

9th Conference of the European Network of Buddhist-Christian Studies (ENBCS)

Hope: A Form of Delusion? Buddhist and Christian Perspectives
June 30th – July 4th 2011, Liverpool Hope University, U.K.

Letter from the President concerning the conference of 2011

The 9th ENCBS will be held in Liverpool (UK), a vibrant city with a rich religious and cultural history. In 2004 it won the status of a UNESCO World Heritage Site (See <http://www.visitliverpool.com>).

Liverpool Hope University traces its history to the nineteenth century, when two separate teacher education colleges for women were established, St Katherine's in 1844 (Anglican) and Notre Dame in 1856 (Roman Catholic). In 1965, a second teacher education college, Christ's College, was established. In 1980, the three joined together in an ecumenical federation that eventually became Liverpool Hope University. It was named 'Hope' because of the hope for ecumenical understanding that was embodied in its founding, in a city that has witnessed religious sectarianism. Today, it welcomes people of all faiths and none. It has two campuses and a robust academic profile that has moved far wider than teacher education. Its Department of Theology, Philosophy and Religious Studies, of which I am a part, has a particularly strong research profile. You can be assured of a warm welcome (See <http://www.hope.ac.uk>).

It is appropriate and exciting, therefore, for a conference about hope in Buddhism and Christianity to be held at Liverpool Hope University. We will look at five themes: Hope and the Critique of Hope; Hope in Pastoral Situations; Embodiments of Hope; Hope in Situations of Hopelessness; Eschatologies of Hope. A Buddhist and a Christian perspective will be given on each theme. As you will see from the programme and list of speakers, we have an excellent line-up of international experts on these themes. In addition, there are three open sessions for which we have issued a Call for Papers (see Call for Papers). The first is designed for postgraduate research students and recognised researchers. Papers for this session need not be on the theme of the conference but should relate to Buddhist-Christian Studies. The second is a forum for practitioners. We hope that groups across Europe that are involved in Buddhist-Christian relations in a practical way will offer presentations for this session. The third invites academic papers on the theme, Hope and Buddhist-Christian Relations.

ENBCS conferences are also an opportunity to meet and to greet others. Conversation is important – during coffee breaks and meals, and in the evenings after formal sessions. So also is the culture of the place where we meet. On the Saturday afternoon and evening, cultural visits in Liverpool will be offered and we will eat in the centre of the city. And for those who value silence, meditation sessions are offered each morning before breakfast.

All who are committed to building understanding between Buddhists and Christians are welcome to attend ENBCS conferences. The focus is academic but we do not limit

attendance to those in academia. We hope to offer some bursaries for research students to help with the cost of the conference. Naturally, we hope that most people will come for the whole conference. However, if you can't, there is a 24 hour rate (See Rates for the Conference), which can be doubled for 48 hours etc. There is also a non-residential rate, if you can find bed and breakfast in Liverpool cheaper than the £35.00 (£20.00 for students) per night that Liverpool Hope University charges. If you go for this option, remember that the conference will be held in our Childwall campus in South Liverpool.

If you are new to ENBCS or if you have long been involved with the Network, I hope you will consider coming to Liverpool. I can assure you it will be a thought-provoking, enriching and enjoyable conference.

With best wishes

Elizabeth

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