

# A Wakefield Welcome

Wakefield Cathedral recently hosted a visit by six members of the Lutheran Cathedral Chapter from Skara in Sweden. Nigel Russell, Wakefield Cathedral Administrator, reports on an exhausting and rewarding three days.

Having rested after a day of travelling our Swedish visitors arrived at the Cathedral in time for the Monday Morning Liturgy. The group members included the Dean and Precentor of Skara, with four pastors. They group set off for York Minster, where the Head Verger gave us a fascinating tour. It was the feast day of St William of York, and a visit was made to his shrine in the crypt. In the stoneyard we saw how the stonemasons carry out their work, and marvelled at their carving skills.

Returning to Wakefield, the group split up for visits to Cathedral School, a rural parish and discussions with the Mara Link Officer. A busy day was capped off by a party in Treacy Hall with members of the congregation and Mothers' Union bringing food and Swedish-themed decorations.

After Morning Liturgy on Tuesday, Julie Burnham (Manager, Wakefield Rent Deposit Scheme - WRDS) gave an informative and very well-received presentation about the work of WRDS. This was followed by an audience with the Mayor in her parlour at the Town Hall. The traditional clothing, mace and history of Wakefield were discussed and gifts were exchanged between Wakefield and Skara.

A visit to the Chantry Chapel of St Mary the Virgin, the oldest and largest of the four surviving bridge chapels preceded a tour of the Cathedral with Malcolm Warburton. In the afternoon, the group met with the clergy and Education Officer to discuss matters of common interest - a valuable



Members of Skara Cathedral and Wakefield Cathedral visit Mirfield

meeting that took most of the afternoon. We discovered that we had a lot more in common than we thought and so much to learn from each other in different areas. The boy and girl choristers sang Evensong, before a splendid traditional Yorkshire dinner hosted by Jonathan and Pamela Greener at the Deanery.

Wednesday morning came all too quickly for some after the previous evening! After Morning Liturgy, June Lawson escorted the group from Skara to Mirfield for a tour of the Community of the Resurrection, led by Father Thomas. The tour included a visit to the impressive community library, the church and beautiful grounds. Father Thomas also outlined the Community's plans for development. All too quickly it was time for our guests to depart, going directly to Stansted and we said farewell to six people who were not just fellow Christians, but firm friends.

Following this most successful visit we are in the process of arranging for a member of the Skara team to stay in Wakefield for a month or so, with a return visit by a member of the clergy team next year. With this exchange we will be able to learn much more from each other.

'Please remember the community at Skara in your prayers.'

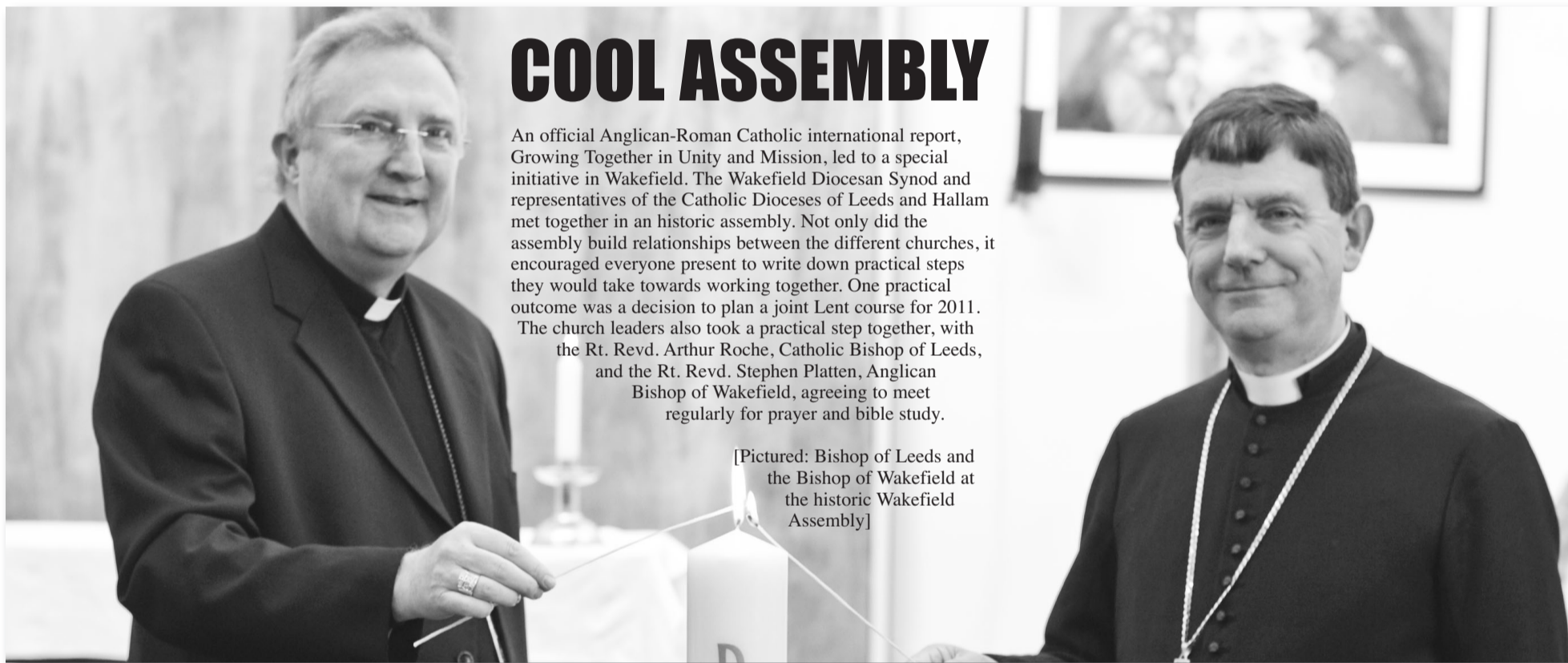
Nigel Russell

## COOL ASSEMBLY

An official Anglican-Roman Catholic international report, Growing Together in Unity and Mission, led to a special initiative in Wakefield. The Wakefield Diocesan Synod and representatives of the Catholic Dioceses of Leeds and Hallam met together in an historic assembly. Not only did the assembly build relationships between the different churches, it encouraged everyone present to write down practical steps they would take towards working together. One practical outcome was a decision to plan a joint Lent course for 2011.

The church leaders also took a practical step together, with the Rt. Revd. Arthur Roche, Catholic Bishop of Leeds, and the Rt. Revd. Stephen Platten, Anglican Bishop of Wakefield, agreeing to meet regularly for prayer and bible study.

[Pictured: Bishop of Leeds and the Bishop of Wakefield at the historic Wakefield Assembly]



## Moving Home?

Where is your spiritual home; why do you attend the church you go to?

Is it an accident of birth, or simply the nearest church to where you live? Is it just the church where you feel most comfortable and welcome, or have you thought carefully about the issues which distinguish the churches? One group of Anglicans is beginning to wonder whether they might move to a new spiritual home. In an exclusive article for Unity Post, the Bishop of Beverley, the Rt Revd. Martyn Jarrett, shows how a new Vatican document, the Apostolic Constitution, is tempting many of the people among whom he ministers. He writes:

### The Apostolic Constitution Proposing New 'Ordinariates' for Former Anglicans

The Apostolic Constitution with its proposals for how what are usually labelled as 'Traditionalist Anglicans' might move into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church has generated much interest. This article comes with a health warning. I write as an Anglican and as one of the Church of England's provincial episcopal visitors, often known as flying bishops. That must affect my perspective, however objective I seek to be.

From the time of the Reformation there have always been Anglicans who have sought to emphasise their church's unbroken links with that of the past. Anglicanism is seen by such folk as part of the Catholic Church seeking to order its life and teaching in accord with the Primitive Church. It has no authority of its own to change what has been taught everywhere and in every age. This, in turn, has led many Anglicans to recognise that the Roman Catholic Church, not least in her renewal since the Second Vatican Council, holds the Faith once delivered to the Saints. For some this has led to their becoming Roman Catholics. Others have remained Anglicans believing that the growing convergence of the two churches, not least through the work of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission colloquially known as ARCIC, would gradually bring the two churches once again into full visible unity.

In many parts of the Anglican Communion holding this latter view has proved increasingly difficult. The presenting issue, most often, has been that of the ordination of women as bishops or priests when Anglican Catholics believe, in addition to their great reservations as to the soundness of the development, that no local church has the right unilaterally to change the Church's teaching and practice on this issue. Alongside this have been controversies surrounding new teaching on human sexuality, the equal validity of all religions and challenges to the uniqueness of the person of Christ, that have made many Anglicans doubtful that their

church could any more be viewed as sharing the faith of the Church Universal. In some parts of the Anglican Communion those opposed to such new developments have been forced out of membership. There is even a Traditional Anglican Communion claiming some 400,000 members. No wonder, then, that such Anglicans and ex-Anglicans have approached the Pope to explore whether special provision could be made for them to move into full communion with him while retaining something of their own Anglican ethos.

The Pope has responded generously offering what is called an ordinariate. The Roman Catholic Church has a long tradition of having alongside its normative territorial dioceses some non-territorial equivalents in order to meet special needs. Bishoprics to the Forces are one obvious example. Now a similar structure will come into being for former Anglicans. The latter will be able to retain something of their former liturgy and spiritual heritage. Their priests will need to be ordained to the Catholic priesthood while recognising what God has already done through their present ministries. Married former Anglican priests will be accepted and, in time, other married candidates might be ordained though the rule of celibacy will apply to single men who have been ordained. Close links are envisaged with local Roman Catholic dioceses. The provision is to be complementary and not in any sense a rival. The provision, strictly speaking, does not provide for corporate reunion. All former

Anglicans are to be received as individuals who can then be organised within the new ordinariates. This is not the same provision as for certain Eastern Churches, known as Uniate Churches that were recognised as now sharing the same faith as the Roman Church and so able to move into full communion without changes to their structure and with acceptance of their orders.

In parts of the world where 'traditionalist' Anglicans have felt themselves denied any longer a valued place in their church many will be drawn to the new ordinariates. In England, too, some have already decided that immediate unity with the See of Peter is the right way forward and that Anglicanism can no longer contain people of their views in what now seems to be a much longer journey than once anticipated in the cause of re-uniting Anglicans and Roman Catholics. The majority of 'traditionalists' within the Church of England have, perhaps, still to make up their minds as to whether or not they belong any longer within the Church of England. If they were to come to a mind that their understanding of Anglicanism was now utterly flawed then the claims of Roman Catholicism and its generous offer of an ordinariate would press heavily upon them. This would be no moving away from the ecumenical quest but the discovery of where in the Christian family God now calls us to be as His Spirit ever guides Christians into a fuller unity.

Martyn Jarrett, Bishop of Beverley

# How's the Courtship Going?

**S**ix years have passed since Methodists and Anglicans sealed their intention to marry and become one Church, by signing an Anglican-Methodist Covenant.

As a Methodist superintendent, who has served in two very different contexts during that time, I've observed a range of attitudes in local churches. There are those who regard the covenant like an arranged marriage, for which they have zero enthusiasm, and hope that if they pretend the engagement hasn't happened then the fateful day will never come. There are some who would really love to name the day, but find their partner reluctant to engage in serious courtship. And in yet other places, especially in Local Ecumenical Partnerships, a common reaction is, 'Well we've been living together happily enough for 30 years – what are we waiting for!'

In 2008 the Joint Implementation Commission (JIC) of the two churches made its report Embracing the Covenant, identifying

work that had been done and work that remains to be done in the process of really getting to know each other nationally, and working through how the differences can be handled in a way that avoids disunity. Both the Methodist Conference and the General Synod have sought to stimulate continuing local exploration of life together, and the churches are now seeking to put together a formal response to the JIC on the basis of feedback already received or now being sought more urgently.

Naturally it is most helpful if Anglicans and Methodists together (and where feasible in company with other sister denominations) engage in discussions about how their local courtship is progressing. But that is not always possible. In some places even today the 'happy couple' feel they have hardly been introduced to each other, let alone have reached the stage of looking into each other's eyes and holding deep meaningful conversations about a new life together. It is important that the re-shaped JIC is

not only informed by comments from localities where the champagne (non-alcoholic alternative included!) is already on ice, but from those contexts where the engagement ring is still in a box on the shelf.

Now would be good to take stock of the covenant and discover whether there are things you have to say that might move the process forward. Perhaps your church has a house group or fellowship programme which could make space for a conversation, inviting friends from the other church to join you?

You can read the whole Embracing the Covenant report at [www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm.fuseaction=opentogod.content&cmid=1570](http://www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm.fuseaction=opentogod.content&cmid=1570), but on balance it is better to put time into thinking and talking with others than reading. So why not have a discussion around the four dimensions of the full visible unity we seek?

They are:  
• common faith: i.e. do Anglicans and

Methodists believe the same things?

- common sacraments: i.e. do baptism and communion mean the same to us?
- common ministry of word and sacrament: i.e. do Methodist presbyters and Anglican vicars essentially engage in the same worship ministry?
- common ministry of oversight: [Anglicans, like most of the World Church, express this through bishops, whilst for Methodists it is the Conference which exercises oversight, delegating it to circuits in many respects. But is it the same ministry that is thus exercised?]

How far are these common elements expressed locally? What would be necessary to achieve them all? Is that possible? If full visible communion were achieved what difference would that make where you are?

Communication is the fundamental of a good marriage – so get talking. But remember how important romantic gestures are – and try to do something imaginative too!

## COMMON DATE FOR EASTER

**The hope that all Christians will be able to celebrate Easter on the same day in the future was reaffirmed by a seminar organized by the Institute of Ecumenical Studies at the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv.**

The problem is just about as old as the church itself: As Christianity

started to spread around the world, Christians came to differing results on when to commemorate Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, due to the different reports in the four gospels on these events. Attempts to establish a common date for Easter began with the Council of Nicaea in the year 325. It established that the date of Easter

would be the first Sunday after the full moon following the vernal equinox. However, it did not fix the methods to be used to calculate the timing of the full moon or the vernal equinox.

Nowadays the Orthodox Churches use the 21 March of the Julian calendar as the date of the equinox, while the Churches of the Western tradition – that is the Protestant, Anglican and Catholic Churches – base their calculations on the Gregorian calendar. The resulting gap between the two Easter dates can be as much as five weeks.

All participants in Lviv, which included Orthodox, Roman Catholic

and Protestant theologians from a variety of European countries, endorsed a compromise proposed at a World Council of Churches (WCC) consultation in Aleppo, Syria, in 1997. The proposal was to keep the Nicaea rule but calculate the equinox and full moon using the accurate astronomical data available today, rather than those used many years ago. Concretely, participants at the seminar expressed the hope that the years 2010 and 2011, when the coincidence of the calendars will produce a common Easter date, would serve as a period during which all Christians would join their efforts 'to make such coincidence not to be

an exception but rather a rule' and prepare for an Easter date based on exact astronomical reckoning and celebrated by all Christians on 8 April 2012.

However, the seminar entitled 'A common date for Easter is possible' did not turn a blind eye to what participants considered to be the main problem: 'not the calculations, but the complex relations and missing of trust among different Christian denominations because of long divisions'.

For answers to frequently asked questions about the date of Easter, see [www.oikoumene.org/?id=3169](http://www.oikoumene.org/?id=3169)

## New General Secretary of World Council of Churches

**N**orwegian theologian and pastor Revd Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, 48, has been elected 7th general secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC).

Tveit will be the youngest general secretary since Willem A. Visser 't Hooft who had led the WCC while it was in process of formation and following its founding assembly over sixty years ago. 'This task I really feel is the call of God. I feel that we have a lot to do together', said Tveit in his acceptance speech. He stressed the spirit of unity that dominated the whole process and expressed hope that it will continue to reign in the common journey. Tveit encouraged people to pray for him: 'Please do not stop!'

Since 2002, Tveit has been the general secretary of the Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations. He is a member of the WCC Faith and Order Plenary Commission and the board of directors and executive committee of the Christian Council of Norway.

The outgoing general secretary, the Revd. Dr. Samuel Kobia, left to prayers, singing, gifts and speeches of thanks. The Revd Dr Bernice Powell Jackson, the WCC president from North America, noted the brokenness occurring in many places around the globe and thanked Kobia for his leadership 'as an unwavering witness for justice and peace in the world on behalf of the World Council of Churches'.

The city of Busan, Republic of Korea, was chosen as venue for the WCC 10th Assembly in 2013.

## Lutheran Leaders

Chilean theologian Revd Martin Junge has been elected general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation in succession to Revd Dr Ishmael Noko. Dr Samuel Kobia of the World Council of Churches expressed 'joy and encouragement' at the election, calling him a 'champion of lively partnerships in the quest for Christian unity and the building of human community'.

## Forum For Us

**The three-yearly Forum of Churches Together in England drew over two hundred people together in September. They represented the widest spectrum of Christian traditions in the country. Under this over-arching theme, the Forum looked at four key areas – Ecology, Doing church differently, Violent crime and Interfaith relationships – and stories were told of particular places.**

The Moderator and Deputy Moderator, Bishop Declan Lang and Mrs Val Potter, welcomed the Forum and outlined its purpose before the General Secretary, Revd Dr David Cornick gave a brief review of our ecumenical journey with the challenge to leave behind the brickyards of slavery and embrace the freedom of living by grace. Small groups were an integral part of the Forum and their discernment of signposts for the way ahead, both for CTE as an organisation and the constituent Churches which it serves, emerged and were presented in the final session.

The four Presidents of Churches Together in England, Archbishop Rowan Williams, Archbishop Vincent Nichols (at his

first Forum as a CTE President), Commissioner Betty Matear and Bishop Nathan Hovhannissian, renewed their personal ecumenical covenant. In a challenging reflection, Fr Timothy Radcliffe asked how Christianity can survive in a hostile climate and concluded that if we are timid, Christianity will not survive. A mark of the distance we have travelled was when Archbishops Rowan and Vincent sat together to lead a Bible study on 1 Corinthians 1.10-31. In the major act of worship, Revd Dr Martyn Atkins, General Secretary of the Methodist Church, preached on God's presence and our response, God's challenge and our response.

The Interactive Market Place gave a wide range of the Bodies in Association and Co-ordinating Groups space to present their work. The Forum elected its representatives to the Enabling Group of Churches Together in England and appointed Janet Scott and Bishop Doyé Agama as Moderator and Deputy Moderator of the next Forum in 2012.

Text and audio files of major sessions are available on the website [www.churches-together.net](http://www.churches-together.net)

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