

**ANNUAL REPORT  
ON CHURCH OF ENGLAND'S ECUMENICAL RELATIONS 2016**

**COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY & LAMBETH PALACE**

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**INTRODUCTION TO THE REPORT**

The cause of Christian unity continues to be vital to the church as it seeks to serve the mission of God. 2016 was a landmark year for Anglican – Roman Catholic relations across the world. It also saw significant progress being made in a number of key relationships for the Church of England in this country. At the same time, the process of renewing the framework for partnerships between local churches, including those aspects of ecclesiastical law that have a direct bearing on what parishes can and cannot do, has been moving forwards. This brief introduction to the Annual Report on Ecumenical Relations for 2016 from the Council for Christian Unity and Lambeth Palace highlights these three areas. For fuller details on the activities mentioned here and for information about the many other areas in which we are involved, please see the full report on the Church of England website, at <https://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/work-other-churches.aspx>.

**A Landmark in Anglican – Roman Catholic Relations**

2016 marked fifty years since the visit of Archbishop Ramsey to meet Pope Paul VI in Rome, an encounter that set a new direction in Anglican – Roman Catholic relations, and from which flows much that we now take for granted. The visit set in motion the process of initiating formal theological dialogue, leading to the work of the Anglican – Roman Catholic International Commission, whose work continues today. The visit also led to the establishment of the Anglican Centre in Rome, which, 50 years on, is a vital hub enabling hospitality and study for Anglicans in Rome and a focus for maintaining regular communication with the Vatican.



Events in October to mark this anniversary included a meeting between the Archbishop of Canterbury and Pope Francis in Rome. In 1966, Pope Paul VI gave the then Archbishop an episcopal ring. The symbolism of this gift was immensely powerful. Without being legal or formally defined, it expressed a solemn recognition of office and ministry. In 2016 a similarly symbolic exchange of gifts took place. Pope Francis gave Archbishop Justin a replica of the crozier head once carried by Gregory the Great, who sent Augustine of Canterbury to be the first Archbishop of Canterbury in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Archbishop Justin gave Pope Francis in return a Coventry Cross of Nails, in recognition of the Pope's global ministry of reconciliation.

While Archbishop Justin was in Rome, 'pairs' of Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops from across the world had also assembled. These pairs of bishops have been appointed to promote and support the work of the International Anglican – Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission. They had begun their pilgrimage in Canterbury and had arrived in Rome to be commissioned for this work by the Pope and the Archbishop. Among them was a pair from England, the Bishop of Truro and the Bishop of Plymouth, who shared in the pilgrimage together. The presence of the Bishop of Truro, Anglican Co-Chair for the English Anglican – Roman Catholic Committee, helped to link what happened in Rome to the on-going task of sustaining and growing relations between Anglicans and Catholics in this country. The Common Declaration from Archbishop Justin and Pope Francis at the conclusion of the visit highlighted the vital need to come together in witness, service and the proclamation of the gospel.

In this country, the English Anglican – Roman Catholic Committee has been reflecting on a research exercise aimed at establishing the extent of cooperation between Anglicans and Roman Catholics in joint activities. The picture that is emerging is very encouraging, though also inevitably to some extent patchy. The Committee reaches the end of its current Quinquennium in 2017, and one of its remaining tasks will be to help the two churches identify areas of priority for growth in their unity in mission in the next Quinquennium, to guide the process of appointing a new Committee.

### **Progress in Key Relationships**

Fifty years ago there were great hopes that new horizons in the spiritual, personal and theological relationships between divided churches would precipitate profound transformations in their institutional relationships, leading before too long to a truly and visibly united church. Such hopes were always fragile, and in this country they received a heavy blow when proposals for unity between the Church of England and the **Methodist Church** were defeated in the recently formed General Synod in 1972. While the kind of institutional unity sought then is not on the agenda now, work has been continuing this year to discern whether the time might be right to enter into a new level of communion between our churches that would enable the excellent joint mission and witness that is already being done by our churches to be even more effective. A key element of this would be that presbyters from the Methodist Church would be enabled to serve as ordained ministers in the Church of England and priests from the Church of England to serve as presbyters in the Methodist Church.

Discussion of what would be a historic step towards Christian unity in this country takes place in the context of the Covenant between our two churches that was signed in 2003. The Joint Covenant Advocacy and Monitoring Group, established in 2015 to oversee and promote the Covenant relationship, has begun the process of recruiting a national network of 'Covenant Champions'. The network will help to increase awareness of the possibilities for partnership in mission and ministry that exist under the Covenant. A particular example of this would be the inauguration in the Diocese of Carlisle of a Covenant Partnership in Extended Area across the diocese (and therefore across the county of Cumbria), to enable a new level of sharing in ministry and resources for the sake of common mission.

The Covenant Partnership in Extended Area in Cumbria includes the **United Reformed Church** as a founding partner alongside the Diocese of Carlisle and the Methodist Church. The report on a four-year process of formal conversations between the Church of England and the United Reformed Church was published in July, in time for it to be considered at the United Reformed Church's General Assembly. Containing resources for study groups, it has now been issued as an e-book through the support of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, available for download at <https://ctbi.org.uk/category/resources/publications/reports/>. In 2017, the Council for Christian Unity and the United Reformed Church will set up a Contact Group responsible for taking forward the report's key recommendations, as set out in its final chapter.



The signing of the Covenant with the Methodist Church in 2003 was the last time the Church of England had established a formal agreement with another church until 2016. Strong support for the report *Growth in Communion, Partnership in Mission* by the General Synod in February and the **Church of Scotland's** General Assembly in May secured approval for the 'Columba Declaration' proposed in its final chapter. The seriousness with which both churches took the mutual acknowledgements and commitments in the Declaration was indicated by the presence of the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland at the General Synod and of the Archbishop of Canterbury at the General Assembly for the two debates, with both giving well-received speeches. Concern for proper communication with the Scottish

Episcopal Church in the context of this new chapter in the long history of our two churches was an important reminder of the inseparability of ecumenical relationships from relationships within the Anglican Communion.

So far, we have focused on progress in long-standing relationships, stretching back over centuries (given that the United Reformed Church continues the history of Presbyterians and Congregationalists in this country). Christianity in England has changed rapidly in recent decades, however, and the growth of **Pentecostal churches** has been a remarkable phenomenon. Careful work has been going on for some time to foster good communication, mutual understanding and cooperation in witness and service. The Archbishop of Canterbury has contributed to this in a significant way by making time to meet with key leaders at both national and international level – the nature of much Pentecostalism meaning that there are often powerful connections across national boundaries.

2016 saw the first meetings of a newly established Steering Group for Anglican Pentecostal relations. Further information can be found in the relevant section of the report, but for the first time we have a point of regular meeting for consultation, for promoting cooperation and for initiating work in particular areas. In coming to this stage, we have learnt the value of grounding all our ‘business’ around Christian unity in fellowship and shared prayer, and in a common commitment to making the gospel known in the world today in tangible ways.

Finally, there were a number of significant opportunities to strengthen ties with **Orthodox churches**. Following the visit of the Oecumenical Patriarch to London last year, the Archbishop of Canterbury was invited to accompany His All Holiness on his annual pilgrimage to Cappadocia in 2016. His Holiness Irinej, Patriarch of Serbia, visited England at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury in October 2016. The Patriarch and his delegation were able to share the extraordinary story of the revival of the Church in Serbia since the fall of communism, and the visit helped to renew what has been a warm and fruitful relationship between our two churches. Later the same month, the Russian Patriarch, His Holiness Kirill, and his delegation came to London to celebrate 300 years of the presence of Russian Orthodoxy here. In his meeting with the Archbishop of Canterbury, both were able to affirm the Church’s calling to be an agent of reconciliation.



## **Renewing the framework for local church partnerships**

It was mentioned earlier that the surge in hopes for Christian unity fifty years ago was bound up with the expectation that experiences of sharing in worship, prayer and mission together with careful work towards doctrinal agreement would pave the way for a coming together of the churches as institutions, so that we could be visibly one and act as one body in the world. Repeated frustrations have resulted in talk of 'institutional unity' becoming suspect in the eyes of many. The formal structures of ecumenism inherited from the closing decades of the twentieth century have themselves become institutionalised and need to be refreshed. This is not to say that ecumenical co-operation does not need to be supported by appropriate agreements and structures. Attempts to grow in unity that refuse to deal with churches as communities and organisations will inevitably remain partial, if not indeed superficial, and over dependent on the enthusiasms of particular individuals.

At local level, these issues become sharply focused. Informal cooperation between churches serving a particular community is relatively straightforward and indeed in many places deeply embedded. Yet moving towards more formal agreement for sharing resources, including ministry, for the sake of common mission can be very challenging. There is not just one simple reason for that, but a vital strand in the ongoing work of the Council for Christian Unity is to work with other churches to see whether that process of moving from informal to formal cooperation can be made simpler and more flexible.

Reviewing the current legislation in the Church of England in the context of the focus on simplification within the Renewal and Reform programme is one part of that. The Ecumenical Relations Measure and the 'Ecumenical Canons' (B 43 and B 44) provide the legal framework for partnership and unity at local level. That framework strikes a balance between flexibility in provision for cooperation and consistency in the Church of England's self-understanding. However, the current legislation was written in the light of ecumenical church life in England a generation ago. The ecumenical context has changed in significant ways in recent decades, as already noted, and both the Ecumenical Relations Measure and Ecumenical Canons require updating to serve the present needs of the Church of England. One important story there has been the rise of churches without national denominational structures, which in urban areas in particular may be key partners for Church of England parishes. Adapting to that will require emendation of the Ecumenical Relations Measure, to which the Ecumenical Canons refer.

The challenges here need relevant work from each of the churches involved, but they require a coordinated response as well. The publication of *A New Framework for Local Unity in Mission* by Churches Together in England has been the catalyst for discussion across its highly diverse membership of a fresh approach to local cooperation. Critically, it sets out a wide range of options for how churches can work together, in the light of what it is they want to achieve and the extent of the sharing of resources and coordination of priorities to which they feel able to commit. This kind of flexibility in what 'institutional' unity looks like at the local level is likely to be crucial

for the cause of Christian unity in the coming decades, and may also provide some useful models for national and international relationships in due course.

The Rt Revd Donald Allister  
Bishop of Peterborough  
Chair, Council for Christian Unity

The Rt Revd Nigel Stock  
Bishop at Lambeth

*All photographs taken from Archbishop of Canterbury's website.*

## Annual Report on Church of England's Ecumenical Relations 2016

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## SECTION ONE: RELATIONS WITH OTHER CHURCHES

### CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

**Lead Bishop: the Rt Revd Peter Forster, Bishop of Chester**

#### **Background**

1. Relations between the Church of England and the Church of Scotland are sustained at national level through a number of regular activities. These include the Moderator's annual visit to London, which includes time with the Archbishop of Canterbury, and a biennial meeting convened by the Archbishop of York, which took place in October this year. There has also been a commitment to annual Faith and Order Conversations, set up following the reception of the report *Our Fellowship in the Gospel* (GS 1792), which was endorsed by General Synod in July 2010, leading to the formation of the group that published *Growth in Communion, Partnership in Mission* in January 2016.

#### **Activities and developments in the past year**

2. Publication of the report was somewhat overshadowed by press coverage and social media attention during the Christmas period. Concerns were raised by some within the Scottish Episcopal Church regarding the Columba Declaration, unfortunately made available prior to the release of the report itself that explained its context and purpose.
3. In the Synod debate on the report in February, the Bishop of Truro proposed an amendment to the main motion affirming the value of relations with the Scottish Episcopal Church, which was accepted. When the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in May, where he was very warmly received, he offered an unreserved apology for mistakes made by the Church of England.
4. With the General Assembly like the General Synod having approved the report, the way was clear to set up the new Contact Group for relations between the Church of England and the Church of Scotland. It was agreed that this would initially comprise seven people, with three appointed by the Church of England, three by the Church of Scotland and one by the Scottish Episcopal Church, to be served by two co-secretaries.
5. There was a signing ceremony for the Columba Declaration in November, following the annual meeting in London between the Moderator of the General Assembly and the Archbishop of Canterbury, at the Church of Scotland's Crown Court Church.

## Challenges and opportunities

6. The first task of the Contact Group will be to look at ways of coordinating of the many different strands of the relationship between our two churches. In terms of potential projects that it might then initiate as set out in *Growth in Communion, Partnership in Mission*, work on the theology of nationhood has perhaps gained still further importance following the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union.

## EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCHES

### Lead Bishop: the Rt Revd Richard Chartres, Bishop of London

#### *Orthodox Round Table*

7. The round table of bishops and others with an interest and involvement in relations with the Orthodox Churches is now up and running and has already made an impact on guiding and supporting the ongoing work. This is a vast field and relies heavily on the establishment and maintenance of good personal relations which requires a lot of attention.

#### *The Holy and Great Synod*

8. Years in the planning, the Synod took place in Crete in June 2016. It was always doubtful that all the autocephalous Orthodox Churches would take part, and in the event four withdrew – the Antiochian, Bulgarian, Georgian and Russian Orthodox Churches. Although these churches did not send official delegations, they did have observers present. While the Synod was not fully ‘pan-orthodox’ it nevertheless did represent a significant stage of development. Perhaps of particular interest to us is the Synod’s statement on dialogue: ‘The Orthodox Church has a common awareness of the necessity for conducting inter-Christian theological dialogue. It therefore believes that this dialogue should always be accompanied by witness to the world through acts expressing mutual understanding and love, which express the “ineffable joy” of the Gospel (1 Pt 1:8), eschewing every act of proselytism, uniatism, or other provocative act of inter-confessional competition. In this spirit, the Orthodox Church deems it important for all Christians, inspired by common fundamental principles of the Gospel, to attempt to offer with eagerness and solidarity a response to the thorny problems of the contemporary world, based on the prototype of the new man in Christ.’<sup>1</sup> We are seeing this emphasis on dialogue accompanied by witness being played out in the Church of England’s relations with Orthodox Churches.

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<sup>1</sup> Pan Orthodox Synod official document: **RELATIONS OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH WITH THE REST OF THE CHRISTIAN WORLD, paragraph 23**

### *Visit of Oecumenical Patriarch*

9. The visit of the Oecumenical Patriarch in October 2015 proved to be a fruitful visit and ended with the invitation from His All Holiness for Archbishop Justin to join him on his annual pilgrimage to Cappadocia in 2016. They also agreed to undertake the joint organization of an international conference on overcoming modern slavery and human trafficking. This is now being planned for early 2017 and will likely take place in Athens. By good providence, the latest agreed statement of the International Commission for the Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue, entitled *In The Image and Likeness of God: A Hope-Filled Anthropology* was published at the time of the visit. The text celebrates what Anglicans and Orthodox affirm together about the human person, created in 'the Image and Likeness of God' and will form the theological foundation for forthcoming discussions on the practical consequences of these theological presuppositions. As Metropolitan Kallistos said at the Nikaeon Dinner held in honour of His All Holiness, this represents the more straightforward phase of the dialogue. Much harder will be addressing the key themes of the protection of the environment, medical interventions, and questions around family life and ethics. Progress of this dialogue is reported on elsewhere.

### *The Serbian Orthodox Church*

10. His Holiness Irinej, Patriarch of Serbia, visited England at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury in mid October 2016. This visit was regarded with great importance by the Serbian Church following the Balkans crisis of the 1990's, and the sense of isolation of the Serbian nation from the rest of Europe since then. It was seen as an opportunity to open a new chapter in the relationship of the Serbian Church with the Church of England. The memories of the suffering of the Serbian people, at the interface with the former Ottoman Empire and its successors, run very deep, and form a significant part of the national narrative even down to the present. Equally deep is the appreciation of the sacrifice of British medical volunteers who served in Serbia during the First World War. The Evensong at St Paul's Cathedral to mark the centenary of the sermon of St Bishop Nicolai Velirimirovich, the first delivered there by an orthodox Christian, was an occasion when these historical veins were richly mined. The visit enabled the Patriarch and his delegation to share with us the extraordinary revival of the Church in Serbia since the fall of communism. It is a revival which taps into the resilience of the liturgy of the home, which kept the faith alive through many difficult years. We also listened carefully to the Serb perspective on Kosovo, which continues to be an extremely sensitive and painful situation. The visit has helped to restore what has been a warm and fruitful relationship between our two churches. The hospitality extended to His Holiness and the delegation by the Archbishop was deeply appreciated.

### *The Russian Orthodox Church*

11. In November 2015 the Bishop of London led a delegation from the Church of England to Moscow which continued the cultural and theological interchange which has been revived between the two churches over the last three years. The visit also paved the way for a small delegation of staff from the St Methodius and St Sergius Postgraduate Institution of Theology to England in

May of this year. They visited St Mellitus College, had meetings in Cambridge with College deans and members of the Divinity Faculty and met with the Community of St Anselm. Negotiations are in hand to plan a visit of theologians and ordinands to Moscow next year. Metropolitan Hilarion is very keen to encourage dialogue between theology and secular academic disciplines and sees value in the exchange of post graduate theological students from Moscow with theological institutions in England.

12. Following hot on the heels of the Serbian visit, the Russian Patriarch, His Holiness Kirill, and his delegation came to London to celebrate 300 years of the presence of Russian Orthodoxy here. At a splendid Liturgy he re-consecrated the Cathedral of the Dormition in Ennismore Gardens. In his meeting with the Archbishop of Canterbury, there was a meeting of minds around concern for Christian minorities in the Middle East and elsewhere in the world, and the Church's calling to be an agent of reconciliation.

## **EVANGELISCHE KIRCHE IN DEUTSCHLAND (MEISSEN COMMISSION)**

**Lead Bishop: the Rt Revd Nick Baines, Bishop of Leeds**

### **Background**

13. The Meissen Commission oversees and promotes the implementation of Meissen Agreement between the Church of England and the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD). It meets once a year, alternately at the invitation of the Church of England and the EKD. The Meissen English and German Committees each meet separately three times a year. In 2016, the Church of England was represented by the Rt Revd Nicholas Baines (Co-Chair); the Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs, the Ven Robert Jones, Professor Morwenna Ludlow (from July 2016, following the resignation of the Revd Dr Carolyn Hammond at the end of 2015) and Mr Richard Parrish. The Revd Canon Dr Leslie Nathaniel served as Co-Secretary until his departure from the CCU staff team in September.

### **Activities and developments in the past year**

14. The Meissen Theological Conference took place in London from 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> January 2016, under the Theme *Reformation Then and Now*. The Co-Chairs of the Conference were the Rt Revd and Rt Hon Richard Chartres KCVO, the Bishop of London and Prof. Dr Friederike Nüssel (Systematic Theology Heidelberg and EKD). The Church of England was also represented by the Revd Dr Andrew Atherstone, the Rt Revd Nicholas Baines, Dr Kirsty Birkett, the Revd Alexander Faludy, the Revd Dr Carolyn Hammond, the Revd Canon Dr Leslie Nathaniel, the Revd Dr Stephen Plant and Dr Elaine Storkey.
15. Other activities relating to the Reformation Anniversary in 2017 included the 'Schools Reformation 500' launch at Church House on 28 April.

16. The annual Commission Meeting was held from 1<sup>st</sup>–4th September 2016 in Munich, with a particular focus on migration and refugees. The Free State of Bavaria has led the way in welcoming refugees and migrants from some of the world's worst conflict ridden areas to Germany.
17. The Commission engaged in discussion and debate with Kirchenrat Dieter Breit, the Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria for Migration and Integration, advising the State Commission in Bavaria. The other key session on migration and refugees was with Dr Beate Merk, the Minister of State for European and Regional Affairs in Bayern. The complexities of ethical, politico-economic and practical challenges facing Europe were identified. The debate ranged over humanitarian responses, the meaning of integration and where limits should be placed in terms of numbers to be settled in Europe. The communique from the Commission's meeting urged churches in Germany and England 'to engage with the complex realities facing our governments, and work towards a framework across Europe within which practical and just solutions can be identified and established. These should be inspired by Christian hope and not driven by fear – the Kingdom of God invites us into a future of justice and freedom.'
18. Alongside this, the Commission addressed issues emerging from the two churches, not least in the area of Brexit and its consequences. Amongst the themes for the next five years is a strengthening of this bilateral relationship in England and Germany.
19. The Rt Revd Jonathan Gibbs, Bishop of Huddersfield, represented Meissen at the EKD Synod in November in Magdeburg.

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

20. The 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation in 2017 will be marked by a number of events sponsored by the EKD, including the European Reformation Roadmap initiative and a Kirchentag culminating in a special service in Wittenberg. Church of England participation in these initiatives is an important opportunity for our churches to learn more about one another and about our intertwined histories, as well as providing occasions for building relationships and identifying areas of common concern. The 'Roadmap' visit to Cambridge on 23 February will provide the context for a public lecture on Anglicanism and the Reformation from Dr Rowan Williams, while it is hoped that there can be a substantial Church of England presence at the Kirchentag, including among the main speakers.
21. The Rt Revd Nicholas Baines will be delivering Bible studies in Halle and Jena as part of Kirchentag auf dem Weg, and will have other speaking engagements in Germany.

## FRENCH PROTESTANT CHURCHES (REUILLY AGREEMENT)

**Lead Bishop: the Rt Revd John Stroyan, Bishop of Warwick**

### Background

22. The Reuilly Contact Group (RCG) monitors and promotes relations between the four British and Irish Anglican Churches and the French Protestant Churches (the Union of Protestant Churches in Alsace Lorraine/Union des Eglises Protestantes en Alsace Lorraine - UEPAL; and the United Protestant Church of France/Eglise Protestante Unie de France - EPUDF) under the Reuilly Agreement (1999).

23. The current membership in the two French churches comprises:

UEPAL: the Lutheran President is Mr Christian Albecker

EPUDF: the President is Rev Laurent Schlumberger.

24. The Reuilly Contact Group members are:

**French:** Co-Chair – the Revd Christian Krieger; Revd Claire Sixt Gateuille; Revd Alexandra Breukink; Revd Olivier Putz; Revd Jane Stranz (observer).

**Anglican:** Bishop John Stroyan and the Revd Canon Dr Leslie Nathaniel [just moved to Germany] (Church of England); the Revd Canon John McLuckie (representative from the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Church in Wales and the Church of Ireland). We await the appointment of a representative of the Diocese in Europe following the retirement of the Ven. Ian Naylor.

**United Reformed Church:** the Revd Julian Templeton (observer).

### Activities and developments in the past year

25. There was no formal meeting of the Reuilly Contact Group in 2016; the next official meeting is scheduled for February 2017. However a meeting was held in Paris in December 2015. Bishop John Stroyan was invited to give a paper at a Colloquium on Monastic prayer in Paris.

26. The Revd John Murray attended the consultation, in June 2016, by the EPUDF which invited responses on their Declaration of Faith to be issued in 2017.

27. A 24 hour residential in Lille scheduled for October 2016 had to be postponed. The event is to be hosted locally and jointly by Anglicans and Protestants (collaboration is already good in Lille) and is to introduce the idea of several such hubs in France where the Reuilly context can be explained and encourage collaboration.

28. Letters of support and solidarity were sent from UK Anglican Churches and the Anglican co-chair of Reuilly to French Church leaders following terrorist events in Paris and Nice.
29. The Anglican Co-Chair set up a visit to the 'ecumenical county' of Cumbria to learn more about ecumenical co-operation there between Anglicans and Protestants. He also hopes to travel to Ireland to speak with people involved in the relationship now established between the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland, which enables interchangeability of presbyteral and episcopal ministries. He will be reporting on these visits at the Contact Group meeting.
30. As part of growing relationships with the French Protestant Churches a group of 20 pastors visited the dioceses of Leicester and Coventry to learn more about Fresh Expressions of Church and Pioneer Ministries.

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

31. Last year, discussions with French Reformed and Lutheran Partners identified a number of points for consolidating the relationship between Anglicans and French Lutheran and Reformed Churches.
  - Work together to seek the continuing conversion of the Church of Christ.
  - Grow the relationship through common witness and engagement. Seek to serve the poor and marginalised; seek opportunities of worshipping and praying together.
  - Organise a core group meeting once every two years between formal Reuilly Contact Group meetings.
  - Strengthen the theological reflection on church dividing issues, devoting one session to this at the Reuilly Contact Group meetings and during core-group meetings.
  - Further theological reflection sharing of histories, contexts and liturgies on the blessing of same-sex relationships is needed. The Synod of the EPUDF has agreed to bless same-sex relationships. However, the USPAL has decided to wait.
  - These points provide a continuing focus for our relations with the French Protestant churches, with the addition now of the challenges arising from the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union.

## **METHODIST CHURCH: JOINT COVENANT ADVOCACY AND MONITORING GROUP FOR THE ANGLICAN – METHODIST COVENANT**

### **Lead Bishop: the Rt Revd Paul Bayes, Bishop of Liverpool**

32. This group was established following the resolutions passed in the General Synod and Methodist Conference in 2014 to ‘monitor progress of faith and order conversations and other on-going work under the Covenant and advocate new initiatives; facilitate communication of Anglican–Methodist developments in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland; and report annually to the General Synod and Methodist Conference’.<sup>2</sup>

33. The Group has met four times since September 2015. We have focused on four main themes:

- the timetabling of the process for introducing proposals for oversight and interchangeability of ministry;
- the tensions and potential blockages in our churches which may hinder progress and how they might be addressed;
- the need to win over not only minds but also hearts in order for our churches to move towards fuller unity and seeking ways in which this may be achieved; and
- an initiative to establish a network of Covenant Champions to play a crucial role in winning hearts and minds at diocesan and district or circuit level.

34. We are also very much aware of the need to keep channels of communication open with our sister churches in Wales and Scotland, in view of the fact that the Methodist Church relates to them as well.

35. The two co-chairs met with the co-chairs of the Methodist Anglican Panel for Unity in Mission (MAPUM) in April. This conversation stressed the importance of the work of MAPUM in supporting local initiatives and in thinking through the practical outworking of the faith and order proposals and also discussed how to take forward the proposal to establish the network of Covenant Champions mentioned. MAPUM has agreed to develop the project and manage it, including the recruitment, training and ongoing support of the network of champions. The key role of the champions is first to gather and share the good stories of covenant working to raise its profile and to show how co-working can be good for mission; and second to assist in ensuring that well informed debate takes place in dioceses and circuits in crucial stages of the Synodical and Conference consideration of proposals. MAPUM is at the stage of recruiting champions.

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<sup>2</sup> *The Challenge of the Covenant: Uniting in Mission and Holiness: Report to the Methodist Conference and the General Synod of the Church of England in 2014*, paragraph 49.



36. The two co-chairs met with the chairs of the faith and order bodies of our two churches and the co-chairs of the Joint Ministry and Oversight Working Group, to encourage the process of drafting the faith and order proposals and reflect on the wider context in which they will need to be placed. The challenge is to present a compelling missional case for making the proposals. The JCAMG is aware of many examples of creative and energising co-working between Anglicans and Methodists at grass roots, which are having to negotiate the existing regulations of our churches, particularly with respect to the authorisation and deployment of ministry. At a time when both churches are seeking to free up ministry for mission, evangelism and making new disciples, the strategy of joint deployment of ministry is beginning to pay off in a number of places.
37. In July, the two co-chairs gave a presentation to the Methodist Conference in which we introduced three members of the joint Anglican – Methodist ministry team in the Retford Team Parish and Trinity Methodist Circuit in Nottinghamshire. Their message was simple and compelling – we are better together as we seek to worship as one, to meet the needs of the world and to follow John Wesley’s famous dictum: “Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.”
38. A warm reception was given by the Conference to the co-chairs and also to the message we were trying to convey. What was billed as a presentation was extended into an impromptu debate, with contributions from the floor which were overwhelmingly positive.
39. Looking ahead, the forthcoming year is likely to be decisive for this whole project. We are aware just how vulnerable it is to wider factors in the culture of the churches, well beyond our control. The challenge remains: can we enable people to engage properly with the careful and detailed work that is being done? And in the face of this challenge we remain hopeful.

### **Members of JCAMG**

*Anglican Co Chair:*  
**The Rt Revd Paul Bayes**

*Anglican Members:*  
**Revd Dr Mike Booker (from July 2016)**  
**Mrs Margaret Swinson**  
**The Revd Robert Cotton (to Jan 2016)**

*Anglican Co-secretary*  
**The Revd Dr Roger Paul**

*Methodist Co Chair:*  
**Mr David Walton**

*Methodist Members:*  
**Revd Dr Caroline Wickens (from Feb 2016)**  
**The Revd Michaela Youngson**  
**The Revd David Gamble (To 2015: RIP)**

*Methodist Co-Secretary*  
**The Revd Neil Stubbens**

## **METHODIST ANGLICAN PANEL FOR UNITY IN MISSION (MAPUM)**

### **Lead Bishop: the Rt Revd John Wraw, Bishop of Bradwell**

40. The Bishop of Bradwell became co-chair of MAPUM last year, following a review of its way of working, which was very dependent on the two co-secretaries doing an enormous amount of work between meetings. We are still dependent on their expertise and extensive knowledge base, but we are developing a style of working which will make more use of what the members are able to bring, remembering that they are all practitioners, with very little spare capacity.

41. It is a group that has two broad functions:

- To provide support and guidance for the Church of England and the Methodist Church to plan together for mission and worship, deployment of ministry and the use of resources.
- And as Anglicans and Methodists together to engage with and shape developments concerning the broad spectrum of local ecumenism.

42. Concerning the first of these, MAPUM is taking forward the streams of work flowing from the General Synod and Methodist Conference resolution of 2014 in three ways:

- By contributing to the development of proposals being brought forward concerning ministry and oversight by the two churches' faith and order bodies, especially with respect to their practical application and implications at local level;
- By gathering inspiring and fruitful examples of joint Anglican – Methodist mission initiatives to share more widely, for example through the presentation given at the Methodist Conference this year (a similar presentation at the July General Synod was cut from the agenda due to lack of time); and by identifying issues which hold back such initiatives, addressing them where possible; and
- By working with the Joint Covenant Advocacy and Monitoring Group to establish a network of volunteer Covenant Champions to raise the profile of the work being done under the Covenant, and, when the time comes, to encourage full and informed debate on the proposals concerning ministry and oversight in their passage through the General Synod and Conference.

43. The second function has been pursued in three areas.

44. First MAPUM has helped considerably to shape the process of refreshing the structures of local ecumenism, which has resulted in the report 'A New Framework for Local Unity in Mission', and following that report's endorsement by the Enabling Group of Churches Together in England, to contribute substantially

to the responses of the Methodist Church and the Church of England to its key proposals. Part of the response is to reflect on the impact these proposals will have and to analyse how they relate to the ecumenical regulations of our two churches.

45. Second, the initiative for amending the Church of England (Ecumenical Relations) Measure 1988 and re-drafting the Ecumenical Canons originated with MAPUM. The Anglican members of MAPUM, assisted by the critique of Methodist colleagues, have decisively shaped the scope and overall direction of these proposals, and will be crucial in developing the revised Code of Practice which will be needed to support the amended Measure and Canons.
46. Third, MAPUM, in keeping up to date with the immense changes that have taken place in the patterns of local unity in mission that are emerging on the ground – especially the mission-orientated, outward looking focused new unity movements and the emphasis on giving visible expression in action to the unity in Christ churches already share – is engaged in a process of theological reflection. We are concerned that the ecumenical heritage of the last few generations and the energy of the new ecumenism inform and invigorate each other. In our most recent meeting we considered how this theological work might be communicated more widely and how it might engage a wider participation. Conventional paper-driven approaches do not seem appropriate.
47. These streams of work are all current. The next few months will be decisive in moving the work forward on refreshing the framework for local unity in mission and the associate amendments to the Church of England's ecumenical regulations. At the same time, we hope that the network of Covenant Champions will begin to form. All of this work signals the need for communicating more effectively with the dioceses, and for providing opportunities for training of those in key positions in dioceses. The network of Diocesan Ecumenical Officers is very keen but many of them do not have the time or the resources to carry this on their own. This is one of the biggest challenges MAPUM faces going into the future.

## **MAPUM Membership 2016**

### **Anglican Members**

Rt Revd John Wraw (co-chair),

Venerable Moira Astin

Revd Sharon Jones

Revd Dr Callan Slipper

Ven Dr John Perumbalath

(Vacancy)

Revd Dr Roger Paul (co-secretary).

### **Methodist Members**

Revd John Hellyer (co-chair),

Mrs Heather Shipman

Revd Graham Kent

Deacon Stephen Roe

Mr David Phillips

Mrs Jenny Easson

Revd Neil Stubbens (co-secretary)

## ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES

### Lead Bishop: the Rt Revd Geoffrey Rowell

48. Our relationship with the Oriental Orthodox Churches continues to be for many of them against the background of persecution and disruption in their historic homelands, with significant consequences for the increasing diaspora communities in the UK and elsewhere.
49. The Anglican-Oriental Orthodox Doctrinal Commission met in Antelias, Lebanon, from October 24<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup>. The Commission concluded an agreement on 'The Nature and Work of the Holy Spirit', and this will be forwarded to IASCUFO and to the respective Oriental Churches for approval and comment; it is hoped that this agreement will then be ratified and launched at the 2017 meeting of the Commission in October in Dublin. The commission was able to meet with representatives of the Middle East Council of Churches and hear reports on the situation in Lebanon (where one third of the population are now refugees) and in other parts of the Middle East. It was noted that the refugee programme in Canada, which was claimed to be the basis for that in the UK, allows sponsors to select refugees, so churches can sponsor Christian refugees if they choose. In the UK this is not the case and refugees are allocated by the UN from Middle Eastern camps, which are almost entirely avoided by Christians because of antagonism from the largely Muslim population of these camps. Christian refugees thus suffer a double discrimination. We were also made aware of current political tensions in Ethiopia related to the Oromo people, which have had some impact on the Church. There are continuing difficulties in relation to Eritrea, where the Patriarch Abune Antonious has been held in detention by the Government for ten years.
50. The Anglican-Oriental Orthodox Regional Forum continues to meet to consider issues relating to the ecumenical relations, the situation in and the needs of the Oriental Orthodox communities in this country. A particular tribute must be paid to the co-chair, His Grace, Bishop Angaelos, for his work in communicating the difficult situation for the historic churches of the Middle East, and for his ability to articulate a clear and articulate Christian perspective on this situation. As in previous years a *Nayruz* service for the Coptic New Year was hosted in St Margaret's, Westminster. Messages of greeting were sent by the Prince of Wales, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Prime Minister. A large congregation attended with significant ecumenical representation.
51. His Holiness, Mar Aphrem II, the Syriac Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch, visited London at the end of November to consecrate the new Syriac Orthodox Cathedral in Acton (formerly St Saviour's Centre for the Deaf) on 24<sup>th</sup> November. The Prince of Wales was present, and Bishop Geoffrey Rowell attended this significant and joyful occasion along with a number of other Anglican and ecumenical representatives.

## **PENTECOSTAL AND BLACK LED CHURCHES AND MULTI – ETHNIC RELATIONS**

### **Lead Bishop: the Rt Revd Keith Sinclair, Bishop of Birkenhead**

52. Strategically, the building of good personal relations with key players in the Pentecostal constituency is fundamental to discerning the call of God to the people of our respective churches to work together for the kingdom. Relationships of trust are essential if we are to embrace the differences between us – theological, cultural and historical – that could be such a source of enrichment, but which have often driven us apart.
53. In his first full year in the role, the Bishop of Birkenhead therefore devoted time to meeting with the leadership with some of our key Pentecostal partners – Bishop Eric Brown, Pentecostal President of CTE, Bishop Wilton Powell and other bishops of the Church of God Prophecy, Pastor John Glass of Elim, Bishop Doye Agama and senior colleagues of the Apostolic Pastoral Congress, Gareth Lloyd-Jones, convener of the Life in the Spirit Conference and others. In each meeting he was warmly received as a fellow Christian leader and found that very quickly a deeply spiritual and pastoral conversation developed. As a result of these meetings he has been invited to address a number of conferences and also to preach at a Pentecostal ordination service. The real desire on the part of our Pentecostal friends to reach out to the Church of England as they tackle a wide range of challenges has become apparent, both within the life of their churches and in their call to mission in local communities and in the nation at large. It is clear that they see the potential for us to do far more than build networks of relationships and there is a strong sense of wanting to see the spiritual gifts of our churches acting together to strengthen faith and transform communities.
54. The centrality of evangelism and prayer among Pentecostals is very strong and Archbishop Justin's themes of prayer and the renewal of the religious life, evangelism and witness and reconciliation resonate deeply with Pentecostals. These themes are perhaps a gift to help Anglicans and Pentecostals discover a sense of common purpose, out of which, as Bishop Wilton sees, our unity flowing. This became apparent especially in an extraordinary meeting of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) and the Church of England in May. Following up the visit of the Chief Overseer of RCCG, Pastor Enoch Adeboye, to Archbishop Justin in July 2015, eleven members of each of our churches gathered at the Focolare Centre in Welwyn Garden City, for a meeting of prayer, worship and discernment and ending with sharing lunch together. It is clear that all that we do must be grounded in prayer. This is sacrificial, not least in time we invest to prayer, and in doing away with any suspicion of superiority. It is also clear that our Pentecostal friends see the Archbishop of Canterbury as having a unique role. The response from Pentecostals to the Archbishop's call for prayer at Pentecost this year demonstrates this and has provided a foundation on which to build and extend.

55. In many ways the foregoing provides the context for the establishment of the Anglican – Pentecostal Theological Steering Group, which has emerged after a long period of gestation, consultation and careful planning (see below for a list of its members). This group could not function without the ground work provided by Churches Together in England, and especially the work that Dr Joe Aldred and Bishop Eric Brown have done to draw together the Pentecostal constituency. It was clear in conversations with Pentecostal leaders that they are aware of the steering group and are expecting it to produce some tangible outcomes. It is very early days in the life of this group. Our first meeting was in May and the second will be in December 2016.
56. The first meeting was very much an attempt to sketch out the vast territory that lies before us. The group agreed that we should look for some low hanging fruit to harvest before going on to initiate new work. The areas that we therefore want to pick up in our second meeting are first the theme of prayer and renewal, focusing particularly on Thy Kingdom Come in the days leading up to Pentecost 2017. Praying together could have two foci: 1) the transformation of our communities and society and 2) learning from another about prayer, by giving people from both our traditions the experience of each other's praying. Different theological understandings of 'renewal' are likely to surface as a programme for prayer and renewal develops. It is possible that there will be different visions of renewal. It will therefore be very important to ensure that language is used in such a way that it engages people and is not a threat.
57. The second theme is to follow through the mutual interest of our churches in seeking out vocations for and formation for ministry. The creative interchange between Anglican and Pentecostal tutors and ministers in training has been steadily increasing over recent years, for example through St Mellitus College and its satellites, Queen's Foundation Birmingham, St John's College Nottingham and the ministry training course at Roehampton University (which hosted our first meeting). There are also a number of strong Pentecostal foundations which are interested in exploring this: for example, the Ministry Training Course of the New Testament Church of God in Northampton and Elim's Regents College in Malvern. Theological training is something Pentecostals are taking very seriously as they face the challenge of growing a new generation of ministers. This also represents recognition of the importance of doing theology in the life of the Church. There is an enormous amount for our traditions to learn from each other. It is crucial for the Steering Group to identify at the strategic level who are the gatekeepers in both traditions – such as directors of training, principals and tutors and those involved in particular agencies. Who need to talk to each other and how are they already with each other on the theme of theological education and theological training?
58. The Anglican – Pentecostal landscape that is opening up before us is vast and rich. It feels like new territory – the traditional approach to theological ecumenical dialogue will not address the challenges and opportunities that there are. This became apparent at a meeting of Pentecostal and Anglican theologians called to discuss the World Council of Churches convergence document *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* in November last year. The Pentecostal participants observed that the process was flawed: there was a sense that they had been

called to discuss a report in which they had no part in, on terms in which they could not participate as equals. Anglicans and Pentecostals can together model a new way of engaging with one another, through humility, prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

### **Membership of the Anglican – Pentecostal Theological Steering Group**

Rt Revd Keith Sinclair (co-chair)  
Revd Dr Rosalyn Murphy  
Venerable Dr Jane Steen  
Revd Dr Roger Paul (co-secretary)

Bishop Eric Brown (co-chair)  
Revd Dr David Newton,  
Revd Dr Hugh Osgood  
Dr R David Muir (co-secretary)

## **THE PORVOO COMMUNION OF CHURCHES**

### **Lead Bishop: the Rt Revd David Hamid, Suffragan Bishop in Europe**

#### **Background**

59. The Porvoo Contact Group (PCG) facilitates the programmes of the Communion of Porvoo Churches. It sets the agenda for the Primates' meeting, the Church Leaders' Consultation (CLC) and the Theological Conferences and acts on behalf of the Communion of Porvoo Churches.
60. The Porvoo Panel is the C of E body which meets twice a year to oversee and encourage the implementation of the Porvoo commitments in the Church of England. Important connections for this purpose are also the Porvoo Lutheran Churches in the area covered by the Diocese in Europe and those Lutheran congregations in England. The current Church of England members are the Rt Revd David Hamid (Chair), the Revd Canon Dr Anders Bergquist, the Rt Revd Paul Ferguson, the Revd Torbjorn Holt, the Ven Mark Steadman, and the Ven Peter Townley. There is scope for two further members to be added. The Revd Canon Dr Leslie Nathaniel was the Secretary until his departure from the CCU team in September.

#### **Activities and Developments in the past year**

61. The theological conference met in October in Riga, Latvia, under the theme *The Spirit of God in the Life of the World*. The conference aim was to reflect theologically on the life and mission of the Church in today's secular context, to discern what the Spirit is saying to the Churches today and to celebrate the 20 years of the signing of the Porvoo Declaration. As well as reviewing the historic significance of the Porvoo Declaration, sessions considered a wide range of subjects including the category of the 'post-secular', the impact of Pentecostal and Charismatic movements across Europe and the spirituality of mission.
62. Delegates from the Church of England at the conference included the Ven Dr John Perumbalath and the Revd Dr Paul Weston.

63. The conference was followed by a meeting of the PCG, which included discussion of events for 2017 such as the forthcoming Primates Meeting, and preparations for the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation.
64. The following Bishops represented the Archbishop of Canterbury at consecrations taking place at Lutheran churches within the Porvoo Communion of Churches:
  - 24.01.16 Norway - Sør-Hålogaland (Bodø) – the Rt Revd David Hawtin
  - 28.08.16 Sweden - Karlstad - The Rt Revd Stephen Cottrell

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

65. A number of the Lutheran members of the Porvoo Communion of Churches are also members of the Council of Lutheran Churches in Great Britain. Effective partnership with them in events to mark the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation could make a lasting impact on relationships between them and the Church of England.
66. The opportunity in 2018 to gather the Primates for 48 hours to take counsel together is very significant. Planning an agenda that makes the best possible use of their time and enables discussion that can feed into work done by each church and indeed work to be done together will be critical.

## **ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN BELGIUM**

**Lead Bishop: the Rt Revd David Hamid, Suffragan Bishop in Europe**

### **Background/Historical note:**

67. In December 1967, following Vatican II, the RCC in Belgium created a National Catholic Ecumenical Commission. Soon after, the Belgian ARC group was created. Prior to that there had been a number of friendly contacts and fruitful meetings between Anglicans and Roman Catholics, most famously the Malines Conversations between Lord Halifax and Cardinal Mercier in the 1920s. From the beginning, RC members (appointed by the Bishop responsible for ecumenism in Belgium) and Anglican members (nominated or approved by the Suffragan Bishop in Europe) have met four times a year. The group has worked on a number of topics: the ARCIC documents, the mutual recognition of Baptism, the problem of “intercommunion”, the question of mixed marriages, the twinning of parishes (in England and Belgium), and the preparation of the three ARC’s meetings (England, France and Belgium). A brief summary of the Belgian ARC group is also available on the IARCCUM website.
68. Belgian ARC is currently composed of 4 Anglicans – the Revd Stephen Murray, Mrs Birte Day, Mr Graham Keen and the Revd Paul Yiend (Co-chair), and 3 RC members – M. Alain Coppettiers, Chanoine Adelbert Denaux and Christiane



Davisters (Co-chair). It remains a dynamic group, with a spread of age and gender, lay and ordained.

69. The RC National Commission for Ecumenism is subdivided into sub-commissions relating to the differing ecumenical partners. Belgian ARC is, for the Catholics, virtually the sub-commission for Anglican Catholic relations. In this capacity Belgian ARC reports – along with the other sub-commissions – to the National Commission for Ecumenism, and the RC co-chair of Belgian ARC sits ex-officio on the National Commission for Ecumenism. From the Anglican point of view, the group is not formally constituted within a National Ecumenical Commission, but it reports to the Suffragan Bishop in Europe, who reports to the Church of England Ecumenical Bishops.

### **Activities and developments in the past year**

70. The group was charged with the organisation of events around the commemoration of the death of Edith Cavell, including concerts, special worship services and an exhibition. All these events were very successful.
71. Canon Adelbert Denaux presented a paper on “Receptive Ecumenism” as an approach that could breathe new life into ecumenical conversations.
72. Mrs. Birte Day was part of a panel of speakers at the National Ecumenical Study Day in Drongen. The theme was: The relation between Church and State, particularly through the lens of religious education.
73. The Revd Henk Laridon (RC Diocese of Bruges) assisted at a symposium on ‘United Leadership’ in London. The Diocese of Bruges has been very active in the twinning of Roman Catholics in Belgium and the Church of England (Lincoln Diocese). Additionally, Fr. Laridon has published a very positive review of a new book about the Anglican Church by the Revd Canon Professor Jack McDonald, ‘De Anglicaanse kerk,’ which is the first book about Anglicanism in the Dutch language in nearly 50 years.
74. The twinning of Chant d’Oiseau à Woluwe and Little St. Mary’s, Cambridge has finished after more than 30 years. Many friendships have been made and it was a source of spiritual strength, but the members of the Brussels ecumenical group believe it is time to put their energy towards the local IEF group (International Ecumenical Fellowship).
75. The migrant crisis has given rise to a great deal of ecumenical cooperation at the local level in order to assist the refugees.

### **Challenges and opportunities**

76. The Revd Paul Yiend has resigned as the Anglican co-chair. It is hoped that a new person can be appointed by the beginning of 2017.
77. Belgian ARC continues to profit from ARCIC “insider”- Professor Denaux – who was a part of ARCIC II and now is working on ARCIC III, specifically the subject of ecclesiology: ‘The Church as Communion, local and universal, and how in

communion, the local and universal Church come to discern right ethical teaching’.

78. It has been quite some time since the last meeting of the 3 ARCs (French, English and Belgian). It is hoped that a new meeting could be organised for 2018 to look at the initial findings of ARCIC III.

## **ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ENGLAND AND WALES**

**Lead Bishop: the Rt Revd Tim Thornton, Bishop of Truro**

### **Background**

79. The relationship between the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales has many strands. The English Roman Catholic Committee (EARC) is a national body which acts as a bridge between the international work of ARCIC and IARCCUM and the regional and local work being done in parishes and dioceses. Since 1970 it has held a vital role here in providing a regular point of contact for representatives from the two Churches to discuss relevant reports, emerging concerns and shared priorities. At the start of the current Quinquennium in 2012, its membership was significantly reduced to eight representatives on each side, while there was also a new focus on identifying specific projects to be taken forward by the members. It continues to meet residentially twice a year, with the aim of combining spiritual encounter with discussion of on-going work and related developments in the wider church. A Steering Committee meets between these events in order to plan for them and to follow them up.

80. Current Church of England members of EARC are: the Bishop of Truro (Co-Chair); the Rt Revd Geoff Pearson; the Revd John Cook; the Revd Dr Andrew Davison; the Revd Duncan Dormor; the Very Revd Vivienne Faull; Joy Gilliver; Margaret Swinson; The Revd Canon Dr Jeremy Worthen (Co-Secretary).

81. The Roman Catholic Co-Chair is Archbishop Bernard Longley, and it is greatly to our benefit that he is also currently Co-Chair of ARCIC III. Details of membership and much other information is available on the EARC pages of the Churches Together in England website.

### **Activities and developments in the past year**

82. During its 2016 meetings, EARC continued to reflect on the mapping exercise of current joint working between Anglicans and Roman Catholics that was undertaken in 2016. In particular, EARC has carefully considered the recommendations for further work that appear in the final section of the report, with a view to deciding what might be undertaken within the final period of the current Quinquennium, and what might be recommended as significant projects for the future.

83. Activities promoting the shared reception of *Evangelii Gaudium* have also continued in 2016. The first volume of the academic journal *Ecclesiology* in 2016 included articles based on papers given at the conference in Cambridge the previous year on *Evangelii Gaudium* organised by two members of EARC, the Revd Duncan Dormor and Dr Alana Harris. They have also secured an agreement with Paulist Press to publish a fuller set of papers in book form. Sales of the highly accessible study resource written by Dr Paula Gooder have been very encouraging.
84. The visit of a relic of Thomas Becket from Hungary in May presented some relatively high-profile opportunities for cooperation between our churches and for growth in mutual understanding, with the relic being displayed at Canterbury Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, as well as other Anglican churches in London. A symposium at Lambeth Palace brought together a distinguished line-up of speakers exchanging insights into history and its relation to contemporary realities.
85. Preparation for the next Joint Bishops Meeting between our churches has also been an important aspect of activities. The meeting, which happens every two to three years, will take a different form in 2017 with the decision having been made to ask each of the eight regional bishops' meetings to send five representatives, rather than simply inviting the House of Bishops. The small planning group responsible for working on the programme includes three members from the Church of England: the Bishop at Lambeth, the Bishop of Truro and Dr Worthen.
86. 2016 constitutes a significant international anniversary for Anglican – Roman Catholic relations, as will be evident from other reports. An evensong at Westminster Abbey and Nikaeen Club reception at Lambeth Palace in June marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Anglican Centre in Rome, while other events in Canterbury and Rome in October included a meeting between the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Pope and the gathering from around the world of 'pairs' of Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops supporting the work of IARCCUM. These included the pair from England, the Bishop of Truro and the Bishop of Plymouth, who shared in the pilgrimage together and in the commissioning by the Pope and Archbishop. The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the visit of Michael Ramsey to Rome and the gift of the ring from the Pope to the Archbishop saw remarkable events in Rome in October which will give a new sense of dynamism to the relationship between our churches.

### **Challenges and opportunities**

87. The Joint Bishops Meeting in early 2017 is a key opportunity to learn about where cooperation is happening and what the striving for visible unity to which we are committed means to the bishops in this country. The decision has been taken not to reconvene a new Quinquennium of EARC until early 2017, after the current one meets for the last time in April. This will provide an important breathing space to assess the priorities for bilateral work at national level between our churches and to ensure that the structures to support them are well-designed and the resources put towards them well-directed.

## ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN FRANCE

### Lead Bishop: the Rt Revd David Hamid, Suffragan Bishop in Europe

88. French ARC met in Paris, 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> April.
89. The membership is unchanged from last year except that Fr Robert Warren has taken over from Deacon Joanne Dauphin as the TEC person on the Anglican side. Père Christophe Delaigue was unwell and unable to attend.
90. Current membership:

**RC:** Mgr Robert Le Gall, Archbishop of Toulouse, Catholic Co-President, Chanoine Jean-Georges Boeglin (Canon of Strasbourg Cathedral and canon lawyer), Madame Annie Wellens (laywoman and patristics expert), P. Christophe Delaigue (young parish priest from Grenoble area).

**Anglican:** Canon Matthew Harrison, Anglican Co-President, Canon Debbie Flach, Fr John Murray, Fr Robert Warren (ECUSA & chaplain at Clermont Ferrand), Mr Gareth Lewis (layman from Gif). P. Emmanuel Gougoud, priest-secretary to the RC Bishop's Conference of France for Unity is secretary. Pasteure Jane Stranz, of the Protestant Federation, is observer but takes a full and helpful part.

### Matters discussed/addressed:

91. Exchange of news: Anglican side. Primates' Meeting and the state of the Anglican Communion, Archdeaconry of France and episcopal ministry. RC side: Synod on the Family and paedophilia/safeguarding issues as in the press recently.
92. Evaluation of the reception of the document, 'O Lord open our lips'. Quite positive and widespread interest beyond France, such as in England and Australia. Fr Matthew did various day conferences on it and a radio programme.
93. The English version is on the IARCCUM website. The French version will remain copyright of the RC Bishops' Conference for another year.
94. Plans to engage with seminaries in the francophone world. French ARC will be engaging the ACC office for assistance with this.
95. A seminar on the theme of Mercy (reflecting the current RC Year of Mercy) and a comparison of the two traditions in terms of the sacrament of penance/confession/reconciliation has involved approaches to the subject from biblical themes, patristics, history, Reformation liturgy to current day practice. Papers are being gathered on this interesting subject, in which the Churches are discovering their joint understanding of the liberating power of God's forgiveness.

### **Proposed new work:**

96. An exploration of how difficult it might be to make a translation of the main elements of CW Morning and Evening Prayer. The French Missal and Breviary are in the midst of being re-translated and any translation would need to respect any new versions of the French Magnificat, for example.
97. An examination of the WCC Faith & Order document *L'Eglise: vers une vision commune*, including how that document uses the figure of the BVM ecclesologically. Included would be a re-reading of ARCIC II on Mary and elements from *Lumen Gentium*.

## **ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH – INTERNATIONAL ANGLICAN – ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMISSION ON UNITY AND MISSION (IARCCUM)**

**Lead Bishop: the Rt Revd David Hamid, Suffragan Bishop in Europe**

### **Background**

98. IARCCUM is an episcopal body, established in 2001, to carry forward in life and mission the agreements reached in the ARCIC dialogue. The co-chairmen are Bishops Donald Bolen of Saskatoon (now Archbishop of Regina), and David Hamid. The co-secretaries are (RC) the Revd Anthony Curren and (Anglican) the Revd Canon Dr John Gibaut. Meetings have been held monthly by conference call often with the participation of consultants. The Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome, Archbishop David Moxon, is a participant in these meetings. The mandate is three-fold to:

- Promote and monitor the formal response and reception of the statements of ARCIC.
- Facilitate relations between ARCIC and national ARCs, and between different national ARCs, providing support and resources to foster an exchange of information and practice.
- Encourage Anglican Provinces and RC Episcopal Conferences to establish ARC dialogues where they do not exist.

### **Major activities and developments in the past year**

99. Pilgrimage to Canterbury and Rome, 30 Sep to 7 Oct. 18 pairs of bishops-at-large participated from every continent. An official summary is in preparation. It will include reference to:

#### *Common faith*

- We recognise each other as brothers and sisters in Christ through baptism.

- We have found significant agreement about Eucharistic doctrine, ministry and salvation.
- We have reached important convergence on authority, the Church as communion, moral principles, Mary and the saints, and episcopacy (including the role of the bishop as the symbol and promoter of unity).
- We share common traditions in liturgy, spirituality, and forms of consecrated and monastic life.
- We have noted the complementarity of our social teaching and of our pastoral efforts to live the Gospel of mercy and love.

*Recognition of deep dimensions to the “certain but imperfect communion”*

- “An ecumenism of the cross”, bearing together the plight of people who face the challenges of our troubled world, standing with the poor, and reaching out together to reveal Christ’s presence among those at the margins.
- “An ecumenism of humiliation”, sharing the brokenness of our church communities, our failure to protect children and vulnerable people from abuse, women from violence, and indigenous people from exploitation.
- “An ecumenism of hope”, committing to working in the power of Holy Spirit, walking alongside each other in healing the world’s wounds, “dispelling the gloom of this world with the light of the Gospel, with the non-violent power of a love that conquers sin and overcomes death.”

*The commission from Pope and Archbishop*

100. At a service jointly led at the Church of S. Gregorio al Celio, Pope Francis and Abp Justin stated that despite obstacles to full unity, “we are undeterred”. Unprecedented, they jointly commissioned the bishops to:
- Engage in an ecumenical mission to those on the margins of society
  - Work together to give voice to common faith in the Lord Jesus Christ,
  - Bring relief to the suffering, peace where there is conflict, dignity where it is denied and trampled upon.
  - Be artisans of healing and reconciliation in the power of the Gospel, and
  - Go as pairs of pilgrims, returning to home regions to encourage common prayer, mission and witness.
101. [www.iarccum.org](http://www.iarccum.org) contains all ARCIC, IARCCUM and national ARC documents; Common Declarations; local, regional & national covenants; best practices; case studies; articles on ARC relations; liturgical celebrations/prayer services; joint pastoral statements; twinnings; news archive, photos and historic

preparatory material from the dialogues available under the 30 year rule,  
material from the IARCCUM summit

## **Challenges and opportunities**

102. Carrying forward the momentum established in Canterbury and Rome. Continuing to meet electronically with the pairs of bishops, and strengthening the “movement” through encouraging plans of action in regions, and spreading the vision among our episcopal counterparts, clergy, and laity.

## **UNITED REFORMED CHURCH**

**Lead Bishop: the Rt Revd James Newcome, Bishop of Carlisle**

### **Background**

103. There are many links between the Church of England and the United Reformed Church. At the national level, we have arrangements for the reciprocal presence of observers at General Synod / General Assembly and on the Council for Christian Unity / Mission Council & Faith and Order Committee. We also completed this year a formal ‘Conversations’ process, building on the previous cycle of work leading to the report *Healing the Past, Building the Future*, which had been discussed at General Synod in July 2011.

104. The members of the Conversations from the Church of England at the time of completing the report were: the Bishop of Carlisle (Co-Chair), the Revd James Hawkey, Canon Rebecca Swyer and Dr Jeremy Worthen (Secretary).

### **Activities and developments in the past year**

105. The Conversations group met for the last time in January to consider responses from a number of bodies, including CCU and FAOC, to its draft report, and to move towards a final text. This was then released in July when it was debated at the United Reformed Church’s biennial General Assembly. The report with its recommendations was accepted by the General Assembly. The CCU considered how the Church of England might respond at its meeting in October.

106. The report, called *Unity, Identity and Mission*, and now available as an e-book on the website of Churches Together in England, has five main chapters. These are: ‘Divine and human relations’; ‘Ecumenism “old” and “new”: a case study’; ‘Making decisions together’; ‘Sharing ministries and sharing ministers’; and ‘Unity, memory and mission’. The report seeks to relate some of the long-standing concerns of faith and order work within the ecumenical movement to the missional challenges facing our churches at all levels. Moves towards making Cumbria an ‘ecumenical county’ provide the case study of the second chapter, a context in which to earth the issues addressed subsequently. Each chapter ends

with discussion questions designed to enable local congregations to engage with its key themes.

107. The report's main recommendations are that:

(1) urgent attention should be given by our churches in consultation with Churches Together in England to the question of identifying and enabling structures that can sustain shared commitment to mission, including sharing of physical resources, ministry resources, financial resources and strategic planning, at local, regional and national levels;

(2) in the light of what occurs between the Church of England and the Methodist Church with regard to interchangeability of ordained ministries within the Covenant relationship, a review should be undertaken regarding understanding of the nature of ordained ministry and potential for progress towards reconciliation and interchangeability of ministries between the Church of England and the United Reformed Church, if appropriate involving other churches also;

(3) a process should be set up for exploration of the relationship between Elders and Church Related Community workers in the United Reformed Church on the one hand, and deacons in the Church of England and elsewhere on the other;

(4) attention should be given to studying the scope for receptive ecumenism between our two churches in the area of worship, looking both at theology and practice, and the opportunities and challenges of worshipping together;

(5) a steering group be set up for Church of England – United Reformed Church Relations that can monitor the implementation of the report's first four recommendations, coordinate different areas of activity and promote further growth in unity in mission.

### **Challenges and opportunities**

108. The CCU agreed at its meeting in October to proceed with setting up a steering group (recommendation [5]), which will be responsible for taking forward the other four recommendations. It was noted that such bilateral work needs to complement and be informed by other relevant ecumenical activity.

109. Relatively swift movement towards accommodating marriage between same-sex couples within the URC may begin to raise difficulties for relations with Anglican parishes in some contexts.

110. There will be a very significant decrease in the number of URC clergy over the next few years, which may begin to have an impact on local ecumenical engagement.



## **SECTION TWO: ECUMENICAL INSTRUMENTS**

### **CHURCHES TOGETHER IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

**Lead Bishop: the Rt Revd David Hamid, Suffragan Bishop in Europe**

#### **Background**

111. Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, the successor body to the British Council of Churches, aims “to serve the churches of Britain and Ireland on our shared journey towards full visible unity in Christ.” It has 40 member churches across the Four Nations, including the Irish Republic. The Moderator is Bishop Angaelos of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the UK. The General Secretary is the Revd Bob Fyffe. It works in partnership with the National Ecumenical Instruments in the various aspects of ecumenical work across the nations. In particular, CTBI focuses upon:

- ecumenical resourcing through study and worship resources
- Faith and Order concerns, especially with reference to the WCC F & O Commission
- mission theology, in partnership with the Church of England
- inter-religious matters: through (a) the Churches’ Forum for Inter-Religious Relations chaired by HG Bishop Angaelos, and (b) the Inter Faith Theological Advisory Group
- world church relations – with a particular focus on the Middle East and China, as well as linking with CEC and the WCC
- aspects relating to the Church in the Public Square, including the resourcing of General Election hustings and the ongoing “Good Society” project.

#### **Activities and developments in the past year**

112. CTBI’s work programme includes aspects of ecumenical worship and spirituality, mission, international and matters relating to the public square.

113. In the run up to the **EU Referendum**, CTBI facilitated a meeting of its member churches whereby different approaches, analysis and perspectives were shared from those attending. A second meeting was held shortly after the referendum result to discuss its implications.

114. In late 2015 a Consultation was held on the **International Faith and Order document “the Church: Towards a Common Vision”**. As a follow up to this it was felt that a conference would be useful to explore the wider and deeper issues of what is meant by “visible unity”. This conference is being held in Edinburgh during November and will include (i) voices from local contexts where ecumenism is flourishing, either in more traditional approaches, or where there is a newer emphasis on unity in mission and evangelism, (ii) recent developments in bilateral relations, such as the Columba Declaration, (iii) broader theological considerations, including the voices of new member churches in the ecumenical instruments.

There will also be a key note address from Professor Grace Davie who will outline some of the sociological perspectives that are relevant to our search for unity.

115. **CTBI's Interfaith Theological Advisory Group (IFTAG)** has embarked on a project to explore the relationship between interfaith relations and evangelism/church growth. This arose because of some anxieties being expressed from some religions, particularly Judaism and Hinduism, that they might be "targeted" for evangelism. IFTAG is inviting people from different Christian perspectives to attend its meeting as a guest, to have a discussion about some of the issues. Once these series of conversations have been completed it is the intention to create an online resource for the churches.
116. IFTAG is also completing a study guide on the document "**Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World**" produced by the WCC, the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue and the World Evangelical Alliance. The Study Guide will explore the issues for the British and Irish contexts with illustrated examples of grassroots work.
117. CTBI, in partnership with the **Board of Deputies of British Jews**, engages in a project called "**Invest in Peace**". It aims to partner local synagogues and churches in different localities to engage in a dialogue about Israel-Palestine; to focus on initiatives in the regime where Israeli's and Palestinians and working together for justice, peace and reconciliation.
118. The **Week of Prayer for Christianity** continues to have a strong uptake. The materials for 2017 have been produced by the CTBI Writers Group and is based on the international material from Germany. Meanwhile the 2017 Lent resource is being written by the Methodist and United Reformed Churches and will explore how Christian faith can be deepened and enriched by encounters with people of different faiths.
119. **Mission Theology Advisory Group** (CTBI and Church of England) continues to serve the churches through its Social Engagement and Evangelism resources (part of its Liberation and Entrapment programme). 20 resources for enabling trust, confidence, faith sharing and hope were produced in January and have been rolled out with the help of the Church of England's Social Responsibility Network. MTAG has also been helping with different strands of the Church of England's Renewal and Reform programme, most particularly in the areas of Discipleship and Lay Vocations and Leadership. MTAG has also done some work on mission issues relevant to all denominations arising from the Brexit vote and continues to resource important work on trafficking, migrants and refugees.
120. **The Refugee Crisis** in Europe prompted CTBI to assign extra resource towards supporting churches in keeping this issue on national and local agendas. In May 2016 CTBI took a group of 12 women Church leaders to Greece to meet with both those who are working with the refugees and refugees in the camps. In particular, to meet with women who had made the perilous journey with their families. It was a visit of solidarity and love. A letter to our churches was written and circulated following the visit, plus a letter to the Greek churches and agencies with whom we met. (both are on the CTBI Focus on Refugees website). CTBI hosts a regular meeting of the churches and agencies most closely involved in this work in order

to provide as coordinated approach as possible. The Director for International Programmes is able to work closely with the **Anglican Alliance** in this regard.

121. CTBI's engagement with **China** has shifted to being more of a convening role with the churches in Britain and Ireland, however, the China Forum is keen to continue to engage with both church traditions in China and the two social welfare organisations of Amity and Jinde, together wherever possible. The CCC/TSPM is especially interested to continue conversations with CTBI member Churches regarding a shared understanding of ecclesiology issues. A Conference is being planned.

122. The WCC General Assembly in Busan pledged to support the call of the **Korean churches** for reconciliation and reunification for their peninsular. The Ecumenical Forum Korea, made up of international partners meets with both the respective ecumenical bodies from North and South Korea in pursuit of this aim. CTBI is in support of this initiative and will be promoting the petition being brought to the European governments next year. In addition, each year on or near to August 15 (the date of the ceasefire agreement) the churches in both North and South Korea mark the day with worship and the order of service prepared for this purpose is translated into English so we can stand in Christian solidarity with them. (it is posted on the CTBI website)

123. **The National Christian Council of Sri Lanka** is a major mover in the work of reconciliation and peace building in their land following the devastating decades long civil war. Along with the other major faiths in Sri Lanka the NCCSL is engaging the diaspora communities in the UK, of which there are around 25,000, to work with them for peace. CTBI is able to support this work in practical ways, offering our services to hold some funds given by member churches, meeting rooms, and introductions to interfaith partners.

### **Challenges and opportunities**

124. Two emerging initiatives this year represent significant opportunities in terms of future work and focus. First, A new **Centre for Theology and Justice** is being established in partnership with Luther King House in Manchester. Its purpose is to develop theological resources to assist congregations in the study of justice issues both at home and abroad. Other partners include Church Action on Poverty.

125. Second, a proposal is being developed to invite the **WCC General Assembly** to Glasgow in 2021. Consultations are on-going with member Churches and a decision on whether to move forward with a potential bid in 2018 has still to be made.

## CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ENGLAND

### Lead Bishop: the Rt Revd Christopher Foster, Bishop of Portsmouth

126. The Bishop of Portsmouth stood down as the chair of the Directors and Convener of the Enabling Group of Churches Together in England (CTE) after the CTE Forum in autumn 2015, but has continued to serve as a director and as one of the Church of England's representatives on the Enabling Group. The other Church of England representative is Canon Linda Ali (General Synod, York).
127. The best way to get a flavour of the strategic priorities, ethos and work of CTE is to read its summary annual review, available here: [2015 review of the year](http://www.cte.org.uk/Publisher/File.aspx?id=178845) (URL: <http://www.cte.org.uk/Publisher/File.aspx?id=178845> ). CTE's strategic priorities are threefold: building relationships, action for mission and theological reflection, with the first of these the heart of its overriding purpose. Relationships of mutual recognition and trust, rooted in prayer, are foundational to all ecumenical mission, service and witness. Building, and even just maintaining, these relationships, is costly in time and resources, but is central to the unfolding of the vision of the Swanwick declaration, which moved the ecumenical instruments from being agencies which act on behalf of the churches, to instruments which enable churches to act together. Herein lies CTE's great strength, but also its vulnerability when churches are focused on other agendas.
128. Following the settlement reached in 2007 regarding the funding of the National Ecumenical Instruments and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, CTE, like the other national instruments, is totally dependent on the contributions of its member churches, intermediate ecumenical bodies and bodies in association. CTE is therefore highly accountable to its member. CTBI retained the historic investments of the British Council of Churches, and so is relatively financially independent of the member churches. A legacy of the last fifty years of ecumenism is that the seven historic churches in England provide over 90% of the revenue of CTE. In 2016, the Archbishops' Council took the decision to make a significant reduction in its contribution, which had previously represented just over 50% of CTE's revenue. For an organisation the size of CTE, the scale of reduction has far reaching consequences and indeed raises issues about the sustainability of CTE into the future.
129. The Directors of CTE decided in view of this reduction in revenue to do two things. First to draw down reserves in order to maintain existing staffing levels (four executive and one administrative posts) to the end of 2017, and second to commission the Christian Think Tank Theos to undertake a review, through interviews with key stakeholders right across the spectrum of CTE's membership and beyond, of the purpose, effectiveness and structures of CTE and the expectations of its stakeholders. Theos has started this project and will report back in just under a year's time. The directors will use this report to make decisions about the future shape of ecumenical life in England going into 2018. It is difficult to see how CTE in isolation can make effective changes to its structures and purpose without some reference to the other national instruments and to CTBI. It is hoped that the Theos project will enable serious reflection on the future shape of the whole ecumenical architecture in these islands. There is in any case likely to be radical change. Fundamental questions are therefore

being asked about the future shape of ecumenism in England and in the British Isles.

- 130. How far can the strategic priority of relationship building between churches be sustained and funded in the current climate?** There are strong voices which ask for evidence in terms of specific outcomes. The difficulty here is that outcomes are the result of highly complex processes, not of straight line connections. One illustration is Thy Kingdom Come being planned for the days leading up to Pentecost 2017. Following the response in 2016, what began and continues to be a call from the Archbishop of Canterbury has been taken up ecumenically and multiplied many times over across a wide spectrum of churches and traditions, both in England and beyond. Some recognition of the multiplying effect of CTE is due. The quality of relationship that has been building quietly over many years is being cashed out in the ecumenical response to this call, in many practical ways, for example by providing an existing network of communication. Crucial to this magnifying effect is the way the CTE Presidents have acted together to model joint vision and commitment.
- 131. How can relationships be constructively modelled between churches of such diverse sizes, of such varying reach into local communities and the structures of society, and of such different polities and histories?** CTE has now 45 member churches. Again this is a strength, but it is also a weakness; such diversity is a joy, but it is also a frustration. For this reason, CTE rarely attempts to ask the leaders of its member churches, or the Presidents, to make joint statements, with the consequence that its visibility is lower than more homogenous organisations. But perhaps a common voice on particular issues is not what the multi-lateral ecumenical space should provide – bilateral relationships are more likely to be the locus of that, for example in the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT), or in the joint work that the Church of England and the Methodist Church have done in relations to safeguarding. Despite the rich diversity that the churches and bodies in association bring to the life of CTE, there is nevertheless a set of core values, which are fully tested in the process to admit new churches and organisations into membership. This core activity is vital to the Church of England's own developing ecumenical relations, especially with new, Pentecostal and diaspora churches. Work continues to be done by the Directors to ensure that procedures are rigorous and fair.
- 132. Does the vision of 'churches together', articulated by Cardinal Basil Hume at Swanwick in 1987 still have life in it and if so, how should it be modelled thirty years on?** The vision only really works if the leadership of a church is committed to it – and this applies at all levels of church life, from church leaders' breakfasts in Revive Rugby and the like to the meeting of the CTE Presidents. But this is to do with much more than the commitment of individuals, but with the institutional recognition of the strategic value of the vision and what it entails. The Presidents of CTE can be very effective, not only if they have sufficient good quality time together, but also when their meetings are staffed properly in such a way that they are followed up in action: witness their joint statement on the commemoration of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation and their joint call to pray Thy Kingdom Come in 2017.

## THE CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES

### Lead Bishop: the Rt Revd Dr Christopher Hill

#### Background

133. The Conference of European Churches (CEC) is made up of Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant Churches in Europe. It collaborates with the Council of European [Catholic] Bishops' Conferences (CCEE). The CEC Assembly is the highest decision-making body of CEC.
134. Under its new constitution and its Headquarters now firmly based in Brussels, CEC has during the last year concentrated on implementing the mandate given to it.
135. The churches of Europe have traditionally looked to the Church of England to play a key role in the leadership of CEC. The former Bishop of Guildford, the Rt Revd Christopher Hill, is the President of CEC. Our strong relations, both with significant Protestant churches and with Orthodox churches, help bind CEC together.

#### Activities and Developments in the past year

136. The new General Secretary Fr Heikki Huttunen began his term in January 2016. As the activities below illustrate it has been a very busy period. The team work has been strengthened and the overall work effective and well coordinated.
137. Thematic Reference Group on **Peacebuilding and Reconciliation** held regular meetings and worked on establishing its priorities for the years leading to the next CEC Assembly. Importantly, they issued a statement on European Parliament resolutions on arms export of 17 December 2015 and on the humanitarian situation in Yemen of 25 February 2016 including arms embargo against Saudi Arabia.
138. In the area of **human rights**, CEC co-hosted a consultation at the Theological School of Halki (Turkey) that brought together theologians, human rights experts and policy makers to discuss and share best practices on freedom of religion or belief. A publication from this conference is forthcoming in late 2016.
139. On 10 November religious and political representatives gathered at the European Parliament to discuss **religious freedom** in the Republic of Cyprus. The well-attended seminar was held at the invitation of Dr Eleni Theocharous MEP in cooperation with the Representation of the Church of Cyprus to the European Institutions and the Conference of European Churches.
140. To mark **International Human Rights Day** on 10 December, the European Platform on Religious Intolerance and Discrimination (EPRID) and the office of Elmar Brok MEP hosted a panel discussion on religion, security, and human rights at the European Parliament. The Conference of European Churches is a member of EPRID and participated in organising this initiative.

141. The Conference of European Churches, in partnership with the Theological School of Aristotle University, organised the **3rd Annual Summer School on Human Rights** “Stand up for Women’s and Children’s Rights!” from 31 May to 4 June in Thessaloniki. More than 90 people, from different countries and representing a number of denominations, participated in the opening of the Summer School. Speakers included experts from Council of Europe, NATO, European universities and many CEC Member Churches and Organisations in Partnership.
142. In terms of **Economic and Ecological Justice** the Conference of European Churches encouraged all to join in a day of prayer for creation and its healing. On 1 September, Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican, Roman Catholic, and other Christians around the world will offer thanksgiving for the gifts of creation and pray for its protection and renewal.
143. As part of our ecumenical contribution to the **Pilgrimage for Climate Justice**, CEC launched a website about the European contribution to the pilgrimage in advance of the [United Nations Climate Change Conference \(COP21\)](#) in Paris in December 2015. The CEC Pilgrimage featured ([cecpilgrimage.wordpress.com/](http://cecpilgrimage.wordpress.com/)) a calendar of European church events. The microsite also hosts links to CEC Member Church contributions to the pilgrimage, background information on the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, and news relating to climate justice and faith. Regular updates on the site raised awareness of climate justice issues of special importance leading to Paris.
144. The Thematic Reference Group for **Bioethics** monitored advances in biotechnology including genetic testing and insurance, research on biological material of human origins, human rights and the dignity of people. There was also active participation in the meetings of the Intergovernmental Steering Committee on Bioethics of the Council of Europe.
145. CEC continued its close cooperation with the Churches’ Commission for Migrants in Europe on all matters relating to **migration, asylum**, and the ongoing refugee crisis in Europe. Together CEC and Churches’ Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) advocated for safe and legal pathways for refugees into and through Europe, and worked for a coordinated responses among churches. A joint CEC-CCME-WCC consultation in the Netherlands in June 2016 was a focal point of our work together.
146. **The World Council of Churches and several United Nations agencies** held a high-level conference on the refugee crisis in Europe on 18-19 January in Geneva. The conference saw representation from the CCME as well as many from CEC Member Churches and Organisations in Partnership.
147. **EU Policy and Legislation:** On April 8 and 9 the CEC Thematic Reference Group on EU Policy and Legislation met in Athens at the Second Evangelical Church, facilitated by member Dr Altana Filos. The group discussed inter alia legal action taken by Slovakia and Hungary against the EU Council to annul the decision on the relocation of refugees from Italy and Greece, the public consultation of the European Ombudsman on the transparency of the trilogue,

the state of play of the debate about the UK EU referendum and the position of the churches in Europe.

148. **The Thematic Working Group on Employment and Social Issues** has submitted a full and detailed response to the public consultation of the EU Commission on a European pillar of social rights in October 2016.
149. The 2018 Assembly will take place in Novi Sad, Serbia. The Patriarch of Serbia warmly welcomed this during his visit to the Archbishop of Canterbury in October 2016.
150. The annual meeting of European Officers of member churches took place in Budapest in October. Some other church leaders also attended in view of the many current crises facing Europe and the EU, including Brexit. The President has contributed a Comment piece to the Church Times (28 October) *The Churches and Brexit*, in part reflecting the concerns expressed at this meeting and the *greater* need for the churches of Europe to collaborate in the light of current European disunity.

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

151. The challenge remains to consolidate the programmatic work on the basis of the new constitution. A lot of work has been done. There are now opportunities and challenges with the move for closer cooperation with CCME (Churches Commission on Migration). The role of the churches in responding appropriately to situations of conflict and migration will be tested increasingly in a troubled Europe. There is, however, also opportunity to build on CEC's enormous achievements and to make a significant contribution for a Europe at peace with itself and the world.

## **WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES**

### **Lead Bishop: the Rt Revd Robert Innes, Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe**

#### **Background**

152. Building on the impetus given at the Tenth Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Busan, Republic of Korea from 30 October to 8 November 2013 under the theme God of Life: Lead us to Justice and Peace, the WCC has worked on articulating a **message of hope against hope** in the midst of suffering and into the brokenness of the world.
153. Churches are called to lift their eyes and strengthen the belief that all belong to a movement that is geared to seek what is better and pray that every day the Kingdom of God should come.



## **A Theology of Hope**

154. In its reports the WCC notes that the people of the church are a pilgrimage people. The Faith and Order convergence document *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* articulates this.
155. We are a people defined by hope. Churches receives a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:4). This living hope is an enduring one. We do not leave it behind. It is not merely a matter of history or a life after death matter. As a pilgrim people we live in a hope that is renewed and fostered every day by the Holy Spirit. And it is this hope that helps us cope with all our struggles and trials of life in diverse contexts and settings.
156. A theology of hope is so central to our DNA that we will be “always prepared to make a defence to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15). This Christian hope is neither given by ourselves nor is it to be kept to ourselves. The hope we know and live in the cross and the resurrection of Christ is central to how we work out our way of life and how we live together as Christians. Our hope is furthermore not a private matter. It is a hope that needs to be proclaimed and cannot be hidden.
157. It is therefore not surprising that the fellowship of churches in the World Council of Churches as well as the wider ecumenical movement will be tested by this benchmark of hope. The WCC seeks to test itself by asking questions, such as: Are we shaped by the living hope given to us? Are we holding ourselves accountable, asking ourselves if hope is what is seen and heard in our words and actions, or are we destroying the hope of others? Are we breaking “the bruised reed” (Isaiah 42:3)? Are we conveying hope in a way that the words of the risen Christ, “Do not be afraid,” can be taken seriously? Are we part of that culture of life, are we protecting and nurturing the life that is manifested in the unique resurrection of Christ? Such questions are helpful in terms of self-criticism and can strengthen confidence in our faith. It can be a test as to whether we are destroying our living hope rather than nurturing it.
158. The WCC expresses confidence that the togetherness on its pilgrimage of justice and peace is a journey in Christian hope.

## **Other activities and developments in the past year**

159. On the recommendation of the programme committee of the WCC, the WCC is working on the following:
- That the WCC becomes the platform for reflection and engagement on the rise of secularization, religious fanaticism and anti-religious extremism.
  - That the implementation of a process to work together in addressing the issue of racism and transformation be given significant attention.
  - That the pilgrimage of justice and peace be also made attractive and invitational for young people, in a language that is accessible to all.

- That the programmatic initiatives of member churches be collated and explored in terms of these also becoming part of the WCC's Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, where appropriate.
- That there is need to strengthen the spiritual perspective of the WCC as it speaks to its membership.
- That a process of understanding and analysing world economic systems in the context of change be given greater attention.
- That the mandate that came from the executive committee held in Paralimni, Cyprus, 21-26 November 2014 and included violence against religion and violence in the name of religion be further reflected on in light of the troubled situation in our world today. A more descriptive title, such as: "Churches Responding to Conflict: Theological Reflections on Violence in the Name of Religion and Violence Against Religion", could be helpful in giving this greater momentum.

160. The Rt Revd Dr Robert Innes, the Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe, was elected as member of the WCC Central Committee after the resignation of Bishop Peter Forster, the Bishop of Chester.

161. The Rt Revd Stephen Conway, the Bishop of Ely, continues to serve on the Commission on Faith and Order of the WCC. He attended a meeting in the Philippines in October, which amongst other things discussed a draft paper on the theology of the pilgrimage of justice and peace that is the guiding theme for the WCC's current work. Dr Worthen contributed at his request to a call for papers on different churches' understandings on authority in moral discernment, and subsequently attended a consultation in Germany in the summer on this subject convened by the Commission's working group on moral discernment.

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

162. The WCC brings a sense of unity and coherence in the life of the ecumenical movement that the world may believe. This joint platform therefore offers enormous opportunities for building Christian confidence across the globe.