

Welcome to the first newsletter of the Joint Public Issues team – staff of the Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed churches, sharing resources to enable the three churches to live out the gospel of Christ in the church and in society. The team aims to promote equality and justice by influencing those in power and energising and affirming local congregations. If you have previously received the URC Network Hotline, the Methodist Public Issues E-news (Pie), or the Baptist Faith and Unity newsletter, you will be sent this new publication, through existing denominational mailing lists. If this means that a small number of people receive the newsletter twice (or even three times!) please contact us and we will try to eliminate the duplication.

TRIDENT REPLACEMENT

The Baptist Union Council is to vote on a resolution that would oppose replacement of Trident, Britain's nuclear weapons system. A similar decision has already been taken by the URC and the Methodist Church. The Anglican Church in Wales, the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference have all also spoken out against Trident replacement in recent weeks. The Baptist Union resolution is identical to that adopted by Methodist Conference, which urged the UK Government to take leadership in disarmament negotiations, in order to bring about the intention of the Non-Proliferation Treaty for the elimination of all nuclear weapons. When the URC Mission Council debated the issue, Revd Peter Brain, Moderator of the North Western Synod said an independent nuclear deterrent for Britain made even less sense now than it did twenty years ago, when Britain originally opted for Trident. The Government has indicated that a decision will be made before Christmas, following a debate in Parliament. The Joint Public Issues Team will be suggesting that Church members write to their MP, encouraging him or her to speak and vote against renewing Trident. Watch this space for further information. A Churches Together in Britain and Ireland background briefing *Trident: UK nuclear weapons at a crossroads* is available at www.ctbi.org.uk.

PEACEMAKING

The URC Synod of Scotland and the Methodist Church in Scotland have together sent copies of the report *Peacemaking: a Christian Vocation* to Scotland's First Minister and other Church leaders. The report, which examines the ethics of war in the twenty-first century, was produced by a Methodist/URC working group. At Methodist Conference and URC General Assembly in July, it was commended for study by local congregations, and as a helpful guide for church leaders. Copies are available from the URC bookshop and MPH bookshop, with a study guide. Price £3.99 + p&p. ISBN 1-85852-323-0.

CREATION CHALLENGE

The joint Methodist - United Reformed Church Environmental Network has a new name: *Creation Challenge*, reflecting the belief that it is our duty to take on the challenge of caring for God's creation. The Creation Challenge newsletter is sent out every other month, and contains information concerning environmental events, tips, reviews and news. If you would like to receive it, please go to the following address to subscribe: <http://www.methodist.org.uk/static/forms/ensubscribe.htm>.

SET ALL FREE - Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act, 2007

Worship material for use on 25 March 2007 (the anniversary of the passing of the Act) or at other times during the year, is now available to download at www.setallfree.net/wm_01.html. New resources also include: a set of six A2 posters featuring historical and contemporary abolitionists, produced by the Methodist Church and Set All Free (£5.00 inc. p&p); Set All Free poster (£1.00 inc. p&p). Order online at www.setallfree.net/buy_now.html or email info@setallfree.net.

WORLD AIDS DAY - 1 December

The theme for 2006 is *You, Me, Us - we can stop the spread of HIV and end prejudice*. 40 million people worldwide and 60,000 in the UK are living with HIV. 7,000 people are newly infected in this country every

year. The National AIDS Trust is encouraging churches to participate in the Red Ribbon Campaign by taking a collection box and selling ribbons. For further information and an online order form, go to www.WorldAIDSday.org.uk. Multi-faith AIDS service *United in Faith: A Time To ...* Sunday 26 November 6.30pm at Southwark Cathedral, London Bridge. Resources for worship for World AIDS Day: Christian Aid *Flesh of our flesh* service prepared by John Bell, featuring Christian Aid partner stories from Ethiopia and El Salvador. tel. 08700 787 788 (quote F1280) to order printed versions or download online at www.christian-aid.org.uk/worship/resources/worldaidsday/index.htm. Church of Scotland *Keeping the promise in love* available at www.churchofscotland.org.uk/appeals/hivaids/hivworldaidsday.htm with other items. For a CD containing all resources, e-mail: hivaids@cofscotland.org.uk or tel. 0131 225 5722.

UPCOMING DATES

PRISONS WEEK 19-25 November Prayer leaflets available from The Secretary, Prisons Week, PO Box 2733, Lichfield WS13 6GZ (suggested donation of £1 per 10 leaflets). www.prisonsworld.org

A PRAYER FOR OUR PRISONS Ecumenical service **Tuesday 14 November** 7.00 pm at St Peter's Italian Church, 136 Clerkenwell Road, London EC1. Contact admin@prisonadvice.org.uk to attend.

PRISONERS ARE PEOPLE London Churches Conference **Saturday 18 November**, 11.00 am - 3.00 pm at St Mark's Church, Kennington Park Road, London SE11. Details from Nikky Wiggins tel. 020 7932 1127 or e-mail: nikky.wiggins@london.anglican.org.

JOINT FAITHS ADVISORY BOARD ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE Day seminar on Community Justice Authorities **Friday 24 November**, 10.00 am - 4.00 pm at the St Mungo Museum, Glasgow. Details from the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office: 0131 558 8137; email: graham@actsparl.org.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH Sunday 19 November

For a free resource pack *One Family: Prayer for the Persecuted* contact Christian Solidarity Worldwide: tel. 0845 456 5464; email: admin@cswworld.org. Also available: DVD introducing the subject of the persecuted church (£5.00 inc. p&p).

LOBBY OF PARLIAMENT ON PALESTINE Wednesday 29 November followed by meeting at 7.00pm in Committee Room 12, Houses of Parliament, with Manuel Hassassian (Palestinian General Delegate to the UK), Jeff Halper (ICAHN) and Richard Burden MP. Contact Palestine Solidarity Campaign tel. 020 7700 6192; email: info@palestinecampaign.org; www.palestinecampaign.org.

RIDING LIGHTS THEATRE COMPANY *Pipe Dreams* at venues around the country until 2 December. A hilarious, globe-trotting whodunnit about what's going on with our water, re-connecting the water rich with the water poor. Contributions to support WaterAid. Admission £9.00; concessions £6.00, groups of 10+ £5.50. For dates/venues, go to www.christian-ecology.org.uk (upcoming events).

HOMELESSNESS SUNDAY 28 January 2007

No home - No justice. Available soon: Resource Pack (£5.50) containing fact sheets, worship and activity material for all ages, focussing on: affordability; shortage of social housing; rural homelessness; homeless and destitute asylum seekers and the problems faced by Central European nationals in Britain not entitled to welfare benefits. Also available as CD £5.50. For further information see Housing Justice leaflet now in circulation or ring Ellen Byrne tel. 020 7723 7273 e-mail hs@housingjustice.org.uk. Online order form will be available shortly at www.homelessness-sunday.org.uk.

WEEKEND OF SERVICES FOR PEACE AND DISARMAMENT 26-28 January 2007

Resource pack available from: Peace Services, WDC, PO Box 28209, Edinburgh EH9 1ZR. £5.00 cheques payable World Disarmament Campaign.

CHURCHES' REFUGEE NETWORK CONFERENCE Saturday 19 May 2007

Holy Apostles Church, Cumberland Street, London SW1. Further details to follow.

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