

**Council for Christian Unity and Lambeth Palace**

**THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND'S  
ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS:  
ANNUAL REPORT 2018**

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE ANNUAL REPORT ON ECUMENICAL RELATIONS 2018

A watershed moment may well be how the year 2018 comes to be seen for the Council for Christian Unity. Like new life growing quietly underground, something new is coming to be.

This is the year that the General Synod of the Church of England and the Methodist Conference voted for further reflection on the proposals of *Mission and Ministry in Covenant*. Who knows? Maybe there is a realistic possibility for the interchangeability of ministries between Anglicans and Methodists.

This is the year also when the Church of England completed the updating of its ecumenical legislation. Not to many minds, perhaps, the most exciting thing happening in the church. But it has real significance. Legislation is the skeleton supporting the living body of relationships, so the rules matter: they allow life to flourish. The amendments to the Ecumenical Relations Measure 1988 and the creation of a single Canon B 43 replacing former Canons provide the frame for a living unity.

This is the year too when the first document was published from the third phase of the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission. *Walking Together on the Way* challenges both Anglicans and Roman Catholics to learn and grow together in their institutional life. It uses Receptive Ecumenism as a creative discipline, at once practical and deeply spiritual.

This is the year, furthermore, when the European dimensions of the Church of England, including its ecumenical relations, have come into a new and sharper focus as the country prepares for Brexit. Whatever comes to be the final settlement between the United Kingdom and the rest of Europe, perhaps we are beginning to grasp the possible impact of Christian unity on society around us.

Human interactions have been central at every level. They are the context of the following reports, the music that gives the tone for understanding the text.

Taking the further reflections upon *Mission and Ministry in Covenant* first. They could seem to be merely picking over well-chewed-upon issues. Indeed, is any of it necessary, given so much is possible already? And yet, our unity in Christ will remain incomplete and be obscured in the eyes of the world unless a way is found to reconcile the ministries of different churches. This goal has proved particularly difficult to achieve where one church has been episcopally ordered and one has not – as with the Church of England and the Methodist Church. Can we find a way to break through this impasse? The reflections of the two churches as they face the challenges of the inevitably untidy time, as two ecclesiastical structures mesh together, may yet prove crucial. Redolent of the grace at work beyond human organisation, this time could make it possible for Anglicans in England to have the joy of sharing in the sign of apostolic Christianity with another church.

The beauty of the amended ecumenical legislation is undoubtedly the support it gives to life together in God's mission in this country. This, however, is not the only thing it does. It adapts the Church of England's ecumenical behaviour to the current realities of Christian life. To do this, it offers a lighter touch in setting up ecumenical arrangements; shows what can be done with Trinitarian churches not yet recognised as churches to which ecumenical provisions apply; makes clear the special provisions for the Salvation Army; extends the range of churches with which relations can benefit from the permissions given by Canon, and removes barriers to co-operation with the new churches alive within specific communities, perhaps only within a single diocese.

*Walking Together on the Way* takes Anglicans and Roman Catholics into a deeper appreciation of each other's traditions and signals a shift towards Receptive Ecumenism. The modesty of one tradition saying to the other: *what can I learn from you?* has rich consequences. Learning from the gifts of the other leads to conversion – repenting of past failings certainly, but still more making discoveries of how to live out the reality of the Church we are called to be.

Then there is Brexit. We cannot know what will happen. Yet when there are social and political fractures, Christians offer renewed and reconciling relationships. The work done this year has shown that the Church of England has a role to play together with its ecumenical partners on the continent in deepening those relationships. It is ecumenism with a social pay-off.

Quietly, and without drawing attention to itself, something new is indeed happening.

The Rt Revd Tim Thornton  
Bishop at Lambeth

The Rt Revd Dr Martin Warner  
Chair, Council for Christian Unity



Archbishop Justin Welby with Bishop Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, Council Chair of the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland



Bishop Christopher Foster meets Pope Francis during the Catholic Bishops' *Ad Limina* to Rome

## UK-BASED ECUMENICAL DIALOGUES

### ANGLICAN-ORIENTAL ORTHODOX REGIONAL FORUM (AOORF)

**Lead bishop: The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, Bishop of Southwark**

#### **Background**

1. Relations with the Oriental Orthodox remain warm and are co-ordinated largely through the Anglican-Oriental Orthodox Regional Forum (AOORF). Meetings this year took place at the Coptic Centre in Stevenage and at Southwark Cathedral. At the latter meeting the Forum heard from Aid to the Church in Need and was joined for lunch by the Bishop of London.
2. The situation of the Church in the Middle East is always at the front of the minds of AOORF and of the representatives of the various diaspora congregations here in England.

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

3. HE Archbishop Angaelos led the prayers at the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex. The Archbishop of Canterbury was represented by the Bishop of Reading at the Nayrouz (Coptic New Year) Service at St Margaret's Westminster in October.
4. Internationally the Anglican-Oriental Orthodox dialogue took place in Beirut in late October 2018.

### ANGLICAN-PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGICAL STEERING GROUP (APTSG)

**Lead bishop: The Rt Revd Keith Sinclair, Bishop of Birkenhead**

#### **Background**

5. 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.

6. Valuing the work already done to increase understanding between Anglicans and Pentecostals, but realising 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. Its aims were revised and simplified when its Terms of Reference were clarified and adopted in March 2018. They are:
  - Deeper mutual understanding between Anglicans and Pentecostals
  - Greater visibility of relations between Anglicans and Pentecostals
  - Expansion of the range of and an increase in joint mission initiatives
7. The membership of the Steering Group in 2018, for the Church of England, was the Rt Revd Keith Sinclair (co-chair) and the Venerable Jane Steen. During the year the Revd Dr Rosalyn Murphy stepped down. The Revd Dr David Hilborn was co-opted to the group, but in accordance with the Terms of Reference another person is being sought. The Anglican co-secretary is the Revd Dr Callan Slipper. The Revd Dr Jeremy Worthen is a consultant. For the Pentecostal Churches the membership is Pastor Agu Irwuku, the Revd Dr Hugh Osgood, and Dave Newman. Pastor Marcus Chilaka represents Pastor Agu who is unable to attend and, for the moment, carries out the functions as co-chair in his place. Dr R. David Muir is Pentecostal co-secretary. Bishop Dr Joe Aldred is a consultant.

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

8. The APTSG has met three times in the last year, on 9 January 2018, 9 May 2018, and 17 October 2018. Key issues discussed were:
  - *The Terms of Reference and the Work Plan.* These were agreed in January and refined in the light of experience and deepening understanding during the year. For instance, it became clear that there are very few places where Pentecostals and Anglicans meet and work together without the presence of other denominations. While this does not diminish the need for Pentecostal-Anglican mutual understanding, it does mean that issues to do with ministry and witness must be seen in this broader context.
  - *Church Planting.* The issue was addressed twice. After the first session, the group had the advantage of being able to look at the Bishops' statement on Church Planting and the Mission of the Church from June this year. Two basic currents in church planting were clear to the group: the more 'laissez-faire' and entrepreneurial approach, on the one hand, and a desire for a more irenic, harmonious, planned approach, on the other. Both are sources of energy with biblical warrant and need to be held together.

- *The implementation of Receptive Ecumenism in the group's work.* It was agreed that Receptive Ecumenism could be a useful methodology. A first step in using it was assayed, looking at the question of ministry and leadership. It is clearly not a 'quick fix' and needs time to be properly implemented.
  - *A conference on Pneumatology and Baptism in the Spirit.* The Revd Dr David Hilborn agreed to organise this on behalf of the APTSG. It looks an exciting venture, and indeed a major one for the group, and is currently due to take place on 2 April 2019.
9. A highlight of the year was the Thy Kingdom Come event organized by APTSG on 9 May 2018. About 90 people, at least 30 of them from the local school, attended the Eucharist in St Peter's Church, Walworth, in the diocese of Southwark. The bells pealed for half an hour before the service began and they rang out again as people left. The Eucharist was a fully Anglican form of worship, though open to others, especially those from a Pentecostal background. Special thanks go to the Venerable Jane Steen, for setting it up, and to the indefatigable Fr Andrew Moughtin-Mumby, the parish priest, whose enthusiasm was infectious, for all his hard work.

## CHURCH OF ENGLAND-UNITED REFORMED CHURCH CONTACT GROUP (CEURC)

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

### **Background**

10. Various attempts were made in the twentieth century to bring the Church of England and the churches of the Reformed tradition closer together, both before and after the coming into being of the United Reformed Church in 1972. After that date the United Reformed Church entered into various dialogues with the Church of England, always with the hope of achieving deeper unity. This has led to various events and documents, the latest being *Unity, Identity and Mission* (2016).
11. To carry this conversation ahead, the Council for Christian Unity of the Church of England and the Mission Committee of the United Reformed Church have agreed to set up a Contact Group that will run for a five-year term in the first instance.

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

12. CEURC's Terms of Reference have been agreed and co-chairs have been appointed. For the Church of England, it is as above; for the URC it is the Revd Ruth Whitehead. Other members are being recruited, and it is hoped to have an initial meeting in the spring of 2019. After that the group will meet at least once a year.

13. The Terms of Reference note that CEURC has four primary purposes, which it does not have to do itself but may outsource:

- work by the two churches in consultation with Churches Together in England to identify and enable structures capable of sustaining shared commitment to mission, including sharing of physical resources, ministry resources, financial resources and strategic planning, at local, regional and national levels;
- in the light of what occurs between the Church of England and the Methodist Church regarding the interchangeability of ordained ministries within the Covenant relationship, a review of the understanding of the nature of ordained ministry that seeks to discern potential for progress towards reconciliation and interchangeability of ministries between the Church of England and the United Reformed Church, if appropriate involving other churches also;
- a process to explore the relationship between Elders and Church Related Community workers in the United Reformed Church on the one hand, and deacons in the Church of England and elsewhere on the other;
- study of the scope for receptive ecumenism between the two churches, especially in worship, looking both at theology and practice, and the opportunities and challenges of worshipping together.

## CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

**Lead Bishop: The Rt Revd Dr Peter Forster, Bishop of Chester**

### **Background**

14. The completion of the Columba process, and the subsequent initial meetings, have laid the basis for a deeper spirit of positive co-operation between the two 'national' churches in the UK.

15. Under the Columba Agreement, a Contact Group has been established, under the joint chairmanship of the Very Revd Dr Angus Morrison and the Bishop of Chester.

### **Activities and Developments**

16. The Contact Group had its inaugural meeting in November 2017, held at Shepherds Dene in Northumberland. The Bishop of Edinburgh has joined the Contact Group.

17. It has been agreed to merge the Contact Group with the bi-annual staff level consultation, which pre-dated the Columba Agreement, and which the Archbishop of York has normally attended.
18. The inaugural meeting was held in March 2018, in Edinburgh, and considered current approaches to mission strategy in the participating churches.
19. The Church of Scotland is currently seeking to develop a strategy somewhat akin to the Church of England's Renewal and Reform programme, and further discussions are taking place at staff level.

## EASTERN ORTHODOX RELATIONS AND ANGLICAN-EASTERN ORTHODOX REGIONAL FORUM (AEORF)

**Lead bishop: The Rt Revd Jonathan Goodall, Bishop of Ebbsfleet**

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

20. Since the last Ecumenical Lead Bishops Meeting the Archbishop has visited the Patriarch of Moscow (20-22 November 2017), the Patriarch of Belgrade (2-4 June 2018) and the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople (18-19 October 2018). The visit to Russia included a visit to St Andrew's Church (Diocese of Europe), events at the British Ambassador's Residence and a lecture at the Post-Graduate Institute of Ss Cyril and Methodius. The visit to Belgrade incorporated a visit, service and speech at the CEC Assembly in Novi Sad as well as an event at the British Ambassador's Residence. The visit to Istanbul included a dinner at the British Consulate General.
21. There have also been a number of other events and partnerships with the Orthodox Church. For a second year running a group of ordinands and clergy in the early years of ministry travelled to Russia in September 2018 to take part in a programme organised by the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Affairs as part of their Summer School. Plans have begun to bring a group from Russia to England next year. There has been close co-operation between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Church of England in the work to counter human trafficking and modern slavery and the Bishop of Salisbury represented the Archbishop of Canterbury at a conference on the environment in Athens. In September there was a joint Anglo-Serbian conference in Oxford commemorating Serbian emigre theologians in Oxford during the years of World War I.
22. The Council for Christian Unity has agreed to set up a small Anglican-Eastern Orthodox Regional Forum (AEORF) to be co-chaired by the Bishop of Ebbsfleet as a joint venture with the British Pan-Orthodox Assembly.

23. Internationally, the International Commission for the Anglican – Orthodox Theological Dialogue met in Cyprus in October 2018. The Commission is examining ethical decision-making in the light of the Buffalo Statement on theological anthropology.

## ENGLISH ANGLICAN-ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMITTEE (EARC)

**Lead bishop: The Rt Revd Christopher Foster, Bishop of Portsmouth**

### **Background**

24. 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 2018 English ARC began a new quinquennium with new membership and celebrated its 100th meeting.

25. The Rt Revd Christopher Foster, Bishop of Portsmouth, was appointed as Co-Chair in 2017 ahead of the new quinquennium. The newly appointed Roman Catholic Co-Chair is Bishop Robert Byrne, Auxiliary Bishop in Birmingham. The group meets twice per year for overnight residential meetings, the next of which is 23 – 24 November 2018.

26. The EARC membership for 2018-2023 is as follows:

#### Anglican

##### *Church of England*

**The Rt Revd Christopher Foster**, Bishop of Portsmouth (Co-chair)

**The Rt Revd Dr Jill Duff**, Bishop of Lancaster

**The Revd Canon Dr Andrew Davison**, Starbridge Lecturer in Theology and Natural Sciences, University of Cambridge; fellow of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge

**The Rt Revd Mike Harrison**, Bishop of Dunwich

**Ms Doral Hayes**, Executive Development Officer for the Association of Interchurch Families; Ecumenical Facilitator for Churches Together in Hertfordshire

**The Revd Canon Maggie McLean**, parish priest in the parish of Battyeford, Diocese of Leeds

**The Revd Andrew Moughtin-Mumby**, Rector of St Peter's Walworth, Diocese of Southwark

##### *Church in Wales*

**The Revd Dr Matthew Hill**, Priest in the Diocese of St David's, Secretary to the Standing Doctrinal Commission of the Church in Wales

**The Revd Canon Jeremy Worthen** (Co-secretary), Secretary for Ecumenical Relations and Theology, Council for Christian Unity

### Catholic

**The Rt Revd Robert Byrne**, an Auxiliary Bishop for the Archdiocese of Birmingham (Co-Chair)

**Fr Andrew Cole**, Parish Priest of the Parish of the Most Holy & Undivided Trinity, Grimsby, Cleethorpes & Immingham

**Mr Claudio Gangemi**, Head of RE at St Bede's School, Surrey

**The Revd Canon William Isaac**, Parish Priest of St. Teilo's with Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, North Cardiff

**The Most Reverend Bernard Longley**, Archbishop of Birmingham

**Fr Steven Parkinson**, Parish Priest in Whitefield, Manchester

**Professor Janet Martin Soskice**, Professor of Philosophical Theology at the University of Cambridge; Fellow of Jesus College Cambridge

**Miss Patricia Whitney**, former secondary school teacher; member of the Focolare Community

**The Revd Canon Anthony Churchill** (Co-Secretary), member of the Arundel Cathedral Chapter; Episcopal Vicar for Ecumenical Affairs in the Arundel and Brighton Diocese

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

27. The new membership of English ARC met for the first time on 2 July 2018 for a welcome and induction session at Lambeth Palace. The Co-Chairs suggested two initial areas of work which will be discussed at the next meeting:

- Joint Schools – reviewing and updating guidelines and advice
- ARCIC III – developing guidance on the reception of the statement released in July 2018

28. The meeting on 2 July was the 100th meeting of English ARC and the occasion was marked with a celebration afternoon hosted at Lambeth Palace. Around 35 former members of English ARC joined the new members to share in tea, cake and prosecco, with reflections given by four former members of their time and work with the committee.

29. The CCU and the Department of Dialogue and Unity for the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales agreed common Terms of Reference for this next phase of English ARC, prior to the appointment of new members.

30. Given the formal inclusion of Welsh representatives from both churches as members under the new Terms of Reference, it was agreed that the name should be changed to English and Welsh Anglican – Roman Catholic Committee.

## JOINT COVENANT ADVOCACY AND MONITORING GROUP (JCAMG)

**Lead Bishop: The Rt Revd Paul Bayes, Bishop of Liverpool**

### **Background**

31. JCAMG works in a spirit of fellowship and mutual understanding, and so feels itself to manifest the Anglican-Methodist Covenant in its own life. It is thus enabled to work for its purpose of helping both churches to grow deeper into their covenant relationship and to express more fully their commitment to mission and unity for the sake of God's kingdom.
32. JCAMG recognises that for the 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 under consideration by the two churches need to be set in this wider context and make a difference to their life and mission.
33. JCAMG works in conjunction with the faith and order bodies of the two churches. Good progress has been made, especially in the bringing forward of Mission and Ministry in Covenant (MMiC). 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 examples of the practical outworking of the Covenant, all of which indicate the opportunities that would be made available by deeper communion between the churches and, in particular, the encouragement to the life, mission and worship of the churches that would be attained by the interchangeability of presbyteral ministry.
34. 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. Co-secretaries: The Revd Dr Callan Slipper (National Ecumenical Officer); The Revd Ruth Gee (Connexional Ecumenical Officer).
35. We note with pleasure the appointment of one of our number, the Revd Michaela Youngson, as President of the Methodist Conference 2018-2019.

## Activities and developments in the past year

36. JCAMG has met three times in the past year.
37. The main focus of JCAMG has necessarily been around the reception of MMiC by the General Synod in February and the Methodist Conference in June this year. Both gatherings asked for further reflection. The need is now to address the three main areas identified in the motion at General Synod: 1) the nature of the unity we are going towards and how it relates to the full unity of Christ's Church, 2) the nature of the historic episcopate as it will be shared by the Methodist Church and how this will work in practice, 3) how the interchangeability of ministry will work, including questions about the training, induction and support for those who may serve in a church other than the one in which they were ordained, as well as 4) the question the motion notes about eucharistic presidency and episcopal ordination. For the Methodist Conference the Faith and Order Committee was directed to include progress on work relating to the interchangeability of deacons in any further reports.
38. The additional work asked for by both churches is being undertaken by a Further Reflection Group co-chaired by the Bishop of Lichfield and the Revd Ruth Gee (who has since become the Connexional Ecumenical Officer).
39. JCAMG has noted the progress of the Further Reflection Group and recognises that the task of advocacy and monitoring must relate to a more extended timetable for progress on MMiC. While seeking to encourage understanding of MMiC, the task of maintaining and deepening interest in the Covenant itself continues to be needed. JCAMG is seeking to stimulate articles and to hold a conference in the summer both to support MMiC and, more broadly, the Covenant.
40. JCAMG is grateful to the work of MAPUM. In particular it wishes to commend the thinking in MAPUM around the unfortunate resonances of the term 'bearable anomaly'. The term has a very respectable pedigree in ecumenical theology, but it is very easy to misinterpret. MAPUM suggested that a more effective way of talking that captures better what we think would be happening in the time-limited period, when there would be non-episcopally ordained Methodist ministers (albeit always in full communion with a bishop) able in principle to function as priests in Church of England contexts, would be to speak of a 'moment of grace'. This both points to the provisional or exceptional nature of the situation and also, more importantly, it indicates faithfulness to the work of God.
41. JCAMG is also grateful to MAPUM for its help in setting up the network of Covenant Champions. The network is small and rather fragile. Work is under way to support it and enable its best functioning.
42. JCAMG also notes, with thanks, the work done by staff in keeping the Anglican Methodist Covenant website up-to-date. This one-stop information point carries all the relevant documentation with regard to the Covenant.

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

**Lead bishop: The Rt Revd Dr John Thomson, Bishop of Selby**

## **Background**

43. MAPUM was formed in July 2009 when, as result of the Anglican Methodist covenant, the Council for Christian Unity's Local Unity Panel and the Methodist Connexional Committee for Local Ecumenical Development were brought together. The two committees had had very similar briefs and it was thought beneficial to do ecumenical things ecumenically. So it has proved. There are participant observers on the panel from the Roman Catholic, Baptist and United Reformed Churches.
44. 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**

45. Following its normal pattern, MAPUM has met twice in the past year, in November 2017 and for its residential in April 2018. The work of the year has focused on the following topics:
- A New Framework for Local Unity in Mission, especially in the light of the guidance offered by CTE, which ties in with the practical application of the Church of England's revised ecumenical legislation
  - Discussion around and advice upon the Ecumenical Code of Practice of the revised ecumenical legislation
  - Consideration of issues around joint confirmation
  - The challenges to local ecumenism as a result of the gradual weakening of intermediate or regional ecumenical structures
  - The ecclesiology of Single Congregation Ecumenical Partnerships
  - The sharing and the sale of church buildings
  - Partnership and hospitality in ecumenical settings

- The declaration of ecumenical welcome to members of other churches attending Anglican or Methodist churches
- The use of the term LEP in the Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church.

46. MAPUM has also continued to have a particular focus on the Anglican-Methodist Covenant.

- MAPUM has been attentive to the passage of Mission and Ministry in Covenant, and it has co-operated with JCAMG in working to disseminate understanding of its proposals.
- In relation to this work, it welcomed the visit by the Anglican co-chair of JCAMG, the Bishop of Liverpool. During this visit MAPUM gave thought to the unfortunate resonances of the term 'bearable anomaly' and proposed, as an alternative way of speaking, the term a 'moment of grace', which would convey more clearly what is happening in the time-limited period when there would be non-episcopally ordained Methodist ministers able in principle to function as priests in Church of England contexts.
- MAPUM has considered the role and the support of Covenant Champions, noting that their work becomes both more difficult and more crucial during the period of further reflection, following the request for this by the General Synod.

## EUROPEAN ECUMENICAL DIALOGUES

### ANGLICAN-ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMITTEE (ARC) – BELGIUM

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

#### **Background**

47. An ARCIC Belgium group has existed for many years. The Revd Canon John Wilkinson (Canon Pastor at the Pro-Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, Brussels), became Anglican co-chair in February 2018, alongside the Father Kurt Priem, a theologian and church historian, who is Roman Catholic co-chair.

48. The other Anglican members continue to be 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).

49. Roman Catholic members of long standing include three lay members who have long been committed to Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue and the distinguished Belgian theologian, Canon Adelbert Denaux, of the Leuven University who was a member both of ARCIC II and ARCIC III. The group meets three times year.

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

50. The insights of Canon Adelbert Denaux into the latest ARCIC developments and Receptive Ecumenism have been invaluable.
51. Father Kurt Priem, the Roman Catholic co-chair will be attending 52nd Belgian Ecumenical Gathering and Study Day which will be considering 'The End of Life: How do Christians come to a Decision: Challenges for Faith.
52. The bi-monthly newsletter has continued. Discussions are however underway to find the best method of keeping Anglicans and Roman Catholics aware of ARCIC and other matters relating to relations between our two communions, both in Belgium and internationally.
53. Members of the group are individually members of a number of the ecumenical bodies mentioned in last year's report, including the La Concertation des Eglises Chrétiennes en Belgique/ Het Overleg van Christelijke Kerken in België, which is the equivalent of the National Council of Churches.

## ANGLICAN-ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMITTEE (ARC) – FRANCE

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

### **Background**

54. 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 is a joint initiative 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.

55. 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 & Monaco and beyond.
56. 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**

57. Although this year's residential meeting had to be adjourned, the two co-presidents of ARC met with the secretary, with attendance by Jane Stranz as Luther-Reformed observer. This meeting discussed and advised the following:
- That work already decided upon in relation to translating the daily offices and the place of Mary as model for mission and holiness needs to be re-launched
  - That membership should be increased to five each side, with an additional RC Secretary and the observer from the Luther-Reformed community.

## MEISSEN ENGLISH COMMISSION (MEC)

**Lead bishop: The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs, Bishop of Huddersfield**

### **Background**

58. 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.

59. In 2018, the Meissen Commission members were:

Co-Chair: The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs  
Co-Secretary: The Revd Dr Matthias Grebe  
The Ven Robert Jones  
The Revd Professor Morwenna Ludlow  
Mrs Helen Page (new)  
The Revd Canon Dr. Dagmar Winter (new)

## Activities and developments in the past year

60. On 17-18 June 2018, representatives of the Evangelical Church in Germany and the Church of England met in Brussels to consider issues relating to our shared future in Europe, in the light of Brexit. Attendees expressed their gratitude for what were all extremely informative contributions from members of the European Commission, Council and Parliament, as well as from ecumenical colleagues in Brussels. The presentations and discussions that followed all highlighted afresh the seriousness of the current situation, and led the group to reflect on the responsibility of the churches for shaping a common future. The representatives stated at the conclusion of the meeting: "We commit ourselves to working in Christian hope for the welfare and reconciliation of all peoples, whatever may happen regarding Brexit in the months ahead."
61. On 20-23 September, the annual Meissen Commission meeting took place in Erfurt, Germany, with a focus on the theme of 'Koinonia'. Immediately prior to that, Bishop Jonathan Gibbs attended and addressed the Assembly of the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe, held in Basle, Switzerland, on behalf of the Anglican Churches in the British Isles. Relations with the Anglican Churches were a key theme in discussions about the future of ecumenism, focusing especially on issues such as the meaning of episcopate and the mutual recognition of ministries.
62. On 11 November 2018, a service of remembrance for the 100th anniversary of the end of World War One was held in the Diocese of Leeds. The initiative was proposed by Bishop Ralph Meister and Christoph Ernst, Co-Chair and Co-Secretary of the Meissen Commission, and a choir of approximately 60 German youngsters flew in for this event.
63. On 15-16 November, the 'After-Brexit' colloquium took place at Lambeth Palace, a joint initiative of the Church of England and the EKD with Archbishop Justin Welby and Bishop Heinrich Bedform-Strohm from the EKD being interviewed together in the final session. The three key areas were (i) the church and the unity of society, (ii) the churches and the unity of Europe, and (iii) the unity of European churches.
64. Brexit remains a key future concern in terms of the relationship between the Church of England and the continental churches. Questions remain about the unity of European Churches and the best means of building and sustaining bridges in this area, as well as the role of the church in political debate, and the voice we might have in the public square.

# OLD CATHOLIC CHURCHES OF THE UNION OF UTRECHT

**Lead Bishop: The Rt Revd Dr David Hamid, Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Europe**

## **Background**

65. The Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht are based almost entirely in continental Europe. With a small “International Bishops’ Secretariat” (one part-time person) based in Utrecht in the Netherlands, there are Old Catholic Churches in the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Poland and couple of isolated congregations in Belgium, France and Croatia. These churches have been in communion with the whole Anglican Communion since the Bonn Agreement of 1931. A former small group of Nordic Old Catholic congregations have now been formally closed. A tiny group of former Old Catholics in Italy were asked to join Anglican jurisdictions several years back.

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

66. There is an International Anglican – Old Catholic Co-ordinating Council which meets annually. This year it met in Winchester. Bishop David Hamid is a member of the Council and the Anglican co-chair is Bishop Michael Burrows of Cashel (Church of Ireland). This meeting both looked back over the development of the relationship between the churches and looked forward to the next phase of the life of the Council after its current mandate ends in 2019. A report is being finalised for presentation to the ACC and the International Bishops’ Conference.

67. The Old Catholic Churches celebrated a Congress (one happens every four years, largely lay involvement) in Vienna in September. Significantly there was a public service of repentance for Austrian Old Catholic complicity with the Nazis in WWII.

68. The principal points of contact between Anglicans and Old Catholics are in those parts of Europe where the churches are present in the same locations. The presence of the Old Catholics is an important consideration in the ongoing conversation about overlapping Anglican jurisdiction in continental Europe.

69. There is joint work between the Church of England Diocese in Europe and the Old Catholics in Schiphol Airport, Calais (refugee ministry) and Lausanne, Switzerland.

70. The Archbishop of Utrecht played a major role in the Assembly of the Conference of European Churches in Novi Sad in June 2018. He preached at the service put on by Anglicans and Old Catholics on the Sunday morning at which the Archbishop of Canterbury presided.

# PORVOO COMMUNION

**Lead Bishop: The Rt Revd Dr David Hamid, Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Europe**

## **Background**

71. The Porvoo Communion consists of the Anglican Churches in the British Isles (including the Diocese in Europe) and in the Iberian Peninsula, the Nordic Lutheran Churches, the Baltic Lutheran Churches (with the exception of Latvia, which remains an observer), the Latvian Church Abroad and the Lutheran Church of Great Britain. The Communion is overseen by the Porvoo Contact Group which meets annually. The co-chairs and co-secretaries meet as a standing committee annually, in addition. The Anglican co-chair is the Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Reverend Dr Michael Jackson and the co-secretary is the Revd Dr Will Adam. The Lutheran co-chair, the Bishop of Copenhagen, the Most Reverend Peter Skov-Jakobsen, has now completed his term of office and will be replaced next year by the Bishop of Tampere (Finland), the Right Reverend Matti Repo, who was some years ago the Lutheran co-secretary.
72. Within the Church of England, the Porvoo Panel, a panel of the CCU, is chaired by Bishop David Hamid and is made up of a mixture of Anglican and Lutheran members based in the United Kingdom.

## **Activities in the past year**

73. The most recent meeting of the Porvoo Contact Group took place in Tallinn, Estonia alongside a Porvoo Consultation entitled 'Minorities and Majorities: a challenge to church and society'. The text of the communiqué published after this event may be found here:  
[http://sakasti.evl.fi/sakasti.nsf/0/1D769654A0DC70CCC2257BDB003900F9/\\$FILE/Porvoo%20Communique%202018.pdf](http://sakasti.evl.fi/sakasti.nsf/0/1D769654A0DC70CCC2257BDB003900F9/$FILE/Porvoo%20Communique%202018.pdf)
74. The delegation from the Church of England to the Tallinn consultation consisted of the Bishop of Tonbridge (the Right Reverend Simon Burton-Jones), the Archdeacon of Manchester (the Venerable Karen Lund), the Reverend April Almaas (Diocese in Europe) and the Revd Dr Will Adam. The consultation considered how minorities and majorities are found in different guises in our societies. Of particular note was the growing appreciation in some churches that the situation in which their church was the religion of the majority of the people in their nation is no longer the case.
75. This year saw a significant Porvoo-related anniversary as it is eighty years since the establishment of intercommunion between the Church of England and the Lutheran Churches of Estonia and Latvia. This anniversary was commemorated at the Eucharist in Tallinn Cathedral on Sunday 14 October where the Archbishop of Estonia presided and the Bishop of Tonbridge preached. The Bishop of Tonbridge brought a greeting from the

Archbishop of Canterbury and there was an exchange of gifts. This particular agreement is part of the web of relationships that predate Porvoo and is a useful reminder that, whilst the Latvian church is not a signatory to Porvoo, this particular agreement has never been revoked.

76. The next Porvoo Contact Group will be in October 2019 in Portugal where the topic will be the voice of the Church in the public square.
77. The Porvoo Panel continues to be a forum to exchange information happening in the Porvoo jurisdictions, monitoring the participation of bishops in consecrations, supporting diocesan links and theological and other exchanges. An event to highlight Church of England/Church of Sweden links is planned for 2019.
78. During a recent visit of Bishop Andreas Aarflot to London, a gathering of some of the architects of the Porvoo Agreement was held over a lunch at the Norwegian Church.

## THE REUILLY CONTACT GROUP

**Lead bishop: The Rt Revd John Stroyan, Bishop of Warwick**

### **Background**

79. 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).
80. The current membership in the two French churches comprises:
  - UEPAL: the Lutheran President is Mr Christian Albecker
  - EPUDF: the President is the Rev. Emmanuelle Seyboldt

81. The Reilly Contact Group members are:

#### ***Anglican delegation:***

Co-Chair: The Rt Revd John Stroyan, Church of England;

Co-Secretary: The Revd Dr Matthias Grebe, Church of England

Representative Diocese in Europe: The Ven Meurig Williams;

Scottish Episcopal Church: The Revd John McLuckie (also representing the Church of Wales and the Church of Ireland);

Observer: Julian Templeton, United Reformed Church, UK

Observer: The Revd Christine O'Dowd Smith, Church of Ireland

***French Lutheran and Reformed delegation:***

Co-Chair: The Revd Christian Krieger, Communion Protestante Luthéro-Réformée;

Eglise Protestant Unie de France: The Revd Claire Sixt-Gateuille;

French Protestant Federation: The Revd Jane Stranz,

Communion Protestante Luthéro-Réformée: The Revd Alexandra Breukink;

Lyon: The Revd Pierre Blanzat

**Activities and developments in the past year**

82. The last formal meeting of the Reuilly Contact Group took place from the 13-15 November 2017 in Belfast. The conversations centred around two themes.

i. The practical measures designed to take forward and strengthen the existing collaboration between the Anglicans and the French Lutheran and Reformed Churches in France, in order to work towards greater unity and closer fellowship. In one of the Business Sessions the group looked at the theological ramifications of the Leuenberg Agreement of 1973 between the Lutheran and Reformed churches as well as the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1888, which emphasises the authenticity of Word and Sacrament for ecclesial agreement.

ii. A fresh theological approach to the on-going discussion on communion and the interchangeability of ministries. Discussions emphasised that since the Reuilly Agreement is embedded in the Leuenberg Agreement, there is a genuine opportunity for renewed conversation about uniting the two churches in ministry. These themes will be picked up in 2019 at the next contact group meeting.

83. The Group also met with representatives of the Irish Anglican-Methodist Covenant.

84. Five pilot sites in France were chosen to deepen the relation with CofE churches with the French Protestant churches: Nice, Lyon, Paris, Grenoble, and Lille. In March 2018 a Conference was held in Lyons to strengthen existing relationships between Anglican chaplaincies and French Protestant churches which culminated in an inspirational act of worship involving all ages.

## ECUMENICAL INSTRUMENTS

### CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES (CEC)

**Lead bishop: The Rt Revd Nick Baines, Bishop of Leeds**

#### **Background**

85. The Conference of European Churches (CEC) was founded in 1959 to promote reconciliation, dialogue and friendship between the churches of Europe at a time of growing Cold War political tensions and divisions. Membership currently includes 116 Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican, and Old Catholic Churches from all countries of Europe, plus 40 National Council of Churches and Organisations in Partnership.

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

86. The five-yearly CEC Assembly took place from 31st May to 6th June in Novi Sad, Serbia. It included presentations, visits, seminars and shared worship as well as business sessions. The Archbishop of Canterbury was one of the guests to address the Assembly. The Church of England's delegation to the Assembly was led by the Bishop of Leeds and included the Bishop of Loughborough, Mark Chapman, Naomi Maxwell and Margaret Swinson, accompanied by Charles Reed and Jeremy Worthen as staff.

87. The title of the Assembly was 'You shall be my witnesses', with hospitality, justice and witness as key themes, each providing the focus for one of the full days. Responding positively to changing patterns of migration, religious belonging and national identity were recurring issues. There were also some matters relating to the revision of the constitution at the previous Assembly that had to be addressed.

88. Over the last two years the CEC has developed regional consultations (Iceland, Edinburgh, Volos and Prague) working on the question of the Churches' vision for the future of Europe. This has resulted in a significantly increased intensity of participation of member churches.

89. The Assembly marked the end of the term of office for Bishop Christopher Hill as President of CEC. Bishop Christopher has held a range of major ecumenical responsibilities in the Church of England over many years, and his contribution to CEC during his period as President is very much appreciated.

90. The Assembly elects the Presidency (President and two Vice Presidents) and Governing Board for the following five-year period. The Bishop of Loughborough was elected as Vice President (representing Anglicans and Old Catholics within CEC's membership), stating that her priority was 'to be engaged with others in work around issues with refugees and the movement of people across Europe.' The Bishop of Leeds was also

elected to the Governing Board, giving the Church of England strong representation at a critical point in its relationship with CEC.

91. Other work has continued through the year alongside the Assembly, including preparation for a conference titled 'Towards Peaceful Coexistence in the Middle East: Challenges and Opportunities', organised in collaboration with the Cumberland Lodge. This will build on a visit made by the (past) Presidency to the Middle Eastern Council of Churches in Spring 2018.
92. Brexit will have an impact on European relations in general and between churches in particular. The commitment of the Church of England to CEC is especially significant in this context.

## CHURCHES TOGETHER IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND (CTBI)

**Lead bishop: The Rt Revd Dr David Hamid, Assistant Bishop in the Diocese in Europe**

### **Background**

93. Following the outcome of the Swanwick Declaration in 1987, the British Council of Churches emerged as the Council of Churches in Britain and Ireland, developing alongside ecumenical instruments – Action for Churches Together in Scotland, CYTUN (Churches Together in Wales), Churches Together in England and the Irish Council of Churches – to help embrace other Christian churches in smaller communities. The Council of Churches in Britain and Ireland subsequently became Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.
94. Acting as an 'instrument' by which the churches can journey together towards full visible unity, CTBI provides information and guidance to bridge understanding of issues in today's society and develops publications and free resources with other organisations and members to offer reflection, prayer and study materials to celebrate key Christian events.

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

95. In December 2017 CTBI, in partnership with Christian Aid and St. George's House, Windsor, CTBI hosted a theological consultation on language pertaining to the Holy Land and the Israel-Palestine conflict. The process was chaired by the Rt. Revd Dr Michael Iprgrave. Following the consultation, a study guide is being prepared by CTBI which includes the text of the papers given as well as study material and additional resources.

96. 'Invest in Peace' is a partnership initiative with the Board of Deputies that engages local churches and synagogues with a focus on supporting reconciliation projects between Palestinians and Israelis. A number of related events were held in the past year.
97. 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. Potential visits are being considered to increase awareness and solidarity for those working for a peaceful outcome to the conflict in the Korean peninsula.
98. Specific plans are being implemented in partnership with the National Council of Churches in Sri Lanka. 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. Areas of shared work include a focus on gender, environment, and conflict resolution. Resources from each Council will be shared whenever possible.
99. 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.
100. The resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2018 was a major project for the year and included the coordination of writers and other specialists. The materials took up the theme from the Caribbean Churches which reflect upon the inheritance of the transatlantic slavery and contemporary challenges in ecumenism. 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.
101. The Lent resource for 2018 was 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. This has now also been developed by CTBI to include a web resource which has been shared by BBC Radio 4. The Lent resource for 2019, 'God of Mystery', will be written by the Mission Theology Advisory Group (MTAG)
102. MTAG is a joint body with the Church of England, which has been exploring issues that have a direct relevance to the current political situation regarding Brexit, especially aspects of belonging and community.
103. The Centre for Theology and Justice has now been established and the work is moving ahead. Various projects are in process. One focus has been the creation of an Arts project, exploring theology and justice through the use of creative arts. The appointment of an Artist in Residence is the first step that has been completed and work on the theme of gender and identity has been agreed.

104. The Churches Refugee Network now has oversight of all aspects of shared work being undertaken. The Moderator is the Rt Revd Jonathan Clarke. 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. Discussions are ongoing regarding useful support to churches who are actively offering resettlement opportunities.
105. Richard Reddie has been appointed to the new position of Director of Justice and Inclusion. The newly configured post will include work on migration and refugees along with a major focus on racial justice issues.

## CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ENGLAND (CTE)

**Lead bishop: The Rt Revd Michael Beasley, Bishop of Hertford**

### **Background**

106. 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. CTE is in touch with all forms of ecumenical practice, including other networks by which Christians co-operate (for instance, the Gather Network and Hope), and it rightly has a certain primacy of place. No other body brings together such a range of churches and organisations or groups with real ecumenical engagement. It functions 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, while at the same time providing a vehicle by which the churches can engage in outreach to society. It has a small but highly effective staff and works in conjunction with ecumenical officers in counties across the land and within the various churches.
107. CTE is responding to the change in its circumstances precipitated by the reduction in funding from its member churches, and in particular the Church of England. This coincides with a time when the churches are seeking a more missional orientation, and so it is a good moment for CTE to discern its way ahead.
108. Last year CTE commissioned a report by the think-tank Theos. It was published on 28 September 2017 as *That they all may be one: Insights into Churches Together in England and contemporary ecumenism*. The report commended much of the work of CTE, and especially its brokering of relationships among the churches, but registered a need for a clearer focus for what it does. The response to that, which tries both to maintain primacy of place being given to relationships in God and, without becoming another mission agency, to have a more missional focus, can be seen in its proposed strapline:

*Churches Together in England: united in Christ Jesus, sharing God's mission, empowered by the Spirit.*

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

109. The Directors have met five times and, by the end of the year, the Enabling Group will have met residentially twice. Among its many activities, CTE has run two annual courses: a training course for newly appointed ecumenical officers (both denominational and county officers) and a consultation and training event for county ecumenical officers. It has also facilitated two meetings of National Ecumenical Officers. The Presidents have met twice during the year, at Lambeth Palace and in Swanwick. This has also been the year of the Forum, which takes place every three years. Notable events and issues in the past year are have included:

- The retirement of the Revd Dr David Cornick and the appointment of the Revd Dr Paul Goodliff to replace him
- CTE has continued to consider how it should respond to the Theos Report (see para. 108 above), leading to discussion about how its relational richness can serve mission and about its relationship with Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
- It has continued to assist in the implementation of *A New Framework for Local Unity in Mission*, which takes a fresh look at ecumenical practice in England suggesting a) ways for greater flexibility in structural arrangements and b) how best to facilitate ecumenism at the intermediate or regional level
- It has come to a greater understanding of new, community churches and begun to appreciate their impact
- It has looked and given support to an interesting project studying the value and effectiveness of juridical ecumenism
- It has hosted and facilitated meeting helping the reorganisation of the challenging but rich ecumenical structure in Milton Keynes
- It has welcomed the restoration of the Free Churches Group to CTE, and continuing growth in membership with new churches joining
- It has published on its website a free web-based resource for making Receptive Ecumenism readily applicable in local settings among groups of Christians from different churches who are not necessarily theologically trained.

110. CTE's long-term commitment to Pentecostal and multi-cultural matters means that it was concerned about the plight of some members of the Windrush generation and the ensuing political storm around migration. It was heavily involved in the planning for the 70th anniversary of the arrival of the Windrush with a service in Westminster Abbey on 22 June, and deeply gratified that it was such a huge success.

111. The Forum of CTE from 17-19 September was a significant moment. All six Presidents were there and the role of all the Presidents was greatly appreciated. But perhaps the thing that was most remarkable was the depth, friendliness and generally uncomplicated simplicity of the relationships of Christians from such a wide variety of churches. It offered tremendous hope for the future.

# WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (WCC)

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

## **Introduction**

112. This year's report focuses on the June 2018 Central Committee meeting of the WCC in Geneva under the theme "Walking and Serving Together for Peace and Justice." It provided the occasion for the WCC to celebrate 70 years of working for unity together with member churches and the wider ecumenical fellowship. There was a sense of being able to walk together, as performance of the mandate given by the last assembly was reviewed and critical decisions made that will guide the future of the council.

113. The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace that was launched in 2013 continues to be a key dimension in the WCC response to God's call for unity, mission, justice and peace, as reflected in the challenging address on the theme "Walking and Serving Together for Peace and Justice", from the Moderator of the Central Committee, Dr Agnes Abuom, an Anglican from Kenya.

114. 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.

115. The plenary session on "The Living Fellowship" reviewed the WCC's achievements from its past 70 years in working for Christian unity and action and also looked at current challenges. In particular it focussed on the Korean Peninsula, the Programme to Combat Racism (PCR), the work to raise awareness of the dangers of nuclear proliferation, and the newly relaunched Thursdays in Black (the global movement resisting attitudes and practices that permit rape and violence).

116. A further plenary was held on the "Experiences from the Pilgrimage". The experiences of recent Pilgrim Team Visits (PTVs) to countries in conflict and division, including Colombia, Burundi, South Sudan and the Korean peninsula, were shared. This programme focussed on the accompaniment of partners in different contexts. It envisages a presence and engagement that builds confidence, generates trust and helps such communities and peoples to feel the sense of a wider belonging and solidarity as they continue to work for peace with justice.

117. The presence of Pope Francis on 21 June provided a special highlight. His Holiness joined the Central Committee in commemorating the 70th anniversary of the WCC. The Roman Catholic Church, he affirmed, was committed to the ecumenical quest for unity, justice and peace. During the morning, the Pope joined an ecumenical prayer in the Ecumenical Centre. His reflections were on the theme living in the Spirit. After visiting the Ecumenical Institute Bossey for lunch and a meeting with students, the Pope returned to the Ecumenical Centre. His reflections centred around the present state of

the ecumenical movement, the WCC-Roman Catholic relations, the quest for unity, the importance of mission, and the perspectives of further collaboration. His visit concluded with a papal mass attended by 30,000 people in the nearby convention centre at Palexpo.

118. **Venue of next assembly:** Invitations were received from the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Dutch Reformed Church and Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa to host the WCC's 11th Assembly in 2021 in Karlsruhe, Germany, and in Cape Town, South Africa respectively. Both venues were suitable. After intense discussion the central committee chose Karlsruhe, Germany. The invitation was received from the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), conveying the acceptance of all its 20 Landeskirchen – United, Lutheran and Reformed churches. Other WCC member churches in Germany as well as the Council of Churches in Germany also supported hosting the assembly in Germany.
119. **Theme of the next assembly:** The Assembly Planning Committee also presented possible themes for the next assembly, and discussion at the central committee centred on Paul's exhortation in 2 Corinthians 5:14: "For the love of Christ compels us." The governing body considered variations on the theme and forwarded its reflections to the WCC executive committee for further deliberation.
120. **Child Safeguarding Policy:** The central committee adopted a Child Safeguarding Policy. This was a further step inviting churches "to promote child protection policies. The process of implementing the Child Safeguarding Policy across WCC programmatic activities and strategies has now begun.
121. 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 offers challenging opportunities for building Christian confidence across the globe.

# BODIES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

## COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

**Lead bishop: The Rt Revd Dr Martin Warner, Bishop of Chichester**

### **Background**

122. According to its Constitution, the functions of the Council for Christian Unity (CCU) are as follows.

(a) To sustain, promote and enhance effective ecumenical working at all levels of the Church of England.

(b) To advise the Archbishops, the Archbishops' Council, the General Synod and the House of Bishops on issues and proposals relating to Christian unity, where appropriate in consultation with the Faith and Order Commission.

(c) On behalf of the Archbishops' Council and the General Synod to be the principal channel of communication with other Christian churches, the Ecumenical Instruments of which the Church of England is a member and (where ecumenical matters are concerned) the institutions and member churches of the Anglican Communion.

(d) To service committees and commissions directly contributing to these functions has a wide-ranging set of functions as set out in its Constitution.

123. Membership consists of a Chair appointed by the Archbishops, four members elected by the General Synod and four appointed by the Appointments Committee (of whom at least two must also be Synod members). The CCU meets four times a year, one of those normally being a 24-hour residential meeting.

124. In July 2018, the Bishop of Peterborough completed his five-year term as Chair of the CCU, having previously served on it as a member. The Bishop of Chichester was appointed as his successor.

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

125. A wide range of topics are considered at meetings, including many areas covered in other reports to this meeting. Some of those included so far in 2018 are listed below.

- Progress on the research exercise on 'Co-operation in Mission': this exercise as initiated as a CCU project. It is being undertaken by CCU staff, with regular

consultation with the CCU. It is exploring the extent, character and effectiveness of co-operation in missional activities between Anglican parishes and non-Anglican churches through an initial survey exercise of parishes in 12 medium-sized English towns, to be followed up by a series of interviews with participants.

- Continuing work on revision of the Ecumenical Canons and the Ecumenical Relations Measure within the remit of Phase 2 of the Simplification Task Group: this is also work initiated by the CCU. Final approval for the legislation took place at the July Synod, and CCU's attention then turned to the accompanying Code of Practice.
- Relations with Continental churches: in the light of preparations for the departure of the UK from the European Union, particular attention has been paid to regular opportunities for interaction, including the CEC Assembly, as well as to special events this year such as the Meissen delegation visit to Brussels in early summer and the 'After Brexit' colloquium taking place at Lambeth Palace in November.
- Proposals for interchangeability of ordained ministries between the Church of England and the Methodist Church of Great Britain set out in *Mission and Ministry in Covenant*: work on this has been led by the faith and order bodies of the two churches. The CCU has been kept informed of developments and has made various comments and suggestions to be fed back to other bodies, including recommendations about engagement with Synod.
- ARCIC III's first major text, *Walking Together on the Way*: the CCU received an initial presentation on the document in September and will be reviewing reception in this country, including work undertaken through the English Anglican – Roman Catholic Committee and at the Joint Bishops Meeting in January 2019.
- Terms of Reference for dialogue groups: the CCU oversees the work of the various dialogue groups that support the Church of England's ecumenical relations at national level. While these groups operate with an appropriate degree of autonomy, the CCU has a particular role in ensuring they are working to up to date Terms of Reference that are congruent with current priorities and allocation of resources.

# FAITH AND ORDER COMMISSION

**Lead bishop: The Rt Revd Dr Christopher Cocksworth, Bishop of Coventry**

## **Background**

126. The Faith and Order Commission came into being in 2010, replacing the Faith and Order Advisory Group and the Doctrine Commission. The former House of Bishops Theological Group became an Episcopal Reference Group within the Commission. It has up to fifteen members and an episcopal chair. According to its constitution, 'The function of the Commission shall be to act as a theological and ecclesiological resource for the Church of England,' with a particular responsibility both to 'undertake work commissioned by the Archbishops, the House of Bishops or the Council for Christian Unity' and to draw to their attention 'matters which appear to it to raise theological or ecclesiological issues worthy of consideration by the Commission.'

127. The current membership of the Commission is listed on the relevant page of the Church of England's website. The Revd Prebendary Sarah Schofield and the Revd Professor Jennifer Strawbridge joined the Commission at the end of 2017. There was an episcopal vacancy for the first half of 2018 until the appointment of the Bishop of Chichester as chair of CCU and an episcopal member of the Commission was confirmed. There are currently two vacancies for non-episcopal members, following the departures of the Revd Dr Emma Ineson and the Revd Dr Rosalyn Murphy in the summer. We are indebted to the commitment of members and their contribution to the work of the Commission.

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

128. The work of the Commission is varied, with a combination of shorter- and longer-term projects, some initiated by the Commission itself and some responsive to requests from other bodies. While major projects tend to have as one objective the production of a substantial document of some kind, the Commission's advice may be sought from time to time on work that is being prepared by others.

129. The major focus for the Commission's ecumenical work in 2018 continued to be the development with the Methodist Church's Faith and Order Committee of proposals enabling the interchangeability of ordained ministries between the Church of England and the Methodist Church, as requested by the General Synod and the Methodist Conference in 2014. The report summarising these proposals, *Mission and Ministry in Covenant*, was debated by the General Synod in February and by the Methodist Conference in July. Both bodies asked for further reflection to be undertaken on specific area by the faith and order bodies of the two churches. A joint subgroup was convened to lead on this task, meeting for the first time soon after the Methodist Conference.

130. The Commission routinely reviews significant texts of international ecumenical dialogue. In 2018, these included the Agreed Statement between Anglican and Oriental Orthodox theologians on the Procession and Work of the Holy Spirit. It also discussed Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation on 'the call to holiness in the contemporary world', *Gaudete et Exsultate*.

Much of the Commission's work does not have a direct bearing on ecumenical relations, although it seeks to attend in all it does to the participation of the Church of England in the one holy catholic and apostolic Church. Areas considered in 2018 included the Five Guiding Principles, Christian-Jewish relations, the calling of the whole people of God and missional ecclesiology.