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FREE

WORLD MISSION COUNCIL - CONNECTING WITH THE WORLD CHURCH

WIM



BEING INTERNATIONAL FAMILY

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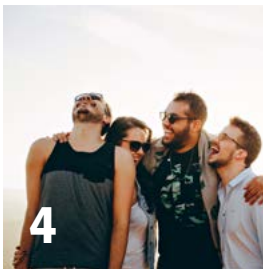
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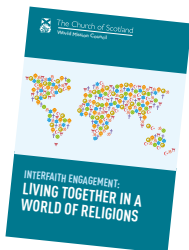
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Editorial



At a recent Twinning visit, a group of Malawian youth delegates explained how the Lebanese youth delegate who was on the same trip, had become like family. Through sharing experiences during the trip to Melrose and Peebles Presbytery, learning each other's culture and laughing together she was now their sister. One of the highlights for the World Mission Council, Local Development Team is observing the coming together of Twinning partners - creating opportunities for friendships to grow - building and strengthening the World Church family. This issue of WM is full of stories of international friendships. Friendships that

encourage each other and value being part of a Church family that transcends borders. We hear from this summer's Czech/ Scottish Family Camp, a Youth Camp and one of our Mission Partners who challenges us to be a welcoming family that reaches out to strangers. A few of our international delegates also share inspiring stories of the importance of standing together and walking alongside others, sometimes stepping in to be their 'family'.

'You don't choose your family. They are God's gift to you, as you are to them.' - Desmond Tutu

FAITH IN THE INTERNATIONAL FAMILY



The Czech/Scottish Family Camp was part of a 3 year initiative of the World Mission Council and the Ecumenical Church of the Czech Brethren (ECCB); sharing of faith, culture and questions has meant a whole lot of learning has taken place and we continue to look forward to seeing how lives are changed. **Lesley Balaj**, shares her experience.

Like many parents in the church I have wondered how to help my children have a strong living faith. I worry that they will become disenchanted with church before they have the opportunity to find meaning in faith. In my quest to find ways to keep my children engaged with church, World Mission Council provided me with an interesting opportunity. A Czech/Scottish Family Camp! An opportunity to meet with other families of faith in an international context. It suited our family to a tee. Prior to our trip we made contact with some of the other Scottish families involved. This was the first step in a very interesting

journey. The camp was a blend of sporty, arty, crafty exciting activities, with plenty of time to get to know the other families that took part. The programme was varied from scary walks in the woods to talent shows, water sports and games, there really was something for everyone and to boot we had an opportunity to learn about Czech Family life. We had an opportunity to start and end our day with worship for the whole family and participate in worship that was different from our usual format. At the end of that 2016 camp in Belec, Czech Republic we had made great memories and met lovely people. We had had such a good time that the following year we were happy

The relationships grew much stronger, our joy in worshipping together as family was increased. It has been wonderful to watch our children grow together and engage with faith and fellowship.

to repeat the experience.

The 2017 camp was even better than the 2016 camp and our understanding of Czech culture, faith and fun grew. We had a couple of great trips to local places of interest and the Czech families were fantastic hosts. The older boys in the camp employed social media to its best effect and began chatting with each other as we all travelled home. The families moved from being lovely people to becoming treasured friends and we kept in touch throughout the year of 2017. 2018 camp had a bit of a change of tempo with the Czech families visiting Scotland this summer. The camp was very different, still sporty, still fun and still great for strengthening friendships. The relationships grew much stronger, our joy in worshipping together as family was increased. It has been wonderful to watch our children grow together and engage with faith and fellowship. As the camp ended, it was a very emotional farewell that was said as our friends had become family! The cycle of camps was highly successful and I believe excelled their brief. Our families engaged with faith, on a personal and international level. Relationships with



families from another culture flourished. Understanding of faith practices in another context grew. We were able to learn 'to do church' in a different way from each other and share good practice and resources. The benefits of the camp are many and diverse and have impacted on our home churches. Our congregation had the opportunity to be led in worship by one of our Czech friends. The Czech/Scottish link between 2 families from the camp was so strong that their congregations hope to explore the possibility of twinning. We could never have imagined the effect the camp would have on our lives and churches. If you ever have an opportunity to attend a similar camp with your family I would encourage you to do all that you can to be part of it, it really is a life changing experience.

ACT NOW...

For more information contact:
wmoutreach@churchofscotland.org.uk
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ECUMENICAL RELATIONS AT ITS BEST



The Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren (ECCB) and the Church of Scotland host an international youth camp once a year. **Ghia Lennox**, Children & Families Worker (St David's Broomhouse) reflects on this summer's camp.

Our journey began with a 3am wake-up call and a busy Edinburgh Airport, much like many of my travels; we were on our way to the ECCB International Youth Camp 2018, taking place in Decin, Czech Republic. This joint camp between the ECCB and Church of Scotland was in its 12th year, with leaders and participants all coming together from 5 different countries and denominations. These included Scotland, Czech Republic (ECCB), Poland (ECAC), United States of America (PCUSA) and Ukraine (Pentecostal, Orthodox), ranging in age from 16-28.

Ecumenical relations at it's best, we spent the week sharing our traditions with each other, both religious and cultural; of course, included in this was Haggis and Ceilidh dancing and a chance to discover everyone's hidden talents. Day to day was a mix of biblical study, worship, games and fellowship and an important part of the day for anyone, meal time. There was also the opportunity to explore the beautiful country surrounding us when we went hiking in the Bohemian Switzerland region. With each step we discovered a different and equally

beautiful element of God's creation, bonding through our many conversations and the group effort to journey through the ups and downs of the mountain range. This, like all other youth camps I have been to both in Scotland and Europe, had with it expectations and what I hoped to gain from the experience. If I were to ask the participants and leaders their expectations and what they gained, I believe there would be many different answers, as we were different ages and stages of life and faith, however we all by the end of the week were overwhelmed with the sense of community that had been created, despite language

...overwhelmed with the sense of community that had been created, despite language barriers, cultural and denominational differences and contrasts in personalities.

barriers, cultural and denominational differences and contrasts in personalities. For me the experience of this camp and those like it have shaped me through my life and faith, offering me a chance to build relationships and learn, not only from those I have something in common with, but from those whose experiences of the world and of faith differ from mine. Having been given the opportunity of going to International Christian camps previously at a young age has aided me in deciphering God's call for



my life and in turn has lead me to once again get out my passport and Bible and on this occasion journey to the Czech Republic to co-lead this camp.

Camps such as this one and many others where young people can come together from around the world and bring their experiences, their culture and their faith and share it with each other are invaluable to the life of God's Church around the world and I would say to any young person if you ever get the opportunity of one, grab it with both hands!

ACT NOW...

Join the Facebook group to stay up to date with upcoming trips. **facebook.com/groups/churchofscotlandwmc/**

YOU SHALL LOVE THE STRANGER



David Sinclair works as a Mission Partner in the Ecumenical and International Relations Department of the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren (ECCB), based in Prague, where he lives with his wife, Mary.

You shall love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

(Deuteronomy 10. 19)

Mary and I arrived in Prague in November last year and everything necessary was provided for us. Our welcome was everything a welcome should be. And we have spoken about how fortunate we, as so-called 'expats', have been. But for 'immigrants' in the Czech Republic it is a different story. And the ECCB, like churches in this and other countries, has had to do what it can to counter the xenophobic narrative that tells people that immigration is a threat to them.

Our quotation from Deuteronomy refers to, 'strangers'; in Czech the translation is, 'hosty' (which means, 'guests'). Neither of those words conveys the full meaning of the original: 'gerím'. Yona Sabar writes in The Jewish Journal: Gerím is a term equivalent to all of our modern immigrants, foreigners, aliens, guest workers, shelter [asylum] seekers. Pentateuch laws emphatically protects them. They have to be treated with justice and as equal to native citizens. It is the understanding that Calvin insisted on operating in the Geneva of his day, with its immigrant population as large as the native one. It is an understanding that confronts us still in our day, but sometimes our translations protect us from what the bible is trying to say to us. Deuteronomy is not talking about, expats from rich countries, not talking about, 'guests'. What our governments need still to hear from the churches, in the United Kingdom and also in the Czech Republic, is: you shall love the immigrants.

PRAYER FOCUS:

Lord God, you are God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the immigrants, providing them with food and clothing. May we hear, in our world and our time, your unmistakable command to love the immigrant.

May we see in those who come desperate and destitute among us the face of your Son. May we see those who flee war, oppression and starvation as the neighbours we are to love as we love ourselves and our own. May we recognise in the need of the world the cry of your people for justice; and may we set out to answer your call in our response. Amen.

CZECH REPUBLIC FACT FILE:

The Czech Republic is known as the castle capital of the world, with over 2000 castles, ruins and keeps.

The currency is the Czech koruna
Population 10.6 million

(Scotland 5 million)

Area of 78,866 sq km
(Scotland 78,772 km2)



MISSION PARTNER PRAYER FOCUS

Join David and Mary in praying for the Czech Republic and the work that they are part of:

- Pray for our political leaders that they may have the grace, the vision, and the courage to recognise the need that seeks their help and respond to it.
- Pray for the churches who preach, teach and enact the welcome and the hospitality that the gospel demands, that they may persevere in the face of great difficulties.
- Pray for those who flee war and oppression and poverty, as they leave all they know in the desperate search for a life worth living; and pray that their prayers may be answered.

LIVING TOGETHER IN A WORLD OF RELIGIONS

We had a great day at this year's conference exploring what it means to live in a world of religions. For those of you who missed it we asked some of our Interfaith delegates who were presenting at the conference to share some of their experiences here...

CROATIA INTERFAITH DIALOGUE CHANGES LIVES



Carolyn Boyd - Managing Director, Ecumenical Women's Initiative, Croatia Interfaith Dialogue

The countries of the Western Balkans remain fragile despite ongoing processes of democratic transformation and regional stabilisation. Invisible barriers remain, consolidating the ethnic cleansing which destroyed one of Europe's most indigenously ethnically diverse areas. The region's main religions - Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism and Islam - are significant political and cultural forces, and so shape the identities of its citizens. I run a Croatian women's fund which over the last ten years has supported over 300 women-led initiatives focused on post-war peacebuilding and reconciliation, many of which are within an interfaith framework. Although we collaborate with allies in the religious institutions, our primary foci are grassroots women's groups. Through this experience, I have seen the most legitimate interfaith dialogue happening. For many, it forms the

first steps which make reconciliation possible, for others it eases the challenges of living in ethnically mixed communities where, faced with the reality of rebuilding lives in divided and hostile communities, interfaith dialogue is a reality and a necessity.

We work with many courageous women motivated by the values and principles they find in their faith. Women who have explored their own religious identities and peeled away the cultural norms and stereotypes supported by the region's traditions which constrain so many women. These are inspiring individuals who work across religious, ethnic and national divides to promote and build a culture of nonviolence. One initiative brought a group of Serbian Orthodox, Albanian Muslim and Catholic women from Kosovo to Sarajevo. The Bosnian women hosting the project shared the following:

'When we reached the tunnel, I showed them images of war torn Sarajevo, how I carried drinking water home, how there was a sniper at each cross road and each corner. When we entered, I was overcome by a feeling of nausea. It all came flooding back, the war and the fear. Amongst the Kosovo women were many who had lost loved ones during the war. Unsurprised by my tears, they remembered their own pain. There we stood in that cramped tunnel and wept for ourselves, for our loved ones, for the youth that we lost to the stupid war. There is no 'ours' and 'theirs', only good deeds done by

good people. It was an important turn-around. The senselessness of war and violence rose to the surface and smothered all our ethnic and religious divides.' Such actions demonstrate the power of practical interfaith dialogue to change lives.

They provide a doubting world with a credible and visible public witness to the hope of peaceful coexistence in all our diversity. Spaces and opportunities for legitimate interfaith encounter are essential and are the building blocks of trust and community.

PEACE IN THE CONTEXT OF CASTE AND RELIGION BASED DISCRIMINATIONS



Kasta Dip - Director, India Peace Centre

The India Peace Centre is an inter-religious Centre for Justice and Peace initiatives. But what does that actually mean? India is a country with rich traditions and an unbelievable variety of ethnic groups. A person's future can be determined by many factors that he or she can't influence. Caste, religion, gender, age, skin colour can lead to privileges or make you a victim of discrimination. The India Peace Centre promotes a dialogue above those barriers through its peace education programmes, interfaith school of peace and other activities targeted towards specific social groups. Our aim is to minimise discrimination in everyday life. The following story shows how discrimination

can affect someone very personally and what the India Peace Centre can do to help: In India, despite the official termination of the caste system, many people still marry someone from their own caste and religion. This is also often expected by one's family. In this specific case a young Hindu man from a high caste fell in love with a Buddhist woman, who was a Dalit, a member of the lowest caste. Their families were both opposing the marriage and placed severe pressure on the couple to end the relationship.

They both attended one of the India Peace Centre's programmes so we became aware of the situation and could offer help. There were many efforts taken to bring the families of the two together. We were able to make the marriage possible, but sadly some family were against the marriage. The marriage took place on the lawn of the India Peace Centre. The groom was accompanied by some members of the India Peace Centre as his parents didn't want to be a part of the wedding. Our hope is that one day the happy couple will reconcile with their families. We know that it is not easy to achieve the goals we've set for ourselves. However we're grateful to work for a more peaceful community every day and see the support for our cause from all over the world.

THE ROAD TO BUILDING INTERFAITH HARMONY



Jennifer Jivan - Director, Christian Study Centre (CSC), Rawalpindi, Pakistan

In Pakistan there are plenty of examples where people of different faiths will be the best of neighbours, partaking in the joys and sorrows of each other, where there is trust and respect, where there is great sharing - as good friends do. But equally, one can find and experience prejudice, discrimination and violation of various sorts. So one will get cases of ones neighbour who will not wish to eat with people of other faiths or drink water from the same tap. In fact there have been cases over the usage of drinking water from the same tap/glass that have led to quarrels, and even persons being accused of blasphemy (the greatest punishment being the death penalty). Human rights violations against minority communities exist. The rise of religious extremism over the last three-four decades has contributed to a mind-set which wants to reject the other. Be it in the form of curriculum, media (electronic and print) or religious interpretation/misuse of it. This has led to sectarian and religious violence. The extremist mind-set has given rise to terrorist activities. The extremist mind-

set has permeated all levels of society; among politicians, bureaucrats, academia, government servants, the common citizen... This has left the country divided and fragmented. While the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan guarantees certain rights to its non-Muslim citizens the issue of equal citizenship is questionable. It is within this very context that the debate, discourse and work of interfaith harmony exists, survives and contributes to make 'wholesome' contributions for the rebuilding of society, to make the heart wholesome again. Interfaith harmony requires careful thinking, self-analysis, critique of governmental policies and constitutional amendments that promote and strengthen interreligious dialogue leading to peace and justice. The Christian Study Centre approaches interfaith harmony, not just as an academic exercise but as a way of life and living that is meant to bear fruit in the lives of individuals and society as a whole. It thus works with various stakeholders at all tiers of society using various methodologies that promote interfaith harmony leading to peace and justice for all. Thus on the road to building interfaith harmony the Centre engages with people of all faiths and together we travel/work for a more harmonious life and living.

INTERFAITH DYNAMICS IN JAMAICA



Roderick R Hewitt - United Church of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands

The national motto of Jamaica states: "Out of Many, One People". It speaks to the diverse groups of peoples from different nations, but primarily from the continent of Africa, that through force or voluntarily migration, made Jamaica their home. The religious-political history of Jamaica has shaped the numerical presence of the different religious groups. The religious landscape has changed since the colonial era with various African revivalist groups (Pukumaina, Kumina, Obeah and Etu), Euro-centric missionary churches and small number of Jews, Hindu and Muslim faith communities, to the early 20th century emergence of American Evangelical and Pentecostal churches (Church of God/ Pentecostal/ Seventh Day Adventists), Rastafari and the contemporary emergence of prosperity gospel groups. The Jamaican constitution that ushered in the independence from British rule in 1962 guaranteed complete freedom of worship. With over 70% of the 2017 population claiming to be Christians, the Church exerts significant influence within the

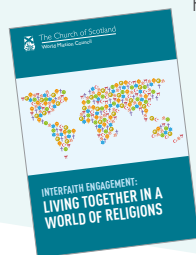
social and political context. Therefore, its dominance within the society does not serve as a positive conduit that encourages interfaith dialogue or relationships. Contemporary interfaith dialogue happens much more within the context of academia. A pioneering step towards interfaith engagement emerged during the 1980's under the leadership of Rev Ashley Smith a minister of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, who served as a Chaplain at the University. He, along with a Hindu lecturer, Dr Mansingh worked towards forming an Interfaith Council that embraced other religious communities. The University with its diverse student population and staff of different faith communities within the Caribbean region became a fitting environment for interfaith engagement. As interfaith witness gained national exposure certain national events that required religious blessings became opportunities to demonstrate the wider ecumenical witness of interfaith cooperation in worship services. Interfaith perspectives also became important during national debates on controversial social issues such as abortion and gambling. Although Jamaica is increasingly becoming a more secular society, religion continues to play a significant role influencing how people live. People are moving beyond traditional Christian communities of faith and are becoming more open to embracing other faith expressions. This suggests that interfaith engagement will gain greater national prominence in the future.

WORLD MISSION RESOURCES

We've had a busy summer working on different resources, particularly following the General Assembly. If you would like to order any of these resources contact wmoutreach@churchofscotland.org.uk. Alternatively visit the website for online versions.

'Living Together in a World of Religions: Interfaith Engagement' – our 2018

Popular Report shares stories of our partners from around the world as they relate their inspiring and challenging experiences of engaging with people and communities of other religions.



'Take your hat off. . . dip it in honey . . . don't lay it on the ground.' These and many more facts are waiting for you to explore as you play our latest game "Interfaith Connections". We hope by playing this game you will learn more about different religions.

This year a special report was presented at the General Assembly looking at what the Church in Scotland can learn from the **Church in Africa**. We've created a compact version of the report with accompanying Bible Studies for you to work through. If you enjoyed working through the previous Anti-Human Trafficking and Gender Based Violence reports and studies then these are similar. If you haven't had the chance to use any of these then there's some great resources waiting for you.



To help you get the most out of the Popular Report we've put together some **bookmarks** that correspond with sections in the report. Each gives you an opportunity to think, share and act on what you can take away from the report.



Mission Partner Posters – Our Mission Partners appreciate your ongoing support. These posters are designed to share about their work and how you can be praying for them.

Peace Puzzles – these small magnetic puzzles are great discussion starters or perfect for a kids activity. The large wooden version that we used at Heart and Soul is available for you to borrow if you're able to collect it from the Church Offices.



As part of the Year of Young People we have produced a set of **Prayer Cards** focusing on young people written by and focusing on young people from churches around the world.



Our **website** is a great source of information about our Partner Churches and ways that you could get involved.

www.churchofscotland.org.uk/serve



The Church of Scotland
World Mission Council

BEHIND THE WALL - STUDY TOUR TO ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

Led by the Very Rev Andrew McLellan with Maureen Jack, on behalf of the World Mission Council.

21-31 March 2019



Staying five nights each in St Andrew's Guesthouse in Jerusalem and in the Lutheran Guesthouse in Bethlehem, the tour will primarily be of interest to those who have visited before. The cost is £1500 per person in a double room (single supplement £200) and covers flights from Edinburgh, half board accommodation, on ground transportation, gratuities and insurance (for travellers 80 years and under). Places are limited; the closing date for applications is 30 November 2018.

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