

**BUILDING A CONFIDENT CHURCH IN A
PLURALISTIC EUROPE**

**THE REPORT OF THE MEISSEN COMMISSION
2007-2011**

The Church of England and the Evangelical Church in Germany

Introduction

The Meissen Commission serves to implement the Meissen Declaration approved and signed by the Church of England and the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD) in 1991. Section B of the Meissen Declaration contains a firm commitment between the two churches to ‘share a common life and mission’, and to take all possible steps towards closer fellowship in as many areas of Christian life and witness as possible, so that both churches may advance to full visible unity. This goal has duly enabled the establishment of partnership links, theological conversations and delegation exchange visits. The Commission is the framework for this ecumenical cooperation, and the Meissen German and English Committees provide local support for this purpose.

The Commission has now completed the fourth quinquennium (five-year period) of its work, engaging with the major themes which have emerged both from its earlier work and from the current challenges facing our churches. These include questions of ministry, confirmation, living in a multi-faith and multi-cultural context, and (in England) the teaching of German and German history in schools.

The final commission meeting of the fourth quinquennium with the theme ‘Building Christian Confidence in a Pluralistic Europe’ was held from 15th-19th September 2011 at the Royal Foundation of St Katharine, Limehouse, London. The year 2011 marked the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Meissen Agreement by the two churches. In this connection, the German Ambassador hosted a special seminar introducing the Meissen Library of German Theology at Durham and considering the subject of Interfaith Engagement within our respective countries. The Ambassador also generously hosted a reception at the German Embassy in London. Furthermore a celebratory service was held in the German Christuskirche in London and Evensong in Westminster Abbey. This was followed by a reception at the Abbey’s Jerusalem Chamber, hosted by the Dean of Westminster.

The present report has been considered by the Council for Christian Unity, and sets out recommendations for the future work of the Meissen Commission.

The Council for Christian Unity commends the Report of the Meissen Commission 2007-2011 to members of the General Synod of the Church of England, and for wider readership in England and Germany. The Report continues to provide encouragement to our two churches as they as they seek to live out the unity of Christ’s kingdom, and to our two nations as they strengthen friendship and common witness in a changing Europe.

On behalf of the Council

✂ Christopher Guildford

Chairman, Council for Christian Unity

May 2012

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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 significant relationships between the two churches at every level and remains a model for other ecumenical agreements.

2 Parishes and dioceses have created partnerships, and exchanges between them have proved fruitful. Not only have churches and individuals learned to look at their faith and the life of their parish through different eyes, but also the scandal of Christian division has been experienced for real. Our churches have come a long way, but we have not yet achieved the full visible unity manifest through the interchangeability of ministries and mutual recognition of Confirmation.

3 However, the agenda of this ecumenical relationship cannot and must not be limited to the status of our churches in relation to each other. As Christian churches in a changing and challenging Europe, we have an obligation to explore our common agenda in mission and evangelism. To this end the Commission has put considerable effort and investment into learning from each other about discipleship in and through 'fresh expressions' of church, the challenges and opportunities of interfaith work (in very different cultural and historic-political contexts), our use of the Scriptures in our mission, the role of the churches in education, and the reform of the church in order to reshape us for mission into the 21st century.

4 Looking ahead - and building on the work of this current quinquennium - we recommend that focused attention be given to the creation of schools links, understanding the impact of the media on the churches' proclamation of the Gospel in a complex world, further work on building a confident church in a pluralistic Europe, and how we better equip Christians for the apologetic task before us. No doubt other issues will arise, but this sets a clear agenda for the years leading up to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017.

5 The Commission began the quinquennium with Bishop Jürgen Johannesdotter as the German co-chair. He retired in 2009 and was succeeded by Bishop Friedrich Weber. Other members of the Commission have also moved on. The end of this quinquennium sees the retirement of several members of the English and German Committees. We are grateful for the excellent contributions of those members of both national committees - not only for their hard work and positive engagement, but also for the genuine fellowship and wonderful humour that has made our work so enjoyable. We also thank the co-secretaries for their remarkable diligence and patience in marshalling the work the rest of us produce and for keeping us to the task.

6 We enjoy our work far too much! We thank God for our churches and our relationships at every level. We commend the report to our churches and the future work of the Commission to God who is faithful and who calls us to a greater unity for the sake not of the church alone, but for the sake of the world for which Christ died and was raised to new life.

The Right Revd Nicholas Baines, Bishop of Bradford and Anglican Co-chair
Bishop Professor Friedrich Weber, Bishop of Braunschweig and German Co-chair

MAIN THEMES

7 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 2007 to 2011 Quinquennium.

MINISTRY

Ordained Ministry

8 The Meissen Commission has continued to consider questions relating to ordained ministry in our respective churches. The Commission was particularly interested to experience the ministry of Pastor Woldemar Flake, who spent three years working as Team Vicar in the Blackburn Diocese (see under Local Ecumenical Partnerships, paragraph 35 page 10). Members were furthermore glad to have experienced an Ordination service in Southwark Cathedral during the Commission meeting in 2007.

Example: one important component of the Nürnberg-Hereford partnership is the presence of pastors from Bavaria in the Diocese of Hereford. In the town of Leominster there are two pastors working in the local ministry team. This presence has strengthened and given the partnership greater visibility. Church groups in Nürnberg hope to be able to welcome someone from the Church of England soon.

Example: The new link between Westcott House Cambridge, and the Predigerseminar Wittenberg, which was initiated by the Meissen Commission, is making good progress and a programme of mutual visits by students and lecturers can now be envisaged.

Ordnungsgemäß Berufen (Called to Office or Duly Called) – EKD

9 The Commission has followed the debates in the EKD in response to the Vereinigte Evangelische Lutherische Kirche Deutschland's (VELKD)'s paper, *Ordnungsgemäß berufen*. The EKD is still discussing this controversial paper which distinguishes between ordination (of those deemed qualified to serve as incumbents) and commissioning. The Commission notes that *Ordnungsgemäß berufen* represents an attempt to clarify practice in response to a challenge which both the EKD and the Church of England are facing: the need to maintain a ministry of Word and Sacrament throughout the Church in a time of diminishing resources. However, the Church of England has maintained the principle that presidency at the Eucharist is restricted to those ordained to the Presbyterate. The EKD, on the other hand, views the limited academic theological education regarded as essential for appointment to incumbent status in the Church of England, as needing attention.

Admission of Women to the Episcopate – Church of England

10 The Commission has also heard regular reports of the debates about the admission of women to the Episcopate in the Church of England. The July 2010 General Synod accepted a Measure which would achieve this. The Measure has been referred to the Dioceses for discussion and approval. If the majority of Dioceses approve it, the Measure

would return to General Synod in February or July 2012 for final approval. At that stage it would need a 2/3 majority in all three Houses of the Synod (laity, clergy, bishops) followed by confirmation by Parliament, to become law. The measure will allow women to take their full place within the Church of England's ministry, making space for those who have conscientious objections, without compromising the authority of the diocesan bishop. It will not substantially change the relationship between the EKD and the Church of England.

Church Reform Process – EKD

11 The work and commitment of the Meissen Commission led to an invitation to the English co-chair to be engaged in the EKD's reform process, beginning with the 2009 conference in Wittenberg based on the document *Kirche der Freiheit*. Further consultations were held between 2009 and 2011 in Kassel and a meeting of ecumenical partners in Wennigsen, Germany.

12 The EKD has responded to the challenge of future changes in the German churches by initiating this reform process and setting new goals: the development of a clear spiritual profile; the achievement of clarity of focus as opposed to trying to cover everything; the establishment of flexible structures; all in a church with an outward orientation. As part of this initiative, Centres of Excellence (*Kompetenzzentren*) have been established in several areas, including liturgy, mission, and the Bible. This process will culminate in Wittenberg in 2017, the 500th anniversary of the birth of the Protestant Reformation when Luther reputedly nailed his Theses to the door of the Schlosskirche.

13 The engagement of the English co-chair in the process has also led to interest in, and a number of requests from parts of the EKD for information about, Fresh Expressions of Church, the English initiative that has arisen from the report *Mission-Shaped Church*. Not only have these developments been discussed by the Commission, but they have also led to groups of German clergy visiting England to learn more, the translation of the original report into German and invitations to speakers from England to contribute to conferences in Germany.

14 In return, Bishop Huber was invited to address the 2011 meeting of the Church of England's College of Bishops to offer his perspective on the current challenges for Christian discipleship in Europe. Facilitating such exchanges is an important part of the Meissen process.

15 The Commission will continue to seek to enable our churches both to reflect together on their established strengths and to identify further areas for development. As the EKD and the Church of England seek to make their mission and worship accessible and inspirational to a new generation, this is a vitally important project.

CONFIRMATION

16 In 2005, the Meissen Theological Conference held at Frodsham explored confirmation and determined that, despite the key differences between episcopal and presbyteral confirmation and the extent and content of confirmation preparation, many

commonalities could be observed. Confirmation preparation in the EKD tends to take place over a period of one or two years, in contrast to a period of six weeks to six months in the Church of England. More significantly for church unity, in the Church of England the confirming minister must be a bishop, whilst the EKD practises presbyteral confirmation.

17 For this reason, the Church of England currently does not recognise confirmation carried out by the EKD, and German Protestants who move to England and wish to be received into the Church of England or to engage in a licensed or ordained ministry in the Church of England will be asked to undergo episcopal confirmation. This situation is replicated with members of the Methodist Church, with which the Church of England has a similar relationship to that with the EKD. There are also anomalies in the Church of England's refusal to recognise presbyteral confirmation, particularly in the case of those confirmed in Porvoo Churches. The EKD and the Methodist Church have both asked that the Church of England recognise their confirmations. Materials intended to resource this discussion in the Church of England have recently been produced, and it is hoped that progress will be made in this matter during the next quinquennium.

MEISSEN SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

18 As a result of a concern expressed about the experience of some German young people in English schools and with a view to strengthen the confidence of Christians in Europe, the Meissen Commission developed an interest in the teaching of German history within the English school curriculum. The question arose: was the next generation being fed a diet of German history which was essentially the Third Reich? Was this exercising an undue influence on how they perceived German people today?

19 As the Commission explored the idea of commissioning some research into this and publicising its conclusions, it became clear that there were other educational issues on which both churches could work together fruitfully at the same time: the promotion of German language teaching in England; the development of Religious Education in response to the changing composition of our two societies; partnerships between church schools in our two countries; common work on the leadership of church schools in our two different contexts. This range of interchange possibilities provided the Meissen Commission with the necessary momentum to make the Meissen Schools Initiative an important project during the next Quinquennium. It was clear that the Meissen Commission needs to seek the help of an academic partner: Christ Church University in Canterbury has offered their involvement in the project and financial support will be sought through grants and sponsorship.

Example: A joint youth camp was organised by the partnership group Berlin–London–Chichester for young people from the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Gymnasium Königs Wusterhausen, the Ev. Kirchengemeinde Königs Wusterhausen (Church Young Peoples' Group(s)/Ev. Junge Gemeinden) and the Bishop Wand School, Sunbury-on-Thames of the Church of England. The location of the youth camp was in Königs Wusterhausen and the Heimvolkshochschule Seddiner See.

20 The Commission has publicised the Meissen Agreement at the conference of the Anglican Association of Secondary Headteachers and a Meissen bookmark has been 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. The Commission intends to establish a project group in each country to take this work forward.

Example: The Commission has helped the Diocese of Southwark establish a RE teacher exchange with the German area of Ostfriesland; a contact group of headteachers and others in England met in May 2011.

INTERFAITH

21 The Commission met in September 2009 in Blackburn – a city where innovative approaches to interfaith relations are being explored – to share and learn from the experiences of both churches in their dialogue with other people of faith and to see Christian engagement in this field as an opportunity towards building greater Christian confidence.

22 The Commission visited Blackburn Cathedral for a presentation by Canon Chris Chivers and his Muslim colleague Ms. Anjum Anwar. The purpose of the visit was to help the Commission comprehend the complexity of ministry and mission in an area with a very high Muslim population and introduce German Commission members to the distinctive diversity of the northern English Muslim community.

23 The Commission was later addressed by the Venerable Dr Michael Ipgrave, Archdeacon of Southwark and former Interfaith Adviser for the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Church of England who helped provide the Commission with a framework for interfaith engagement. His presentation set the visit to the cathedral in a broader context of interfaith challenges and opportunities facing the Church of England.

24 The distinctions between immigration experiences in England and Germany were explored.

25 The Church of England response to the interfaith situation through its Presence and Engagement initiative was also discussed. There was agreement that withdrawal of parish ministry from seemingly unproductive areas should be avoided, since this would contribute towards a dwindling in Christian confidence. Christian presence in ways which respect cultural and religious difference is an authentic Christian witness. Christian engagement is visible through work in prisons, hospitals and schools.

26 Building on this work, a seminar was hosted by the German ambassador to mark the twentieth anniversary of the signing of the Meissen Agreement. This seminar considered interfaith engagement in the Church of England and the EKD. The final Commission meeting also explored the interfaith context of the work of parishes in the East End of London. The Commission found much common ground on interfaith cooperation. It intends to continue

to set an appropriate focus on the importance of place and locality for understanding and experiencing Islam.

27 Both churches will continue to share information regularly, in order to build on the common ground that has been identified and to contribute towards building greater Christian confidence in a society with ever-changing contextual challenges.

MISSION AND ECCLESIOLOGY

28 Dr. Kirsteen Kim, Professor of Theology and World Christianity at Leeds Trinity University College, introduced the Commission to the plans for the centenary celebration of the World Missionary Conference of Edinburgh. She also produced a paper on *Edinburgh 1910 and Edinburgh 2010: Different Theological Views*, which traced the journey from Edinburgh 1910 to 2010 and provided a comparative analysis of the situation then and today.

29 There was a lively discussion on a number of issues and a written response from Dr Christof Theilemann. The Commission was of one mind that local witness and Christian confidence were important for the growth and vitality of the churches. Although there could be theological differences, there was enough common ground to find a coherent theological approach to mission in the present context.

30 Relating to this work, 'Ecclesiology in Mission Perspective' was the theme of the seventh theological conference which took place at Sarum College, Salisbury from 11 -14 January 2011, (see paragraph 40, page 11 for further information).

RECIPROCAL ACTIVITIES

PARTNERSHIPS

31 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.

32 There are currently some 35 active partnerships involving a 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.

33 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. Information is also available in the online Meissen Information Pack, (see paragraph 61, page 14).

34 During the past five years there has been a considerable exchange of good practice, not least in the area of responding to Safeguarding legislation concerning children and young people; many partnerships involved in all-age or youth-focused exchanges have seen this as a problem, not least because of different understandings of the issues in our two countries.

Example: There is now a well-established pattern of exchange visits for the newly-ordained in Worcester and Magdeburg. They travel as a group and stay together for part of the visit, and then are hosted in the parishes with the newly-ordained for a few days. Apart from the personal friendships and encounter, this has facilitated a real exchange of theological ideas and experience.

LOCAL ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIPS (LEPs)

35 In order to facilitate the exchange of ministers (both shorter stays and medium-term appointments) a number of Anglo-German LEPs have been set up under Canon B44, and initial feedback has been sought and obtained; recommendations have been passed to the appropriate bodies. A full list of Meissen LEPs can be found on page 20.

Example: The three LEPs in Blackburn Diocese have been involved in a reciprocal exchange of ministers. In particular the appointment of Pastor Woldemar Flake to the post of Team Vicar in Colne and Villages (East Lancashire) was very successful. In a traditional mill-town context, Pastor Flake had responsibility for two districts, presiding regularly at Holy Communion in two churches, and lived with his family in one of the villages. It was a new and unusual experience for the community to have a German pastor leading its Remembrance Sunday worship. In exchange, an Anglican priest has spent several months in a post in Braunschweig, linked with the Cathedral and the Student Chaplaincy; fluent German (which relatively few Church of England clergy possess) is less important in this context than in more traditional parish ministries.

MEISSEN THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCES

36 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 Sixth Meissen Theological Conference

37 The sixth Meissen Theological Conference took place at the Mutterhaus of the Kaiserswerther Diakonie at Düsseldorf from 25-28 November 2008. Its topic was *Ecumenical Understanding and the Authority and Uses of Scripture in the Context of the Meissen Agreement*.

38 One of the key features of theological agreement between the Church of England and the EKD noted by the Meissen Agreement is a shared conviction about the centrality of Holy Scripture for the life of the Christian Church. In the light of this conviction the conversations looked at a number of different aspects of the way in which Scripture has

been and is understood and used in the life and ministry of the Church of England and the EKD and how it has shaped the confessional documents and formularies of the two churches. In spite of the different theological traditions of the churches represented, there was a notable degree of overlap in the understanding and concerns of those who attended. There was consensus that the Gospel gives us the hermeneutical key for understanding the unity and authority of Scripture.

39 Papers from the Fifth and Sixth Theological Conferences were published under the title *Communion Already Shared and Further Steps* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Otto Lembeck 2010).

The Seventh Meissen Theological Conference

40 Impelled by a sense of the urgency of mission in a Europe often marked by apathy, ignorance and even hostility towards the Christian faith, the seventh Meissen Theological Conference took place at Sarum College, Salisbury from 11 -14 January 2011 and considered the theme *Ecclesiology in Mission Perspective/Ekklesiologie in missionarischer Perspektive*.

41 Participants took part in the regular worship of Salisbury Cathedral and Sarum College, rooting the consultation in the Christian spirituality of the local context.

42 The consultation took forward a key commitment of the Meissen agreement bringing together theological and practical approaches to the church's mission. Listening to each other's experiences in spite of different contexts, participants noted the underlying similarities.

43 Both sides recognise that their sense of participating in the *Missio Dei* needs to be strengthened. The mission of the church is rooted in the incarnation of God coming to us in Jesus Christ, and not leaving us as we are.

44 The discussions on mission experiments through 'fresh expression' initiatives within the Church of England and the church wide regional and diaconal models of mission in the EKD context highlighted the enormous advances made towards greater mutual learning.

45 The conference recognised that the Church is called to be instrumental in God's mission, so that the Church is missionary by nature. The unity of the church expresses itself in its shared mission, and in particular in the reconciliation of divided communities. It noted that it is essential to relate reflection on mission to practical training in the living out of faith so as to form a basis for joint mission and witness initiatives.

46 Papers of this Theological Conference will be published under the title *Ecclesiology in Mission Perspective* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt 2012)

MEISSEN DELEGATION VISIT

47 In connection with the 20th Anniversary of the signing of the Meissen Declaration a Church of England delegation led by The Most Revd and Right Hon Dr John Sentamu, Archbishop of York, met with counterparts from the EKD led by Präses Nikolaus Schneider, Chair of the EKD Council, in Meissen (where the Agreement was drawn up) and Dresden from 13th -16th October 2011.

48 The main topic for discussion was "Visitation". Important contributions were made by The Ven Penny Driver, Archdeacon of Exeter and The Ven Michael Igrave, Archdeacon of Southwark for the Church of England and Bishop Friedrich Weber and Provost Sigurd Rink for the EKD. It was recognised that this was an initial exploration of the theme and needed to be worked on in greater depth.

49 The visit was honoured by an entry in the Golden Book of the City of Meissen by the Archbishop of York and the Chair of the EKD Council, followed by a service of Evening Prayer in the nearby Cathedral and a reception. On Sunday 16 October the Archbishop of York preached at a commemorative Eucharist in the packed Frauenkirche in Dresden.

ATTENDANCE AT SYNODS AND EVENTS

50 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.

OTHER VISITS

51 There was a visit from staff of Church House, London, to the EKD Headquarters (Kirchenamt) in Hannover. It was led by the General Secretary of the Council for Christian Unity and included staff from three departments. The visit greatly facilitated the present and future sharing of resources and expertise. It opened an important dialogue and new level of co-operation between the two churches at a time when considerable challenges were being faced by both church and society. The common mission, embodied in the Meissen Agreement, is to face challenges together wherever we can.

52 Thirty German pastors from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg visited Church House in July 2009 and engaged in discussions with the Council for Christian Unity and shared in the Eucharist at Lambeth Palace. In May 2010 a large delegation attached to the German YMCA was welcomed to Church House to strengthen bonds of friendship in England. Bishop July and a small delegation from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg visited the Church of England in March 2011 to learn more about the 'Fresh Expressions' initiative. Facilitated by the Council for Christian Unity, another delegation of 30 from the 'Haus Kirchlicher Dienste' in Hannover visited the Church of England in September 2011 to learn about 'Fresh Expressions' and training programmes.

KIRCHENTAG

53 The relationship between the two churches was also given visibility through the Church of England presence at the Kirchentag in Cologne (2007), Bremen (2009), Munich (2010, jointly with the Roman Catholic Church) and Dresden (2011). The Church of England is officially represented by the Co-Chair and Co-Secretary of the Commission together with two other appointed representatives. In addition to this there are generally over 250 participants from the UK. The Church of England presence at the Kirchentag is 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; and through strong grassroots participation from the UK. During the Dresden Kirchentag the Bishop of Bradford, Nicholas Baines, the Co-Chair of the Meissen Commission, led a Bible Study in the Frauenkirche. At the Dresden Kirchentag, the relationship between the Church of England and the EKD was given a particular profile to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Meissen Agreement.

REPORTS

CELTIC ANGLICAN CHURCHES

54 The Celtic Anglican Churches have appreciated observer involvement in the Meissen Commission over the past five years, as in previous quinquennia. During that period, the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Church in Wales and the Church of Ireland have shared many concerns and interests, not least in considering the draft Anglican Covenant. Developing relations with the Methodist Church have also been a common interest among us, as well as facing the implications of the global financial crisis which arose in the later part of the quinquennium. There have been some issues that have been the subject of particular focus for each of the three churches. For example, the Scottish Episcopal Church has established a Rural Commission and, of course, Edinburgh saw the centenary celebrations of the 1910 World Missionary Conference; the Church in Wales, also in 2010, marked the ninetieth anniversary of its disestablishment; some church statistics were encouraging, with the rate of decline in Sunday church attendance slowing, and an increase in weekday attendances; in the Church of Ireland, the 'Hard Gospel', anti-sectarianism programme was brought to a conclusion, and the then Chairman of the Council of the EKD, Bishop Wolfgang Huber, paid a very successful visit to Ireland in May, 2008, with much ecumenical involvement. There has been some discussion during the quinquennium about the Celtic Anglican Churches becoming more closely involved in the work of the Meissen Commission, but no steps in that direction have as yet been identified.

SYNOD OF THE GERMAN-SPEAKING CHURCHES IN GREAT BRITAIN

EVANGELISCHE SYNODE DEUTSCHER SPRACHE DER DEUTSCHSPRACHIGEN KIRCHEN IN GROSSBRITANNIEN

55 The German speaking Synod and its twenty-eight congregations in seven pastoral areas play a small but important role in ecumenical relations.

56 In 2009 the EKD and the Synod signed a new contract. The Synod is a member of Churches Together in England (CTE) and of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI). An observer attends the Meissen Commission meetings.

57 All congregations have close ecumenical relations to their local churches and practice a lively ecumenical “Meissen-Partnership”.

58 The close relationship to the Church of England gives a lot of inspiration to the congregations as well as to the pastors. In these times of declining church membership and growing financial problems the congregations of the Synod could learn from their partners as to how to live as the Church of Jesus Christ in a secular world. ‘Mission shaped Church’ provides insights to take this work forward.

THE DIOCESE IN EUROPE IN GERMANY

59 The Church of England has nine chaplaincies in Germany, which are constituted, together with the parishes of the Episcopal Church in the Council of Anglican Episcopal Churches in Germany. The relationship between the chaplaincies of the Church of England and the Landeskirchen der EKD continues to develop positively. Reports from chaplaincies highlight not only the good working relationships and co-operation but also the warm and friendly reception Anglican chaplaincies are receiving from their sisters and brothers in the EKD. There are difficulties with regard to language, diversity in church traditions, lack of sufficient resources, as well as the fact that recognition of one another’s ordained ministries has not yet been achieved. However, these difficulties have not proved to be a barrier for a large number of common initiatives at congregational level.

WIDER ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS

60 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.

RESOURCES

MEISSEN INFORMATION PACK

61 This valuable practical resource for parishes and partnerships (available online at <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/ccu/europe/ecumbackground/meisseninfo.rtf>) will be up-dated during the next quinquennium.

PUBLICATIONS

62 The book *Bereits erreichte Gemeinschaft und weitere Schritte/Communion Already Shared And Further Steps* (Verlag Otto Lembeck, Frankfurt am Main, 2010), contains the contributions and results of the 5th and 6th Theological Conferences in Frodsham (2005) and Düsseldorf (2008) which discussed ‘Christian Initiation and Mission in post-Christendom’, and the ‘Ecumenical Understanding of Authority and Use of Scripture (the Bible) within the context of the Meissen Declaration’.

63 The 2005 Conference focussed on the way in which social and cultural factors that shape the concrete practice of our churches significantly influence baptism, catechesis and confirmation. The connections between doctrine, church life and the changing cultural contexts can make theological exchange into experiences of discovery.

64 At the 2008 Conference in Düsseldorf, the connection between the use of Scripture in the church and the 'use' of the church by the Gospel, and the way in which the triune God calls the church to be an instrument of his will of grace, formed the focal point of the papers presented. The Gospel is the key for assessing all types of spirituality and all ethical positions.

65 During the Ecumenical Kirchentag in Munich 2010, a booklet was published recounting *The Birth of the Meissen Agreement*, as seen through the eyes of three contemporary witnesses (Christa Gregel, Klaus Kremkau, and Mary Tanner, the original co-secretaries). It was updated and reproduced for the Kirchentag 2011 in Dresden.

MEISSEN PRAYER BOOKMARK

66 The bookmark (text at paragraph 80, page 18) with prayers from both traditions was well received, widely disseminated and continues to be in use. It was reprinted for the German Kirchentag 2011, and once again proved very popular.

MEISSEN FLYER

67 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

<http://www.durhamcathedral.co.uk/library/collections>

68 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.

69 The collection has been housed in the Deanery since 1999 and is vested in the Dean and Chapter. The Commission is grateful to the Dean and Chapter for their continuing support. The library continues to be served by an impressive and expert band of volunteers. During the past five years, excellent relationships have developed with the University Library, the Faculty of Theology, and St John's College, all of which are represented on the Management Committee, the chair of which, the Ven Peter Townley, represents the Meissen English Committee.

70 As a result the catalogue is now fully online at: <http://www.meissenlibrarydurham.co.uk/>. A feasibility study is in hand with the aim of integrating the Meissen library catalogue into the Cathedral Library online catalogue and then that of the University. Each development will improve access to the catalogue for a wide range of readers and students.

71 German interest in the library has increased, following visits by the German Consul General to Scotland and North East England and by the German Ambassador. In September 2011 the Ambassador hosted at the German Embassy in London a seminar and reception in order to raise the profile of the library and the Meissen relationship.

MEISSEN COMMISSION MEETINGS

72 During this Quinquennium the Meissen Commission met once each year in September:

- 2007 St Columba's, Woking
- 2008 St Afra-Klosterhof, Meissen (celebrating 20 years of the drafting of the Meissen Agreement)
- 2009 Whalley Abbey, Blackburn Diocese
- 2010 Haus Leucorea, Wittenberg
- 2011 Royal Foundation of St Katharine, London (celebrating 20 years of the signing of the Meissen Agreement)

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Meissen Journey continues

74 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.

Following the appointment of a new Commission for the next quinquennium and as part of its mandate to pursue full visible unity, its work should be shaped by the following recommendations:

75 THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

- a. The Commission should further work towards convergence in relation to confirmation and mutual recognition of ministries.
- b. The Commission supports the development of theological models for effective ministry and mission in a multi-faith and multi-cultural context and facilitating the exchange of advisers and consultants.

- c. The Commission should address the urgent need in both churches to encourage a confident engagement in the public discourse.

76 LIFE AND JUSTICE

- a. In order to communicate effectively in a society which is powerfully shaped by the media, and particularly in the light of developments in the new media environment, the Commission should facilitate the exchange of expertise between our churches.
- b. Given the important role which both churches play in education and schooling, the Commission should support the further development of the Meissen Schools Initiative.
- c. The Commission should further encourage Meissen partnerships to embark on mutual exploration of the Reformation Decade themes. Meissen Delegation visits should be organised with this in mind.

77 SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- a. Given the rapidly developing political and economic challenges in our societies, the Commission should facilitate the exchange of advice, insight, experience and expertise in relation to the response of our churches both locally and nationally.
- b. In the light of growing social need, the Commission recommends exploring together the concept and praxis of diaconal ministry as an integral part of the life and mission of the churches at every level.

78 At its final meeting, when formulating its recommendations, the Commission drafted a possible framework for addressing these matters in the next quinquennium. This framework is offered as Appendix 3. It is, however, the responsibility of the next Commission to set its own course.

79 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. The Meissen Commission will seek to ensure that these discussions are rooted in - and develop resources for - the experiences of the work in the local partnerships.

80. 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



Evangelische Kirche
in Deutschland

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



Evangelische Kirche
in Deutschland

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*

Birmingham	Propstei Frankfurt, Ev. Landeskirche in Hessen und Nassau
Blackburn	Evang.-Luth. Landeskirche Braunschweig
Bradford	Kirchenkreis Erfurt, Ev. Kirche in Mitteldeutschland
Canterbury	Kirchenbezirk Markgräflerland, Ev. Landeskirche in Baden <i>and</i> Zossen, Ev. Kirche Berlin-Brandenburg-schlesische Oberlausitz
Chelmsford	Hildesheim, Ev.-Luth. Landeskirche Hannovers
Chichester	Ev. Kirche Berlin-Brandenburg-schlesische Oberlausitz Kirchenkreis Bayreuth, Ev.-Luth. Kirche in Bayern
Coventry (Kenilworth Deanery)	Dresden-Mitte, Ev.-Luth. Kirche Sachsens
Durham	Nordelbische Ev.-Luth. Kirche
Ely	Nordelbische Ev.-Luth. Kirche; Kirchenbezirk Heidenheim, Ev. Landeskirche in Württemberg
Hereford	Kirchenkreis Nürnberg, Ev.-Luth. Kirche in Bayern
Lichfield	Ev.-Luth. Landeskirche Mecklenburgs
Lincoln	Klöden, Ev.-Luth. Kirche Sachsens
Liverpool	Köln, Ev. Kirche im Rheinland; Überlingen-Stockach, Bayern
London	Ev. Kirche Berlin-Brandenburg-schlesische Oberlausitz; Hannover, Ev.-Luth. Landeskirche Hannovers
London (Willesden)	Chemnitz, Ev.-Luth. Kirche Sachsens
Manchester (Central Salford Deanery)	Kirchenkreis Lünen, Ev. Kirche von Westfalen
Norwich	Koblenz-Mitte, Ev. Kirche im Rheinland
Oxford (Reading)	Düsseldorf, Ev. Kirche im Rheinland
Peterborough	Prenzlau, Ev. Kirche Berlin-Brandenburg-schlesische Oberlausitz
Sheffield	Kirchenkreis Hattingen-Witten, Ev. Kirche von Westfalen
St. Albans	Kirchenkreis Paderborn, Ev. Kirche von Westfalen
Sodor and Man	Niederlauken, Ev. Landeskirche in Hessen und Nassau
Wakefield	Kirchenkreis Herne, Ev. Kirche von Westfalen
Worcester	Propstei Stendal-Magdeburg-Halberstadt, Ev. Kirche in Mitteldeutschland

b) CATHEDRALS/DOM- und CITY- KIRCHEN

Coventry	Dresden (Frauenkirche)
Durham	Lübeck (Dom and St Marien)
Ely	Hamburg
Ely	Schleswig
Worcester	Magdeburg
Bristol	Hannover (Marktkirche)
London (St Paul's)	Berlin (Berliner Dom)
Lichfield	Schwerin

c) LOCAL ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIPS (LEPs)

(Ely) Ely Team Ministry	(Nordelbische Ev-Luth. Landeskirche) Kirchenkreis Nordfriesland (Nordbezirk - formerly Suedtondern)
(Blackburn) Colne and Villages Team Ministry- Poulton, Carleton and Singleton Warton	(Ev-Luth. Landeskirche Braunschweigs) Gesamtpfarrverband Asse Pfarrverband Flöthe-Flachstökheim Timmerlah
(Sheffield) Rawcliffe Hook and Airmyn	(Kirchenkreis Hattingen-Witten, Ev. Landeskirche von Westfalen) Gemeinde Witten Annen

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 Revd Canon Robert Jones

The Revd Canon Dr Charlotte Methuen

Mr Richard Parrish (from 2008)

The Revd Colin Penfold

The Revd Canon Dr Charles Hill (Co-Secretary until 2008)

The Ven Peter Townley (in attendance at September 2008 meeting)

The Revd Dr Leslie Nathaniel (Co-Secretary from 2009)

- **EKD**

Bishop Jürgen Johannesdotter (Co-Chair until 2009)

Bishop Dr Friedrich Weber (Co-Chair from 2009)

Frau Justizrätin Margit Fleckenstein

Pfarrer Dr Christof Theilemann

Propst Dr Matthias Sens (until 2008)

Propst Dr Sigurd Rink (from 2009)

Professor Dr Dr h.c. Michael Weinrich

Oberkirchenrat Matthias Kaiser (Co-Secretary until 2010)

Oberkirchenrat Christoph Ernst (Co-Secretary from 2010)

- **Observers**

The Revd Dr Irene Ahrens (2007) and The Revd Simon Hobbs (2008-2010)
(Diocese in Europe)

The Revd Canon Ian Ellis (Celtic Anglican Churches)

Pfarrer Wolfgang Kruse (German Synod in Great Britain)

3. POSSIBLE FRAMEWORK FOR ADDRESSING RECOMMENDATIONS 2012-2016

EKD Reformation Decade Theme (with possible venue for Commission meeting)	Main Themes	Other Agenda Items
2012 MUSIC (Eisenach)	Education and Meissen Schools Initiative History and Histories (Recommendations 2b and 2c)	Partnership development Review Quinquennial Report Update Meissen Information Pack Ecumenical prize – explore options
2013 TOLERANCE (Leicester)	Interfaith as context for ministry and mission Church schools in an interfaith context (Recommendation 1b)	DELEGATION VISIT to C of E 2013 Education, schools, catechesis (Kirchentag in Hamburg)
2014 RELIGION AND POLITICS (Frankfurt)	Political-economic change Diaconate (Recommendations 3a and 3b)	THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE 2014 'Catechesis and Christian Apologetics' Confession(alism)
2015 IMAGE AND BIBLE (Salford)	Media and communications (Recommendation 2a)	DELEGATION VISIT to EKD 2015 Media and communications (Kirchentag in Stuttgart)
2016 ONE WORLD (Berlin)	Pulling the threads together Visibility of the Church Meissen 25 years on (Recommendations 1a and 1c)	Possible Theological Conference Meissen 25 years – celebrations Quinquennial Report
2017 REFORMATION YEAR	New Quinquennium	