

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

Dear Bulletin Readers

Happy New Year

This is a special bulletin to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Some more detailed news items will follow in February's bulletin.

With all good wishes,

Leslie Nathaniel
Archbishop of Canterbury's International Ecumenical Secretary
and European Secretary Council for Christian Unity

Francis Bassett
Assistant Secretary Council for Christian Unity

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2. SALT OF THE EARTH: RESOURCES FROM LATVIA

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is traditionally observed from the 18th to the 25th January – the octave of St Peter and St Paul. However, some areas observe it at Pentecost or some other time.

Salt of the Earth, the prayer material for 2016, was prepared for worldwide use by the Christians of Latvia, and adapted by the Britain and Ireland writers group, based around the verses 1 Peter 2: 9 – 10. Peter's first letter is an encouragement to the newly baptised to live holy lives and to answer the calling shared by all the baptised to proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord.

Latvia today is a crossroads where Roman Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox regions meet. Because of this unique location, it is home to Christians of many different traditions. Gathered by the Archbishop of Riga members of a variety of church communities and projects in Latvia were asked to reflect on the chosen theme and the experience of their work.

The main service is inspired by the verses from Peter's letter and Jesus' metaphors of salt and light which are important cultural themes for Latvia. Each of the days has been prepared by one of the diverse Church communities. The 8 Days are linked principally by the experience of being a Christian in Latvia.

The *Salt of the Earth* resources can be downloaded at:

<https://ctbi.org.uk/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2016#resources>

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3. JÜRGEN MOLTSMANN LEADS ECUMENICAL REFLECTIONS IN GENEVA

At the start of a new year of work at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva, respected German theologian Jürgen Moltmann led a day-long series of presentations and discussions as a guest of the World Council of Churches (WCC) on Wednesday, 13 January. He also responded to comments and questions on his new book, *The Living God and the Fullness of Life* (WCC Publications, 2016).

A long-time participant in inter-church affairs on local, regional and international levels, Moltmann insisted that “the ecumenical movement is as much about renewal as it is about unity.” The nearer members of various churches come to Jesus Christ, he said, the nearer they come to each other.

Still, he admitted, “it is common for Catholic theologians to quote Catholic theologians, and for Protestant theologians to quote their like.”

“Although we tend to feel closer to our own tradition than to Christianity as a whole,” he continued, “believers in many parts of the world today are hated and persecuted” not because they are Methodists or Reformed, but “because they are Christians.”

Drawing on Saint John Paul II's papal encyclical on ecumenism, *Ut Unum Sint*,

Moltmann affirmed that the witness of the martyrs is to the One Church of Jesus Christ.

Moltmann noted that “The vision and hope of the ecumenical movement is not in the church, but in the kingdom of God. We must open ourselves up to the surprises of the future.”

Encouraging the imagination of his listeners, he contrasted the traditionalist churches of the West that arose in the era of empire and domination with emerging churches, especially those arising in Asia, Africa and Oceania. These are “minority communities organized as an enterprise,” relying on the support of the Holy Spirit and introducing new forms of spirituality.

“We need a new spirituality of our senses,” said Moltmann, advancing a spirituality that takes the world seriously, moving toward a commitment to “earth religion.” He applauded what he characterized as this “ecological turn to theology.”

“Politically, earth religion creates greater commitment to this life, this earth. It shows appreciation for the body,” he added. “It encourages us to fight against the cult of death.”

Jürgen Moltmann’s visit to the Ecumenical Centre began with a seminar on the pilgrimage of justice and peace, during which the theologian engaged in wide-ranging dialogue.

As a teenager, Moltmann was drafted into the German auxiliary services and subsequently into the army. He began to study theology as a prisoner of war in 1945-48 before going on to university. He has taught and lectured widely and is Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology at the University of Tübingen.

In presenting Professor Moltmann WCC General Secretary said: “His books, lectures and contributions to the ecumenical debate have been and continue to be a source of inspiration, challenge, insight, wisdom and hope. They are translated in so many languages, they have influenced theology and churches in all parts of the world, not at least in the global south.... It is a privilege to host him here today.”

To read the WCC communiqué go to:

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/jurgen-moltmann-leads-ecumenical-reflections-in-geneva>

The Living God and the Fullness of Life is published by the World Council of Churches (ISBN 9782825416648) and is widely available from bookshops and online.

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4. PRAYER FOR COMMITMENT FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY WEEK

God our Father, it is your purpose to bring your whole creation into full unity in Christ. We commit ourselves to you. Help us to live for others even as your love includes all: to seek out from others the truth they have grasped; to trust each other as fellow – workers in the one community you have given us; to obey your call to make visible the unity of your Church. Come, Holy Spirit, help us. Amen.

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5. REFORMATION THEN AND NOW: NINTH MEISSEN THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE 12 – 15 JANUARY

The ninth Meissen Theological Conference met in London at the Royal Foundation of St Katharine between the 12th and 15th of January 2016. The conference addressed the theme *Reformation Then and Now, Anglican and Protestant Perspectives*. The title was prompted by the impending 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation in 2017. The papers presented reflected the variety of meanings inherent in the title: Reformation is both an event to be interpreted and remembered, and a task to which the Church is called in the 21st no less than in the 16th century.

Right understanding of the historical events of the Reformation in our two countries is of great importance. We were helped in this task by papers which addressed the question of memory and commemoration in our respective contexts and through reflection on points of contact and contrast between the ideas of English and Continental Reformers. That some of this took place in the setting of a day visit to Cambridge where the English Reformation began was especially helpful. However, we are also aware of a danger towards which some of our other papers pointed. Uncertainty about the future, especially in an increasingly secular, unstable, and troubled European and geopolitical context, might cause us to seek security in examining a past upon which we feel able to gain a stable 'fix' rather than engaging with the present, which we cannot or do not wish to understand let alone control. In light of the above the Meissen Theological Conference affirmed the contribution Meissen needed to make: to encourage our churches to keep telling the Christian story; to find new ways of enabling England and Germany to remind Europe of its formative history and rooted identity; and to offer our two countries a different way of looking at the world, thinking about the world and living in the world.

The members of the delegation and their contributions (will be published) were as follows:

Church of England

- The Rt Revd and Rt Hon Richard Chartres KCVO, Bishop of London and Co-Chair of the Meissen Theological Conference. Contribution: *The Changing Fortunes of Reformation in Anglican Self-Understanding*
- The Revd Dr Andrew Atherstone, Tutor in History and Doctrine, Wycliffe Hall, Oxford
- The Rt Revd Dr hc Nicholas Baines, Bishop of Leeds and Co-Chair of the Meissen Commission: *Meissen's Contribution to the Renewal of the Anglo-German Conversation in the 21st Century*
- The Revd Dr Kirsty Birkett, Tutor in History, Philosophy and Ethics, Oakhill College, London
- The Revd Alexander Faludy, Priest-in-Charge, Wallsend St John, Newcastle

- The Revd Dr Carolyn Hammond, Dean of Chapel, Gonville and Caius, Cambridge: *Traduttore traditore („translator traitor“): Consequences of Vernacular Scripture and Liturgy for Reformation Christianity*
- The Revd Canon Dr Leslie Nathaniel, Archbishop of Canterbury's International Ecumenical Secretary and Council for Christian Unity European Secretary; Co-Secretary Meissen Commission
- The Revd Dr Stephen Plant, Dean of Chapel and Runcie Fellow, Trinity Hall, Cambridge: *The End of Reformation: the Eschatological Consequences of Luther's Reformation insight*
- Dr Elaine Storkey, Theologian Cambridge: *Reformation Then and Now – Social and International Dimensions from an Anglican Perspective*

Keynote Address

- Professor Torrance Kirby, Professor of Ecclesiastical History, McGill University, Montreal: *Faith and Works: Martin Luther and Richard Hooker on Two Kinds of Righteousness*

Evangelische Kirche Deutschland

- Prof Dr Friederike Nüssel, Lehrstuhl fuer Systematische Theologie und Dierktorin des Oekumenischen Instituts, University Heidelberg, Mirtglied der Kammer fuer Theologie der EKD, Co-Vorsitzende der Meissen Theologischen Konferenz : *The 500th Anniversary of the Reformation in Germany: Theological and ecumenical impulses for a cultural event*
- Bischöfin Petra Bosse-Huber, Vizepraesidentin des Kirchenamtes der EKD Hannover und Leiterin der Hauptabteilung Oekumene und Auslandsarbeit
- Oberkirchenrat Christoph Ernst, Referat Nord- und Westeuropa im Kirchenamt der EKD Hannover, Co-Geschaeftsfuehrer der Meissen Kommission
- Reformationsbotschafterin Prof Dr Margot Käßmann, Berlin: *Reformation Jubilee 2017- Challenges to be met* (due to an accident Prof Dr Käßmann was unable to travel but her paper was made available and read during the conference)
- Prof Dr Jörg Lauster, Professor fuer Systematische Theologie, Universitaet Muenchen: *Zur reformatorischen Schrifthermeneutik und ihrer Relevanz für moderne Reformationskirche(n)*
- Prof Dr Gury Schneider-Ludorff, Lehrstuhl fuer Kirchen-, Dogmen- und Theologiegeschichte, Universitaet Neuendettelsau *Religion und Politik. Reformatorische Impulse und ihre Bedeutung für heute*
- Evangelische Militärbischof der Bundeswehr Dr Sigurd Rink, Berlin: *Zur Bedeutung der Ethik Luthers im Lichte aktueller friedensethischer Herausforderungen*
- Prof Dr Michael Weinrich, ehemals Lehrstuhl fuer Systematische Theologie (Oekumenik und Dogmatik), Universitaet Bochum, Mitglied der Meissen Commission: *Kirche zwischen Kontextualität und Katholizität. Protestantische Anregungen zur ökumenischen Bedeutung des Reformatorischen*

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6. MIGRATION: MAPPING CHURCH RESPONSES

The Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) have published a revised and updated edition of their joint study, *Mapping Migration: Mapping Churches' Responses in Europe*. The 2016 text explores challenges and changes in the European church landscape in light of international migration.

The comprehensive study—prepared by missiologist Revd. Dr Darrell Jackson and sociologist Dr Alessia Passarelli—combines theological interpretation, sociological accounts, and the voices of migrants themselves. *Mapping Migration* is organised according to the themes of integration, belonging, and community, and it articulates both the experiences of migrants and how they shape and build church communities in Europe.

“This updated study contributes to a better understanding of migration and diversity in European societies and churches,” said CCME General Secretary Doris Peschke. “We hope this work will cultivate more adequate responses to migration.”

Migration in Europe contributes to a more diverse religious presence and affects the mission of the churches, the book argues. “Migration provides opportunity to welcome the stranger and uphold the dignity of every human being,” remarked CEC General Secretary Fr Heikki Huttunen.

The study is released in advance of a WCC/UN high level conference on the refugee crisis in Europe, to be held in Geneva on 18-19 January.

With accessible theological reflection, user-friendly infographics, and compelling first-hand accounts, *Mapping Migration* is essential reading for anyone interested in the intersection of the life of the churches with trends in migration.

Mapping Migration is available for download from the CCME website at <http://www.ccme.be/downloads/publications/>
Print copies are available from major online retailers.

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7. SAINT SERGIUS ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE CONFERENCE: SATURDAY 13 FEBRUARY

To mark the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Saint Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute, Paris, and the publication of the first Agreed Statement of the International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue: 'In the Image and Likeness of God: A Hope-Filled Anthropology', a special conference has been organised:

'The Institut Saint-Serge: Celebrating 90 Years of Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue'

This conference will take place on Saturday 13th February 2016 in the Winstanley Lecture Theatre, Trinity College, Cambridge and will be followed by a drinks reception. The conference will explore the history and present state of the Anglican-Orthodox dialogue and of the role of the Institut Saint-Serge within that exchange, while also considering the continued importance of the thought of Saint-Serge in contemporary Anglican and Orthodox theology.

Speakers include: Dr. Antoine Arjakovsky (College des Bernadins, Paris); Dr. Brandon Gallaher (University of Exeter); Professor John Milbank (University of Nottingham); Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware) of Diokleia.

Registration Fee: £20

For the full programme and details of how to register, visit:
saintsergiusconference.blogspot.co.uk

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<http://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/work-other-churches/ccu.aspx> and visit the Latest News page

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