



# Progressive Christianity Network Britain

Registered Charity No: 1102164

## ANNUAL REPORT & FINANCIAL REPORT 1<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY - 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2013



Delegates at the Celebrating a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Faith Conference in London on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2013

Registered address

26 High Street, Newnham, Gloucestershire, GL14 1BB

# The Progressive Christianity Network Britain

- Registered Charity No:** 1102164
- Governing Document** Constitution adopted 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2003, and amended 19<sup>th</sup> January 2004, 12<sup>th</sup> November 2005, 24<sup>th</sup> October 2009 and 20<sup>th</sup> April 2013
- 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**
- i. Promoting a way of living consistent with the 8 points and with a progressive, inclusive, open approach to religion.
  - ii. Supporting groups of PCN members and non-members to explore a progressive understanding of Christianity.
  - iii. Supporting and encouraging members of the Progressive Christianity Network, both those whose faith is lived out within the community of church as expressed in mainstream denominational Christianity and those outside of any such organised institutional Christian framework.
  - iv. Networking, conferencing and providing forums for open debate about all aspects of Christianity, including interaction with people of other faiths.
  - v. Engaging in discussion and negotiation with members of different Christian denominations, promoting agendas and understandings that are both liberating and radical.
  - vi. Developing and encouraging progressive Christian congregations and communities.
  - vii. Promoting membership of PCN Britain

**Address:** 26 High Street, Newnham, Gloucestershire, GL14 1BB

**Bankers:** The Co-operative Bank

**Independent Examiner** Andrew Wright

**Trustees for the period of this report:**

Chair John Churcher  
Vice chair: Angela Smith  
Secretary: Paul Onslow  
Treasurer: Andrew Burrell  
Adrian Alker  
Sonya Brown  
Robin Story (representing St Marks CRC)  
Philip Goodwin (up to April AGM)  
Sandra Griffiths  
Alison Morley (up to April AGM)  
Alan Race  
Richard Tetlow

*Members at Glenfall House in Cheltenham taking part in the annual residential weekend in June 2013*



# Chair's Report on the Network in 2013

Last November PCN Britain celebrated the completion of its first 10 years as a charity promoting and supporting open and contemporary Christian understanding. We can rightly claim that the network is now firmly established in Britain and I am pleased to report that the past year has been yet another busy and significant time for PCN Britain, as the network continues to grow in both influence and membership.

In taking on the Chair's role from John Churcher in May, I am mindful of his positive and affirming influence on the shape, size and scope of the network, which has been really significant. We owe John an incalculable vote of thanks for all that he has done for PCN Britain during his time in the Chair and we are fortunate that he remains an active trustee and we value his ongoing support as Vice Chair.

This past year has seen PCN Britain and PCN groups organise a number of conferences, study days and retreats, some of which have been arranged in conjunction with partner organisations. I would like to extend my thanks to all who have made these possible. In what follows, I will sample but a few so please consult the PCN website for a full run down of all the recent events.



***Ian Wallis of St Marks, Sheffield, at the PCN Spring Conference in April 2013***

In April we attracted a record attendance to our Spring Conference, which examined what it means for a church to call itself progressive. The conference was unusual in that there was no keynote speaker. Instead three progressive

churches collaborated to present different aspects of the theme.

During June we held a retreat weekend at Glenfall House, which focused on the possibility of 'progressive worship'. This was very much a homemade event as trustees offered talks and workshops to the 21 PCN members and friends who attended. Also during June, PCN Britain and the Open Christianity Network Ireland sponsored a successful and innovative tour by Dr Val Webb, the Australian theologian. Val gave twelve lectures in all and spoke at eight group meetings in the UK about the new edition of her book 'In Defence of Doubt: an invitation to adventure'. Those who were able to attend her talks found them enlightening and inspiring so if you missed her tour, then please consider having a look at her books that are available in the usual places online.

I am pleased to note that in total there were 14 occasions last year when PCN affiliated groups organised publicly advertised events with visiting speakers. This is a great increase on previous years and I hope we can maintain this trend. Don't forget that we offer grants and underwriting for such events.



***The Greenbelt stand had a birthday theme***

In August PCN Britain was present at the Greenbelt festival for the fourth year running and shared a stand with St Marks Centre for Radical Christianity, Modern Church and Inclusive Church. Since Greenbelt was celebrating its 40th birthday, the four partners picked up the birthday theme and we took the opportunity to draw attention to our own anniversary. We owe a big thank you to the ten PCN members who volunteered their help.

In September, PCN Britain sent a delegate to the Common Dreams Conference in Canberra, which was a gathering of progressive Christians in Australia and the South Pacific. Trustee Alan Race took up the challenge and spoke about the impact on progressive thought of John Robinson's challenging

book, 'Honest to God' which is now fifty years old. Alan looked at Robinson's position in the spectrum between classical theism and non-realism and suggested what Robinson's enduring legacy might be. You can find Alan's talk on our website.



Then nearer to home, in November over 150 people attended the 'Being Honest to God' conference at the Hayes Centre, Swanwick. This proved to be a sell-out and this very popular conference was jointly organised with Modern Church to mark the 50th anniversary of John Robinson's book, *Honest to God*.

***Richard Holloway at the Hayes***

During the 'Being Honest to God' conference PCN Britain also marked its 10th Anniversary by signing the Charter for Compassion and becoming a partner organization. The trustees had no hesitation in linking with this wider movement for compassion, founded by Karen Armstrong, as it brings together all religions, spiritual movements and those who hold to the values of love. I am pleased to report that a number of individual members of PCN have also chosen to sign the Charter.

In November we also began a review of PCN Britain's Eight Points by inviting all members to join a consultation process aimed at enabling the membership to tell trustees if there were particular portions of the Eight Points they would like to see revised and, if so, how they would like to see them changed. We received many wide ranging and helpful suggestions and the trustees join me in thanking members for taking such an active interest. Re-drafting the Eight Points is now an ongoing activity and the outcome will be recorded in next year's annual report.

Since the launch of the new website in late 2012, the past months have revealed what a vital resource this is in enabling PCN to reach out to the membership and beyond - through its many pages on the latest news, events, blogs, articles and the group pages. We continue to be grateful to Andy Vivian, Dave Coaker and Steve Ireland for their efforts in updating and ensuring the continuity of web site improvement. Similarly, we would like to thank Hugh Dawes for his attentive editing of the PCN magazine, 'Progressive Voices' which has continued to go from strength to strength under his watchful eye. I am pleased to report that PCN Britain has again continued to work productively with partner organisations on many undertakings this year, including our participation in the joint publication

project which has given us the 'Together in Hope' series of booklets, available through the website, the office, or as a Kindle download.

In 2012 PCN members expressed their wish that we make representations to the government to record our overwhelming support for same-sex marriage, including the option for church ceremonies. So it is pleasing to report that in July the 'Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill' was successfully passed. Further, I note that the 'Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill' has now been passed with a large majority, making Scotland the 17th country in the world to legalise same-sex marriage. Together these new pieces of legislation represent a major step towards full equality for LGBT people in Britain. PCN Britain stands by the notion that in making marriage available to all a clear message is conveyed to our society, one that says that same-sex relationships are just as worthy and valued as opposite sex relationships and that stable, faithful, loving relationships should be fully honoured and recognised regardless of the gender of the couple.

PCN Britain is above all a network of volunteers and so without the efforts and dedication of group convenors, steering groups and subcommittees, PCN Britain would neither endure nor develop. Five new local groups were affiliated last year: Worthing, St Albans, Market Harborough, Oadby – Leicester, and Balham. On behalf of the Management Committee, I express my sincere thanks to all who have contributed in any way to the work of PCN, not least to the authors of the many stimulating articles in "Progressive Voices" and on the website.

I also wish to offer my own thanks to all on the Management Committee for their continued hard work on behalf of the network and membership. I especially thank Sonya Brown who completes her term of office as a trustee and steps down as her ministerial role increases. She has fronted much of PCN's work at Greenbelt and has been a willing speaker at local groups. Her book on Christianity and Feminism is the latest in the Together in Hope series. Thankfully, she has agreed to continue to accept invitations to speak. As Chair, I am thankful to Andy Vivian who, as PCN Administrator, supports the network admirably in all it sets out to do whilst offering a first point of contact for all, both inside and outside of PCN Britain. Finally, I thank all PCN Britain members for their continued support of, and commitment to, progressive Christianity.

Please accept my apologies for being unable to attend the Spring Conference and AGM this year.

Angela Smith, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2014

# Financial Report

## - Year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013

1 In accordance with the approach permitted by the Charity Commission for a body of PCNB's gross income the accounts are kept and reported on a receipts and payments basis meaning that there are no accruals.

2 The format of submitted accounts is the one recommended by the Charity Commission, that is all receipts and all expenditures are aggregated. The Charity Commission provides a form for this (CC16a). This version may be seen on application to the Treasurer.

3 The accounts for 2013 have been subject to Independent Examination by Andrew Wright, who was appointed to this role by the Management Committee on March 16<sup>th</sup> 2013. The Independent Examiner has examined both formats mentioned above. His certificate is shown below.

4 The accounts show a surplus at the end of the year of £6019.23. The boost to income in 2013 was the Honest to God conference, which made an overall profit of £4,289.72. This event was run jointly by PCN and Modern Church; the accounting was passed through the PCN Accounts. The overall profit was divided between PCN Britain and Modern Church. However the payment of £2,144.86 to Modern Church was made in 2014 and so does not appear with these accounts.

5 PCNB operates the following three accounts:

- a) A current account, with cheque and online banking facilities, with the Co-operative Bank;
- b) A savings account with CCLA who are specialists in investment management for charities, faith organisations, and local authorities;
- c) A PayPal account for the receipt of payments in online transactions.

6 PCNB does not have a business credit card, charges that must be received by credit card (e.g. materials for events, general postage, internet ISP Charges) are made against the Administrator's and/or the Treasurer's personal accounts and they then seek reimbursement from PCNB through the normal expense process.

7 During 2013 the PCNB Committee continued to take on accounting for the Joint Publications Project which publishes the Together in Hope series. For this purpose there is a restricted fund within our accounts. This is necessary in order to avoid cross-subsidy between the Project and the PCNB General Fund. The value of publication stock as at December 2013 was approx. £1,955.00.

8 Membership & Gift Aid was claimed for the single accounting year of 2011 to the value of £4,112.91. Gift Aid for 2012 was claimed within the financial year of 2014.

9 The members of the Management Committee did not receive any remuneration, but reasonable expenses were paid to them; £2951.35 was paid to the Management Committee. These expenses include the accommodation for the annual strategic review weekend. Travel has decreased by £752.92; there will be a continued effort to keep committee expenses under control, which is measured by ensuring that they don't exceed the prior years by more than 5%.

Andrew Burrell  
Treasurer

8<sup>th</sup> May 2014



***Independent examiner's report on the accounts  
follows on the next page***

**Section A****Independent Examiner's Report****Report to the trustees/  
members of**

Progressive Christian Network Britain

**On accounts for the year  
ended**31<sup>st</sup> Dec. 2013**Charity no  
(if any)**

1102164

**Set out on pages**

Seven and eight of this report

**Respective responsibilities of  
trustees and examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of independent  
examiner's statement**

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

**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 130 of the Charities Act; and
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities 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:**

**Date:** April 29<sup>th</sup> 2014**Name:**

Andrew Wright

**Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body**

N/A

**Address:**

Courtyard Gallery

32, Boroughgate, Appleby-in-Westmorland, Cumbria, CA16 6HT

**Section B****Disclosure**

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material problems.

## **PCNB RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS**

<b>Headings</b>	<b>2013 Receipts</b>	<b>2013 Payments</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>
Interest	£90.05		£90.05	£79.01
Coop Bank	£20.39			
CCLA	£69.66			
Public Events	£29,650.54	-£26,495.79	£3,154.75	-£3,260.93
Events 2012				-£3,260.93
Events 2013	£29,650.54	-£26,495.79	£3,154.75	
JPP	£1,868.33	-£114.08	£1,754.25	£415.23
JPP				
Loan (MC)	£750.00			£750
Book Sales	£1,118.33			-£1,788.56
JPP Committee expenses		-£114.08		-£94.26
Printing				-£2,029.07
Membership & Donations	£20,663.42	-£180.90	£20,482.52	£24,663.93
Membership – for 2013				
Refund		-£180.90		
Subscriptions	£14,246.95			£12,837.70
Other Donations	£89.44			
Membership – for 2014				
Subscription	£2,214.12			£4,820.23
Gift Aid claim	£4,112.91			£6,029.65
Operations		-£13,868.38	-£13,868.38	-£16,346.73
Committee Expenses		-£2,951.35		-£3,704.27
Insurance		-£378.56		-£378.35
PCNB Office		-£10,513.47		-£11,314.11
Admin Salary & Tax		-£9,921.68		-£9,679.21
Office and IT Costs		-£591.79		-£1,634.90
Grants		-£25.00		-£950.00
Media/Publications	£2,254.63	-£7,848.59	-£5,593.96	-£4,455.36
Newsletter				
Newsletter		-£3,215.63	-£3,215.63	-£2,485.52
Other publications	£2,254.63	-£1,124.31	£1,130.32	-£100.36
Books and CDs/DVDs	£2,254.63			
Publication Costs		-£794.31		
Marketing		-£330.00		
Website		-£2,384.34	-£2,384.34	-£1,869.48
Surplus/Deficit for year	£54,526.97	-£48,507.74	£6,019.23	£1,095.15



**Members gather for the 2013 AGM**

## STATEMENT OF ASSETS

### Funds

<b>PCNB General Fund*</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>
Balance at 1 January	£21,407.24	£20,312.09
Surplus/Deficit for year	£6,019.23	£1,095.15
Balance at 31 December	<b>£27,426.47</b>	<b>£21,407.24</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>£27,426.47</b>	<b>£21,407.24</b>

### Bank Accounts

	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>
Balance at <b>1 January</b>		
Co-operative Bank current a/c	£14,037.90	£5,792.77
CCLA deposit account	£7,131.16	£7,068.90
PayPal account	£238.18	£7,450.42
<b>Total</b>	<b>£21,407.24</b>	<b>£20,312.09</b>
Balance at <b>31 December</b>		
Co-operative Bank current a/c	£12,725.65	£14,037.90
CCLA Deposit account	£14,700.82	£7,131.16
PayPal account	£0.00	£238.18
<b>Total</b>	<b>£27,426.47</b>	<b>£21,407.24</b>

<b>Joint Publications Project (Restricted Fund)*</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>
Balance January 1st	£1,432.92	£1,017.69
Book Sales	£1,118.33	£1,788.56
Printing		-£2,029.07
JPP committee expenses	-£114.08	-£94.26
Loan (from Modern church)	£750.00	£750.00
Surplus / Deficit 2011	£1,754.25	£415.23
Balance at 31 December	<b>£3,187.17</b>	<b>£1,432.92</b>

\* PCNB General funds incorporate JPP restricted funds



Angela Smith, Chair



Andrew Burrell, Treasurer  
10<sup>th</sup> May 2014