



Progressive Christianity Network - Britain

Registered Charity No: 1102164

Annual Report & Financial Statements for the financial year 1st January - 31st December 2008



St Faith's Vicarage, 62 Red Post Hill, London SE24 9JQ

The Progressive Christianity Network - Britain

Registered Charity No: 1102164

Governing document: Constitution adopted 22nd September 2003, as amended 19th January 2004 & 12th November 2005

Object of the Charity: The advancement of the Christian Religion in such exclusively charitable ways as the trustees in their absolute discretion see fit.

Main activities of the Network

- i) To support, promote and network open Christian understanding, both for individuals and for congregations.
- ii) To be inclusive in its concern for that open understanding, wanting to hold together both social and theological concerns, and modern and post modern perspectives.
- iii) To promote a way of living within the wide and rich diversity of church.
- iv) To engage in discussion and negotiation with denominational leadership from within the membership of Christian churches, promoting agendas and understanding which are both liberating and radical.
- v) To develop a visible presence of open Christian congregations and communities.

Address: C/o St Faith's Vicarage, 62 Red Post Hill
London SE24 9JQ

Bankers: The Co-operative Bank, PO Box 250,
Skelmersdale, WN8 6WT

Independent examiner Peter Stribblehill

Trustees for the period of this report:

Chair Hugh Dawes
Vice chair: Charles Hedley
Secretary: Jill Sandham
Treasurer: Montague Lynds (until 22nd November 2008) Duncan Craig (from 22nd November 2008)
Adrian Alker
John Churcher
Sandra Griffiths
Philip Goodwin (from 8th March 2008)
Claire Jenkins (until 22nd November 2008)
Peter Knight
Mary McMahan
Anne Padgett (from 22nd November 2008)
Alan Powell (until 22nd November 2008)
Brian Wilson

Cover picture: Bishop Gene Robinson coming over to the PCN Britain stall at the Lambeth Conference.

Chair's report on the Network

1st January to 31st December 2008

It falls to the author to write this Report, since he was the Management Committee's chair for the year under review. However he stepped down from that role almost immediately the year ended, when John Churcher was elected in his place. The report is written therefore from a different perspective to those of previous years - from the desk of the Newsletter editor rather than the chair of the Committee's overseer. "A view," in that sense, "from the foothills", to use the wonderful title of Chris Mullin's recent and delightful diaries, and so with an eye more often focussed on what appeared in the newsletter than on the minute book. The latter has not been ignored, however, and the more formal, statistical aspects of proper reporting comes first.

The last 'annual' report covered in fact only nine months, because of the decision made in 2007 to change the financial year end from 31st March to 31st December. Consequently this is the first time that the report and the accompanying financial statements cover the period 1st January to 31st December.

Administration

In 2008 the Management Committee met for regular business on four occasions. The attendance rate at meetings was again high; whilst the willingness of several of the committee's members to volunteer many hours of their own time to the practical work for the Network helped turn good ideas to actual achievement. That and the excellent work done once again by Olivia McLennan, the Network's Administrator, working from her home base and in close contact with the chair and secretary, gave members a sense of belonging to something it was worth belonging to - a sense reinforced for those in local groups by the mutual support felt there. Members' responses in the review of the 2005 - 2008 strategy made that very plain.

Membership

The 2007 report showed subscribing membership standing, in November that year, at 330. By the same time in 2008 it had reached 392. Quite a lot of that - though not all - was undoubtedly due to the fresh interest in PCN which had been generated by Jack

Spong's October 2007 tour of the United Kingdom. Spong has been a true friend to the Network from its very beginning, and once again pointed attenders to its unique positioning in the UK at the progressive point on the Christian spectrum.

The affiliation fee, with its rates of standard, donor and minimum, again remained constant at £30, £45 and £15 respectively (plus whatever additional donations members wished and could afford to make.) All members (whatever rate they chose to pay) received full benefits of membership: these include reduced conference rate at events organised both by the Network and by St Mark's Centre for Radical Christianity in Sheffield, and 4 newsletters per year.

Conferences and other events

Here things were just a more modest than in the previous year. Organising the Spong tour was a massive exercise in 2007. And as this report is being written we are less than a week away from another and even bigger tour by Jack Spong; organisationally bigger too, and seeming certain to draw even more people to it. Some drawing of breath after one and before the next was therefore understandable.

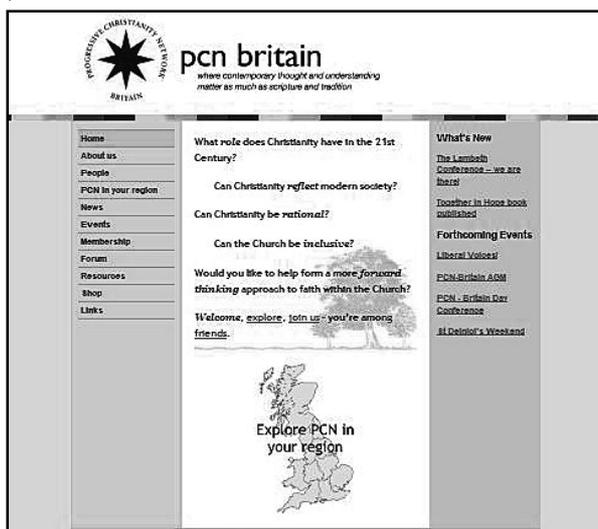
We did, however point our members to an excellent day in April with Marcus Borg at the Centre for Radical Christianity in Sheffield - *Uncovering the Life, Teachings and Relevance of a Religious Revolutionary*, and to one different, but no less interesting, in November, which had Don Cupitt speaking on *The Meaning of the West: a Radical Christian Interpretation*. Both the events were greatly enjoyed by the many who went to them, who were also able to benefit from the mutual reduced conference rates referred to above.

Website

Last year's report referred to all John Hetherington's work on the website up until his resignation from the Management Committee in October 2007. We sought first, through the newsletter, to recruit a volunteer web manager from our membership, but this did not prove possible. In the early part of 2008 therefore Olivia McLennan took on that role in addition to her Administrator tasks,

and very quickly proved herself to be a dab hand at that as well.

Which was as well, since fairly immediately she was caught up in a long talked about redesigning of the website in the light of developing needs. The working out of this took some considerable time. The implementation of it was painfully slow. It was meant to be up and running in good time for the Anglican Communion's Lambeth Conference (see below). But the engine of the site was new to our developers, and proved difficult in any number of ways. As the deadline grew closer and closer there were endless email communications between developer, web manager, Management Committee Secretary who was at a conference in Woking, and the author, who at that time was on sabbatical leave and at St Deiniol's Library. It was all pretty fraught, and some of the communications sharp, but it did finally go live, just in time.

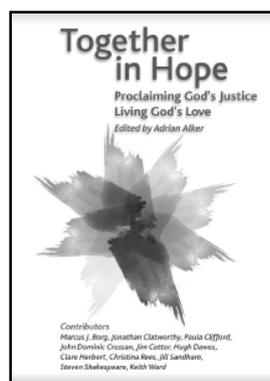


And there were still to be plenty of teething troubles after that, and a few matters remain outstanding even as this is written. But the site is more flexible than its predecessor and allows more to be done within it, including online joining of the network, and online purchase of other items too. A fresh look to it was overdue, and strangely it feels already like a familiar friend and, as with the newsletter, a vital communication took both with members and others.

Together in Hope

Online sales provide a nice link to *Together in Hope*, the book which we produced in association with a mix of other open Christian organisations. Forming some sort of coalition with other bodies of theologically open

outlook was a key element of the 2005 - 2008 strategy, and one which Adrian Alker has overseen with great care, building trust, and looking carefully always for an opportunity to take it a step further. The Lambeth Conference (of which more below) was just such an opportunity, and it was Adrian who, in the midst of others more concerned with Anglican niceties at the conference (most of them not nice at all!) picked up the project, ran with it, and made it happen.



Indeed the book was formally launched at the conference itself. We are greatly indebted to him. PCN is the Progressive Christian Network, and the book – which is not intended to be the last of our publishing ventures – highlighted

the worth of working with Christian fellow-travellers, even if their particular take on faith is not quite the same of ours (and of course ours is immensely varied too!).

Lambeth Conference, Methodist Conference, URC Assembly

The awareness of that, and the desire of PCN from its beginnings to be a voice *within* denominational Christianity, part of it (however uncomfortable that might be to some of the other voices within it, and sometimes to us) made July very much our conference month. At Lambeth a large team of members (including some from the Management Committee) took turns to staff our stall, which was in a generally pretty congenial space within the Marketplace. Several of our coalition partners were near us, and there was space at times for some good conversations with them.

But plenty of people visited us as well, and a good number were friendly, and obviously pleased to see us. Gene Robinson chatted warmly with us, Katharine Jefferts



Schori did the same, and with a gentle friendliness very different from the way some (though not all) English bishops just swept past.

We had copies of our June newsletter for people to take away – with its front cover article in big bold type bearing the conference headline *Heresies: and why we should welcome them* – and a substantial number were taken. Other visitors were more circumspect, but several had the courtesy to sit down, and listen to us; and I certainly felt better informed, and more understanding, as I listened to them. There were also insights into faith being something much more than head-stuff and radical theological purity. The African bishops wives selling colourful shirts and bags which they had made to marketplace people like us and to other delegates in order to raise funds for parish church work back home. And this conversation, which reported separately by two who were on our stall. “*Our people are lucky to make their communion fortnightly.*” “*Lack of clergy?*” “*No, lack of bread.*”

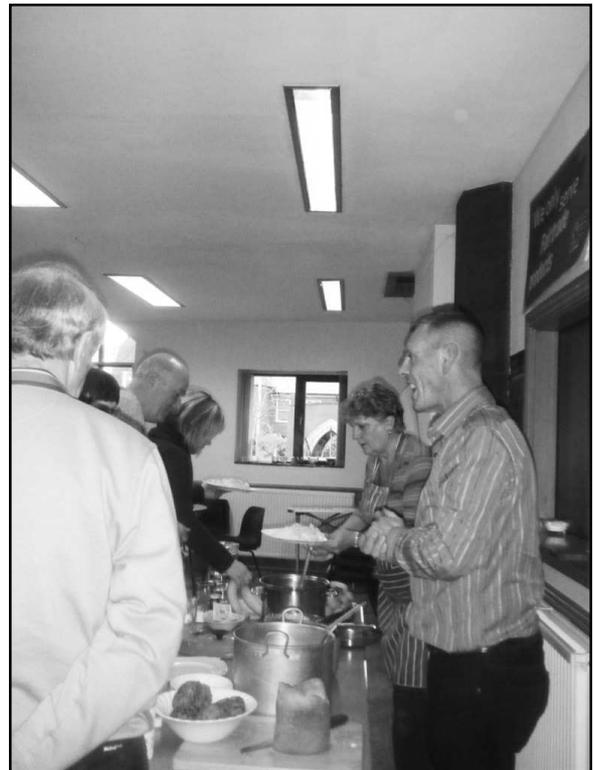
We also took stalls to the Methodist Conference and to the URC Assembly, both a little earlier in July. There, as at Lambeth, we were wanting to say “We are here, and we are part of you, and we are committed to this thing called church.” We didn’t sign up loads of new members, but we saw it as part of the process, of “embedding ourselves in people’s minds”, as Charles Hedley so wisely expressed it as we looked back on all three events at the management committee. Sandra Griffiths, in the newsletter, commented on how the pile of past newsletters available on the URC Assembly stall seemed regularly to go down when she disappeared for a few minutes for a coffee. And interestingly our stall there was free, since ‘so many URC members are in PCN’!

What else in 2008?

Well lots, of which sadly there is space remaining for no more than a few somewhat arbitrary highlights.

Our Progressive Christian Map of Britain, on which Brian Wilson worked so hard on the committee’s behalf, made its first appearance in the March newsletter, and later on, in a way easy to search, on the new website, along with a growing number of local groups.

We had a splendid AGM on 22nd November, earthed in place and in people, at St Agnes’s Church in North Reddish near Manchester. We learnt a lot about the work Clive Larsen and his team did there, had possibly the best food ever at any PCN event., and began the all



member including review of the 2005 - 2008 strategy, with a view to determine targets afresh in 2009. The only regret must be that more members did not come to benefit from St Agnes’s delights. We also said thank you there to two committee members, Alan Powell and Monty Lynds, both of whom had given wonderful service over recent years. Monty set down the treasurer’s task he generously took on two years before, to free himself up to train as an Anglican lay reader: another instance of determination to stay within and be a voice within. Alan for several years did all the work of being the co-ordinator of the young network of local groups, and was in addition was the organisational genius of the much valued and enjoyed St Deiniol’s weekends. We are indebted to both of them.

The local groups section of the newsletter made plain how much was going on in them, and what a variety of things as well. The mix of articles offered by members, with some lively responses too, demonstrated that thoughtful response to faith, and concerned living out of it as well, was alive and well in PCN. Some of the photos included bear witness to laughter, humour, fun as well. A good year, and a very good “view from the foothills” as it ended.

Hugh Dawes

Independent Examiner's report to the Progressive Christianity Network

This report on the accounts of the Progressive Christianity Network (PCN) for the year ended 31 December 2008, which are set out on page 1 is in respect of an examination carried out under s.43 of the Charities Act 1993 ("The Act").

Respective responsibilities of the PCN and the examiner

As members of the PCN you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts: you consider that the audit requirement of section 43(2) of the Act do not apply. It is my responsibility to issue this report on those accounts in accordance with the terms of the Act.

Basis of this report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 43(7)(b) of the Act. That examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the PCN and a comparison of the accounts with those records. It also includes considering any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the Act have not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed



Dr Peter Striblehill

October 2009

Progressive Christianity Network -Britain

Registered Charity No.1102164

Statement of Receipts and Payments for the Year Ended 31st December 2008

UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

	12 months to 31/12/2008 £	9 months to 31/12/2007 £	12 months to 31/03/2007 £
RECEIPTS			
Membership - individual	6,584	9,321	11,728
Membership - church	0	0	0
Donations	472	135	575
Gift Aid	4,547	425	0
Investment income	426	510	271
Conference and retreat income	1,033	10,991	2,522
Book sales	0	1,350	989
Book sales - Together in Hope	732	0	0
Sundry	60	142	0
Donation of reserves of other organisation	1,082	0	0
TOTAL RECEIPTS	14,936	22,874	16,085
PAYMENTS			
Publicity, stationery & printing	2,831	1,905	1,568
Administrator salary	6,324	3,939	5,270
Postage	748	653	511
Administration	298	236	688
Website costs	183	112	224
Website Upgrade	658		
Conference/retreat expenses	1,000	6,665	3,416
Costs of books development - Together in Hope	500	924	838
Board Expenses	1,524	1,190	2,412
Computer expenses	0	34	152
Sundries	471	176	
Coalition & Group Development	142	209	1,612
TOTAL PAYMENTS	14,678	16,043	16,691
Net Incoming Resources	258	6,831	(606)
CASH FUNDS 1st JANUARY 2008	14,228	7,397	8,003
CASH FUNDS 31st DECEMBER 2008	14,486	14,228	7,397

Note 1

PCN-B encourages and facilitates formation of local groups. However, local PCN-B groups are self-supporting informal associations, the activities, income and expenditure of which are not under the control of the board of management of PCN-B and consequently the financial results of local groups are excluded from the PCN-B accounts. The exception to this principle is where local groups ask PCN-B to underwrite public events in their locality. Where PCN-B agrees to do this, it is on the basis that the profit/loss, or a proportion thereof, accrues to PCN-B and is therefore included in the PCN-B accounts.

Note 2

The members of the management committee did not receive any remuneration.

Note 3

£1,524 was paid in expenses to a total of 9 members of the management committee.

Progressive Christianity Network -Britain

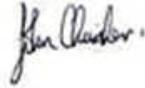
Registered Charity No.1102164

Statement of Assets and liabilities at 31st December 2008

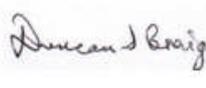
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

	12 months to 31/12/2008 £	9 months to 31/12/2007 £	12 months to 31/03/2007 £
CASH FUNDS			
Bank balances	<u>14,486</u>	<u>14,228</u>	<u>7,397</u>

Signed on behalf
of all trustees



J.Churcher
Chair



D.Craig
Treasurer