



### Reflection of the Month:

### Rising to the challenge of our Christian calling

By His Grace Bishop Angaelos, General Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the United Kingdom and one of the six Presidents of Churches Together in England.



Living faithfully as a Christian in the 21st Century is certainly challenging. We often hear and give sermons about hope, victory, and empowerment, but sometimes all we perceive in our world today is challenge and defeat. We witness the brutal persecution of innocent women, men and children around the world on a daily basis, and have grown desensitised to the fact that many Christians continue to die for their Faith. It is easy to preach that we must always be strong, resilient and joyfully convicted of our beliefs, but the fact is that injustice is rife in our world today, and as people are brutally murdered for their Faith, it can seem like the battle is lost. I suppose however, that our interpretation of events would depend on what our end goal is, and what our overall expectation is in this life and in the life to come.

We measure success based on our expected outcome, whether that be in our workplaces, or in our day to day lives. If our expectation then, is to always present ourselves as powerful, strong, prominent individuals, as Christians we are likely to be disappointed. Our calling is quite the contrary, for we, as Christians, are asked to place others before ourselves; to be sacrificial, forgiving and patient. So by very definition we are set up to fail in 'worldly' terms. If my expectation is that I, and my Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, will always be accepted, understood, and welcomed, then that is certainly not going to happen.

We are reminded by Saint Paul and also by our Lord Himself, that the Christian message will be perceived by many as 'foolishness', and we ourselves may be even deemed 'fools'. Our Lord Himself was falsely accused of being demon possessed, so what then do we make of our calling in this world? Are we to live defeated? Do we continue to be perceived as foolish and naïve? Are we to forgive those who continue to wrong us and those we love? I suppose the answer to that lies in whether we truly want to walk in the footsteps of our crucified Lord, and if we believe that there is a resurrection waiting for all those who do, as St Paul reminds us, "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18, NKJV).

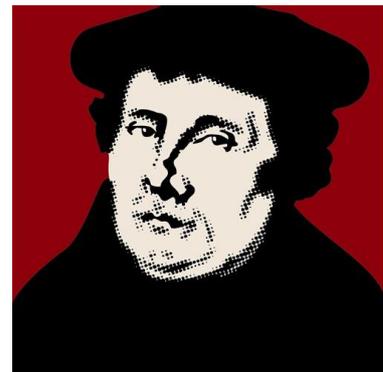
If we continue to assess our lives based purely on our expectations of the world, it will never lead us to true satisfaction or success. We were never meant to focus on this

transient existence because we are destined for the eternal, and it is there we must fix our eyes. Our life on earth is temporary, as we are warned in Scripture, "It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away" (James 4:14, NKJV). We must live as faithful ambassadors of our Lord Jesus Christ while on earth, and live to serve all we encounter, yet we must live knowing that this is not the end of the journey, for there is a promised life to come. We must strive daily to keep ourselves from unnecessary distractions that cloak the truth of the Gospel message, which is hope, salvation and victory.

It is only by the grace of God that we can live with hope and without fear or worry in this existence which seems to be filled with uncertainty. Fear comes from the unknown, and yet if I trust in the One Who knows all, is all-powerful and all-loving, there is nothing left to fear, everything is certain.

We need to live in that certainty. Our Christian life is not a philosophy or a theory. It is real. We believe in a real God Who is alive and active in this world, Who is really all-powerful, all-loving and unchanging. When we depend and rely on that in our daily lives and decisions, and in challenges to our Faith, we will be confident knowing that our future is beyond anything we could ever comprehend, remembering the words of God "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jeremiah 29:11, NKJV).

## **Full speed ahead for CTE conference: *Responding to the Reformation***



The final line-up has been confirmed for a major conference this autumn, *Responding to the Reformation*, which takes as its structure the [Presidents' advice](#) on how to commemorate well the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The conference is being organised by a planning group which includes CTE staff members and National Ecumenical Officers.

### **Keynote speakers**

- Mark Chapman, Professor of the History of Modern Theology, Oxford University;
- Nicholas King sj, Fellow of Campion Hall, University of Oxford, the translator of a new version of the Greek Bible;
- Jeremy Worthen, Secretary for Ecumenical Relations and Theology of the Church of England's Council for Christian Unity;
- Andrew Louth FBA, Professor Emeritus of Patristic and Byzantine Studies, Durham University; Honorary Fellow, Faculty of Theology, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam;
- Jan McFarlane, Bishop of Repton in the Diocese of Derby.

There will also be a panel discussion involving members of the Association of Interchurch Families, *Chemin Neuf*, and Jenny Sinclair, founder and director of *Together for the Common Good*.

Visit the [conference overview web page](#) for full information.

### **Worship, workshops and bookstall**

[Teresa Brown of Devine Music](#) is planning the worship with a member of the conference planning group and will lead the music. Conference participants with singing or musical ability are invited to become involved in the music.

Conference participants will be able to choose two workshops from a total of eight possibilities. The conference [workshops web page](#) has the details thus far and as soon as full details are available, participants will be invited to submit their choices.

CLC bookshops will provide a selection of books, music and gifts. They are willing to supply items to order – visit the [bookstall page](#) for details.

### **Over a hundred participants**

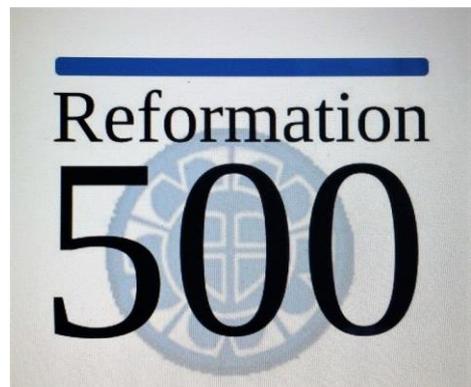
CTE is delighted to have received over a hundred bookings for this key conference for Ecumenical Officers and others with experience of ecumenical work beyond the local. It is still possible for us to request extra rooms and bookings are still possible. [Visit the website](#) for information.

## **Churches Together in Kent to mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation**

There will be a service of worship at Canterbury Cathedral on Sunday 15th October 3.15pm, with both Catholic and Protestant participation.

It would be great to see a good number of folk attending, showing our unity as we look forward to the future of the Body of Christ. There are also five lectures being held in Canterbury in the Autumn, following themes of the Reformation. They are sponsored by the Canterbury Diocese and the East Kent Methodist Circuit.

[More information can be found here.](#)



## **Church Leaders endorse Sports Chaplaincy UK in 25th year**



The Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu is among a number of senior Christian leaders who have added their support to the work of national sporting charity, Sports Chaplaincy UK at a special Reception in the Palace of Westminster.

Throughout 2017, Sports Chaplaincy UK has been celebrating its 25th anniversary year, which now sees nearly 450 chaplains in a range of sports clubs, from elite to disabilities as well as a new campaign to begin promoting Gym Chaplains.

A delegate of Christians leaders, chaplains and partners were in the Houses of Parliament on Thursday 7th September for a Reception hosted by the Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP, Labour Faith Envoy and Vice Chair of Christians in Parliament. During the Reception, Warren Evans, Chief Executive of Sports Chaplaincy UK reminded delegates of the 'opportunity' that Christians across all the churches have to engage the community called 'sport'..

There were presentations on the value of having sports chaplains in elite football clubs from Paul Elliott CBE MBE and Linvoy Primus, one of Sports Chaplaincy UK's Trustees. Churches leaders in attendance included Mgr Vlad Fletzmann from the John Paul II Sports Foundation UK and CEOs of other national Sports Ministries.

Baptist minister Revd Dave Chawner, Chair of Trustees of Sports Chaplaincy UK says: *"For 25 years Sports Chaplaincy UK has been recruiting, training, placing and supporting chaplains in sports clubs across the UK. There are now over 400 such chaplains offering pastoral and spiritual support to everyone in their club irrespective of faith background. As an organisation we work from an unashamedly Christian perspective and have the backing of many of the governing bodies within UK sport including the Premier League, English Football League, Scottish FA, Racing Welfare, Disability Sport Wales, and the Rugby Football League. The purpose of this reception is to share with you the vision and work of Sports Chaplaincy UK and the variety of opportunities that presents for the church, both national and local, to engage with the thousands of men, women and young people who make up the community called "sport"."*

One of those other senior Church Leaders endorsing the work of Sports Chaplaincy UK, Dr Hugh Osgood, one of six [Presidents for Churches Together in England](#) said: *"As more and more sports associations look to Sports Chaplaincy UK, and rely on its credibility, the Church needs to rise to the challenge to serve. Right now the opportunity exists to place chaplains in many more sports clubs. This is such an exciting prospect that I am calling on the Church to think about increasing its engagement with the sporting world. If God is calling you even to explore the possibility of service, I am urging you to be in touch with Sports Chaplaincy UK. I will continue to pray for the work of Sports Chaplaincy UK in the years ahead and assure them of my ongoing support."*

Sports Chaplaincy has applied to be a [Body in Association](#) of CTE.



## **Germinate Chief Executive Officer at the Arthur Rank Centre for rural mission and ministry**



### **Package c. £50k**

A unique opportunity has arisen to take The Arthur Rank Centre and our growing Germinate brand onto the next stage of its development.

We are an independent ecumenical charity that helps UK rural communities flourish by resourcing, encouraging and equipping local churches.

Rural mission and ministry is a challenging yet exciting area, often at the forefront of shared ministry, lay leadership and new ways of being church, with particular opportunities for mission in diverse rural contexts.

Recent developments of the Germinate programme have laid a strong foundation. As the current CEO retires in spring 2018, the trustees are seeking an inspiring, strategic and collaborative leader.

The role is based at the Germinate offices at Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire. There is an occupational requirement that the holder is a practising Christian.

A copy of the job description can be found at [germinate.net/about-us/ceo-vacancy-advert](http://germinate.net/about-us/ceo-vacancy-advert). An application form is available from [Alison Selwood](#) or telephone: 02476 853060.

**Deadline for applications:** Sunday 22 October 2017

**Interviews scheduled:** Thursday 23 and Wednesday 29 November 2017

## **Season of Creation Through to 4<sup>th</sup> October**



A collection of international ecumenical, Protestant, Anglican, Catholic and interfaith resources for Creation Time. For 2017 the Season of Creation is a collaboration between the World Council of Churches (WCC), ACT Alliance, Global Catholic Climate Movement, the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network and Anglican Communion Environmental Network.

As well as resources, the Season of Creation website includes a list of events, advice on organising a service and other courses of action.

Resources and links from Churches Together in Britain and Ireland:  
<https://ctbi.org.uk/creation-time-2017/>

## Beach Mission assists Churches Together Group

The Scripture Union beach mission in Minnis Bay, north Kent, is an amazing example of churches working together in mission. It has been running now for 123 years. Amazingly, it ministers to over 1000 children and young people each summer time. The SU team organize things, with help from Gold Hill Baptist Church and the five churches in Westgate.



Pictured is local organizer, Tessa Hinge, who's been helping for 30 years. With age groups from pre-school up to 17 years old, all church buildings are used and now there's a tea tent for parents too. *"It's bringing all the churches together, touching children for just a fortnight"* said Tessa. George Kalu, a local minister, added that *"It brings enthusiasm to the area and inspiration to the churches about what is possible"*.

20 of the young adult helpers this year came up through the mission. This is an amazing example of what smaller churches can achieve when we work together in mission. Churches Together in Westgate is only five churches, but together, with some outside help, great things are possible.

[Click here for more info about the holiday club.](#)

## And finally ...

### Thirty years since the 'Swanwick Declaration'

To remember and mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, here is the text from the CTE webpage that describes the landmark event.

*The 'Swanwick Declaration' of 4<sup>th</sup> September 1987 marked the transition from a Council of Churches model of working to the Churches Together model.*



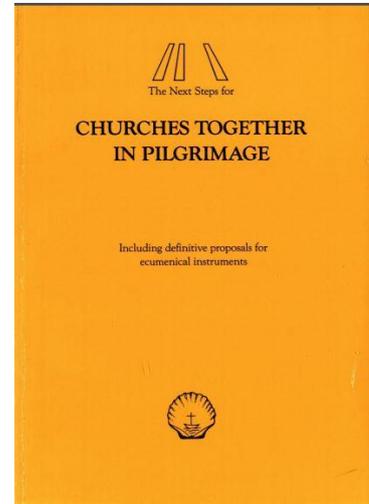
*The Swanwick conference is commemorated by this plaque outside the chapel at the Hayes Conference Centre in Swanwick, Derbyshire. The Declaration is published in [Churches Together in Pilgrimage](#) (the Marigold Book: cover and link below).*

1987 text:

Appointed by our churches and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit we declare that this, the broadest assembly of British and Irish churches ever to meet in these islands has reached a common mind. We are aware that not all Christians are represented amongst us but we look forward to the time when they will share fully with us.

We came with different experiences and traditions, some with long ecumenical service, some for whom this is a new adventure. We are one band of pilgrims. We are old and young, women and men, black and white, lay and ordained and we travelled from the four corners of these islands to meet at Swanwick in Derbyshire. There we met, we listened, we talked, we worshipped, we prayed, we sat in silence, deeper than words.

Against the background of so much suffering and sinfulness in our society we were reminded of our call to witness that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. We affirmed that this world with all its sin and splendour belongs to God. Young people called on us to be ready to sort out our priorities so that we could travel light and concentrate on our goal. Driven on by a gospel imperative to seek unity that the world may believe, we rejoiced that we are pilgrims together and strangers no longer.



We now declare together our readiness to commit ourselves to each other under God. Our earnest desire is to become more fully, in his own time, the one Church of Christ, united in faith, communion, pastoral care and mission. Such unity is the gift of God. With gratitude we have truly experienced this gift, growing amongst us in these days. We affirm our openness to this growing unity in obedience to the Word of God, so that we may fully share, hold in common and offer to the world those gifts which we have received and still hold in separation. In the unity we seek we recognise that there will not be uniformity but legitimate diversity.

It is our conviction that, as a matter of policy at all levels and in all places, our churches must now move from co-operation to clear commitment to each other, in search of the unity for which Christ prayed and in common evangelism and service of the world.

We urge church leaders and representatives to take all necessary steps to present, as soon as possible, to our church authorities, assemblies and congregations, the Report of this Conference together with developed proposals for ecumenical instruments to help the churches of these islands to move ahead together.

Continuing to trust in the promised gift of the Holy Spirit, we look forward with confidence to sharing with our own churches the joys of this historic Conference. We thank God for all those who, from Lent '86 and before, have been part of this pilgrimage. We feel their presence with us. We urge our churches to confirm by decision and action the hopes and vision on which we have laid hold, and which we shall not let go.

This is a new beginning. We set out on our further pilgrimage ready to take risks and determined not to be put off by `dismal stories: We resolve that no discouragement will make us once relent our avowed intent to be pilgrims together. Leaving behind painful memories and reaching out for what lies ahead, we press on towards the full reconciliation in Christ of all things in heaven and on earth, that God has promised in his Kingdom.

[Link for history of Churches Together in England and the 'Marigold Book'](#)

The Swanwick Declaration prayer:

Lord God, we thank you  
for calling us into the company  
of those who trust in Christ  
and seek to obey his will.  
May your Spirit guide and strengthen us  
in mission and service to your world;  
for we are strangers no longer  
but pilgrims together on the way to your Kingdom.  
Amen.

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This mailing is from Churches Together in England and is sent once a month

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