

APPENDIX N

Klingenthal Consultation October 2005

The 2005 Consultation between Lutheran-Reformed Churches in Europe and the Churches of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales was held at Klingenthal in Alsace, France under the auspices of The Strasbourg Ecumenical Institute during the period October 20-23. The 2004 Consultation, which took up again the process of discussion and discernment on the part of these families of churches after a long fallow period, ended with a desire to continue the exploration of issues of common concern. This was done in the recognition that we share a Reformation heritage within the catholicity of the church and that the place of Christianity, once taken for granted in Europe, can no longer be assumed today for the future. It was and remains our conviction that we somehow need to work towards a shared strategy if Christianity is to have a coherent continuing witness. The 2005 Consultation concerned approaches to such a witness along with questions of fellowship and communion across members of the Leuenberg Fellowship, signatories of the Porvoo Common Statement and Anglican Churches of the British Isles. The Church of Ireland was represented by the Bishop of Clogher.

A number of principles of ecumenical ecclesiology were enunciated and revisited. The suggestion that no bilateral agreement can do without the multilateral agreement is as old as *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* itself. However, in this context, it is worth remembering that this principle is not an argument for bland uniformity, rather a recognition of distinct emphases within the goal of unity. Both organic unity – much spoken of in the early and heady days of ARCIC i – and reconciled diversity, another mode of unity, were discussed. The parent churches were encouraged to revisit the much-neglected 1984 Anglican-Reformed Report *God's Reign and Our Unity*, with its double exploration of organic unity and unity for mission being particularly pertinent to the task ahead of the Protestant Churches of Europe. This was due in large part to the work of Bishop Leslie Newbigen with his vast experience of The Church of South India.

A recognition that in ecumenical encounter you have to deal with aspects of your own history seriously as never before came through in the carefully expounded example of Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue which issued in The Malta Report 1972. The genius and sensitivity of Cardinal Walter Casper, in the spirit of Vatican II, resulted in a combination of respect for the argument *Sola Scriptura* with a flexibility in relating both to the content of doctrines and their expression in the two traditions. This gave birth to what is called differentiated consensus. We learned that the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Joint Declaration on Justification 1999, following the same line of ecumenical argument, enabled the head of the Lutheran Church in Chile to feel that his church was treated as a real church by the Roman Catholic Church. This was seen as a real break-through.

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The current Lutheran ecumenical emphasis on ministry in the apostolicity of the whole church focused on Bible, Creeds and Sacraments provoked lively discussion of the *satis est* (it is enough) of Conf. Aug.7 relating to Gospel and Sacraments. The current Reformed Tradition's understanding suggested the following paradigm: that in God's offering of God's self to me as a person in Word and Sacraments I am justified not in isolation but inside the community. The Lambeth Quadrilateral has resonances of this in its own 4-part harmony.

The contemporary situation in the Anglican Communion elicited discussion. Interestingly and constructively, Anglicans present were encouraged not to lose the pre-Reformation ideal that the whole known world comes under the reign of Christian revelation and that Christian public truth is a revelation to all people. From this flowed a plea to implement, however post-English today's Provinces of the Anglican Communion may be, a contemporary version of the sacramental and jurisdictional ministry of the church, altered perforce because of different political circumstances, in seeing part of the church's commitment to be incarnate in the structures of the world as we find it. The argument developed further into the suggestion that if we give up on prophetic engagement with governments, we give up half our mission.

Much remained to be explored but open theological exchange set in the context of realism about our own situations sharpened the focus as well as enhancing the fellowship.

Often the question is asked: What is the point of our sending people to these Conferences? I offer one general and four specific responses. The general response is to the effect that if the Church of Ireland is *out*, it is not part of what is emerging as a vital reconfiguring of inter-church relations in the Europe of which we are part. To me this is a serious shrivelling of our potential to witness to the Risen Christ at home and abroad. The four more specific responses are the following: the need for a strategy on the part of Christian churches in Europe today; the need continually to make the existing Agreements work pastorally as well as structurally in relation to those settling in parts of Europe different from those in which they were born; the need to work at issues of communion; the recognition that denominational identity does not make sense outside an ecumenical self-definition on the part of denominational churches.

It is planned that a further Consultation take place in approximately eighteen months time and that it be held again in Klingenthal.

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