

Putting faith to work



Churches for Work
and Social Justice
www.ccisr.org.uk

signposts to engaging with the world

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“Putting faith to work” is at the heart of what ISR is about, as we work to make a difference in the community, in the workplace and in the church.

We are here to raise issues of social responsibility and social justice, and to support churches in their mission and ministry, so we hope you will find this information useful and an encouragement to get involved. There is much more information on our website www.ccisr.org.uk and we would love to hear from you.

Please note: all web links in this publication are ‘active’. If you read this online, hovering over the links will enable you to visit the web site.

Fairtrade tastes good in the South West

Many of us first encountered Fairtrade products in our churches and found out just how good the chocolate, tea and coffee tastes. What we may not be aware of is the range of other Fairtrade products and the network of Fairtrade supporters who help make it possible for producers abroad to receive a fair price for their hard work.

In September, 63 people from 24 different towns across the South West came together in the spacious setting of County Hall Trowbridge for the annual South West Fairtrade day. A wide selection of Fairtrade products were on display throughout. Hilperton School Choir sang a Fairtrade song they had written for the occasion. One Fairtrade campaigner summed it up: ‘A well-organised, stimulating day meeting many like-minded people... I feel re-inspired!’

Adam Gardner from the Fairtrade Foundation updated participants about new developments and products. We also heard Christina Baskerville, from local business “Easy Bean”, on how small Fairtrade businesses have to fight to keep their products on supermarket shelves, and how we need to support of Fairtrade campaigners to keep promoting them.

A choice of workshops took place on Fairtrade Town renewals, working in

schools, Fairtrade events throughout the year, and challenges to making Fairtrade products more widely available. These led into a panel debate with questions on a wide range of issues from certification to impacts. We were reminded that to receive the distinctive Fairtrade designation, every part of the product had to be Fairtrade compliant.

Jenny Foster, South West Fairtrade Co-ordinator, works enthusiastically 2 days a week to continue developing Fairtrade in the region. The Fairtrade Foundation wants to use the South West as an example of how effective regional Fairtrade campaigning can be, and to share expertise with other regions across the country.



There are currently 105 towns and villages in the South West that have Fairtrade status or are working towards it, and hundreds of Fairtrade churches and schools.

Jenny says, “If your church wants to become a Fairtrade church, it’s easy to achieve, and shows your community that you stand up for justice and fairness.” Details of this can be found here: http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/get_involved/campaigns/fairtrade_places_of_worship/fairtrade_churches/default.aspx

Contact Jenny: bristolfairtradenet-work@gmail.com



Chaplaincy in Swindon Centre

The Church is engaging with a multitude of workplaces across Swindon through chaplaincy. A team of seventeen volunteer chaplains connects with the thousands working in retail and commerce to serve their pastoral needs. They are members of local churches who are recruited, trained and supported by ISR.

As Senior Workplace Chaplain, Revd Angela Overton – Benge oversees this multi-denominational team and leads by example. During a recent visit to the Brunel Centre, she met Barry from the *Cafedelicious* coffee shop, who couldn't speak highly enough of the chaplaincy. These are troubled times for many retailers who welcome someone who will listen.

Later that afternoon Angela called on Emily and Dean at the offices of *inSwindon BID*, the business improvement company which manages the town's central retail and commercial district. These two talented young business people appreciated the time which she gave to them and her interest in the work they carry out on behalf of the community.

Just walking around the heart of Swindon, you couldn't fail to notice the people who immediately recognised Angela and spoke with her.

There is always opportunity for more volunteer chaplains. Angela says, "An exciting new venture is in Old Town where we have had a longstanding presence in the Co-op supermarket. Now we are visiting staff in the small shops, restaurants and business

premises. But we need more people to come on board and help in the work."



If this might be you or you want to know more about becoming a volunteer retail chaplain then why not come along to a **Taster Session in Swindon on Saturday November 9th, 10am to 12 noon-** Contact Angela at the ISR office on 0117 9557430 or angela@ccsr.org.uk



Myths about Poverty

Myth 5

'They' are on the fiddle'

Over 80% of the UK population believe that "large numbers falsely claim benefits". Benefit fraud has decreased to historically low levels - the kind of levels that the tax system can only dream of. Less than 0.9% of the welfare budget is lost to fraud. In fact if everyone claimed and was paid correctly, the welfare system would cost around £18 billion more than it presently does.

Being a workplace Chaplain



Alison Smith

I served in the military for 5 years and spent 16 years as a support staff member for the local police force. My vicar retired and I became chaplain to the local Royal British Legion and I also trained for the MEP (Major Emergency Plan) where I found out about chaplaincy training. I was interviewed and trained primarily to become a local Fire Station Chaplain.

The opportunity to actively go out and share the heart of Jesus with my community without 'preaching' to anyone really appealed to me.

I get excited knowing that I am in a privileged position where I can listen without prejudice to anyone, share in their mealtimes and conversations and be accepted into their environment.

One of the challenges is to remain impartial and to get folk to accept you. There are misconceptions about lay chaplains, and people are surprised when they realise we are 'normal' folk who are there to support them with no hidden agenda other than to show them the love of Christ.

You mustn't become despondent if you are not readily accepted but enjoy the opportunity and your enthusiasm will rub off on those you come into contact with.

St. John Chaplaincy

St John is one of the most well known and respected caring organisations. In modern times it is best known for its St John Ambulance first aid provision, providing everything from cover at big football matches to training work place first aiders. Almost all members of St John are local volunteers training and meeting in local units across the country. With more than **45,000 volunteers** nationally, over half of which are under 25, St John Ambulance is able to treat 550 casualties per day, or **200,000 per year**. Each year St John Ambulance volunteers donate **4 million voluntary hours** to ensure the public's safety and enjoyment at events.

St John has various different branches, from badgers (it's children's uniformed division), cadets for youth, adult units and fellowship for its retired members.



St. John was and is a Christian organisation and seeks to stay true to its motto 'for the faith and in the service of humanity'. Each county has a County Chaplain and here in the County (of Avon) that's me.

Did you know that across the greater Bristol area there are 30 units located: this means that there is going to be one near you!

What I am currently working on is developing my chaplaincy team by recruiting a number of Lay Chaplains from local churches who may be able to be a 'first point of contact' for local units - people who would be

willing to visit local units, pray for the members, develop the relationship between local units and local churches and even go on the occasional visit to an event to see them in action.

I have found chaplaincy with St John tremendously rewarding - is God nudging you to give it a try?

Come and find out more about how you could become a chaplain at our **Taster Morning is on Saturday 11th January 2014 from 10am to 12 noon at ISR.**



Revd Dr Andy Schuman
County Chaplain, St John Ambulance

Vicar at St Christopher's
Brislington

Parish Vicar at Christ The Servant
Stockwood

Workplace Chaplaincy

I have been working now as a Workplace Chaplain for 9 months at Rolls Royce and Airbus. For me it was a really leap in the deep end as I was new to chaplaincy and also the sites are big. Both venues have a combined staff of 10,000, before you consider the onsite sub contractors. During this time I have meet some amazing people, who have been so welcoming to me.

I had seen the benefits of

chaplaincy from my days as a centre manager at the Salvation Army, where each hostel has a chaplain that supports both staff and men. So it was this positive experience and the ideas shared by my ISR Chaplain colleagues that I started my formal visits.

I have a formalised routine for visiting, ensuring I am on site on fixed days and visit different areas regularly. I see this activity as the 'shop window' for my chaplaincy, as it lets people see me around on site and know that I am available. Some visits people want to chat, other times they are quiet, so you pray, as you walk, for the people you meet. I am learning that chaplaincy is about being open to the directing of God where you are, allowing Him to guide and you being fully available and present so he can use you.

When I stop and think about my role is amazes me to think I am invited into the secular world of work to offer a listening ear, support and compassion where people are. As Teresa of Ávila, the late Christian mystic, stated

"Christ has no body now but yours..Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours."

We hear a lot about incarnational living in church circles these days and I find that workplace chaplaincy is certainly an incarnational ministry into an increasing secular world.

*Matt Albury is
Methodist
Workplace
Chaplain*





Home for Good

On November 3, join with churches throughout the UK to celebrate our adoption into God's family and consider what we can do to support the thousands of children living in care.

The desperate need in the UK to find more adoptive parents and foster carers provides the church with a great opportunity to change the lives of some of the most vulnerable children, engage with local authorities and be good news to society.

The [Home for Good](#) team has already been approached by several local authorities and adoption and fostering agencies, who are eager to engage with the Church on this issue.



CCS Adoption is your local child adoption charity, working across the South West to find families for children who need them. With a record number of children currently waiting and a national shortage of adopters, CCS welcomes the Government's recent announcement of £19.3 million funding to help adoptive families.

The Children's Minister, Edward Timpson, announced on the 11th of September that the government is creating an Adoption Support Fund to make

adoption support accessible and timely for those families that need it the most. Jadwiga Ball, CCS Adoption CEO, explains that: "Our long experience in providing life long support to adopters shows how crucial it is for the right therapeutic support to be available when needed. This new initiative will help many adoptive families and should encourage other people considering adoption to feel more confident in making this life changing decision."

CCS's post adoption service is provided by qualified adoption workers and counsellors, and we also have strong links with post adoption support groups. Our adopters describe our post adoption service as "invaluable and lifelong."

CCS believes that adoption support services play a vital role in helping to address the specific issues that some adoptive families might encounter with an adopted child. Many adopted children have experienced the trauma of abuse and neglect or have specific needs which require additional support.

The Adoption Support Fund on £19.3 million will provide adopters with the security that the right adoption support will be available, as and when they need it. The DfE set out its determination to improve the quality of adoption support available to families on the 24

December 2012 in 'Supporting Families who Adopt', which included a range of reforms.

It is hoped the reforms to the adoption system will make it easier for children, for whom adoption is the right decision, to be placed quickly in stable and loving homes. The introduction of the Fund will hopefully enable adopters to get the right support they need so they can focus on creating strong long term relationships with their adopted children. .

For more information about adopting with CCS or supporting our work please call 0117 9350005 or info@ccsadoption.org or visit our website at www.ccsadoption.org where you can download our free adoption info pack and find out about our free info days.



CCS Adoption have 6 beautiful new pop up banners available for churches/places of worship to display. They are 80CM X 2 Metres and are freestanding. Call 0117 9350005.

Resources for Adoption Sunday can be found at <http://www.homeforgood.org.uk/campaign/adoption-Sunday/>

CCS Adoption

Building a positive future for children



Visit from The Revd Ruth Gee, President of Conference 2013/2014

Earlier this month we were lucky enough to have a visit to our offices from the head of the Methodist Church, Ruth Gee.

In her blog she wrote: 'I met with the Chair, Dr John Savage and with some of the committed people who work for ISR, including workplace chaplains, the co-ordinator of b.friend which supports asylum seekers and refugees, administrators and co-ordinators. There are over 100 volunteers engaged in different aspects of the work of ISR. At the heart of all the work is the expectation of glimpses of the glory of God in every part of the world and the call to enable others to know the love of God wherever they are. We ate lunch and talked together before I went to meet one of the chaplains at work.'



Matt Albury is chaplain at Rolls Royce. I met him there and he took me around the workplace. Here Matt works in many different environments, quiet office spaces, large project rooms, design and manufacturing areas. Matt exercises a ministry of presence here. He makes himself known and available for those who want to talk with him. As we walked round Matt never missed an opportunity to greet people. This is a ministry that requires patience, perseverance and the conviction that God is at work here. Amongst the desks, the robots and the engine parts, I glimpsed glory thanks to Matt.'

Christians Giving Up Carbon For Lent

The Diocese of Bristol is calling for a Carbon Fast during Lent 2014.

For many Christians, the 40-day Lenten period of reflection and fasting is an opportunity to focus on spiritual matters and practical discipleship. People start reading devotional literature, use guided prayer and take part in special Bible studies in order to redirect their minds to the divine. Many give up certain foodstuffs and drinks, like chocolate and alcohol, as they reflect upon Christ's 40 days of temptation and fasting in the wilderness.

In 2014 the Diocese of Bristol is challenging Christians to give up some of their Carbon usage for the Lenten period between March 5th and April 20th, by saving energy and reducing costs. This is in recognition of the God-given responsibility people have to care for creation and the environment as part of their everyday discipleship. The aim is for everyone to examine and reshape daily patterns of life, spending habits and travel choices in a way that helps protect the world for future generations.

Nearer the time, the Diocese will suggest practical ways of reducing energy usage and the quantity of associated greenhouse gases which are

affecting the climate. In addition, there will be a series of theological reflections, written by people within the Diocese, to help everyone to think through the issues. These will be made available through the Diocese's website and by email.

The Carbon Fast is part of the Bristol Diocese's response to the national Church of England "Shrinking the Footprint" campaign, which aims to see carbon emissions reduce by 42% by 2020. It was this that prompted the Diocesan Synod at its September gathering to agree the following motion:

This Synod urges all parishioners and their families, church schools and academies to take steps to cut their own carbon footprint by 40% during the 40 days of Lent 2014, starting on 5 March.

It therefore requires the Diocesan Board of Finance, the Diocese and its parishes to take steps to help members of the Church of England put into practice, throughout the Diocese of Bristol, dramatic steps to reduce our Carbon Footprint in line with the policy agreed by General Synod.

It is anticipated that in coming weeks other South West Dioceses will take up the Lenten Carbon Fast in 2014. For further details contact Gordon Hindmarch, Diocesan Environmental Officer, at ISR on 0117 955 7430 or at gordon@ccisr.org.uk



Christmas starts with Christ

The Christmas story has been around for a long time, but today it's being forgotten – 51% say the birth of Jesus is irrelevant to Christmas.

This year, the *Christmas Starts With Christ* campaign aims to change that in Bristol, Gloucestershire, North Somerset, Wiltshire and Swindon.

Churches of all denominations are being invited to join in the *Christmas Starts With Christ* advertising campaign in 2013. It is being supported by 14 Christian churches and agencies including the Church of England, Methodists, Premier and Evangelical Alliance.

Greater Bristol is one of two major cities in the UK into which the network of churches and charities behind *Christmas Starts* are putting an ad campaign worth over £10,000. The aim is to help re-establish the true meaning of Christmas in our society and provide a platform for churches to reach out to their communities.

“Does Christmas start with telly ads in October? No! Christmas starts with Christ” is the message on one of the simple yet striking posters that will be all over the Bristol area from 1 December to Christmas Day.

Complemented by radio adverts and media coverage that draws attention to the social impact churches have in our communities, churches can then personalise other posters to tell everyone about their local event – and at the same time remind them that Christmas starts with Christ. “Christmas starts with our carols by candlelight”, for example, or “when we feed the hungry”, or Messy Christmas.

The ChristmasStartsWithChrist.com website is the resource for churches but the ChristmasStarts.com site will go live in Advent for those outside the Church interested in finding out more.

Bristol has been chosen as a socially diverse regional city in which to pilot a major campaign. ComRes research will be conducted before and after the campaign to see the difference it has made to people's perceptions. Other Churches Together have in recent years supported the campaign, so it is hoped to see the message made known across the West of England.

“The *Christmas Starts With Christ* campaign is such a gift to us as we seek to connect people in our communities with Christ both through worship and the ministry we offer in our churches and neighbourhoods,” said Bishop Mike Hill. “It's also something we can do across the churches and denominations.

In a video to churches, supporting the campaign, he continues, “God starts where we are by sending his Son that we might understand the Good News. That's what we want to get across this Christmas – that Christmas is not just the start of all this but at the very centre of it.”

Find out more at: <http://www.bristol.anglican.org/2013/christmas/#sthash.AzMmaYof.dpuf>

Study guide to “The Lies We Tell Ourselves” report

Responding to requests for Bible study materials linked to their report “The Lies We Tell Ourselves: Ending Comfortable Myths About Poverty” (available at www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/truthandlies), the Joint Public Issues Team have produced an introductory study guide for small groups. It links some of the main ideas in the report with biblical themes and provides questions, group activities and

Bible reflection. The material is written to take up to an hour and half, and is easily adapted to suit your situation.

The guide can be used to consider how injustice is often sustained by misinformation, prejudice and ignorance. According to the study guide authors “carrying stereotypes, received wisdom and prejudices about others is part of being human – where we do not have reliable, first-hand experience, we tend to fill in the gaps ourselves. These exercises help to make us aware of these gaps, and begin

to think about our attitudes in the light of Jesus Christ's example”. The study guide is available at www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/TL-Study.pdf





November Films

Monday 11 November - Bristol - 8pm (Doors 7.30pm)

Bristol Radical FilmFest - www.bristolradicalfilm.org.uk

Venue: The Cube Microplex Cinema, Dove Street South, Bristol BS2 8JD

Tickets: £5 waged / £4 unwaged available from venue on the door - www.cubecinema.com

Includes film 'Emerging Solidarities' and interview with Andrew Wallis, CEO of anti-trafficking NGO Unseen. B.friend, the ISR project working with refugees and asylum seekers is working with Unseen in Bristol.

A trailer for the film can be viewed at www.dfn.org.uk/kavi

The event will be for a general audience, so suitable for anyone



interested in justice issues, trafficking/slavery, or India.

UK Gold Film Showing at The Cube Cinema, 4 Princess Row BS2 8NQ, **Sunday 10th November 8 pm**

Christian Aid is working with Oxfam and Action Aid to promote this film on the vital issue of Tax Justice. Global tax

dodging becomes personal this autumn in a new award-winning documentary which follows one vicar as he explores the trail of tax dodging from near to his parish boundaries to destinations across the world. UK Gold is a truly compelling look at the depth and complicity of the UK's tax havens in fuelling the financial secrecy that allows global tax dodging to rob poor countries. The Guardian describes it as *'the kind of film to get the blood boiling and steam hissing out of your ears... an ambitious and admirably clear assault.'*

Following the film there will be a panel discussion with speakers from Christian Aid, Oxfam and Action Aid.

The Cube does not have a pre-booking service for films, tickets are only sold on the door. You can however register/confirm your interest here and download a ticket to show <http://bristolgold.eventbrite.co.uk>. Please turn up 15 minutes before the showing to buy tickets. The Cube is a membership cinema, please re-



member to bring your membership card or you can buy one on the door - only £1.

Working with ISR

If you would like to explore how ISR can support your church or faith community, whether through training or other opportunities, please get in touch:

162 Pennywell Road
Bristol.BS5 OTX.
0117 9557430

CANCER ENCOURAGEMENT



'MY RIGHT HAND IN THE FATHER'S'; Knowing God's Comfort and Strength through Breast Cancer' by Helen E Jones

Amazon Reviews

"An amazing book. In the face of adversity, love, hope and...God will prevail."

"A humbling story - a must read for anyone affected by cancer."

"Refreshingly honest, remarkably encouraging and easy-to-read."

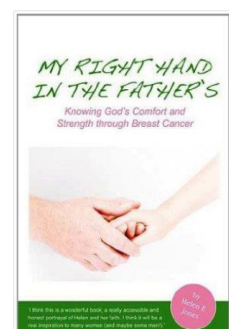
"A must have for anyone taking the breast cancer journey, their family and friends."

"This is a brilliant read....a real page turner...I cried and laughed within the first 10 pages! Very well written. A real encouragement of God's love and faithfulness even during the hard times."

"A must read! Very moving but providing strength for those facing cancer or supporting loved ones with cancer. Wonderful."

Available at www.amazon.co.uk & www.eden.co.uk £7.99

FIRM ROOTS
CANCER SUPPORT
'Strength for today; hope for tomorrow.'



Love Takes Us Into Politics

The Bishop of Salisbury, the Rt Revd Nicholas Holtam, has said the Christian duties to care for those in need and love unconditionally take the Church inevitably into the area of politics.



The Bishop of Salisbury, the Rt Revd Nicholas Holtam, opened the ***More Than Food? expressing compassion, expecting justice*** conference with this challenge. ISR was one of the partners of the South West Churches Regional Forum who arranged the conference at St Michael's, Stoke Gifford. The Bishop was addressing an audience of representatives from churches across the six South West Dioceses who had gathered to discuss responses to the current food poverty crisis which is affecting many households in Britain. The Bishop reminded everyone that Scripture makes clear the Christian duty to care for the vulnerable. Churches, rooted in every community and independent of public money, have a uniquely rich perspective to understand problems and speak out on them.

Bishop Nicholas went on to say: "The care of those in need is a striking characteristic of Christianity. The stories of Matthew 25 and of God's judgement are on the basis of our welcoming the stranger, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and the person in prison are an impetus to gratuitous pastoral care. This is not about care of the deserving poor. "Love is about the care of individuals but it is also about the care of society. Love distributed is about justice and inevitably takes us into the area of politics and how the society is organised."

With reference to the 'bedroom tax', the Bishop said: "One analysis shows the massive gap that would have to be overcome in the region if people were to be able to downsize to accommodation that would fit the new rules. In Wiltshire, there were no unoccupied one- and two-bedroom properties at all, for 2,953 affected households, though 48 were advertised as being available shortly. "The impact of this welfare reform is now the subject of a welcome enquiry.

"It does seem very odd to be putting such pressure on the 2.2m who are unemployed when only 200,000 of them are long-term unemployed and there are only 400,000 unfilled job vacancies. What you see depends on where you stand and the Church has a unique position in being rooted in every community and of being independent of public money.

"In a society of payday loans, food and fuel poverty, increasing rents, high youth unemployment, and crisis situations arising from changes in benefits, our churches have a key role. We care for the individual and build hope in our communities by being like light, salt, yeast changing experience for the common good and renewing hope among those who feel desperate."

Gordon Hindmarch, ISR Social Justice & Environment Officer welcomed the Bishop's timely message: "*Being informed that 13 million people are living below the Government's official poverty line is a sobering enough thought. When told that 3.6 million children are experiencing poor quality lives with 1 in 5 mums skipping meals to feed their children then the case for Christians to respond becomes compelling. One practical way is to support local food banks. Another is for us to write to our MPs asking the Government to do more to alleviate food poverty in modern Britain.*"

Chaplaincy Taster Session (Swindon)
Saturday Nov 9th
10am—12 noon

Major Emergency Plan (for potential new volunteers)
Friday 15th Nov
Wednesday 27th November

Training Opportunities

0117 9557430

Or

alison@ccisr.org.uk

Chaplaincy Taster Session (Bristol)

Tuesday 21st January 2014

St John Taster Session

Saturday 11th January 2014

b.friend training course

Saturday 25th January 2014

Thursday 30th January 2014

Thursday 6th February 2014

