

GENERAL SYNOD 2012

MOTION NO 11 – LEUENBERG CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Proposed by The Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson, Archbishop of Dublin & Glendalough

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

As Members of General Synod are well aware, there are two major Agreements among the Protestant Churches in Europe: Porvoo and Leuenberg. As Members of the Church of Ireland we have had a long-standing theological interest and involvement in both. The opportunity is now before us to embrace the Memorandum of Agreement between the British and Irish Anglican Churches and the Leuenberg Church Fellowship and Members of Synod will have found a copy on your seats when you came into the cathedral this morning.

Briefly stated, the advantages of our doing so lies in the fact that the Methodist Church in Ireland is already aligned with the Leuenberg Fellowship. The second thing is that Members of the Lutheran Church in Ireland are also aligned with Leuenberg. Both of these reasons – since these two groups of people are already our friends in working and loving partnership – encourage me to propose that The General Synod approve the Memorandum of Agreement as set out in Motion 11.

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

between the British and Irish Anglican Churches and the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe – Leuenberg Church Fellowship

Preamble

In 1995 and 2004 two consultations between the Anglican churches in Europe and churches belonging to the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) took

place. Their aim was to consider what the declarations of Meissen, Porvoo and Reuilly might mean for the wider relations between Anglicans and Protestants in Europe. Since 2005 representatives of the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Church in Wales, the Church of Ireland and the Church of England have met three times with representatives of the CPCE to study the faith and order work on which they are engaged. These meetings have been helpfully facilitated by the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg. At the meeting of 13-15 April 2011 at Chateau Klingenthal, near Strasbourg, it was agreed that the Anglican and CPCE representatives would recommend to their sponsoring bodies that there should be a memorandum of agreement between the parties who have participated in the consultations.

The CPCE is based on the Leuenberg Agreement (LA) of 1973 which facilitated reconciliation and brought about “church fellowship” (ecclesial communion), including table and pulpit fellowship, between Protestant churches in Europe. Since it “is in the life of the churches and congregations that church fellowship becomes a reality”, the more than 100 churches of CPCE committed themselves to “bear their witness and perform their service together” (LA 35).

The four British and Irish Anglican Churches are in communion with each other and are members of the worldwide Anglican Communion, served by the four Instruments of Communion. Representatives of the four churches have been meeting for an intra-Anglican faith and order consultation every few years.

For more than two decades, declarations of formal relationship have been made between Protestant churches belonging to the CPCE and Anglican churches. In the Meissen Declaration (1988), the EKD and the Church of England acknowledged each other as “churches belonging to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ and truly participating in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God”. They committed themselves “to share a common life and mission” and made certain forms of “eucharistic fellowship” possible. In a corresponding way, the Reuilly Declaration (1999) between the four Anglican Churches in Britain and Ireland and two Reformed and two Lutheran

churches in France brought „a decisive step forward in the direction of visible unity” (Foreword, 18). In the British Isles, there are, among others, formal relationships between the Church of England and the Methodist Church of Great Britain (2003) and between the Scottish Episcopal Church, the United Reformed Church and the Methodist Church of Great Britain. The multilateral Welsh Covenant includes the Church in Wales and several Protestant churches. The most far reaching agreement is the Porvoo Declaration (1992) in which the four Anglican Churches in Britain and Ireland have entered into ecclesial communion with Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches (four of them member churches of CPCE).

There is thus a nexus of overlapping ecumenical agreements and relationships of communion within which the developing conversation between the CPCE and the four Anglican churches is taking place.

Acknowledging the importance of this developing ecumenical context in a changing Europe and recognising the usefulness of the recent consultations the following agreement is proposed.

Affirmation

Both the Anglican churches and the CPCE are committed to the goal of the visible unity of the Church of Jesus Christ. According to the basic ecclesiological document of CPCE, “the **unity** of the church ... is rooted in the unity of its origin, i.e. in the unity of the triune God” and “has been given to ... the churches as the work of God. Thus the churches are faced with the task to witness in visible ways to this gift of God ...”. The church fellowship realised in the “fullest possible co-operation in witness and service to the world” (LA 29) is seen as a witness to the visible unity.

The Anglican churches are committed to the goal of “full visible unity” in the form of “the sharing of one baptism, the celebrating of one eucharist and the service of a common ministry (including the exercise of a ministry of oversight, *episcopate*)” (Reilly Common

Statement, IV). Anglicans understand full visible unity as involving the canonical Scriptures, the ecumenical creeds, the two dominical sacraments and “the historic episcopate locally adapted”, as reflected in the Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1888/1920.

Thus there is a growing shared understanding by the Anglican churches and the CPCE of the goal of unity, but not yet complete agreement about the necessary elements of that goal. They are committed to continue working for a deeper shared understanding which will enable them to take further joint steps towards visible unity.

Commitments

As far as resources allow, the Church of England, the Church of Ireland, the Church in Wales and the Scottish Episcopal Church, on the one hand, and the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe – Leuenberg Church Fellowship, on the other hand will

- Exchange information and documentation on their emerging faith and order work;
- Continue to meet approximately every three years for a faith and order consultation;
- Explore together the theological exposition and concrete expression of the Church’s mission, ministry and unity/communion;
- Invite each other to participate in major projects of theological research and reflection in the service of the Church’s mission in Europe;
- Assist one another, wherever possible, in developing wider ecumenical relationships in Europe.