

COMMISSION FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY AND DIALOGUE

REPORT 2010

MEMBERSHIP

The Archbishops and Bishops

Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke, Bishop of Meath & Kildare (Chair)	Rev John McDowell
Rev Canon Patrick Comerford	Mrs Roberta McKelvey
Rev Canon David Crooks	Dr Kenneth Milne (Honorary Secretary)
Rev Canon Dr Ian Ellis	Mr Trevor Morrow
Mr Sam Harper	Rev Daniel Nuzum
Rev Ian Knox	Ms Catherine Turner
Rev Darren McCallig	

Executive Summary

The centenary of the now legendary Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910 - an event which is rightly celebrated as providing the spark which ignited the modern ecumenical movement - has inevitably provided an impetus for widespread reflection on the current state of the ecumenical project. The Christian Church worldwide may indeed rejoice at the levels of contact, direct mutual support and shared worship enjoyed today between Christians of different traditions, shaped and motivated by a century of committed ecumenical endeavour. There can however be no justification for allowing matters to remain where they stand at present. It would be a betrayal of the entire ecumenical venture if the slogan 'unity in diversity' were ever permitted to replace the aspiration for the full visible unity of the whole Christian Church, and the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue in its work seeks to face this challenge with transparency and without equivocation.

A further challenge of a more practical nature, which continues to face the ecumenical movement (and thus the Commission), is that of finding new ways of linking vibrant ecumenical activity in local contexts with 'institutional' endeavours at ecumenical progress, and, as a corollary, of ensuring that the genuine and exciting advances in mutual understanding between different Christian traditions clearly seen at conferences and international gatherings become earthed and realised in the life of local Christian communities. It is therefore a real encouragement for the Commission that the Church of Ireland readily endorsed the recent bishops' Vision Statement which places ecumenism and dialogue with other faiths at the heart of the Church's agenda for the future.

As we have reported previously, the Commission operates through three distinct, though interrelated, sub-groups dealing respectively with inter-church (that is, ecumenical) affairs, Anglican concerns and inter-faith matters.

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Ecumenical affairs

Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke, Bishop of Meath and Kildare (Convenor)

Dr Kenneth Milne (Honorary Secretary)

Rt Rev Richard Henderson, Bishop of Tuam

Rev Canon David Crooks

Rev Daniel Nuzum

Mrs Roberta McKelvey

Mr Trevor Morrow

One Church of Ireland representative from the Covenant Council

One Methodist representative from the Covenant Council

We are bound to recognise the significance of the centenary of Edinburgh 1910, but note that while there will be commemorative events in that city, they are on a somewhat more modest scale than was originally envisaged. However, the executive committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC) will meet there and we anticipate that this meeting will help to bring the WCC's activities closer to our attention. The Church of England is marking the centenary of Edinburgh 1910 by mounting a conference in the course of 2010 and we hope to be invited to participate in that.

This sub-group relates to the various ecumenical instruments to which the Church of Ireland belongs (whose responsibilities and activities can be followed on their several websites).

- The Irish Council of Churches (ICC)
- The Irish Inter-Church Meeting (IICM) and its executive (IICC)
- Churches together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI)
- The Conference of European Churches (CEC)
- The World Council of Churches (WCC)

The Irish Council of Churches (ICC): There was a good attendance of Church of Ireland representatives at the Annual General Meeting, which was hosted by the Moravian Church at Gracehill Village, Co. Antrim on 2 April 2009. The theme, introduced by Ms Lorna Gold (Advocacy Manager at Trocaire) was *Living for to-morrow's world - green? global? greedy?*, the appropriateness of which in the Irish situation became painfully apparent in the course of succeeding months. The Chairman of the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue, the Most Rev Richard Clarke, Bishop of Meath and Kildare, was installed as vice-president of ICC and will become president at the AGM of 2010.

In the course of the year the general secretary, Mr Michael Earle, announced his intention to retire and we wish to express to him our appreciation of his commitment to the work of the ICC and his ready co-operation with us at all times.

The Irish Inter-Church Meeting (IICM): This body, in which the Roman Catholic Church is a full participant, grew out of the Ballymascanlon talks that were first held in the 1970s. Regular meetings of its executive committee (IICC) take place at which we are represented by

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the Most Rev Richard Clarke and Rev Canon Dr Ian Ellis. A recent development was the appointment of Mr Philip McKinley to the post of Ecumenical Officer, based in Dublin, but with a remit to strengthen local relationships throughout Ireland. This project is managed by the ICC but steered by an IICC group.

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI): A major re-structuring of this organisation took place during 2009 and we participated in the meetings through which the process was accomplished. The general secretary, Rev Canon Bob Fyffe, attended our November meeting (and also addressed the Standing Committee of the General Synod on the following day) setting out in detail the role that CTBI now sees itself as performing for its member Churches. It will now seek to provide a service for the Churches in areas that are best addressed ecumenically, such as relations with Churches in China, and will operate through networks on which we are represented as follows:

Churches Racial Justice Network: Very Rev Gordon Wynne
Churches International Student Network: Rev Darren McCallig
Churches Inter-religious Network: Rev Obinna Ulogwara

Our chairman, the Bishop of Meath and Kildare, has been elected a trustee of CTBI.

The Conference of European Churches (CEC): The major event of the year was the 13th Assembly, held at Lyon, France, in July. The Church of Ireland was represented by the honorary secretary of the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue, Dr Kenneth Milne, (see Appendix A) and the Bishop of Meath and Kildare was present as a member of the ICC delegation. CEC came into being in 1949, in the wake of World War II, and played a vital role in maintaining links between the Churches on either side of the Iron Curtain. Circumstances have changed greatly, a fresh vision is required and a committee has been established to make proposals as to the future shape and policies of CEC. These will take account of the new challenges now facing Europe, perhaps the most urgent being climate change, which must be faced internationally (especially through the European Union) and by the Churches acting ecumenically. A department of CEC, the Commission for Church and Society, based in Brussels, relates very closely with the institutions of the European Union and also with the Roman Catholic Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community (COMECE).

The World Council of Churches (WCC): In 2009, the World Council of Churches appointed a new secretary-general, the Revd Olav Fyske Tveit, a theologian and pastor of the Church of Norway. We are hoping to establish better lines of communication with WCC in the months ahead as many of its concerns are of considerable local interest, both environmentally and ecumenically. It is a huge organisation with a large central committee and while a great deal of material is published, it is difficult to keep track of the work that is under way, and which can, misleadingly, appear remote from our local concerns. However, the executive committee of WCC is a relatively small body, and we shall seek to make ourselves more familiar with its proceedings.

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As distinct from our engagement with ecumenical matters through the above instruments, the Church of Ireland has relations of a more specific nature with Churches in Scandinavia (the Porvoo Agreement), Germany (Meissen Conversations see Standing Committee Report Appendix Q on Page 320) and France (Reuilly Agreement).

Reuilly Agreement: an agreement was signed in 1999 by representatives of the Anglican Churches of Britain and Ireland, of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of France and of the Reformed Church of France. Modelled to a large extent on the Meissen process, regular meetings take place at which the Anglican Churches of Ireland, Wales and Scotland have been represented by the Very Rev Alexander Gordon, Provost of Inverness, who held the Anglican chaplaincy in Strasbourg at the time when the conversations were initiated. He has kindly provided the following elucidation of what is in hand:

Ecumenical agreements are really of two kinds for Anglicans. Because of our understanding of the nature of the Church and its relation to the ordained ministry, an agreement which allows *full* interchange of ministries requires a commitment to the historic episcopate and to the regularisation of the ways in which ordained ministries are used within the life of the Church. Hence the Porvoo agreement between the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches and the Anglican Churches in Britain, Ireland and other European Countries has a facility for full interchange of clergy, because all will be episcopally ordained and a common church discipline is acknowledged. Such agreements are hard won but there have to be changes in church life and discipline after them.

However there is another kind of agreement – and at present it is in this category that the Reuilly Agreement falls – which is one of recognition and expressive of a commitment to go on discussing together and wherever possible working together in our common mission. This kind of agreement does not involve the interchangeability of ministries but it does commit both sides to agreement on ten important areas of agreement on the fundamentals of the faith – scripture, the creeds, justification and sanctification, the nature of the Church, worship and sacramental life, baptism and eucharist, the corporate priesthood of the whole people of God, ordered ministry and oversight exercised in personal, collegial and communal ways, and hope in the final consummation of the kingdom...all our churches are in change and are in the process of considering the balance between the various dimensions of oversight (*episcopo*).

Inter-Faith

Rt Rev Dr Michael Jackson, Bishop of Clogher (Convenor)
Rt Rev Trevor Williams, Bishop of Limerick
Rev Canon Patrick Comerford (Honorary Secretary)
Very Rev Patrick Rooke (resigned 2010)
Rev Obinna Ulogwara
Rev Darren McCallig
Mr Sam Harper
Dr Susan Hood

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The downturn in the economies, both North and South, raises fears for some that the backlash may result in new attacks on the diverse communities on this island. This in turn could have serious and damaging impacts on inter-faith relations and dialogue.

Positive and pro-active steps can help build community and build confidence between faith communities.

To this end, the Inter-Faith Working Group is organising a major conference on Inter-Faith relations and dialogue, which will take place in the Church of Ireland Theological Institute, Dublin.

Dioceses will be asked to send representatives, along with chaplains working in areas such as hospitals and education, in the hope that each diocese and sector ministry can have equipped lay and clerical inter-faith advisers who can help all of us through the maze of problems, difficulties and opportunities that arise in encounters, including marriages, bereavement and community events, and in schools and hospitals.

In recent months there have been a number of positive developments in the area of the Church of Ireland's engagement with inter-faith dialogue. Among these, the warm welcome extended to staff and students of the Theological Institute during recent visits to the principle mosque and synagogue in Dublin indicate the positive potential for the future of the engagement of the Church of Ireland in interfaith dialogue.

Anglican affairs

Working Group for Anglican Affairs

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

Ms Catherine Turner (Honorary Secretary)

Rt Rev Harold Miller, Bishop of Down and Dromore

Rev Canon Dr Ian Ellis

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

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

Mr Ian Smith (Deceased 2009)

Mrs M Patricia Wallace (Resigned 2010)

The Group was saddened at the passing of Working Group member Mr Ian Smith, whose thoughtful participation in the debate will be greatly missed. The resignation from the Group of Mrs Paddy Wallace was also regretted, her energy and insight have been of great value to the Group.

Anglican Consultative Council

The working group received reports on ACC 14 (held 2 – 12 May 2009 in Jamaica) from the Church of Ireland members, Rev Dr Maurice Elliott and Ms Catherine Turner.

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Anglican Covenant

The working group continued to follow the developments relating to the proposed Anglican Covenant. It will be assisting the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue in assessing the consonances of the Covenant with the formularies of the Church of Ireland.

Anglican Networks

In light of information gathered at ACC14 the working group advised the main Commission on appropriate Church of Ireland engagement with the various Anglican Networks.

Porvoo Communion

The working group considered reports from the Church of Ireland Contact person Rev John McDowell both prior to and post the meeting of Porvoo Primates and Contact Group held in Porvoo, Finland, from 11 to 16 October 2009. This included consideration of the relationships within and beyond the Porvoo Communion.

The Porvoo Communion continues to strengthen its common life through regular meetings of those appointed as Porvoo Contact Group representatives by signatory Churches, by the interchange of views, by diocesan links and by providing opportunities for theological reflection at conferences convened by the Communion or by member Churches individually.

The principal meeting in 2009 was that of the Primates of the Communion held in the Cathedral town of Porvoo, Finland

The Primate's Conference

Climate change, diaspora congregations and the understanding of communion amidst the current economic crisis were among the topics discussed as the primates and presiding bishops in the Porvoo Communion met in Porvoo, Finland from 12 to 13 October 2009.

The primates and presiding bishops of the Porvoo Communion meet every other year to discuss matters of common interest. This year the meeting was held in the historic city of Porvoo, which gives its name to this communion of Anglican and Lutheran Churches in several European Countries.

The Norwegian Presiding Bishop, the Rt Rev Olav Skjevesland, gave a presentation on climate change and its impact on the world's economy, especially its detrimental effects in many of the developing countries. He also shared the resolution of the Church of Norway to enter into a process of ecological reform on all levels of Church life.

The bishops welcomed a presentation from a Lutheran and an Anglican from Finland on how communion can work in practical ways. Rev Dr Tomi Karttunen gave an overview of how the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland has worked for many years with immigrant Churches and how the Anglican Diocese in Europe has contributed to the enrichment of the life and worship of the Lutheran Church. Rev Rupert Moreton, local Anglican chaplain of the Diocese in Europe, gave a moving description of worship in an Anglican Sudanese

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congregation in Northern Finland and challenged the bishops to look at diaspora congregations in the light of diverse patterns of migration. The bishops called for a consultation on diaspora communities in the Porvoo context.

Common challenges in the Porvoo Churches at present include the impact of the current economic crises, issues in human sexuality and the question of the responsibilities and privileges of being in communion. These challenges are felt within each Church family. The Archbishop of Wales, the Most Rev Barry Morgan, gave an insight into the complexities of finding consensus within the Anglican Communion. The Archbishop of Sweden, the Most Rev Anders Wejryd, spoke about the Lutheran World Federation and how it is working through potentially divisive issues.

The bishops recommended that further work needed to be done on how the Porvoo Churches, as Churches in communion, should consult with one another about decisions that would have communion wide consequences.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark

Having enjoyed observer status since the early 1990's, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark has decided to come into full membership of the Porvoo Communion by signing the Porvoo Declaration. The Danish Church has long been a supporter of Porvoo and it is an occasion of great rejoicing that reforms within her own governmental structures has facilitated a decision for full membership.

The Porvoo Communion is a communion of Churches, mostly in Northern Europe, that have signed a declaration to "share a common life in mission and service". The Churches that signed the Agreement are The Evangelical-Lutheran Churches of Estonia, Lithuania, Sweden, Norway, Iceland and Finland and the Anglican Churches of Wales, Ireland, Scotland and England. Two Churches from Southern Europe also belong to the Porvoo Communion. They are the Lusitanian Church in Portugal and the Reformed Episcopal Church of Spain. The Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Denmark and Latvia have observer status.

Fetter Lane Common Statement

It is the intention of the working group to study the implications for the Church of Ireland of the 'Fetter Lane Common Statement of 1995' reached between the Church of England and the Moravian Church of Great Britain and Ireland.

Anglican Networks

The increasing availability of electronic means of communication has led to a growing awareness of the ease with which contact between Churches can be fostered in new ways. The Anglican Communion seeks to benefit from the possibilities for consultation provided by electronic mailing and websites which are both speedy and cheap. Hence the setting up of a system of Anglican networks co-ordinated from the Anglican Consultative Council offices in London. While it is envisaged that the members of the networks will meet from time to time,

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and even hold occasional combined meetings, much business, such as sharing news and exchanging models of good practice, will be transacted electronically.

Church of Ireland participation in the networks thus far is as follows:

Anglican Health Network: Mr Martin O'Connor (Bishops' Appeal)

Anglican Communion Legal Advisors' Network: the Rt Rev Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross

Anglican Peace and Justice Network: the Rt Rev Trevor Williams, Bishop of Limerick and Killaloe

Network for Inter-faith Concerns (NIFCON): the Rt Rev Michael Jackson, Bishop of Clogher

International Women's Network: Canon Doris Clements – has now completed her term. The Church of Ireland has not appointed another representative at this time.

Anglican Refugees and Migrants Network: Mr Philip McKinley

Anglican Urban Network: Very Rev John Marsden

Theological Education: Dr Maurice Elliott

International Anglican Family Network: Mrs Roberta McKelvey

International Anglican Youth Network: a nominee of the Church of Ireland Youth Department

APPENDIX A

Report by Dr Kenneth Milne (Honorary Secretary of the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue) on the meeting of the ecumenical officers of the Four Nations (England, Ireland, Wales and Ireland) at St Andrew's House, London, from 16 to 17 February 2010.

Every two years or so those with ecumenical responsibilities in the four Anglican Churches in Britain and Ireland convene for an exchange of information and views. This time we met at the Anglican Consultative Council offices in London.

Those taking part were Mr Paul Avis and Mr Roger Paul (Church of England), Gwynn ap Gwilym (Church in Wales), Ms Elsbeth Davey (Scottish Episcopal Church) and myself.

We discussed the various ecumenical bodies to which we belong:

1. World Council of Churches (WCC);
 2. The Conference of European Churches (CEC);
 3. Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI);
- and, locally, Churches Together in England (CTE); Churches Together in Wales (CYTUN) and All Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS). I referred to the existence of two inter-Church groupings in Ireland, the Irish Council of Churches (ICC) and the Irish Inter-Church meeting (IICM), explaining the origins and different composition of each of these.

The World Council of Churches (WCC)

A programme team from the WCC recently visited the Scottish Churches and is likely to have gained the impression that much needs to be done to improve communications with member Churches in these islands. There is a Scottish member of the Central Committee of the WCC, and there has been mention of the possibility of that committee visiting England. I spoke of our feeling of remoteness from the WCC and mentioned that while undoubtedly the world wide web is a remarkable source of information, and we do not avail ourselves sufficiently of it, it can by no means replace the opportunities for engaging with topics that come from personal encounter and discussion.

The Conference of European Churches (CEC)

Our group noted that the major event of last year was the 13th Assembly held at Lyon and that this organisation, founded in the immediate aftermath of World War II, when Europe was divided by the Iron Curtain, is seriously considering how its role needs to be adapted to meet the new Europe that has emerged.

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI)

The recent re-structuring of CTBI was applauded, as was its intention to work with the Churches on issues such as the Churches in China and to provide pre-meeting briefing sessions in connection with international events (one was held before the CEC Assembly at Lyon). It was thought that CTBI might also fulfil a useful role by facilitating opportunities for the national ecumenical instruments to talk to one other, though the spectre of yet another

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layer of ecumenical gatherings was not ignored. Again, might there be a role for CTBI in furthering developments in the ‘faith and order’ area?

ANGLICAN-ROMAN CATHOLIC RELATIONS

There was reference to the forthcoming ARCIC III, and it appeared that Anglican provinces have been invited to nominate for membership. The Anglican- Roman Catholic International Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM) was described by one of our number as having been established to put wheels under the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), having been set up to further Anglican-Roman Catholic relations in the context of ARCIC. The bishops of the Church of England relate to the Roman Catholic hierarchy of England and Wales in the matter and so the Church in Wales will have an observer at a forthcoming meeting (which is being held in Wales).

ANGLICAN-METHODIST RELATIONS

Each of our four Churches has a covenant relationship with the appropriate Methodist Church, which is somewhat complicated in that there is a Methodist Church of Great Britain, not separately for England and Wales, and that Welsh Methodism has two conferences, English-speaking and Welsh-speaking. The English, Welsh and Scottish Churches are studying a document entitled *Embracing the Covenant*, and such interest in the publications of our Covenant Council was expressed at our meeting that I have arranged for my colleagues to be supplied with copies of these booklets.

INTER-ANGLICAN

There was general agreement that while the larger Churches could not dispute the importance of ecumenism, it still does not engage the interest of their members as it might and should. There had been some hope that celebrating the centenary of Edinburgh 1910 would provide a stimulus for ecumenical endeavour but the Edinburgh 2010 events, perhaps overly ambitious to begin with, have been so scaled down in size that such hopes are greatly diminished. However, the Church of England is organising a conference (in the context of a meeting of its diocesan ecumenical officer at Swanwick later this year which will have Edinburgh 1910 very much in mind and we are invited to take part.

Anglican Networks, an Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) initiative, were briefly mentioned and I reported on our growing participation in these. The forthcoming meeting in Sweden of Church leaders and Porvoo contact persons was also mentioned and is regarded as of considerable importance given that strategy for the coming four years will be identified there. The matter of Church/State involvement in national marriage regulations is likely to be high on the agenda for that gathering.

Salient points emerging from the reports on ecumenical activities in the other three Churches were as follows:

England: It is the intention of the Church of England that its ecumenical business should, as far as possible, be carried out in partnership with the other three Anglican Churches in Britain

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and Ireland. England is experiencing a huge growth in the number of ethnic and house churches. Some of the latter have grown so large that they are purchasing large sites and buildings, often at a very low cost (a consequence of the economic situation), and there are some signs of co-ordination among them. UK government support for new housing has led to a vast growth in Britain of housing estates where the 'new' churches flourish. Churches Together in England, (CTE) of which the Free Church Council is a component has an active role to play in all of this. African Churches are a big feature of the English scene and while co-operation with them seldom goes beyond a sharing of buildings, the diocese of Southwark is regarded as having made good progress towards developing a closer relationship. While legislation through ecumenical canons facilitates such developments, important issues can arise as to legal liability, especially where this may be incurred by voluntary bodies.

The formation of a Faith and Order Commission/Committee is being proposed by the English bishops and proposals are in train for an inaugural meeting to take place at St Michael's College (Llandaff) in May 2011. The possibility of several representatives from the other nations being invited was aired and the dates of our General Synod are being taken into consideration to facilitate Irish participation.

Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) are very numerous in England (as they are, to some extent, in Wales and Scotland). There are at least 300 parish-based LEPs in England but it would appear that the model favoured by the Church of England is a more broadly-based, even diocesan, one. Here again, the legal redress to which volunteers (and parishes) may be exposed is a cause for concern.

Wales: Churches together in Wales (CYTUN) has a large and varied membership. Covenant relationships extend beyond the Church in Wales-Methodist agreement to the Covenanted Baptist Church in Wales, the Presbyterian Church of Wales and the United Reformed Church. The Commission of the Covenanted Churches in Wales has responded to the 2007 World Council of Churches (WCC) document *Called to be the One Church*, and a copy of this response was tabled at our meeting.

Scotland: Apart from Scottish involvement in the many matters referred to so far in this report, we heard about an important development whereby the Church of Scotland, the state Church, has set up a commission to study what is called 'territorial presence'. In other words, to review the Church of Scotland's historic claim to provide a ministry throughout the land.

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