



# *Churches Together Around Ludlow*

## *Newsletter*

### *Autumn-Winter 2015*

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#### **Thoughts from Colin Sheward, CTAL Chair 2015-16**



This is my first newsletter item to be produced as Chair of CTAL for 2016 – this position is both a great honour to hold and also a challenge. I follow Tim Coles and hope that I can maintain the work and standards he set – though I doubt I can equal the energy and day-to-day drive he imparted to this, along with his many other roles. The position of Chair has (in theory at least) alternated between ministers and lay church members of CTAL and I belong to the latter. I attend Ludlow Quaker Meeting and as well as this I represent local Quakers on Ludlow Under Pressure and look after bookings for hiring the Quaker Meeting House. You may

also know that I sit on Ludlow Town Council.

CTAL at its most basic is a meeting point for the Churches of Ludlow who have joined us as members or affiliates. But in coming together we build a stronger structure and in the last year we spent considerable time reviewing our terms of reference to bring the work of our executive in line with the changed roles of our organization.

In the last few years we have seen the development of Ludlow Under Pressure and Hands Together Ludlow and now we are investigating exciting new ideas about youth work in the Ludlow area. We make no claims about these initiatives being in our day-to-day management. We encourage self-administration of these groups – but we were the place these ideas were developed and we maintain an ongoing interest in their progress. I hope these ventures will continue to progress throughout 2016 and that CTAL will continue to serve the needs of Ludlow.

## Welcome to Kim Stilwell

Kim tells us:

I'm very glad to have this opportunity to introduce myself to readers of the CTAL newsletter.

My family moved into Bitterley Close from Sandbach in early August, and have been savouring the beauty of the area and the kindness of the church folk ever since. My wife, Stella, and I have five children. Peter, Anna and John are still living with us and are settled into schools in Ludlow and Hereford. William is an apprentice working for Bentley Motors in Crewe, and Lydia is studying for a music degree at Nottingham University.

Stella is originally from Manchester and I'm from Gloucester. We met through a shared interest in walking and birdwatching, and we both enjoy singing and cycling.

My background is in Electronic Engineering. After graduating from Imperial College I worked for the BBC in Television Centre, before being employed by a manufacturer of broadcast equipment in their Technical Training department. In the 1990s I moved into Higher Education, working as a Course Leader in a specialist Broadcasting College in Chislehurst, Kent.



I trained as a Local Preacher in the Methodist Church, finally responding to a call to become an ordained minister, and started my training in 2001. I began part-time on an ecumenical course in the South East. I was 'stationed' as a Probationer Minister in Sandbach in 2005 and was ordained in 2007. I was brought up in the Church of England and have enjoyed working with friends from other churches wherever possible in my ministry.

I enjoy most aspects of my work, despite the challenges! It is inspiring to share in God's work with such lovely people. I am glad to be a volunteer in Wesley's cafe where there is such a lovely atmosphere among the teams and with the customers. I like pastoral work and am sorry that there is never enough time to do as much as I would wish.

I hope that my time in Ludlow will be a time when the church's involvement in the community continues to grow, sharing the love of God in deed and word and helping more and more people discover Him. And I hope that members of my churches will deepen their experience of God both through this work and through the work of the church in growing disciples.

I hope to meet you all soon - do drop by in Wesley's on a Saturday morning!

## Conflict, peace and justice: the Olivier Memorial Peace Lecture 2015 by Rowan Williams

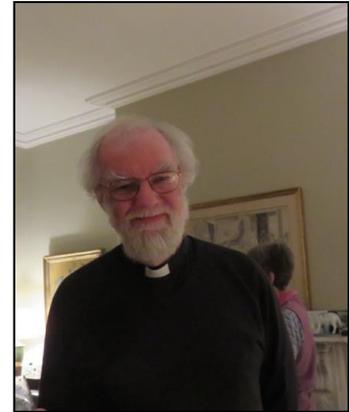
Rowan Williams used his lecture to give a view, necessarily selective, of conflict and peace in our day. His key message was the need to recognise that human beings are interdependent, as are states. We need to recognise, foster, and celebrate that interdependence in order to live in peace and justice.

To summarise:

### *Conflict*

What is the nature of conflict? How can we deal with it?

There is a body of Christian thought about conditions under which it is just to go to war. Just-war theories derive from the ideas of people such as Augustine and Aquinas who were making sense of the conflicts in their own day. Augustine in the 5th century was considering how the use of force in the face of external threat could be compatible with Christian discipleship and what limits should be put on it. Aquinas in the 13th century was thinking about how to limit the damage that rival small states inflicted on each other. Both were thinking pragmatically, not setting out to create a theory. Their reflections were later expanded to apply to new circumstances.



We are now in quite different circumstances from Augustine and Aquinas. The challenge now is to grasp how to deal with new kinds of war in which the categories used previously no longer apply. Ideas about war as self-defence or changing the balance of power are outdated. Mary Kaldor has spoken of 'new wars' and shown that in wars that we are now seeing it is difficult to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants. The people who use force may be public agents, or private. The same applies to those who suffer the effects of force. It can be difficult to distinguish between war and large-scale criminality. Just-war theories which speak about states are difficult to apply to states which are collapsing because of internal conflicts. It becomes difficult to conduct negotiations to end conflicts because there may be nothing to negotiate about. There are new forms of action, such as intervention forces aiming at stability. ISIS, for example, though it calls itself a state, is not a state which wants to be included in the international state system, or subject itself to international law, or negotiate on its demands to conventional states. Its stance is apocalyptic, it is anticipating Armageddon in the foreseeable future. It is not possible to negotiate with it. Amongst other new factors in conflict are new technologies, such as drone warfare, use of child soldiers for intimidation of the population, use of gender-related violence as a means of terror. There is a new language about 'wars on', the war on terror, for example. New causes of conflict include control of resources such as water and food. Conflicts are often conducted at a distance as proxy conflicts. Wars are more diverse and more uncontrolled. We no longer know what war is.

### *Peace*

Changes in the nature of conflict mean we must also redefine peace. Previously peace was a settlement between states after a conflict. But from a religious standpoint peace is about the interdependence of peoples. Interdependence is about including all humans and the natural world in one unity. It is the recognition that all humans need each other.

All of us have humanity, have limitations, all of us need each other. We must become aware when we are excluding people. Migrants and refugees are part of the interdependence of all. For each of us to be secure our neighbour must also be secure. Security is indivisible. Our neighbour includes Syria and Iraq. Refusal to acknowledge that 'my security is the security of my neighbour' has tragic consequences, as we can see clearly from a distance when we watch the conflict between Israel and Palestine. The important question in a conflict is not 'how should we react?', or 'what should we be seen to be doing?' but 'how to work for the security of our neighbour?' This question is not being put at the moment. It has no easy answer.

### *Justice*

Justice is about the restoration of trusting reciprocal relationships. It is not a matter of allocating resources in a particular way. It is about mutual recognition and mutual service. Practices which disadvantage some to the advantage of others destroy mutuality, undermine interdependence, and are profoundly unjust. These include competitive economic growth, refusal of transparency as to taxation, and trade in arms.

### *Reflections on the situation in the Middle East*

We need more thinking about the arms trade and dependency on fossil fuels. Who sells arms to ISIS? Who buys oil from ISIS? We need more robust international control of these transactions. Our security must come from shared action. The arms trade is vastly profitable and the effects of the arms are uncontrollable. Control of arms sales cannot be reliable. Arms cannot be defined as defensive because it is the user who decides how to use them, possibly for aggression. Arms fairs lead to destabilisation. ISIS does not manufacture its weapons, it gets them by trading.

We need to revitalise shared security and internationalism. Pursuit of sovereignty may lead us to overlook the interdependence of states. Isolationism is popular, but misguided. Closing borders is not a solution. We must pursue international co-operation and reciprocity. This also applies to action to mitigate climate change. We must recognise that endless economic growth is not possible.

Solving conflicts is not possible by using old theories. When we see how world problems are interconnected we may feel paralysed. The existence of this lecture and the audience's presence here indicate that paralysis may at least not be complete. But we can feel more powerful if we have an inkling of what reciprocity and interdependence mean. We can do better. God can do better, through human beings. We must make a sharper diagnosis of problems, and ask unpopular questions. What sort of world do we want to live in?

Rowan Williams then responded to questions and observations from the audience. Amongst these were:

*How do you feel about bombing Syria?* Bombing in Syria by the UK is a mistake, a result of the need to be seen to be doing something and the desire to be a good ally. But it is not effective or decisive. It gives a feeling of taking action, but not of obligation to work out a long-term outcome.

*How should we deal with ISIS?* Using force against ISIS is inevitable. It must be effective. We should have worked with Russia much earlier because it has diplomatic leverage on the Syrian regime. We should put pressure on Saudi Arabia. And listen to

minority communities (Yazidi, Christian) and hear their opposition to bombing. We must build capacity on the ground. Use of force is the least bad option.

*Can the use of nuclear weapons ever be justified?* The use of nuclear weapons is not justifiable. They are intrinsically indiscriminate and have dire long-term environmental effects. Their use cannot be compared to the use of the atom bomb to end the Second World War.

*Can you develop further your comments on ISIS and the Middle East?* ISIS is a massive evil. But the individuals in it are human. We know from our own experience that lives can change. We discover new possibilities in ourselves. We must not suppose that our neighbour will never change. ISIS includes people who can change, are like us.

*Please comment on the problem of secondary causation (as shown in Bible). Bible suggests God acts; now we tend to think God doesn't act.* Many people now feel that God does not act in the world. But God works in it habitually, through human interactions, and we can let God act through human lives.

*A big problem is the media. What to do?* The media pick out drama, compelling narratives, polarised forces, conflict, and zero-sum situations. The challenge is to circumvent the print media and put out a different story, create different networks, set up new chat rooms, use online resources to challenge the media stories.

*Where is the authority to challenge violence?* Authority no longer receives much recognition. The United Nations is no longer authoritative. Authorities have to earn their recognition. Authority should derive from the delivery of well-being for all. Thinking about human rights should be recast as thinking about human dignity. A few people have more authority in more than just a section of the world, including Mary Robinson, Desmond Tutu, Jimmy Carter, the Dalai Lama and Pope Francis.

*Should not Christians be speaking with one voice in face of international problems?* It is preposterous that the Christian family of churches is not united. The principle of 'my security is your security' also applies here. There are instances of co-operation between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches. A common Christian voice can be developed, and ironically, responding to crises may enable this.

*We live in an age of secular individualism.* It is destructive if individuals deny their dependence on others, feel they owe others nothing, and feel themselves to be their own maker and saviour.

*You speak of interdependence; what of the significance of identity in defining groups?* Difference amongst humans is not to be obliterated. It does not necessarily lead to conflict. Difference is enriching. We must be who we are for the sake of our neighbour, and our neighbours must have their identity for our sake.

Summarised by Wendy Bartlett, photograph by Ursula Freeman

This summary and summaries of other lectures in the series are on the Ludlow Quaker Meeting website, [ludlowquakers.co.uk](http://ludlowquakers.co.uk).

## **Ludlow Food Parcels: report for January - June 2015**

Ludlow Food Parcel scheme would like to thank everyone who has supported, and continues to support, this scheme. The success of this scheme depends on all the donations that we have received, and people continue to be very generous, for which we are most grateful.

Here is a statistical breakdown of all the parcels that have been distributed in the first 6 months of 2015. By 30 June we had given away 101 food parcels. This provided food for 231 individuals, including 102 children. In 2014 we had given away 133 food parcels by the end of June.

Compared to the last two years, we have seemed quite quiet, and March was very quiet with only nine food parcels given out all month. I was beginning to think that our services were becoming less necessary, but we have received more demand for food parcels in the last 2-3 weeks. It is quite noticeable that in June there were far more families with children in need.

The current trend appears to be that more working families are in need of food parcels. Often the people needing a food parcel are working people on a low income who have experienced an emergency e.g. accident, ill health, family crisis. Many of the people who need a parcel because of sickness have mental health problems.

There have been a couple of heart-rending cases where one parent has walked out on the rest of the family. In one case the remaining parent had to give up work to care for very young children, and in the other, the departing parent took all the savings. In both of these cases, the food parcel recipient was ashamed to have to ask for a food parcel, but it helped them through a very tough time.

We have helped more homeless people this year than last year, with 7 food parcels going to homeless people in 6 months, and only 3 for the whole of 2014.

It has always been our aim to show the love of God in times of crisis, and with the help of all the people who so generously donate items to us, we have never had to turn anyone away. Thank you.

#### *Demographic breakdown of parcel recipients*

Family	17
Single male	34
Single female	12
Single-parent family	27
Couple	11
Total	<b>101</b>

Single adult	73
Married adult	56
Children	102
Total	<b>231</b>

#### *Reasons for needing a parcel*

Financial	27
Benefit	21
Sickness	28

Other	25
Total	<b>101</b>

Where the reason Benefit is given, this is because benefits have been stopped (often in error). It has taken up to 8 weeks for benefits to be re-instated, although this has improved recently.

*Other*

Homelessness	7
Child access/custody	4
Recently returned from abroad, no benefits yet	3
Debt	3
Probation	2
Awaiting pension change decision	1
Bereavement	1
Between jobs	1
Freezer broken	1
Spent Universal Credit too soon – has since received budgeting advice	1
	<b>25</b>

Ruth Davies

### **CTAL monthly lunches**

The CTAL monthly lunches have not been taking place recently and the question was raised in the AGM as to whether they could restart. We promised that this would be discussed by the Executive Committee in its February meeting. I know many people appreciated the lunches and the associated social activity and discussion they allowed.

If you have views on this matter – especially if you were a volunteer at the lunches or perhaps you are a potential new volunteer (which would be most welcome) – it would be nice to hear from you, so that your views or offers of service can be put to the Executive Committee. This would be useful in making a decision on a possible resumption of this activity. Please put your views through your church's CTAL representative, or if you wish to me. My phone number is 01584 875946.

Colin Sheward

### **Next issue**

Please send in items for the next issue. It will also carry the minutes of the 2015 AGM and the CTAL accounts.

## Member churches

Ludlow Baptist Church	Mr Simon Lambourne 01584 874076	LudlowBaptistChurch.co.uk
St Laurence's, St John's, St Giles', Church of England	01584 872073	stlaurences.org.uk office@stlaurences.org.uk
Living Waters Church	Mr Andy Summers 01584 879297	lwludlow.org.uk
Ludlow Methodist Church	Rev. Kim Stilwell 01584 318628	ludlowmethodistchurch.org
Ludlow Quaker Meeting	Cynthia Prior and Colin Sheward (CTAL representatives) 0870 7656 980	ludlowquakers.co.uk
St Peter's Roman Catholic Church	Canon Christopher Walsh 01584 872906	stpetersludlow.org

## Associated church

Elim Christian Fellowship	Rev. Tim Coles 01584 878634	ludlowelim.co.uk
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Editor's note: The newsletter welcomes expression of a range of views. Those expressed in articles are those of the contributors. They do not necessarily represent the position of CTAL.

For a large-print newsletter please use the version on the CTAL website, or for a printed copy contact any of the churches.

Contributions for the next newsletter should be sent to the editor, Wendy Bartlett, at wendy.bartlett1@gmail.com. The last date for items for the next issue is 14 March 2016.

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To make it easier to read the newsletter on screen, you can change the font size: if you are using Word, click on View, then Zoom, then type the size you need (eg 125%) into the box.