

**THE GENERAL SYNOD  
COMMITTEE FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY  
REPORT 2006**

**1. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE**

The Archbishops and Bishops (Rt Rev PF Barrett was Chairman until January 2006)

Mr George Clarke (resigned June 2005)	Rev Canon Walter Lewis
Rev Patrick Comerford	Ven Gregor McCamley
Rev Canon David Crooks	Mrs Roberta McKelvey
Rev Canon Dr Ian Ellis	Dr Kenneth Milne
Very Rev Leslie Forrest	Mr Trevor Morrow
Rev Robert Gray	Rev Daniel Nuzum (Honorary Secretary)
Rev Sandra Hales	Rev Derek Sargent
Mr Sam Harper	Rev Gillian Wharton
Mrs Ruth Heard	Rev Canon Trevor Williams
Rev Iain Knox	Mrs Andrea Wills

2. The Committee for Christian Unity met five times during the last year. At each meeting of the Committee for Christian Unity there is an opportunity to hear about local ecumenical developments and initiatives across Ireland. This is always a useful window onto the local ecumenical world and we are encouraged by the many 'good news stories' in so many areas and would wish to encourage them. In 2006, in response to a request from Standing Committee, the Committee for Christian Unity hopes to conduct a thorough evaluation of its work with a view to producing proposals for the future role of the Committee as it seeks to serve the Church.

**3. The Irish Council of Churches/The Irish Inter-Church Meeting**

The Church of Ireland has been involved in the work of the Irish Council of Churches and the Irish Inter-Church meeting. The Irish Inter-Church Meeting took place in 2005 in Cork and included the launch of the report of the working group on spirituality entitled *The deepest freshness – deep down things*.

The Irish Council of Churches has initiated a review process about its future direction and priorities as it seeks to serve the member churches. The Committee for Christian Unity will be engaging with this process.

A copy of the ICC Annual Report will be available at the General Synod.

**4. Churches Together in Britain and Ireland**

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland is coming to the end of a long and difficult process of evaluation about its future. The revised changes should have come into effect by the time of General Synod and include significant staff reduction and a change in management structure. The new CTBI will operate very closely in Britain and Ireland with the National Ecumenical Instruments. It is changing structure from a 'council' model to being an agency of the ecumenical instruments in Britain and Ireland. It is a source of regret to us that the Irish Council of Churches has opted to be only an associate member of this body. This

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has meant that we as a Church have decided to retain separate full membership. Dr David Goodbourne served as General Secretary of CTBI since 1998 and will have moved to a new post by the end of March 2006. We wish him well and express our gratitude for his leadership of CTBI during a period of tremendous change. We wish his successor Canon Bob Fyffe well as he takes over as General Secretary.

### **5. Conference of European Churches**

2005 saw the retirement of the Rev Dr Keith Clements, the General Secretary of CEC. We wish him well and thank him for his leadership and welcome his successor the Venerable Colin Williams. CEC is working towards the third European Ecumenical Assembly which will take place in Romania in September 2007. This ecumenical assembly is being organised by the Council of European Bishops' Conferences and the Conference of European Churches. The theme of the Assembly is *The light of Christ shines upon all: Hope for renewal and unity in Europe*.

### **6. World Council of Churches**

The ninth assembly of the World Council of Churches took place in Porto Alegre, Brazil in February 2006. The Church of Ireland was represented by Ms Yvonne Naylor and the Rev Daniel Nuzum. The assembly dealt with many issues including: economic justice, Christian identity and religious plurality, youth overcoming violence as well as the receiving of the report of the Special Commission which was looking at the involvement of the Orthodox churches in the World Council. One practical out working of this report will be the end of parliamentary style majority voting and the introduction of a consensus decision making process. It has also brought changes to our 'common prayer' together. The eighth report of the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches was also received by the Assembly. Most importantly, the Assembly was a time of celebration where more than 4,000 people from every part of the world came together to give thanks to God for the unity we share in Christ and to pray *God, in your grace, transform the world*.

### **7. Inter Faith**

Following the positive response of General Synod to the Committee's Inter-Faith Proposals in 2005 various developments have taken place. The Committee has appointed a small group with expertise in this area to draw up guidelines for the Church in dealing with inter-faith issues. It is hoped that this will be available early in 2007. This group is chaired by the Bishop of Clogher. (The Bishop of Clogher is also chairman of the Network for Inter-Faith Concerns at the Anglican Communion Office, London.) We wish to commend the recent publication of *Hand of History* by CMSI as a valuable resource in this area.

### **8. Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ**

The Committee for Christian Unity, following the invitation of Standing Committee, produced a response to the recently agreed ARCIC statement *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ* which appears as an Appendix to the report of Standing Committee.