

**COMMISSION FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY AND DIALOGUE**

**REPORT 2012**

**MEMBERSHIP**

The Archbishops and Bishops (ex-officio)

The Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke, Bishop of Meath & Kildare (Chair)	Mr Philip McKinley
Rev Canon Patrick Comerford	Dr Kenneth Milne (Honorary Secretary)
Rev Canon David Crooks	Mr Trevor Morrow
Rev Canon Dr Ian Ellis	Rev Daniel Nuzum
Mr Samuel Harper	Rev Niall Sloane (Honorary
Rev Iain Knox ( <i>retired December 2011</i> )	Records Secretary)
Rev Darren McCallig	Rev Canon Helene Tameberg-Steed
Mrs Roberta McKelvey	Ms Catherine Turner

**Executive summary**

The Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue operates through a consortium of working groups, dealing respectively with matters ecumenical, intra-Anglican contacts (including our relationship with the Porvoo churches), and inter-faith dialogue. Although each has clearly distinctive responsibilities it is crucial that they do not work in isolation from one another, hence the umbrella structure of the Commission.

It is important for the well-being of the Church of Ireland that neither the Commission nor its working groups be regarded as dealing with “external” relationships of the Church of Ireland, almost in the sense of a diplomatic service. What the Church of Ireland does in its relationships with other Christian traditions, the provinces of the Anglican Communion and with other faiths, defines what we ourselves are – one tradition within the wider Church.

This report outlines the work undertaken by the various working groups and the Commission. In particular, the involvement of the Church of Ireland in the Irish Council of Churches and the Irish Inter-Church Meeting continues with energy although there has also been emphasis on the ecumenical initiatives in the wider context of Europe. The chair of the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue, the Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke, has been appointed to the International Anglican-Orthodox Commission for Theological Dialogue.

We extend good wishes to Mr Wilfred Baker who has been appointed by the Standing Committee to serve on the Anglican Consultative Council for the coming nine years. Mr Baker has been invited to join the Anglican Affairs working group. In the context of a wider Anglicanism the importance of the Porvoo connections cannot be overestimated. In the past year, the Evangelical Church of Denmark became a full member of the Porvoo Communion of Churches, and a number of members of our Commission have been heavily involved in the deliberations of the Communion. The Inter-Faith working group has

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continued to raise the profile of the crucial importance of inter-faith dialogue and of an increase in understanding between different religious faiths in Ireland and of equipping diocesan inter-faith resource persons with a further series of seminars, including participation from those involved in inter-faith initiatives and structures in England and Scotland.

We recommend a thorough reading of the entire report in order that members of the General Synod may appreciate the variety and extent of the work undertaken by the Commission and its working groups.

### **Ecumenical Affairs Working-Group**

The Church of Ireland engages in ecumenical affairs through its membership of the following inter-church instruments, both national and international, whose proceedings can be followed in more detail on their web-sites:

*The Irish Council of Churches (ICC)* [www.churchesinireland.com](http://www.churchesinireland.com)

The Council held its Annual Meeting chaired by the President, the Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke, at the Island Civic Centre, Lisburn, County Antrim on 7 April 2011. Following a welcome by the Mayor, Alderman Paul Porter, the members participated in an act of worship in Lisburn Cathedral, conducted by Rev Canon Sam Wright, and with music provided by the choir of The Wallace School. The keynote address to the annual meeting was given by Mr Fintan O'Toole, assistant editor of the Irish Times, and a response was made by Mr Peter Lynas, director of the Evangelical Alliance, Northern Ireland. The Annual Meeting in 2012 will be held at Taney Parish Centre, Dundrum, County Dublin.

The Church of Ireland is represented on the Executive Committee of the Council by the Rev Daniel Nuzum, the Rt Rev Trevor Williams (Bishop of Limerick and Killaloe) and Dr Kenneth Milne. The Church of Ireland is represented on the Council's Board of Overseas Affairs by Mr Colin Ferguson and Dr Kenneth Milne.

*The Irish Inter-Church Meeting (IICM)* [www.churchesinireland.com](http://www.churchesinireland.com)

This body, which includes representation from the Roman Catholic Church, has its origins in the meeting between member Churches of the Irish Council of Churches and the Irish Episcopal Conference at the Ballymascanlon Hotel, Dundalk, on 26 September 1973. On 20 October 2011, a well-attended meeting on 'The theology of hope' was held at Edgehill Theological College, Belfast under the auspices of IICM at which the speaker was the Rt Rev Tom Wright. The meeting was followed by an equally well-attended act of worship in Fisherwick Presbyterian Church.

*The Irish Inter-Church Committee*

The business of the IICM between meetings is conducted by the Irish Inter-Church Committee on which the Church of Ireland is represented by Rev Canon Ian Ellis and Dr Kenneth Milne. The committee operates through its Theology Forum and Church in Society Forum. The latter has been engaged in a study of ethical investment as it relates to the

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Churches and has held a series of discussions with the financial officers of several Churches. It hopes to report its findings later in 2012.

##### *Ecumenical Officer*

Mr Philip McKinley, ecumenical officer, appointed jointly by the ICC and the IICM, serves the entire island, and has special responsibility for developments in the Republic of Ireland. He visited many ecumenical bodies throughout the country and for the first time a clear picture of local ecumenical activity is emerging.

##### *Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) [www.ctbi.org.uk](http://www.ctbi.org.uk)*

The Church of Ireland continues to relate to other Churches in these islands through its membership of CTBI. The Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke is a trustee and Dr Kenneth Milne is the Senior Representative. The Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Rev Dr Michael Jackson, is moderator of its Faith and Order Reference Group. The Senior Representatives Forum was held in Dublin in March 2011 when the main topic for consideration was 'Church in the Digital Age'.

##### *Conference of European Churches (CEC) [www.ceceurope.org](http://www.ceceurope.org)*

As decided at its Assembly held in Lyon in 2009, CEC is undergoing a radical assessment of its constitution and general *modus operandi*. A further assembly, much less ambitious in scale, is to take place in Budapest in July 2012 at which 'reform measures as well as constitutional, legal and decision-making aspects' will be presented for implementation by a working-group set up for that purpose. CEC's 'Church and Society Commission' (on which some member Churches of the Irish Council of Churches have observer status in rotation), continues to provide a valuable link with the continental Churches, most particularly in relating to the agencies of the European Union. Dr Kenneth Milne attended a meeting of the ecumenical secretaries of the member Churches of CEC in Strasbourg in October 2011 at which time was devoted to considering the church and society agenda in different countries, with particular reference to human rights.

##### *Ecumenical initiatives*

The Church of Ireland is represented, either directly or indirectly, on several ecumenical initiatives taking place in Europe at present. They are:

- (a) The Meissen Commission, which involves the Church of England and the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (the German Protestant Church) at whose meetings the Church of Ireland, the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Church in Wales have observer status in rotation.
- (b) The 'Leuenberg' talks, where an agreement has been reached on a draft Memorandum of Agreement between the British and Irish Anglican Churches and the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (formerly known as the 'Leuenberg Church Fellowship').

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We have considered and approved this draft memorandum and have forwarded it to the Standing Committee of the General Synod for its consideration.

- (c) The Reuilly Conversations involve French Churches and the Anglican Churches of Great Britain and Ireland. The Church of Ireland, the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Church in Wales are represented in rotation. The signing of the foundation document took place at Westminster Abbey in 2002. We hope that the Church of Ireland, as a signatory, will participate in any occasions arranged to mark the anniversary.

*World Council of Churches (WCC)* [www.wcc-coe.org](http://www.wcc-coe.org)

The Standing Committee of the General Synod has, on our recommendation, nominated to the World Council of Churches the name of the Bishop of Connor for appointment to its Central Committee to fill a vacancy caused by the resignation of an Irish representative, Dr Heather Morris of the Methodist Church.

### *Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue*

The Chairman of the Commission, the Bishop of Meath and Kildare, has been appointed to the Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue.

## **European Affairs Working-Group**

### *Membership*

Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke	Rev Canon John Merrick
Miss Janet Barcroft	Dr Kenneth Milne
Mr Robert Cochran	Mr Robert Roe
Rev Adrian Empey	Rev Canon Terence Scott
Rev Canon David Hutton Bury	Professor Ben Tonra
Rev Canon Eithne Lynch	

As reported in 2011, the working-group on European Affairs that had previously reported through the former Church in Society Committee has become part of the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue, this arrangement to be reviewed after one year. The working-group continues to benefit from contact with the Church and Society Commission of CEC (which closely monitors EU matters including developments relating to the 'Citizens' Initiative' introduced by the Lisbon Treaty), and from the regular (almost weekly) sessions and publications of the Institute for International and European Affairs in Dublin. The chairman of the working group, Dr Kenneth Milne, is a Church of Ireland representative on the Board of Overseas Affairs of the ICC and has been asked by that Board to develop its European remit in the light of present widely acknowledged difficulties, especially in the Eurozone. These must be of concern to the Churches in both political jurisdictions of Ireland. It is of particular interest to the working-group that the forthcoming Annual Meeting of the ICC will focus on the Churches' response to Irish and European economic and social matters.

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**Anglican Affairs Working Group**

*Membership*

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

The Rt Rev Harold Miller, Bishop of Down and Dromore

The Rt Rev John McDowell, Bishop of Clogher (the Church of Ireland Representative on the Porvoo Contact Group)

Mr Wilfred Baker (from September 2011)

Rev Canon Patrick Comerford

Rev Dr Maurice Elliott (Church of Ireland representative on the Anglican Consultative Council)

Rev Canon Ian Ellis

Rev Iain Knox (retired December 2011)

Ms Catherine Turner (Church of Ireland representative on the Anglican Consultative Council), Honorary Secretary

Rev Canon Helene Tarneberg-Steed

Rev Iain Knox retired from the Working Group and the full Commission for Church Unity and Dialogue (CCUD) and the Commission. We thank him for his commitment in time and interest given to the work of the Group. Mr Wilfred Baker was invited to join the working group following his appointment as the new Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) lay member for the Church of Ireland.

*Anglican Covenant*

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

*Anglican Networks*

It was agreed that the Group would work with the Church of Ireland contacts for each of the Anglican Consultative Council Networks. This would be in addition to the reporting arrangements for the contacts to the full Commission.

*Porvoo*

The Porvoo Communion of Churches continues to strengthen contacts and understanding between member Churches. The Porvoo Communion has no paid staff, centralised secretariat, or headquarters. Member Churches provide co-secretaries and co-chairs on a rotational basis and membership of the Communion is expressed in participation in the activities which it organises.

Porvoo began as an agreement between, broadly speaking, national churches, but is now in the process of expanding to consider the incorporation of other types of ecclesial communities.

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At present the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Great Britain, the Evangelical Latvian Lutheran Church Overseas, and the Evangelical Lutheran Latvian Church all have observer status, with a view to signing the Porvoo Common Statement and becoming full members. The Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland has also made an inquiry about observer status and this is being considered by the Porvoo Contact Group.

The Evangelical Church of Denmark having become a full member in 2011 is planning a study visit to Ireland to take place in 2012. This will involve Bishops from Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands.

The means by which full membership is obtained was set out in our report to last year's General Synod (Book of Reports p376).

In February 2011, the Bishop of Clogher, Rt Rev John McDowell (Porvoo Contact Person), the Archbishop of Dublin, Most Rev Dr Michael Jackson and the Bishop of Limerick & Killaloe, Rt Rev Trevor Williams participated in a conference in Tallinn, Estonia entitled *Responding to Conflict*. The Bishops of Clogher and of Limerick & Killaloe each made presentations on their experiences of societies in conflict and their contributions were greatly valued.

The bi-annual meeting of the Porvoo Primates took place in Cardiff in October 2011. Unfortunately the Archbishop of Armagh was unable to attend due to a very heavy Autumn schedule. The Primates asked that the Porvoo Contact Group (PCG) consider exploring further the implications of the European wide economic crisis and any contributions which the Churches might make to the debate on Economics and Ethics.

In response to this, the PCG are planning a consultation/conference to be held in Lithuania at the invitation of the Bishop of the Evangelical Church of Lithuania, the Rt Rev Mindaugas Sabutis.

The PCG met at around the same time as the Primates and, aside from their normal business, offered their respective Churches' prayers and concern following the appalling massacre which had taken place at the Labour Party youth camp outside Oslo.

A major Consultation on Marriage was held in Turku, Finland in November 2011. The Most Rev Dr Michael Jackson, Archbishop of Dublin led the Bible Studies at this event and the Rt Rev Michael Burrows, Bishop of Cashel and Ossory was a participant. At the event each participant explained the marriage liturgy and practice of their Church and explored the biblical and theological basis of marriage.

A very wide range of marriage disciplines exists within the Church of the Porvoo Communion.

Future conferences/consultations are planned to include migration, sacraments and the mission of the Church and the role of the diaconate (the latter to take place in Ireland in 2013).

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The Rt Rev Ingeborg Midtomme, Bishop of More in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Norway, attended the consecration of the Church of Ireland Contact Person, the Rt Rev John McDowell as the new Bishop of Clogher.

### *Moravian Church*

Discussions continue with representatives of the Moravian Church in Ireland. Members of the Working Group visited the Moravian Church and settlement in the village of Gracehill, and have been invited by the Moravian Province of Britain and Ireland to join with the Church of England in discussions aimed at deepening relationships and exploring further the possibilities of the Fetter Lane Agreement.

### *Old Catholics*

The Rt Rev Michael Burrows, Bishop of Cashel and Ossory, is involved in the Society of St Willibrord which promotes relationships between Anglicans and Old Catholics. He attends its meetings in England from time to time.

## **Inter-Faith Affairs Working Group**

### *Membership*

Most Rev Dr Michael Jackson, Archbishop of Dublin (Convenor)  
Rt Rev Trevor Williams, Bishop of Limerick  
Rt Rev Patrick Rooke, Bishop of Tuam (from November 2011)  
Rev Canon Patrick Comerford (retired October 2011)  
Ms Georgina Coptly (from November 2011)  
Dr Susan Hood  
Rev Darren McCallig (Honorary Secretary)  
Rev Sandra Pragnell (from November 2011)  
Rev Canon Glen West (from November 2011)

In the past year the Inter-Faith Working Group has continued its work of supporting and resourcing the Church's engagement with people of other faiths. In particular, two conferences were held which explored the many theological, pastoral and practical issues raised by our increasingly multi-religious society.

In September 2011, a seminar entitled "Building Inter-Faith Relations in Ireland today" was held at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute in Dublin. Eight dioceses of the Church of Ireland were represented. The principal speaker was Dr Phil Lewis of the University of Bradford, who is the Bishop of Bradford's adviser on inter-faith affairs.

Speaking on "Building inter-faith and intercultural relations in urban Britain", Dr Lewis – who has worked in a Muslim-Christian studies centre in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, and is a former Christian Mission Society (CMS) mission partner – stated that the Churches in Ireland needed

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to think in a long-term way by looking at the next ten years, adding: “Now is the time to work at developing relationships; you can’t develop them in the middle of a crisis.”

The conference also heard contributions on a number of aspects of inter-faith dialogue and relations from Garda Sargeant David McInerney, of the Garda Racial, Intercultural and Diversity Office; Fr Alan Hilliard, Roman Catholic chaplain in the Dublin Institute of Technology and Abed Aldakar, Integration and Intercultural Officer with Doras Luimní in Limerick.

In March 2012, a seminar was held in Edgehill College, Belfast. Among the speakers was the Rev Canon Dr Alan Race, former Dean of Postgraduate Studies at St Philip’s Centre for Study and Engagement in a Multifaith World in Leicester. He spoke about the relationship between dialogue and evangelism. There was also some input from Mr Iain Stewart who is Interfaith Development Worker with the Church of Scotland. He explained his role in engagement and dialogue in Scotland. Finally, Lady Shruti Rana spoke about the work of the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum, of which she is a member.

A further event is planned for September 2012 and will be held at Saint Thomas’, Eglantine Avenue, Belfast. The Working Group hopes that these activities will help to build capacity among the network of diocesan inter-faith advisers and also call the wider Church’s attention to the challenges and opportunities of a religiously diverse world.

The Working Group welcomes the continued progress in inter-faith relations in Ireland and notes in particular the establishment of the Dublin City Inter-Faith Forum. This initiative, funded by Dublin City Council, aims to educate and encourage people of different faiths to dialogue, reflect and work together in matters of policy, strategy and action.

Finally, a number of new members were co-opted onto the working group this year: the Rt Rev Patrick Rooke, Bishop of Tuam; Rev Canon Glen West; Rev Sandra Pragnell and Ms Georgina Coptly.



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**Resolutions**

- (a) That the report of the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue be received
- (b) That the following be appointed members of the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue

The Archbishops and Bishops

Rev Canon Patrick Comerford  
Rev Canon David Crooks  
Rev Canon Dr Ian Ellis  
Mr Samuel Harper  
Rev Darren McCallig  
Mrs Roberta McKelvey  
Mr Philip McKinley

Dr Kenneth Milne  
Mr Trevor Morrow  
Rev Daniel Nuzum  
Rev Niall Sloane  
Rev Canon Helen Tarneberg-Steed  
Ms Catherine Turner