



Free to Believe Conference 2024

Coming to our Senses

The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick
Wed 4th to Fri 6th September 2024

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Cost £275 (Booking Form Attached)

Coming to our Senses

*'The Word made flesh is here made word again' (Edwin Muir, The Incarnate One).
A focus on embodiment, a continuing challenge for churches, and worldwide.*

Speakers:

Kathy Galloway

Former Leader of the Iona Community, and former Head of Christian Aid Scotland.

Victoria Turner

Editor - 'Young, Woke and Christian'

Worship Leaders:

Fiona Bennett

Minister of Augustine URC, Edinburgh

Kathy Galloway



Free to Believe Conference Theme: Coming to our Senses

In the miracle and mystery of birth, we are reminded of some fundamental truths. We are first of all created, and when we forget that, we undermine our very existence. We are co-created, a species among species, with a responsibility to respect other forms, for we are interdependent, and they are also part of the divine creation. We are embodied, whole persons, and the human body is to be cherished, not starved, beaten, and killed, because it is holy. We are located, we have a time and a place, we are part of a history and geography in which God acts through us. We are co-creators-we can create nothing out of nothing, but only in relationship and exchange with the earth, with other people, with God, who is always drawing us on to regeneration, to bringing forth God's life.

The failure to acknowledge our creatureliness has been a big problem for human beings - and an ever bigger one for the other life forms we share the earth with. Our tendency to assume that the universe is at our disposal has made us careless to the point of extreme culpability. Perhaps that's because there's so much of it; so many people being born, living, dying, in their billions now, across the world. So many species, animals, plants, so much inconvenient life; getting in the way of other people's ambitions, greed, beliefs.

But this is not a biblical perspective, or indeed a truly religious one. Nor is it ultimately a healthy one for anybody OR anything. Ultimately, we are all inconvenient, useless. Life is not a possession to be accumulated, but a gift to be appreciated and cherished. The value of life is intrinsic, in the living of it.

What does it really mean to us to be embodied, to be creature? Perhaps to answer this, we need to come back to our senses.

Kathy Galloway is an activist and writer. A member and former Leader of the Iona Community, and former Head of Christian Aid Scotland, the major focus of her work has always been peace-making and social justice issues, especially relating to poverty, ecology, and gender. She has also worked for Church Action on Poverty as their Link worker for Scotland, and with a charity established to support women who experienced abuse in a religious context, and she was one of the originators of 'A Woman's Claim of Right for Scotland.' She is the author of a dozen books on justice issues, spirituality and poetry, and her writing has been widely anthologised. She lives in Glasgow.

Rev Fiona Bennett Having studied Divinity at New College and a post-graduate diploma in Community Education at Northern College in Dundee, Fiona was ordained as a minister of the Scottish Congregational Church in 1996. When the SCC joined the URC in 2000, she became a minister of the URC. As a URC minister she has worked in local churches with both the Methodist Church and the Church of Scotland, before being inducted as the minister of Augustine United Church in 2009. Fiona served as the Moderator of the General Assembly 2022-2023 and is a practitioner with Place for Hope. As well as being a minister, Fiona is a mum and partner. She has a great love of music, stories, singing and laughing.

Victoria Turner is a lecturer in Theology and Mission at Ripon College Cuddesdon. Her PhD is from the University of Edinburgh. Victoria's research interests include World Christianity, ecumenism, youth studies, decolonial and liberation theology, interfaith, mission history and theology, and political and practical theology. She is the editor of *Young, Woke and Christian: Words from a Mission*, and is currently co-editing *Lived Mission in 21st Century Britain*. Victoria is an active member of the URC, most recently serving on the Church Life Review Group and on the Editorial Board of *Reform Magazine* and works extensively with the World Communion of Reformed Churches.

Free to Believe National Conference 2024

The Hayes Conference Centre - Wednesday 4th to Friday 6th September 2024



The cost is £275 (deposit - £50). Full fee to be paid by Wednesday 24th July 2024.

Payment can be by bank transfer to
Account Name: **Free to Believe**
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I wish to book place(s) at the Free to Believe National Conference 2024.

NAMES (in block capitals). If booking for more than one person, please indicate if you require a single room or a double room, and which people will be sharing.

1. Single / Double
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Confirmation of bookings will be made by email