

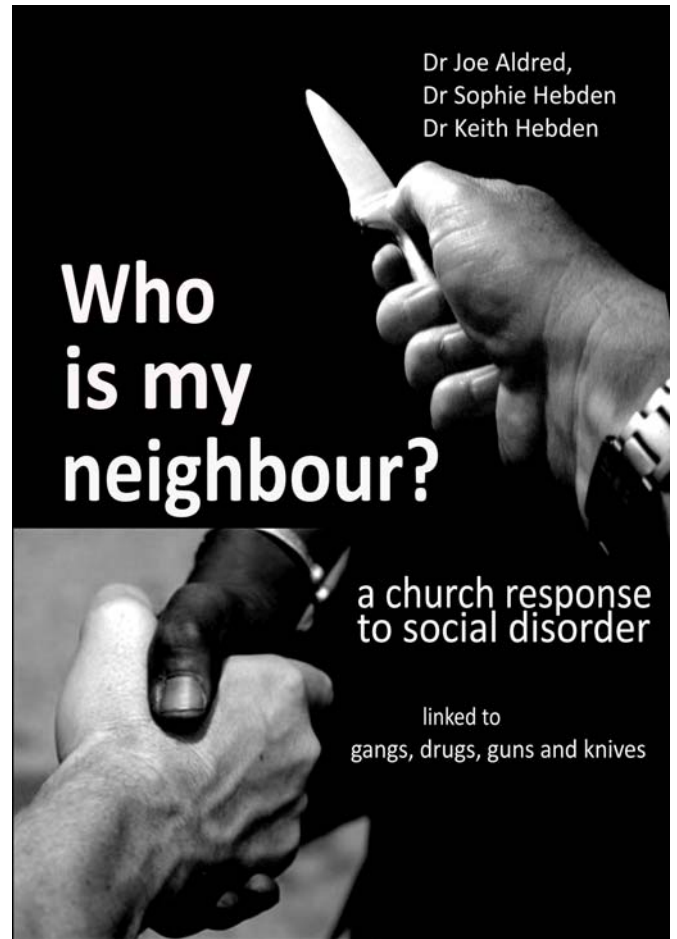
## Who is My Neighbour? A Church Response to Social Disorder Linked to Gangs, Drugs, Guns and Knives

As knife crime becomes a heightened national concern, Churches Together in England have published a timely report. It recommends ways in which the government, churches and the police service can work together more effectively to reduce gang-related crime linked to drugs, guns and knives.

With a foreward by the Bishop for Liverpool, The Rt Revd James Jones, *'Who Is my neighbour? : a church response to social disorder linked to gangs, drugs, guns and knives'* was launched on Monday 21 July 2008 in the House of Commons, Westminster, at a reception hosted by David Lammy MP, with church representatives, politicians and police officials in attendance.

Commenting on the report, The Revd Dr David Cornick, General Secretary of Churches Together in England said, "This report reaffirms our belief that the Christian Church is a sign of God's love

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for our world. It emphasises the unique value of each young person's life, and seeks to inspire the churches to reach out to young people in inner cities caught up in social disorder, as an act of good neighbourliness".

At a time when gun and knife crime reports and discussions are dominating the headlines, *'Who Is my neighbour?'* is

an expression of the Church's deep concern about social disorder and violent crime, especially the death of young people. The report highlights these worries and suggests practical ways to work together to address the issues head on. The recommendations encourage long-term strategic partnerships between churches, community groups, the police, criminal justice partners and local authorities.

The Revd Dr Joel Edwards, General Director of the Evangelical Alliance said: "This report is a vital and timely message. I hope that church leaders will use it to inform the way they work with young people, government, the police and Criminal Justice agencies; but also step up their efforts to tackle the underlying causes of the alarming trend of rising knife crime."

Among the recommendations are: that churches should develop strategies to better support families, promote listening events for young people and encourage members to move back into deprived areas; that the Government should empower local people to tackle these issues themselves, and encourage inter-faith and inter-generational projects; that the police deepen its involvement with

Restorative Justice projects and work closer with churches as key partners.

Churches Together in England plans to hold regional receptions to discuss how the recommendations in the report can be implemented locally by churches, local government and the police. These meetings will be held in Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Derby, Gloucester, Leeds, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Milton Keynes, Nottingham, Reading, Sheffield, Southampton, Stoke-on-Trent and Wolverhampton.

We aim to see a copy of this report in each local church and read by every leader in urban contexts.

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#### **NOTES:**

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- A PDF copy of the report is available at: [www.churches-together.net](http://www.churches-together.net)
- Hard copies of the report are available from Churches Together in England, contact [office@cte.org.uk](mailto:office@cte.org.uk) or telephone 020 7529 8132.
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