



Reflection of the Month: A list of '95 Actions' in unity and mission.



Jim Currin writes:

A minister once observed, 'everywhere St Paul went there was a revolution. Everywhere I go there is a cup of tea'.

500 years ago, Martin Luther's '95 Theses' caused a revolution. This is a list of '95 Actions' as a Reflection. It is a list organisations, activities and events that could not have been envisaged in Luther's day, but very evident in our own – and each has no doubt been accompanied by many cups of tea! The list is not exclusive to CTE and the items are not listed in any order. In addition the church is not perfect. However, I hope it is an encouragement as we have been fulfilling the prayer of Jesus in John 17: 20,21. It is a snapshot of achievements in unity and mission in our own day:

Churches Together in England (CTE) exists. 45 national churches have committed to journey together. Reps meet x2 per year. *Theos* reported 'encouraged by all were hearing'. There has been 30 years development since the *Swanwick Declaration*. 100 people recently attend CTE Reformation Conference. Church leaders mark unity in Westminster Abbey. Reformation unity conferences around the country. Unity seminars given. Archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal Nichols on BBC together.

Angela Merkel attends Reformation unity service in Wittenberg. There are International agreed statements on Justification. *Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC)* meet regularly, as does *English ARC*. The Archbishop of Canterbury recently had a 4th meeting with Pope Francis. New Anglican Representative to the Holy See just appointed. World Council of Churches working with World Evangelical Alliance. International collaboration of churches for refugees, water aid, and ethical investment.

6 Co-Presidents of CTE. His Grace Bishop Angaelos and Pastor Agu start new terms. Presidents sign a Covenant to pray and witness together. Presidents commended *Thy Kingdom Come* prayer for people to be followers of Jesus. Joint Beacon events held for prayer held across England. National church leaders meeting. Over 1500 local groups of Churches Together. 49 CTE *Bodies in Association*. 3 CTE *Agencies: CAFOD, Christian Aid and Christian Enquiry Agency*.

Local Missions. Stadium Evangelism. City Intercessors. Food banks. Street pastors. Debt Counselling. Joint church magazines. Outreach to New Housing Areas. Church Plants. 800 *Local Ecumenical Partnerships*. Ecumenical Chaplaincies. Inter faith dialogue. Pulpit swaps. Prayer networks for schools, Police, and Local Authorities. Partnership programs. Joint community venture. *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*.

Joint evangelistic visiting. *Sports Chaplaincy. Healing on the Streets.* Counselling. Children's and Youth activities. Justice Campaigns. Joint worship. Walks and Pilgrimages. Open Air Witness.

A New Framework for Local Ecumenism. Resources for Receptive Ecumenism. National Ecumenical Officers. County Ecumenical Officers. Working with Hope Together; 115 We Gather groups; 1000 at Movement Day UK conference for unity and mission. CTE Presidents in Parliament Square with Evangelical Alliance. New groups of churches in mission together. Local leaders pray together. New joint ventures in mission and business transforming local communities.

CTE website 1000 areas. Average 10,000 page-requests per day. Monthly mailing of News. Daily twitter feed @churchesengland. Annual Leaflet and Annual Review. Reports eg *Behind Closed Doors* and CTE initiatives like *They Also Served*. One off Symposiums, Occasional papers, Reports, Meetings and Working Parties, Research and Reporting.

Like CTE, there are also national ecumenical instruments *Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. Action for Churches Together in Scotland, Cytûn in Wales. Irish Council of Churches. In addition is the Free Churches Group, Joint Public Issues Team. Joint Liturgical Commission.* There are also Ecumenical Studies, the *One in Christ* journal and the forthcoming *2018 CTE Forum*.

There. That's 95 Actions on the anniversary of 95 Theses, exhausting but not exhaustive to show the breadth of unity and mission in the English church today. It is good news. Be encouraged, you are part of the journey making a difference with Jesus.

More tea?

Jim Currin is a Church Army Evangelist and member of staff at CTE for Evangelisation, Mission and Media.

Westminster Abbey marks 500th Anniversary of the Reformation

David Cornick reflects on the service to mark the 500th anniversary of the 95 theses and the start of the Reformation:



Whether or not Martin Luther actually nailed his 95 theses to the church door in Wittenberg on October 31st, 1517 is doubtful. What he definitely did do was post a copy of them to his diocesan bishop on that day. What followed led to what we now call 'the Reformation' although it would be more accurate to talk of many reformations, some of which produced what later came to be called 'Protestantism' and others the reform of the Catholic Church. Nonetheless, the 500th anniversary of that day needed to be marked.

It is a particularly significant anniversary for our friends in the Lutheran Churches, and it was right that the Council of Lutheran Churches should take the lead, in partnership

with Westminster Abbey, in offering a service to mark the day. They did so with open hearted generosity to ecumenical guests who filled the Abbey alongside them. CTE's Presidents processed, the Archbishop of Canterbury preached and Cardinal Nichols offered prayer.

It was a thoroughly Lutheran occasion, marked in particular by the rich tradition of Lutheran music. The Abbey choir of women and men let Bach's Lobet den Herrn open a door into the joy of Lutheran spirituality (Bach is surely one of Lutheranism's greatest gifts to the world!) and their joyous voices rang around the vaulted arches. But two contemporary pieces commissioned by the Lutheran Council of Great Britain were glorious complements – The Answered Hymn by Barbara Höfling which allows at least five of the different languages used within the Lutheran Council to counterpoint each other in praise, and Bent Sørensen's immersive setting of John 17:23 I in them and you in me. Victor Gollancz once said that music ought to be one of the proofs of God's existence! Had he heard the choirs gathered for this service and the music they sang he might have considered his hypothesis proved.

In his sermon Archbishop Justin reminded us that the reformation recalled the church to the reality that (in the words of the BCP Collect for Trinity 19) '...without thee we are not able to please thee', and he addressed the ambiguities of the heritage of the Reformation. On the one hand the renewal of the gospel and the gift of the Scriptures, on the other war, destruction and division. But the gospel speaks profoundly to every age, and in our day the gospel, so powerfully renewed in the Reformation, speaks to the inequalities of our day – refugees and human trafficking, human arrogance and materialism. Will we let the gospel transform us as those caught up in the reformations of the sixteenth century allowed themselves to be changed?

That in turn introduced a significant moment in the quest for Christian unity. The Anglican Communion have affirmed the substance of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (signed in 1999 by the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity). It had also been previously signed by the World Methodist Council and the World Communion of Reformed Churches. The Archbishop presented copies of the Anglican affirmation to the Revd Dr Martin Junge, General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, and the Most Revd Brian Farrell, Secretary of the Pontifical Council, in the presence of Methodist and Reformed representatives. It symbolised the healing of those cruel divisions of the sixteenth century.

In the afternoon about 300 people attended a seminar in St Margaret's Church, which is part of the Abbey. Professors Alexandra Walsham and Eamon Duffy from Cambridge, David Crankshaw from King's College, London and Robert Stern from Sheffield, along with The Rt Revd Martin Lind, the Lutheran Bishop in Great Britain, explored Luther's influence on English church history and European philosophy and theology. It was a salutary reminder of how the world can be changed by one person's concern for the integrity of the gospel, and as such a challenge to us all. The Lutheran community in this country is small, although it is of course a major world communion. This anniversary reminds us of how impoverished we would be without Lutheran spirituality, and how much we could be enriched by fellowship and dialogue with our Lutheran friends.

Picture courtesy of Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey. <http://www.westminster-abbey.org/press/news/2017/october/westminster-abbey-marks-500th-anniversary-of-the-reformation>

CTE Presidents' meet with leaders of member churches



The leaders of CTE's member churches met with the Presidents over a buffet meal at Lambeth Palace on October 24th. After the meal Archbishop Justin introduced a discussion on how the churches could collaborate in their common mission to England. This was based on the findings of the Theos report *That they may all be one: insights into Churches Together in England and contemporary ecumenism* ([available as a pdf download from our website](#)).

The Presidents also took the opportunity to thank Bishop Eric Brown, the first Pentecostal President of CTE at the end of his four year period of office, and to welcome his successor, Pastor Agu Irukwu of the Redeemed Christian Church of God. As a sign of their common commitment to seek the unity of Christ's Church, the Presidents signed the personal covenant which binds them to support each other in prayer and work towards the visible unity of the church. The [text of the Covenant can be found on the website here](#).

The church leaders joined Archbishop Justin in the Crypt Chapel for compline at the end of the evening.

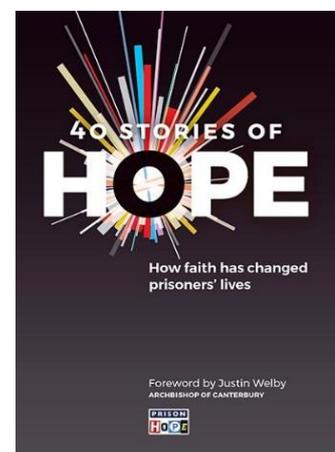
Prison Hope '40 Stories of Hope' Launched at Lambeth Palace



There is no one, no life, no story that is beyond God's power to love and transform' writes Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, in his foreword to 40 Stories of Hope.

40 Stories of Hope was launched at Lambeth Palace at a gathering of prison chaplains and prison volunteers. The Archbishop is pictured above at the launch with Bishop Richard Moth, the Catholic Bishop for Prisons; Catherine Butcher from HOPE who compiled the book; Pastor Osien Sibanda who contributed some of the stories drawn from his work in Bristol; Bishop James Langstaff, the Church of England Bishop for Prisons and Roy Crowne, executive director of HOPE.

HOPE has compiled 40 Stories of Hope from prisoners, prison chaplains and ex-prisoners, and CWR has published the stories in an attractive book, together with 40 daily readings



and prayers, plus group sessions. The book can be used in the weeks leading up to Easter 2018 or at any time. Free copies are available for Prison Chaplains to give away.

[Copies can be ordered from CWR here.](#)

Churches and faith groups urge Government not to fudge reform of FOBTs



From the Methodist website 31st October 2017:

Today a group of Churches and faith-based organisations have welcomed the Government's announcement of a consultation on proposals for changes to gaming machines and social responsibility measures, but warned that the range of options presented for a maximum stake for fixed-odd betting terminals is too wide.

In a statement, the Salvation Army, the Church of England, the Methodist Church, the United Reformed Church, the Baptist Union and the Church of Scotland, CARE, the Evangelical Alliance and Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs said: "Fixed odds betting terminals (FOBTs) present serious problems in society and for local communities, families and individuals. Evidence links them to patterns of addictive behaviour, large financial losses and anti-social and criminal behaviour. While we welcome the Government's consultation, anything approaching an upper limit of £50 would not go far enough to reduce the negative impact these machines can have on individuals, families and the wider society."

Not only is there a major challenge presented by FOBTs, there are also wider issues associated with gambling that require serious political commitment to address. "We stand by the belief that the maximum stake on fixed odds betting terminals must be radically reduced from the current maximum stake of £100. We believe that this will help to reduce the potentially enormous financial loss that some people experience, and therefore the consequences including debt, depression and crime. Most of us are committed to a £2 maximum.

"We urge the Government to view gambling addiction as a public health issue. The Department of Health must engage with gambling addiction strategically, at the levels of both prevention as well as treatment for individuals. "Evidence showing that problem gambling causes harm to a disproportionate extent in disadvantaged areas and amongst ethnic minorities. Local authorities must be empowered to combat the increase of gaming machines and their clustering in disadvantaged areas.

"There is also evidence of a strong association between problem gambling and online play. In this context it is very important that the long awaited multi-operator self-exclusion system for online gambling, first promised by the Government in March 2014, is now implemented as quickly and as robustly as possible. "We are profoundly concerned about the marked growth in gambling advertising and urge the Government to adopt a 9 p.m. watershed, which includes the promotion of gambling through sports events."

Telling stories of Mission in Derbyshire

Tim Gossling (Derby Church Net) writes:

Up and down the county, God is at work. Whether in the most rural parts of the Peak District, in the city, or the many small towns - there are stories to be told of lives being changed through creative approaches to mission, right on our doorstep.



At the Mission Together in Derbyshire event on 7th October, people were encouraged by reps from four organisations that work in different ways in our area.

Phil Morton of Derby City Mission gave a presentation about their work, and also a picture of how, with the assistance of a Home Office grant, he is investigating homelessness provision in the rest of Derbyshire – and it wasn't all doom and gloom.

Then Deacon Lorraine Brown gave four pictures of her work as Peak Park Mission Enabler (Faith in the Peak) - including projects in Tissington, Monyash, Berresford Dale and Edale – all with positive developments where tiny chapels were previously feeling low. Her work, like Phil's, actually spreads over into Staffordshire, where she lives in Longnor.

Jonathan Brook spoke for Valley CIDS. Thanks to their 33 Lighthouse Charity Shops, they are able to do all sorts of work 'investing in the next generation'. Their Quest and Blend arms are doing a variety of work with children and young people, partly in schools and partly in their own premises, including Turner Farm in Swanwick.

And last but not least, Moira Biggins spoke for Workplace Chaplaincy in Derbyshire and the growing chaplaincy movement, providing a listening ear to workers in many varied workplaces.

The day, arranged by Churches Together for Derbyshire, was an opportunity for strategic networking, and many new contacts and relationships were formed.

Paul King was one of the organisers. He said, "The day was remarkably uplifting... it was terrific to hear such imaginative, creative and dedicated things not just happening but bearing fruit. "Up and down the county, as elsewhere, people are finding encouragement and thoughtfulness. Please pray for us and stand by for the next development."

<http://www.derbychurch.net/>

CTE Reformation Conference:

A Report: Responding to the CTE Reformation Conference Oct 2017



Dudley Coates writes:

From 16 to 18 October around 100 people gathered at Swanwick for this conference arranged by the National Ecumenical Officers and CTE. It replaced the normal autumn meetings of denominational ecumenical officers and was expanded to welcome anyone with ecumenical experience beyond the local. It was therefore attended by many Denominational Ecumenical Officers as well as by some County Ecumenical Officers.

Participants were from the Protestant, Orthodox and Catholic traditions and from newer churches. Most, but not all, of those attending had a formal ecumenical role in their own tradition. Participants also included representatives of ecumenical groups, notably of Chemin Neuf (www.chemin-neuf.org.uk/en) and the Association of Interchurch Families (www.interfamilies.org.uk) both of whom took part in the panel discussion on reconciliation.

The conference opened with a largely historical talk on 'Remembering: living with the legacy of the reformations' by the Revd Professor Mark Chapman. Mark reminded us of the role of myth in all our traditions and the highly contested legacy of the reformation era on all sides using in particular the story of the 19th century decision to erect the Oxford memorial to Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer.

Fr Nicholas King SJ on 'Repenting: Fragmentation and mission' gave us a Bible study on the Acts of the Apostles focusing on the Council of Jerusalem in chapter 15. 'Maybe we can delay the Spirit, but we cannot stop the Spirit', he said; and 'expect the unexpected'.

To read the rest of the Report visit:

https://www.cte.org.uk/Articles/508956/Home/News/Latest_news_articles/CTE_Reformation_Conference.aspx

Dudley Coates
Ecumenical Officer for the Southampton Methodist District
October 2017

A Reflection on the Conference: What I take away from the CTE Reformation Conference Oct 2017

Janet Appleby writes:

The main legacy for me of this wonderful conference is the many stimulating and often profound conversations I had with strangers who rapidly became friends. These new friends were from all parts of England – and indeed



some from abroad (Poland and even Australia) as well as covering the full range of Christian traditions both old and new.

After the conference, I reflected on what I had experienced and learnt in the hope of retaining some of the joy and energy of the Holy Spirit which I had experienced in listening to the lectures as well as conversing, discussing and worshipping. In particular there was Jan McFarlane's 'So what?' question and the discussions during the final session on next steps. So here is some of what I hope to carry forward.

I felt challenged in my role as ecumenical officer to do more to encourage local Churches Together Groups to pray together more. Prayer is crucial. It means spending time and listening to God rather than telling God what God already knows. However, prayer is also dangerous. God will challenge us but also inspire us. However, we can let go of our anxiety about decline, and instead trust God and join God in God's mission.

I also hope to encourage the different denominations and traditions to learn more about each other's history, culture and gifts. David Cornick's epigram 'When we encounter the other we discover more of ourselves' is especially resonant. We were reminded that God is always beyond our understanding and we need to celebrate our differences within God's unity and create a generous spirit of openness to each other in God. The Trinity shows us that community, koinonia, is our calling, not individualism. One metaphor we were given is of us all as allotments in God's garden, rather than as having our own private gardens.

To read the rest of the Reflection visit:

https://www.cte.org.uk/Articles/508956/Home/News/Latest_news_articles/CTE_Reformation_Conference.aspx

Janet Appleby
Ecumenical Officer for the Newcastle Diocese of the Church of England
October 2017

Photos courtesy of Chris Dobson, Ecumenical and Global Partnership Officer, Diocese of Bristol

Pastor Agu Irukwu becomes new CTE Pentecostal President

Pentecostal members of Churches Together in England have elected Pastor Agu Irukwu as the next Pentecostal President. A law graduate of the University of Warwick, a barrister and former investment banker, Pastor Agu is national leader of the Redeemed Christian Church of God in the UK, and Senior Pastor of Jesus House, London. Pastor Agu becomes only the second person to serve in this position following Bishop Eric Brown who was first elected Pentecostal President in 2013.



CTE Presidents provide spiritual leadership to the national ecumenical movement that facilitates closer working together by the churches in England. The Pentecostal President is part of a six-member presidium representing the breadth of English Christianity, these are: Bishop Angaelos, the Revd Canon Billy Kennedy, the Revd Dr

Hugh Osgood, Cardinal Vincent Nichols and Archbishop Justin Welby.

In welcoming the new President, the Revd Dr David Cornick, General Secretary of CTE said, 'We are delighted to welcome Pastor Agu as our Pentecostal President and look forward to working with him to build on the foundations so ably laid by our first Pentecostal President, Bishop Eric Brown. '

The new Pentecostal President signed a joint covenant at a meeting of CTE presidents and national church leaders on 24 October 2017 at Lambeth Palace. The covenant commits the presidents to 'pray to God to lead us, with all our sisters and brothers in Christ, towards communion in faith, life and witness; so that, united in one body by the one Spirit, we may together witness to the perfect unity of his love'.

Commenting on his appointment Pastor Agu said, 'I consider it an honour and a privilege to serve as one of the six presidents of Churches Together in England. As the Pentecostal President, I have tremendous regard for the five other presidents most of them I know personally and are people whose ministries and lives I have admired. I am hoping that I can bring whatever graces God has given to me to bear as we serve the church in what I consider exciting times. Exciting because in spite of negative news that all abounds, I see tremendous opportunity for the church. I am believing that as we serve we will play our part in bringing to pass the revival that we so earnestly desire for this nation'.

The Pentecostal President's term will run from October 2017 to September 2021. For further information about Pastor Agu Irukwu: [click here](#)

A Discipling Presence

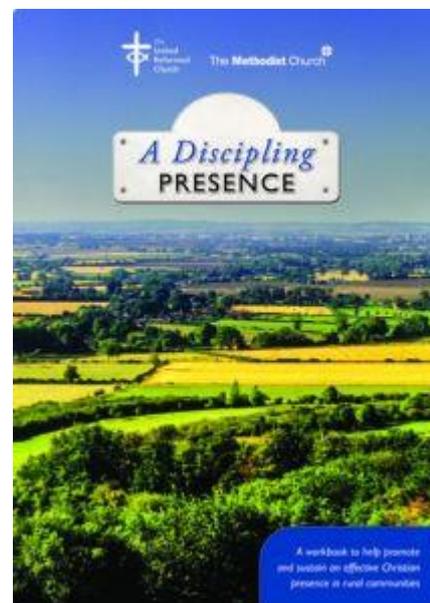
This is from a Methodist/URC Press Release:

Are you part of a rural church? Do you want to focus on mission and making disciples? If so, A Discipling Presence is for you. It contains stories to inspire, exercises and Bible passages to help you reflect and practical suggestions to get you started or move you forward.

Elizabeth Clark, National Rural Officer for the Methodist and United Reformed Churches, has been part of the ecumenical group that created this new resource.

This book supports those living and serving God in the countryside. It contains thinking about worship, evangelism, children and young people and making the best use of church buildings. It encourages, challenges and inspires.

'For anyone involved in rural church life, this book offers food for thought, confidence in God and hope for the future. It's realistic and practical.' Revd John Proctor, General Secretary, the United Reformed Church



'A Discipling Presence will appeal to those working in a wide variety of rural contexts and I warmly recommend it to you.' Revd Loraine Mellor, President of the Methodist Conference (2017/2018)

Copies cost £3.49 (plus postage and packing), [available from Methodist Publishing](#)

[Link to the Germinate website](#)

President of the Methodist Conference welcomed to URC Church House



Church House, the London offices of the United Reformed Church (URC), welcomed a special guest on 11 October for a tour of the newly-refurbished building and an informal chat about sustaining current ecumenical relationships and building new ones.

The Revd Loraine N Mellor, President of the Methodist Conference, met with staff who were delighted to have the opportunity to question her about her presidential year.

Lorraine then met with the Revd Philip Brooks, the URC's Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, and stressed the value of building and sustaining good and practical ecumenical relationships.

"The biggest risk for our Churches is the failure to make disciples," Lorraine said.

Philip added: "Lorraine and I have shared roots in Bolton, specifically relating to the church where I was last a minister, at Christ Church Methodist/URC Local Ecumenical Project (LEP) in Little Lever. It was lovely meeting with her and discovering our shared values of building good ecumenical relationships."

On the Way to be One

Focolare is a Body in Association of CTE and write:

An afternoon exploring a spirituality of communion and its impact upon Christian unity.

How does the practice of love for one another transform relations among churches? This transformation will be viewed from the perspectives of different Christian traditions.



The afternoon will feature a keynote address by Callan Slipper (National Ecumenical Officer for the Church of England) who will present the Focolare's experience of the spirituality of unity. There will also be a sharing of real-life stories that focus upon the building of communion and an inter-church panel discussion. The panellists are:

Martin Lind (Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain)
John Sherrington (Roman Catholic Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster)
Jane Litchmore-Grant (The Church of God of Prophecy)
Christopher Chessun (Anglican Bishop of Southwark)

All are welcome. Suggested voluntary contribution: £10.

Please book at: <https://tinyurl.com/ontheway2017>

As we remember together the dramatic effect of the Lutheran Reformation 500 years ago, and appreciate the gifts of all the churches, we can see our common understanding of communion as vital both for renewal and for Christian witness to the world...



The Focolare Trust (Focolare Movement) www.focolare.org.uk

And finally ...

Thy Kingdom Come will be Thursday 10th May to Sunday 20th May 2018.

Education Sunday will be on 9th September 2018.

The Church of God in Christ is a new member Church of Churches Together in England.

CTE website more secure as Endis/Church Insight who provide the web platform have moved all their websites to secure HTTPS servers.

EXTRA ALERT re Web Photographs

PLEASE READ and ACT quickly if appropriate

A new website for a local Churches Together group has accidentally used a photograph that looked like one of their own, but was in fact from a photographic stock library. They have been issued with a letter of Copyright Infringement and an Invoice for £305.

Though an image of a church, the stock library has an automatic mechanism (called a 'bot') which trawls the internet looking for an electronic 'tag' on the individual stock image. If such an image is not covered with a copyright licence cover, a letter arrives from the stock library agent to the local web manager. In this case to CTE, which we then had to pass on to the local Churches Together group for image removal and information, as well as possible payment.

As the letter initially came to me as CTE web manager, I tracked down the local CT group at the same time as protesting strongly to the stock library agent that local community volunteers were unfairly being given an Invoice for £305 for copyright infringement that was recent and accidental.

I have had to leave the situation to the local CT group but offered to issue an alert for anyone using web images on a blog site, web site, image gallery, online PowerPoint, or any other way images are kept and from whatever source (especially Google Images and other online providers). There are licence arrangements and every image needs to be covered individually eg 'Creative Commons Zero' or copyright payment provided for the length of time the image is live. Please research and avoid copyright infringement.

[We have issued an Alert before](#) but ask everyone please to pass the message on for due diligence and avoidance on unnecessary cost to unwary web managers. Thank you. Jim Currin.

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