

**ANNUAL REPORT ON CHURCH OF ENGLAND'S
ECUMENICAL RELATIONS 2017**

**COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY &
LAMBETH PALACE**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION TO ANNUAL REPORT ON ECUMENICAL RELATIONS.....	3
<i>SECTION ONE: RELATIONS WITH OTHER CHURCHES</i>	6
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND	6
EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCHES	7
EVANGELISCHE KIRCHE IN DEUTSCHLAND: MEISSEN COMMISSION	8
FRENCH PROTESTANT CHURCHES: THE REUILLY CONTACT GROUP.....	10
METHODIST CHURCH: JOINT ADVOCACY AND MONITORING GROUP (JCAMG)	11
METHODIST CHURCH: METHODIST ANGLICAN PANEL FOR UNITY AND MISSION (MAPUM)	13
OLD CATHOLIC CHURCHES OF THE UNION OF UTRECHT	15
ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES	15
PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES: ANGLICAN PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGICAL STEERING GROUP	16
PORVOO COMMUNION OF CHURCHES	18
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH: ENGLISH ANGLICAN ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMITTEE (ENGLISH ARC)	19
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH: ANGLICAN ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMITTEE IN FRANCE	20
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH: ANGLICAN ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMITTEE IN BELGIUM	23
<i>SECTION TWO: ECUMENICAL INSTRUMENTS</i>	24
CHURCHES TOGETHER IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND	24
CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ENGLAND	26
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES (CEC)	28
WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES.....	29

Introduction to Annual Report on Ecumenical Relations

Changing times

1. 2017 was a year of change and transition in a number of ways for ecumenical relations. Sadly, it was marked by the deaths of three people who were serving the cause of Christian unity for the Church of England in different but crucial ways: Bishop Geoffrey Rowell, who was lead bishop for relations with the Oriental Orthodox churches; Bishop John Wraw, who was the co-chair of Methodist Anglican Panel for Unity in Mission; and Francis Bassett, Assistant Secretary for the Council for Christian Unity (CCU) and a long-standing member of staff at Church House. We are saddened by their deaths and our prayers go to all their family and friends.
2. These can seem like confusing times for ecumenism. It is easy to be disheartened by the lack of progress towards unity at national and international level – and by the appearance of fresh fault lines and areas of stress in relationships. Yet as a brief look through the full Annual Report will show, dialogues between Anglicans and other churches of all kinds remain strong and vibrant, tackling a wide range of topics, doctrinal, spiritual, missional and practical. Moreover, the publication in 2017 of *Mission and Ministry in Covenant* on proposals for interchangeability of ordained ministries between the Church of England and the Methodist Church shows that there is a deep reservoir of imagination and energy for overcoming historic divisions, and for taking decisive steps towards the visible unity of the church, to which the Church of England and the Anglican Communion remain committed.
3. Nonetheless, the research undertaken by Theos in the course of their review of Churches Together in England brought sharply into focus the lack of consensus among the churches as to the kind of unity to which we are called (report available at <https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/cmsfiles/Reportfiles/CTE-report.pdf>). It also affirmed, however, the strong desire across the churches to hold together unity and mission – that the churches need to meet the challenges of sharing the gospel in our society together, and that our ecumenical relationships and structures need to bear fruit in mission. There is a vital question here as to whether the Church of England can uphold and promote a vision of unity that is being made visible to the world in relationships of love and trust that hold us together in the one body of Christ and that speak of the transforming reality of reconciliation. At the same time, that vision needs to be earthed in the everyday life of Christian communities. That underlines the importance of the CCU's current research project on missional cooperation that will be taken forward in 2018.

A landmark year

4. 2017 was a major historical landmark for the churches worldwide: the 500th anniversary of the Reformation – to use the short title, into which all manner of qualifications might be inserted. Although much of the energy and resources for this came originally from Germany, unlike previous Reformation centenaries this

was a truly global and ecumenical occasion, as was made clear by the way commemorations began on the 31st October 2016 with a joint Catholic – Lutheran commemoration held in Lund in Sweden, where Pope Francis shared in leading prayers with the President and the General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation.

5. The paper prepared by the Faith and Order Commission for the debate in February at General Synod on the Reformation Anniversary identified three significant opportunities for the Church of England. These were:
 - strengthening relations with partner churches in Continental Europe, including the Evangelical Church in Germany (Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland – EKD) and the Lutheran churches of the Porvoo Communion;
 - deepening reconciliation between churches historically divided by the events of the Reformation, in England and internationally;
 - promoting reflection within the Church of England and in wider society on the continuing significance of the theological themes of the Reformation, with the good news of Jesus Christ being at the centre of that.
6. A wide range of events and initiatives have been valuable in taking those opportunities during 2017. Highlights have included:
 - the Archbishops' statement on the Reformation anniversary, released in January;
 - a Porvoo consultation held in Norway in February on 'Identity, Memory and Hope: the continuing significance of reformations for our churches and societies', in which the Church of England representatives participated fully, including giving one of the papers;
 - the General Synod debate in February on the Anniversary of the Reformation, which passed a resolution that gave thanks to God for the blessings of the Reformation, welcomed signs of convergence between the churches on the doctrine of salvation, and commended initiatives to foster mutual understanding and reconciliation during the anniversary year;
 - a day on 'The Reformation Then and Now' in Cambridge on 23rd February, organised jointly with the Council for Lutheran Churches, including a seminar for which the main speaker was Lord Williams of Oystermouth and coinciding with the arrival of the 'Reformation Truck' touring Europe;
 - Church of England participation in the Kirchentag in Berlin in May, where the Archbishop of Canterbury was one of the opening speakers and then led a Bible Study;
 - the Meissen Commission meeting in Oxford in September, with the theme being the Reformation Jubilee;

- a conference on 'Responding to the Reformation' in October organised by Churches Together in England, again with strong Church of England participation, including two of the plenary speakers;
- the service at Westminster Abbey on 31st October, organised by the Council for Lutheran Churches, at which the Archbishop of Canterbury preached and then made a presentation of the text of the Anglican Consultative Council's resolution regarding the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* to representatives of the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church.

Looking ahead

7. For those who have been closely involved in these and many other events nationally and internationally, there is much to ponder and much on which to build in terms of new levels of understanding and the strengthening of our relationships. The three opportunities mentioned at paragraph 5 above are also, however, abiding challenges for the whole Church of England. Relations with churches in Continental Europe have the potential to contribute to our life in new ways as we move towards Brexit. The wounds of division, violence and mistrust inflicted during the long Reformation in this country of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries run very deep and still await full healing. The hope of the Reformers was that the good news of salvation would be made available to all and that everything in the life of the church would speak of the gospel. That remains a task for every generation, not just the work of one, and a task for which the churches need one another, as globalization and secularization are together making very clear. For the sake of making the gospel known, and the renewal and reform of the church that must always accompany this, we cannot forget that we are 'members one of another' in the one body of Christ (Romans 12.5; cf. Ephesians 4.25).

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

The Rt Revd Tim Thornton
Bishop at Lambeth

SECTION ONE: RELATIONS WITH OTHER CHURCHES

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

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

Background

8. Following a lengthy and uneven history of contacts between the Church of England and the Church of Scotland, the Columba Declaration was formally signed late in 2016, when the Moderator of the General Assembly made his annual St Andrewside visit to London.
9. Under the Columba Agreement, a 'Contact Group' has been established with the joint chairs being a former Moderator, the Very Revd Dr Angus Morrison (who is the current CofS ecumenical representative on General Synod), and the Bishop of Chester.

Activities and Developments

10. The Contact Group held its first meeting in mid-November, where it reviewed a wide range of issues. A representative of the Scottish Episcopal Church took full part in the first meeting of the Contact Group.
11. Historically, there have been biennial staff level meetings between the Church of England and the Church of Scotland, organised from Church House, and with the Archbishop of York present. The next such meeting is scheduled for 2018. The Contact Group considered how it might support the forthcoming meeting and what the relation might be in future, with a focus on practical collaboration.
12. Dr Jamie Harrison was the Church of England's representative at the General Assembly in 2017. Perhaps the most significant development was a decision in principle to permit Church of Scotland ministers to conduct same-sex marriage ceremonies, and this matter now awaits implementation following analysis of the relevant legal questions.
13. Significant changes of personnel occurred in 2017, with the retirement of the Very Revd Sheilagh Kesting as Ecumenical Officer, and of the Very Revd John Chalmers as Principal Clerk, whose role was somewhat akin to a mixture of Archbishop and Secretary General. The Revd Dr John McPake, who co-chaired the Columba process, is the new Ecumenical Officer, and the Revd Dr George Whyte is the new Principal Clerk.

Challenges and Opportunities

14. These are early days in the post-Columba period, and a sense of consolidation is appropriate. The Church of England and the Church of Scotland share a heritage

as 'national' churches, albeit differently expressed, but at parish level the dynamics are remarkably similar, as are the challenges and opportunities we face. It is hoped that each year the Contact Group can focus on a particular area, and share our wisdom from our related but different perspectives.

EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCHES

Lead bishop: the Rt Revd Jonathan Goodall, Bishop of Ebbsfleet

Background

15. The Church of England had ad hoc connections with the Eastern Byzantine Churches from within a century of its autonomy from Rome – a time when only Russia had any autocephaly from the four patristic centres of Orthodoxy. As a further 9 churches gained autocephaly in the 19th and 20th centuries bilateral relations were also developed, by connection with the see of Canterbury as well as individual other clergy and internationalist lay people. The Anglican Eastern Churches Association and later the Fellowship of SS Alban and Sergius, and then the World Council of Churches, were among the groups that increased mutual contact and promoted early theological conversation. Following the Vatican Council these contacts were consolidated in the familiar modern international dialogue mode, bringing together representatives of 14 autocephalous local Orthodox churches and representatives of the more numerous provinces of our Communion. That body works under the oversight of Anglican Communion Office staff.

Activities and developments in the past year

16. At the beginning of 2017, the Bishop of Ebbsfleet took over the role of lead bishop for relations with Eastern Orthodox churches from the then Bishop of London, in time to be the Anglican Communion delegate for the **Holy and Great Council on Crete**. Two points stand out regarding this momentous event.
17. First, despite various challenges and the absence of four of the local churches, the council actually *happened*, and arrived at a series of *modest but real agreed documents* which are currently being assessed and approved in local processes in all Orthodox churches. (Since the Council was convened by *unanimous decision* of the primates, notwithstanding non-attendance by some, the decisions of the Council are available for all *to endorse retrospectively*.) It is a live question as to *when* another council will be convened and what lessons will be applied from the ice-breaking event of 2016 (Romania has formally offered to host the next Council), but there is consensus *that* one should be convened.
18. The second comment concerns the council's landmark ecumenical document, 'The relations of the Orthodox Church with the rest of the Christian world'. While there was a dispute on the council floor, and a compromise wording reached, as to the use of the word 'church' to describe non-Orthodox Christian bodies, the fundamental point is that for *the first time in any collectively authoritative way* the Orthodox Church has affirmed its *involvement* in, its own sense of the *goal* of, and its method of handling internal *disputes* about, the ecumenical movement. It

is a totally new basis on which to build more formally. Given that ecumenism is itself the major presenting dispute to surface among contemporary Orthodox, this document is both politically and theologically key.

19. The establishment of an **Orthodox Roundtable**, which will bring together both Eastern and Oriental Orthodox affairs, is a very promising development given the increased population of the UK from Orthodox countries, and the simultaneous fact of Orthodoxy being the dominant expression of Christianity in many of the world's global hotspots.
20. The **International Commission** for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue met in Sliema, 14-21 October 2017. This was the second meeting of the second phase of the overall study work of the present Commission, dedicated to exploring the practical consequences of the principles of Christian anthropology. It is hoped that the establishment of a national coordinating committee will be able to promote a certain shadowing in local conversation of the international theological dialogue, to strengthen both.
21. Events in Israel in the summer have led to the swift international engagement of the **Patriarchate of Jerusalem**. On behalf of all the patriarchs and heads of churches in Jerusalem, HB Patriarch Theophilos III has been engaged in several tours of meetings: local heads of state governments, heads of churches (including the Archbishop, after Constantinople, Athens and Rome), to be followed by a governmental and diplomatic tour, all prompted by developments that are seen as significant threats to the Jerusalem *status quo*.

Challenges and opportunities

22. In mid-October, the Bishop of Ebbsfleet was invited to address as an official observer the Pan-Orthodox Assembly of Bishops with churches in GB and Ireland. The assembly readily agreed to his proposal that the Church of England and the Assembly should institute a local coordination committee of the kind enjoyed between ourselves and the Oriental Orthodox. This should enable a more focussed and effective local agenda between our churches.
23. There is a need to expand the range of our bilateral relations with local Orthodox churches. In an age of growing Orthodox conciliarity and joint action, and a range of direct relations with Rome in particular, this is becoming ever more essential. Finally, there is an increasing demand for foreign visits, including some of the most stressed and conflicted places, which will have to be prioritized in conjunction with Lambeth.

EVANGELISCHE KIRCHE IN DEUTSCHLAND: MEISSEN COMMISSION

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

Background

24. The Meissen Commission oversees and promotes the implementation of the 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 2017, the Church of England was represented by the Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs (stepping in for the Anglican co-chair Rt Revd Nicholas Baines), who will be taking over as lead bishop with effect from 1st January 2018, the Venerable Robert Jones, Professor Morwenna Ludlow, and Professor Mark Chapman (stepping in for Mr Richard Parrish). In July 2017, the Revd Dr Matthias Grebe was appointed as Co-Secretary.

Activities and developments in the past year

25. The Reformation Roadmap 'storymobile' came to Cambridge on Thursday 23 February. A full day of events included a symposium at the Church of St Edward King and Martyr on the theme 'Reformation then and now'.
26. The 36th German Protestant Kirchentag took place from 24 to 28 May 2017 in Berlin and Wittenberg. Reflecting on international ecumenism, interfaith, and intercultural dialogue, it also looked ahead to the next 500 years of Protestantism. The theme of the 2017 Kirchentag was "You see me" (Gen 16.13) and included over 2500 individual events.
27. The 27th annual meeting of the Meissen Commission was held from 21 to 24 September 2017 in Oxford, with a particular focus on the Reformation Jubilee and the political challenges raised by Brexit, as well as the role of the church 'on the ground'.
28. The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs, Bishop of Huddersfield, represented Meissen at the EKD Synod in November 2017 in Bonn.

Challenges and opportunities

29. During the last 10 years the Meissen Commission has followed the Reformationsdekade themes. However, the current quinquennium will take attention in a different direction under the co-chairmanship of Ralf Meister and Jonathan Gibbs.
30. The next Meissen Theological Conference is planned for 2019. There remains a strong desire in both churches to tackle afresh challenges such as the interchangeability of ministers and apostolic succession, and to keep in mind the theme of full visible unity as a driver for the future.
31. Brexit remains a key future concern in terms of the relationship between the Church of England and the continental churches. Questions remain about how bridges should best be built, the role of the church in political debate, and the voice we might have in the public square, as well as practical and logistical support that the churches might show to each other and society during this turbulent time.

FRENCH PROTESTANT CHURCHES: THE REUILLY CONTACT GROUP

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

Background

32. The Reilly 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 Reilly Agreement (1999).

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

- UEPAL: the Lutheran President is Mr Christian Albecker
- EPUDF: the President is the Revd Emmanuelle Seyboldt

34. The Reilly Contact Group members are:

- **French:** Co-Chair – the Revd Christian Krieger; Revd Claire Sixt Gateuille; Revd Alexandra Breukink; Revd Pierre Blanzat (*new member*); Revd. Paolo Morlacchetti (*new member*); Revd Jane Stranz [observer].
- **Anglican:** Bishop John Stroyan, the Venerable Meurig Williams (*new member*) and the Revd Dr Matthias Grebe (*new member*) [Church of England]; the Revd Canon John McLuckie [representative from the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Church in Wales and the Church of Ireland].
- **United Reformed Church:** the Revd Julian Templeton [observer].

Activities and developments in the past year

35. The two Co-Chairs met in February and had good conversations about developing the work of the Group. They drew up a draft agenda for the November meeting and agreed to encourage the pilot scheme for strengthening relations between local churches in France. They also had a useful conversation with Bishop Christopher Hill.

36. The formal meeting of the Reilly Contact Group in 2017 took place in November. The Group met in Larne, Northern Ireland and as one part of the agenda heard from representatives of the Irish Anglican-Methodist Covenant. The group also considered a Reilly liturgical project.

37. Invitations are being issued to Anglican parishes and Lutheran-Reformed churches in five areas of Paris and Strasbourg inviting them to participate in a project designed to strengthen relationships between local churches. It is anticipated that the local churches might start the project by organising a joint service to take place before Christmas. It is planned to have a meeting in March 2018 to share perspectives and experiences around the project.

Challenges and Opportunities

38. At a previous meeting in December 2015, 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 UEPAL has decided to wait;
- changing dynamics in the light of Brexit.

39. 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 ADVOCACY AND MONITORING GROUP (JCAMG)

Lead bishop: the Rt Revd Paul Bayes, Bishop of Liverpool

Background

40. In the words of its report to the Methodist conference, JCAMG ‘continues its work guided, we believe, by the Holy Spirit, with the purpose of helping both our Churches to grow deeper into the covenant relationship we share under God and to express more fully our commitment to mission and unity for the sake of God’s kingdom.’

41. JCAMG recognises that for our two Churches to move forward in covenant, a number of developments are necessary, each of which requires courage and imagination and none of which is sufficient on its own. The proposals to be brought forward by the faith and order bodies of our two Churches need to be set in this wider context and make a difference to the life and mission of our Churches.

42. JCAMG works in conjunction with the faith and order bodies of our two Churches, along with the Joint Subgroup on Ministry and Oversight appointed by them. They have continued to make good progress with the tasks given to them in 2014. Another key partnership is with MAPUM which has also continued to fulfil its key roles. Its work in relation to the Covenant has included exploring the opportunities that deeper communion between our two Churches and interchangeability of presbyteral ministry would offer for our worship, life, and mission.
43. Co-chairs: The Rt Revd Paul Bayes (Bishop of Liverpool), Mr David Walton (Vice-President of the Conference 2008/2009); Church of England Members: The Revd Dr Mike Booker, Mrs Margaret Swinson; Methodist Members: The Revd Dr Caroline Wickens, The Revd Michaela Youngson.

Activities and developments in the past year

44. The Revd Dr Roger Paul had served as one of the Co-Secretaries of our Group and of Methodist-Anglican Panel for Unity in Mission (MAPUM), as well as of the Joint Implementation Commission (JIC) in its latter years. He retired in April and we take this opportunity to record our appreciation of his very significant contribution to developments under the Covenant. We welcome the Revd Dr Callan Slipper as our new Anglican Co-Secretary, and pay tribute to the ongoing work of the Revd Neil Stubbens as our Methodist Co-Secretary
45. JCAMG has met three times in the past year.
46. JCAMG is grateful to MAPUM for recruiting a number of Covenant Champions. A second round of recruitment is in hand and interviews were held in July shortly after the Methodist Conference and General Synod met. We hope that champions will be invited to share in diocesan and district synods and to engage in other ways to raise the profile of Anglican-Methodist joint-working under the Covenant at local and intermediate level as well as to advocate the work being done to enable our two Churches to move towards fuller unity in mission, worship, and holiness.
47. One of the specific tasks of Covenant Champions is to gather and share good stories of that joint working. In the light of the overwhelming support of both the Methodist Conference and the General Synod for the recommendations made by the JIC in 2014, we hope that there are many good stories of our Churches at local and regional level giving priority to making full use of what is already possible for them to do together, especially planning together for mission and worship, deployment of ministry and the use of resources. We look forward to hearing more of those stories and hope that they will inspire even more joint working.

Challenges and opportunities

48. These include:

- to assist the passage into ecclesiastical law and subsequent ecumenical practice of the proposals implementing the theological vision of the Anglican Methodist covenant;

- to monitor and reflect upon any lessons learnt in this progress of the proposals;
- to monitor progress in the areas of joint-working identified in the 2013 and 2014 JIC reports, and to note any new developments.

**METHODIST CHURCH:
METHODIST ANGLICAN PANEL FOR UNITY AND MISSION (MAPUM)**

Lead Bishop: Vacant

Background

49. MAPUM is the coming together of CCU's Local Unity Panel and the Methodist Connexional Committee for Local Ecumenical Development. In the light of the Anglican Methodist covenant these two bodies, which engaged in very similar tasks, merged in July 2009.

50. MAPUM's Mission Statement says: 'MAPUM affirms the inseparability of unity and mission in the context of theology, spirituality and practice. It bridges the central and the local, interpreting one to the other and enabling joint ecumenical work. Its priority focus is to progress the Anglican-Methodist Covenant relationship, seeking to embed it in the lives of the two Churches and to make full use of what is already possible.' This is summed up in the strapline: *Promoting the unity in mission of the whole church at local level, especially through the Anglican-Methodist Covenant.*

Activities and developments in the past year

51. MAPUM has been saddened by the death of its Anglican Co-Chair, John Wraw, Bishop of Bradwell, who served on MAPUM from 19 Oct 2015. His funeral was on Monday 7th August in Chelmsford Cathedral. As was expressed at the funeral, the members of MAPUM are deeply grateful for having known this exemplary Christian.

52. MAPUM has met twice in the past year, in November 2016 and for its residential in March 2017. Its work can be seen under two headings, taken from its strapline:

53. *Of the whole church at local level*

- One focus of the last year on local unity in mission has been the *New Framework for Local Unity in Mission* produced by Churches Together in England. It has been considered in depth, bearing in mind a wide range of input, including from Baptist, URC and Roman Catholic partners. Broadly speaking all are supportive of its approach.
- The Simplification agenda of the Church of England has been another area of work, especially looking at the Code of Practice for the revised Canon B 43.

- On the Methodist side, MAPUM has looked at Joint Confirmation and Sharing Agreements.
- A specific and developing area of work is a theological understanding of unity in mission, seeking both to give a grounding to MAPUM and to shed light on unity in mission more broadly.

54. *Especially through the Anglican-Methodist Covenant*

- MAPUM, in co-operation with JCAMG, has looked at the implications of the interchangeability of ministry for Christian life, worship and mission, especially giving consideration to local examples.
- In relation to this work, and again in conjunction with JCAMG, MAPUM has recruited, in two rounds, 12 Covenant Champions. Their task is to raise the profile of Anglican-Methodist joint working under the Covenant at local and intermediate level, especially by gathering and communicating 'good new stories'. As part of their advocacy, it is hoped that they will be invited to participate in diocesan and district synods.
- There have been changes due to the retirement of two of the National Ecumenical Officers, the Revd Dr Roger Paul and the Revd David Tatem (URC observer). Dr Paul has worked indefatigably and with great skill for MAPUM and Mr Tatem has been a wise and constructive commentator upon MAPUM's work. MAPUM looks forward to collaborating with his successor, the Revd Philip Brooks. A replacement will be needed for the Revd Dr Callan Slipper since he has changed role within MAPUM following his appointment as Dr Paul's successor.

Challenges and opportunities

55. A new Anglican co-chair needs to be found. MAPUM is grateful to the two Archdeacons among its members for filling the breach. The vacant Anglican place on the Panel also needs to be filled.
56. The network of Covenant Champions needs to be monitored and more good news stories gathered.
57. The next developments in the wake of the covenant and the passage of proposals for the interchangeability of ministry need to be carefully monitored and the implications of what eventually happens at each stage will need to be considered. This next phase is crucial also for the Church of England's relationship with other non-episcopal and Protestant churches.
58. The implications of *A New Framework for Local Ecumenism* need to be worked out for the local level. This touches both upon the new thinking around local cooperative working and upon the effect of shifting the pastoral responsibility for LEP's from Intermediate Bodies to the parent churches.
59. Consideration will need to be given to the increasing collapse of intermediate level ecumenism.

60. Theological work on the understanding of unity in mission needs to continue.

OLD CATHOLIC CHURCHES OF THE UNION OF UTRECHT

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

61. The Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht have been in communion with the Church of England since the Bonn Agreement of 1931. Old Catholic churches are found in a number of European countries, and particularly in the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland.

62. The Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe attended and took part in the consecration of the new bishop of the Old-Catholic Church in the Czech Republic, Bishop Pavel Stránský on 1 April 2017.

63. In May 2017 groups of Anglican and Old Catholic young people met in Luxembourg for a conference. During this conference the participants issued a declaration (The Willibrord Declaration) expressing concern about discrimination, environmental damage, poverty, the refugee crisis, religious violence, misuse of technology and unethical practices.

64. The Anglican-Old Catholic International Commission met in Bonn in July 2017.

ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES

Lead bishop: the Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, Bishop of Southwark

Background

65. Relationships with the Oriental Orthodox churches in this country are sustained through informal contacts at various levels. Opportunities for giving and receiving hospitality are significant for maintaining and strengthening relationships. The continuing political instability in many of the regions where these churches have their historic homelands and the suffering of their members arising from that have an inevitable and proper bearing on our exchanges. The Anglican-Oriental Orthodox Regional Forum (AOORF) has an important role in providing a regular opportunity to gather people together, review current developments and address issues of current concern. It is co-chaired by His Grace, Bishop Angaelos, the Coptic Bishop of London.

Activities and developments in the past year

66. The death of Bishop Geoffrey Rowell earlier this year was felt as a keen loss for Anglican relations with the Oriental Orthodox churches. Bishop Geoffrey continued to serve well into retirement as the lead bishop for the Church of England in this area, while also being tireless in his engagement with the international theological dialogue between our communions and in maintaining global contacts. The Bishop of Southwark, who was already a member of the Anglican-Oriental Orthodox Regional Forum and has a deep knowledge of its

member churches, has taken over as co-chair and as lead bishop following Bishop Geoffrey's death.

67. AOORF met in September. As well as sharing tributes to Bishop Geoffrey and exchanging news from the churches, it considered the current situation in the Middle East and reflected on the continuing work of the Anglican-Oriental Orthodox International Commission, which is focusing on pneumatology.

68. Although the Orthodox Round Table did not formally meet this year, there was a valuable planning meeting that included the Bishop of Ebbsfleet as lead bishop for the Eastern Orthodox churches as well as the Bishop of Southwark. The plan is to commit to a pattern of annual meetings, which will combine a morning meeting of a core group followed by a themed afternoon drawing in other people for e.g. presentations and discussions. The core group will also meet separately to review and plan.

Challenges and opportunities

69. Public discussion of the plight of Christians in the Middle East, with associated policy issues, is likely to continue as the situation in various countries changes. It is important for views expressed on these matters by those from the Church of England to be informed by dialogue with the churches present in the region, including the Oriental Orthodox churches.

PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES: ANGLICAN PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGICAL STEERING GROUP

Lead bishop: the Rt Revd Keith Sinclair, Bishop of Birkenhead

Background

70. Relations nationally between the Church of England and an increasing number of Pentecostal churches have been deepening steadily at both national and local church level. On the Pentecostal side there is a keen desire that conversation and the deepening relationship with the Church of England should bear fruit in terms of public witness, the strengthening of local joint evangelism and outreach into communities, and in growing disciples. Theological dialogue is important, but it must be grounded in praying together, a living relationship, and joint action. Pentecostal leaders relate very positively to the ministry of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Archbishop's themes (renewing prayer and religious life, evangelism and reconciliation) resonate with their aspirations as well as within the Church of England and create, therefore, a synergy for shaping Anglican-Pentecostal relations.

71. Valuing the work already done to increase understanding between Anglicans and Pentecostals, but realizing that more work needs to be done in jointly proclaiming the Gospel and serving the kingdom, CCU and the leaders of Pentecostal churches in membership of CTE set up a steering group (APSTG). Its first meeting was on 25th May 2016. It aims:

- to build theological foundations for Anglicans and Pentecostals to work and pray together in unity, mission and holiness;
- to promote and resource praying and working together at national and local level;
- to facilitate interchange between Anglicans and Pentecostals in their formation as disciples and ministers.

72. The Anglican membership of the Steering Group in 2017 was the Rt Revd Keith Sinclair, the Venerable Jane Steen and the Revd Dr Rosalyn Murphy.

Activities and developments in the past year

73. The APTSG has met twice in the last year, on 20 January 2017 and 12 July 2017. Key issues discussed were:

- *Leadership, and in particular episcopal leadership.* Attention was given to different patterns coming from Africa that affect some Pentecostal communities and current Church of England tensions.
- *Theological education and training.* There was exploration of how Pentecostal institutions might access some provision from Anglican institutions and vice versa and liaison between them has been set in motion. Consideration was given to promoting partnership between specific institutions and exploring how far national frameworks might enable such partnership.
- *Proposals for work on social action and renewal.* Potential partners for an envisaged research project were looked at, among which were the University of Roehampton, the Centre for Contextual Theology, Theos, and CCU. The question was also raised of how far it is useful to focus specifically on Anglican-Pentecostal cooperation.
- *Holding a joint leadership seminar.* The aim would be to bring together church leaders for theological reflection on issues of common concern, such as reconciliation, evangelization in a multicultural society, and the place of social action with regard to witness and discipleship.

74. The *Thy Kingdom Come* event organized by APTSG on 25 May 2017 at Brixton Community Church was extremely successful. There was good representation from the church congregation and from a wide range of church leaders, including the local Roman Catholic priest, alongside the local Anglican vicar, the Archdeacon and (at the end) the Bishop of Woolwich. It was agreed that the APTSG should sponsor an event each year as part of *Thy Kingdom Come*.

75. APTSG wishes to express its profoundest gratitude for the ministry of the Revd Dr Roger Paul, both for his key role in establishing it and for his hard work to ensure the Steering Group's subsequent smooth running. Such support is essential to the group's future work, providing the proper context for its thinking

and helping it take full advantage of the blessings of any events that may be run, such as *Thy Kingdom Come*.

Challenges and opportunities

76. APTSG's terms of reference need to be finalized.

77. Ongoing theological cooperation will need to be monitored.

PORVOO COMMUNION OF CHURCHES

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

Background

78. The Porvoo Communion consists of the signatory churches to the Porvoo Agreement. As well as the Anglican churches of the British Isles and the Nordic and Baltic national Lutheran churches, the signatories are the Lutheran Church in Great Britain, the Latvian Church Abroad, the Lusitanian Church and the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Latvia is not a signatory but sends an observer to the meetings.

79. The Porvoo Contact Group is made up of representatives (normally a responsible staff member) from each Church and is co-chaired by the Archbishop of Dublin and the Bishop of Copenhagen. Within the Church of England, the Porvoo Panel is chaired by the Suffragan Bishop in Europe and is made up of a mixture of Anglican and Lutheran members based in the United Kingdom. In May the Revd Dr William Adam was appointed Anglican co-secretary of the Porvoo Contact Group.

Activities and developments in the past year

80. There were two major Porvoo events during the year:

- Consultation in Bergen, 25-28 February 2017: *Identity, memory and hope: the continuing significance of reformations for our churches and societies*. This was part of the programme of events marking the 500th anniversary of the Reformation;
- Primates' Meeting in Copenhagen, 12-14 October 2017: *The presence, role and mission of the Church in a secular or post-secular society*. This meeting brought together primates and presiding bishops from around the communion alongside members of the Porvoo Contact Group.

81. Invitations come in periodically for bishops of the Church of England to attend consecrations of new bishops in the Lutheran Porvoo churches.

Challenges and opportunities

82. The Porvoo Communion will celebrate its silver jubilee in 2021. This will, in all likelihood, be marked by a primates' meeting and conference in Porvoo (Finland),

where the agreement was finalised. The longevity of the communion is such that the churches are now faced with finding ways of living and ministering together in a way which is normal rather than novel.

83. Brexit was a major conversational and discussion theme in both meetings this year. The Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church spoke movingly in Copenhagen about his concerns about the effect on his communities in the north of Scotland of the withdrawal of the UK from the EU.
84. The question of the position of the Church in Latvia and the Latvian Church Abroad continues to be a live issue which bubbles up from time to time in meetings. The LCA now has at least one congregation in Latvia and the Anglican chaplain in Riga is a former bishop of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain and of Latvian heritage.
85. The Reformation commemoration events were an opportunity for Anglicans and Lutherans to work together. The events of 31 October were largely organised by the Council of Lutheran Churches in conjunction with Westminster Abbey and the Nikaeen Club. Staff in the CCU provided support to this process.

**ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH:
ENGLISH ANGLICAN ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMITTEE (ENGLISH ARC)**

Lead bishop: the Rt Revd Timothy Thornton, Bishop at Lambeth

Background

86. The English Roman Catholic Committee (EARC) is a national body which acts as a bridge between the international work of IARCCUM and ARCIC and the regional and local work being done in parishes and dioceses in this country. In 2017, English ARC completed a five-year phase of work, which began in 2012 with a meeting at Canterbury.

Activities and developments in the past year

87. The Joint Bishops Meeting that took place in Birmingham on 31 January and 1 February, hosted by the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, brought together nearly 80 Anglican and Catholic bishops to share common concerns and plan a way forward together. The four main sessions focused on: the international ARCIC dialogue; migration and refugees; prayer and evangelisation (with particular reference to Thy Kingdom Come); and the way forward both for the Joint Bishops Meeting and for English ARC. The bishops noted the achievements of English ARC in its 2012 – 2017 quinquennium and affirmed its role of liaison, reflection and encouragement of practical action for its next phase of work.
88. The Rt Revd Geoff Pearson subsequently reported to English ARC that he had found the Joint Bishops Meeting greatly encouraging, with bishops keen to see fruit from both theological dialogue and practical co-operation. The process has

begun of planning for the next such meeting in 2019, when it will be the turn of the Church of England to host.

89. At the 99th English ARC meeting held at Hothorpe Hall on 31 March and 1 April the members identified some possible themes for their successors in the next quinquennium. These included engaging with what is happening at diocesan and parish level and helping to enhance communication between different levels; engaging with ARCIC III and making its work better known; and enhancing the induction of new members.

90. English ARC also considered a paper on 'English ARC in the next Quinquennium', approving its three main recommendations:

- the CCU and the Department of Dialogue and Unity for the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales to agree common Terms of Reference for the next phase of English ARC, with appropriate episcopal consultation, before members are appointed;
- ten members to be appointed by each church to serve on English ARC, with careful thought being given to a pattern of meetings that uses church budgets and the time of members well to take forward a realistic number of agreed areas of work, and to the possibility of reserving some places for people who can assist with a specific area;
- the conclusions of the 'Mapping Exercise' and the process of reception for the work of ARCIC III be taken into account in defining the priorities and key areas of work for the next phase of English ARC.

91. Some attention was also given as to how the Church of Wales might best be represented on an 'English' committee, set up to serve two churches with different boundaries.

92. The recommendations were accepted by the CCU and the Department of Dialogue and Unity, and are in the process of being implemented.

Challenges and opportunities

93. The process of appointing a new Committee is in progress, with the Bishop of Portsmouth now appointed as the Church of England's Co-Chair for the forthcoming Quinquennium.

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH: ANGLICAN ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMITTEE IN FRANCE

Lead bishop: the Rt Revd Dr Robert Innes, Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe

Background

94. French ARC has been in existence since late 1960s and is an official body mandated by the French RC Bishops Conference. It is one of five official bilateral

ecumenical conversations at national level. It has published two documents in its history:

- 'Twinings and Exchanges/Jumelages et Echanges' ,1990, joint publication with English ARC;
- 'Lord open our lips: For a Common Prayer between Anglicans and Roman Catholics/ Seigneur, ouvre nos lèvres: Pour une prière commune aux Anglicans et aux Catholiques' 2014 – on the daily/Sunday offices of Morning and Evening Prayer.

95. French ARC is responsible for overseeing the translation of the CW rites of initiation (baptism and confirmation, children and adults), the marriage service and most of the funeral service. These translations have been given official status by the Liturgical Commission of the Church of England and are used throughout the Archdeaconry of France and beyond.

96. French ARC normally meets once a year residentially over a period of three days. It seeks to reflect on the life of the two traditions, to deepen understanding and to watch over the successful co-existence of these two traditions in France.

Activities and developments in the past year

97. French ARC met from Tuesday 9th May till Thursday 11th May in Toulouse, staying at the diocesan seminary of Saint Cyprien in the city.

- Evening Prayer on the 9th and Morning Prayer on 10th were said by French ARC in an oratory according to the Anglican rite.
- Vespers on the 10th and Lauds on 11th were said with the seminarians in their large chapel.

98. The membership is as follows:

Anglicans: The Revd Canon Matthew Harrison, co-president; The Revd Canon Debbie Flach, Chaplain of Lille; Fr John Murray from Strasbourg; Fr Robert Warren (ECUSA) from St Etienne; Mr Gareth Lewis from Versailles.

Roman Catholics: Monseigneur Robert Le Gall, Archbishop of Toulouse, co-president; Canon Jean-Georges Boeglin from Diocese of Strasbourg, Mrs Annie Wellens from Diocese of La Rochelle, Père Christophe Delaigue from Diocese of Grenoble (absent). Secretary: Père Emmanuel Gougaud (Priest Secretary to the Roman Catholic Bishops Conference for the national ecumenical service: SNUDC).

Observer from the Luthero-Reformed churches in France: Pasteure Jane Stranz.

99. Monseigneur Le Gall, Archbishop of Toulouse and Co-President of French ARC also attended the greater part of the Anglican Archdeaconry Synod in 2017 – and acts as the contact bishop for Anglicans. Fr Matthew also goes as Anglican observer to the French RC Bishops Conference plenary meeting in Lourdes each November.

100. At the end of the meeting last year we agreed to take forward two matters this year.

- An examination of the place of Mary as model of holiness and mission;
- An examination and feasibility study of translating CW Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer into French.

101. Papers were prepared as follows:

- 'Mary in ARCIC II – Mary Grace and Hope – and the responses of the churches' (Debbie Flach);
- From the document of WCC *The Church: towards a common vision* (Faith and Order Paper 214), 'i. Mary and Ecclesiology' (Robert Warren), 'ii. Panorama of the reception of the document and points of commonality and division' (Gareth Lewis);
- 'Mary in *Lumen Gentium* and Vatican II' (Jean-Georges Boeglin);
- 'Mary in the work of the Groupe des Dombes' (Annie Wellens);
- Mary in the devotional practice and thought of our two communions (Mgr Le Gall, using works of Pope Francis a good deal, Matthew Harrison looking especially at texts of collects and prefaces for feasts of Mary in BCP, CW and the Anglican Communion).

102. There was good discussion and a question about how to take these matters forward and report back to our churches.

103. Fr John Murray had been tasked with analysing what would need to be done in order to translate CW Morning and Evening Prayer into French. After the publication of the French ARC document on the Daily Office there had been a good deal of interest in this question – some presuming that a French version had been made available as part of the work. John delivered an excellent paper outlining the different elements. First there was a discussion about whether we wanted or were able to take this project forward. The meeting agreed that it was a useful and good idea and something that only French ARC could do. It was noted that that the French RC office was presently undergoing a renewed translation process itself. It was decided to use the French ecumenical psalter – already in use by the RC Church in France and its communities including monastic ones – along with their translation of the canticles.

Challenges and opportunities

104. It was decided to take forward the project to translate from CW the Sunday versions of Morning and Evening Prayer. The work was divided up and organised until a first review next year. We would also return for one session to our work on Mary – especially her place in redemption.

**ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH:
ANGLICAN ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMITTEE IN BELGIUM**

Lead bishop: the Rt Revd Dr Robert Innes, Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe

Background

105. An ARCIC Belgium group has existed for many years. For the past decade, the Revd Paul Yiend, Anglican chaplain in Liège, was its Anglican co-chair. In 2015, Paul stepped down. To replace Paul, the Revd Stephen Murray (Anglican chaplain in Ghent and Area Dean of Belgium and Luxembourg) and Ms Birte Day (Inspector-Advisor of Anglican Religious Education in Flanders and Brussels) have undertaken the chairmanship on an interim basis. The Revd Canon John Wilkinson (Canon Pastor at Holy Trinity Pro-Cathedral, Brussels), has graciously indicated that he will take on the Anglican co-chairmanship from January 2018.

Activities and developments in the past year

106. The main initiative is the participation of ARCIC Belgium in the annual study-day of the Commission nationale catholique pour l'oecuménisme. There was an ARCIC push for the Archbishop of Canterbury's *Thy Kingdom Come* prayer project. There has been a loose proposal for ARCIC England, France and Belgium to meet together to discuss ARCIC III.

Challenges and opportunities

107. Belgium offers a slightly different context for ecumenical contact because of the Napoleonic Concordat still in force here: the national leaders of the Catholic, Anglican, Orthodox and Protestant churches, together with the national leaders of Judaism and Islam, are required to meet regularly to discuss and debate issues of mutual concern, but this contact is never bilateral and always takes place outside the usual channels for ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and action.

SECTION TWO: ECUMENICAL INSTRUMENTS

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

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

Activities and developments in the past year

Middle East consultation – Windsor

108. In December 2017 CTBI, in partnership with Christian Aid and St George's House, Windsor, will be hosting a theological consultation on language pertaining to the Holy Land and the Israel-Palestine conflict. We have assembled 6 main contributors, including Dr Munther Isaac, a young Palestinian theologian from Bethlehem, and a total of 30 participants in all with a diverse ecumenical spread from across the four nations. The consultation will be chaired by the Bishop of Lichfield, the Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave. Following the consultation, a study guide will be prepared by CTBI which will include the text of the papers given as well as study material and additional resources.

Invest in Peace

109. A partnership with the Board of Deputies, this project engages local churches and synagogues with a focus on supporting reconciliation projects between Palestinians and Israelis. It has featured "Parents Circle" which works with parents bereaved as a result of the conflict. We have held events in London and are planning further events in Manchester, Leeds and Glasgow.

Inter religious – New IFTAG resource

110. The Inter Faith Theological Advisory Group has completed a study guide on the document "Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World" from the World Council of Churches, the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue and the World Evangelical Alliance. This is now to be published as a download.

WPCU 2018 resources and 2019 outline

111. The resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2018 are now available in all the usual formats, including English-Welsh bilingual booklet, English only booklet (both available in hard copy and as a download), with downloadable Irish translations and ROOTS material. The materials take up the theme from the Caribbean Churches which reflect upon the inheritance of the transatlantic slavery and contemporary challenges in ecumenism.

112. The theme for 2019 has been developed by the churches in Indonesia and explores the call to be one amidst a world of injustice. The character of this is the context of Christian ecumenism in a majority Muslim situation. The CTBI Writers Group will be commencing work on these materials in November.

Lent

113. The Lent resource for 2018 has been prepared by HOPE on theme “50 Stories of Hope” featuring stories of transformation in the lives of people serving prison sentences. The printed resource includes a foreword by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

China Links

114. There was a very successful Church leaders’ visit to China in the summer of 2017. Further theological work is being discussed with particular interest in the development of contextual theology and possible links to theological colleges in China. There is the clear opportunity to link this work with theological colleges here in Britain and Ireland.

WCC Network on Korea

115. The staff at CTBI continue to be involved in the WCC Network on Korean Reconciliation on behalf of the CTBI constituency. The main outcome desired by the Korean Churches is for a peace treaty to be established. There is also the clear need at this time to express solidarity with the Korean Churches in working for reconciliation.

Centre for Theology and Justice

116. This has now been established and the work is moving ahead. Various projects are in process. Poverty issues, spirituality and Justice, and work around embodied theology are all possibilities. Consideration is being given to how creative arts can be used to explore spirituality and other issues.

Refugees

117. The Churches Refugee Network (the Moderator for which is the Rt Revd Jonathan Clarke) now has oversight of all aspects of shared work being undertaken. Recent CTBI sponsored visits by a group of young men to Lampedusa, and a women leader’s visit to refugee camps in southern Greece were very successful, with significant engagement across social media. Reports are available on the CTBI website.

Middle East concerns

118. CTBI continues to engage with partners across the Middle East, especially the Middle East Council of Churches. Staff continue to share in the management group of the EAPPI programme. The wider concerns of the region continue to be monitored and visits considered.

Sri Lanka partnership

119. Specific plans are being implemented at present, in partnership with the Sri Lanka Council of Churches. Support is being given to reconciliation work especially through staff capacity in Colombo. Links will be made to the Sri Lankan community in the UK to continue the necessary work of reconciliation.

Racial Justice

120. CTBI Trustees are looking to increase work around Racial Justice and associated issues in the coming year. This work may well include aspects of hate crime.

WCC

121. Significant effort went into preparing a potential bid document and process to host the 2021 General Assembly. The eventual outcome of a consultation with the Churches meant that the proposal was not taken forward, however we were grateful for the effort and assistance of the City of Glasgow.

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ENGLAND

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

Background

122. Churches Together in England (CTE) was set up as the body enabling the churches to co-operate ecumenically in England. It is a means for the churches to act, and its voice and its structure seek to put the churches, as it were, in the driving seat. In reality, however, there are a number of networks by which the churches work together (for instance, the Gather Network and HOPE) and, at times, CTE is also misperceived as merely a bureaucracy or council in its own right. Nonetheless CTE is in touch with all forms of ecumenical practice and it rightly has a certain primacy of place. No other body brings together such a range of churches and organizations or groups with real ecumenical engagement. Indeed, CTE could be said to be, perhaps, one of the jewels in the crown of English ecumenism, not only functioning at once as a 'safe space' where churches can be in dialogue and as a platform for all Christians to speak into the life of the nation, but also protecting and enabling forms of inter-church co-operation that are frequently little valued as dull and rather humdrum (although much envied elsewhere in the world), especially its support of intermediate and local ecumenism, and the maintaining and training of the various networks of ecumenical officers, especially county ecumenical officers.

123. CTE is undoubtedly at a crossroads, precipitated by the reduction in funding from its member churches, and in particular the Church of England. This coincides with a time when the direction of ecumenism is shifting and so the critical issue of finance constitutes both a challenge and an opportunity to re-think the role of CTE. If CTE were to founder, the consequences for Christianity in

England would be serious; but if CTE takes on a new shape the possibilities, especially for mission, are enormous.

124. As CTE meets the current challenge-cum-opportunity it has discerned three strategic priorities: brokering relationships, theological engagement, and facilitating mission. Its most important activity has been to commission the think-tank Theos to write a report looking at CTE and considering the way ahead. It was published on 28 September 2017, with the title *That they all may be one: Insights into Churches Together in England and contemporary ecumenism* (by Natan Mladin, Rachel Fidler, and Ben Ryan).

Activities and developments in the past year

125. The Directors have met four times and the Enabling Group has met residentially twice. The key issues discussed were:

- The Theos Report, *That they all may be one: Insights into Churches Together in England and contemporary ecumenism*;
- *A New Framework for Local Ecumenism*, which takes a fresh look at ecumenical practice in England that a) suggests ways of having greater flexibility in structural arrangements for 'local co-operative working' and b) brings pastoral oversight back to the churches for Local Ecumenical Partnerships;
- The tidying up of some rules in CTE's constitution, in particular with regard to voting procedures to accept new member churches;
- New member churches, especially welcoming the Church of God in Christ into membership;
- The Christian case for addressing the legacy of slavery and colonialism and the need for reparative justice;
- A capability audit of the Directors to make sure that the board has the necessary for its tasks;
- Preparing for the appointment of a new General Secretary (the present General Secretary, the Revd Dr David Cornick is retiring in 2018).

126. CTE facilitated a highly successful conference, which took the place this year of the annual conferences of many Denominational Ecumenical Officers: *Responding to the Reformation*, in Swanwick in October. It was a major initiative of the churches in this country as part of the commemoration of the Reformations, focused around the symbolic 500th anniversary of the start of the Lutheran Reformation.

127. CTE funded *They Also Served*, a project bringing into light the part played by African and Caribbean service personnel in the First World War. It provides resources, a website and promotes events.

Challenges and opportunities

128. Following the publication of the Theos Report, a number of areas need careful attention:

- furthering the good work of CTE in brokering relationships;
- finding ways of enabling all the churches to speak to the nation, especially via the Presidents in such a way that the media take notice;
- focusing on a mission-based ecumenism;
- articulating a sharper theological vision of what unity means – a vision that manages the almost impossible task of encompassing the wide range of perspectives, some of them contradictory, of its member churches.

129. *A New Framework for Local Ecumenism* presents opportunities, and responses to it need monitoring, especially its impact upon intermediate ecumenism.

130. The meeting with funding churches in early 2018 must engage in a realistic conversation. Perhaps the pivotal role of CTE in support of local ecumenism needs to be made clearer.

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES (CEC)

Lead Bishop: the Rt Revd Christopher Hill, President of CEC

131. In addition to the daily activities of the staff in Brussels and the work of 20 thematic working groups under representatives of member churches, last year has been dominated by the question of the future of Europe. This is not only about Brexit. Economic justice, migration issues and the rise of the far-right affect all the European Churches, whether from jurisdictions in the EU or beyond. The subject of the next Assembly in Novi Sad (Serbia) (see below) is indeed the future of Europe: witness, justice and hospitality.

132. To this end there have been three regional consultations and there is a further one to come. There was a Nordic-Baltic consultation in Iceland in February (issues arose over Russia and the Baltic States); a consultation for UK and Ireland in Edinburgh in April (with Brexit as its main theme); another in Volos (Greece) last month on migration. There will be a final consultation in Prague for Central European issues, which will include questions of political and religious extremism and Muslim-Christian relations. The findings of all four consultations will be very important resource material for the Novi Sad Assembly.

133. Senior representatives of CEC and the Council of Episcopal Conferences in the EU (COMECE) engaged in an important meeting with the President of the European Commission to seek more effective implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon, Article 17 (Dialogue between the EU and religions). CEC with COMECE also meets at governmental level each six months with the incoming rotating presidency of the Council of the EU.

134. Planning is proceeding well for the Assembly in 2018. Dates are 31 May 2018 to 6 June, and the location will be Novi Sad. The theme has been confirmed by Presidium and Governing Board as *You Shall Be My Witnesses* (Hospitality, Justice and Witness to be sub-themes) and the process of approaching keynote speakers has begun. The delegation from the Church of England has been approved following nominations by the Appointments Committee of the General Synod.

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

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

Introduction

135. The World Council of Churches (WCC) recognises that in our present times its role and its objectives are of the highest relevance. It is acutely aware of the signs of polarization, the growing gaps between rich and poor, extremism and violence, concerns about the future of our planet Earth and the withdrawal of accountability for our only common home and future.
136. All these have and continue to be a constant challenge to what we as Christians stand for, to what we can do, and what our values and our vision are. A diminishing Christian confidence is in evidence in parts of the WCC constituency. The challenges Christians face in a complex world scenario surfaced during the efforts to pursue a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. In many regions of WCC membership people long and struggle for greater justice, for reconciliation and peace. They are in need of light and renewed hope in their lives. In Jerusalem HB Patriarch Theophilos III fervently invoked the Holy Spirit to bring churches together to work for peace. In such an increasingly complex world, the active presence of WCC is essential.

The Quest for Unity

137. Since the WCC was inaugurated almost 70 years ago, its struggle for greater unity and for peace and reconciliation has been rooted in prayer. In a public speech on the occasion of his visit to the Ecumenical Centre on April 24 this year HAH Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew reminded his listeners of the legacy pursued by his predecessors since 1920, namely, the call for a council of churches to work for the visible unity of the church. He pointed to the necessary connection between the quest for the unity of the Church and the initiatives for peace, justice and the environment. He observed that we are called to be united on the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace in our world, a pilgrimage which belongs to the very identity of the Church.
138. The current ground realities in the world have mobilised the WCC to reflect on new approaches on its journey towards greater unity and closer fellowship between its member churches. As the WCC approaches its 70th anniversary in 2018, it seeks to recommit itself to seeking the unity of the Church and engaging in the common service and witness for justice and peace in the world.

139. “God unites, the enemy divides.” This was the title of a speech by the bishop of Oslo, Eivind Berggrav at the first assembly of the WCC in Amsterdam, August 1948, which has lost none of its pertinence for us today. It theologically outlined how the work for unity reflected the characteristics of God. The focus should not be on identifying our enemies, but rather more attention should be paid to the forces that make people enemies of one another. There is urgent need to question the polarizing and dividing powers of our world today.

Religion and Violence

*He has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.
(Ephesians 2.14)*

Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness. (James 3.18)

140. The persistence and spread of extremist violence in the world, and the ambiguous connections of this with religion, are causes of increasing alarm and concern today.
141. Christians are being put under pressure and even persecuted in various parts of the world. On its ecumenical Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace the WCC has focussed particularly on the Middle East – the birthplace of our living faith, which has been nourished and nurtured by the unbroken witness of the local churches who have their own roots in Apostolic times. This Christian presence is undergoing enormous strain and hardship resulting in many leaving their homeland. Yet many still remain, who are constantly in need of our prayers and our solidarity.
142. In the midst of violence and division, the WCC calls churches to prayer and action, to offering a word of hope, faith and love and encouraging and supporting actions for peace with justice. The WCC has upheld the consistent hope-filled objective and prayer for the situation in the Middle East.
143. Religious leaders and communities from all faith traditions are called to self-examination and reflection on the relationship between religion and violence, and to challenge interpretations and practices that support violence and hate preaching, which threaten peace and social stability.
144. The WCC member churches and ecumenical partners are called to give priority to reflection on issues of religion and violence in their own contexts, taking seriously the need for openness to and appropriate support for those who may be seen as the ‘other’ in each situation; to support fellow Christians who are suffering as a result of religiously motivated violence; to extend such support not only to Christians but also to others who suffer similarly; and above all to speak words of Christian love into situations of violence and division.

BREXIT

145. The WCC has called for both wise and measured leadership in the UK and for ecumenical solidarity with the churches in the UK. On the one hand is the call to respect the democratic expression of the collective will of the people of the

UK which could lead to a re-examining of fundamental questions of values and identity. On the other hand it is clear that by withdrawing from EU membership the UK cannot isolate itself from the challenges that face the region and the world, including the political crisis arising from receiving refugees and migrants. Collective reflection and action with all churches will continue to be necessary to address those challenges in the interest of building human community.

Programmatic Engagement – Some Highlights

146. The 2018 Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in Arusha, Tanzania will focus on the theme: **Moving in the Spirit – Called to Transforming Discipleship**. This is to be both a mission and an ecumenical event, an opportunity, in an African ecumenical context, to reflect missiologically on the signs of the times in our world today. It will be rooted in our joyful witness in word and deed to Jesus Christ and his Gospel and involve further reflection and a re-commitment to working for justice, reconciliation and peace among all peoples as well as the engagement and participation in interfaith dialogue. There will be opportunity to celebrate the Christian unity so far achieved and look at ways in responding to current challenges.
147. The WCC seeks to become a platform for reflection and engagement on the rise of secularization, religious fanaticism and anti-religious extremism.
148. The WCC seeks to ensure greater participation of youth and indigenous people from different confessional and geographical backgrounds in its programmes for stewards and other programmatic work.
149. The programmatic initiatives of member churches are to be collated and explored in terms of these being incorporated in the WCC's Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace.
150. A process of understanding and analysing world economic systems in the context of change will be given greater attention.

Programmatic Engagement

151. The WCC continues to hold on to a theology of hope and sees its membership defined by hope. Churches are assured of a new birth into a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (I Peter 1.3,4). This living hope is an enduring one. We do not leave it behind. It is not merely a matter of history or of 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 our diverse contexts and settings.
152. A theology of hope is so central to our DNA that we will be "always prepared to make a defence to anyone who calls (us) to account for the hope that is in (us)." (1 Peter 3.15). This Christian hope is neither given by us, nor is it to be kept to ourselves. The hope we know and live in the cross and the resurrection of Christ is at the centre of how we work out our way of life and how we live together

as Christians. Our hope is not a private matter; it cannot be hidden, but must be proclaimed.

153. It is therefore not surprising that the fellowship of churches in the WCC as well as in 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.

Challenges and Opportunities

154. The WCC brings a sense of unity and coherence in the life of the ecumenical movement that the world may believe. It is seeking to also become a platform for reflection and engagement on the rise of secularisation, religious fanaticism and anti-religious extremism. This joint platform therefore offers challenging opportunities for building Christian confidence across the globe.

155. The task of responding to situations of conflict in different parts of the world continues to be a struggle and will be an ongoing challenge. In particular, the situation in the Middle East and the tensions between Ukraine and Russia continue to affect church to church relationships.

156. The Rt Revd Dr Robert Innes, the Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe and the Revd Canon Dr Leslie Nathaniel, the Anglican Chaplain in Hamburg are the elected members of the Church of England to the WCC Central Committee.

157. Bids for the hosting of the next WCC General Assembly were invited. Glasgow was initially proposed as one possible location. Although some considerable research was prepared by members of the board of CTBI, the bid was in the end withdrawn in view of the considerable costs and uncertainties over funding. Bids are being submitted by Germany and South Africa.