

**CHURCH OF ENGLAND
COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY
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1. INTRODUCTION

Dear Bulletin Readers

Much of our Bulletin this month is taken up with reports and links to the Wittenberg meeting in February, marking the third stage of the pilgrimage to the European Ecumenical Assembly in Sibiu Romania later this year. We also draw your attention to latest news from the German Protestant Kirchentag.

Roman Catholics and Protestants in parts of Germany are working together on a joint initiative for Lent called *Autofasten* (<http://www.autofasten.de/>). This is the tenth year of the campaign, which aims to encourage people to think more carefully about the use of their cars and move back to public transport.

The latest Newsletter from the **Building Faith in our Future Campaign** is now available with links to many web resources. It covers the following topics which can be useful areas of discussion in partnership meetings:

1. Update: “Funding of Church Buildings: Next Steps”
2. Downing Street Petition
3. Valuing our Heritage – making the case for future investment in the historic environment
4. The Pastoral (Amendment) Measure
5. Funding Opportunities: English Heritage, Heritage Lottery Fund, LPWGS and Landfill Grants
6. Heritage Link launches Heritage Funding Directory
7. Further mapping of the contribution of places of worship to their communities
8. Request for Good Examples
9. Church Art website

10. Shrinking the Footprint - update
11. Liaison with Government Departments
12. Liaison with Other Partners

To register as a Building Faith Supporter and receive copies of the Building Faith in our Future e-bulletin, please contact: Becky Payne at:

Email: rebecca.payne@c-of-e.org.uk; Phone: 020 7898 1886

Address: Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3AZ

To download copies of the Building Faith in our Future report, latest Key Facts and other information about the Building Faith Campaign go to:

www.cofe.anglican.org/about/builtheritage/buildingfaith/index.html

The French Protestant Federation is offering a series of radio Lent talks this year on the Lord's Prayer. These are downloadable as a podcast at

http://www.radiofrance.fr/chaines/france-culture2/emissions/careme_protestant/

A major web site offering liturgical and other resources for French Protestant worship is available at <http://www.cultes-protestants.org/> The French Roman

Catholic Church has put together a dossier on Lent at

<http://www.cef.fr/catho/actus/dossiers/2007/careme/initiatives2.php> A full list of dossiers can be found at <http://www.cef.fr/catho/actus/dossiers/index.php>

The Cyprus Agreed Statement

This year has seen publication of "Cyprus Agreed Statement": the fruit of a third phase of Anglican-Orthodox international theological dialogue. It reflects the further consideration given to ecclesiological issues discussed in earlier phases and registers considerable agreement over a range of issues.

In the words of the Co-Chairmen, the Statement "... is offered to the Anglican and Orthodox churches in the hope that, as it is studied and reflected upon, it will help Christians of both traditions to perceive anew the work of the Triune God in giving life to His Church, and draw us closer to that unity which is His will for all the faithful."

The statement is titled "The Church of the Triune God" and is published by the Anglican Communion Office. Price £5:95 ISBN 6 – 00000006 – 1.

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2. NEWS FROM CEC

ON THE WAY TO THE THIRD EUROPEAN ECUMENICAL ASSEMBLY

CEC reports that the third stage of the European “pilgrimage” will take place in the city of Luther last month. One hundred and fifty delegates from churches, Bishops’ conferences, ecumenical organisations, communities and movements gathered from 15-18 February 2007 in Lutherstadt-Wittenberg (Germany), for the third stage of the Third European Ecumenical Assembly (EEA3).

The EEA3 is being organised by the Council of European Bishops’ Conferences (CCEE) and the Conference of European Churches (CEC) on the theme *The light of Christ shines upon all – Hope for renewal and unity in Europe*.

Along new lines, the EEA3 follows the tradition of the European Ecumenical Assemblies held at Basel (1989) and Graz (1997). It differs from the previous Assemblies in that it is not a one-off event but a process in four stages, a sort of “symbolic pilgrimage” through the different confessional traditions of our continent. The first stage was held from 24-27 January 2006 in Rome, the centre of Catholicism, with the participation of 150 delegates from churches, Bishops’ conferences, ecumenical organisations, communities and movements. The second stage, still ongoing, consists of national and/or regional meeting on the Assembly theme. For the third stage in Wittenberg, where the Reformation started, 150 delegates again gathered from all European countries.

Finally, the fourth stage will be the Assembly itself in Sibiu, Romania, from 4-9 September 2007, with the participation of 2500 delegates, meeting for the first time in an Orthodox country.

The Wittenberg encounter, on the theme **Rediscovering the gift of light that the Gospel of Christ represents for Europe today**, opened with an ecumenical service in the Protestant “Stadtkirche”. The preacher was Bishop Axel Noack from the Protestant Church in Saxony (Kirchenprovinz Sachsen) (text available at www.eea3.org)

An opening session followed in the Leucorea University, with speeches by H.E. Cardinal Péter Erdő, President of CCEE; the Rev. Jean-Arnold de Clermont, President of CEC; the Lutheran Bishop Wolfgang Huber, President of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) (available at www.eea3.org); the Methodist Bishop Walter Klaiber, President of the German Council of Churches (ACK); and the Roman Catholic Bishop Gerhard Feige, delegate of the German Bishops’ Conference (available at www.eea3.org)

A series of thematic sessions were held on:

- Secularisation as a challenge for Europe – a detailed paper from Mgr Aldo Giordano, (Roman Catholic), General Secretary of CCEE is available at www.eea3.org
- Ecumenical experiences and concerns of today;
- What vision for Europe today? ;
- Preparations for Sibiu ;
- Reconciliation in Europe, European launch of the Decade to Overcome Violence .

A special event was the meeting with the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Dr Horst Köhler.

Major papers given on this occasion can be downloaded in English from www.eea3.org:

"The contribution of Roman-Catholic theology to the ecumenical movement": H.E. Cardinal Jean-Pierre Ricard, President of the French Bishops' Conference and Vice-president of CCEE, France.

and

"The significance of Protestantism for Europe": The Revd. Thomas Wipf (Reformed), President of GEKE (Gemeinschaft Evangelischer Kirchen in Europa), President of the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches, member of the CEC Presidium, Switzerland

Papers given on the question What is the churches' vision for Europe today? Can be downloaded from www.eea3.org as follows:

The Revd. Rüdiger Noll (Lutheran), Director of CEC Church and Society Commission, Associate General Secretary, CEC (German only)

and

Dr. Daniel Buda (Orthodox), EEA3 local organiser (CEC), Romania (English or German)

The programme also included prayer services (Evening Prayer from the Finnish Orthodox tradition, Bible reflection and Morning Prayer from The Revd. Anthony Peck, General Secretary, European Baptist Federation, UK, and Common Ecumenical sending prayer can be downloaded in English at www.eea3.org).

LETTER TO THE CHRISTIANS OF EUROPE FROM STAGE 3 OF EEA3, MEETING IN WITTENBERG, GERMANY.

"The Light of Christ shines upon all. Rediscovering the gift of light that the Gospel of Christ represents for Europe today"

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ throughout Europe,
Grace and peace to you all!

As representatives of Churches, Bishops' Conferences, movements and ecumenical organisations, we have travelled from 44 countries to Lutherstadt-Wittenberg, Germany, the birthplace of the Reformation, an important place in the Christian tradition. We met from 15th to 18th of February 2007 to share in prayer and reflection, and to continue the process of the Third European Ecumenical Assembly (EEA3) to be held in Sibiu, Romania in September 2007.

Having committed ourselves again to this common journey, we have sought to deepen mutual trust and understanding by living, working and praying together. We have also endeavoured to foster a spirituality that is rooted in the Gospel. Through prayer and action, we continue to encourage renewed enthusiasm for our ecumenical journey. We have turned once more to our source of communion and love, the one

God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

As we begin Lent together in the Churches of East and West we invite you all, sisters and brothers, to a pilgrimage of light. We look for the light of Christ which shines in the darkness. This light invites us to recognise our darkness of mistrust, suspicion and enmity and to be reconciled in the sacred presence of Christ's cross which transforms our darkness into the light of the resurrection. With this recognition we invite all Christians and Churches across Europe to join us in prayer, reflection and in repentance, as we seek to know and live out of the heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ who offers grace and renewal. We are inspired to action by our theme: "The Light of Christ shines upon all. Rediscovering the gift of light that the Gospel of Christ represents for Europe today". In humility and prayer we encourage our fellow Christians in opening their hearts to the true light of Jesus Christ and to join us in working to bring justice and hope to our continent. The light of Christ will inspire us all to work and witness to the gifts of peace, reconciliation and unity in our divided world.

As we met in Lutherstadt-Wittenberg, we were made aware of the fruits of the various national and regional events across Europe that will contribute to the EEA3 in Sibiu. We have given thanks to God for signs of shared fellowship and continued eagerness of so many who live out their vocation of sacrificial witness in the difficult situations that still exist across our continent. We have been encouraged by the continued eagerness of so many to work for freedom and the dignity of human persons to overcome fear and despair in our communities. We urge you to reflect and pray in Christ, for all Churches and Christians on this pilgrimage. This is a way for the whole Christian community to be involved with those who will travel to Sibiu. The light of Christ cannot be contained or diminished.

Our shared prayer is that the process leading to Sibiu will be another starting point for Christians in Europe to work together, as the light of Christ spreads across Europe with renewed intensity..in all of us.

Consecrate and unite us with your Holy Spirit so that we are one in You, in the recognition and invocation of your Son. (adapted from a prayer by Phillip Melanchthon)

3. GERMAN PROTESTANT KIRCHENTAG

Final preparations for the forthcoming Kirchentag in Cologne (6 – 10 June) are being made. The deadline for registering a group is fast approaching (30 March). This can be done on-line at www.kirchentag.de or through the Revd Robin Blount at The Revd. Robin Blount at 6 Lyn Court, Shorncliffe Road, Folkestone CT20 2PE (Tel 01303 250028 or email robin.blount@virgin.net). Group leaders who have sent in a registration and who would like further information, or anyone who is not part of a group but would like to join one should also contact Robin. Acknowledgement of applications may take some time, but check with Robin Blount if there are queries. A reminder that the British site for Kirchentag information is <http://www.kirchentag.org.uk/> .

Any Meissen partnership officers who will be attending the Kirchentag, and would like to display any material on the Meissen Links stand in the Markt should in touch immediately with Oberkirchenrat Matthias Kaiser at the EKD – matthias.Kaiser@ekd.de

Sheila Brain, the British representative on the Kirchentag International Committee will be issuing a detailed guide for visitors from the British Isles – this will contain highlights of special interest to English-speaking people, including information on events with simultaneous translation. Events to note include a special Sibiu-related programme in Halle 7, a range of major international speakers and Bible Study leaders, an Old Catholic/Anglican/EKD service on the 25th anniversary of Lima at the Versöhnungskirche, the special Meissen service at St George’s Anglican Church at 18.30 on Thursday 7th, and an evening ecumenical service in Cologne Cathedral on Friday 8th.

Local churches will celebrate the traditional *Feierabendmahl*: throughout the Kirchentag there would be *Stille Kirchen* open for prayer until midnight and there will be a number of Kirchentag events linked to the G8 summit at Heiligendamm. There will be a focus on Africa through the programme. The open-air podium in Heumarkt would be a centre for music (mainly rock), and Saturday will be a *Nacht der Lieder*: the podium in Neumarkt will host music, cabaret and events for children: There will be a “Wortweg” starting from Roncalliplatz, punctuated by “Wortart” at Wortorten” (mainly installations by students): the Landeskirche will have a pavilion at the railway station: there will be a Kulturmeile along the Rheinufer, where a Hansa cog would be moored as a floating embassy for the Bremen Kirchentag in 2009; a group would also sail up the river from the Neckar promoting travel by water as environmentally friendly. There will be Taizé prayers at St Agnes church on Thursday and Friday, as part of a *Nacht der Lichter*.

Latest programme information is downloadable at <http://www.kirchentag.net/index.php?id=3> The full draft programme should be published by the end of March.

Preparatory meetings for groups will be taking place in the West Midlands, on Merseyside and in the Thames Valley.

As far as travel is concerned, Sheila Brain informs us that there is an Easyjet service direct to Bonn/Cologne and other airlines fly to Düsseldorf, easily reachable by train. For travel from the South East of England, Eurostar connections to Cologne are available as an alternative for those who do not wish to travel by air.

4. ...AND FINALLY

With the rapid development of Broadband across Europe it becomes increasingly possible for Internet users to access television and radio programmes previously unavailable abroad.

Many public service broadcasters now make worship available to download from TV and radio archives, and we have frequently pointed them out in our Bulletin. The availability is increasing all the time – for example, for readers interested in watching the Sunday morning service (Gudstjänst) from Swedish television (SVT), it is downloadable at

http://svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=51812&lid=20070225&lpos=SVT2_1000_sitelin k&from=tabla

(or simply through the www.svt.se portal)

And Norwegian TV (NRK) offers an extensive archive of Sunday services and religious programmes at <http://www.nrk.no/programmer/sider/gudstjenesten/>

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