

# That's the Spirit!

The title of the 2021 Non-Theists Friends' annual conference was *That's the Spirit!* There were three keynote speakers and, after the conference, recordings of their talks went up on the website [nontheist-quakers.org.uk](http://nontheist-quakers.org.uk). Now they have kindly given permission for *Sofia* to transcribe and publish written versions of two of these talks. The first talk was given by Andrew Copson, the chief executive of Humanists UK. He discusses 'humanist spirituality', an idea that some humanists would reject as a deplorable oxymoron.

This *Sofia* is published at Pentecost (5<sup>th</sup> June this year) and our front cover shows the Holy Spirit descending in tongues of fire upon the small group of Jesus's followers huddling in the upper room. It transforms them into a body of people filled with one spirit: They become *allegro con spirito*. In fact people think they are drunk!

The Non-Theist Friends' conference last year took place at the same time as the Euro football championship and this *Sofia*'s back cover shows the England team taking the knee in solidarity with black players and other black people who suffer abuse. That's the spirit!

Next we have Dominic Kirkham's article exploring how the icon of St George has been hijacked as an imperialist nationalist symbol by Putin in his unholy war, supported by Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow. Carol Palfrey revisits William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience* – spiritual experiences. Frank Walker disagrees with 'no-funeral funerals'.

The second in our series of 'New Testament Poems and Proclamations' is *Mary's Magnificat* in Luke's gospel, the song which she sings, 'filled with the spirit', on her visit to her cousin Elizabeth when they are both pregnant. The feast of the Visitation is usually celebrated on 31<sup>st</sup> May, in time for this *Sofia*. The *Magnificat* is a subversive song and has been banned in several countries in Latin America and even in British India.

You will see below an announcement of the forthcoming SOF Annual Conference, which will be on Zoom again. We hope as many people as possible will be able to join.

## Sea of Faith Network 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference

### Being Human

25<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> July 2022 (on Zoom)

#### Keynote Speakers

**Peter Francis, Warden of Gladstone's Library**

**Canon Brian Mountford, publisher and author of radical Christian books**

**Dr Anastasia Somerville-Wong, Humanist Chaplain, Exeter University**

Besides keynote speakers, video presentations and the like, there will be workshops to sign up to – also base groups, whereby attendees can maintain contact with 'their' group and reflect together on elements /aspects of Conference across the week. You can see plans and schedules in due course on the conference website:

[www.sofconference.org.uk](http://www.sofconference.org.uk)