THE ARCHBISHOP
OF CANTERBURY

The Centre for Cultural Witness

The creative, imaginative, culture-shaping power of the Gospel

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Why

We live at a time where there is little common vision for the future of our societies. At such a moment, a fresh, pro-active approach to communicating the Christian gospel in the public arena is needed more than ever.

Based in Lambeth Palace Library, we aim to make Christian faith better understood in public, displaying the creative, imaginative, culture-shaping power of the Christian gospel. We will harness the wisdom of theologians and other Christian leaders to enable them to communicate a rich, intelligent vision of the world seen through Christian eyes, in engaging formats.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, says: “This initiative is sorely needed for the Church in the UK and across the world at this moment, to strengthen our witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and to harness the considerable wisdom of Christian scholars in this country and beyond.”

What

The main outward facing work of the Centre is a magazine-style website – Seen & Unseen – which launched in 2023. The website aims to explain and explore aspects of Christian faith in accessible language and offer Christian perspectives on culture and contemporary life. A theological academic research programme will partner with university theology faculties to explore the task of the Church’s cultural witness in the contemporary context. Senior Christian leaders and emerging communicators will be offered a learning programme focused on cultural witness.

Who

The Centre for Cultural Witness has a small full-time staff led by Bishop Graham Tomlin. It is run in collaboration with prominent theological faculties in the UK, Europe and America. Funding is provided by donations, including from the McDonald Agape Foundation and the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Charitable Fund.

Focus areas

Communication: The main outward facing work of the Centre is the Seen & Unseen magazine-style website. It features regular and occasional contributors, well-known names and younger, more diverse voices. Written primarily for the person outside the church, we hope it becomes the go-to place for accessible, intelligent Christian comment on contemporary life and the significance of the Christian faith in shaping culture and transforming lives.

Learning: To help develop the Church's voice in public the Centre will draw together prominent Christian leaders with media specialists and academic theologians. This will include developing and supporting a network of emerging younger communicators, giving both training and a platform for their contribution.

Research: To communicate the transformative message of the Christian faith in the fast-changing culture of today, theological and sociological research is needed to discern how best to do this in a post-Christian and even 'post-truth' world

Launched in September 2022, The Centre for Cultural Witness explores how the church can explain, explore and share with others its profound and transforming story in public.

The team

Graham Tomlin is the Centre's Director. He taught theology within Oxford University for many years before moving to London in 2005 to set up what became St Mellitus College. He was Bishop of Kensington from 2015-2022 and was deeply involved in the church's response to the Grenfell Tower fire. He is a regular contributor to national publications and has written many books and articles, both academic and more popular.

Nick Jones is the Centre's Senior Editor. As a journalist, analyst and communicator, Nick has mastered digital media to find insights, tell stories and improve reputation across the public and private sectors. He has worked for 10 Downing Street, the Central Office for Information, Visa Inc, HS2 Ltd and publishers ranging from national newspapers to specialist research firms.

Belle Tindall is the Centre's Reporter. In the final stages of her Doctorate in Biblical studies, Belle has researched, taught, and written on numerous topics for the University of Wales, Trinity St. David. She is a regular contributor for Premier Christianity's Woman Alive publication and LICC. She was the Editorial Manger for the online platform 'Girl Got Faith' and contributed to its debut book.

Paula Hynd is the Centre's Executive Manager. Paula has a strong background in fundraising, organisation and management, having worked for Alpha International in recent years. Her previous roles have included an international placement in Mexico City helping to set up a local Alpha office and more recently working as part of the fund development team forming a strategy around donor communications.

Read the Church of England press release about the centre's launch:

Bishop of Kensington to lead new Centre for Cultural Witness | The Church of England.

Stay in touch

We would love to keep you informed about all that is happening with the Centre. Sign up to receive updates and news from the Centre for Cultural Witness.

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