



CCU Resources 2007

Meissen clergy

Guidance for Clergy Appointments and Exchanges under the Meissen Agreement

1. The Meissen Declaration states:

Authorised ministers of our churches may, subject to the regulations of the churches and within the limits of their competence, carry out the tasks of their own office in congregations of the other churches when requested. If these functions are to be exercised for an extended period of service rather than on a single occasion, an invitation from the appropriate authority is necessary for the carrying out of these tasks.(B iv)

Ministry of Anglican clergy in the EKD

2. Ministry in the EKD is governed by the regulations of the EKD member churches. These constitute no real impediment to the ministry of Anglican priests within the EKD, but do not facilitate ministry by Anglican deacons. It is unlikely that Anglican priests would be asked to assent specifically to every article of a Confession, although they would be expected to respect the Confession(s) of the Church in which they were ministering, and not to speak against it.

3. Under Canon B 43.3, Church of England clergy need the approval of the Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe if they are to take part in any service on a regular basis or preside at the Eucharist according to the rite of one of the EKD member churches.

Ministry of EKD pastors and Vikare in the Church of England

4. German ministers can be invited to carry out the full range of pastoral and other non-liturgical duties in the Church of England. Under Canon B 43 they can also be invited and given permission to perform a wide range of liturgical duties. There is no difference between the positions of male and female ministers. The duties mentioned in Canon B43 are:

- (a) to say or sing Morning or Evening Prayer or the Litany;
- (b) to read the Holy Scriptures at any service;
- (c) to preach at any service;

- (d) to lead the Intercessions at the Holy Communion and to lead prayers at other services.
 - (e) to assist at Baptism or the Solemnisation of Matrimony or conduct a Funeral Service;
 - (f) to assist in the distribution of the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper to the people at the Holy Communion;
- if the minister or lay person is authorised to perform a similar duty in his or her own Church.

5. It should be noted that provisions in Canon B 43.9 involving joint worship and worship according to the rites of another church are intended to apply to situations where a group of church members is present with their minister, and not to facilitate the ministry in the Church of England of individuals in isolation from the churches of which they are ministers.

6. Because the Meissen Agreement does not provide for a full interchangeability of ministers, EKD ministers cannot yet be given Permission to Officiate as a Church of England priest or deacon. They cannot therefore baptize, preside at an Anglican Eucharist, conduct marriage services, or be given sole charge of a parish.

7. Where a German congregation in England is a member of a local ecumenical partnership, Canon B 44 (Of Local Ecumenical Projects) applies. This allows a greater degree of sharing of ministry, as detailed in *The Ecumenical Relations Code of Practice 1989*. Canon B 44 only applies to the ministers of congregations which are members of the LEP concerned.

Auslandsvikariat

8. The *Vikariat* is a period of training (typically lasting two years) undertaken by a *Vikar/Vikarin* after a degree in theology and prior to ordination. The training is parish-based, but involves some time spent in a seminary. The regulations of many EKD member churches make it possible for a number of those who have completed a *Vikariat* to spend a further year as a *Vikar(in)* abroad. Because this is regarded as part of their training, their own church may be willing to continue to pay them during this year. This makes it financially possible for a German *Vikar(in)* to work for a year as a curate in a Church of England parish. Permission from the diocesan bishop for ministry in accordance with Canon B 43



CCU Resources 2007

is required. This enables the *Vikar(in)* to perform virtually all the tasks normally performed by Anglican curates in deacon's orders. In some *Landeskirchen* a *Vikar(in)* is ordained before entering upon the year abroad, whereas in others ordination takes place when the *Vikar(in)* is appointed to his or her first parish as a pastor. It is important that the *Vikar(in)* is aware that this will not make a difference to the duties which he or she will be able to perform in the Church of England.

9. The Meissen Commission believes that the possibility of an *Auslandsvikariat* offers rich potential. Those who spend a year in an English parish will carry this experience with them throughout their ministry in Germany, and the life of the English parish will be enriched. Parishioners will learn from the insights of the German *Vikar(in)*, and the partnership between our two churches will impinge on everyday Christian life at the local level. Such a placement will be easiest to arrange on a bilateral basis within the context of a diocesan link. The Commission encourages those who are engaged in such links to explore this possibility. The Commission would be grateful to be kept informed, through its co-secretaries, of such arrangements.

10. It is important that the incumbent and the *Vikar(in)* meet each other before the placement begins to discuss the expectations each has of the other. The experience will only be authentic if the *Vikar(in)* works under the direction of the incumbent as an English curate would, playing a full part in parish life and worship. At the same time, the *Vikar(in)* should be encouraged to gain experience of the wider life of the deanery and diocese, including opportunities such as participation in post-ordination training, with the approval and assistance of the incumbent.

11. The chief practical matter to be arranged when a *Vikar(in)* is to spend a year in an Anglican parish is that of accommodation. The *Vikar(in)* should reside within the parish, as an Anglican curate would. It may be that a vacant curate's house or other church property can be made available. Alternatively, there may be room in the parsonage house or in a parishioner's house. However, it is desirable that the *Vikar(in)* should have a self-contained flat, either in such a house or elsewhere in the parish, rather than living as a member of the host's household. The salary paid to a German *Vikar(in)* usually includes provision for payment of a modest rent; it is important to check whether this will be the case. It is advisable

to make it clear to unmarried applicants that cohabitation is not acceptable.

12. Sometimes a German *Vikar(in)* makes contact directly with a Church of England parish priest, who finds accommodation and obtains the permission of his or her *Landeskirche* and of the Church of England bishop. In such cases the Meissen Commission asks that its Anglican and German Co-Secretaries be informed of the arrangement, and that the *Vikar(in)* submit a brief evaluation of his or her experience at the end of the year.

13. In other cases, the Commission's assistance in finding such a placement is sought. Applications are welcomed, and should be made through the German Co-Secretary, not direct to London. The request may be made subject to the *Vikar(in)* passing the Second Theological Examination. Such a letter needs to be received in Hannover at least eight months before the proposed placement is intended to begin (e.g. before 1 February for a placement to begin on 1 October); longer notice (up to twelve months) would be appreciated where possible. Again, a brief report at the end of the year is requested.

Employment

14. The legal position makes it fairly easy for a German-speaking Anglican priest to be employed in an EKD member church. Such employment, and the terms and conditions of service, should be arranged between the priest and the EKD member church concerned. For presidency at the Eucharist, the permission of the Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe is required (see above). It is the individual's responsibility to check the position with regard to pensions, taxation and national insurance.

15. Under the Diocesan Stipends Fund Measure 1953 a bishop can declare any person 'to be engaged in the cure of souls within the diocese'. This makes it possible for German ministers to be paid from the Diocesan Stipends Fund, provided that they are assisting, and under the supervision of, an incumbent or priest in charge. However, a German minister cannot *have* the cure of souls in a parish and therefore cannot be instituted as an incumbent or licensed as a team vicar or priest in charge, and the number of posts to which a German minister could be appointed is therefore likely to be very limited at the present time. In

view of this, the Meissen Commission believes



CCU Resources 2007

that exchanges of ministers offer the best possibilities at present.

Exchanges

16. Where a partnership exists between parishes or deaneries, or between a Church of England diocese and an EKD member church, clergy exchanges can be arranged directly without recourse to the Meissen Commission, although the Commission would be grateful to be informed of the exchange. Where no such partnership exists, the Commission is happy to seek suitable partners at the request of a Church of England diocese or an EKD member church (but not at the request of individuals). The Co-Secretaries should be approached at least one year in advance.

17. All practical arrangements are the responsibility of the Church of England diocese and the EKD member church concerned. The Meissen Commission suggests the following guidelines.

— Each church should continue to pay its own minister. The Anglican priest would continue to be paid from the diocesan stipends fund and pension cover would continue automatically (without charge). National Insurance contributions should continue to be paid by the Church Commissioners and by the individual, although the Department of Social Security (Overseas Branch) should be consulted as to whether permission is required for this. If the priest is to stay in Germany for more than 183 days (six months), however, tax would be paid in Germany and not in the United Kingdom. Guidance for Clergy Going Overseas on Short-Term Exchanges (i.e. less than twelve months) is available from the Church Commissioners, and advice should also be sought from H.M. Inspector of Taxes at the address given in the Church Commissioners' advice sheet.

— Accommodation should be made available free of charge by the church in which the minister is working during the exchange. Because of the different levels of remuneration between Germany and England and the different arrangements for housing between England and Germany and between EKD member churches, some EKD member churches might wish to adjust the pay of those being sent to England to take account of any reduction in their normal living expenses, and might wish to supplement the income of those coming from England to take

account of any increase they are likely to experience in their normal living expenses. Such

matters should be regulated by the diocese and the EKD member church concerned in each case.

18. For an Anglican priest to preside at the Eucharist in a member church of the EKD, the permission of the Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe is required (see para. 3 above). Since a German minister cannot be given sole charge of an English parish, exchanges are most likely to take place at the level of assistant curates and team vicars.

19. The Meissen Commission suggests that in the first instance exchanges should be for a period of six weeks, building up to longer periods in the light of experience in the diocese.