



*One in Christ Jesus,
engaged in God's mission,
empowered by the Spirit*

Churches Together in England: looking to the future

Churches Together in England is at a fascinating turning point. During 2017 the Board invited the Theos think tank to undertake a piece of research to discover what the churches wanted from CTE in the next five year phase of its history. The report can be downloaded from our website at; www.cte.org.uk/theos

The report acknowledges the remarkable work that has been achieved in building relationships across an immense diversity of churches. Our members include both Byzantine and Oriental Orthodox churches, black and white Pentecostal churches, 'new church' networks like Pioneer and Ground Level, as well as the historic churches of England – Anglican, Roman Catholic and Free Church. We have grown from 16 member churches in 1990 to 48, and in that we reflect the diversity of English Christian life. We are the most diverse ecumenical body in Europe, and for that reason we are far more like the Global Christian Forum than the World Council of Churches.

The question which Theos posed on behalf of our members is how we can build on that solid foundation of relationships. Our members are clear that maintaining those relationships will remain key, but they also point to the need to explore collaboration in mission and service. Translating that into strategic aims and work plans is the present pre-occupation of the Board and staff team.

Our work is focused both horizontally (with denominations) and also 'vertically' towards intermediate ecumenical bodies (at county and city level) and through them to local expressions of ecumenism in Churches Together groups and other ecumenical groupings. Patterns of mission and joint activity are in flux locally. Good, creative work flourishes there, so another major concern is how best we can continue to support and encourage those levels of activity.

Recently CTE appointed a new General Secretary who recognizes the strategic importance of collaboration in evangelism and mission, and the need for excellent communications. We are fortunate in having a highly competent Board and a staff who are widely experienced and dedicated to the ecumenical journey. We also relate easily and well to the other National Ecumenical Instruments and to Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

The present staff member responsible for evangelism, mission and communications plans to retire at the end of June, and the Board has decided to make two appointments in replacing him, in line with our response to the Theos Report — a full-time Evangelism and Mission Co-ordinator, and a half-time (1 year fixed term contract) communications officer. The new members of the staff team will be joining a vibrant organisation whose role is widely appreciated by its members (as the Theos report shows). A visit to our web site - www.cte.org.uk will provide a wealth of information, and the current [CTe-News](#) and the archived copies (both of which can be accessed through the web-site) give a flavour of ecumenical life in England.