

Launch of Christian Assembly Network of the Welsh Assembly Government on 26 March 2009

June Milligan, Director of Business Development

June introduced the event and illustrated the complexity of the diversity agenda – how reality can appear so differently from a variety of individual perspectives. June spoke very positively about networks in general and specifically about formal staff networks, of which this is the fifth.

Graham Johnson, recent leader of Christian Fellowship

Graham reflected on the last 30 years of activity of the Christian Fellowship and how this had led to the request for staff network status. He described the vision of a Christian group in every Welsh Assembly office. Graham described the regular meetings consisting of a varied programme of Bible teaching and prayer meetings, including Christmas and Easter Services. He gave reasons for the continuation of Christian activity over 30 years:

- 1) God has kept it
- 2) Many have prayed
- 3) Bible believing Christians (and adherents of many faiths) do not believe that you put off your faith when you come to work
- 4) There are Bible believing Christians from a wide range of denominations who, setting aside their minor differences, work together to share the same vision and want to: i. do their daily work to the glory of the Lord ii. be prepared to explain to their colleagues the good news of what the Lord Jesus Christ has done by dying on the Cross for their sins.
- 5) It has been Bible based
- 6) The welcome has been to all. Those of faith and no faith.

Bible Reading: 1 Timothy 2 1-7 read in Welsh and English

Read by Luned Roberts and Vashi Phare

“ 1 I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. 2 Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. 3 This is good and pleases God our Saviour, 4 who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth. 5 For there is only one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus. 6 He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone. This is the message God gave to the world at just the right time. 7 And I have been chosen as a preacher and apostle to teach the Gentiles this message about faith and truth. I’m not exaggerating—just telling the truth.”

Prayer

Mike Cummings praised God for His gracious saving work and asked for God's blessing on this new staff network.

Stephen Clark, Pastor of Free School Court Evangelical Church, Bridgend

Stephen provided a "3D" presentation to explain the Christian faith:

The Christian faith maintains that we all share:

- a common **Dignity** because we are made in God's image. Regardless of race, nationality, gender. Far from being a Western faith we need to remember it came out of a common Eastern culture and Jesus made his first steps in Egypt. Man is made to know the God who made us – we are special.
- a common **Depravity**. Jesus said: **you being evil**.....know how to give good gifts..... We are all flawed and not what God wants us to be.
- We therefore have a need for a common **Deliverance**. If all are on a ship going down, different nationalities, different class/culture/ wealthy or poor/educated/ignorant – when the boat is sinking we all need the same deliverance. This takes us to the One God with Jesus Christ who intercedes between God and man.

Trish Longdon of Trish Longdon Associates

Trish recently worked at the Audit Commission as the Director responsible for developing and delivering the Commission's Equality and Diversity Strategy. The setting up of networks formed an important part of the strategy and Trish shared her experience, and talked about the benefits and some of the challenges that followed.

Trish provided a wealth of practical insights into the value of networks and how they needed to be supported. Networks are an opportunity for people of the same difference to come together. Networks can help support the morale and competence of staff, so that the organisation becomes an employer of choice. Networks help create more confident, competent and "whole" employees that feel they can bring "all" of themselves into the organisation. Trish described the improvement in public services that can result from a public organisation honouring and making effective use of the diversity of its staff. The outputs of staff networks therefore need to be harnessed by the organisation. Success would be determined by leadership commitment, clear strategy, support through difficulties, evaluation and learning.

Q&A

A question was asked about how the network will be taken forward. A member of the Diversity Team explained that a meeting would take place to consider this.