

What You Will Need...

The Notes are in booklet form and large print. You might want to print them for people or to email them for them to either print themselves or read on a device during the sessions.

Music Each session starts with a hymn. The tunes should be well known and able to be downloaded online. Please email via Andy.Braunston@urc.org.uk help finding music to sing along to. h

The Discussion Questions

How would you feel if the changes we need to make mean that those of us in the west need to have less in order for a better distribution of resources?

Session 2

ploughed back into the community. If you find the film of the story "The Boy Who Swam with Piranhas" you see how the financial establishment tried to stop him.

Standing up to the racism of Empire

How has migration been used as a weapon in our contemporary politics?

the current (2023) government is determined to bring immigration down and to end the passage of people over the Channel (but not open up legal routes to claim asylum as is a basic human right). Suella Braverman (Home Secretary at the time of writing) uses powerful rhetoric against migrants and is trying to persuade the courts it is lawful, and safe, to deport people to Rwanda.

What benefits might migration bring?

In the west we have aging populations where more and more of us live longer after retirement. Our social security systems are funded by current taxation not savings made throughout our working lives. More people need to work and pay tax to pay for the social support we need as we age. Brexit has already caused labour shortages, more migration would offset this.

Some years ago an asylum charity in Manchester produced a Christmas card with the Holy Family depicted as asylum seekers – how might such an idea change some attitudes?

Might we change our attitude to asylum seekers if we remembered Jesus, Mary and Joseph also found asylum in Egypt?

greater divorce rights
more women in public office and in industry.
right to say no to sex in marriage.

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more likely to save us from the seemingly irresistible power of fossil fuelled empires?

A Higher Law than Empire's

Gethin considers the missionaries that evangelised various countries were, unwittingly or not, agents of empire what do you think?

you might want to think about the recent law changes in Uganda giving life imprisonment for homosexuality or even execution built on British colonial laws and an understanding of Christianity funded by American evangelicals but building on colonial ideas.

Gethin thinks, however, these imperial agents in bringing the Bible also brought the power to resist imperial policies the empire was subverted by its own agents. How do you think the Bible is subversive?

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women, slave and free etc.
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Latin. Might there be similar reasons for the English speaking world to set it to exquisite, yet rather inaccessible, tunes?

The English choral tradition – often replicated in Scottish Cathedrals – does, I think, take away from the power of the words. They make it safe. But the Church has been making Mary safe for over 2,000 years.

to be filled with good things, the rich will have to be sent away empty handed?

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The book was written by the victors after the event; so maybe the writers wanted to justify their actions and used God to back them up. (After all God loved the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites and the others as much as God loved the Jews).

Passages like this have given encouragement to colonisers ever since and are still used to justify some policies of the State of Israel.

Gethin noted that Welsh people who had experienced oppression were instrumental in oppressing First Nations people in Canada. Why might oppressed folk become oppressors?

Oppressed people can become instrumental in their own oppression; they take on the values of empire and see them as normal.

To speak English might have been seen as progress rather than

Sometimes the first step of liberation is to see our own bonds.

Babylon has Fallen!

Have you ever read, or attempted to read, Revelation? What did you make of it?

people will probably have found it confusing.

The visions of the seven churches are quite easy to understand but the rest is in a style we find difficult to access and the disturbing language and images – sometimes sexist – are ones we find hard to access.

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Gethin uses Biblical images of God as judge not popular images in contemporary Christianity. What do you make of the idea of God judging humanity?

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court.
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the court to punish and deter.
So judgement is a key part of our society
if they believe that God is judge or not.

Gethin confidently holds that the empires that control us will fall just as Jesus noted Satan falling from Heaven and the writer of Revelation proclaiming that Babylon had fallen. How might you help the empires that control us to fall?

the first step is to see the empires that surround us. Multi national companies, the economic norms of our society, the violence of war.
remember Fair Trade was once seen as quirky yet it changed the world!