

Confident Discipleship

How many of us feel confident about our Christian faith, to the extent that we can explain it to someone who asked us? Certainly the question of 'confidence' keeps coming up in the mission network and seems to be a major concern of many at present.

Last September at the CTE Forum Timothy Radcliffe spoke about 'Confident Christianity' and said, 'We need a confident Christian culture, which enables us to see the world in terms of blessing and gratitude, redemption and salvation .. a culture which is open to the questions and insights of our contemporaries of whatever faith or none'. His talk is on the website of [Churches Together in England](#).

This year, a major theme for some churches in England, including Baptists, Methodists and Salvation Army is 'discipleship'. The strap line for the Baptist Union of Great Britain for example is 'Encouraging missionary disciples'. They have produced a resource called 'Confidence in the Gospel' which you can find on the [BUGB website](#).

The Congregational Federation have also recently produced training material on their website called 'Growing Disciples' which aims to 'explore the nature of discipleship confidently; to identify and celebrate their rich diversity, in order to build up the Body of Christ; and to live their Christian faith publicly'. You can see that material on the [Congregational Federation website](#).

Now confidence must not be confused with power. Five weeks ago Jacques Matthey, the WCC Mission Secretary, said 'Mission must be in Christ's way'. He continued, 'in the sense that it doesn't prioritise efficiency and success, keeps distance from powerful structures and people in the world and respects the fact that often God calls small, weak, sick and meaningless people to bear God's message'. How do we equate fragility and confidence? Mother Teresa.

We need to explore the issues, equip our people, and pray for confidence to be a witness in the world. One key issue is having the confidence to explain the 'hope we have within us'. With this in mind the Churches coordinating group for Evangelisation invited Tracy Cotterell and Neil Hudson from the [LICC 'Imagine' Project](#) to reflect on their pilot project working 16 ordinary congregations looking at 'Confident Discipleship'.

The church is very good at drawing people in to take on things and responsibilities on top of the everyday responsibilities. New thinking and resources are needed to turn the church inside out, sending people as confident disciples to pray 'thy kingdom come' wherever they spend most of their time. LICC are developing such resources which should be available in the Autumn. In the mean time you can find on the [CTE website](#):

1. a summary report of our meeting
2. the LICC PowerPoint presented
3. information about Bible Fresh and
4. Other resources re 'Confident Discipleship'

We know that our confidence comes from Christ. What we need to do in this timely discussion is encourage, resource and pray. It is, after all, good news for those who have not yet heard.

Jim Currin is a Church Army evangelist and Secretary for Evangelisation at Churches Together in England.