

Note to CEEC on the Reform/Awesome Conversation Tuesday 5th January 2010 at the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, St Peter's Vere Street.

This note is to commend to CEEC the Statement of the Reform/Awesome group which took part in this conversation.

Thanks to those who prayed for us. We studied scripture together for the day; passages including Genesis 1-3, Luke 24 and 1 Timothy 2, with papers prepared. I think we managed to cover between us serving members on the teaching staff of Oak Hill, Trinity, St John's Nottingham and Ridley Hall. It had been "good to be here". There was respect and robust discussion; there was, in that phrase used in the Statement, evangelical love.

We did not by any means cover all that could be addressed; but we recognised that this serious bible study, committed unreservedly to the authority of scripture (we quickly established common ground on the CEEC basis of faith) had been neglected by us for too long. The day was profoundly edifying even though it presented us with the stark reality of evangelicals reading texts and coming to different conclusions about their meaning. There is more study to do; some of the areas we covered left us at the end only too aware that we had hardly begun. There is more to do on headship and the Holy Trinity, on the experience and nature of women's ministry in the first centuries, to name only two. We recognised that we were all vulnerable to the sin of misrepresenting the views of those with whom we disagreed.

Above all, both groups were able to express to the other their great hope; for Awesome, the hope of being recognised as evangelicals by brothers and sisters in Reform, and for Reform the hope of being defended in their place in the Church of England by their sisters and brothers in Awesome. The Statement seeks to identify the areas for further reflection.

Finally, we could not but be aware of the political questions facing the Church of England. And we believe that there is a proper process for us to pray over and engage in. Our task, however, was to come again under scripture, not only in our understanding, but also in our relating, especially where there is profound difference yet real unity.

We hope to meet again and continue this conversation with the Lord and with one another.

I would like to thank all those who came and took part, the representatives and guests; and special thanks to Lis Goddard and David Banting who did so much to work on the detailed programme and the Statement.

My text for the day came from Romans 12, including v 10 - 12

"Outdo one another in showing honour. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer",

Keith Sinclair, Bishop of Birkenhead