



CTe-News from Churches Together in England

December 2013

The Presidents of Churches Together in England

'Speaking to the Seasons'



What is Advent?

We use the word 'advent' when we talk about the 'advent of television', or the 'advent of the mobile phone'. Advent is an ancient word meaning coming or arrival.

This is a season called 'Advent', as we think at Christmas of the coming of Christ. In a few weeks' time we shall be celebrating an amazing event in history - the arrival of God in human form, as a baby born at Bethlehem. We celebrate this season as a time of hope, anticipation, and preparation, but we also know that for many it is a time of stress, difficulty and hardship. These are circumstances similar to those when Jesus was born 2000 years ago. God entered our circumstances at that time. God still longs to come to each of us today. As Presidents of Churches Together in England, representing 42 member churches across all the traditions, we support a wide variety of projects and local churches to bring the joy and peace to the Christ child to people everywhere, whether followers of Jesus or not.

In this Advent season we invite you to do two things. First, find out more about Christianity from www.christianity.org.uk. Second, find a church in which to celebrate Christmas this year.

Changes in English Christianity and Changes at CTE

Here, Rev Dr David Cornick, General Secretary of Churches Together in England, presents a CTE Features paper about 'Changes' in English Christianity and in the structure of CTE that serves it. Changes are described below, followed by an appreciation of two staff members who are leaving at the end of the year.



This paper was presented in a consultation of County Ecumenical Officers at CTE on 27.11.13 and provides an insight in to the changes of English Christianity that are affecting changes at Churches Together in England.

The changes at CTE builds on a strategy agreed by the CTE Board and Enabling Group in which the member churches meet, and which has decided that the future work of Churches Together in England should be shaped by three key strands:

- > Relationships - between the 42 national member churches, 49 Intermediate (county) Bodies, 900 LEPS, and 2,500 Churches Together groups
- > Action - what the churches do together, particularly in mission and outreach like Street Pastors, Food banks, Festivals and evangelisation
- > Theology - how we reflect on all the above and the ecumenical journey ahead.

David Cornick says:

So, that's the strategy, and how we got there – relationships with our 42 members, concentrated particularly on deepening the engagement between the new and historic members; harnessing the energy for unity which is incipient in new mission initiatives, and doing what we can to help the churches reflect theologically on the ecumenical journey in all its present complexity.



Working on that strategy has coincided with the creation of a new phase in our relationship with the Free Churches Group. Their Directors have decided that their work can best be fostered by separating out the two charities, and we have been doing that. Although all our members will still have access to the specialisms of their staff in health care chaplaincy, prison chaplaincy and education, they will now be managed separately.

Implementing our new strategy means shifting resources at a time of financial stringency – (our funding has dropped by £40K over the last three years). We will be locating to smaller premises in the early months of 2014, and reducing our staffing. At the same time, recognising the importance of mission and of relationships between the newer and more historic ecumenical partners, we will be making our posts in a) evangelisation and mission and b) Pentecostal and multicultural issues full time rather than part time. This is a significant change of emphasis, and our support of intermediate ecumenism will be from the whole staff team rather than through Field Officers.

From January 1st CTE's staff will be:

- Jim Currin Evangelisation, mission and media
- Joe Aldred Pentecostal and multicultural issues
- Jenny Bond Training and resourcing
- Celia Blackden Interfaith relations
- Lorraine Shannon Administrator
- David Cornick General Secretary (also responsible for leading on theology)

We are clear in our own minds that what we are doing is vital for the sustenance of the vision of unity in challenging days. If we've got our analysis right, we should be scratching where the churches are itching!

We are also investing heavily in a serious, professional re-vamp of our web-site, which we think is mission-critical, with our web site providers, and that will hopefully be completed by Easter.

Download the Features paper Changes in English Christianity and Changes at CTE

As a result of the changes at Churches Together in England we have two members of staff leaving at the end of 2013.



Carole Golden has been a member of the CTE staff since Sept 2000, first as the Personal Assistant to the Executive Officer for Youth and as the Administrator for the Opportunities for Volunteering scheme.

Carole became the PA to the CTE General Secretary, first with Rev Bill Snelson, and then with Rev Dr David Cornick.

As administrator for the Minority Ethnic Christian Affairs group, Carole has also worked closely with Bishop Dr Joe Aldred.

Carole has also been the CTE office Manager and latterly the Financial Assistant to the Finance Director - in addition to all her other roles in the staff team.

In January 2014, Carol, Ripton and son Reuben will be moving as a family to Yeovil in Somerset.



Revd John Bradley has been a member of the CTE staff team since Sept 2001 when he joined the staff to be the CTE Field Officer South. John's role has been to support the County Ecumenical Officers and Intermediate Bodies in the south of England. In addition, John has been the Secretary for the Churches Group for Local Unity and editor of Pilgrim Post, which became CTe-News. John has been a member of various groups and networks including the Churches Rural Group, Friends of the Bossey Institute, and latterly Churches for All. John and Marion will continue to live in Milton Keynes and be members of the ecumenical congregation of the city centre church, Christ the Cornerstone where John is a Methodist Minister.

A new office for Churches Together in England An announcement will be made about the new office arrangements for CTE in the New Year.

Coptic Nativity Icon Stamp released

Royal Mail unveils their 2013 Christmas stamp collection featuring a Coptic Nativity icon by Hertfordshire-based iconographer Fadi Mikhail.

The stamp, entitled 'Theotokos, Mother of God' depicts the Virgin Saint Mary embracing the Infant Christ. It is an example of the beauty and deeply rooted Faith and culture of the Coptic Orthodox Church, the largest Christian denomination in the Middle East which traces its roots back to the Apostle Mark in the first Century.



Since its establishment in the United Kingdom in the 1960s the Coptic Orthodox community has been increasing in size, and more recently in activity. The Coptic faithful in the United Kingdom are active members of society who contribute to their wider community through a variety of spiritual and social networks and programmes.

His Grace Bishop Angaelos, General Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the United Kingdom, said: "This is an opportunity to not only portray the beautiful iconographic heritage of the Coptic Orthodox Church within British culture, but also its theology and teaching with respect to the message of hope and salvation in the Nativity, a Feast that is often transformed into a purely commercial occasion. It also lives as a testimony to the resilience of the Copts, who continue to live their Faith in the birthplace of Christianity and across the world despite the many challenges they have faced in recent months and years.'

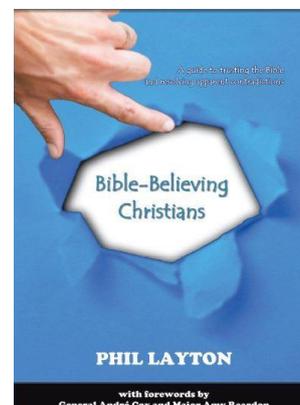
Coptic iconography in the United Kingdom: www.UKCopticIcons.com
Website: www.CopticMediaUK.com

Bible-Believing Christians

Captain Philip Layton from the Salvation Army has taught at the Training College and now leads a congregation in Hythe. Here he introduces his new book called "Bible-Believing Christians" <http://www.biblebelievingchristians.org.uk/>

It has 138 easy-to-read pages, includes a few illustrations to help break up the text, and is a guide on why we can trust the Bible and how we can resolve apparent contradictions (with examples!).

The world leader of The Salvation Army, General André Cox, has written a foreword, as well as Major Amy Reardon of the International Doctrine Council.



It has just been published, and is available either by ordering from bookshops, or directly online. All profits go toward the work and ministry of The Salvation Army.

EDUCATION SUNDAY 2014 16 February

**RESOURCES: Going above and beyond ...
Matthew 5.21-37**

[/Publisher/File.aspx?ID=119970](#) <DOWNLOAD

MORE RESOURCES AVAILABLE SOON:

Sermon/homily notes

Prayers

Hymn and song suggestions

Primary school collective worship resource

Secondary school collective worship resource

Ideas for all-age worship

Resources for Higher Education



About Education Sunday:

Education Sunday is a national day of prayer and celebration for everyone involved in the world of education. For more than 100 years there has been an annual recognition of Education Sunday in England and Wales (traditionally on the ninth Sunday before Easter). The resources are designed to help you prepare for your own celebration on or around Education Sunday, or on any other day during the year, such as the start or end of the academic year. You can use these resources in your church, in local schools, colleges and universities and in other places of learning.

Government launch 'Together in Service' grant programme

Communities Secretary Eric Pickles today (21 November 2013) launched a new £200,000 grant programme, 'Together in Service' that will celebrate the practical contribution faith communities make to society through volunteering and motivate and inspire new multi-faith social action projects.



'Together in Service' will run for 2 years and will be delivered by FaithAction, a national network of faith based and community organisations. It builds on the success of the 'A Year of Service' programme held during 2012 to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

Like a 'Year of Service' it will be based around an ongoing calendar of faith-based volunteering around chosen themes relating to religious festivals or celebrations. Every month there will be a focus on the volunteering that the featured faith undertakes by itself, for example Harvest Festival, celebrated by the Christian faith or Mitzvah Day which is run by the Jewish community. The programme will then feature multi-faith projects, where the lead faith has joined up with other religions to deliver voluntary work.

A Together in Service fund provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government of £100,000 a year for 2 years is available in the form of small grants for multi-faith projects of £2,000 to help get local multi-faith projects off the ground.

Read the full story here from the Government website about 'Together in Service'

CofE House of Bishops Working Group on Human Sexuality

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have published the Report of the House of Bishops Working Group on Human Sexuality.

In a statement thanking the working group - chaired by Sir Joseph Pilling - for its report, the Archbishops commented that the report "is a substantial document proposing a process of facilitated conversations in the Church of England over a period of perhaps two years. The document offers findings and recommendations to form part of that process of facilitated conversations. **It is not a new policy statement from the Church of England.**"

Noting that "the issues with which the Report grapples are difficult and divisive" the Archbishops recognise Sir Joseph's Pilling's comment that 'disagreements have been explored in the warmth of a shared faith'. The Archbishops continue "Our prayer is that the process of reflection that will now be needed in the Church of England, shaped by the House of Bishops and the College, will be characterised by a similar spirit."

Link to the Church of England website for the Pilling Report

Archbishop welcomes ecumenical community to Lambeth Palace

On 18th November 2013, Archbishop Justin announced 'an ecumenical step of some significance' as members of Chemin Neuf prepare to take up residence at Lambeth Palace.

Picture: the Chemin Neuf community coming to Lambeth Palace, l-r: Oliver Matri, Ula Michlowicz, and Ione and Alan Morley-Fletcher.



The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby has announced that members of an international ecumenical community are to reside at Lambeth Palace.

From January 2014, four members of Chemin Neuf will live at Lambeth Palace to share in the daily round of prayer that underpins the Archbishop's ministry, and to further the ecumenical and international dimensions of his work.

Archbishop Justin said: 'The church is constantly called to realise its God-given unity. The Holy Spirit blows through our lives and our structures and impels us into new ways of learning to love each other as Christ loves us. 'I am deeply moved that in God's grace Chemin Neuf have agreed to this radical and exciting new step of coming to live as a community of prayer, hospitality and learning at Lambeth Palace. We pray that this step of obedience will bear fruit among us, and for the church.'

See more at: <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5186/archbishop-welcomes-ecumenical-community-to-lambeth-palace#sthash.5Tp2kQOm.dpuf>

All I want for Christmas is blood

Press Release from Christian 'Flesh and Blood' campaign in association with NHS

November through to the New Year is typically a challenging time for blood stocks. Hospitals in England and North Wales will need up to half a million units of blood to see them through the period. However, Christmas shopping, the party



season, and the general rush together with the extended public holidays mean taking the time to donate can slip off people's to-do list, putting pressure on blood stocks. A unit of blood has a shelf life of 35 days. Hospitals in England and North Wales need around 7,000 units of blood every day to treat patients in urgent need and each unit donated could help save or improve the lives of up to three people. Besides being crucial to care in A&E, blood is used to treat patients with cancer, blood disorders like sickle cell or thalassemia as well as women needing blood during childbirth.

For more information about the campaign visit www.blood.co.uk/campaigns/christmas or to get your church involved in donation visit www.fleshandblood.org.

Cornwall Service and Ecumenical Letter of Intent

There were balloons, fireworks and a jazz band as the Archbishop of Canterbury joined over 750 people in St Petroc's Church, Bodmin, on Sunday 17 November, to celebrate the signing by local and regional church leaders of an Ecumenical Letter of Intent.



The special service, organised by Churches Together in Cornwall, marked an important milestone towards church unity as the leaders of the Church of England, the Methodist Church, the United Reform Church, the SW Baptist Association and the Salvation Army committed themselves and their churches to:

- seek out every possible opportunity for joint initiatives at local and county level in mission to all the people of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly
- work together to equip both lay and ordained ministry whenever possible, and to share that ministry wherever appropriate
- continue the work of developing strategies to optimise the use of church buildings for the benefit of communities throughout the county.

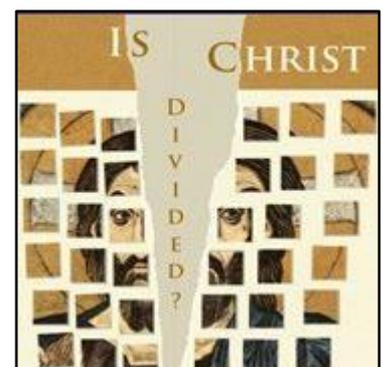
Read the whole story and see more pictures on the Diocese of Truro website

Watch the video interview with the Archbishop of Canterbury on BBC News Cornwall

Is Christ Divided?

CTBI Week of prayer resources for 2014

Is Christian disunity a scandal before God? Or is it something we have grown accustomed to, as though it were a creaky door that we never seem to get around to fixing? St Paul's words challenge us as we reflect upon this question. To suggest that disunity is something acceptable is declaring that Christ himself is divided - and that really is a scandal!



2013 was the year in which churches from all inhabited continents of the world gathered in Korea for the 10th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches. We gathered for no other reason than to declare to the world that our disunity is a scandal and that we will go on praying for and working for that unity which is God's gift to the church and to the world.

The Churches of French Canada have chosen for us a key biblical text of the ecumenical movement and have invited us to think about what our divisions say to the world and to each other about the Christian faith. They have also suggested that we use the Millennium Goals as a focus for our prayers for the world.

Dates

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is traditionally observed from the 18th to the 25th January - the octave of St. Peter and St. Paul. However, some areas observe it at Pentecost or some other time. To allow for local decision making, the material has only the year on it and the days are denoted by the numbers one to eight, so you can use it at any time of year.

For more information visit the website of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

Message of the WCC Assembly: "We intend to move together"

"Join the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace" is the title of the Message of the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC). The assembly in Busan, Republic of Korea, was convened on 30 October and drew to a close on 8 November 2013. An assembly, the highest governing body of the WCC, is held once every seven to eight years to endorse policies, review projects and point the future direction of the organization.



The "Message" of a WCC assembly is meant to report the spirit of the event as well as common commitments of representatives from 345 member churches, related religious bodies and partner organizations. It reflects the theme of an assembly, adopted beforehand by the WCC central committee.

The theme of the Busan assembly was this brief prayer: "God of life, lead us to justice and peace."

The original WCC assembly at Amsterdam in 1948 sent a message to the churches and the world that included the phrase "We intend to stay together." The Message of 2013 affirms, in the context of the churches' invitation to the pilgrimage of justice and peace, "We intend to move together."

Describing their time in Busan and other parts of the country, participants in the 10th Assembly offered this affirmation:

"We share our experience of the search for unity in Korea as a sign of hope in the world. This is not the only land where people live divided, in poverty and richness, happiness and violence, welfare and war. We are not allowed to close our eyes to harsh realities or to rest our hands from God's transforming work. As a fellowship, the World Council of Churches stands in solidarity with the people and the churches in the Korean peninsula, and with all who strive for justice and peace."

[Full text of the Message of the WCC 10th Assembly](#)
[Official website of the WCC 10th Assembly](#)

CTE Christmas card picture competition - an invitation to all

Each year the staff at Churches Together in England have a Christmas card printed with a copyright free picture on the front. Several hundred cards are sent to a wide variety of people in the national, county and local networks of Churches Together.

For 2014 we thought we would invite any artist to submit their work for consideration in a competition. The prize is to have the picture printed on our Christmas card for Christmas 2014, with the work referenced on the card with thanks, acknowledgement, together with a link to the artists blog or web site (if they have one). The picture will also be used on the CTE website for Christmas 2014, so be seen by all our web visitors.



This invitation would be an opportunity to profile the work of a new or amateur artist who has not had a picture in print before - or it may be an opportunity for a professional to add to their portfolio. We would like to consider work from people of all ages, backgrounds, and theological persuasions.

As a way of starting this new initiative, and while Christmas card images are fresh in mind, we invite any submitted pieces of work to reach us by 31st January 2014. We will judge, announce the winner in February, and reserve the usual right for 'judges decision to be final'.

The picture itself **MUST** be the original work of the person who emails us, or (in the case of a person under 18) a parent or guardian who confirms that the work is original to the young person to whom copyright is to be acknowledged.

The subject matter of the chosen Christmas card will be the season of Christmas / Incarnation / birth of Jesus Christ. We shall be looking for originality in interpreting the Christmas account with any links from the biblical narrative for our modern day context, especially as it may relate to our journey together. The picture on this web page here was chosen for our 2013 card. Each year we have a different card, picture and style.

The artist is free to use any medium they chose and we welcome variety. We are also pleased to consider photography as art, although we would need assurance that there is no copyright issue with objects or people depicted in the picture.

In terms of the process, at CTE we will work with an original photograph or scan (format JPEG .jpg) of the picture submitted by the artist or guardian.

For more information go to:

http://www.cte.org.uk/Articles/381285/Churches_Together_in/Resources/News/News/CTE_Christmas_card.aspx

Suggestions for material in CTe-News should be sent to jim.currin (AT) cte.org.uk

To subscribe to CTe-News visit www.cte.org.uk/news

An extra CTe-News will appear just before Christmas with a Christmas message

from the Presidents of Churches Together in England

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