

**COMMISSION FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY AND DIALOGUE
REPORT 2021**

Election of Commission – That the following be elected to serve on the Commission

*Dr Kenneth Milne
Mr Glenn Moore
Ms Cate Turner
Rev Canon Dr Daniel Nuzum
Rev Canon Elaine Murray
Rev Canon Patrick Comerford
Rev Cathy Hallissey
Rev David White
Rev Ken Rue
Rev Suzanne Cousins
The Archbishop of Dublin
The Bishop of Cashel, Ferns & Ossory
The Bishop of Derry & Raphoe
The Bishop of Limerick & Killaloe
Very Rev Niall Sloane*

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REPORT 2020**

*A Bishop (Chairman): The Primate (resigned November 2020)
The Bishop of Cashel, Ferns & Ossory (from
November 2020)
WCC Representative: VACANT
ACC Representative: Rev Katharine Poulton
ACC Representative: Mr Wilfred Baker
Porvoo Contact Group Person: Rev Canon Helene Tarneberg Steed
An Honorary Secretary of General Synod: Rev Canon Malcolm Kingston
Hon Records Secretary: Rev Ken Rue
Hon Secretary: Very Rev Niall Sloane
The Bishop of Tuam
The Bishop of Limerick
Rev Canon Patrick Comerford
Rev Canon Dr Ian Ellis (retired October 2020)
Rev Canon Dr Daniel Nuzum
Rev Suzanne Cousins
Rev Cathy Hallissey
Rev David White
Ms Georgina Coptly (resigned January 2021)
Ms Cate Turner
Dr Kenneth Milne*

MEMBERSHIP (20)

In the most challenging circumstances, and working mostly online, the CCUD strove to advance the Church's commitment to the cause of Christian Unity, while recognising that it is precisely this kind of work which is best advanced through the richness of personal relationships and face-to-face encounter.

Although not strictly an 'ecumenical matter', the Commission supports and to an extent oversees the involvement of the Church of Ireland in the affairs of the wider Anglican Communion, often providing advice to the Standing Committee. This year we note the election by the Standing Committee of Mr Glenn Moore as the lay representative of the Church of Ireland on the Anglican Consultative Council, and we know that he will bring rich experience and sound insight to this important task. He succeeds Mr Wilfred Baker, someone of similar wisdom whose contribution on the wider international stage has been greatly appreciated.

We also support the involvement of the Church of Ireland in the various Networks which help to bind the Anglican Communion together and inform its members concerning the pressing issues of our time. In this context we note that Mr Robert Dunne (R.I. Safeguarding Officer) has become involved in the Safe Church Network, Canon Andrew Orr is similarly involved with the Environmental Network, as is Dr David Hutchinson-Edgar with the Peace and Justice Network, Ms June Butler with the Family Network and Ms Jacqueline Armstrong with the Women's Network. Thus, as always, the Church of Ireland might claim to punch above its weight in Anglican affairs.

The various ecumenical instruments which enrich the mission of the Irish churches continue their endeavours. In this context we note with pleasure this year the appointment of Bishop Andrew Forster as Vice-President of the Irish Council of Churches and as a trustee of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. In due course Bishop Forster will have an opportunity to serve as President of the ICC. During 2020, in many practical ways, the ICC has assisted member churches to share insights and ideas in their response to the Covid 19 situation.

The steady work of the inter-faith working group (which has owed much over recent years to the contribution of Ms Gina Coptý) continues, and there will of course be further face to face initiatives when circumstances permit. The Commission commends one such initiative by the Three Faiths Forum in Cork (see Appendix). Our European Affairs group (greatly indebted of late to the leadership of the bishop of Tuam) has monitored the more turbulent waters of Brexit and their implications for the churches, whether it be in the challenges facing border communities or the pastoral care of the farming community. The Rev Canon Helene T. Steed continues to guide us in matters concerning our role in the Porvoo Communion, and The Rev Dr C O Dowd Smyth reports regularly concerning matters associated with the Reuilly process.

Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue – Report 2021

The Rev Canon Dr Ian Ellis has been an extraordinarily energetic and enthusiastic ambassador for the Church of Ireland, not least internationally, where his grasp of detail in complex ecumenical conversations is encyclopedic. We wish him a fruitful retirement and offer good wishes to The Rev Canon Dr Maurice Elliott who succeeds him in one aspect of his work, namely participation (an observer for a 5 year period) on our behalf in the Meissen process.

Inevitably membership of Commissions such as the CCUD changes somewhat year by year, but the members owe great gratitude to Archbishop John McDowell who through recent years has chaired our meetings and led our work with commitment, wisdom, humour and that distinctive mellifluous turn of phrase which so often creates a pathway through problems and illuminates the way ahead.

Appendix

Three Faiths Forum Cork Leaflet



Key Facts: Judaism

Jewish people believe in one God who is eternal and without physical form.

Some Jewish people are hoping for the coming of the Messiah and the Messianic Age.

Different movements include Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Liberal.

Shabbat (the Sabbath) runs from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday. An important time for families and worship in the Synagogue.

The Star of David and the Menorah are well recognised symbols of Judaism.

Jewish People can worship in the Synagogue or at home. It is a personal relationship but also one of covenant with God.

Some Jewish people believe in the world to come (Ha Olam Ha Ba). When the Messiah comes, the dead will be resurrected.

Yom Kippur is a day of reflection and repentance in the Jewish calendar, asking for God's forgiveness.

Tzedaka (the importance of doing what is right and just) and Mitzvah (to follow G-d's commandments) are important principles for Jewish people.



Key Facts: Christianity

Christians believe in one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (the Trinity).

They believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah ('the anointed one'), that he was crucified, died and was resurrected on the third day.

Different Christian denominations include Church of Ireland, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Unitarian, Orthodox, Presbyterian as well as Evangelical Churches and communities.

For most Christians, Sunday, the day of the Resurrection, is their day of worship when many Christians gather to worship together, sometimes for Holy Communion. They can also pray at home.

Christians have a personal relationship with God, praying to God both individually and collectively.

Some Christians believe in heaven and hell – some might only believe in heaven or also purgatory.

Christians believe in God's grace and forgiveness for sins but also in a judgement to come in the end times.

Discipleship for a Christian means being personally committed to following the example of Jesus Christ that is revealed in and through the gospels



Key Facts: Islam

Muslims believe in the shahadah – there is only one God and Muhammad (peace be upon him PBUH) is the final messenger.

Allah ('God' in Arabic) has 99 names, such as Al-Rahim (which means the Most Merciful). Prophet Muhammad is a central, human figure in Islam.

In Islam there are two sizeable traditions: Sunni (circa 90%) and Shi'a (circa 10%). There are many sub-traditions within these.

Many Muslims will worship in a masjid (mosque). On Fridays there are Jummah prayers. They can also pray at home and elsewhere.

The Quran is the Holy Book which was divinely revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. Muslims also use the Hadith.

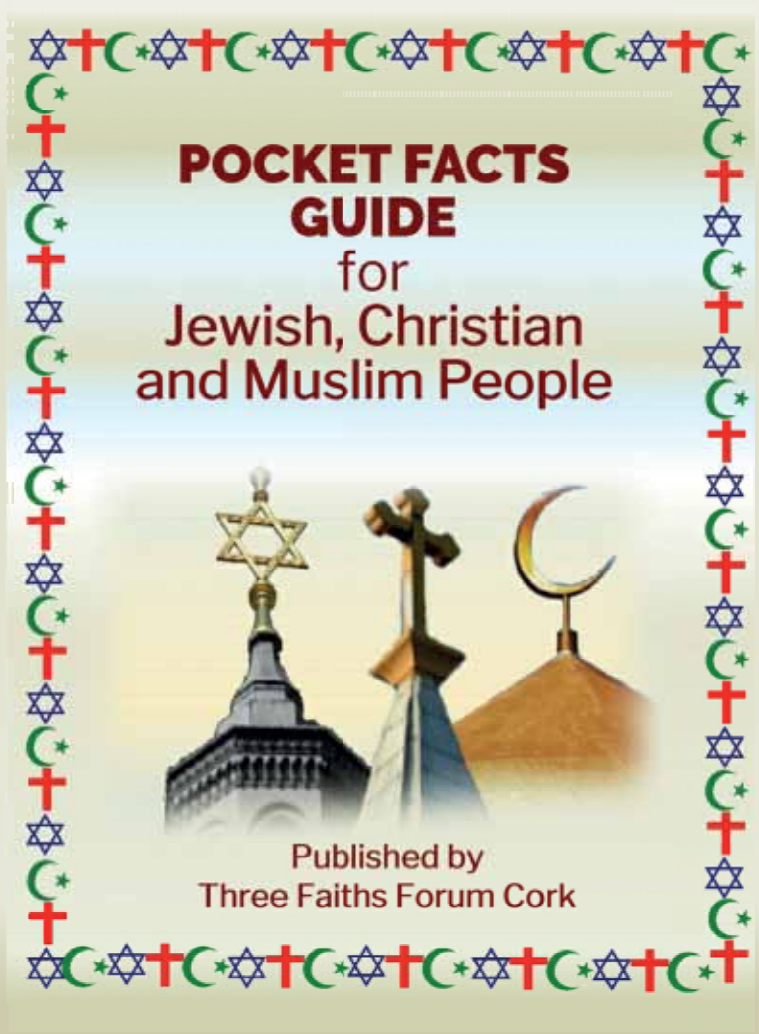
Muslims pray 5 times a day; there are many other ways that Muslims worship, maintaining a relationship with Allah.

Muslims believe in the afterlife. Heaven is known as Jannah and hell is known as Jahannam.

Muslims believe in judgement day where all humans will be questioned. Muslims believe in the mercy and forgiveness of Allah.

Humans strive to emulate the life of the Prophet Muhammad.

The Cork Three Faiths Forum is an initiative that brings together representatives of the three Abrahamic faiths – Judaism, Christianity and Islam, seeking to create a space where people of faith can dialogue openly and respectfully, come to a better understanding of each other’s faith and work together to enhance tolerance, co-operation and friendship in our society. Cork, like all of Ireland, is increasingly a multicultural,multiracial and multireligious society. Our group is drawn from the Muslim, Jewish and Christian faith communities in Cork and have come together to explore how our various faith traditions can help foster a spirit of openness, dialogue, and inclusion within our society.



Thank you to St Philip's Centre in Leicester for the idea of these booklets and for much of the content which was amended to reflect all three of the faiths represented in Cork 3FF.

This Pocket Guide was produced with a grant obtained from the Westhill Foundation in 2020.



Before you start talking...

Judaism, Christianity and Islam are known as the Abrahamic faiths: they all believe in the same God as Abraham and share similar stories, histories and people.

Judaism, Christianity and Islam are incredibly diverse and it is difficult to say that 'All Jewish people believe...' or 'All Christians do...' or 'All Muslims eat...'. This guide is a brief introduction to get you talking not a definitive statement of

the teachings of any of the three faiths.

Similarities between Muslims, Christians and Jews include the importance of charitable giving and of prayer.

Muslims treat Christian and Jewish texts with respect. They form a part of Islamic history and the Qur'an presumes knowledge of their stories when it retells them. Judaism is rooted in the Bible. Jewish people understand their Jewishness as code to their identity, not simply as a religious way of life.

Be aware of the impact of centuries of Christian

prejudice against Jewish people. For many centuries the Christian church sanctioned and even encouraged persecution of Jewish people. This includes the Holocaust (the Shoah).

Key differences focus around the Christian belief in Jesus whom Christians believe is the Son of God whereas Muslims believe Jesus was a Prophet of God and most Jewish people believe Jesus was in the Prophetic tradition but was neither the Messiah nor a deity.

JEWISH

Scriptures: The Tanakh, or Hebrew Bible, is a collection of twenty-four books, written in Hebrew and Aramaic, arranged in three sections, The Torah (Law), which makes up the first five books, contains the commands God gave to Moses.

The Talmud (which contains the Mishnah) is not viewed as Scripture; it is the discussions and teachings of the Oral law given to Moses on Mount Sinai, which have been passed down by Rabbis through the generations. Both the Torah and the Talmud are of particular significance to Jewish people.

Food: In Judaism, strict observance of the law includes adherence to the *kashrut*, or kosher food laws. Some animals (or parts of an animal) may not be eaten; animals that can be eaten are killed in a manner that includes draining all blood. Meat – which includes chicken – cannot be eaten with dairy products. Eggs, fruit, vegetables and grains may be eaten with either meat or dairy.

Jews will fast for twenty-five hours on *Yom Kippur* (the Day of Atonement). Of course some Jewish people may choose to, for example, refrain from eating meat out of environmental or health concerns.

In the Synagogue (Shul): Men may be expected to wear a kippah or yarmulke.

If attending a Service in an Orthodox Synagogue, please be aware that men and women sit separately.

Please dress modestly, wearing clothes that cover your shoulders and go at least below the knee.

Please be respectful of those praying/worshipping.

Please refrain from bringing food or drink in with you, in case of prohibited food or spillages.

Please show respect to images and sacred texts, especially if handling them yourself.

Make sure to ask permission before taking photos.

CHRISTIAN

Scriptures: The Bible has two parts called; The Old Testament and The New Testament. The Old Testament contains the same books as the Jewish Scriptures (the Tanakh) but they are arranged and divided differently.

Many Christian Bibles contain additional books referred to as the Apocrypha. Some but not all Christian denominations accept these books as part of the canon of the Bible.

The New Testament contains four Gospels which tell the story of Jesus' life and teaching, a history of, and letters to the early Church and also the Book of Revelation.

Whilst the Old Testament was written mainly in Hebrew (with a few chapters written in Aramaic) and the New Testament was written in Greek, most Christians tend to read the Bible now in their own local language.

Christians look to The Bible to better understand the nature of God and faith as well as a source of comfort and guidance. It is used extensively in prayer and worship.

Food: In general Christians are not prohibited from eating any foods but Christians may choose to fast at particular times as part of their religious practice.

Many Christians will fast during Lent which usually means foregoing a certain food for the entirety of Lent. Some Christians, particularly Catholic and Orthodox, refrain from eating meat on Fridays. Other Christians will fast as part of prayer or before they receive Holy Communion.

In the Church (Chapel): Some churches will expect men to take off their hats before entering.

Please dress modestly when visiting a place of worship.

Please be respectful of those praying/worshipping.

Please refrain from bringing food or drink in with you.

Please show respect to images or sacred texts, especially if handling them yourself.

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MUSLIM

Scriptures: The Qur'an is the word of God and was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) over 23 years, via Angel Jibra'il (Gabriel). It was revealed in Arabic and most Muslims will read it in its original form (but translations are available).

Muslims consult the Hadith for guidance; primarily these are the sayings and the actions of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Food: In Ramadhan Muslims who are fit and healthy fast for 29/30 days, abstaining from food and drink from sunrise to sunset. Muslims can also fast for a variety of spiritual practices throughout the year.

Muslims only eat food which is *halal* (meaning 'lawful'); prohibited foods (*haram*) are listed in the Qur'an – such as pork and carrion. Halal food must be sacrificed in the name of God. Muslims are prohibited from drinking alcohol and taking intoxicants. Some Muslims may choose e.g. a vegetarian lifestyle for reasons other than religious observance.

In the Masjid (Mosque): Everyone will need to remove their shoes on entry.

Women should cover their hair as a sign of respect.

Please dress modestly, this includes covering your shoulders and legs.

Please be respectful of those praying/worshipping.

Please refrain from bringing food or drink in with you, in case of prohibited food or spillages.

Please show respect to sacred texts, especially if handling them yourself.

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