CTE Forum 2015

As an Ordinand of the Church of England in my third year of training, and after many years of discernment I am very much Church of England. However, after a 48-hour forum I returned to college being rooted in my Christian faith in a way that goes beyond mere denominational boundaries.

So often the Church of England is guilty of creating what the last Bishop of Oxford John Pritchard would describe as ‘church-craft’, as of course other denominations do also. Church-craft is an all-consuming obsession that the Church of England finds itself mercy to, it distracts many from the work of the church. Quinquennials, rotas, parish boundaries, deanery boundaries, diocesan boundaries, licences, meetings and much much more contributes to the life of the church, taking up time and moving the church into a direction that it never intended to go.

The forum however gave a very refreshing view that went beyond mere church-craft, and looked to the heart of the gospel. Ecumenism is a wonderful opportunity for all denominations to look beyond the mere functions and in-jokes of its gatherings, and looks to the cause of the gatherings, Jesus Christ; the outcast, the accused, the disenfranchised, the scapegoat. The Christ that binds us, is so often better found in the gaps where our individual denominations fail to meet and sometimes where our denominations overlap.

Ecumenism reminds us to look beyond the conventions that our own individual churches create due to the fact that we are only human, and it calls us to look to what we all endeavour to hold but of course can never manage; the mystery of Christ and his call to serve. The act of dialoguing and the practice of ecumenism is essential in order to develop in our theologies and our understandings of God.

Ben Rundell

1.10.15