

Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue - 2009

COMMISSION FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY AND DIALOGUE

REPORT 2009

MEMBERSHIP

The Archbishops and Bishops

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| Most Rev Dr RL Clarke, Bishop of Meath & Kildare (Chair) | Mr WT Morrow |
| Rev Canon P Comerford | Rev DR Nuzum |
| Rev Canon DWT Crooks | Mr N Richardson |
| Rev Canon Dr IM Ellis | Very Rev PW Rooke |
| Mr SR Harper | Ms CS Turner |
| Rev IJE Knox | Rev OC Ulogwara |
| Rev Canon WA Lewis | Rev GV Wharton |
| Rev DM McCallig | Rt Rev TR Williams, Bishop of Limerick |
| Mrs R McKelvey | Mrs AJ Wills |
| Dr K Milne (Honorary Secretary) | |

Executive Summary

It is not surprising that many people, if not most, find the number of ecumenical organisations and their acronyms highly confusing. However they have specific roles to play, and insofar as our resources permit at a time of almost unprecedented financial constraint, it is our wish to play as active a part as possible in these organisations. Our representatives attend many meetings and subsequently report to us, and we consider it to be of the highest importance that the work of this commission and the reports that we receive should be known in the parishes. Modern technology makes this possible and we intend to set up a web-site whereby information about our activities can be readily accessed. We would also draw particular attention to preparations for the CEC Assembly in Lyon in July (section a below), our plans for participation in some of the various Anglican Networks (section b) and hopes for creating opportunities for inter-faith dialogue (section c)

(a) Ecumenical affairs

Most Rev Dr RL Clarke, Bishop of Meath and Kildare (Convenor)
Dr K Milne (Honorary Secretary)
Rt Rev RCA Henderson, Bishop of Tuam
Rev Canon DWT Crooks
Rev DR Nuzum,
Mrs R McKelvey
Mr WT Morrow
One Church of Ireland representative from the Covenant Council
One Methodist representative from the Covenant Council

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Irish Council of Churches (ICC) and Irish Inter-Church Meeting (IICM)

The Annual General Meeting of the ICC took place on Thursday 2 April in Gracehill Moravian Church near Ballymena, County Antrim. The theme of the meeting was 'Living for Tomorrow's World- green? global? greedy?' The keynote speaker was Professor Ferdinand Von Prondzynski, the President of Dublin City University. The Bishop of Meath and Kildare, as Vice-president of ICC has over the past regularly attended meetings of the executive committee of ICC and has also attended meetings of IICM.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The customary Week of Prayer for Christian Unity began on Sunday 25 January 2009 and was marked by events throughout the country. As before, we provided parishes with a proposed text for acts of worship.

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

The Chairman, Most Rev Dr RL Clarke and Honorary Secretary, Dr K Milne attended the annual CTBI forum for senior church representatives held in Edinburgh on 30 April and 1 May 2008. A major item on the agenda was the establishment of a series of four 'Networks' comprising representatives of the member churches from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. Church of Ireland representatives on the networks are as follows:

- Churches' racial justice network: Very Rev Gordon Wynne
- Churches' international student network: Rev Darren McCallig
- Churches inter-religious network: Rev Obinna Ulogwara

A representative on the Global mission network has yet to be appointed.

An important CTBI initiative has been the establishment of a China Study Centre which is intended to provide a comprehensive resource for those interested in developing their understanding of the Church in China (see www.ctbi.org.uk)

This year's forum takes place in Cardiff on 12 and 13 May 2009.

Four Nations' Faith and Order Consultation

The Second Four Nations' Faith and Order Consultation was held in the General Synod Office of the Scottish Episcopal Church, Edinburgh during the period 20-22 October 2008. The Church of Ireland was represented in Edinburgh by the Dean of Killala, The Very Rev Dr Sue Patterson and the Bishop of Clogher, The Rt Rev Dr Michael Jackson. (See Appendix A - report from Bishop Jackson).

Meissen Commission

Rev Canon Dr Ian Ellis, observer on behalf of the Church of Ireland, Church in Wales and Scottish Episcopal Church at these conversations (which are essentially bilateral meetings between the Church of England (CofE) and the German Protestant Church) has reported to us

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on his attendance at last year's meeting in Germany. (See Appendix B - report from Canon Ian Ellis)

Conference of European Churches (CEC)

We continue to explore with the ICC issues that emerged from the Third Ecumenical Congress in Sibiu last year. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the formation of CEC, which comprises the Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican and Old Catholic Churches of Europe, and its 13th Assembly will be held in Lyon, France, from 15-21 July 2009. It will be attended by the Bishop of Meath and Kildare, on behalf of the ICC and Dr Kenneth Milne, Honorary Secretary of the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue on behalf of the Church of Ireland. At a time of serious economic decline in Europe and political uncertainty (due in part to the rejection of the Lisbon Treaty by Ireland) this assembly will be looking at a European society that has been transformed greatly since the collapse of the Iron Curtain a decade ago. It is the intention of the organisers that the issues on the assembly's agenda will be considered by the member churches well before July so that representatives will bring with them the concerns and attitudes of their constituencies.

(b) Anglicanism

Rt Rev MAJ Burrows, Bishop of Cashel and Ossory (Convenor)

Ms K Turner (Honorary Secretary)

Rt Rev HC Miller, Bishop of Down and Dromore

Rev Canon Dr IM Ellis

The Church of Ireland representative on the Porvoo Contact Group (Rev FJ McDowell)

The Church of Ireland representatives on the Anglican Consultative Council (Rev Dr MJ Elliott and Ms K Turner)

Mr I Smith

Mrs P Wallace

Lambeth Conference

In advance of the Lambeth Conference of 2008 the working group considered the level of response in the Church of Ireland to the totality of the resolutions passed at Lambeth 1998.

Anglican Covenant

The working group followed the developments of the Anglican Covenant Design Group in relation to a proposed Anglican Covenant, and of the interim Church of Ireland response from a group set up by Standing Committee.

Anglican Networks

The working group reviewed the Church of Ireland engagement with the Anglican Consultative Council Networks. It considered what further involvement might be beneficial to the Church of Ireland, and how the Church of Ireland might best enrich the life of others.

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Anglican Consultative Council (ACC)

In preparation for the ACC meeting of 2009 the working group considered the level of response in the Church of Ireland in relation to the resolutions passed at previous ACC meetings. This exercise is of much practical assistance to the two members of ACC who are also members of the working group (Rev Dr Maurice Elliott and Ms Kate Turner).

Porvoo

Following the untimely death of Very Rev Desmond Harman the working group considered the appointment of a contact person for Porvoo. This was based on information that had been previously provided by Dean Harman on the evolving role of the contact person. Following his appointment as the Church of Ireland Porvoo Contact person Rev John McDowell joined the working group and circulated his reports to and post the meeting held in Vilnius in October 2008. The working group recognised the need to differentiate between Porvoo contact meetings and invitations to other thematic gatherings arising from the Porvoo process. A paper by Canon Ian Ellis reviewing the Porvoo Statement and its relevance to current debate on an Anglican Covenant was considered by the working group. (Appendix C – report from Rev John McDowell)

Old Catholic Church

The working group is reviewing the maintenance of contact between the Church of Ireland and the Old Catholic Church.

(c) Inter-faith

Rt Rev Dr MGStA Jackson, Bishop of Clogher (Convenor)
Rev Canon P Comerford (Honorary Secretary)
Very Rev PW Rooke
Rev O Ulogwara
Rev D McCallig
Mr S Harper
Dr S Hood

The recent conflict in the Gaza Strip is just one of the many signs of how urgent the task of interfaith dialogue is today, and the working group feels strongly that interfaith dialogue must remain a priority in the mission and work of all the Churches.

A major conference on the theologies of peace within the three main monotheistic traditions, examining peace and war in the scriptures of the Jewish, Christian and Islamic traditions, was planned for September 2009. Ms Clare Amos had agreed to be the principal speaker.

Budgetary constraints have forced the working group to postpone this conference until at least next year. But we are in no doubt about the urgent need to build on the Church of Ireland's

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commitment to dialogue, which is central to the Mission Statement of the House of Bishops, and so we are continuing to plan this conference and to work towards convening it in 2010.

The Middle East continues to provide the focus and the agenda for much interfaith work, and so the response to General Synod's approval of the use of the "Jerusalem Prayer" throughout the Church of Ireland on 8 June was both positive and encouraging. The Middle East dimension to the agenda in interfaith dialogue was brought home also with the visit of a Palestinian youth group to Ireland last summer, and Dr Susan Hood played a major role in organising their programme and itinerary.

At this difficult time we have also sent our greetings and assurance of prayers to the Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem.

The *Interfaith Guidelines* have been circulated to all bishops, and they have been asked to send these to Diocesan Councils for Mission and other appropriate diocesan-level bodies for responses, observations on their usefulness and suggestions for updating any future revisions.

The working group has continued to build its expertise and knowledge in this field, hearing reports on the Inter-Faith Indaba at Lambeth 2008 (10 minutes), and on the Archbishop of Canterbury's meeting with Chief Rabbis of Israel.

A CTBI request for Church of Ireland representation on an interfaith group has resulted in the nomination of one of our members, the Rev Obinna Ulogwara.

The future plans for the Inter-Faith Working Group include:

- drawing together school chaplains and hospital chaplains, because it is in schools and hospitals that contact among the members of World Faiths often occur in the first instance in Ireland happens.
- a residential conference in Leicester where participants could experience living families of other faiths and learn first-hand of the culture and family life of others.
- identifying members of the Church of Ireland, lay and clerical, who can act as 'resource persons' in their dioceses.

Resolution for consideration by the General Synod 2009

That the General Synod is of the view that the time is right for the different Christian traditions in Ireland to explore afresh together a common theology of baptism and to share insights concerning their baptismal discipline and practice. The Synod accordingly instructs the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue to make this issue a priority on its agenda.

APPENDIX A

FOUR NATIONS' FAITH AND ORDER CONSULTATION

Introduction

The Second Four Nations' Faith and Order Consultation was held in the General Synod Office of the Scottish Episcopal Church, Edinburgh during the period 20-22 October 2008. We worshipped in the neighbouring St Mary's Cathedral. The First Consultation had been held in Dublin in 2006. The Church of Ireland was represented in Edinburgh by the Dean of Killala, the Very Rev Dr Sue Patterson and the Bishop of Clogher, the Rt Rev Dr Michael Jackson.

The Consultations provide an opportunity for the Anglican Provinces of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales to share work in progress and to review developments across the Four Nations and throughout the Anglican Communion as they impinge on the Four Nations. The following documents formed the basis of the Consultation:

- The St Andrew's Draft of the proposed Anglican Covenant
- The Nature and Mission of the Church (a WCC document)
- Cardinal Kaspar's Address to the General Synod of the Church of England on the Ordination of Women to the episcopate
- The Mission and Ministry of the Whole Church
- Embracing the Covenant, the Quinquennial Report of the Joint Implementation Committee (JIC) of the Anglican-Methodist Covenant.

Other areas considered in the working sessions were: Liturgical Formation, Fresh Expressions of (the) Church, the expansion of membership of the Meissen Commission.

Church of Ireland contributions included: the recently published Covenant Council document by Mrs Gillian Kingston; a briefing paper on Meissen Membership by Rev Canon Dr IM Ellis; an ecclesiological assessment of the Ballina fresh expression of church (FXC) which is both ecumenical and cross-community by Dean Patterson.

Some Areas Covered

In what follows I will give a flavour of the discussion over this broad-ranging spectrum of business, as much as anything to show where we might expect to make a contribution in this important area were the Church of Ireland properly to resource work like this.

- (1) The Anglican Covenant proved to be a matter of considerable interest. Discussion centred on a number of areas such as: What does being a visible church, if indeed the Anglican Communion can be described in such terms, demand at an international level? The Consultation grappled with two issues in particular in this regard. The first is that with so many definitions of the word: covenant 'doing the rounds' at any given time, what particular expression of covenant are we dealing

with at any given time? (A participant identified at least four different usages on the part of the Archbishop of Canterbury during the Lambeth Conference alone.) The second is that ecumenically, but not internally, we have worked hard at coherence, even if we often sense little return. A number of working principles emerged for consideration, for example: to be in communion is to be bound together within the love of God, is expressed in our behaviour towards, respect for and co-operative mission with one another. We learned that the Canon Law Project of the Anglican Communion was originally conceived as the mechanism whereby the practicalities of communion might be taken into a Province's Canon Law, thereby providing within each Province something which would be common to all Provinces and could be appealed to as a common core of a creative and co-operative Anglican identity. In such a way as this it had been hoped that 'the Covenant' would become part of the structures of each individual Province. The Consultation expressed little confidence in the Covenant having the capacity to deliver what was being asked of it. Four seemingly interminable years after The Windsor Report, we can see how the original half-thought through vision seems increasingly unworkable and idealistic. This was said for the following reasons. Can the Covenant do enough to hold together those whom it is supposed to hold together? Who should be its signatories, when across the Anglican world there are such different and disparate Anglican polities? Attention was drawn to a paper by the late Professor Henry Chadwick written in preparation for The Virginia Report. It referred to the identification of one hundred theses/axioms derived from what as Anglicans we hold in common along with the suggestion of the necessity to recognize what we do have in common canonically *prior to* any adoption of a Covenant. Another insight shared was that in a post-Colonial age and in an era where the word 'mission' can be used with a whole range of meanings, the overwhelming dilemma which we face is that of being a communion without sharing a culture. Anglicans are largely allergic to demands for uniformity.

- (2) The Nature and Mission of the Church (a WCC document) which has been sent to all the churches for consideration and response was discussed. A number of problematic issues regarding it were raised: its slant was overwhelmingly Reformed and insufficiently catholic; it gave inadequate mention of the relationship and the tension between the visible and the invisible church; it offered no understanding of the relationship between mission and salvation; there was no mention, in an ecumenical context, of the Five Marks of Mission of the Anglican Communion. A wider general concern was expressed that the document assumed an understanding of the church which suggested too sharp a distinction between the church and the world and proffered an inward-looking focus as intrinsic to the identity of the church. It was felt that the addressing of even some of the concerns raised would have gone a long way to correcting the impression of an outmoded response to an urgent problem.

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- (3) A presentation by Dean Patterson on structural issues relating to the emerging fresh expressions of church (FXC) scene in Ireland with illustrative reference to the development of an FXC in Ballina involving the Methodist, Presbyterian, Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic churches, along with both Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic bishops, was well received. It was practical in character, theologically well-argued and located critically within the exciting and fluid FXC movement. FXC was described as a movement currently running ahead of structures and in no sense something 'from the top down.' In fact the questions it poses are going in the opposite direction. Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) shared the fact that the Church of Scotland was, in a certain sense, leading the way in this area in Scotland, having put 25% of its budget currently into schemes akin to FXC. There were two particularly important observations. The first was that a key person in FXC in an Anglican context is the diocesan bishop who, ecclesiological, offers permission if, in her/his judgement, it is a Godly way to move. The second is that successful FXCs are already raising questions relating to the function of ordained ministry which are engendering a crisis of confidence among clergy. The strong suggestion was made that there be an Inter-Provincial Forum to share experiences (possibly incorporating preparation of a Conference) – Dr Paul Avis has undertaken to make the recommendation to CTBI that they organise this - and that the ecclesiological issues relevant to FXC be addressed as a matter of urgency along with the sacramental life of those involved, specifically those areas to do with Baptism and Holy Communion. How do you avoid creating a new tradition and indeed (another) new denomination within Anglicanism? Mission-shaped initiatives have very quickly brought churches to the point at which there are currently no answers from the perspective of Order. There is also exciting work to be done relating to FXC in comparison with Ecclesial Movements in the Roman Catholic church and with the social projects undertaken within Porvoo in the Lutheran church through *diakonia*.
- (4) Liturgical formation was considered in a paper introduced by SEC through the Rev Canon Ian Paton. Many of those present who were 'professionally' involved in church life bemoaned the widening gulf between church membership and active appreciation of the liturgical rhythm, on the part of members, of life outside, as well as inside, the church building. Meanwhile the Rev Professor David Jasper of Glasgow University spoke of the considerable interest in liturgy as something phenomenological in universities, particularly in Religious Studies and Cultural Studies, where there is a new emphasis on exploring underlying patterns and their ethical value. What was particularly interesting was that such a link between liturgy and ethics had not occurred to the 'ecclesiastical professionals.' We were left with the challenging and humorous thought that at almost no other time was there greater emphasis on fitted kitchens and fitted bathrooms which, by the preparation of meals

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and by the performing of ablutions are, in the home, profoundly liturgical places. The Consultation concluded that we have paid insufficient attention to the connection in Anglican life across: liturgy, mission and spirituality.

- (5) The Meissen Agreement and the question of widening participation in it. The Agreement dates from discussions in the late 1980s between Evangelische Kirche in Germany (EKD) and the Church of England, the latter alone of the churches of The Four Nations. The way things have subsequently developed means that in a certain sense this is now an anomaly since Meissen has served as a paradigm for Porvoo, Reuilly and the (English) Anglican-Methodist Covenant. Dr Ellis represents Ireland, Wales and Scotland as an Observer. The principle embedded in Meissen is that: whatever we say of ourselves, we say of one another and this is, in itself, a significant step towards full visible unity. The difficulty, in particular with contemplating expansion of membership at present, is that the original Agreement is now lived out over a number of years between two large established churches, namely the CoFE and the EKD. No definitive conclusion was, or could be, reached but there was a suggestion to explore the possibility of an Observer from each of Ireland, Scotland, Wales separately attending Meissen meetings.
- (6) The Anglican-Methodist Covenant. The document, *Embracing the Covenant*, the quinquennial report of the Joint Implementation Committee (JIC) of the Anglican-Methodist Covenant seeks to unpack what it means to be 'in covenant.' We were told that alongside differences of eucharistic practice and presidency, together with difference in elements and their disposal, there is 'foursquare' understanding of formularies and liturgies and that the Church of England is being asked to share the opportunities of Establishment with its ecumenical partners, in this instance the Methodists. To me personally this seemed both far-fetched and incoherent at the structural level towards which the comments were pointing. The content of the JIC Report included: (a) discussion of diaconate with a description of the two-fold order of ministers in English Methodism – presbyters and deacons - the latter being a self-conscious Religious Order with a Warden; this was set alongside the contemporary disarray about the role of the order of deacon within the CoFE particularly when related to *diakonia* within Porvoo and (b) the different language used about Christian unity, with Methodists speaking of the ultimate horizon and Anglicans speaking of full visible unity and (c) discussion over the invitation issued in 1947 by Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher to English Methodists to take episcopacy into its system. Much of this is quite different from matters currently preoccupying both the Methodist Church in Ireland and the Church of Ireland in our own explorations of enacted Covenant. The Scottish and Welsh Churches are now to join JIC process and I simply ask the question: Should our Irish Covenant Committee be represented at this or are we so radically different from the above for this not to be useful? The situation in which JIC now finds itself is that of inviting full participation and

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shaping direction for the future. The most recent Irish Covenant material, written by Mrs Gillian Kingston, was well received as an excellent way of clearly communicating material to church members.

Final Thoughts

The Third Faith and Order Consultation is to be held in spring 2011 in Cardiff. Continuity of membership along with an active interest in Faith and Order issues within the Church of Ireland is essential. Our relationships with others in this field, on an on-going basis, needs to be resourced realistically. It also needs to become embedded both locally and centrally in the life of the Church of Ireland and in the self-understanding of the work of The Church of Ireland Theological Institute, in those whom it prepares for ministry, lay and ordained, and in the many other ways in which those of us who have lived with this concept from the outset hope it will impact on the life of Ireland most widely.

I acknowledge with gratitude the helpfulness of Ms Janet Maxwell and Ms Jenny Polden in preparations for the Consultation.

The Right Reverend Dr Michael Jackson, Bishop of Clogher

November 2008

The Fourth International Consultation between The Leuenberg Fellowship (CPCE) and The Eastern Orthodox Family of Churches took place from October 30 to November 2 2008 in The Kardinal Koenig Haus, Vienna. The Bishop of Clogher and the Armenian Orthodox archbishop of Vienna attended, as Porvoo and Oriental Orthodox Observers respectively.

Baptism was chosen as the theme because it is generally agreed to be the sacrament which makes possible entry into the fullness of God's grace, is complete in this regard and brings with it public expression of membership of the church as a child of God. It has, therefore, implications for church membership denominationally lived but is not of itself appropriately used 'confessionally.' This was particularly clear among delegates from CPCE even though it, unlike Anglicanism, is a confessional church family. Papers presented covered the following areas in particular: the critical overview of recent ecumenical agreements on baptism; the analysis of three examples from the life of the early church which emphasized mission as the primary driver of baptism in church life; the detailed description of the relationship between baptism and chrismation in the understanding of participation in the total life of the Orthodox Church properly described as eucharistic.

A number of assumptions and misapprehensions were addressed and cleared away. For example: the widespread Orthodox misunderstanding that in the Protestant tradition baptism is no more than a qualification to hold church office; the 'grey area' of chrismation was likewise explored in such a way as to press the Orthodox participants to explain, for example, when a member of a Christian church outside Orthodoxy converts to Orthodoxy, why chrismation is administered.

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From a Church of Ireland perspective and from within our membership of Porvoo, I was able to explain the Trinitarian, Christological and Pneumatic character of baptism and the relationship of confirmation to living a mature baptismal life in the world as a member of the church eucharistically. This strengthened the capacity of Orthodox participants to comprehend how the two dominical sacraments generally necessary to salvation (for those of you who know The Catechism) are not a 'budget option' in a religious credit crunch commonly called The Reformation locally adapted, but a bedrock of Christ-derived discipleship and witness. Nobody present knew that, within the Anglican tradition, baptism is episcopally administered!

As a result of both broad-ranging discussion and informal conversation and friendship-building the following significant point was reached: agreement on the unrepeatable character of baptism and its being the definitive point of entry into full membership of the church of God; agreement that ecclesiological matters of importance remain.

The Right Reverend Dr Michael Jackson, Bishop of Clogher

November 2008

APPENDIX B

MEISSEN COMMISSION

The Meissen Commission is a joint body of the Church of England and the Evangelische Kirche in Germany (EKD) with the purpose of furthering greater co-operation and unity between the two Churches. I attended this meeting, held in the Protestant Academy in Meissen, Saxony, as Observer for the Celtic Anglican Churches.

The EKD, while it is termed a 'Church', comprises the 23 Landeskirchen (regional Churches) in Germany, some of which are Lutheran, some Reformed (Calvinist) and some United (Lutheran/Reformed). The EKD thus embraces different denominational traditions, but holds together effectively although naturally not without tensions at times. There is some discussion over whether or not it is, in fact, a 'Church', since it embraces different denominations. This discussion is ongoing, and no doubt will continue for a long time. However, the ordained ministry is fully interchangeable throughout the EKD.

The Meissen Commission was formed in 1988, following an initiative taken by the late Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Robert Runcie, when he was an official visitor to the 1983 German celebrations of the 500th anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther. The Commission is called 'The Meissen Commission' because its governing Agreement was signed in Meissen (in the Lutheran Cathedral). This year's meeting was held in Meissen and the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Agreement was marked by an evening of reflection on the process and a special service in the Cathedral.

The emphasis in the Commission's work is on practical co-operation. Some of issues discussed during the meeting were: the twinning of parishes and congregations, English participation in Kirchentag events, youth exchanges, general sharing of information, mutual visits by administrators, the Meissen Library (at Durham), and the teaching of history as it impinges on Anglo-German relations.

There was some discussion of a more doctrinal nature, chiefly focusing on the Anglican and German Protestant understandings of ordination and the practice of episcopacy. Some of the German Landeskirchen have bishops, but they are not in the historic succession. There was discussion of the proposed Anglican Covenant, the EKD being very interested in our current dilemmas.

A particular issue is the question of the enlargement of the Meissen Commission to include the Celtic Anglican Churches as full member-Churches. At present there is one observer representing the three Celtic Anglican Churches; this is shared on a rotating basis, which I understand to be five-yearly.

It has to be said that there are very mixed feelings about enlarging the Commission. The Scottish Episcopal Church is in favour; the Church in Wales is against (at least for now); and

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the Church of Ireland has not formulated an official view, although it would be fair to say that a cautious openness to the concept has been expressed in the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue. There would, of course, be funding implications. However, it would ultimately be for the Church of England and the EKD to agree to any enlargement, and there is no enthusiasm for enlargement on the English side; I am not aware of EKD perspectives on this.

An alternative to the Celtic Anglican Churches joining the Meissen Commission as full members would be for them individually to consider having their own bilateral committees with the EKD. However, once again, funding would be an issue, as possibly to some extent would be language. The Meissen Commission works in English when meeting in England and in German when meeting in Germany. A meeting that worked only in English would somehow lack parity, I feel, but I expect that there are sufficient Church of Ireland people who would be able to engage. Then again, I feel the Church of Ireland's double jurisdictional context would make it more suitable for us to have our own relationship with the EKD.

Some years ago, the late Dean of Cashel, David Woodworth, developed a quite elaborate link between the Church of Ireland and the EKD in Herne, North Rhine/Westphalia. I was involved in several encounters and found it very fruitful. The work was mostly in English, but there was some translating. The funding, at least on the Irish side, was at the discretion of local bishops.

I. M. Ellis

21.10.08

APPENDIX C

PORVOO WORKING GROUP MEETING

Firstly, from my point of view, the meetings were informative, interesting and rewarding and I would like to thank the Church of Ireland for this opportunity to represent it and to widen my own horizons.

The Contact Group has six new members, myself included, who were attending for the first time. The Church in Wales has also nominated a new member, Gwynn ap Gwilym who, in addition to being a clergyman, is a celebrated Welsh language poet. Unfortunately he was unable to be present at the meeting in Vilnius.

Only the Reformed Catholic Church of Spain had no representative present.

As of 2009 the new Lutheran co-chair is to be Bishop Karl Sigurbjornson of Iceland.

The business meetings involved three strands of activity:

- planning for future Porvoo Meeting, e.g. Primates Meeting, Church Leaders Meeting, theological consultations etc.
- discussing matters of common interest.
- updating one another on developments in our respective countries

We have also some cultural exposure and much worship.

Planning for Future Meetings

This activity, which took up a fair proportion of time, gave the process something of a feeling of circularity. Anyone from Northern Ireland will be familiar with the process of having a meeting with the sole purpose of planning for another meeting, but at least in this case we were planning for meetings of our elders and betters; the Primates and the Church Leaders who are to meet in Finland in 2009 and Norway in 2010 respectively. The Primates Meeting is at the same time as the next Contact Group Meeting.

The broad theme of the meetings will be *'Living in Communion'* and whichever Irish Primate attends will be invited to give a paper on that theme, as will a Lutheran Presiding Bishop, probably Mindagus Sabutis of Lithuania. Full agendas have been agreed and will be available when the minutes of the meeting are issued shortly.

Several other consultations are also planned including a pre-CEC conclave for Lutherans to which we are invited, a Church of Denmark consultation on migration and a Porvoo Theological Consultation on that Lutheran shibboleth, the diaconate, to be held in Oslo in 2009.

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The Church of Denmark, currently with observer status, has made considerable progress towards coming into full membership, and this will, for some unexplained reason, require the Anglican Churches to go into a deep parley with them about apostolicity and episcopacy.

Discussing Matters of Common Interest

Perhaps the most intriguing of these topics was enlargement of the Porvoo Communion. It seems that no one is really sure if this is possible as no mechanism exists to approve applications for membership, beyond those who are currently observers. In addition it seems that there aren't many clamouring to get in although some entertain high hopes of the Ingrians and the Lutheran Church of Russia.

Matters of human sexuality were prominent in discussion. There is a very clear disagreement between the Baltic Churches and their Nordic counterparts on this issue (and on the ordination of women). This has repercussions for wider alignments within World Lutheranism. For instance the Lutheran Church of Lithuania is in full communion with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

A long and decisive debate took place on young people and Porvoo. It seems to have been an articulated desire of previous meetings to involve young people in the Porvoo process but it remains very unclear how this can be achieved in any affordable way. A Young Persons Contact Group is a possibility.

Updating (Country Reports)

Each representative is required to send a Country Report to the co-secretaries a few weeks prior to the meeting and an opportunity is given to present these and any other material.

The reports are very diverse and I can only highlight a few interesting features.

Firstly, the Baltic Churches have bought-in to the liturgical revival which the Nordic Lutherans experienced about forty years ago. This has met with some resistance in pietistic circles but the use of standard liturgies and liturgical vestments is now pretty well accepted.

The Nordic Churches are each coming to internal arrangements regarding the blessing of civil partnerships and related matters. In each country there is a sizable minority who are not keen on such blessings and it would seem to be left up to the individual pastors to decide.

The Lusitanian Church, although very small seems to have played an important part in the recent abortion referendum in Portugal by offering a genuinely alternative analysis in contrast to the polarised arguments of Roman Catholic Church and wholly secular groups.

The Church of Denmark is exploring ways of loosening State ties. It is also debating the possibility of a time-limited episcopate. The sticking point is the disposal of supernumerary bishops.

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The Dioceses of the Faroe Islands and Greenland are soon to be independent Lutheran Churches and it is unclear what that may mean for their membership of Porvoo.

Muslim-Christian relations have improved greatly since the 'cartoon' scandal.

The Anglican Diocese in Europe's Nordic chaplains are those who see Porvoo worked out daily. Their representative on earth is Rev Rupert Moreton. He has experienced great difficulty in persuading the Lutheran Church of Finland to make provision for a sizable Sudanese Anglican migrant population and is generally of the opinion that the Lutheran State Churches are unconscionably bureaucratic.

The Church of England reported that the Measure for the Ordination of Women to the Episcopate, passed earlier in the year by General Synod has still to go out to local synods and then to receive Parliamentary sanction. It is not a done deal and the earliest implementation date, provided it gets over the remaining hurdles, is 2012.

The Church of Finland is to introduce a measure to allow deacons to preach with a bishop's licence. The Finns are also heavily involved in Lutheran-Orthodox discussions in which the Orthodox display a strong suspicion of the Human Rights agenda.

In the aftermath of the recent mass-shooting incident the Finnish bishop's ensured that Churches were open for prayer and comfort. They did not issue a press statement.

The Church of Norway is also in debate about links with the State. They have sent a new liturgical book to 100 parishes for a six month trial period. The issue of the ordination of clergy living in monogamous same-sex relations is left up to individual bishops. The Norwegians have rejected the expedient of 'flying-bishops' and are considering the idea of Area Deans providing alternative pastoral oversight for those who object to their bishop's practice. Whether these deans are to have the charism of flight is unclear.

The Estonian Church is in something of a quandary regarding the ordination of women as pastors. None of the other Baltic Lutherans countenance the practice, but two Estonian bishops ordained women pastors during the years of Soviet occupation. It seems that they may have done so *ultra vires*. About 20 women pastors remain in the Estonian Church.

The Lithuanian Lutheran Church has induced the congregations of the Lithuanian Diaspora to join the Synod of the mother church. Two congregations in the USA, one in Canada and twenty in Germany now send representatives to Synod.

The Latvian Lutheran Church (an observer) is wholly absorbed with sorting out its funding for ministry on a pooled basis.

The Church of Sweden is fabulously well staffed and active in the ecumenical sphere. They have even got the Swedish Baptists to recognize infant baptism where it has been the basis of future faith. They are also very active in inter-faith dialogue. The Church of Sweden was disestablished (but obviously not disendowed) in 2000. It employs 22,000 people.

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In a special guest appearance the local Lithuanian bishop, Mindaugas Sabutis, gave a rather chilling analysis of the ambitions of the European Union to create substantial databases on citizens under the pretext of the War against Terror.

Culture Exposure

We visited The Museum of Genocide Victims in the old KGB Headquarters, which was a moving tribute to anti Soviet Lithuanian Partisans. Walking around the Old City it was impossible not to notice the many Hebrew inscriptions on tablets above doorways. Pre-1940 Vilnius was known as the Jerusalem of the North, with a Jewish population of 300,000. There were 20,000 remaining after the war.

Worship

Most of the Contact Group representatives had the opportunity to lead worship and to preach. I used the Late Evening Office and took the opportunity of noting how our respective liturgical traditions, although developing independently, were very similar. As always joint worship was the most rewarding part of the day.