

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

EUROPEAN BULLETIN – No 46

30th November 2007

CONTENTS

- 1. Introduction**
 - 2. News from CEC**
 - 3. New Finnish Church Web Site**
 - 4. EKD Publication on Peace**
 - 5. Luther Garden in Wittenberg**
 - 6. And finally....**
-

1. INTRODUCTION

Dear Bulletin Readers

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

A special event at the start of 2008 will be the centenary of The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, from 18th - 25th January. Churches Together in England (CTE) has announced that resources for local events and personal devotion are now available. Church members are also invited to share in a national service at Westminster Abbey on Friday 18th January at 5pm – details are on the CTE website at www.cte.org.uk 18th - 25th January each year marks the Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity - between the feasts of the Confession of St Peter and the Conversion of St Paul. Material is prepared by the church in a particular part of the world and shared around the globe and resources can be ordered from Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), at <http://www.ctbi.org.uk/wpcu2008/weekofprayer.html>

"One Light - One World" - Unity and the Scriptures - a booklet is available, highlighting some scripture passages encouraging Christians. For the national service to be held in Westminster Abbey on Friday 18th January at 5pm, an invitation and response form are available at:

<http://www.cte.org.uk/Publisher/Article.aspx?ID=98816>

Ravenna document from Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches

CTE also reports that the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches are moving closer together. On November 23rd 2007 the cardinals of the church of Rome met to discuss a document entitled "The Ecclesiastical and Canonical Consequences of the Sacramental Nature of the Church" which has been written by a joint commission of the two wings of the ancient Church. This 'Ravenna' document (agreed in October 2007) seeks ways to heal the long-standing rift and restore the unity which was found in the earliest 'ecumenical' councils of the Church.

The full document can be read on the Vatican website:

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/ch_orthodox_docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20071013_documento-ravenna_en.html

Building Faith in our Future newsletter

The latest **Building Faith in our Future** newsletter is now available, with plenty of useful material for discussion in European partnership meetings. The Building Faith Campaign has three simple messages:

- Churches matter and deserve support
- Without support they are at risk
- We are therefore seeking: better funding (50:50 partnership with the State in funding towards their repair, and a 'level playing field' in terms of access to other funding); and to strengthen the Church's capacity to develop the use of its buildings for worship and mission to the wider community.

The contents of the latest edition include: Update: "Funding of Church Buildings: Next Steps"; Results of the 2007 ORB survey; Shrinking the Footprint – Commit to Cutting the Carbon; Churchcare – the re-launch; The National Churches Trust; Mapping of the contribution of places of worship to their communities; and Church Art website.

To register as a Building Faith Supporter and receive copies of the Building Faith in our Future e-bulletin, please contact: Becky Payne at: rebecca.payne@c-of-e.org.uk

Download copies of the Building Faith in our Future report, latest Key Facts and other information about the Building Faith Campaign from:

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

Arts, politics and church: celebrating George Bell

Further details have arrived about the George Bell Conference which to be hosted by the University of Chichester and Chichester Cathedral between Monday 23 and Wednesday 25 June 2008.

People interested in taking part are encouraged to go to the website: www.georgebellconference.org.uk for details about the programme, accommodation and a booking form.

Bonhoeffer Congress in Prague July 2008

The churches continue to reflect on the life and work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. From 22nd -27th July, 2008, in Prague, 10th International Bonhoeffer Congress will take place on the theme "A Way between Fundamentalism and Secularism? Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Theology in Today's World". Speakers will include Juergen Moltmann, Martin Marty, Olga Sedakov and John de Gruchy with the chairman, Dr. Keith Clements. For full details go to: www.bonhoeffercongress2008.cuni.cz

The organisers of the German Protestant Kirchentag are planning well ahead, with the announcement that Kirchentag Presidents have been appointed up to 2013. The Hamburg Senator for Culture Karin von Welck will lead the 2009 gathering in Bremen and Deputy President of the Bundestag Katrin Göring-Eckardt will lead the 2011 Kirchentag in Dresden. 2013 will be under the leadership of Professor Gerhard Robbers from Trier, and may take place in Hamburg, according to the EKD press service. Protestant Co-President of the Second Ecumenical Kirchentag 2010 in Munich will be Eckhard Nagel, who also led the 2005 Kirchentag in Hannover. The next six years will see a total of four *Kirchentage*.

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

The Bulletin is sent out on a mailing list: Please advise us if your email address changes, or if you do not wish to receive the Bulletin. CCU is not responsible for the content of external web sites mentioned in this Bulletin.

2. NEWS FROM CEC

After the Third European Ecumenical Assembly in September, the Conference of European Churches has been catching up in some important business this Autumn:

CEC-CCME MERGER: ENLARGING PROPHETIC VOICE ON INCLUSION OF MINORITY COMMUNITIES IN EUROPE

The Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe and the Conference of European Churches have agreed to complete their merger in 2008.

CEC news service reports that a "Memorandum of Understanding" between the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) and the Conference of European Churches (CEC) has been signed this November in Vienna by the officers of the two ecumenical organisations. The Memorandum agrees on the merger of CEC and CCME to be completed by the end of 2008. CCME will become a Commission of CEC, with the mandate to "serve the churches in their commitment to strangers... in

order to promote an inclusive policy at European and national levels for migrants, refugees and minority groups".

The agreement was signed by the Rev. Arlington Trotman and Ms Doris Peschke, respectively Moderator and General Secretary of CCME, and for CEC by the President, the Rev. Jean-Arnold de Clermont, and the General Secretary, the Venerable Colin Williams. The Memorandum was adopted by the Executive Committee of CCME and by the Central Committee of CEC.

The agreement is the result of a long negotiation process, and indicates the importance CCME and CEC have attached to the need to work more closely together on this agenda. It should enlarge the prophetic voice on the inclusion of, and support for new minority communities throughout Europe.

The Conference of European Churches (CEC) is a fellowship of some 120 Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican and Old Catholic Churches from all countries of Europe, plus 40 associated organisations. CEC was founded in 1959. It has offices in Geneva, Brussels and Strasbourg.

The Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) is the ecumenical agency on migration and integration, asylum and refugees, and against racism and discrimination in Europe. Members are Anglican, Orthodox and Protestant Churches and Councils of Churches as well as church-related agencies across Europe. CCME formally co-operates with the Conference of European Churches and the World Council of Churches.

Full details are on the CEC web site, at: www.cec-kek.org

CALLED TO ONE HOPE IN CHRIST: ASSEMBLY IN LYON 2009 TO MARK 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF CEC

The next major ecumenical event for the European Churches will be the 2009 General Assembly of CEC.

CEC news service has announced that "Called to one hope in Christ" will be the theme of the 13th Assembly, to be held in Lyon, France, from 15-21 July 2009. The theme is inspired by a passage from the Letter to the Ephesians (chapter 4), where the apostle Paul underlines the unity of the body of Christ.

The Assembly will also be an opportunity to celebrate the 50th anniversary of CEC, with a reflection on the past as well as on the future of the ecumenical movement. This will be prepared by a series of "strategic future workshops" with the participation of theologians, sociologists, youth, representatives of migrant communities and churches, and officials from the European institutions.

Some 400 representatives from the CEC member churches will attend the Assembly as delegates. Together with delegated representatives from the 40 associated organisations, guests, young stewards and staff, the total number of participants will be approximately 700.

More details are on the CEC web site.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF CEC: BISHOP STURM (AUSTRIA) CALLS FOR AN ECUMENICAL THEOLOGY FULL OF COURAGE AND HOPE

CEC news service reports that the Central Committee of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) met for its annual session from 14-17 November 2007 in Vienna, Austria. The meeting opened on Wednesday 14 November with an ecumenical service in the Evangelical-Lutheran church "Johanniskirche" in Vienna-Liesing. In his sermon, the Lutheran Bishop of Austria, Herwig Sturm, reflected on the recent 3rd European Ecumenical Assembly (EEA3, Sibiu, Romania, 4-9 September 2007) underlining the need to develop "an ecumenical theology which is full of courage and hope and does not capitulate when confronted with dogmatic barriers". Later during the meeting, Central Committee members met with representatives of the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Austria, as well as with the General Secretary of the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE), Dr Michael Bünker. A reception with civic authorities was held on 15 November in the Vienna Town Hall.

One of the main decisions of the Central Committee was the approval of a "Memorandum of Understanding" which prepares the way for the merger between CEC and the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) in 2008. For information on the CEC-CCME merger please see our press release at CEC-CCME Merger .

The Central Committee gave a favourable response to the application by the Orthodox Church of Estonia (EAÕK) to become a member church of CEC. At the same time it agreed to accept the candidature of the Estonian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate. A final decision on membership of the latter will be taken in 2008; in the meantime, the Central Committee asked the CEC Presidium to reflect on a model of common representation of Orthodox Churches in Estonia within CEC.

The Central Committee received a report on youth participation in CEC and endorsed a memorandum of cooperation between CEC and ecumenical youth organisations. It authorised the establishment of a Joint Committee between CEC and its associated youth organisations with the mandate to foster youth participation in the ecumenical movement at all levels, including decision-making bodies.

A report on the "Healing of memories" project in Romania was received. The project, which deals with the historical roots of tension between churches in Romania, is a common venture between CEC and CPCE. Starting in 2008 CEC will take the main responsibility for this project, co-ordinated by Rev. Dieter Brandes, who has been seconded to CEC by the Evangelical Church in Württemberg, Germany.

An in-depth discussion on the EEA3 highlighted both positive and negative aspects of this event. "Notwithstanding difficulties and tensions", stated the CEC President, Rev. Jean-Arnold de Clermont, "the Sibiu Assembly has shown that ecumenism is not blocked. The delegates were ready to continue dialogue, and above all they were

determined to witness together on crucial issues such as the preservation of environment, social justice in Europe and beyond, the fight against poverty”.

The Central Committee also approved the theme for the upcoming 13th Assembly of CEC, to be held in Lyon, France, 15-21 July 2009. “Called to one hope in Christ” is the theme, inspired by a passage from the Letter to the Ephesians (4,4). The Assembly will also be an opportunity to celebrate the 50th anniversary of CEC.

Two statements on public issues were approved: one on Economic Partnership Agreements between the European Union and countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (see press release on CEC web site: Economic Partnership Agreements). The second statement is on the administrative detention of migrants pending removal from EU countries (see press release on CEC web site: Detention of Migrants).

Two new members of the Churches in Dialogue Commission of CEC were appointed: the Rev. Dr Matti Repo from the Lutheran Church of Finland and Ms Marie Vejrup Nielsen from the Lutheran Church in Denmark.

3. NEW WEB SITE FOR THE CHURCH IN FINLAND

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (ELCF) is expanding its services in the Internet. A new website in English was opened on 19th October at <http://evl.fi/english>.

The ELCF says that the purpose of these web pages is to decipher Lutheran Christianity in Finland to people coming from other cultures so that it is easier to catch on to activities in local congregations. Information can be found on the church calendar and the celebration of various holidays. The quiet religiousness and prayer life of Finns is also described. Expatriates in Finland often wonder why Finns talk so little about their faith and go to church so seldom although more than 82 percent are ELCF members.

"We hope that these web pages will make it easier to step into our church and participate in worship and other activities. Church activities are a good way to get to know Finns. Through the Internet we also welcome others besides Lutherans to get acquainted with the life in our congregations," says Sami Kallioinen, Chief of Web Communication in the ELCF Communications Centre.

The ELCF website in English describes also how congregations function. Information can be found on how to arrange a baptism or wedding or funeral using different languages. Frequently asked questions about such occasions have been compiled and answered.

Some congregations arrange activities in several languages. Contact information for them is provided in the English-language website.

The new web pages give information on how to contact church workers and describe how a pastor or diaconal worker can give help.

Basic facts like orders of worship, statistical figures and organization charts have been gathered into the website, and there are also links to some online church publications.

ELCF Communications Department reports that these new web pages have been made especially keeping in mind immigrants who are more fluent in English than Finnish or Swedish. The site also includes information for overseas interest groups including Finnish emigrants. Church workers can also make use of information provided in English on these pages.

4. EKD PUBLICATION ON PEACE

The Evangelical Church in Germany has published a new *Denkschrift* or memorandum, on peace.

The launch of the document, including a presentation on the theme of peace by Bishop Wolfgang Huber, Chairman of the Council of the EKD, can be downloaded as an MPEG file from the EKD website (www.ekd.de).

The document emphasises the basic principle that peace needs to be actively constructed through the dismantling of violence, extending the international rule of law, and the promotion of world-wide social justice. The full title of the document is "*Aus Gottes Frieden leben für gerechten Frieden sorgen*".

The content covers: an analysis of the social and political factors which endanger peace; the contribution of the Church to work for reconciliation and a just peace; the conditions on which global peace and the restraint of military force will depend; and the political tasks facing global and European institutions in their responsibility to uphold world peace.

The document can be downloaded as a pdf file from the EKD web site, or is available as a paperback, published by the Gütersloher Verlagshaus at a price of EURO 5,95.

5. LUTHER GARDEN IN WITTENBERG

The news service of the Lutheran World Federation has reported on a major venture to prepare the way for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017.

An approximately 230-meter-long Luther Garden will be developed in Wittenberg as a symbol of the global magnitude of the Reformation, and of the interconnectedness, interaction, and reconciliation between Christian churches. Churches throughout the world will be invited to sponsor one of the 500 trees to be planted in the garden.

The LWF German National Committee have demonstrated a strong desire to have the commemoration of the 500 years of the nailing of the 95 theses as an ecumenical and international event

The project involves a public square shaped around a Luther Rose created from a variety of cobblestones. Outdoor worship services and other events may be held at the site. The plan is to have an oval shape from a group of 500 trees surround the Luther Rose by 31 October 2017. The garden will serve to connect the town centre and the River Elbe, with the garden pointing southward to the river, thus symbolically opening itself to the world.

A triangle will connect Wittenberg's Castle Church, City Church and Luther Garden as part of the town's green belt. The outdoor garden will add another Luther symbol to city in addition to the Luther House and Luther Monument.

LWF adds: " possible tree-sponsorship partners could include, in addition to the LWF member churches, churches of the Anglican Communion, World Methodist Council, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and all churches and dioceses that have been shaped or influenced by the Lutheran Reformation, including dioceses of the Roman Catholic Church. The churches involved in the project are to be asked to plant a tree at a central location with a reference to Wittenberg as the Reformation's place of origin, giving voice to a sense of a worldwide inter-relatedness of spirit and theology in the central concerns of the Christian faith. This would make it possible to turn the Luther Garden into an interactive Reformation monument.

The conference of bishops and church leadership of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD) and the GNC have placed great importance in the 2017 Reformation jubilee, as both a celebration of the global Lutheran communion and an ecumenical and international event. In this context, the LWF is the natural choice when it comes to opening the doors to other global communities. "

Further information on the Luther Garden including photos can be accessed on the LWF website at: www.lutheranworld.org/Luthergarden.html

6. ...AND FINALLY

GERMANY KEEPS SUNDAY SPECIAL

The German language web site www.sonntagsruhe.de has developed as a major resource for keeping Sunday special. The well-designed web site, with its many sub-sections gives an excellent insight into the ongoing debate in Germany about the Sunday opening of shops, and there is plenty of material suitable for use in Meissen and other partnerships.

*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*
