

Commemorating the Centenary of the Balfour Declaration

SUNDAY 26 November, 6.00 pm at
Salisbury Methodist Church

Preacher: Rev Brian Brown

Lord Balfour was a member of the British War Cabinet in the First World War. At the fall of the Ottoman Empire, French and British Governments carved up the countries of the Middle East, Palestine falling to the British.

In November 1917 Lord Balfour wrote a letter to Lord Rothschild, one of the leading figures of the Jewish community in Britain in which he promised to “view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people”... simultaneously adding “it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine”.

The Jewish Homeland was achieved in 1948 on Israel becoming an independent state but this was at enormous cost to the Palestinians with 750,000 fleeing from their homes and becoming refugees. The pledge to the Palestinians has yet to be honoured. Indeed their situation is worse through the Occupation, the separation wall and the blockade of Gaza. British history is intrinsically linked with the fight of Palestinians for human rights and that is why our partners in Christians Aware and the Amos Trust etc ask that churches should use this centenary year to urge the UK government to honour its one-hundred-year-old pledge to safeguard Palestinian rights and work with others to create the framework for peace and security for all who call the Holy Land home.

This special service will be conducted by the Revd Brian Brown. Brian was Director of the Christian Institute of Southern Africa until he was banned in 1977 by the apartheid regime, then Africa Secretary for the Methodist Missionary Society (as it then was). Now he continues his search for social justice and the end to another apartheid system within Israel/Palestine.



Mrs Liz Overthrow (Secretary to WCT)
19 Bratton Avenue
Devizes SN10 5BA
E: liz.overthrow@btinternet.com T: (01380 722404)



Autumn

2017

REFORMATION 500—MOVING ON

In 1500 almost all western Europeans were Christians belonging to one Church under the headship of the Pope. The protest against some of the practices and beliefs of the Church, initiated in 1517 by the monk and university lecturer Martin Luther, ended up splitting western European Christians into mutually antagonistic sects. For four centuries these divisions seemed a permanent feature of western Christianity, but the rise of the ecumenical movement in the 20th century has led some people to wonder whether Christians can somehow move on from the Reformation and transcend their historic divisions. The 500th anniversary of Luther's protest seemed to us to be an appropriate time to consider this issue. A meeting with this aim was held in Market Lavington Community Hall on 20 October with about 50 people from around the county attending.

The meeting was first addressed by **Anna Claar Thomasson-Rosingh**, who had been brought up in the Dutch Reformed tradition and is now an Anglican priest and Director of Studies at Sarum College. She pointed out that Luther had not intended to found a new church, but his insistence on his differences from the Roman Church had led to a split. In particular, he insisted that the **sole** source of salvation is faith in Christ, that our knowledge of Christ is derived **solely** from Scripture and that therefore we owe **everything** to God's grace. Anna wondered if the route to Christian unity might lie through an emphasis on what unites Christians rather than on what divides them. In her view, Christians have a very great deal in common and we need to celebrate that rather than start from a requirement of uniformity of belief which is likely to prove as divisive as it did, she reminded us, in the 17th century Netherlands. *(continued overleaf)*



Who are you today?

Mother, husband, grandmother, brother?
Teacher, office manager, student,
electrician?

If you are looking after someone who
couldn't always manage without your help:
someone with a physical disability, long
term health condition, mental health issue or a problem with
substance misuse you may also be a carer.
Juggling a caring role around work, studying, seeing friends or
spending time with other family members can be challenging. And
sometimes it can feel lonely.



Carer Support Wiltshire are a local charity supporting unpaid carers in
Wiltshire. Our Carer Cafes and Support Groups are held throughout the
county and offer information, advice and the opportunity to make new
friends over a cuppa. Visit our website to find one near you
www.carersinwiltshire.co.uk or call us on 0800 181 4118 or 01380 871690
from a mobile for a copy of our What's On Guide.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity—January 2018

'That All May Be Free'

Resources are now available from Churches Together in Britain and
Ireland, produced in the Caribbean and uses Exodus 15, a song of
triumph over oppression, as the motif of the Week of Prayer in 2018.

The themes of the daily material raise some of the contemporary
issues addressed by the Caribbean churches. Abuses of human
rights are found across the region and we are challenged to consider
our manner of welcoming of the stranger into our midst. Human
trafficking and modern-day slavery continue to be huge issues.

Addiction to pornography and drugs, continue to be serious
challenges to all societies. The debt crisis has a negative impact
upon the nations and upon individuals – the economies of the nations
and people have become precarious. Family life continues to be
challenged by the economic restrictions which lead to migration,
domestic abuse and violence.

The Caribbean Churches work together to heal the wounds in the
body of Christ. Reconciliation demands repentance, reparation and
the healing of memories. The whole Church is called to be both a
sign and an active agent of this reconciliation.

Reformation 500—Moving On—*continued*

The second speaker was **Fr. Michael Robertson**, Roman Catholic
Ecumenical Officer of the Diocese of Clifton. His topic was changes
in the Catholic Church since the Second Vatican Council which have
transformed that Church's view of the ecumenical movement. Before
the 1960s the Catholic Church tended to view itself as God's army on
earth: only those obeying that army's leaders counted as members of
the Christian Church. Since the 1960s the Christian Church has
come to be understood as the community of those who respond to
God's call to fellowship with him. The Church is thus wider than the
Roman Catholic Church, since all who call themselves Christians
respond in some degree to God's call. This changed understanding
has made it possible for the Roman Catholics to begin dialogues with
Methodists, Anglicans, Copts and other Christians, while at the local
level Catholics now often work with members of other denominations.
According to Fr Michael, the ecumenical goal must be full communion
of the churches, based on a shared understanding of God's purposes
for mankind. Anna Claar, by contrast, seemed to think Christian unity
will always presuppose agreement to disagree about some issues.
She thereby reveals herself a kindred spirit to her great compatriot
Erasmus of Rotterdam, a contemporary of Luther, who also viewed
dogmatism as the enemy of unity.

A few questions and comments from the audience followed the two
talks. While welcoming the change of heart in the Catholic Church,
several people expressed regret that the ecumenical movement has
not yet progressed far enough to allow other Christians to receive
communion in Catholic services. The evening ended with heart-felt
applause from the audience, who had found the talks and discussion
informative and thought-provoking.

New Venture—West Wiltshire Theology Group

First meeting

Thursday 18 January 2018 at 7.30 p.m.
St Boniface Hall, Warminster School (BA12 8PJ)

**Renewing and Reforming
our understanding of marriage**

An address with questions and discussion given by

Bishop Nick Holtham
Bishop of Salisbury