

## Press Release

20<sup>th</sup> September 2018 for immediate use

Full resolution photograph available and attached



### Only by working together

‘Only by working together can we alleviate the pain suffered by so many’, said one of the six Presidents of Churches Together in England this week. His Grace Archbishop Angaelos, the Orthodox CTE President, was referring to Orthodox, Anglican and Salvation Army churches responding to refugees.

He was speaking alongside his co-Presidents at the Forum of Churches Together in England which took place at Swanwick in Derbyshire on the theme: ‘I am with you always – together in God’s mission’.

With 270 delegates present, including many under 35yrs, the six Presidents had a conversation together about the ‘Presence of Christ’. Questions were posed from six young adults who were present as Forum delegates and each President reflected on the ecumenical journey which we all share in response to the prayer of Jesus for mission and unity.

Pentecostal President, Pastor Agu Irukwu, said that our witness to Christ continues despite what we are going through. ‘Whether on the mountains or in the valleys, we tell the story of his presence with us just the same’. Archbishop Justin Welby, the President for the Church of England, added, ‘people will see the presence of Christ in us when we stop holding on to things and we start letting God put a cross in our hands’.

Referring to Jesus, one of the young adults asked the Presidents, ‘What tables would you overturn?’ Cardinal Nichols for the Roman Catholic Church said, ‘we are being given a consistent lead by Pope Francis on clericalism and the assumptions on a position of superiority and privilege that are sometimes present. He wants that table clearly and vigorously turned over’.

Revd Dr Hugh Osgood, the Free Churches President, agreed, suggesting we needed new ways of measuring success, 'We need to come away from the competitiveness we've had between the Churches. Why not measure what impact we are having on society?'

All the Presidents spoke of the need for divine encounter. Revd Canon Billy Kennedy, representing the New Churches, the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) and the Lutheran and German-speaking Churches, said that in a 'very fragmented world .. the Church needs to rediscover its confidence,' and whilst language and culture change, 'the need in human hearts hasn't changed.'

Cardinal Nichols used the image of a rose window as a picture of the Church, 'which always has Jesus at the centre' he added, referring to the Churches working together in England.

The Forum marked the change of CTE General Secretary from the Revd Dr David Cornick, who retires, to the Revd Dr Paul Goodliff, recently appointed.

## Notes

Churches Together in England is the 'national ecumenical instrument' of the member churches: [www.cte.org.uk/memberchurches](http://www.cte.org.uk/memberchurches)

The Forum is the broadest ecumenical gathering of Christians in England, bringing together the 47 national member churches, regional Intermediate Bodies, and 51 ecumenical Bodies in Association. It last met in 2015. Background information: [www.cte.org.uk/forum](http://www.cte.org.uk/forum)

Information specific to this Forum: [www.cte.org.uk/forum2018](http://www.cte.org.uk/forum2018)

Reports, photographs, session videos etc will be placed on: [www.cte.org.uk/Forum2018/afterwards](http://www.cte.org.uk/Forum2018/afterwards)

The Forum met at The Hayes conference centre, where in 1987 the then Presidents signed the Swanwick Declaration which proclaimed, We are strangers no longer but pilgrims together on the way to God's kingdom. [www.cte.org.uk/swanwickdeclaration](http://www.cte.org.uk/swanwickdeclaration)

CTE Logo .png file

Photo credit: Chris Dobson © Churches Together in England. We apologise that we do not have a group photograph that includes The Archbishop of Canterbury. Pictures that do include Archbishop Welby in the panel discussion are in the Flickr album: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/136329692@N08/albums/72157701153889884/with/42990831520> / or from Jim Currin.

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