

**CHURCH OF ENGLAND
COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY
CHURCH HOUSE LONDON**

EUROPEAN BULLETIN – No 48

8th January 2008

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1. INTRODUCTION

Dear Bulletin Readers

A very happy New Year to all our readers, and every blessing for your ecumenical work in 2008.

This edition of the Bulletin completes our fourth year of publication. Thank you for your encouragement and interest, as we look forward to the fifth year! Do let us know how useful the Bulletin is for your work - news and ideas for publication are always welcome.

Dean Desmond Harman R.I.P.

We were very saddened to hear of the death on 18 December of the Very Reverend Desmond Harman, Dean of Christ Church Cathedral Dublin, and Church of Ireland member of the Porvoo Contact Group since 2002. Desmond will be greatly missed for his dedication and good humour in the ecumenical cause. Our condolences and prayers go out to his family and friends.

New Year's honour for Dr Mary Tanner

We are delighted to receive the news that Dr Mary Tanner has received a DBE in the New Year Honours list for services to the Anglican Communion which include distinguished work with ARCIC, the Lambeth Conference and the Eames

Commission. Mary is European President of the World Council of Churches. At Church House Mary was the theological secretary of the General Synod's Board for Mission and Unity and then General Secretary to the Council for Christian Unity.

Adam von Trott Memorial Lecture

This year's Adam von Trott Memorial Lecture is taking place on 3 March at Mansfield College, Oxford. This year's speaker is Professor David Marquand, the distinguished political historian.

For information about the lecture please see the Mansfield College website:

<http://www.mansfield.ox.ac.uk>

Bishop Bell conference in Chichester: 23 – 25 June

A reminder of the forthcoming conference at Chichester commemorating the ministry of Bishop George Bell: Art, Politics and Church: Celebrating George Bell. It will be held from 23rd-25th June 2008, and a conference website gives full details at : www.georgebellconference.org.uk, for all who wish to participate and/or offer a paper. For further information, please contact Revd Dr Paul M Collins, Reader in Theology, University of Chichester, Chichester PO19 6PE, +44 1243 816000
<http://inculturation.chi.ac.uk>

Canon Charles Hill
European Secretary CCU
charles.hill@c-of-e.org.uk

Francis Bassett
Assistant Secretary CCU
francis.bassett@c-of-e.org.uk

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2. NEWS FROM CEC

Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches

Pre- announcement:

Seminar on Employment and the Churches in Europe, with EU Commissioners Figeland Spidla,

On 27-29 February 2008, the Church and Society Commission (CSC) together with the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) and the European Contact Group (ECG) will hold a consultation in Brussels on employment and the churches in Europe. The consultation will include a Dialogue Seminar on 28 February with the European Commission, which will be co-organised with COMECE and the Bureau of European Policy Advisors. The main speakers of the Dialogue Seminar are

Mr Vladimir Spidla, the Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, and Mr Jan Figel, the Commissioner for Education and Culture.

The idea of this consultation is to discuss the value aspects of the European employment strategy (“flexicurity”) and the role of churches in relation to employment policies in Europe. It will also provide an opportunity to coordinate the activities of churches and church-related organisations in this area.

Further information is available from lhs@cec-kek.be. Details about the event will follow in January.

EU Member States sign the Reform Treaty

The Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches reports that on 13 December 2007, EU Member States signed the Reform Treaty now known as the ‘Treaty of Lisbon’. The Lisbon Treaty settles years of debate over EU institutional reform and will hopefully enter into force after national ratification processes on 1 January 2009.

CSC reports that Hungary as the first EU country ratified the new Treaty in a parliamentary vote on 17 December. The final text of the Treaty of Lisbon is available at:

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showPage.asp?id=1317&lang=en&mode=g>

In its final version, the Article concerning dialogue with churches and religious organisations received again a new number. It is now 16 C (see page 69). CSC took stock of the new Treaty in a briefing published in November 2007. This can be downloaded at:

<http://www.cec-kek.org/pdf/Update12Briefing4.pdf>

Also available online is the speech by José Sócrates, President of the European Council, at the signing ceremony:

http://www.eu2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/20071213DiscursoPMTratado.htm

The Charter of Fundamental Rights is officially proclaimed

CSC also reports on the proclamation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights which forms an integral part of the new Treaty and will become legally binding.

In order to mark this and compensate the decrease of its visibility in the Treaty – the reference to the Charter appears in one Article only, says the CSC report – a formal proclamation by the Presidents of the three European institutions was held in Strasbourg on 12 December. In addition, the entire text is published in the EU Official Journal.

In comparison to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the European Social Charter, which are the Council of Europe human rights treaties, the

EU Charter of Fundamental Rights brings together in a single text a whole range of civil, political, economic and social rights. It also introduces modern rights such as the right for a good environment, right of consumer protection, right to have a good public administration, right to data protection and the prohibition on cloning of human beings.

Charter of Fundamental Rights:

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/default_en.htm

European Convention on Human Rights:

<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/ListeTraites.asp?MA=3&CM=7&CL=EN>

European Social Charter: http://www.coe.int/T/E/Human_Rights/Esc/

The CEC Church and Society Commission also reports that the signing of the Treaty of Lisbon and of the Charter of Fundamental Rights were followed by the **meeting of the European Council** which took place in Brussels on 14 December.

The main themes of discussions were migration, preparation of the next three-year cycle of the Lisbon Strategy, climate and energy policy, maritime policy and Kosovo status process. The summit also adopted a Declaration on Globalisation. European Council Conclusions including the Declaration on Globalisation: www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/97669.pdf

CSC adds that the Summit endorsed the agreement of the Employment and Social Affairs Council of 5/6 December on the common principles on flexicurity. CSC gave its comments on the flexicurity approach in its response to the Green Paper on Labour Law in February 2007.

CSC also made a short assessment on the Commission Communication “Towards Common Principles of Flexicurity” which prepared the December decisions (see Update N° 10 on the CEC website).

Common principles of flexicurity. The draft conclusions have been adopted. <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/07/st15/st15497.en07.pdf>

The CSC-CCME-ECG response to the Green Paper on Labour Law. <http://www.cec-kek.org/pdf/002507answertogreenpaperlabourlaw.pdf>

The Church and Society Commission has announced its programme of future consultations:

In the course of 2008, CSC will organise a series of consultations on different themes linked to its work programme, which was approved at its Plenary Meeting in Armenia last June.

Ae consultation on church and employment will take place on 27-29 February

and a meeting with churches from the countries holding the upcoming EU Presidencies in late May. Consultations on socially responsible investment and on globalisation are also foreseen during the first half of 2008.

A consultation focusing on religion in the public sphere has been scheduled for October 2008. In the autumn 2008, CSC intends to organise another consultation on the topic of globalisation.

The Assembly of the European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN) will be held in Italy in September 2008. A brainstorming meeting on bioethics is also planned for the year 2008.

Full details from CSC via the website www.cec-kek.org

3. CEC/CCEE: CO-OPERATION WITH MUSLIMS IN EUROPE SHOULD BE INTENSIFIED

The CEC Press Service reports that during its meeting from 6th to 9th December in Berlin the Committee for Relations with Muslims in Europe, established by the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE) and Conference of European Churches (CEC), underlined the importance of seeking common ground with Muslim partners in Europe and to enter into a sustainable and confidence building dialogue.

CEC says that the committee welcomed the letter from 138 Muslim authorities "A Common Word Between Us and You" which was published some weeks ago as a significant step in the history of Islam, a sincere sign of establishing good relations with the Christian churches and to stand together for a more peaceful and just world.

The meeting recommended to the churches to respond positively and to offer common talks and exchanges which should underline commonalities between the two religions and common tasks but also touch upon differences and existing tensions.

The committee which met in Berlin on invitation of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) consists of 20 members and consultants from Roman-Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant churches all over Europe - including Turkey - and is mandated to exchange experiences from the different parts of Europe, to advise the churches concerning Christian-Muslim affairs, to intensify co-operation with Muslim partners and to reflect the European integration process from an inter-religious perspective.

The committee intends to organise a pan-European conference together with Muslim partners in October 2008, possibly in Brussels, on the subject "Being a Citizen of Europe and a Person of Faith. Christians and Muslims as Active Partners in European Societies". CEC says that this conference will substantially contribute to the "European Year of the Intercultural Dialogue 2008". The next meeting of the committee in April 2008 in Hungary will include Muslim partners for a shared preparation of this conference.

This work may well be of interest to Meissen, Porvoo and other partnerships.

4. INTERNATIONALE MARTIN LUTHER STIFTUNG

As plans begin to emerge to commemorate the five-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation, the new international Luther Foundation in Wittenberg is announcing initiatives at the historic Reformation site.

The INTERNATIONALE MARTIN LUTHER STIFTUNG was formally founded on Martin Luther's birthday, 10th November 2007, in the refectory of the Luther House in Wittenberg in the presence of the members of the board of trustees and the management committee.

See: <http://www.luther-stiftung.org/news.htm>

The Stiftung says that one of its tasks is to support projects and organize conferences, 'which specifically seek a discourse between national and international decision makers and social elites with respect to value formation and intellectual orientation.'

It comments 'In the current milieu of today's superficial debates, the Lutheran concept of a basic thesis of business ethics should not only create attention but should also contribute to hindering religious and political fundamentalism and provide an enlightened Christian forms of explanation, declaration and design of realistic and international significance. (For example: "www.luther-thesis-today.com" as an innovative and organized Internet platform or in the form of a competition such as "Jugend unternimmt" (youth in business) which is under the patronage of the German Federal President, in co-operation with the European young people's training centre at Kloster Volkenroda).'

In December last year the Stiftung published a Luther breviary (Luther's short interpretations of biblical texts for each day of the year) in German and English. The Stiftung says that the breviary will introduce readers to the powerful language of the Reformer himself and his cosmopolitan religiousness. Furthermore, it will be a small but very practical spiritual-intellectual language trainer and will introduce the Foundation to the German and English-speaking worlds.

Further information is available from the bilingual website www.luther-stiftung.org

5. ECUMENICAL YOUTH COUNCIL IN EUROPE – WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

The Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe (EYCE) is calling on young people to get involved in the forthcoming Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (see: http://www.eyce.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=PagEd&file=index&topic_id=3&page_id=727)

EYCE says:

‘In our ever changing and divided world, the call of Jesus Christ for his followers to be one is a priority for us as we struggle to proclaim the Good News and to help transform the world. From 18 to 25 January 2008 Christians all over the world will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. On this occasion, we, the major global Christian student and youth organizations and youth desks of the different Churches call upon all our members to take action and make our voices heard for Christian Unity.

As part of the Week for Christian Unity, global Christian youth organizations are encouraging all our members to take action for Christian unity. We strongly encourage all our members at the local, national and continental levels to organize common actions during the week with other Christian student and youth organizations.

These actions could include ecumenical prayer services, social action activities (such as an environmental cleanup), Bible studies or seminars. We hope that this Week will be an occasion for our groups to get to know each other better and to work together to proclaim the Good News of Jesus in our world today through word, prayer and action.

As part of the Week of Prayer, the leaders of the global Christian student and youth organizations will issue a letter to leaders of the major Christian churches on how young people today see the future of Christian unity. Get your voice heard by sending your comments and messages to Church leaders to roger.schmidt@lutheranworld.org

In addition, EYCE has produced a special Youth Prayer which could be used in local links meetings:

Ecumenical Youth Prayer

Loving Creator, you call upon us your children to love one another in a spirit of unity, to give thanks and to pray without ceasing. Forgive us for the times when we forget to pray and when we create divisions instead of unity. Help us to overcome the barriers between us and empower us as young people to take up your call in all parts of our lives. Our Father....

EYCE reports that the theme of this year’s Week, chosen by the World Council of Churches and the Vatican, reminds us of the universal call of Christians to prayer. In looking at the letter of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, we see that this call to prayer is also a call to unity and social justice (1 Thessalonians 5.12a, 13b-18)

For more details about the Week of Prayer, see:
www.ctbi.org.uk

and

www.oikoumene.org/?id=3939
www.weekofprayer2008.org

6. CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY CHAPLAINS

The Conference of European University Chaplains has announced details of a forthcoming conference, to be held from 30 June - 4 July 2008 in Tampere, Finland

On the theme of **Reflecting Light**, this is the third Global Conference of University and College Chaplains, Campus Ministers and Religious Professionals. The next CEUC Conference itself will take place in Kristianssand, Norway in 2009

On the Tampere event, CEUC says:

‘Welcome to Tampere in June 2008!

We cordially invite all of you who offer spiritual and pastoral care in university communities, colleges, universities of applied sciences/polytechnics, institutes of vocational education and other related educational environments to the 3rd Global Conference of University and College chaplains, Campus Ministers and Religious Professionals at Tampere, Finland on 30 June – 4 July 2008.

We warmly welcome all religious professionals, religious advisers, directors and co-ordinators of religious life, campus ministers and university chaplains to the conference. It will be held in Finland, the country of tens of thousands of lakes, in Tampere, a city surrounded by two lakes.

Light is very precious to us in our country. We live in deprivation of light during several months of the year. However, in the summer when our conference takes place, we have light in the abundance, in the Northern parts of the country 24 hours a day.

From this contrast we have drawn the theme of our conference:

Reflecting Light

Reflecting on Faith: celebrating diversity

Reflecting on Justice: sharing our stories

Reflecting on the Profession: searching for common ground’

For full details, go to www.ceuc.org

7. CENTENARY OF ANGLICAN-GERMAN ECUMENICAL CONTACTS 1908/1909

The next two years will see the commemoration of an important milestone in the ecumenical movement, with the hundredth anniversary of the Anglo-German ecumenical contacts of 1908/1909 which focussed attention on the Christian call to work for peace against the backdrop of gathering international tension. In commemorating this contact, the churches have the opportunity to speak with a common voice on peace and reconciliation in our own time.

The **Revd Dr Keith Clements**, former General Secretary of the Conference of European Churches, has been researching the fascinating and inspiring story of the 1908/1909 meetings and offers the following insights:

Peace and the Churches – an anniversary

The years 2008 and 2009 see a notable one hundredth anniversary for the churches of Britain and Germany. In May 1908 over 130 German church representatives – Protestant, Roman Catholic and Free Church – visited England and Scotland for over a week, and the following year a large British party similarly visited Germany. It was a time of rising tension and military competition between the two countries, and the exchange visits aimed to help the churches promote better understanding and peace between the two peoples.

A vision

The moving spirits of the visits were two lay Christians: on the British side, J. Allen Baker MP, a Quaker, and in Germany the Protestant Baron Eduard de Neufville. These visionaries mobilised the support of the church leaders of all confessions and denominations in both countries for what in its time was a pioneering ecumenical venture. Out of the visits grew a British-German body, “The Associated Councils in the British and German Empires for Fostering Friendly Relations between the two Peoples.” This in turn stimulated the formation in 1914 of a still wider organisation, the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches.

Tragedy – and new beginnings

The catastrophe of the First World War was of course a bitter blow to all these efforts. But if the pioneers had been unable to prevent the war, neither did the war destroy this movement for peace-building. Remarkably, not only did the British and German Councils continue to publish their journals during the war, but the World Alliance even managed to meet in neutral countries in Europe. After the Armistice the World Alliance quickly began work on reconciliation. It provided an important place of meeting for the former belligerents and other countries, and through the 1920s and 1930s it held many international meetings focusing on disarmament, human rights, religious freedom and the treatment of minorities. Alongside bodies like the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work it played an important role in the growing movement for Christian unity and continued in existence until the inauguration of the World Council of Churches in 1948.

Today

British and German churches now relate together in many ways and at various levels from parish, congregational and diocesan partnerships to formal inter-church agreements and common membership of the European and world ecumenical bodies. They look back on dark times of conflict and bitter feelings but are thankful for the ways in which so much reconciliation has come about. It is fitting, therefore, that during 2008-09 they should pause and mark the centenary of the pioneering venture that first called on the churches to challenge the growing culture of nationalistic militarism and to promote the things that make for peace, and which despite early setbacks was to bear fruit both for these two countries and for the wider world.

Celebration and renewed commitment – an invitation

In Britain and Germany, the anniversary is an opportunity to salute the pioneers, to celebrate our common journeying since then, and to undertake a renewed, shared commitment to peace-building amid the conflicts of today's world.

Christians and churches can mark the anniversary in ways appropriate to them. Those which already have particular links, for example through parish or congregational twinning, will no doubt want to use and build on those.

A number of initiatives in England and Germany are being planned - watch out for news of special commemorative events in 2008/2009! The CCU European Bulletin hopes to provide details as they emerge.

Dr Clements offers the following prayer for use during these anniversary years:

Creator God, you call people of all nations into the one family of your grace and truth, and you enable people of different tongues to speak to one another in the common language of love. We thank you for all those:

- *who have sought to remove the barriers that divide and antagonise;*
- *who have worked to heal the wounds left by war;*
- *who by their courage, their example and their prayers have been witnesses to reconciliation and peace.*

Especially today, we give thanks for all those in Britain and Germany who over the past 100 years have been peacemakers:

- *those who pioneered the way;*
- *those who persisted in face of hostility and failure;*
- *those who have built the lasting bridges of friendship that we know today.*

Grant that as faithful sisters and brothers we may now walk to the future together, at peace with one another other and being peacemakers for the whole world, and so be called children of God.

This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who is our peace. Amen.

8. ...AND FINALLY

NEW GERMAN WEB PORTAL FOR SCRIPTURE SCHOLARS OPEN TO ALL

The German Bible Society (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft) has opened a new Internet-Portal with a scholarly focus, for anyone to consult. It provides access to original language texts of the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, Novum Testamentum Graece (Nestle-Aland), Septuaginta (Rahlfs/Hanhart) and Vulgate. Several German translations, including the Luther-Bibel 1984 and the Gute Nachricht Bibel ('*Good News Bible*') are also accessible, with much secondary literature.

See: <http://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/>

*Material edited and distributed by the European Secretary, Council for Christian Unity, Church House, London Mail: charles.hill@c-of-e.org.uk
Visit the CCU website at: www.cofe.anglican.org/info/ccu*
