

Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue – Report 2011
COMMISSION FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY AND DIALOGUE
REPORT 2011

MEMBERSHIP

The Archbishops and Bishops

Executive Summary

The work of the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue has seen welcome development over the past year.

The business of the Anglican sub-group has inevitably been dominated by consideration of the Anglican Covenant and on a particular approach to the matter that might seem appropriate for the Church of Ireland. There has also, however, been consideration of the use of the Anglican Networks and further attention as to which of these are of particular value and usefulness. The connections between the Church of Ireland and the Porvoo churches have been given both immediacy and verve in the participation of Rev John McDowell.

The Inter-Faith sub-group has embarked on an ambitious programme of integrating dioceses into the work of inter-faith engagement. A very successful conference was held in Dublin in September 2010 and this has been followed by the establishment of inter-faith liaison officers in many of the dioceses of the Church of Ireland. The conference has been the first step in a process that included study of established inter-faith structures in the Diocese of Leicester.

The appointment of the Chair of the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue, the Bishop of Meath and Kildare, as President of the Irish Council of Churches has brought the work of the Council more directly within the ambit of the ecumenical work of the Commission. We also welcome the appointment of Mr Mervyn McCullagh as Executive Officer for the Irish Council of Churches and the Irish Inter-Church Meeting.

Although the work of the Covenant Council is under the direct purview of the General Synod, the Commission has properly discussed central aspects of the work of the Covenant Council.

On an experimental basis, the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue has added a fourth sub-group to its work, European Affairs. This strand of the concerns of the Church of Ireland had earlier been part of the structures of the Church in Society Committee and on its

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re-ordering, it was felt that the Commission for Unity and Dialogue might be a suitable 'parent' for this group. This is now being undertaken for a limited period, to be followed by review as to effectiveness.

Ecumenical Affairs

Membership

The Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke, Bishop of Meath and Kildare (Convenor)
Dr Kenneth Milne (Honorary Secretary)
The Rt Rev Richard Henderson, Bishop of Tuam (*resigned 31 January 2011*)
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

The Irish Council of Churches (ICC)

At the annual general meeting of the Irish Council of Churches in March 2010, the Bishop of Meath and Kildare assumed the presidency of the ICC in succession to Rev Tony Davidson. Following the retirement of Mr Michael Earle, (the General Secretary of the Council) the Executive Committee of the Council (through its Management Committee) discussed in detail the restructuring of the ICC and the decision was taken to re-fashion the role of the senior staff member as primarily strategic and less representational in scope. It has been good to welcome Mr Mervyn McCullagh as Executive Officer following his appointment in June 2010. He has quickly settled to his tasks with great insight and energy and in company with a young staff, his colleagues Ms Karen Kelly, Mr Philip McKinley and Mr Adrian Cristea, is giving the ICC a commendable freshness of style and approach. We thank Rev Raymond Fox, who retired in 2010, for his years of service to the Executive Committee of the ICC as a Church of Ireland representative and also Mrs Roberta McKelvey as a co-opted member for twelve years. We welcome the appointment of Dr Kenneth Milne as Rev Raymond Fox's replacement on the Executive Committee. The Church of Ireland is represented on the ICC Board of Overseas Affairs by Dr Milne (with special reference to European matters) and Mr Colin Ferguson. Church of Ireland representatives on the Irish Council of Churches and representatives at Church meetings may be found on page 220 of the Standing Committee report.

The Irish Inter-Church Meeting (IICM)

Work continues on aligning the work of the Irish Council of Churches more closely with the Irish Inter-Church Meeting (which includes representation also from the Roman Catholic Church). The IICM hosted a well-organised and lively meeting in October 2010 on the role of the Churches in Irish education systems. This meeting included welcome and major participation from the Church of Ireland representatives.

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Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI)

The Church of Ireland is involved in the work of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland through Dr Kenneth Milne as its official representative and also through the appointment of the Bishop of Meath and Kildare (as representative of the Anglican Churches in these islands) as a trustee of CTBI and moderator of its Faith and Order Reference Group. The Archbishop of Dublin (Designate) is also a member of the latter group, appointed by the Church of Ireland. In addition to its meetings on contemporary issues (including a lively meeting in Manchester in May 2011, focusing on inter-church dialogues) CTBI has energetically moved into a greater use of web-based technology, with particular effect. A particular interest of CTBI has been the developing of relationships with the Chinese Christian Churches, a task that it is in a unique position to undertake. Those seeking up-to-date and very usable material for parochial or diocesan study on these and other ecumenical and social issues are strongly recommended to explore CTBI's superb web-site at www.ctbi.org.uk.

Networks (see below)

The Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC)

We are continuing to explore ways in which our relations with Churches in Europe and other parts of the world can be fostered by our membership of CEC and the WCC (see report of the European Affairs Working Group below).

Inter-Faith Affairs

Membership

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

The Church of Ireland took a major and innovative initiative in Inter-Faith Dialogue last September when the Inter-Faith Working Group organised a conference on Inter-Faith relations and dialogue, which took place in the Church of Ireland Theological Institute, Dublin.

Expert speakers and panellists came from the Church of Ireland, the wider Anglican Communion, other colleges and other major faith groups, while the attendance included bishops, diocesan representatives, chaplains, interested clergy and laity. Participants visited the Irish Islamic Centre and Mosque in Clonskeagh and the Dublin Synagogue in Terenure. In both places of worship the hosts extended warm hospitality to the group and also gave significant time for questions.

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Minister Conor Lenihan spoke at the conference dinner which was hosted by the two Archbishops of Dublin, Dr John Neill and Dr Diarmuid Martin. Guest of honour on the night was Rabbi Zalman S Lent (Community Rabbi in Ireland). The Muslim leaders could not attend the dinner as they were breaking the Ramadan fast with their families. (See <http://www.ireland.anglican.org/index.php?do=news&newsid=3159> for images from the Conference).

The conference follow-up included a subsequent visit to the Church of Ireland by Archdeacon Michael Ipgrave, an internationally-acclaimed Anglican expert in this field. Then in spring a group, led by the Bishop of Clogher, attended a three-day residential programme in the St Philip's Centre in Leicester. The programme included a visit to a mosque and a Hindu temple as well as opportunities to examine the many theological, pastoral and practical issues raised by living in a multi-religious environment.

The then Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Rev Dr John Neill, played a key role in establishing the new Dublin Interreligious Council (DIRC), co-hosting the inaugural meeting at the end of 2010. The Council is due to be launched officially in May 2011 and promises a model for similar local initiatives.

The Working Group welcomes the committed relationship-building process between Abrahamic faith leaders in Ireland, in which the Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Rev Alan Harper, with other Christian leaders and the leaders of the main Islamic traditions and the Jewish community, in Ireland, have been engaged, including a dialogue where they exchanged Jewish, Christian and Muslim understandings of peace, at Farmleigh House, and shared a meal together, hosted by the President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, at Áras an Uachtaráin.

Meanwhile, the Working Group continues to express the fear voiced in last year's report that the downturn in the economies, both north and south, may cause a backlash resulting in the marginalisation of or new attacks on the diverse communities on this island, leading to 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 and the Working Group hopes the appointment of Interfaith Advisers in each diocese is seen as a priority in the ministry and mission of the whole church.

Anglican Affairs

Membership

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

The Rt Rev Harold Miller, Bishop of Down and Dromore

Rev Canon Dr Ian Ellis

Rev Iain Knox

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 (Honorary Secretary))

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Anglican Covenant

The working group continued to follow the local and international developments on the Anglican Covenant.

Anglican Networks

The working group suggested appropriate Church of Ireland engagement with the range of Anglican Consultative Council Networks. Church of Ireland contacts have now been identified for each of the networks and a reporting arrangement with the full Commission on Church Unity and Dialogue (CCUD) has been put in place.

Anglican Consultative Council (ACC)

The working group noted that the Standing Committee would be appointing a lay member of ACC to succeed Ms Kate Turner whose term of three meetings would be completed on the eve of the next ACC. Rev Dr Maurice Elliott remains the Church of Ireland clerical member of ACC for another two meetings.

Moravian Church

The working group met with representatives of the Moravian Church in Ireland and agreed to initiate discussions on deepening relationships between the Moravian Church, Church of Ireland and developments arising from the Fetter Lane Agreement (1995).

Porvoo

Regular informative reports on meetings, activities and news in the Porvoo Communion were made by Rev John McDowell, the Church of Ireland Porvoo contact person. The Bishop of Cashel and Ossory attended the Porvoo Church Leaders Consultation in Sweden. Written reports on Porvoo Communion activities were submitted by Rev John McDowell to the CCUD and to the Standing Committee.

Porvoo Report

Full Membership for Denmark

The most significant event of 2010 in the life of the Porvoo Communion was the accession into full membership of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark (ELCD). The occasion was marked by a Eucharist and signing ceremony in Copenhagen Cathedral where the Church of Ireland was represented by the Bishop of Clogher, the Rt Rev Michael Jackson.

The ELCD has had observer status within the Communion since the beginning. Decision making within the Church is entirely devolved to the dioceses and although strongly committed to the principles of Porvoo, it took a number of years to work through the internal process of ratifying the Porvoo Common Statement. In the end this was achieved through a decision of the Ecumenical Relations Council of ELCD.

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Church Leaders' Consultation

A Church Leaders' Consultation also took place in Sigtuna, Sweden in April 2010. The Church of Ireland was represented by the Bishop of Cashel, the Rt Rev Michael Burrows and Rev John McDowell.

Meeting of the Porvoo Contact Group (PCG)

The PCG had its annual meeting in Madrid, hosted by the Spanish Episcopal Reformed Church, a full member of the Porvoo Communion. The Group meets to exchange information on developments within its respective Churches and jurisdictions and to plan future Porvoo events.

An additional attraction at the Madrid meeting was the attendance of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain (LCGB), represented by the Rt Rev Jana Gringerga. The LCGB are contemplating applying for full membership of the Porvoo Communion and in the meantime has been given observer status.

A presentation in support of an application for observer status was also given on behalf of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad (LELCA) by the Rt Rev Ernsts Rotzitis.

Porvoo Communion Extension

The procedure for considering applications for membership of the Porvoo Communion has been somewhat *ad hoc*. The matter was discussed at the PCG meeting and the following process was agreed.

1. Request for Observer status should be sent to PCG, which will make a decision on the matter.
2. The observers would attend at least one PCG meeting, a Church Leaders' Consultation, and a Primates' Meeting before applying for full membership.
3. Requirements for full membership will include the Church's full knowledge of, and agreement with, the Porvoo Declaration.
4. The decision on full membership will be made at a Porvoo Primates' Meeting. (The Church of Ireland expressed reservations to the PCG in respect of this decision).

Country Reports

It is the custom at PCG meetings for each representative to speak to a Country Report submitted earlier.

Below is a sample of matters of interest from other countries:

England: it was explained that the process of ratifying the General Synod's Measure for the Ordination of Women to the Episcopate may take a further two years.

Estonia: As with many Lutheran churches, especially in the Baltic States, the enthusiasm for liturgical reform is not shared by all parishes and there is some difficulty in formalising a Church-wide liturgy.

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Finland: The Finnish Church is continuing to work towards a common understanding of that Porvoo perennial: the diaconate.

Iceland: Some fall-out in Church/State relations has occurred following allegations of a cover-up of sexual abuse.

Norway: Some further discussion has taken place on the matter of the recognition of ministerial qualification from other Churches for the purpose of appointment within the Norwegian Church. It is notoriously difficult to find canonical acceptance within National Lutheran Churches if not trained within those Churches.

Portugal: The recognition of the Lusitanian Church by the State is a huge step forward. The Church now enjoys the same legal status as the Roman Catholic Church.

Future Events

A Consultation on *Responding to Conflict* was held in Tallinn, Estonia 20 – 23 February 2011. The Church of Ireland is regarded as having particularly useful experience in this field of endeavour and invitations were issued to the Bishops of Limerick and Clogher to act as Resource Persons for the Consultation. The Bishop of Colombo, the Rt Rev Duleep de Chichera, was also been invited to act in that capacity.

The bi-annual Porvoo Primates' Meeting will take place in Cardiff 3 – 7 October 2011 and the PCG member for the Church in Wales, the Rev Gwynn ap Gwilym, reported on preparations. The 2013 meeting has been scheduled for Iceland.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland will host a *Consultation on Marriage* 1 – 4 November 2011. The aim will be to look at the theological, practical, medical, sociological and moral issues surrounding marriage.

A Porvoo Theological Conference on *Sacraments in the Mission of the Church* will be hosted by the Danish Lutheran Church, in Copenhagen 7 – 10 October 2012.

It is hoped that a further Consultation on the Diaconate will take place in Ireland in 2013.

Networks

The Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue appoints representatives to the various networks it is associated with. With the advancement of electronic communication many of these networks converse through email groups/forums thus greatly reducing costs and increasing interaction. These networks include: *Anglican Affairs*, *Network for Inter Faith Concerns* (NIFCON), *Churches Together in Britain and Ireland* (CTBI) and *Church Action on Labour and Life* (CALL). Full information on the networks may be found at: www.ireland.anglican.org/index.php?do=news&sid=16.

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Anglican Networks

ANGLICAN NETWORKS

The official Networks of the Anglican Communion, co-ordinated from the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) office in London, draws together Anglicans involved in particular aspects of mission and ministry. The Church of Ireland is represented on the following committees.

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| International Anglican Women's Network (IAWN) | Canon Doris Clements |
| http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/index.cfm | |
| International Anglican Family Network (IAFN) | Mrs Roberta McKelvey |
| http://iafn.anglicancommunion.org/index.cfm | |
| International Anglican Youth Network (IAYN) | Mr David Brown |
| http://iayn.anglicancommunion.org/index.cfm | |
| Anglican Health Network | Rev Daniel Nuzum & Mr Martin O'Connor |
| http://www.anglicanhealth.org/ | |
| Anglican Communion Legal Advisor's Network (ACLAN) | The Rt Rev Paul Colton |
| No website | |
| Anglican Theological Education Network | Rev Dr Maurice Elliott |
| http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/theological/teac/index.cfm | |
| Anglican Peace and Justice Network (APJN) | The Rt Rev Trevor Williams |
| http://apjn.anglicancommunion.org/index.cfm | |
| Anglican Refugee and Migrant Network (ARMN) | Mr Philip McKinley |
| http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/2010/2/12/ACNS4683 | |
| Anglican Communion Environmental Network (ACEN) | Rev Elaine Murray |
| http://acen.anglicancommunion.org/index.cfm | |



NETWORK FOR INTER FAITH CONCERNS (NIFCON)

NIFCON links those in different provinces with a particular concern for inter faith relations, and coordinates news and resources in this area.

The Rt Rev Michael Jackson
<http://nifcon.anglicancommunion.org/index.cfm>

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CTBI NETWORKS

Many issues facing the church benefit from a unified approach. Churches Together in Britain and Ireland works with member churches to co-ordinate responses, share resources and learn from each other's experiences. There are currently seven main work areas.

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| The Churches Inter-religious Network http://www.ctbi.org.uk/CD/16 | Rev Obinna Ulogwara |
| The Churches Racial Justice Network http://www.ctbi.org.uk/CB/14 | <i>Vacant</i> |
| The Global Mission Network http://www.ctbi.org.uk/CA/13 | Rev Paul Hoey |
| The Churches International Student Network http://www.ctbi.org.uk/CC/15 | Rev Darren McCallig |
| Church and Public Issues http://www.ctbi.org.uk/CF/18 | Mr Trevor Morrow |
| Faith & Order Reference Group http://www.ctbi.org.uk/CG/19 | The Rt Rev Michael Jackson |
| China Desk http://www.ctbi.org.uk/153 | The Rt Rev Michael Jackson |



CHURCH ACTION ON LABOUR AND LIFE (CALL)

An Ecumenical Initiative to Promote Social Europe

Dr K. Milne

<http://www.ceceurope.org/cec-newsletters/call-church-action-on-labour-and-life/>

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European Affairs

Membership

Miss Janet Barcroft

Mr Garrett Casey

The Most Rev Richard Clarke

Mr Robert Cochran

Rev Canon Adrian Empey

Rev Canon David Hutton Bury

Rev Canon Eithne Lynch

Dr Kenneth Milne (Convenor)

Mr Robert Roe

Rev Canon Terence Scott

Professor Ben Tonra

It has been agreed that this working-group, which previously reported through the Church in Society Committee, shall for the present be part of the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue, the arrangement to be reviewed after one year. The terms of reference of the working-party are set out in the Church in Society Committee's report to General Synod in 2004 and its role can be summarised as the monitoring of developments in the European Union as they affect Irish society and, in particular, the Church of Ireland. EU policies form a significant part of the agenda of CEC's Church and Society Forum and it is mostly through our membership of ecumenical instruments, CEC in particular, that the Church of Ireland participates in discussion of matters relating to the Union.

The Lisbon Treaty [article 11(4)] provides for a new mechanism, the 'Citizens' Initiative', whereby, subject to certain criteria, the EU can be required to address citizens' concerns about those matters in which the Union has competence. A green paper [EU COM(2009) final] proposing how the Citizens' Initiative might operate issued from Brussels and was considered by the parliamentary Joint Committee in European Affairs in the Republic early in 2010. The Joint Committee sought comments, which we submitted, and which it appended to its report. While pre-dating our working-group's association with the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue, the submission is included as an Appendix to this report. The green paper on which the submission comments is to be found on the EU website.

APPENDIX A

RESOLUTIONS TO BE PROPOSED TO THE GENERAL SYNOD

1. That the report of the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue be received.
2. That the following be elected members of the Commission

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| The Archbishops and Bishops | |
| The 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 Philip McKinley |
| Mr Samuel Harper | Rev Niall Sloane |
| Rev Iain Knox | Rev Helena Tameberg Steed |
| Rev Darren McCallig | Ms Catherine Turner |
| Mr Trevor Morrow | Rev Obinna Ulogwara |
| Rev Daniel Nuzum | |
3. That the General Synod welcomes the work of the Inter-Faith Working Group and encourages each diocese to appoint an Inter-Faith Resource Person to foster and encourage Inter-Faith initiatives at diocesan and parochial level.

Appendix

Submission on the green paper on a European Citizens' Initiative from the Working-group on Europe of the Church of Ireland Church in Society Committee to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on European Affairs.

We welcome the ambition of the European Commission, as expressed in the green paper (p.3) to ensure that European citizens should benefit from this new right as soon as possible after the entering into force of the Lisbon Treaty (i.e., by December 2010). We are glad to avail ourselves of the opportunity afforded us by the Commission and the Oireachtas Joint Committee on European Affairs to submit our comments.

Before taking in numerical order the issues set out in the green paper we wish to put on record our appreciation of the fact that the proposed Initiative goes some way towards addressing the view frequently expressed by supporters of the Union, as well as by its critics, that insufficient effort is devoted to bridge the gap that is perceived to exist between the citizens of the member states and the institutions of the Union. We also recognise that in devising the *modus operandi* of the Initiative the perennial tension between parliamentary democracy and populism has to be borne in mind.

1. Minimum number of member states from which citizens must come

We consider that a minimum of one third is preferable, and that while this is easily computed with 27 member states, the number would be rounded up where the number of member states was not evenly divisible by three.

2. Minimum number of signatures per member state

While the suggested 0.2% seems reasonable to us, it might foster alliances between large and small states by stipulating a minority of 0.2% per state to require each state to reach 1% of the aggregate of participating states.

3. Eligibility to support a citizens' initiative- minimum age

We agree that the age for eligibility to sign should in each state be the age of eligibility for voting in European elections there, noting that this is the general practice in those states that have an equivalent of the Citizens' Initiative.

4. Form and wording of a Citizens' Initiative

While arguing that requiring proposers to draft a legal document is unrealistic (and quite likely in the eyes of some to cast doubts on the good faith behind the whole concept of citizen involvement) yet we acknowledge the necessity to avoid frivolous, unclear and inappropriate proposals. Nor would we wish to see the spirit that informs the concept to become the tool of well-organised and well-funded pressure groups. Perhaps a template of some kind needs to be provided identifying:

- the terms of the proposal itself;
- the aims that it seeks to achieve, with arguments;

- how it relates to treaty-based powers of the Commission;
- such organisations and groups that support the proposal, with details of their sources of funding. (see 8 below)

5. Requirements for collection, verification and authentication of signatures

While at first sight a harmonised procedure for collecting signatures would be attractive, it is scarcely necessary in practice, and so we would recommend that the mechanisms that already exist for such procedures in member states should suffice. However, account needs to be taken of the fact that in the case of Ireland, for example, the register for European elections lists voters who are not necessarily citizens.

So far as the participation of non-resident citizens is concerned, it should be noted that they have no votes in Irish elections other than those for university seats in Seanad Éireann. Furthermore, and while it might be consistent with the spirit of the Citizens' Initiative for the signatures of non-resident citizens to be allowed, the sheer logistics of validating them would seem daunting.

6. Time limit for the collection of signatures

The period of one year would seem reasonable.

7. Registration of proposed initiatives

A mandatory system of initiation is necessary, the ratification of registration being the required starting point for the collection of signatures. We would recommend that the registration process be the business of the Ombudsman, rather than of the Commission or other institutions of the Union.

8. Requirements for organisers-Transparency of funding

Agreed

9. Examination of citizens' Initiatives by the Commission

We agree that there is a strong case for fixing a time limit for the Commission to respond to a Citizen's Initiative. Six months, with the possibility of extension by a further three months in especially complex cases, would seem appropriate.

10. Initiatives on the same issue

We would be reluctant to envisage the Commission or other EU institutions having the right to reject Initiatives other than for non-compliance with the provisions provided for in (4) and (8) above, and would prefer that no disincentives were put in place.