

**A CONFIDENT CHURCH IN A PLURALISTIC EUROPE – A CONTINUING  
JOURNEY**

**THE REPORT OF THE MEISSEN COMMISSION  
2012-2016**

**The Church of England and the Evangelical Church in Germany**

In Memoriam  
Bishop Dr Friedrich Weber  
Co-Chair of the Meissen Commission 2008 – 2015

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## FOREWORD

1 The Meissen Agreement between the Church of England (CE) and the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD) was signed in 1991. It has allowed the development of important and far-reaching relationships between the two churches at every level and remains a model for other ecumenical agreements. This report concludes the first 25 years of Meissen.

2 Partnerships between parishes and dioceses are vital, and they often prove to be very fruitful. Not only have churches and individuals learned to look at God, the world and Christian faith - and, not least, the life of their parish - through different eyes, but also the scandal of Christian division has been experienced for real. Our churches have still not achieved the full visible unity that comes through the interchangeability of ministries and mutual recognition of Confirmation.

3 However, our agenda during the last quinquennium has directed us towards our common vocation as large churches in Europe to engage together in mission for the sake of the kingdom of God. We framed our agenda around the EKD's Reformation year themes and this enabled us to address together not only the impact of the Reformation on our churches and societies, but also to explore afresh the needs of contemporary churches to continue being reformed. To this end we have paid attention to themes such as politics, the media, education and interfaith matters.

4 The next quinquennium will allow us to take our work further. We need not lose the ecclesiological search for full visible unity, but simultaneously must continue to focus on the common mission of the church in Europe. Themes might include the environment, poverty, liturgy, and spirituality. The fact of Brexit forms the context in which our relationships must be strengthened.

5 The last quinquennium began with Bishop Professor Dr Friedrich Weber as the German co-chair. Bishop Weber, an Ecumenical Canon of Blackburn Cathedral, retired from his post as Bishop of Braunschweig in 2014. After a short illness, he died at the beginning of 2015. We mourn his loss and are deeply grateful for his friendship, leadership and wisdom. Our grateful thanks goes to Bishop Dr Sigurd Rink who was the interim German co-chair. At the Meissen Commission meeting in Munich, we were delighted to welcome as the new German co-chair Ralf Meister, Bishop of Hannover, and look forward to the next quinquennium with him.

6 The work would not be possible without the excellent engagement and administrative support from the co-secretaries, Dr Leslie Nathaniel and OKR Christoph Ernst. The Revd Canon Dr Leslie Nathaniel left his post after our final meeting in Munich in order to become the Chaplain of the Anglican Church of St Thomas Becket in Hamburg. We are grateful for his friendship and excellent service.

7 We commend this report to our churches and the future work of Meissen to God who is faithful and who calls us to greater unity for the sake of the world for which Christ died and was raised to new life.

*The Right Revd Nicholas Baines, Bishop of Leeds and Anglican Co-chair  
Bishop Ralf Meister, Bishop of Hanover and German Co-chair  
January 2017*

## **MAIN THEMES**

8 Building on the recommendations of the last Quinquennium and the commitment of both churches to share a common life and mission on the journey towards full visible unity, the following represent the main themes under discussion in the 2012 to 2016 Quinquennium.

### **REFORMATION**

9 We have been working together as partners during the German Reformation Decade. The theological conference in 2016 worked on the Theme *Reformation Then and Now*. Dr Margot Käßmann gave a Keynote speech at the 2014 Commission meeting in Spandau. As well as aligning our programme with the themes of the German Reformation decade, the Commission is involved in marking this Jubilee in the Church of England in 2017 (see para 52).

### **MUSIC**

10 The Meissen Commission engaged with the Reformation theme of music by consideration of both Luther and Bach in Eisenach. Furthermore, Prof. Dr Corinna Dahlgrün let us into a consideration of church music to the present day.

Example 1: Prior to the Meissen Commission meeting in Eisenach, Prof. Corinna Dahlgrün led a visit of German students to London to experience the variety of liturgy and music in Church of England Worship today.

### **TOLERANCE AND INTERFAITH ENGAGEMENT**

11 This was considered in the context of the multi-faith city of Bradford through its schools, churches and business contacts.

Example 1: We visited a Church of England Academy and also a primary school with a large majority of Muslim students. We also met the vicar of a church in an area with an 80% ethnic majority and discussed the theme with local business leaders of different faiths.

Example 2: The Meissen Delegation Visit took place in England in May 2013 at the St Philip's Centre in Leicester. It was hosted by the Bishop of Leicester, the Rt Rev Tim Stevens and was the earliest opportunity for the new Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd and Rt Hon Justin Welby to meet Präses Dr Nikolaus Schneider, the then Chair of the EKD Council.

### **RELIGION AND POLITICS**

12 We considered the Reformation theme of religion and politics in a year when we were commemorating the outbreak of World War 1. The session began with a meeting with the President of the German Bundestag, Dr Norbert Lammert, followed by discussions with an EKD representative in the Bundestag.

Example 1: Commemorating WW1 – Bishop Petra Bosse-Huber took part in a British televised national service of commemoration at Westminster Abbey.

Example 2: Partnerships marked this commemoration in many different ways. At the Commission meeting in Berlin we visited the Plötzensee Memorial Centre (dedicated to commemorating the victims of National Socialism) and the Ecumenical Gedenkzentrum Plötzensee.

### **MEISSEN SCHOOLS INITIATIVE**

13 The Commission publicised the Meissen Agreement at the conference of the Anglican Association of Secondary Head teachers, and a Meissen bookmark was distributed to them. A letter has been sent to all Heads of Church of England Secondary Schools and Academies, inviting them to be part of this project. A long term aim would be to have a network of Meissen Schools. To this end Richard Parrish represented the Commission on the European Steering Group of the (currently named) Protestant 500 Reformation Schools.

Example: A day conference at Church House, Westminster, brought together representatives of the European Steering Group, Heads of British Schools, members of the Commission and the Church of England Chief National Education Officer, the Revd Nigel Genders. Participants took part in a lesson on “what does the Reformation mean” taught to A Level students, as well as sharing information on education patterns in Germany and England.

### **IMAGE AND BIBLE**

14 At the Commission meeting in Liverpool we addressed the differences and similarities between the engagement of our two churches with the media and the way in which we proclaim the Gospel in an age of biblical illiteracy.

Together with the Church of England’s Deputy Communications Director, Rachel Harden, the Commission visited the BBC at Media City Salford and met the staff responsible for commissioning and producing the BBC’s religious broadcasting.

### **ONE WORLD**

15 Celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Meissen Commission at its meeting in Munich considered one of the biggest challenges facing the world today: migration and refugees. The Free State of Bavaria led the way in welcoming refugees and migrants from some of the world's worst conflict-ridden areas to Germany. The British government has resisted welcoming refugees, even some of the most vulnerable children and young people.

16 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 Bavaria.

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.

17 The Commission, bringing together the diverse experiences of Germany and England, united in urging the churches to be realistic in facing the challenges of both refugees and host communities. Christian engagement must be based on articulating and demonstrating a confident narrative of hope and the rejection of a narrative of fear - fear of 'the other', fear of uncertainty, fear for the future.

18 The Meissen Commission urges 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. This generation of refugees will not forget how they have been treated, and this experience will fuel the conflicts, grievances or peaceful integration of the next generations.

19 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.

20. A special guest at the Commission meeting was Präses Dr Irmgard Schwaetzer, the Chair of the EKD Synod. She has been appointed as a full member of the Commission for the Quinquennium 2017-2021.

## **RECIPROCAL ACTIVITIES**

### ***PARTNERSHIPS***

21 Paragraph 1 of the Meissen Implementation Agreement provides for the encouragement of partnerships at all levels and the development of such links has been one of the successes of the Agreement.

22 There are currently some 35 active partnerships involving a Church of England diocese and a Landeskirche (Regional Church) in Germany (see page 19). These vary from those involving only an individual parish-to-parish link to those that operate on multiple levels involving parishes, deaneries, diocesan institutions and diocesan leadership. The Commission has prepared and is maintaining a database of contacts in both countries. Many are now long-lived enough to be facing handing over to the next generation, including developing a new set of good personal relationships, which are vital to the life of any partnership.

23 The previous Quinquennial Reports have given details of typical partnership activities, and the overall pattern has remained unchanged, though individual links fluctuate in their intensity, and there is constant financial pressure, especially on the English side.

Example 1: There is a Three Confessions Conference which involves Roman Catholics in the Diocese of Worcester and EKM partnership. This has ranged over many of the Meissen themes, including interfaith, a Soul for Europe, the Bible in the light of Luther's translation and the authorised version, and in 2016 an ecumenical pilgrimage to Magdeburg.

Example 2: As part of a Local Ecumenical Project a German pastor from Nürnberg has been serving as an assistant minister in the parish of Leominster in the Hereford Diocese.

### **MEISSEN THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCES**

24 As part of the implementation of the Meissen Agreement, the Church of England and the EKD have agreed 'to continue official theological conversations' in order to 'encourage the reception of the theological consensus and convergence already achieved and to work to resolve the outstanding differences'.

#### **The Eighth Meissen Theological Conference**

25 The Eighth Meissen Theological Conference under the theme *Ecclesial Communion in the Service of Reconciliation* was held at Martin-Niemöller-Haus Arnoldshain from 11- 14 February 2014.

26 In the context of the centenary of the outbreak of World War 1, and recognising that "we cannot change the past, but are responsible for how we remember it," the Conference addressed questions of Church relationships, patriotism and theology as they shape our common life in the Europe of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The leitmotif of this discussion was 'reconciliation' as experienced, as desired, and as a motivation for our churches' engagement in wider society.

27 This Conference was co-chaired by the Bishop of London, the Rt Revd and Rt Hon Richard Chartres KCVO and Prof Dr Friederike Nüssel (Systematic Theology, Heidelberg).

28 Papers from this Theological Conferences are available on the websites of both our churches at: <https://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/work-other-churches/europe/the-meissen-agreement.aspx> and [http://www.ekd.de/international/partnerkirchen/england/2014\\_8theol\\_konferenz.html](http://www.ekd.de/international/partnerkirchen/england/2014_8theol_konferenz.html)

#### **The Ninth Meissen Theological Conference**

29 The ninth Meissen Theological Conference met in London at the Royal Foundation of St. Katherine between the 12th and 15th of January 2016. The conference addressed the theme *Reformation Then and Now: Anglican and Protestant Perspectives*. The title was prompted by the impending 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation in 2017. The papers presented reflected the variety of meanings inherent in the title: Reformation is

both an event to be interpreted and remembered, and a task to which the Church is called in the 21st no less than in the 16th century.

30 Right understanding of the historical events of the Reformation in our two countries is of great importance. We were helped in this task by papers which addressed the question of memory and commemoration in our respective contexts and through reflection on points of contact and contrast between the ideas of English and Continental Reformers. That some of this took place in the setting of a day visit to Cambridge where the English Reformation began was especially helpful. However, we are also aware of a danger towards which some of our other papers pointed. Uncertainty about the future, especially in an increasingly secular, unstable, and troubled European and geopolitical context, might cause us to seek security in examining a past upon which we feel able to gain a stable 'fix' rather than engaging with the present, which we cannot or do not wish to understand let alone control. The contributions of the ninth Meissen Theological Conference have been published at the Evangelische Verlagsanstalt Leipzig with the title "Reformation Then and Now" (ISBN 978-3-374-04563-1). This book is available through the offices of the Meissen co-secretaries.

31 In light of the above the Meissen Theological Conference affirmed the contribution Meissen needs to make: to encourage our churches to keep telling the Christian story; to find new ways of enabling England and Germany to remind Europe of its formative Christian history and rooted identity; and to offer our two countries a different way of looking at the world, thinking about the world and living in the world.

### **MEISSEN DELEGATION VISIT**

32 One of the key Meissen commitments concerns 'joint oversight'. The participating churches invite once in the lifetime of each of their Synods a delegation (in all two visits). The last delegation visit was in Meissen, Germany 2011. The 2013 Leicester visit, hosted by the Church of England, was the first visit in the new Quinquennium and was a 20 person 'Meissen Group' from both Germany and England.

33 Delegates from both churches shared a pilgrimage through the interfaith landscape in Leicester, which included engagement with Sikh, Hindu and Muslim communities as well as coming to understand the experience and strategy of the Diocese of Leicester in its long evolving interfaith dialogue, engagement and partnership.

34 This occurred against the background of the murder of one of the serving British servicemen in Woolwich which sharpened the focus on interfaith dialogue and engagement and coincided with the visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby and the Chair of the EKD Council, Präses Nikolaus Schneider to the Meissen Delegation.

35 The Archbishop of Canterbury in his opening message to the delegations emphasised that *ecumenism is the oxygen of mission and evangelism, it is not an extra*. He took the delegation on an ecumenical journey in a context of new realities. There were brewing economic challenges. Furthermore he observed that religious confrontation is economic,

social and personal. These challenges cannot be met if churches are divided. As Christians we are called to provide a theological response. The church has a unique opportunity to present to society a theology of openness and hospitality in the way we carry out our diaconia. Churches are called to be a church across boundaries and recover the confidence in the good news of Christ.

36 The Chair of the EKD Council in his response expressed his joy and honour of meeting and getting to know the Archbishop personally so soon after his enthronement. He spoke of the closer and growing links between our two churches made possible through the Meissen Declaration, and that we were well on the way towards the goal of full visible unity. On Europe he emphasized the mutual obligation of the churches to work together for a Europe of solidarity and social justice, holding on to and building on the common ground already achieved rather than focussing on what divides us. He concluded by highlighting that the Meissen relationship is a signal of the importance of holding on to the goal of full visible unity; it is a signal of the change which is possible through friendship, and it sends out the message of our identity together, building self-confidence as churches in Europe.

37 Delegates shared their own perspectives in creative discussions and it was good to see interfaith activity through different cultural lenses. Furthermore, delegates valued the continual shared hospitality which marked out every visit and discussion and were impressed by the bridge building which Leicester interfaith dialogue models. They were challenged in their own outlook and practice both in England and Germany for future theological reflection and consequent action.

38 Delegates also expressed their thanks to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Chair of the EKD Council for their presence. Delegates especially thanked the Bishop of Leicester who was present throughout the visit and enriched the visit by his leadership and engagement.

#### ***ATTENDANCE AT SYNODS AND EVENTS***

39 Interchange between the two churches at Synods, the Church of England College of Bishops and EKD events has been on a regular basis, strengthening and bringing further visibility to the partnership between the two churches. Attendance at EKD Synods were shared between the Bishop of Leeds, the Ven. Robert Jones, the Revd Canon Dr Leslie Nathaniel and the Bishop of Huddersfield. At Church of England Synods the Präses of the EKD Synod, Dr Irmagard Schwaetzer, the President of the EKD Church House in Hannover, Dr Ulrich Anke, the Bishop of Hannover, Ralf Meister, and the Co-Secretary of the Meissen Commission, OKR Christoph Ernst, were present.

#### ***OTHER VISITS***

40 See Appendix 2 for visits from partners to the Church of England.

#### ***KIRCHENTAG***

41 The relationship between the two churches was also given visibility through the Church of England presence at the Kirchentag in Hamburg (2013) and Stuttgart (2015). The

Church of England is officially represented by the Co-Chair and Co-Secretary of the Commission together with two other appointed representatives. Commission members, present and former, take part in their own right amongst the 200 participants from the UK. The Ven Robert Jones represents the UK on the International Standing Committee of the Kirchentag.

42 The Church of England presence at the Kirchentag is further expressed in a variety of ways: a jointly organised Meissen service, which has regularly had churches filled to capacity; a stand organised by partnership links in the *Markt der Möglichkeiten* ('Market of Opportunities'); the involvement of Church of England representatives (including bishops) in podium discussions and other ecumenical services and events; locally organised Anglican services, such as Choral Evensong in Stuttgart, which are much sought after; and through strong grassroots participation from the UK. The English Co-Chair, then the Bishop of Bradford, Nicholas Baines, preached at the live televised final service of the Hamburg Kirchentag to 120,000 worshippers in Hamburg and hundreds of thousands at German local churches and at home. As Bishop of Leeds he took part in significant public discussions at the Stuttgart Kirchentag along with the German Foreign Minister, Frank Walter Steinmeier and the former General Secretary of the United Nations, Kofi Annan.

## **WIDER RELATIONSHIPS**

### ***CELTIC ANGLICAN CHURCHES***

43 The Scottish Episcopal Church, Church in Wales and Church of Ireland continue to be represented by a shared observer at Meissen Commission meetings. The three churches value their place at the table and the opportunities that flow from it. During this quinquennium it has been the turn of the Church in Wales to undertake the observer's role. Reports from all three Celtic Churches have been taken to Commission meetings. Reports from the Commission meetings, along with EKD Reformation anniversary material, have been distributed to the Celtic Churches. A wide range of areas of work by the churches have been shared with the Commission during that time. Themes of common concern to the Celtic provinces include issues around the beginning and end of life including assisted dying, human sexuality, the ordination of women to the episcopate, ecumenism, reviews of theological education and training and developments in liturgy and hymnody. There has been a variety of social economic and justice concerns, both domestic and international, including foodbanks, the living wage, fair trade and people trafficking.

44 Each province has had its particular focuses during this time as well. The Church of Ireland has begun to mark the centenaries of events leading to the creation of the Republic of Ireland. The Scottish Episcopal Church's Grosvenor essay series looked at the Church and Scottish identity ahead of the 2014 Scottish independence referendum. The Church in Wales, looking towards 2020 and centenary of its disestablishment, has been busy implementing recommendations of the 2012 Harries Review, reshaping church structures for mission in a changing society.

## **SYNOD OF THE GERMAN-SPEAKING CHURCHES IN GREAT BRITAIN (EVANGELISCHE SYNODE DEUTSCHER SPRACHE IN GROSSBRITANNIEN)**

45 The Synod of the German Speaking Congregations in Great Britain comprises six Pfarrämter with 20 congregations representing a great diversity. They all face challenges as generational change has an impact everywhere. Some of the smaller congregations will fade and there might not be a new generation coming through. Others will thrive and face challenges such as people staying for a limited time and then moving on. Finding volunteers who are able to commit themselves for longer periods is proving to be more and more difficult. The fundamental question of what the purpose of German Speaking Congregations in Great Britain is, how it might have changed and what they can add to the existing voices proclaiming the gospel, is an underlying issue in all the structural debates and decisions that have been made in the last five years. In the decade running up to the Reformation Jubilee 2017 the question of *Ecclesia semper reformanda* has kept raising its head.

46 Among the structural changes taking place in the Synod over the last years was the further reduction of clergy. In 2012 the former parochial district (Pfarramtsbereich) of Birmingham and the Midlands had to be given up; the parishes from the Midlands are now being served by colleagues from Manchester and Bristol (and Cambridge). These changes increased the pressure on all pastors and lay people within the Synod to sustain our ecumenical relationships with various other churches in the UK.

47 Most congregations do find themselves in longstanding and much valued ecumenical relationships with the Church of England, the Church in Wales, the Church of Scotland and increasingly also with the Scottish Episcopal Church. This allows various joint ventures. The sensitive issue of joint Remembrance Services shows that the way of reconciliation has regained trust and respect. The Centenary of the Beginning of World War I in 2014 showed a remarkable openness of British people to include Germans in commemorating these painful events together with local German congregations.

48 The result of the Brexit Referendum was unexpected for many and still causes a feeling of uncertainty for many Germans in Britain. The vote will have its effects when the UK exits the European Union. Apart from general economic consequences the effects for so many areas in which Germans work are unforeseeable. This might and will affect the German Speaking Congregations in the nearer future.

## **THE DIOCESE IN EUROPE IN GERMANY**

49 The Church of England has nine chaplaincies in Germany, which are constituted, together with three parishes and three missions of the Episcopal Church in the Council of Anglican Episcopal Churches in Germany. The relationship between the chaplaincies and the Landeskirchen der EKD continues to develop positively. The difficulties with regard to the language have become less important in recent years as more and more Germans, especially those of the younger generation, are able to speak English. We continue to have a challenge with relatively so few Church of England priests speaking German.

50 Reports from chaplaincies highlight not only good working relationships and co-operation, but also the warm and friendly reception Anglican chaplaincies receive from their sisters and brothers in the EKD.

51 All chaplaincies are longstanding members of national and regional bodies of churches in Germany – for example, the ACK's (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen) - and regularly share in ecumenical activities. For example, St Thomas a Becket in Hamburg regularly celebrates a short form of Evensong in the St. Petri Kirche (where all members of Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen celebrate a short service at 17.15 each day from Monday to Friday).

52 Other examples of our work together include Berlin where St George's Church is invited by the Evangelische Marienkirche at Alexander Platz to hold a weekly Sunday evening service, and share regularly with them and neighbouring Evangelische Churches in shared acts of worship.

53 In Freiburg, where the Evangelische Kirche has been twinned with Guildford since 1979, the "Guildford Committee" is an ecumenical group comprising seven members of Freiburg Anglican Church. The Anglican Church in Freiburg also uses the rooms of Petrus Paulus Gemeinde and they put on joint projects such as working with refugees, a conversation group (German-English), and regular shared worship.

### **ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS**

54 In Commission meetings we take note of other significant ecumenical developments (such as developments in the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe, the Conference of European Churches, and the World Council of Churches) and in each other's church relationships. Our relationship with the Porvoo Communion of Churches helps focus us on questions around episcopal ministry.

## **RESOURCES**

### **PUBLICATIONS**

55 The Meissen Commission publications in this Quinquennium were:

- The Eighth Meissen Theological Conference: *Ecclesial Communion in the Service of Reconciliation* (published on the websites of both churches);
- The Ninth Meissen Theological Conference under the theme *Reformation Then And Now Anglican and Protestant Perspectives* (can be obtained in hard copy from the respective churches).

### **MEISSEN PRAYER BOOKMARKS AND FLYERS**

56 The bookmark (text at paragraph 80, page 18) with prayers from both traditions is always well received, widely disseminated and continues to be in use. It was reprinted for the German Kirchentag 2011, and once again proved very popular. In 2011, a Meissen flyer was produced in order to create greater awareness of the Meissen vision to build a

confident Christian church in Europe. The flyer was widely distributed at the German Kirchentag, to partnership groups in both countries, and at other events.

### **MEISSEN LIBRARY OF GERMAN THEOLOGY, DURHAM**

(<https://www.durhamcathedral.co.uk/heritage/library/catalogues>)

57 The library, the gift of the EKD to the Church of England under the Meissen Agreement between the two churches, is the largest gathered collection of theological works in German in England, numbering over 15,000 titles. Particular strengths are the theology, history and practical life of the Protestant Church in Germany in the 19th and 20th centuries. It includes categories of books that are otherwise unavailable in the UK (such as sermons and pastoralia), and provides unrivalled insights into German Christianity at key moments in its history.

58 The Meissen Library is fully integrated into the Durham University and the catalogue is available online at: <https://www.dur.ac.uk/library/meissen/>.

### **MEISSEN COMMISSION MEETINGS**

59 During this Quinquennium the Meissen Commission met once each year in the autumn:

- 2012 Eisenach
- 2013 Bradford
- 2014 Berlin
- 2015 Liverpool
- 2016 Munich

60 The national local committees met three times each year in their respective country between the full Commission meetings.

### **QUINQUENNIUM 2017-2021 POSSIBLE THEMES/TENTATIVE WORKPLAN**

61 The following work plan and suggested themes will help shape the work of the Meissen Commission during the next quinquennium and also support its mandate to pursue full visible unity:

#### **QUINQUENNIUM 2017-2021 – POSSIBLE THEMES/TENTATIVE WORK PLAN**

<b>2017</b>	<b>General Theme: JUBILEE OF REFORMATION Commission Theme: MARTYRIA</b>	<b>MAIN ITEMS</b>	<b>OTHER BUSINESS</b>
<i>21 February</i>	<i>A European Roadmap Way Station, Liverpool (Lutheran led with CCU support)</i>		
<i>23 February</i>	<i>A European Roadmap Way Station, Cambridge (CCU led with Lutheran support)</i>		

<i>25 February</i>	<i>A European Roadmap Way Station, London (Lutheran led with CCU support)</i>		
<i>24-28 May</i>	<i>Kirchentag, Berlin/Wittenberg (Archbishop of Canterbury has been invited to give keynote lecture - awaiting response)</i>		
<i>21-24 September Oxford</i>	<i>Meissen Commission Meeting in England</i>	The Reformation in England and setting the ground for the next years.	
<i>31 October</i>	<i>Reformation anniversary service, Westminster Abbey (Archbishop of Canterbury has agreed to preach)</i>		
<i>November</i>	<i>EKD Synod</i>		
<b>2018</b>	<b>Theme: KOINONIA</b>		
	<i>Possible 10<sup>th</sup> Meissen Theological Conference in Germany</i>	Suggestions: New Atheism; Apologetics in a world of illiteracy.	
<i>20-23 September</i>	<i>Meissen Commission in East Germany (Weimar, Jena or Meissen)</i>	What kind of church fellowship do we have? Living the Gospel together; Church and Secularisation; Individualism versus community.	
	<i>Possible Meissen delegation visit of EKD and CofE to Brussels</i>		
	<i>EKD Synod</i>		
<b>2019</b>	<b>Theme: LEITURGIA</b>		
	<i>Possible Meissen Delegation visit of EKD to England</i>		
	<i>Meissen Commission in England</i>	Spirituality and the new generation; Role of liturgy and worship; the liturgies of our two churches.	

	<i>Kirchentag</i>		
<b>2020</b>	<b>Theme: DIACONIA</b>		
	<i>Possible 11<sup>th</sup> Meissen Theological Conference</i>		
	<i>Meissen Commission in Germany</i>	Poverty, Environment	
<b>2021</b>	<b>Theme: Ecumenism (WCC General Assembly, possibly in Germany or Scotland)</b>		
	<i>Meissen Commission in England</i>		
	<i>Kirchentag</i>		

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### The Meissen Journey continues

62 With the proposed 5 year thematic plan, the Meissen Commission should engage with these themes by way of its theological conferences, delegation visits, commission meetings, the exchange of advisers and consultants and the development of other relationships and ecumenical visitations. Special attention should be given to strengthening the partnership work in certain spiritual care areas (eg school and military chaplaincies) as they have already begun to grow and flourish. The Meissen Commission also recommends evaluating the current status of regular observers (one from the Celtic Churches, one from the Diocese of Europe and one from the German Protestant Churches in the UK) at Commission meetings.

63 In light of the fact of Brexit, the Meissen Commission will seek to ensure that these discussions are rooted in - and develop resources for - the experiences of the work in local and other partnerships, which will be carried forward with renewed energy and vision.

64 In the appointment of members to the Commission, theological conferences and delegation visits, the Meissen Commission notes the need for both churches to give consideration to the nurture of a new generation of ecumenical participants, theologians and experts, especially those with requisite linguistic skills.

## 65 PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER - TEXT OF MEISSEN BOOKMARK

### MEISSEN COMMISSION

Ich danke dir, mein himmlischer Vater, durch Jesus Christus, deinen lieben Sohn, dass du mich diese Nacht vor allem Schaden und Gefahr behütet hast, und bitte dich, du wollest mich diesen Tag auch behüten vor Sünden und allem Übel, dass dir all mein Tun und Leben gefalle. Denn ich befehle mich, meinen Leib und Seele und alles in deine Hände. Dein heiliger Engel sei mit mir, dass der böse Feind keine Macht an mir finde. Amen

*Martin Luther, Morgensegen*



GEMEINSAM UNSERE MISSION  
IN EUROPA ENTDECKEN



Almighty and everlasting God, we thank you that you have brought us safely to the beginning of this day. Keep us from falling into sin or running into danger, order us in all our doings and guide us to do always what is righteous in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

*Common Worship, Daily Prayer  
(Morning Prayer on Wednesdays)*

### MEISSEN COMMISSION MEISSEN COMMISSION

Lighten our darkness, Lord, we pray, and in your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night, for the love of your only Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

*Common Worship Daily Prayer  
(Evening Prayer for Sundays)*



DISCOVERING OUR COMMON  
MISSION IN EUROPE



Bleibe bei uns, Herr, denn es will Abend werden, und der Tag hat sich schon geneigt. Bleibe bei uns und bei deiner ganzen Kirche. Bleibe bei uns am Abend des Tages, am Abend des Lebens, am Abend der Welt. Bleibe bei uns mit deiner Gnade und Güte, mit deinem heiligen Wort und Sakrament, mit deinem Trost und Segen. Bleibe bei uns, wenn über uns kommt die Nacht der Trübsal und Angst, die Nacht des Zweifels und der Anfechtung, die Nacht der Armut und Not, die Nacht des bitteren Todes. Bleibe bei uns und allen deinen Gläubigen in Zeit und Ewigkeit. Amen

*Evangelische Gesangbuch 896*

### MEISSEN COMMISSION

## APPENDICES

### 1 WHO'S WHO - PARTNERSHIP LINKS

#### a) *LINKS INVOLVING DIOCESES and / or REGIONAL CHURCHES IN THE EKD*

Blackburn	Landeskirche Braunschweig (since 1996)
Canterbury and Dover	Kirchenbezirk Markgräflerland (LK Baden) (since 1994)
Chichester	Ev.-Luth. Kirchenkreis Bayreuth, (Evang.-Luth. Kirche in Bayern)
	Evang. Kirche Berlin-Brandenburg-schlesische Oberlausitz (Coburg-Konferenz) (since 1985)
Durham	Ev.-Luth. Kirche in Norddeutschland (since 1998)
Ely	Ev.-Luth. Kirche in Norddeutschland (since 1990)
Guildford	ACK Freiburg (LK Baden) (since 1979)
Hereford	Kirchenkreis Nürnberg, (Evang. - Luth. Kirche in Bayern) (since 1989)
Leeds	Kirchenkreis Erfurt (EKM), (since 1.11.1997)
Lichfield	Ev.-Luth. Kirche in Norddeutschland (since 1999)
Liverpool	ACK-Köln, Ökum. Städtepartnerschaftsausschuss (LK Rheinland)
London	Evang. Kirche Berlin-Brandenburg-schles. Oberlausitz (since 1998)
Manchester	Kirchenkreis Dortmund (EKvW) , (since 1984)
Sheffield	Kirchenkreis Hattingen-Witten (EKvW), (since 1990)
Wakefield	Kirchenkreis Aachen (LK Rheinland)
Worcester	Propstei Stendal-Magdeburg (EKM), (since 1.6.1998)
	Evangelische Kirche in Mitteldeutschland (since 1998)

#### b) *CATHEDRALS/DOM - und CITY- KIRCHEN*

Blackburn Cathedral	Braunschweiger Dom
Bristol Cathedral	Marktkirche Hannover
Coventry Cathedral	Frauenkirche Dresden
Durham Cathedral	Dom zu Lübeck
Ely Cathedral	Dom zu Schleswig
Lichfield Cathedral	Dom zu Schweriner
St Paul's Cathedral, London	Berliner Dom
Worcester Cathedral	Magdeburger Dom

**c) CHURCH COMMUNITIES/KIRCHENGEMEINDE–KIRCHENGEMEINDE**

Whitstable/Kent	Verband der Ev. Kirchengemeinde im kleinen Wiesental (LK Baden) und der Evang. Kirchengemeinde Teltow (EKBO) (Dreieckspartnerschaft) (since 1987)
Findon, Clapham u. Patching	Kirchengemeinde Schney (LK Bayern)
St Nicholas Arundel	Kirchengemeinde Stegaurach (LK Bayern)(since 2002)
Durrington	Kirchengemeinde Münchberg, (LK Bayern)(since 1996)
All Saints Crowborough	Kirchengemeinde Pegnitz (LK Bayern)
Findon-Patching-Clapham	Kirchengemeinde Schney (LK Bayern) (since 2014)
Poulton-le-Fylde	Kirchengemeinde Flöthe (LK Braunschweig) (since 1997)
St Francis, Dudley	Ev. Auferstehungsgemeinde Bremen-Hastedt )(LK Bremen), (since 1987)
St Marys Painswick	Kirchengemeinde St. Albani, Göttingen (LK Hannovers) (since 1995)
Hull	Christuskirche Bad Vilbel (LK Hessen Nassau) (since 1999)
Exeter	Christuskirche Bad Homburg (LK Hessen Nassau)
Isle of Man	Kirchengemeinde Rod an der Weil und Kirchengemeinde Merzhausen-Lauken (LK Hessen Nassau)
Watford	Kirchengemeinde Gonsenheim (LK Hessen Nassau)
London	Christuskirche Watenborn Steinberg Pohlheim (LK Hessen Nassau)
Warboys	Christianskirche Hamburg-Ottensen (Nordkirche)
Whittlesey and Pondersbridge	Kirchengemeinde Wyk auf Föhr (Nordkirche)
Blaydon & Swalwell	Eirene-Gemeinde Hamburg Langenhorn (Nordkirche)
Blackwell, Darlington	Kirchengemeinde Stellingen, Hamburg (Nordkirche)
Egglescliffe	Kirchengemeinde Eddelak (Nordkirche)
Swaffham Prior	Kirchengemeinde Joldelund (Nordkirche)
Norwich	Kirchengemeindeverband Koblenz (LK Rheinland)
Milton Keynes	Pauluskirchengemeinde Leipzig-Grünau (LK Sachsens) (since 1987)
Birmingham	Bethanienkirchengemeinde (LK Sachsens)
Kenilworth	Kirchengemeinde Maria am Wasser Dresden-Hosterwitz (LK Sachsens) (since 1997)
Airmyn, Hook,Rawcliffe	Kirchengemeinde Witten-Annen (EKvW) (since 2007)
St Luke Cannock	Kirchengemeinde Datteln (EKvW)(since 2000)
St Matthew, Wigmore	Kirchengemeinde St. Petri-Nicolai Dortmund (EKvW) (ruht)
Ely Team Ministry	Kirchenkreis Nordfriesland (Nordbezirk) (Nordkirche) (since 2004, LEP)

*There are also numerous parish-to-parish partnerships, both within diocesan links and outside them, partnerships between ecumenical groupings, and partnerships based on civic twinning, but space does not allow all of these to be listed.*

## 2 MEISSEN COMMISSION MEMBERS

- **Church of England**

The Right Revd Nicholas Baines (Co-Chair)

The Right Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs

The Ven Robert Jones

Mr Richard Parrish

The Revd Helen Azer (until 2013)

The Revd Dr Cally Hammond (from 2014 until 2015)

Prof Morwenna Ludlow (from 2017)

The Revd Canon Dr Leslie Nathaniel (Co-Secretary 2009-2016)

- **EKD**

Bishop Dr Friedrich Weber (Co-Chair until Jan 2015)

Military Bishop Dr Sigurd Rink (Interim Co-Chair from Jan 2015 until April 2016)

Bishop Ralf Meister (Co-Chair from April 2016)

Bishop Susanne Breit-Keßler (from April 2015)

Präses Dr Irmgard Schwaetzer (from 2017)

Pfarrer Dr Christof Theilemann

Prof Dr Dr h.c. Michael Weinrich

Dr Elke Eisenschmidt

Birgit Holstein

Oberkirchenrat Christoph Ernst (Co-Secretary)

- **Observers**

Revd Canon Christopher Jage-Bowler (Diocese in Europe)

Revd James Harris (Celtic Anglican Churches until 31.01.2016; from 2017 Revd Kenneth Fleming from the Scottish Episcopal Church will be the observer)

Revd Dr Ulrich Lincoln (until 31.06.2016) and Revd Verena Jantzen (from 01.07.2016) (German Synod in Great Britain)

## 3 NOTABLE VISITS OF GERMAN PARTNERS TO ENGLAND 2013-16

Date	Group name & contact person	Programme arranged so far
2013 27 May – 4 June	Group of area deans (10) from Hessen-Nassau led by Annegret Puttkammer and Hans-Hermann Pompe	Bishop John Finney to speak to group in Church House on 29 May.

4 -7 June	MÖWE - 12 pastors from Churches of Westphalia and Rhineland	Visit to Church House - Presentation by Leslie Nathaniel on Church of England structure, different forms of ministry, variety of relations, challenges, followed by discussion. Visit to St Philip's Centre, Leicester – "Church in Intercultural Context". Evaluation.
10 June	20 pastors from Nagold, Württemberg (led by Markus Kalkofen)	Request for evening visit to Anglican parish (part of study visit to London) – Church of England: History Structure, Relationships at German YMCA
24-30 June	Schwäbisch Gmünd Pfarrkonvent – staying at St Katharine's and Indian YMCA	Meeting at St Katharine's on 25 June with Bob & Mary Hopkins on Anglican church planting. Other inputs: Dr Martin Davie and Leslie Nathaniel; Additional input on Presence and Engagement initiative from Leicester; Work session with German pastors at Church House; Evensong.
27 June	10 pastors from Hannover Landeskirche led by Revd Dirk Stelter	Bishop John Finney to speak to group in Church House. Evensong at Westminster Abbey
27-30 June	Konfessionskundliches Institut Bensheim (15 in total including Bishop Weber, Charlotte Methuen, possibly Christoph Ernst)	Request to visit Lambeth Palace Library. Meeting with Bishop Christopher Hill.
1 Sept for a few days	Group of Lutheran visitors from Kurhessen-Waldeck led by Pfarrer Juergen Wolf	Visiting London to learn about the Church of England. Visited churches including Holy Trinity Brompton, St Paul's Cathedral, St Martin's in the Fields, All Souls Langham Place.
<b>2014</b> 25-30 March	Oliver Schuegraf (VELKD) leading group from VELKD Council	Visits to Leeds, Blackburn, Coventry & London. 28 March: Meet Archbishop of Canterbury, tree planting in Lambeth Palace garden, tour of Library. Visit Church House for presentations by Research and Statistics; and Church Commissioners on ethical investments.
July	Präses Dr Irmgard Schwaetzer, Chair of the EKD Synod	Attended and addressed the York sessions Church of England Synod

21-26 July	Christiane Vogel, dean of Lutheran Church District of the Upper Rhine Valley, Baden, leading group of 40 ministers and their partners	22 July: tour of the city and cathedral, meeting with Bishop of Dover, the Right Revd Trevor Willmott
29 July-5 August	Göppingen Youth Symphony Orchestra	Concert at Southwark Cathedral and St Pancras Church (fundraising event for the London Festival of Contemporary Church Music)
September	Members of London Diocese, led by an archdeacon	Partnership visit to Berlin
<b>2015</b> January	The Regional Bishop of Bavaria, Susanne Breit-Keßler	Attended the consecration of the Bishop of Stockport, the first woman bishop in the Church of England
19-22 March	Matthias Hiller with small group from ecumenical office in Württemberg	Exposure to ecumenical work, London
May	Group of 20 from Württemberg, led by Ernst Schmidt	Exposure to Church of England, including visits to York, Cambridge and London (meeting held at Lambeth Palace, 20 May)
November 2015	Präses Dr Irmgard Schwaetzer, Chair of the EKD Synod	Attended the Church of England Inaugural Synod in London
<b>2016</b> 14-17 April	Dr Christof Theilemann and members of Berliner Missionswerk's UK Advisory Council's Executive Committee: Superintendent (Dean) The Revd Carsten Bolz, Wilmersdorf-Charlottenburg Deanery, Chairperson; The Revd Barbara Killat, EKBO Chaplain for Migration and Integration; The Revd Ursula Zohren-Busse, Potsdam; Mrs Brigitte Kucerova, Secretary, Berliner Dom; The Revd Florian Kunz, Berlin-Schöneberg (previously worked at St Luke's, West Kilburn, for a year)	Meet Berlin Mission volunteers and have a conversation with their local priests on how things are going
27-28 April	Members of Steering group of <i>Schools Reformation 500</i>	Meeting of Steering group hosted by Richard Parrish at Archbishop Tenison's Church of England High School, Croydon. Followed by Meissen UK launch event of <i>Schools Reformation 500</i> at Church House.

20-24 June	Group of 21 from Württemberg, led by Pfarrer Hans Georg Schmid	Parish visit to London, including Church House on 21 June
July 2016	The Bishop of Hannover, Ralf Meister, Co-Chair of the Meissen Commission	Attended and addressed the York sessions of the Church of England synod