

**CHURCH OF ENGLAND'S ECUMENICAL RELATIONS
2019 ANNUAL REPORT**

Contents

Introduction to the annual report on ecumenical relations 2019	3
Relationships with other churches	6
BAPTISTS	6
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.....	7
EVANGELISCHE KIRCHE IN DEUTSCHLAND (EKD).....	8
FRENCH PROTESTANT CHURCHES	10
LOCAL UNITY	12
METHODIST CHURCH	15
OLD CATHOLICS OF THE UNION OF UTRECHT	19
ORTHODOX CHURCHES.....	20
PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES.....	24
PORVOO COMMUNION OF CHURCHES	27
THE PROTESTANT CHURCH IN CHINA	28
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH	29
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH.....	38
Ecumenical Instruments	40
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES (CEC).....	40
CHURCHES TOGETHER IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND (CTBI).....	41
CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ENGLAND (CTE)	43
WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (WCC)	46

INTRODUCTION TO THE ANNUAL REPORT ON ECUMENICAL RELATIONS 2019

Among the fresh challenges and points of rejoicing that face the churches year by year, one thing from the last twelve months stands out as particularly significant. It is a piece of empirical research. Now, it may be possible to ask how a report can be exciting. The answer in this case is that the Council for Christian Unity's *Doing Mission Together: How Partnership Promotes Gospel Growth* (DMT) explores the link between unity, so crucial for the Church's flourishing, and mission, so vital for our world in constant need of transformation.¹

DMT focuses upon one key aspect of unity, namely, the cooperation of churches as they reach out to the communities they serve. This is what it means by 'missional ecumenism', more closely defined by using the Five Marks of Mission² as the lens through which to look at how churches of different denominations work together. Given that rural areas and large cities have already received much attention, DMT asks its questions in the context of medium-sized towns. There were some surprising results. For instance, while there is a high level of activity relating to the third mark of mission, responding to human need by loving service, there is also a great deal of collaboration among the churches on the first mark of mission, proclaiming the gospel and, what is more, very often the Church of England is in the lead role for this..

Especially interesting are the things that were found 'significant for enabling positive experiences of doing mission together.'³ These were:

- 1) **a common calling to serve the local community**, meaning a focus together on a specific community with attentiveness to its distinctive history, identity and current needs;
- 2) **a concern for the good use of resources**, meaning both an awareness of the limitations of venues, finances, staff time and volunteer capacity leading churches to consider how to avoid duplication and, significantly in the light of the need to learn from one another, a concern to let each church bring its particular gifts to bear upon the common task;

¹ Alice Costar, Jeremy Worthen, Callan Slipper, Amelia Sutcliffe, *Doing Mission Together: How Partnership Promotes Gospel Growth. A study of missional ecumenism involving Church of England parishes and other denominations in English towns*, Council for Christian Unity, 2019, available at <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/work-other-christian-churches/our-news/doing-mission-together-how-partnership-promotes-gospel>.

² The Five Marks of Mission:

- 1) To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom;
- 2) To teach, baptise and nurture new believers;
- 3) To respond to human need by loving service;
- 4) To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation;
- 5) To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

Quoted in *Doing Mission Together*, p. 14.

³ *Doing Mission Together*, p. 2.

3) **a care for building relationships**, meaning a deliberate and intentional focus upon building mutual trust and understanding, and especially among church leaders, whether this was done via formal structures or ways that were purposely kept informal;

4) **a commitment to sharing in prayer and worship**, meaning regular joint services and informal prayer meetings as well as a living spiritual unity, that is, the grounding of human relationships in the primary dimension of Christians in communion in Christ.

There is much here to inspire practice, and that could contribute to church growth, in all of its dimensions. Doing mission together across denominational divides also brings its challenges, however. At the moment, one of the areas where churches are most struggling to come to agreement is sexual ethics, which has become, as others have said, a new ecumenical frontier. New fault lines have emerged between Christians, as has recently become apparent within Churches Together in England (CTE) as it seeks to hold together churches with divergent approaches to the ethics of same-sex relationships.

The question is not just about the ethical positions themselves but about how to proceed amid such deep disagreement. While all of course agree that love, and even relationship, should be maintained, there are contrasting views about how this love can be shown. On the one side some think we can act in this area according to different views without that needing to affect church relationships, but for others such difference in practice bring consequences for how we can relate.

Sadly, persons can easily be hurt in the turmoil. CTE, the instrument of churches working together in England has now, almost inevitably, found itself in the midst of this challenge. For what causes tension within the churches also causes tension between them. This new ecumenical frontier is set to be an important part of the ecumenical agenda for some time to come. There is much to be done.

The work has already begun, however. For instance, understandably, and very helpfully, in the next round of the third phase of the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC III), Anglicans and Roman Catholics will look at how ethical decisions are made. The first phase of ARCIC III has prepared for this by producing a valuable document, *Walking Together on the Way*, looking more broadly at how decisions are made within the two traditions and, at the beginning of the year, the 'Joint Bishops' Meeting' of the two churches began to study this document with one another. For Anglicans and Roman Catholics questions about decision-making are especially acute since it is precisely here that they are most divided. But ARCIC III is significant also for the methodology it has adopted: Receptive Ecumenism, a discipline found useful in several other conversations. What is significant is that its method of seeking to learn from the other while being aware of the needs and limitations experienced within one's own tradition also seems set to be a vital part of the ecumenical agenda in the future.

Questions of ethics, decision-making, and the way in which Christians can best talk to one another across their differences are all about how the Christian body can achieve full health; they are a question of the body of Christ's flourishing. This has enormous value. But it also has direct implications for mission. The reason is, at least, threefold. First, a healthy Christianity is fit for purpose in witnessing to Christ: divisions diminish the beauty of the Church and a lessened spiritual life makes Christians less able to respond effectively to others. Second, the same issues that challenge the Church challenge the rest of society and so resolving them for themselves gives Christians an experience to share. And third, a flourishing Church would have something that others might want, a foretaste of what humanity could be. It is a matter, you could say, of being the change you want to see.

Coping with contrast in a creative way is the calling of Christians with our gospel of reconciliation. As we learn to do this, opening ourselves in the power of the Spirit to Jesus' transforming work on the cross, our response to the challenges we face will have repercussions for our witness in the world. God is at work both for the flourishing of Christ's body and, through us as his body's hands and feet, for the flourishing of all humankind.

The Rt Revd Tim Thornton
Bishop at Lambeth

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

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER CHURCHES

BAPTISTS

Lead bishop: The Rt Revd John Holbrook, Bishop of Brixworth

Overview

1. There is almost invariably a very warm welcome and a deep sense of Christian fellowship with Baptists, even though their views on Church order, and especially episcopal leadership and the baptism of infants, a national church and involvement with the state as a rule are markedly different from those of the Church of England. Nonetheless, there are Baptists who recognize with appreciation what the ministry of bishops can bring to the Church and many who express gratitude for the role the Church of England in the affairs of the country. Conversations with the Church of England and internationally have also deepened mutual understanding, and even brought about some rapprochement, on the question of Christian initiation.
2. The organization of the Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB) is far looser and more light touch than the Church of England. BUGB has a small national team based in Didcot in Oxfordshire with a role of influence and of speaking for Baptists, at least those who belong to the Union. It provides resources, help with safeguarding and legal issues, and financial advice. In a similar fashion, about a dozen regional Associations offer help in the same areas. The Associations have a fair degree of autonomy, including how they allocate mission and ministry funding. Each local church has autonomy too, to call or dismiss their pastors, to pay and house them as they think fit, and even to leave or join the Baptist Union.
3. Despite the existence of these organizational supports, nothing at the national or regional level is described as a church. Hence while there may be a national Union and there may also be regional Associations, only the local worshipping congregation can be described as 'church'.

Key place of dialogue: the BUGB Council

4. The BUGB Council meets twice a year for a two-day residential at Swanwick. There are about 80 people representing the regional Associations. They invite two ecumenical representatives, currently Anglican and URC, but in future years it might be Methodist and RC. The Anglican representative to the Council is the Rt Revd John Holbrook, Bishop of Brixworth, whose period of on the Council is to finish in 2022.

Reflections

5. Baptists make up 8% of Christians in the country (just below the Methodists and the Pentecostals who each have 9%),⁴ and so they are a significant partner for the Church England. The two churches work together on a range of issues, especially mission.

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

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

Key dialogue group: Church of England – Church of Scotland Contact Group (Columba Declaration)

Background

6. The Contact Group was established under the Columba Agreement and held its inaugural meeting in November 2017. The Church of Scotland co-chair was the Very Revd Dr Angus Morrison, former Moderator, and the Church of England co-chair was the Rt Revd Dr Peter Forster. Both announced in March 2019 that they would be stepping down from their roles. The Very Revd Dr Russell Barr has now been appointed as the Church of Scotland co-chair, with the Rt Revd James Newcombe serving as his counterpart from the Church of England.
7. The other current Church of England members of the Contact Group are the Revd Catherine Pickford and the Revd Dr Gavin Wakefield. The Bishop of Edinburgh, the Rt Revd John Armes, is the representative from the Scottish Episcopal Church.
8. It has been agreed in principle that the biennial staff consultation between the two churches, which pre-dates the Columba Agreement and has previously been attended by the Archbishop of York, might be integrated with the annual meeting of the new Contact Group, for example by taking place immediately beforehand at the same venue and with overlapping participation. The most recent consultation was in March 2018.

Key activities for the year

9. The Church of Scotland has been developing a new initiative, a Radical Action Plan, that in various ways parallels Renewal and Reform in the Church of England. The possibility for mutual learning in these endeavours was explored at the last biennial staff consultation and further discussed at the meeting of the Contact Group in March 2019.

⁴ <https://www.eauk.org/church/research-and-statistics/english-church-census.cfm> (accessed 2 July 2019)

10. Alongside work on the Radical Action Plan, the 2018 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland set up a Special Commission on governance. The Bishop of Chester accepted an invitation to assist the Special Commission in its work.
11. Approval for the Radical Action Plan and the recommendations of the Special Commission at the General Assembly in 2019 marks this as a year of potentially far-reaching significance in the life of the Church of Scotland.
12. Alongside these matters, the Contact Group discussed a wide range of subjects at its meeting in March, including *Mission and Ministry in Covenant, Our Common Calling* (the current dialogue between the Church of Scotland the Scottish Episcopal Church) and the role of national ecumenical instruments. It recommended 'Church and Nation' as a main focus for the next biennial staff consultation.

Reflections on the year

13. There has been a season of change for the Contact Group, with new co-chairs taking over.

EVANGELISCHE KIRCHE IN DEUTSCHLAND (EKD)

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

Key dialogue group: Meissen Commission

Background

14. 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.

15. The Meissen Commission members are:

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

Key activities for the year

16. The 29th annual meeting of the Meissen Commission was held from 26–29 September 2019 in Hexham Abbey, with a particular focus on the mutual recognition

of ministries and the nature and meaning of episcopacy. Over and above the business sessions, the programme also featured a visit to Durham, including the Cathedral with Evensong, and to Cranmer Hall. This year, The Revd Prof Mark Chapman, the Co-Chair of the Theological Meissen Conference led one session, giving some theological input for the Committee and providing an update from the conference in February. This is designed to promote closer links between the Commission and the Theological Conference.

17. In light of Brexit, the Bishop of Huddersfield organised a Meissen partnership meeting in the Diocese of Leeds, on Saturday 23 November 2019, with the aim of sharing good practice and of strengthening these relationships at this sensitive time.
18. The EKD delegation visit and 'After-Brexit' conference took place from 15–16 November 2018 at Lambeth Palace, with Archbishop Justin Welby and Bishop Heinrich Bedford-Strohm from the EKD. The proceedings of the conference have now been published as: *After Brexit? The Church of England, the European Churches and the Future of European Unity*, ed., Matthias Grebe and Jeremy Worthen (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2019).
19. The 10th Theological Meissen Conference took place at Hamburg University from 11–14 February 2019. As a central part of the Meissen Declaration, the Theological Conference functions as a theological resource for the Commission's broader work. Conscious of the crucial importance of closer church relationships in a time of political uncertainty, the co-chairs, Prof. Dr. Friederike Nüssel and Prof. Dr. Mark Chapman, decided to address the theme of 'Revisiting the Meissen-agreement after 30 years' with the explicit aim of working 'to resolve the outstanding differences between the participating churches' (Meissen Declaration para. 8). The proceedings will be published as *Revisiting the Meissen Agreement after 30 years*, edited by Mark Chapman, Matthias Grebe and Friederike Nüssel. The Conference sought to address key themes such as the significance of the historic episcopate and the mutual recognition of ministries; much work remains to be done, but it is hoped that these discussions may also be relevant to other conversations, including those with the Methodist Church.
20. The 37th German Protestant Kirchentag took place from 19–23 June 2019 in Dortmund. From the English Committee of the Meissen Commission, it was attended by the Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs, the Revd Dr Matthias Grebe, and Mrs Helen Page.

Reflections on the year

21. 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, the best means of building and sustaining bridges in this area, the role of the church in political debate, and the voice the churches might have in the public square, including as agents for reconciliation and dialogue in society, as well as the practical support that our churches might offer to each other and society during this turbulent time.

FRENCH PROTESTANT CHURCHES

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

Key dialogue group: Reuilly Contact Group

Background

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

23. 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

24. The RCG 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 in Wales)
- Church of Ireland: The Revd Dr Christine O'Dowd Smith

French Lutheran and Reformed delegation

- Co-Chair: The Revd Christian Krieger, Communion Protestante Luthéro-Réformée;
- Co-Secretary/Eglise Protestant Unie de France: The Revd Claire Sixt-Gateuille;
- Communion Protestante Luthéro-Réformée: The Revd Alexandra Breukink;
- Lyon: The Revd Pierre Blanzat
- Nice: The Revd Paolo Morlacchetti
- Fédération Protestante de France: The Revd Anne-Laure Danet

Key activities for the year

25. Building on the gathering in Lyons in 2018, where Anglican Chaplains and Protestant Ministers met to strengthen existing relationships, there has been mutual representation at each other's Synod meetings and more recently the sharing of some training material. The Archdeacon of France plays a crucial part in enabling and encouraging a deepening partnership in worship and witness.

26. Alongside the more formal biennial meetings of the RCG, the Group remains committed to building relationships in France in the alternate years, particularly by the encouragement of 'hubs' of good practice, where corporate worship, witness and service can thrive.

27. Preliminary conversations have begun regarding the significant overlap between the work of RCG and the Meissen Commission and the opportunities this could afford to progress the call to unity.
28. The next meeting of the RCG will take place from 17–19 February 2020 in Edinburgh.
29. An inaugural Reuilly Theological day conference is planned, to mark the 30th anniversary of the signing the Reuilly Agreement in 2021.
30. The RCG meeting took place from 4–6 February in Hohrodberg Community Centre (Alsace), chaired by the co-chair, the Revd Christian Krieger and the Venerable Canon Meurig Williams, Archdeacon of France. The Rt Revd John Stroyan, Anglican co-chair, was unable to attend for family reasons. The business agenda included sessions such as ‘Where are we in light of Brexit?’ and ‘Report on Meissen: Learning points for RCG’, with reports on the Lyon meeting and pilot sites in France, and a comparative discussion on Brexit in the UK and the Gilets Jaunes in France. A highlight included a walking tour through the mountains of Alsace, with the group enjoying some traditional Alsatian hospitality at a local winery as well as input about the region’s troubled experience during World War I.
31. An interim RCG meeting, with only the co-chairs and co-secretaries, took place on 24 June at Church House. Points discussed included the next meeting in 2020, the inaugural Reuilly Theological day conference, and the Terms of Reference.

Reflections on the year

32. The decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union remains a challenging issue, though here also lies an opportunity for the Churches to be bridge-builders and moderators of the discussion, and not collude with language that is alienating. The General Synod called all to unite and cooperate in the common task of working for human flourishing. A further remaining challenge is to find ways to consolidate the relationship between Anglicans and French Lutheran and Reformed Churches, to work together and grow the relationship through common witness and engagement, to serve the poor and marginalised, and to find opportunities of worshipping and praying together.

LOCAL UNITY

Key Dialogue Group: Methodist-Anglican Panel for Unity in Mission

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

Overview

33. The picture of local ecumenism is a mixture of light and shade, of hope and the need for new inspiration. The hope comes from several sources. Although in some places ecumenical relations feel rather stale, going through the same round of things with little energy, even in these places relations at the very least are cordial. More to the point, however, there are growing numbers of unity in mission activities, among the most popular of which are Street Pastors, foodbanks, and Christians Against Poverty or other forms of debt counselling. These three do not in any way preclude the emergence of a whole range of creative ways for serving the community, varying according to local need and inspiration. In a similar fashion, the churches cooperate directly in Local Ecumenical Partnerships of every sort and are developing other imaginative ways of cooperating in a structured fashion. Nationally this variety is supported by *A Flexible Framework for Local Unity in Mission*, developed by a core group of National Ecumenical Officers in collaboration with Churches Together in England. The National Ecumenical Officers are currently devising tools to facilitate this cooperation. Along the same lines, the Church of England's revised ecumenical relations, with an amended Ecumenical Relations Measure, a new ecumenical Canon, and a new Code of Practice, all of which are adapted to the new context of interchurch cooperation, came into force on 21 February 2019. Furthermore, exciting prospects of unity in mission are offered by the ecumenical county of Cumbria, which is already stimulating interest elsewhere as a possible model of good practice, by the prayer initiative of Thy Kingdom Come, which is now fully ecumenical in its take-up, and by the increasing use of Receptive Ecumenism as a fruitful means for learning from one another.
34. At the same time, it is impossible not to note the patchy support from denominational authorities at regional level. Partly perhaps this is the result of much ecumenical activity in the recent past being focused upon setting up structures and often coming to be swamped by bureaucracy, partly it is the result of the success of former forms ecumenism which made so many breakthroughs that it now seems there is little new to do – at least little to do locally that is likely to result in an immediate overcoming of denominational divisions. To some extent, ecumenism is the victim of its own success. Related to this is the collapse in several places of intermediate level ecumenism (that is, of ecumenism between the local and the national). The network of County Ecumenical Officers (CEOs) works very well in some areas, but in others is fragile or non-existent. Sometimes this is also the result of a theological deficit, namely, the lack of understanding of the essential interconnectedness of unity, mission and holiness of life. Where unity and holiness of life are neglected, effective mission is compromised.

35. Against this background of light and shade, the Council for Christian Unity has been working to support local ecumenism by providing training for Diocesan Ecumenical Officers (DEOs) as well as CEOs (and other interested parties!), both directly and often as part of a team working with Churches Together in England. A clear focus has been upon the Church of England's revised ecumenical legislation. In this context too, work in cooperation with the Baptist, Methodist and URC National Ecumenical Officers is under way to provide better Model Constitutions Local Ecumenical Partnerships. Likewise, there is ongoing work to encourage a new vision around the apparent need for a deeper spiritual ecumenism, which is to say an ecumenism rooted in communal and personal transformation.

Methodist-Anglican Panel for Unity in Mission (MAPUM)

Background

36. 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 Baptist, Roman Catholic, and United Reformed Churches
37. 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.*
38. MAPUM meets twice a year, residentially in the Spring and for a day in the Autumn. Its members are:
- *Anglican:* Rt Revd Dr John Thomson (co-chair), Ven. Moira Astin, Revd Canon John Robertson, Revd Sarah Gower, Revd Canon Cameron Butland, Revd Dr Andrea Russell, Revd Dr Callan Slipper (co-secretary)
 - *Methodist:* Revd Dr Jonathan Pye (co-chair), Mr David Phillips, Miriam Moules, Nicola Reynolds, Revd Alan Anderson, Revd Graham R Kent, Revd Ruth Gee (co-secretary)
 - *Participant observers from other churches:* Hilary Treavis (Baptist), Revd Dr Geoff Cook (Roman Catholic), Revd Philip Brooks (URC)

Key activities for the year

39. MAPUM continues to be attentive to the Anglican-Methodist Covenant and particularly to the passage of Mission and Ministry in Covenant. During its residential

meeting MAPUM welcomed the visit by the Bishop of Liverpool, Anglican co-chair of the Joint Covenant Advocacy and Monitoring Group (JCAMG). A key issue that emerged was that, while recognising the support that exists for the Covenant in both Churches, there is a need for both MAPUM and JCAMG to encourage a deeper connection with, and passion for, the Covenant relationship. It also welcomed the Covenant Champions to its session on communication and supported the work of encouraging them to be proactive in their role.

40. MAPUM has followed the progress of the Code of Practice on Co-operation by the Church of England with Other Churches February 2019, which came into force on 21 February 2019. MAPUM looked at the documents several times as it developed and made many comments. Through MAPUM it can be said that the ecumenical practice of the Church of England has been developed ecumenically, and the panel is owed a debt of gratitude.
41. MAPUM has reviewed the Formal Ecumenical Declaration of Welcome and Commitment, which has been updated in the light of the Church of England's revised ecumenical legislation (the amended Ecumenical Relations Measure, the new Canon B 43, and the new Code of Practice), made more precise and, in the process, revealed more fully the underlying generosity of the Church of England's ecumenical provisions, and slightly adjusted its introductory matter to adapt the Declaration to the breadth of situations where it is being, or can be, applied.
42. The 2019 residential meeting may well prove to be a turning point. It focused on new directions in ecumenism, and what emerged revolved around a more precise understanding of spiritual ecumenism as the soul and the goal of ecumenism. This does not in any sense minimise the need for structural, doctrinal or formal unity, indeed, it enables organic unity and shows why that matters. It also sets ecumenism firmly within the realm of mission since the spiritual dimension is fundamental to the transformation of society. More work will be done on this, but it is an intriguing start.

Reflections on the year

43. Attention will need to be given to how to progress with the Covenant, following the debate at the General Synod in July.
44. Work will need to be done on the changing face of ecumenism and, in particular, to assisting the development of ways of facilitating the Working Agreements and Partnership Agreements (Type A and Type B Local Ecumenical Co-operative Schemes, in the language of the Code of Practice).
45. Work will also be needed to progress a balanced understanding of spiritual ecumenism. This could have long-lasting effects in the field of Christian unity.
46. It may be useful to work further on applying the provisions of the new Code of Practice.

47. MAPUM has a role to play in supporting the fragile network of intermediate level ecumenism. As it appears to be collapsing in some parts, it demands creative and innovative ways of thinking.
48. There may be work to be done on thinking about how to learn the lessons of the ecumenical county of Cumbria, and so see how they could be applied elsewhere.

METHODIST CHURCH

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

Overview

49. Since November 2003, the Church of England and the Methodist Church of Britain have been in Covenant. The Covenant was made by the two churches 'in a spirit of penitence for all that human sinfulness and narrowness of vision have contributed to our past divisions, believing that we have been impoverished through our separation and that our witness to the gospel has been weakened accordingly, and in a spirit of thanksgiving and joy for the convergence in faith and collaboration in mission that we have experienced in recent years.' This spirit has animated all the work that has taken place since the Covenant was signed.
50. Key to the vision of the Covenant is the first of its seven affirmations, in which the two churches recognise 'one another's churches as true churches belonging to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ and as truly participating in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God.' From that flow all the subsequent acknowledgements and significantly for what has happened since then, the fifth and seventh affirmations, respectively that 'We affirm that one another's ordained ministries possess both the inward call of the Holy Spirit and Christ's commission given through the Church' and 'We affirm that there already exists a basis for agreement on the principles of episcopal oversight as a visible sign and instrument of the communion of the Church in time and space.' At the same time, among the six commitments made, the Covenant committed the two churches to seek '*as a priority, to work to overcome the remaining obstacles to the organic unity of our two churches, on the way to the full visible unity of Christ's Church. In particular, we look forward to the time when the fuller visible unity of our churches makes possible a united, interchangeable ministry.*' (Emphasis added)
51. A Joint Implementation Commission (JIC) was set up to further this work towards further unity and it ran for two five-year periods, 2003-2008 and 2008-2013. It made great progress in many areas (its papers can be found in the Anglican-Methodist website: www.anglican-methodist.org.uk). Its Final Report came out in 2014, and it made three recommendations. The second sharpened the focus of some of the commitments made in the Covenant, calling upon the churches at local and regional level, supported and advised by the Methodist Anglican Panel for Unity in Mission (MAPUM) to 'give priority to making full use of what is already possible for them to

do together, and especially to plan together for mission and worship, deployment of ministry and the use of resources.’ There have been many manifestations of this across the country, particularly where Methodists are more numerous, and it can be seen in Local Ecumenical Partnerships, cooperation within Churches Together groups, and in the joint work by the National Ecumenical Officers, especially in collaboration in rethinking ecumenical practice in what has come to be called *A Flexible Framework for Local Unity in Mission*.

52. The third recommendation of the JIC’s Final Report was to set up a Joint Covenant Advocacy and Monitoring Group, a report of which can be found below.
53. The first recommendation was the most radical. It drew upon the affirmations already made in the Covenant and called for the Faith and Order bodies of both churches to bring forward proposals for
 - i. the Methodist Church to consider afresh expressing the Conference’s ministry of oversight in a personal form of connexional, episcopal ministry and the Church of England to recognise that ministry in the Methodist Church as a sign of continuity in faith, worship and mission in a church that is in the apostolic succession.
 - ii. the Church of England and the Methodist Church to address the question of reconciling, with integrity, the existing presbyteral and diaconal ministries of our two churches, which would lead to the interchangeability of ministries.
54. This recommendation led to *Mission and Ministry in Covenant* (MMiC), which has now been discussed twice by General Synod. In 2018, following MMiC’s publication the previous year, it was discussed first by the General Synod, in February, and by the Methodist Conference, in July. Both asked for further reflection. This was duly done and in July 2019 MMiC came again to General Synod. It seemed clear that despite the work done most people had not changed their views and the House of Bishops was evidently not of one mind. Furthermore, changes in marriage discipline by the Methodist Church with regard to same-sex marriage had unsettled a number of Evangelicals who would previously have supported the proposals. In the event, it was agreed not to begin the legislative process but, nonetheless, to proceed on the assumption that the direction of travel was correct and would lead to concrete proposals by the House of Bishops for the implementation of the interchangeability of ministry. The Faith and Order bodies of both churches were requested to look at crucial liturgical and practical issues to facilitate these proposals.

Key dialogue group: Joint Covenant Advocacy and Monitoring Group (JCAMG)

Background

55. JCAMG works in a spirit of fellowship and mutual understanding, and so feels that it manifests the Anglican-Methodist Covenant in its own life. It works in conjunction with the Faith and Order bodies of the two churches.
56. JCAMG meets twice a year and seeks to encourage and enable both churches to live and grow in their Covenant relationship. While significant time is given to monitoring the ongoing processes in relation to MMiC the group also wishes to affirm and advocate the important opportunities for mission already afforded by the Covenant, and to affirm the work of MAPUM in identifying and sharing these.
57. Co-chairs: The Rt Revd Paul Bayes (Bishop of Liverpool), the Revd Ruth Gee (a former President of the Methodist Conference and currently Assistant Secretary to the Conference and Connexional Ecumenical Officer); Church of England Members: the Revd Mike Booker, Mrs Margaret Swinson; Methodist Members: the Revd Dr Caroline Wickens, the Revd Michaela Youngson (President of the Methodist Conference 2018-2019). Co-secretaries: the Revd Dr Callan Slipper (National Ecumenical Officer); the Methodist Church is the process of appointing a new co-secretary.

Key activities for the year

58. After several meetings with the Digital Content Officers of the Methodist Church, the production of a variety of resources to support conversations around the Covenant is proposed. Funding has been secured. The debate in General Synod has meant that the initial ideas have had to be adjusted, but the intention is to have:
 - i. a video (or possibly a series of 5-6 minute videos) provisionally called 'Freed for Mission', with a particular view on stories of activity already under way, which can be used through social media channels;
 - ii. a video animation, provisionally called 'Ready to Serve', for use in meetings such as Deanery Synods and Circuit meetings. It would provide an outline and explanation of the Covenant designed to engage, inform, and inspire the audience;
 - iii. An update to the existing Frequently Asked Questions document.
59. As co-chair of JCAMG, the Bishop of Liverpool met with MAPUM in March 2019. While recognising that there is support for the Covenant, both MAPUM and JCAMG wish to encourage a deeper connection with, and passion for, the Covenant relationship.
60. Immediately following the MAPUM meeting, the Covenant Champions met with the National and Connexional Ecumenical Officers and Mr David Walton, the Methodist co-chair of JCAMG, to encourage and equip the Covenant Champions in their activities. The network remains fragile, but it should be valued, especially as the

Covenant still needs to be promoted whatever may happen to the proposals of MMiC.

61. 'The gifts we receive...' is an ongoing consultation designed to take advantage of the opportunities of the Anglican-Methodist Covenant. It seeks to offer suggestions as to how each church could help the other grow as both deepen their relationship. The first part took place on 21 June 2019 and was felt by all to have been extremely successful. The second part took place on 3 October 2019 and gathered the insights gained on the first day combined with reflections over the summer in order to see what could be of benefit to each church. The process fulfilled the hope that it might be an imaginative and inspiring support to the Covenant. Perhaps the most exciting thing to come out from it will be a resource, using receptive ecumenism, for deepening mutual learning between Anglicans and Methodists.
62. Monitoring the tone of the General Synod debate on MMiC and Methodist reactions to it was particularly important. This presented a mixed picture. On the one hand the disappointment of not proceeding to legislation and delaying still further was keenly felt by many; on the other, the majority in favour of proceeding was about two thirds, and the tone of the debate, while rehearsing the various sides of the argument, was mission-orientated and strongly positive. So the result was both a setback and an encouragement. The Methodists were gracious in their response. The General Synod's requested work on the liturgy associated with the transition to greater communion and the practical outworking of interchangeability may give rise to some hope; it is possible that it could reassure some people. It is yet to be seen what this will mean in fact for the future timetable for bringing ahead the proposals.

Reflections on the year

63. The motion approved by the General Synod requests action from various bodies. First, it asks the Faith and Order Commission, working with the Methodist Church's Faith and Order Committee, to draft texts for the 'formal declaration', the inaugural service or services and the service of welcome for the first appointment of a minister from one church to serve in the other, and to draw up practical guidelines for ministers to be received to serve in the other church. Second, it asks the House of Bishops to report during the next quinquennium on the work of the Faith and Order bodies together with proposals for implementation. Much will depend, therefore, upon how the Faith and Order bodies of both churches respond.
64. The work of MAPUM and other activities in support of the Covenant, with or without progress to the interchangeability of ministers, will remain vital.
65. It continues to be important to enable the sharing of experiences of working together, both when this is positive and encouraging and when it is more challenging. Stories have been gathered and posted on the Covenant website and this continues to be one way in which to share information and learn from one another.

OLD CATHOLICS OF THE UNION OF UTRECHT

Lead Bishop: The Rt Revd Peter Eagles, Bishop of Sodor and Man

Background

66. The Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht are based entirely in continental Europe. There are Old Catholic Churches in the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Poland and some isolated congregations in Belgium, France and Croatia, all served by a small 'International Bishops' Secretariat' (IBC) based in Utrecht. These churches have been in communion with the whole Anglican Communion since the Bonn Agreement of 1931.

Key Activities for the year

67. The Anglican–Old Catholic International Co-ordinating Council (AOCICC) completed its most recent mandate in January 2019 and submitted its report *Anglicans and Old Catholics Serving in Europe* to the parent bodies, the International Old Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC). Bishop Michael Burrows (Church of Ireland, Cashel and Ossory) completed his term as the Anglican co-chairman of AOCICC at the end of the mandate. The Archbishop of Canterbury has appointed the Bishop of Sodor and Man to replace him. The International Old Catholic Bishops' Conference has not yet indicated if they will replace Bishop Dick Schoon (Haarlem) as Old Catholic co-chairman, and if so who the appointee will be.

68. The ACC in Hong Kong passed a resolution as follows:

The Anglican Consultative Council:

- a. welcomes the report of the Anglican–Old Catholic International Coordinating Council, *Anglicans and Old Catholics serving in Europe* (2019);
- b. commends the report to the Churches of the Anglican Communion for study, and where appropriate, action;
- c. renews the mandate given to the Council at ACC15, asking it:
 - i. to continue to explore theologically the nature and meaning of our communion;
 - ii. to promote knowledge of our churches and their relationship;
 - iii. to assist the Old Catholic and Anglican bishops in Europe in their common ministry and coordinated oversight;
 - iv. to encourage joint initiatives in mission in continental Europe;
 - v. to review the consistency of ecumenical agreements and dialogues of the Churches of the Anglican Communion and the Union of Utrecht;
 - vi. to build on the work of previous mandates;
 - vii. as guarantor of the Bonn Agreement on behalf of both Communion, to oversee plans for the commemoration of the centenary of the Bonn Agreement in 2031;

viii. thanks the Anglican members of the Coordinating Council and requests that the Archbishop of Canterbury name the Anglican co-chair in consultation with the Secretary General, and that the Secretary General name the Anglican members in consultation with the Archbishop of Canterbury.

69. The annual meeting of Old Catholic and Anglican Bishops in continental Europe took place in Lublin, Poland in June. The issue of safeguarding was also addressed in the AOCICC report, and safeguarding protocols in each jurisdiction were, once again, a major item on the agenda. Joint work continues between the Diocese in Europe and the Old Catholics in Schiphol Airport, Calais (refugee ministry) and Lausanne Switzerland. St Clement's Church in Prague has a 'dual citizenship' as an Old Catholic parish of the Czech Church and a Diocese in Europe Chaplaincy.

70. Besides the AOCICC and the annual meeting of Anglican and Old Bishops in Europe, there are St Willibrord Societies in several countries, with the UK Society being the most active.

ORTHODOX CHURCHES

Lead bishops: The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, Bishop of Southwark (Round Table and Oriental Orthodox)

The Rt Revd Jonathan Goodall, Bishop of Ebbsfleet (Eastern Orthodox)

Key dialogue groups: Orthodox Round Table

Anglican-Oriental Orthodox Regional Forum (AOORF)

Anglican-Eastern Orthodox Regional Forum (AEORF)

Overview

71. Both Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches are present in England and the larger part have bishops resident in and around London. This allows for a close relationship to develop with the local bishops which aids relations with the churches in their canonical territories. For the second year a Lambeth Orthodox Round Table took place in the summer, to which representatives of each jurisdiction were invited and most came. Relationships between the Archbishop of Canterbury and the heads of a number of churches are strengthened and maintained by the Apokrisiarioi, the Archbishop's official representatives, to the heads of a number of Orthodox churches. During 2019, after thirty years in post, the late and much-loved Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira and Great Britain retired, and his successor, Archbishop Nikitas, was warmly welcomed. The Assyrian Church of the East also appointed a resident bishop, Mar Awraham Youkhanis, to serve the Church of the East in the United Kingdom.

Background

72. The Lambeth Orthodox Round Table was first conceived by the Right Reverend Richard Chartres before his retirement as Bishop of London and Lead Bishop for Eastern Orthodox Relations.
73. The first annual meeting of the Round Table was on 2 July 2018, with the second meeting then held on Monday 17 June 2019. The Chair is the Bishop of Southwark, the Rt Reverend Christopher Chessun.

Key activities for the year

74. The first meeting was a great success and numbers for the second meeting were also very good. The pattern of the meeting was as follows:
- a. Morning session with representatives of groups and bodies from within or connected to the Church of England with a special interest in Orthodox relations. The groups share information and the idea is that through this both a consistency of practice and a reduction in duplication might be achieved;
 - b. Eucharist and lunch (Orthodox participants arrive at this point);
 - c. Afternoon session where Anglican and Orthodox participants interact and share news, concerns and information.
75. The Anglican bodies represented in 2018 were the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association, the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius, the Nikaeian Ecumenical Trust, the Nikaeian Club, the Romania Liaison Group, the Philip Usher Memorial Fund, the Coordinating Committee for Cooperation between the Church of England and the Moscow Patriarchate and the Anglican-Oriental Orthodox Regional Forum. Also invited were the lead bishops and Church of England members of the international dialogues between the Anglican Communion and the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches. Almost all the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox jurisdictions were represented.
76. This year Canon Malcolm Rogers, Chaplain of St Andrew's Moscow and Archbishop's Apokrisiarios to the Patriarch of Moscow gave a presentation of his work in the morning session, while the discussion topic in the afternoon was the Bishop of Truro's review of Foreign Office policy relating to the persecution of Christians.

Reflections on the year

77. Historically the character of Anglican-Orthodox relations was somewhat haphazard. Much of it relied on the private enterprise of interested individuals (for example Canon John Douglas, Vicar of Camberwell who built up a great range of deep relationships with churches across the Christian East in the inter-war years) and

voluntary societies and agencies. The Council for Foreign Relations (the forerunner of both Lambeth Palace and Church House's ecumenical staff and work) sought to bring some consistency to this and the Round Table continues in this vein.

Anglican-Oriental Orthodox Regional Forum (AOORF)

Background

78. AOORF began under the chairmanship of Bishop Geoffrey Rowell as a means by which the Church of England could engage with the Oriental Orthodox Churches present in England;
79. The business of the forum is informal and principally consists of information sharing, discussion of areas of concern and facilitating support for the (often small) Oriental jurisdictions in this country.

Key activities for the year

80. The situation of the Church in the Middle East is always at the top of the agenda. The position of Christians in Iraq, and in particular on the Ninevah Plain, has been an important item of concern this year.
81. The Archbishop of Canterbury was present at the blessing of an Armenian memorial cross in the memorial garden at Canterbury Cathedral.
82. The Independent Inquiry into UK Foreign Office policy on the Persecution of Christians has also been an important agenda item this year. The final report of the Inquiry, chaired by the Bishop of Truro, was published in July.

Reflections on the year

83. In December 2018 Westminster Abbey hosted a significant service celebrating the presence of Christians in the Middle East. This brought together a number of visiting Christian leaders from the region. The service brought to light the plight of the church in parts of the Middle East and also the complexity of the situation on the ground;
84. The plight of Christians in the Middle East has resounding significance around the region. In many ways the position of Christians is a barometer of wider religious freedom in the region and their presence (and their flourishing) can be understood as guaranteeing wider freedom of religion and belief in Muslim-majority countries.

Anglican-Eastern Orthodox Regional Forum (AEORF)

Background

85. There are a number of Orthodox jurisdictions present in England. Many have resident bishops, but some have oversight from bishops based in other countries.

Representatives of the various churches are invited to the Lambeth Orthodox Round Table each year and in 2019 most were present.

The CCU has made provision for the setting up of an Anglican–Eastern Orthodox Regional Forum to monitor and encourage Anglican–Orthodox relations.

Key activities for the year

86. The Bishop of Ebbsfleet visited a number of Orthodox territories during a period of sabbatical leave in early 2019.

87. A visit of ordinands and younger clergy to Russia, to take part in a programme arranged by the Department for External Church Relations of the Russian Orthodox Church in September. This follows successful similar visits in previous years. A return visit by younger clergy and seminarians from Russia has been postponed.

88. The Patriarch of Jerusalem visited Lambeth Palace and was presented with a set of digital image copies of some Greek manuscripts held at Lambeth Palace Library.

89. After thirty years in post, Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira and Great Britain, who died at the age of 91 on 20 November 2019, retired in June a few months earlier. He will be much missed. His successor, Archbishop Nikitas, was enthroned on 27 July 2019. Archbishop Nikitas was formerly Metropolitan of the Dardanelles and Director of the Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute at Berkeley, California. The Bishops of London and Ebbsfleet were present at the enthronement.

90. The former Bishop of Derby and staff from the Mission and Public Affairs Division attended a conference arranged by the Ecumenical Patriarch on tackling Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.

91. The Church of England is represented on the International Commission for the Anglican–Orthodox Theological Dialogue by the Bishop of Norwich and the Reverend Dr Alison Joyce.

92. There are a number of other groups and bodies that encourage and oversee relations with the Orthodox Church, including charitable bodies (the Nikaeen Ecumenical Trust, the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association, the Philip Usher Fund, the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius) and the Lambeth Romania Liaison Group.

Reflections on the year

93. The most significant development of late has been the tensions between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Patriarchate of Moscow over the status of the Church in Ukraine. Moscow has withdrawn representatives from a number of pan-Orthodox and ecumenical bodies, including withdrawing the Orthodox representative on the Church of England's General Synod.
94. On the request of the Archbishop of Canterbury the Business Committee of the General Synod invited the Russian Orthodox Church to send a representative in addition to that of the Pan-Orthodox Assembly of Bishops. It is hoped that a single Orthodox representative will be identified in time for the February 2020 sessions.

PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES

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

95. 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. It is clear that the rapid growth of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity demands a response from the Church of England. In England, Pentecostal Churches now equal the Methodist Church of Britain in the numbers of those worshipping on a Sunday (about 9% of Christians). Furthermore, Pentecostal spirituality has a growing importance in Church of England congregations, often appealing to those at the beginning of the Christian journey, especially younger people. Given the need for renewal and the mission imperative of the Church of England, this appeal is instructive. There would seem to be a lot to learn in the sphere of evangelism and about the power of the Holy Spirit.
96. 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.
97. In the light of this, one highlight of the year has been the visit of the President of the Pentecostal World Fellowship, Tan Sri Reverend Dr Prince Guneratnam and his colleagues to the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace on 24–25 June 2019. On the first day there was a seminar that made considerable use of the work of the Anglican Pentecostal Theological Steering Group (APTSG, see below). It gave rise to theological questions since Pentecostal Christianity is far from being a unitary

phenomenon, with a wide diversity of belief and practice. It also challenges Anglicanism since the gifts of the Spirit are not evident, to Pentecostal eyes, in Anglican congregations. At the same time, the need to cooperate in facing social issues, such as knife crime, became evident. On the following day there was a visit to the Palace of Westminster where the work of the Church of England in Parliament was explored. The Archbishop of Canterbury accompanied the group for the whole time, indicating the importance of the visit and of this dialogue. There is much to be done in the future. One practical fruit of the visit may be the establishment of for a formal dialogue between the Anglican Communion and Pentecostal churches.

Key dialogue group: Anglican-Pentecostal Theological Steering Group (APTSG)

Background

98. The Church of England is relatively late in having an official dialogue with Pentecostals. Nonetheless, valuing the work already done to increase understanding between Anglicans and Pentecostals, the Council for Christian Unity and the leaders of the Pentecostal churches in membership of CTE have set up a steering group (APTSG). 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.

99. The membership of the Steering Group in 2019, for the Church of England, was the Rt Revd Keith Sinclair (co-chair), the Venerable Jane Steen, the Revd Dr David Hilborn. The Anglican co-secretary is the Revd Dr Callan Slipper. A fourth person is being sought. The Revd Canon Dr Jeremy Worthen is a consultant. For the Pentecostal churches the membership is Pastor Marcus Chilaka (co-chair), the Revd Dr Hugh Osgood and Dave Newman, with the Revd Phyllis Thompson joining later in the year. Dr R. David Muir is Pentecostal co-secretary. Bishop Dr Joe Aldred is a consultant.

Key activities for the year

100. On 2 April 2019 the APTSG ran an Anglican-Pentecostal Consultation, entitled Pneumatology & Baptism in the Spirit. Thirty-six academics, experts and practitioners from the Church of England and a range of Pentecostal churches attended. In the first session, which gave an overview from the perspectives of the two churches on the theme of the day, the speakers were the Very Revd Dr Sarah Rowland Jones (Anglican) and the Revd Dr Caleb Nyanni (Pentecostal). In the next session the Revd Dr Andy Lord (Anglican) and the Revd Marcel Simpson (Pentecostal) spoke about the Role of the Spirit in Water Baptism, while in the final session, the Revd Dr Chigor Chike (Anglican)

and Dr Simo Frestadius (Pentecostal) spoke on the theme of Baptism in the Spirit. The day was introduced by Dr Marcus Chilaka and facilitated by the Revd Dr David Hilborn.

101. The other key activity has been to begin to use Receptive Ecumenism as a method of deepening understanding between the churches. This is in its early stages and, in the end, may be more of a scoping exercise.

102. The group continues to monitor practical ways of drawing Anglicans and Pentecostals together in mission. It has taken an active role in promoting Thy Kingdom Come. Given that this initiative now has clearly a life of its own, it was agreed that the group no longer needs to do anything specific to promote it.

Reflections on the year

103. The APTSG's key event this year was the Consultation on Pneumatology & Baptism in the Spirit. It served both as a means of deepening understanding between Anglicans and Pentecostals and as a means of encouraging warmer relationships. It also brought out the variety of opinions among Pentecostals. This kind of study is helpful in that it addresses some vital issues for Christians. A reflection upon the theological questions raised by the Consultation, taken together with the issues raised at the Seminar on the occasion of the visit of the World Pentecostal Federation to the Archbishop of Canterbury, will need to be undertaken. It will give light for how to proceed in the future. In order to explore the issues and challenges raised through these events, the APTSG may need to bring in a wider range of dialogue partners.

104. One remarkable feature of the Receptive Ecumenism exercises is to notice how little members of either tradition really know of each other. There is great potential for learning in the process of going beyond false notions and stereotypes. This is ecumenism that does not work only for Christian unity, but also for ecclesial and spiritual health.

105. Given that Anglican and Pentecostal mission usually takes place in a multid denominational setting, the growth in mutual understanding potentially has a broader effect than just a bilateral improvement of relations. It functions, rather, as a catalyst for cooperation in mission among larger groups of churches.

PORVOO COMMUNION OF CHURCHES

Lead bishop: The Right Revd Dr David Hamid, Suffragan Bishop in Europe

Key Dialogue Group: Porvoo Contact Group

Background

106. The Porvoo Agreement was signed in 1996 and brought the Anglican Churches of the British Isles into communion with the larger part of the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches. The Church of Denmark, the Lusitanian Church, the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church, the Latvian Church Abroad and the Lutheran Church of Great Britain have entered the communion subsequently. The Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Latvia remains outside the communion but sends representatives to some meetings. The Church of England had pre-existing relationships with a number of the signatory churches.

107. The relationships between churches are monitored and encouraged by the Porvoo Contact Group. The co-chairs are the Most Reverend Dr Michael Jackson, Archbishop of Dublin, and the Right Reverend Matti Repo, Bishop of Tampere (Finland). The co-secretaries are Will Adam (England) and Johannes Zeiler (Sweden).

108. The CCU's Porvoo Panel is chaired by the Right Reverend Dr David Hamid and exists to monitor and encourage the relationship between the Church of England and the Porvoo Churches, including linking with Nordic and Baltic congregations and chaplaincies in England.

Key activities for the year

109. The Steering Committee (co-chairs and co-secretaries) of the Porvoo Contact Group met in Vilnius, Lithuania in June 2019. A Porvoo Church Leaders' Consultation then took place in Oporto, Portugal in October 2019. The Church of England was represented by Mr Adrian Harris, Dr Rachel Jepson and the Reverend Dr Anderson Jeremiah.

110. The Porvoo Panel met twice, in keeping with its usual pattern. In addition, on 22 March 2019

Canon Jonathan Collis from the Diocese of Chelmsford organised a day for dioceses and parishes with Swedish church links in September 2019.

Reflections on the year

111. The Porvoo Communion is a communion of churches in Europe but present in states within and outside the European Union. A great deal of conversation between the churches has been concerned with the consequences of Brexit, not least for the rights of citizens living in other countries.

112. The Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Lithuania had been largely absent from recent meetings of the Contact Group and from consultations and conferences. The standing committee, therefore, met in Vilnius to keep up contact with the church and its bishop. It is hoped, therefore, that a representative from Lithuania will be present at the October meeting.

113. 2020 will see a Porvoo Theological Conference in Sweden in October and 2021 will see a Primates' Meeting in Porvoo (Finland) to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the signing of the original agreement.

THE PROTESTANT CHURCH IN CHINA

Lead Bishop: The Right Reverend David Urquhart, Bishop of Birmingham

Background

114. The National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China/China Christian Council (TSPM/CCC) are the umbrella organisations of the Protestant Christians and the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association/China Catholic Bishops' Conference (CPCA/CCBC) for the Catholic Christians. Alongside the official state registered TSPM/CCC and CPCA, there are 'underground' or 'unregistered' churches, traditionally called 'House Churches'.

115. According to China's official figures, there are estimates of between 23–35 million Protestant Christians, with 38,000 pastoral personnel, 150,000 preachers and lay workers, 21 Bible seminaries and Bible schools teaching 2,500 registered students. It is impossible to accurately say exactly how many Christians there are outside the registered church – estimates range up to 100 million.

Key Activities for the Year

116. In April, Archbishop Justin made a short visit to Beijing and Shanghai. The Archbishop met with The Chinese Government, the new leadership of the TSPM/CCC and the China Catholic Bishops' Conference.

117. The visit was jointly hosted by the Chinese Government and the TSPM/CCC. Whilst the visit coincided with a large 'Belt and Road' policy conference, it was noted that the delegation was hosted impeccably.

118. The objectives of the Archbishop's visit were to:

- To show solidarity with the Church in China
- To meet with the new leadership of the CCC/TSPM
- To invite a delegation from the Chinese Church to Lambeth Conference 2020.

Lambeth Conference 2020

119. During the visit, the Archbishop formally gave a written letter of invitation for a Chinese delegation to attend next year's Lambeth Conference, which was well received.
120. As the Protestant church in China is 'post-denominational', bishops do not exist in the church. The leaders that will be invited are the functional equivalent to bishops in this post-denominational church. Their attendance at next year's conference is intended to strengthen the relationship between the Anglican Communion and the church in China, strengthen the Chinese in their leadership and enable other Lambeth Conference delegates to learn from the church in China.

Key Reflections on the Year

121. Engagement between the Anglican Communion and the People's Republic of China have largely been positive in the last year, with the highlight clearly being the Archbishop's visit to China. It is hoped that the Archbishop will make another, longer, visit to China during his archiepiscopacy in order to continue to strengthen the relationship with the Protestant Church in China.
122. Whilst there have been positive interactions between the Anglican Communion and the Church in China, there remains some concerns around Human Rights issues in the country more widely. Widespread and much publicized concern remains for the Uighur minority in Xianjang amid reports of persecution and imprisonment in re-education centres.
123. In recent months, there have been a number of protests, both peaceful and violent, within Hong Kong, relating to the highly controversial extradition bill proposed by the Chief Executive of Hong Kong, Carrie Lam. Even after this bill was suspended, protests have continued.

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

**Lead bishops: The Rt Revd Christopher Foster, Bishop of Portsmouth (EWARC and IARCCUM Bishop at Large for England);
The Rt Revd Dr David Hamid (IARCCUM)
The Rt Revd Dr Robert Innes (Belgian & French ARCS)**

Key dialogue Groups:

**English and Welsh Anglican-Roman Catholic Committee (EWARC)
International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM)
Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC)
Belgian and French Anglican-Roman Catholic Committee**

Overview

124. Relations between the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church have two distinct strands. There is the relationship with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, which finds its regular national focus in the English and Welsh Anglican-Roman Catholic Committee (EWARC) and the biennial Joint Bishops Meeting. Within the Diocese in Europe, there are relations with other Bishops' Conferences, also supported by national Anglican-Roman Catholic Committees in the case of Belgium and France.
125. The ecclesiology of the Roman Catholic Church means that the relationship between the local and the universal 'levels' of church is especially close (to use the terminology of the latest ARCIC report, *Walking Together on the Way*), and therefore attention to international dialogue is especially important for the Church of England in this instance. This includes both the theological work of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission and the development of partnership in mission through the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM). Indeed, the Terms of Reference for EWARC reflect those of IARCCUM and include among its purposes 'attending to the processes of formal response and ecclesial reception for agreed statements of ARCIC'.

English and Welsh Anglican-Roman Catholic Committee (EWARC)

Background

126. The English and Welsh Roman Catholic Committee (EWARC) 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. Members are appointed for a five-year period, with the current quinquennium beginning in 2018. The purpose of English and Welsh ARC is to support, coordinate and promote relations between the Church of England and the Church in Wales, and the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales. This includes encouraging and exploring growth in the communion that already exists and identifying and advocating practical ways to live out that communion.
127. The Rt Revd Christopher Foster, Bishop of Portsmouth, was appointed as Co-Chair in 2017 ahead of the new quinquennium. The Roman Catholic Co-Chair is Bishop Robert Byrne, now Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle. They were also appointed as IARCCUM Bishops at Large for England in January 2019 and will take on at least three joint ventures together across the country in 2019.
128. The group meets twice per year for overnight residential meetings. Anglican Representation to this body is: the Rt Revd Christopher Foster, Bishop of Portsmouth; the Rt Revd Mike Harrison, Bishop of Dunwich; the Revd Canon Dr Andrew Davison; Ms Doral Hayes, the Revd Canon Maggie McLean; the Revd Andrew Moughtin-Mumby; the Revd Dr Matthew Hill (Church in Wales). There is one current vacancy from the Church of England.

Key activities for the year

129. A joint meeting of Anglican and Catholic bishops was held in Leicester, on 16–17th January. This meeting now appears to be settling into a biennial pattern. It was the Church of England's turn to host the meeting, and the focus was on *Walking Together on the Way*, with Paula Gooder and Paul Murray, both members of ARCIC III, as co-presenters. The bishops shared in worship together and were guided around the Richard III Exhibition Centre and discussed a number of other topics. They also reflected on the hearings concerning both churches of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.

130. The key areas of focus in the first phases of the current quinquennium of EWARC are as follows.

- ARCIC III's statement *Walking Together on the Way* – the committee will continue to reflect upon how best to aid in the reception of this document, which was published in July 2018. This is likely to be through resources for use in different contexts.
- Joint Schools – The Committee has drafted a Statement of Principles for joint schools and has commissioned the education departments of the two churches to update the guidelines for joint schools.
- Interchurch Families – the committee has suggested it could produce pastoral guidance resources, in conjunction with the Association of Interchurch families.
- The environment is also a topic that members are keen to explore.

131. The Committee will also now be considering the opportunities for fostering relations between our churches arising from the canonisation of Cardinal John Henry Newman in October.

132. The Committee will meet in different locations of pilgrimage around England and Wales in the current quinquennium and will seek to engage with the local community whilst in situ.

Reflections on the year

133. Discerning how EWARC can assist in the reception of *Walking Together on the Way* has not been straightforward; it is not a document that all will find accessible or consistently engaging. EWARC has, however, begun to develop some resources that could enable people in different contexts in our churches to practise the kind of 'receptive ecumenism' advocated by the document, in a format geared to its key themes. Anglican members are also conscious that all ARCIC reports have received careful consideration from the General Synod and that the extensive reflection in *Walking Together on the Way* on synods and councils in the life of the church give it particular relevance.

International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity and Mission
(IARCCUM)

Background

134. IARCCUM is an episcopal body, established in 2001, to carry forward in life and mission the agreements reached in the ARCIC dialogue. The co-chairmen are Archbishop Donald Bolen (of Regina), and Bishop David Hamid. The co-secretaries are (RC) the Revd Canon Anthony Currer and (Anglican) the Revd Canon Dr John Gibaut (until May 2019). Meetings since the 2016 summit have been held by conference call. The mandate is three-fold:

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

Some activities and developments in the past year

135. Supporting the growing number of IARCCUM companions. These are bishops (apart from the bishops at large), clergy and laity, who are engaging in common witness and mission, based on the IARCCUM vision. Companions are growing in Africa and the Americas with pairings in the Dominican Republic, Canada, Malawi, and future possibilities in Ireland, the West Indies/Antilles.

136. The Walking Together Foundation is now fully registered in UK law as a charity which will enable tax-efficient contributions from many countries to the work of IARCCUM bishops and companions around the world. This is vital to IARCCUM's work, as there is no serious budget for IARCCUM either in the ACC or in the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

137. The IARCCUM network has been invited to support the evaluation of the ARCIC III document *Walking Together on the Way Learning to Be the Church—Local, Regional, Universal* in provincial houses of bishops and RC episcopal conferences.

138. Preliminary plans are underway for a second IARCCUM summit in 2021

139. Preliminary plans are underway for a joint IARCCUM/Academic symposium to mark the centenary of the Malines Conversations, also in 2021.

Related to the Church of England

140. Bishop Christopher Foster and Bishop Robert Byrne (Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle) are IARCCUM bishops at large for England. Bishop Robert Innes and Archbishop Robert Le Gall (Toulouse) are IARCCUM bishops at large for France.
141. The IARCCUM website, www.iarccum.org, contains ARCIC, IARCCUM and some national ARC documents; Common Declarations; local, regional & national covenants; examples of best practice; case studies; articles on ARC relations; liturgical celebrations/prayer services; joint pastoral statements; twinnings; news archive, photos and historic preparatory material from the dialogues available under the 30 year rule, material from the IARCCUM summit.

Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC)

142. The 'Erfurt Report' of ARCIC III, *Walking Together on the Way: Learning to be the Church – Local, Regional, Universal*, was published in 2018 along with commentaries on the text by Canon Jamie Hawkey (Anglican) and Fr Ormond Rush (Catholic). This agreed statement on Ecclesiology was the first major report of the third phase of ARCIC and marked the end of a particular set of appointments of members of the commission. Ahead of the 2019 Commission meeting in Jerusalem, both the Anglican Communion and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity appointed new members as the Commission turned its mind to the discussion of ethical decision-making, in fulfilment of the second part of the mandate given to ARCIC by Pope Benedict XVI and Archbishop Rowan Williams in 2009.

143. The Communiqué issued at the 2019 meeting was as follows:

The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) met at the Anglican Cathedral of St George, Jerusalem, from 12-17 May 2019. The Commission is grateful for the hospitality afforded by the Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem, the Most Reverend Suheil Dawani, and the Dean of St George's Cathedral, the Very Reverend Hosam Naoum, as well as the Apostolic Administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, OFM. Jerusalem holds a unique place in the lives and faith of all Christians and the proximity of the holy sites and prayer and worship in them undergirded the Commission's discussions. Supremely, Jerusalem is the place where our Lord Jesus Christ died and rose again, yet it is also the site of the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15), where the apostles met for prayer and discussion under God that led to reconciliation of differences in the Church. Members of ARCIC were privileged to be able to visit the Old City, to make an excursion to Bethlehem and the Ecumenical Institute at Tantur and to meet with Head of Churches in Jerusalem.

*This year marks a transition in the life of ARCIC III after the publication of *Walking Together on the Way* in 2018. There have been a number of changes in both Catholic and Anglican members of the Commission, with more than half of Commission members completing their terms. The Most Reverend Sir David Moxon, KCNZ, stood down as Anglican Co-Chair in 2018. The Most Reverend Philip Freier, Archbishop of Melbourne (Australia), replaces him as Co-Chair alongside the Catholic Co-Chair, the Most Reverend Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham (UK).*

The agenda of the Commission now turns from the study of ecclesiology to the study of the manner in which ethical teaching is discerned in our Churches. This topic forms the second part of the mandate given to the Commission by Pope Benedict XVI and Archbishop Rowan Williams in 2009. At this meeting the Commission considered how each of the two communions had discerned their ethical teaching with reference to two case studies: slavery and contraception. The Commission also discussed how this new phase of work related to Walking Together on the Way, and in particular the determining method of that document, Receptive Ecumenism. In light of these discussions the Commission further developed the agenda and plans for its ongoing work.

144. The Members of the Commission are as follows:

Anglicans:

The Most Reverend Philip Freier, Australia (Co-Chair);
Dr Moeawa Callaghan, Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia;
The Reverend Dr Isaias Ezequiel Chachine, South Africa;
Dr Paula Gooder, England;
The Reverend Canon Garth Minott, West Indies;
The Most Reverend Linda Nicholls, Canada;
The Reverend Dr Alexander Ross, Australia;
The Reverend Dr Peter Sedgwick, Wales;
The Right Reverend Christopher Hill, KCVO, England (Consultant);
The Reverend Dr William Adam, Lambeth Palace (Co-Secretary);
The Venerable Jonathan Gough, England (Minute taker);
The Reverend Neil Vigers, England (ACO Staff).

Catholics

The Most Reverend Bernard Longley, England (Co-Chair);
Sister Margaret Atkins, OSA, England;
Father Albino Barrera, OP, USA;
Father Paul Béré, SJ, Cote d'Ivoire;
+The Most Reverend Robert Christian, OP, USA;
Dr Kristin Colberg, USA;
Professor Sigrid Müeller, Austria;
Dr Emmanuel Nathan, Australia;
Fr Vimal Trimanna, CSsR, Sri Lanka;
Professor Paul Murray, England (Consultant);
The Reverend Anthony Currer, PCPCU (Co-Secretary).

145. Members were sad to hear of the sudden death on 11 July 2019 of Bishop Robert Christian, OP, a long-time member of the Commission and one of the principal drafters of *Walking Together on the Way*.

146. The next meeting will take place in May 2020 in the Monastery of Bose, Italy.

Background

147. In December 1967, following Vatican II, the Roman Catholic Church in Belgium created a National Catholic Ecumenical Commission. Soon after, the Belgian Anglican–Roman Catholic Committee (ARC) group was created. The committee is already looking forward to the Centenary celebrations of the Malines Conversations between Lord Halifax and Cardinal Mercier in 2021. As always, representatives of the two churches continue to meet four times a year.
148. In 2018, two new co-chairs were appointed: on behalf of the Anglicans, John Wilkinson, Associate Chaplain and Canon Pastor at Holy Trinity, Brussels, and for the Roman Catholic church, the Revd Kurt Priem. The Belgian ARC is currently composed of three Anglicans – the Revd Stephen Murray, Mrs Birte Day, and Mr Graham Keen, and three Roman Catholic members – M. Alain Coppettiers, Chanoine Adelbert Denaux and Christiane Davisters.

Activities and developments in the past year

149. The group continued to carry out a series of events around the commemoration of the death of Edith Cavell, including concerts, special worship services and an exhibition. All these events have been very successful.
150. Despite ending his personal involvement at the conclusion of ARCIC II, Canon Adelbert Denaux continues to provide the latest information on ARCIC III developments.
151. The National Ecumenical Study Day in Namur examined the theme of: ‘End of life: how do Christians decide? Challenges in Faith.’
152. Along with 6 of the other officially government recognised faith-groups, the Anglicans and Roman Catholics participated in a refugee re-settlement scheme, ‘Humanitarian Corridors’, which partnered various faith groups with refugees via Sant’Egidio to bring more than 125 family from Syria and Lebanon to Belgium.
153. ‘Thy Kingdom Come’ has been fully embraced by both denominations as an annual event. There is not a centralised programme for either church, but rather, parishes and individuals participate in this week of prayer with the encouragement of Archbishop Justin Welby and Pope Francis.
154. In April, Stephen Murray and three Anglican colleagues visited the Anglican Centre in Rome. They were able to attend a Papal audience and enjoyed a great deal of ecumenical learning and hospitality.
155. Safeguarding continues to be a priority for the Church of England, and regular updates are given to the Church of England’s Roman Catholic partners who are very

interested in the safeguarding policies, practices and training being done in the Anglican Church in Belgium.

156. ARC Newsletter - John Wilkinson circulated a survey among the readers of the ARC news. The result is that the newsletter will cease to be published in paper form. Rather, a website will be developed specifically for ARC in cooperation with the Roman Catholic office responsible for ecumenism.

Challenges and opportunities

157. It has been quite some time since the last meeting of the three ARCs (French, English and Belgian). It is hoped that a new meeting could be organised in the near future and the committee is looking forward to considering the initial findings of ARCIC III.
158. Meanwhile, the committee feels encouraged by the commissioning of Bishop Robert Innes and Bishop Johan Bonny (Antwerp) as partners for mission in Belgium & Europe.
159. Additionally, the committee will continue to track the latest news leading up to the Lambeth Conference 2020.

French Anglican–Roman Catholic Committee

Background

160. 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:

Twinnings and Exchanges/Jumelages et Echanges (1990) is a joint initiative with English ARC;

O 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.

161. 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.
162. 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

163. There have recently been many changes in membership of French ARC. The (fairly new) Roman Catholic co-president of ARC France is Mgr Bernard Ginoux, Bishop of Montauban. The successor to the former Anglican co-president, Canon Matthew Harrison, is Revd John Murray from St Alban's, Strasbourg. Fr Mark Osborne and Ms Sonia Taylor, both from St George's, have also been appointed, thus bringing the Anglican membership up to full strength. There are new members on the Roman Catholic side too.
164. Following on from 2018 when the annual meeting did not take place, two meetings were planned for in 2019. The first was held from 12–14 February.
165. The main business of this meeting was to review the work in progress for the translation of Common Worship Morning and Evening Prayer into French. (Following on from French ARC's publication *O Lord, open our Lips* on the common ground between the two traditions of daily prayer, it is hoped that the availability of a translation will encourage the use of the respective liturgies on ecumenical occasions. It will also of course be very useful for Anglicans in France and possible also in other French-speaking countries.)
166. A great deal of work has been carried out during recent months. Everything has now been translated, often initially by an Anglican with good French, and then thoroughly revised by one of the French members of ARC, the new Roman Catholic members having been selected partly for their liturgical skills.
167. The draft texts will be reviewed at the next meeting from 22–24 October. The final stage will be a stylistic harmonisation by a French member of the group who is an editor and publisher.
168. Some initial consideration has been given to the question of subsequent authorisation of the finished product. It is hoped that the respective ecclesiastical authorities will authorise experimental use of the liturgies in French for a trial period, after which, with any necessary modifications, they would be submitted to the Church of England and French Roman Catholic liturgical commissions for formal authorisation.
169. In February, French ARC also returned to the subject of sacramental confession ('le sacrement de réconciliation') which was the subject of the meeting in 2016 when, because of the illness of the member concerned, the expected contribution on current Roman Catholic practice in this area had not been forthcoming. To fill this gap, Mgr Ginoux, the new Roman Catholic co-chair, gave an interesting oral presentation on the post-Vatican II period.

Challenges and opportunities

170. After completion of the translation work, it will be necessary to move on to other topics. One possibility would be to study and discuss the work of ARCIC III.

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Lead bishop: vacant

171. Relations are warm between the United Reformed Church (URC) and the Church of England. Cooperation takes place in several ways. First of all, they participate together in Churches Together groups both locally and at intermediate level. Related to this, the Church of England and the URC also cooperate with other churches in unity in mission initiatives, such as Street Pastors, Foodbanks and Christians Against Poverty. There are a number of Local Ecumenical Partnerships in which the Church of England and the URC participate, and in some they are the only two churches. In these latter it is possible that different approaches to liturgy can cause tension but, by the same token, they can be a real source of mutual learning and deepening relationship. Of particular interest is the ecumenical county of Cumbria where the URC is one of the four churches that have signed a Declaration of Covenant Partnership; the other two churches involved are the Methodist Church of Britain and the Salvation Army. Other member denominations of Churches Together in Cumbria signed a Letter of Companionship.
172. Nationally, relations are excellent. The URC fully participates in all national structures and there is an excellent relationship between all the National Ecumenical Officers. The URC is following with great interest how the Anglican Methodist Covenant develops. It is to be hoped that this may give some light and encouragement for future growth in understanding between the URC and the Church of England. The Church of England's National Ecumenical Officer is a participant observer of the Methodist United Reformed Church Liaison Group, which meets twice yearly, and has contributed to discussions to do with episcopacy and authority. He also attended the URC Faith and Order Group to speak about Receptive Ecumenism, a discipline that the URC wishes to explore in its ecumenical relations.
173. The context of these relations is various attempts in the twentieth century to bring the Church of England and the churches of the Reformed tradition closer together, both before and after the inception of the United Reformed Church in 1972. After that date the United Reformed Church entered into various dialogues with the Church of England, beginning with the informal tripartite Anglican, Methodist and United Reformed conversations, which started in 1999 and were published in 2001 as 'Conversations on the Way to Unity'; followed by the report 'Healing the Past – Building the Future' (2010), which led to a service of reconciliation in Westminster Abbey in 2012 on the occasion of the 350th anniversary of 'the Great Ejection' in 1662; and then the subsequent document 'Unity, Identity and Mission' (2016).

Key dialogue group: Church of England–United Reformed Church Contact Group (CEURC)

Background

174. To carry conversation begun in the twentieth century ahead, a Contact Group has been established by the Council for Christian Unity of the Church of England and the Mission Committee of the United Reformed Church for a five-year term in the first instance. Its work will be carried out particularly with reference to the Anglican–Methodist Covenant.

Key activities for the year

175. The group will meet once a year. Its members are:

Anglican: A co-chair is being sought, Revd Dr Jamie Hawkey, Revd Canon Rebecca Swyer, Revd Glenn Coggins, Revd Dr Callan Slipper (co-secretary)

URC: Revd Ruth Whitehead, Moderator of URC SW Synod (co-chair), John Ellis, Revd Dr Susan Durber, Revd Timothy Meadows, Revd Philip Brooks (co-secretary)

Reflections

176. The Contact Group's four primary functions will be to promote, not necessarily by doing these itself:

- a. work by the two churches in consultation with Churches Together in England that identifies and enables 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);
- b. 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);
- c. 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;
- d. 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.

ECUMENICAL INSTRUMENTS

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES (CEC)

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

Background

177. 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 114 Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican, and Old Catholic Churches from all countries of Europe, plus around 40 National Council of Churches and Organisations in Partnership.
178. Responsibility for the governance of CEC resides ultimately with the five-yearly Assembly, which last took place in 2018 in Novi Sad, Serbia. The Assembly appoints the Governing Board that oversees CEC's work between meetings of the Assembly. In 2018, the Bishop of Loughborough was appointed as one of the two CEC Vice Presidents and the Bishop of Leeds was also appointed as a member of the Governing Board.

Key activities for the year

179. The Governing Board has been seeking to build on the key priorities identified at the Novi Sad Assembly by identifying strategic priorities and a corresponding work plan for the period until the next Assembly. An initial version of this was circulated to member churches and then substantially revised in the light of feedback.
180. Attention has also been given to finances. A new formula for calculating member contributions, with greater weighting given to church membership figures, was agreed at the Novi Sad Assembly.
181. There was a gathering of ecumenical officers from member churches in Finland in September. Initial conversations have taken place regarding the possibility of an event in 2020 to mark the combined centenaries of the Appeal to All Christian People issued by the Lambeth Conference and the encyclical letter on unity from the Orthodox Synod of Constantinople.
182. The Bishop of Loughborough has also joined the Executive Committee of the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) as CEC's representative. This continues to be a vital area of concern where effective cooperation between churches across Europe can have a significant impact. There are also on-going questions about the relationship between CEC and CCME.

183. In May, member churches were informed that the current CEC General Secretary, Fr Heikki Huttunen, would be stepping down from this role, with Dr Jørgen Skov Sørensen now appointed as his successor.

Reflections on the year

184. CEC continues to be a focus for significant opportunities to coordinate the witness of churches across the European Continent. With the membership of new Thematic Groups recently announced, it is to be hoped that substantial progress can be made with regard to addressing the priorities set by the last Assembly.

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND (CTBI)

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

Background

185. 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.

186. 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.

Key activities for the year

187. CTBI has been concerned to support the churches in their response to events around Brexit. Further to the work on National Days of Prayer, prayer and worship resources were produced. CTBI also convened a residential meeting involving, among others, the Corrymeela Community, the Iona Community and St Ethelburga’s Centre for Reconciliation and Peace to look at producing material around fostering peace and reconciliation in the local context.

188. Other projects and programmes supported by CTBI this year include: ‘Invest in Peace’ (in partnership with the Board of Deputies of British Jews); a study guide titled ‘Acting God’s Love’ based on the International Guidelines, Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World; asylum and refugee work with the Churches Refugee Network; and hosting a consultation on the promotion of environmental issues.

189. One of the highlights during this year was sharing in a pilgrimage to Egypt following in the steps of the Holy Family, but also offering a witness of solidarity in a context of Christian persecution. Participants noted that the Egyptian revolution of 2011 which was witnessed on television screens had prompted the creation of the Egypt Council of Churches, not as an ecclesiastical structure for its own sake, but as a recognition by Christians and Church leaders that they are stronger when they stand together.

190. Further information about the many facets of CTBI's on-going work can be found via the various websites it supports:

- Main CTBI website (ctbi.org.uk)
- CTBI archive website (ctbiarchive.org)
- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity wall (weekofprayer.org)
- Focus on Refugees (focusonrefugees.org)
- Centre for Theology and Justice (theologyjustice.org)
- Lent Pilgrimage (lentpilgrimage.org.uk)
- Good Society project (agoodsociety.org)
- Dispossession Project (dispossessionproject.org)
- China Online Study Centre (chinaonlinecentre.org)
- Churches Together websites directory (churchestogether.org)
- Churches Election (churcheselection.org.uk).

191. Following a similar event in 2017, a further consultation was held in November for member churches to discuss together the work of CTBI, along with issues of importance for the churches across the four nations of Britain and Ireland.

Reflections on the year

192. So many of the resources produced by CTBI are of excellent quality theologically, yet there is the feeling that they may be often unknown or overlooked in the Church of England itself. This raises questions about how connected CTBI may be to the churches, and so fulfilling its role as an 'instrument' by which the churches can journey together towards full visible unity. The issue of connection to the churches is something that CTBI is seeking to address. One recommendation to the Church of England would be for frequent consultation of the CTBI website for information and resources related the Church of England's priorities, for instance, reconciliation in communities, asylum and refugee concerns, the environment, and interfaith relations. In a post-Brexit UK, CTBI may have a vital role to play as an instrument of the churches, both because it spans the UK/Irish border and because it may have things to offer the ecumenical life of an increasingly fragmented group of nations within the UK itself.

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN ENGLAND (CTE)

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

Background

193. 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 organizations or groups with real ecumenical engagement. It seeks to function at once as a 'safe space' where churches can be in dialogue and, so far as it is possible, as a platform for Christians to speak with a united voice 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.

194. 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.

195. CTE is still working through its response to the report by the think-tank Theos, 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, engaged in God's mission, empowered by the Spirit*.

196. Currently the Church of England participates in the governance structures of CTE via the presence among its Trustees of the Rt Revd Dr Michael Beasley, Bishop of Hertford and the Revd Dr Callan Slipper. Both are members of CTE's Enabling Group which serves to give voice to the churches in setting CTE's agenda. On the Enabling Group they are joined by Ms Annika Mathews from the Church of England Youth Council.

197. There has been a profound challenge to CTE in a question that has arisen regarding what is termed the 'Fourth Presidency'. There are six Presidents of CTE, who together represent the major traditions of its forty-nine Member Churches. The Presidents meet regularly to discuss matters concerning the life of the churches in England and together seek to serve as a sign of unity. In its press release upon the challenge, CTE says, 'Upon the Fourth Presidency becoming vacant, Quakers in Britain (formally The Religious Society of Friends) made its nomination, and with the Lutheran Council of

Great Britain, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of England, German-Speaking Lutheran, Reformed and United Congregations in Great Britain and Church of Scotland (Presbytery of England), they appointed Hannah Brock Womack, an active Quaker, to this role.... Prompted by Hannah's recent equal marriage, an ongoing process of discussion, listening and prayer has begun, recognising that churches hold different views regarding human sexuality, and that for many this is a very emotive and painful subject.'

198. This process has meant facing disagreement, in the context of so much that unites the churches,. As a result CTE says in its press release, 'While remaining committed to the journey of unity we are on as churches from many traditions, the Member Churches of CTE, through the Enabling Group, have recently requested the Fourth Presidency Group to refrain from enacting its Presidency at this time, leaving the Fourth Presidency as an 'empty chair' for the current term of office. This empty chair represents the lack of agreement within the churches in England regarding human sexuality, and the reality that this dimension of the churches' pilgrimage together is not yet complete. CTE commits to continue listening to the voice of the Fourth Presidency Group and the churches they represent and is working with them to find ways to ensure that, during this period, their voice in the collective presidency is still heard.'

Key activities for the year

199. The Trustees meet five times a year and the Enabling Group twice a year. They have dealt with several issues requiring particular care, including pension arrangements for staff and, especially, the challenge of different views among members churches on same-sex relationships. This latter issue has focused on the questions surrounding the Fourth Presidency.

200. CTE's staff are essential to its successful performance. This year Jim Currin retired and was replaced in June by two people, reflecting the developing priorities of CTE in the light of the Theos report. One is the Revd Dr Ben Aldous who will be full-time Evangelism and Mission Co-ordinator, and other is Mrs Lucy Olofinjana, who will be part-time Communications and Media Officer with special responsibility for the website.

201. Following on these appointments, CTE plans to hold a Consultation on Discipleship, Evangelism and Mission booked for March 23rd–24th 2020. Entitled 'Discipling the Whole Church to Reach the Whole Nation', it aims to provide an opportunity for people leading in those areas from all of CTE's member churches, as well as others from Gather, Hope and various missional Bodies in Association to find new ways of prioritising Christian unity in developing strategies for the churches' mission.

202. With over 4 million page requests on the website www.cte.org.uk in 2018, with visitor numbers for page requests being on average 11,794 per day, and with an average stay on site of 2 minutes 40 seconds, the website is an important part of CTE's outreach and its service to the churches. A considerable review of web areas is under

way and there are now 883 live topic sections under the four main headings of About, News, Resources and Contact. This will continue to be developed.

203. For many years CTE has supported the work of Receptive Ecumenism and a key resource on this was completed by David Tatem, former National Ecumenical Officer for the United Reformed Church, David Cornick, then CTE General Secretary, and Callan Slipper, National Ecumenical Officer for the Church of England. Entitled 'Embracing the Other', it is a resource for local groups available as a download from the website. It can be delivered as a stand-alone session, either as a day or half-day, or as a five-session course.
204. CTE has continued its work of supporting Ecumenical Officers, both facilitating twice-a-year meetings of the National Ecumenical Officers and the training of County and Denominational Ecumenical Officers. The training has been organised by Jenny Bond, CTE's officer for Training, Resources and Events. There was a two-day meeting for newly appointed Ecumenical Officers in January and a Consultation with CEOs in May which focused upon mission. This work gives necessary support to intermediate level ecumenism (that is, at the regional level between the local and the national).
205. CTE supported an event run by a group of the National Ecumenical Officers to develop resources for *A Flexible Framework for Local Unity in Mission*, formerly *A New Framework for Local Unity in Mission* (renamed on the grounds that it is no longer new). This took place in Church House, Westminster.
206. The membership of CTE continues to grow. The newest member churches are the Wesleyan Reformed Union, followed by the Apostolic Church (a Pentecostal church rooted in the 1904 Welsh Revival). An application by the Presbyterian Church of Ghana went to the CTE Enabling Group in September 2019, and a further two are likely. Feed the Hungry, a group that works ecumenically to provide overseas aid, has recently been added to the Bodies in Association to CTE.
207. In June this year CTE contributed to an imaginative exploration of a different form of building Christian unity, in the form of a conference upon 'Juridical Ecumenism'.

Reflections on the year

208. The question of the Presidency of CTE and its relationship to the member churches is extremely important; indeed, it has the potential to have a major and lasting effect upon CTE and its effectiveness. Not only could it cause churches to leave CTE but it could seriously weaken the Presidency. The Presidency is a key way by which CTE helps the churches to speak into the public domain, giving a voice to smaller denominations so that they can be heard nationally.
209. The issue of the Presidency runs parallel to the need to stimulate the articulation of a sharper theological vision of unity, capable of facilitating the co-operation of churches with very different theologies and ecclesiologies.

210. The question of the weakening condition of intermediate level ecumenism is increasingly urgent and, since the intermediate level is so important for how CTE fulfils its mission, it will need to be further addressed.
211. Assisting churches to engage in mission that is more powerful because carried out ecumenically is going to be a priority for several years to come.

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (WCC)

**Lead bishops: The Rt Revd Dr Robert Innes, Bishop in Europe (Central Committee);
The Rt Revd Dr Michael Iprgrave (Commission on Faith and Order)**

Background

212. The WCC describes itself as ‘a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.’ When it was founded in 1948 it drew together the ‘life and work’ and ‘faith and order’ strands of the global ecumenical movement. In 1961, the International Missionary Council became part of the WCC.
213. Currently there are 350 churches in more than 110 countries who are members of the WCC as it engages in its quest for common witness to the good news of Christ, service to all the world’s people, inter-religious dialogue and cooperation, theological formation and spiritual renewal and transformation.
214. The Assembly, which normally meets every eight years, is the ‘supreme legislative body’ of the WCC. It appoints the members of the Central Committee and sets programmatic priorities for the next phase of the WCC’s work. The last Assembly took place in Busan in 2013 and launched the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. The next Assembly will be in Karlsruhe, Germany in 2021.
215. The Faith and Order Commission of the WCC is a multilateral, global forum of ecumenical theology and comprises of official representatives of churches belonging to the main historical streams of Christianity, including the Roman Catholic Church. Theologians from 33 countries in five continents consider a wide range of issues and areas of ecumenical work.
216. There are two Church of England members on the Central Committee: the Bishop in Europe, the Rt. Revd Dr Robert Innes, and the Revd Canon Dr Leslie Nathaniel. The Bishop of Ely was originally appointed to the Commission on Faith and Order, with the Bishop of Lichfield currently serving as his substitute.

Key activities for the year

217. After the outstanding celebration of the 70th Anniversary of the WCC last year, the WCC is now looking forward in hope. The consideration of its ecumenical legacy, and the fruits of Christian fellowship among its member churches remains an ongoing task. Its ecumenical journey of Walking, Praying and Working Together continues in different forums representing Christians from all regions and major confessions.
218. The Commission on World Mission and Evangelism met in May in Finland to reflect on its conference in Arusha, Tanzania, last year. It issued 'The Arusha Call to Discipleship', available as part of the WCC document Called to Transforming Discipleship.
219. The Faith and Order Commission has continued its theological reflection in a quest for greater unity and closer fellowship among churches. A new and pivotal Faith and Order document, *Come and See*, has been published which explores the unity agenda in the light of global challenges to peace and justice.
220. One of the Faith and Order Commission's current work streams is studying moral discernment and ecclesial authority, with an initial collection of scholarly papers on this theme expected to be published this year. Difficulties in obtaining a visa unfortunately prevented the Bishop of Lichfield from attending the meeting of the Commission in China in June 2019.
221. The next WCC Assembly will be held in Karlsruhe, Germany from 8-16 September 2021. After intensive discussions, the WCC has finally announced the Assembly theme: *Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity*.
222. Planning a WCC Assembly is a complicated task. In addition to ongoing work in getting the different aspects of the location fit for purpose, committees are working on completing key programmatic tasks. The Assembly Worship Committee, for example, has already made significant progress in preparing documentation for the worship sessions, including Bible studies.
223. The WCC has been communicating a number of its initiatives to member churches, including *Just Community of Women and Men in the Church*, the *Hiroshima-ICAN Academy on Nuclear Weapons and Global Security*, and the *Ecumenical Global Health Strategy*.
224. It was announced at the beginning of the year that the current General Secretary, the Revd Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, would be stepping down after the completion of his current (second) term. The search process has begun. There have been two important meetings. The nominee is due to be confirmed by the Central Committee in March 2020.

Reflections on the year

225. The WCC is moving the agenda along in a new way, thus seeking to expand horizons and stimulating reflection and debate. However, further work needs to be done to clarify what an emerging ecumenical concept for the future can be.
226. The imperative of unity at all levels, theological, ecclesial and others, continues to be a vital element of all WCC work. Further reflections are needed to see how this element can be woven into emerging ecumenical concepts, such as, the compelling love of Christ.
227. The pilgrimage of justice and peace has given the WCC significant momentum in terms of Christian witness and mission. Much emphasis has been given to the programmes of visiting teams. The task therefore is to work towards justice and peace becoming an essential feature of all of the WCC's work.
228. On the matter of engaging with the sustainable development goals from a Christian perspective, a deeper debate is necessary.
229. That the WCC Assembly 2021 is to be in Europe is significant. The assembly has not been in the European region since the 4th Assembly in Uppsala in 1968. It has been twice in the Asian region, twice on the African continent, once in Latin America and once in North America since then. This is therefore an opportunity for Europe to be the ground for mission initiatives, for greater Christian visibility and building Christian confidence in an increasingly changing and challenging situation. This is an opportune moment for the Diocese in Europe to be a key link and visibly engaged with WCC activities.