of society.

As we have also found, particularly since the start of the pandemic, local communities are huge reservoirs of ingenuity, mutual support and goodwill. Churches can be a central part of this, drawing on the radical visions and ideas across scripture and the anti-poverty movement to help improve their whole community. Those who take the leap will be amazed at what they can achieve in partnership.

On our blog you can read more about the partnership, the impact this work will have – and how churches can play a key role in the movement to end UK poverty. Please follow the link to find out more, and think about how your church could be part of it!

<https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/a-call-to-uk-churches-forge-new-partnerships-and-make-change-happen/>

CHURCH ACTION ON POVERTY NEW PUBLICATION *DIGNITY, AGENCY, POWER*

Poverty robs people of their dignity, agency and power. Church Action on Poverty and its partners work to build a movement in which people and communities can reclaim those essential aspects of life. This anthology of stories, prayers, reflections and liturgy is published to coincide with the organisation's 40th anniversary and to inspire continuing work towards those ends.

£14.99 from Wild Goose Publications: <https://www.ionabooks.com/product/dignity-agency-power/>

Or download the book for £9.99: <https://www.ionabooks.com/product/dignity-agency-power-downloadable-book/>

ODDS ON: AN INTERACTIVE SHORT FILM - LIVE LAUNCH EVENT

The Lowry, Manchester Wed 13 July

Join us for this in-person and live streamed event to launch *Odds On*, Dante or Die's new interactive short film exploring online gambling, which is available to watch for free from 5 July via *Odds On: Interactive Short Film* | The Lowry <https://thelowry.odds-on.online/>

Dante or Die are back at The Lowry to launch *Odds On*, which takes you behind the screen into the murky depths of online gambling. The event will include an interactive screening of *Odds On*, in which the audience will collectively decide the course of action, followed by a panel discussion titled '*The Female Gambler: How is online gambling affecting women across the UK*'. The all-female panel includes Stacey Goodwin, author of '*The Girl Gambler*', Nadine Ashworth, Operations Manager at support organisation GamFam & a member of Odds On's Lived Experience Creative Advisory Group, Wendy Knight, who also has lived experience & is active within Gamblers Anonymous, Harp Edwards, Residential Treatment Manager at Gordon Moody; and Fiona Watson, who plays the film's protagonist. It will be hosted by Ciara Leeming, a photographer and writer based in Manchester who has regularly worked for Big Issue North magazine and the Guardian as a journalist.

Wednesday 13 July, 7.30 – 9pm The Lowry: Aldridge Studio. Available to watch online and in-person. From £5.

<https://thelowry.com/whats-on/odds-on-panel-discussion/>

STORIES FROM UKRAINE: UKRLAND

The Lowry, Manchester Thu 04 August 2022 20:00 Lowry Studio (Unreserved) £10.00 £12.00

A one-woman show featuring texts from modern Ukrainian playwrights and writers, written after the start of the war in Ukraine. These are monologues about war. No, not like that... About a man in an inhuman war. Some of the texts are in English, some in Ukrainian. The play is about confusion, about survival, about hatred and love, about rage and strength of spirit. Performed by Ukrainian actress Shorena Shoniia, known for her work in film (*No Step Back, Secret Love*) and theatre (*Juliet and Romeo*, Lesya Ukrainka Theater).

All proceeds from this performance are going to a Ukrainian children's charity.

<https://thelowry.com/whats-on/stories-from-ukraine/>

DIARY

JULY

19 Chester World Development Forum meeting at The Unity Centre, 7pm. CWDF members Linda & Stewart Shuttleworth will give us an update on their ongoing work in Uganda to improve mental health services in this large developing country.

22-24 44th Annual Justice and Peace Conference at the Hayes Centre Swanwick. '**HOPE! A VERB WITH ITS SLEEVES ROLLED UP**' Booking: <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference/> See pages 6-7 for more info

● **Season of Creation 2022** September 01 to October 04. The 2022 celebration guide *Listen to the Voice of Creation* for the Season of Creation has just been launched at: <https://seasonofcreation.org/>

● **Read The Spring issue of *MouthPeace*** the quarterly online newsletter for Shrewsbury, Liverpool and Lancaster dioceses <https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/cms/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Mouthpeace-Spring-22..pdf>

● **Read NJPN's weekly column** online on Independent Catholic News www.indcatholicnews.com or find articles be uploaded onto our website at www.justice-and-peace.org.uk

● 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 regular news and information from NJPN including a **new fortnightly e-bulletin with a comprehensive round-up of current events, campaigns, e-petitions and resources** (plus copies of this newsletter & back issues for NJPN North West) at www.justice-and-peace.org.uk or contact ebulletin@justice-and-peace.org or admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk 020 7901 4864

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