

## Report on the CTE Forum-Annika Inga Mathews-CEYC/Synod delegation

I had a fabulous time of fellowship, worship and conversations with brothers and sisters in Christ from across many different churches in England at the Churches Together England Forum. It was a great privilege to learn more from one another, and grow in love and knowledge of Christ together, and also special to me to be there as one of the representatives from the Church of England and Church of England Youth Council.

I met and talked to people from a wide range of Christian denominations, some of which I had not come across before, and it was very insightful and interesting discussing faith and aspects of the different traditions together. Both through my own journey in my Christian faith and experience of different churches, and in discussion with others at CTE, I feel my personal faith has been enriched and was pleased and encouraged that the similarities and heart of the Christian faith were most evident throughout the Forum rather than the distinctions between Church traditions.

The Biblical quote, 'I am with you always' and the thematic approach to the main conversations, 'The transforming presence of Christ' were a great means of refocusing on why we were all at Forum: to grow together in our faith and come closer to Christ, and acknowledge His presence with us, which was evident throughout. The unity and friendship shared between the Presidents filtered out amongst the others of us there; it was good to share fellowship with one another over meals and join in conversations together. The worship was uplifting, including experiencing styles I had not yet encountered, and I enjoyed the workshops I attended, only wishing I could go to a few more than the two permitted within the timings.

It was a pleasure to note that many young people were included in delegations to the Forum, and our contributions valued, whether that be in facilitating small groups, representing ecumenical associations, posing questions to the Presidents or participating in worship.

I departed the CTE Forum, full of the admiration of Christ and the knowledge of the importance of unity amongst Christians in combating social injustice and the problems facing the world we live in and full of hope of what we can accomplish, when following Christ wholeheartedly together as a force for good on this Earth.

Accommodation and food: excellent! We were very well catered for and looked after.

Workshops: Were very insightful and interactive; only wish I could have gone to more.

Worship and main conversations and bible study were all great, and stimulated environment for conversations and fellowship and for the transformative presence of Christ to be truly experienced. It was interesting to attend the Market Place and find out more about the ecumenical associations I wasn't aware of. I appreciated being included in the worship and the conversations with the Presidents. I'm not sure how it would be possible; perhaps having an evening worship session too for all, not in small groups but I would have appreciated trying out another form of worship style as was offered on Tuesday morning, as it was very interesting experiencing something I was unused to. The art project and creative prayer was good to see being included in the worship.

Small groups: I appreciated having the smaller groups to chat in and worship in together.

Suggestions for improvement: Organise a networking session for people from the same area (aware that we could try and do that ourselves, as some did via the contacts list but may be helpful as there were still quite a lot of people there)

Other comments: It would have been interesting to hear something more from the Salvation Army people there. Youth Forum for CTE in the pipeline? A few less emails may have been better, as some was repeat information of what had already been said, so weren't strictly necessary. Practical ways of getting involved in local CTE groups, and ecumenical work would be appreciated. I fortunately met with the CTE Greater Manchester rep but advice on getting involved and linked up with things would be helpful to know, particularly what is on offer for younger people.

Thanks for all the hard work and organisation put into Forum!