

# New Bishop of Coventry 3rd Mar 2008

## New Bishop of Coventry

The Queen has approved the nomination of the **Reverend Canon Doctor Christopher John Cocksworth** BA, PhD, PGCE, Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge, for election as Bishop of Coventry in succession to the Right Reverend Colin James Bennetts MA, who resigned on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2008.

### Background and family

Christopher (aged 49) was born and brought up in the Horsham area and attended local schools. He went to Manchester University and trained for the ministry at St John's College, Nottingham. Married to Charlotte for nearly 29 years, they have 5 sons: Tim (24), Ash (22), Sam (20), Seb (14) and Matt (10). Charlotte is trained as a teacher of the deaf and currently teaches children excluded from school.

### Work and Ministry

Christopher served his first curacy at Epsom Common Christ Church, Guildford diocese, from 1988 to 1992. From 1992 to 1997 he served as Chaplain of Royal Holloway, University of London and then as the Director of the Southern Theological Education and Training Scheme from 1997 to 2001. He was made an Honorary Canon of Guildford Cathedral in 1999. He has been Principal of Ridley Hall since 2001 where he has led the College into a period of significant growth.

Christopher teaches Christian worship and is particularly interested in the interface between worship and doctrine, and between charismatic experience and Anglican liturgy, as well as in forms of worship, ministry and church life for a missionary age. He was a member of the Church of England Liturgical Commission from 1996 to 2006, and was involved in the revision of the ordination services and the compilation of Common Worship Daily Prayer.

His various publications include *Evangelical Eucharistic Thought in the Church of England*; *Holy, Holy, Holy: Worshipping the Trinitarian God*; *Being a Priest Today: Exploring Priestly Identity*; *An Anglican Companion*, and soon to be published, *Holding Together: Gospel, Church and Spirit*. Chris has also been the author of a number of Grove booklets.

### Hobbies and interests

He enjoys watching films and plays, visiting historic buildings, hill-walking, swimming and cycling.

### Future hopes

Speaking about his own reaction to the news, Christopher says:

*"Having been brought up with the story of the Cathedral and having worked with Bishop Colin and Bishop Simon on different projects, I have long admired the Diocese of Coventry. I am thrilled to have the chance to play a part in its vision of reconciliation and peace for the world and faith and hope for all".*

He goes on to say of the future:

*“I am privileged to be coming to a county at the heart of England and a city that became a twentieth-century icon of the possibilities of the human spirit. I am very grateful for the opportunity to help the Church contribute to the building up of the life of county and city in the twenty-first century. I look forward to immersing myself in the life of this exciting diocese and getting to know its people and communities.”*

The Bishop of Warwick commenting on the announcement says :

*“Christopher will bring with him considerable experience of the breadth of the Church and of working together across denominations both regionally and nationally. With experience of the international church in Germany (EKD) and the Syrian Orthodox church in Syria, he will, I am sure, bring energy and enthusiasm to developing the many international relationships we enjoy as Diocese and Cathedral. Above all, I believe that he will help us to grow both in our relationship with God and in our engagement with the world”.*

Christopher will be consecrated a bishop and installed as Bishop of Coventry later in the year. He will be the youngest diocesan bishop in the Church of England.

ENDS.

*Note to Editors:*

There will be an opportunity to meet with Chris at a press meeting in the old Cathedral ruins after the announcement is officially made, on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March at 11am.

**Photo opportunities will be available as follows:**

- **11.00am in the ruins of the old Cathedral**
- **11.15am on top of the old Cathedral tower where Chris will have a spectacular view of the city and be introduced to Pru Porretta in the guise of Lady Godiva, a symbol of the ‘Spirit of Coventry’ and the benefactor of Coventry’s first cathedral .**
- **12.15pm at the Arthur Rank Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire CV8 2LZ. Head quarters of the Royal Agricultural Society of England and home of the Royal Show.**
- **1.00pm at St Paul’s C of E Primary School, Stockingford, Nuneaton CV10 8NH where Chris will meet staff and pupils from the school.**

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for further information**

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