

# THE WINDOW

Number 24

Summer 1990

## LATVIAN AND ESTONIAN PASTORS JOIN ANGLO-SCANDINAVIAN PASTORAL CONFERENCE IN NORWAY

From 24th to 31st May, 1990, eight clergy of the Church of England went to Stavanger, Norway, to join pastors appointed by the Lutheran churches of the Nordic and Baltic region, for the eighth Anglo-Scandinavian Pastoral Conference. Since 1978, these biennial conferences have been bringing together clergy and others from the Church of England and the Nordic churches to share insights and experiences about their churches' mission and ministry. On this occasion, delegates came not only from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland but, for the first time, also from the Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Latvia and Estonia.

The conference gave an insight, through seminars and study-visits, into the life and work of the Church of Norway, as well as an opportunity for Anglicans and Lutherans to learn of one another's traditions. As has become a feature of the Anglo-Scandinavian Pastoral Conferences in recent years, there was also a lively exchange on many issues between Lutherans of different nations and the Anglicans became aware that Lutheranism, like Anglicanism, is a very broad Church indeed. Those who had attended the last Nordic-based pastoral conference in Aarhus in 1986 were struck by the cultural contrast between the pietism of the Church of Norway and the more liberal folk-church tradition of Denmark.

Anglicans and Lutherans alike were captivated by the personal perspective on news from the Baltic states, and the role of the churches in the rapid changes in those countries, which the Latvian and Estonian delegates gave.

The Anglo-Scandinavian Pastoral Conferences are essentially "life and work" rather than "faith and

order" events, but inevitably one impinges on the other. Of special interest to those amongst the Church of England group concerned with the current official talks between their church and the Nordic and Baltic churches was the existence in Norwegian parishes of the *Bedehus* (prayer houses) where many members of the Church of Norway gather for prayer, praise and - albeit unsanctioned by the Church - occasional services of holy communion celebrated by the laity.

The Pastoral Conference was organised by the Very Revd Leif Frivold, Dean of Kristiansand, the Revd Oddmund Brundtland, Vicar of Bjerkreim, Mette Bagge, Lecturer at the School of Mission and Theology in Stavanger and the Very Revd Trond Hardeng Sub-Dean of Stavanger Cathedral, who has been appointed Norwegian national secretary for the conferences. The Rt Revd Björn Bue, Bishop of Stavanger, received the delegates and played an active role in the conference.

A report is now in preparation - in two parts, one by the Anglicans and one by the Lutherans - in which the main issues of the conference will be identified and a constructive critique of the Church of Norway will be offered. Reports of the previous Anglo-Scandinavian Pastoral Conferences are available from their Anglican and Lutheran Chairmen, the Revd Geoffrey Brown (Co-Moderator of the Anglican-Lutheran Society) 30, Thanet Street, London WC1H 9QH, or from the Revd Anders Bäckström, Uppsala University, 752 23 Uppsala, Sweden.

The next Anglo-Scandinavian Pastoral Conference will be held in 1992 in Reykjavik, Iceland. The convenor will be the Revd Jon Baldvinsson, Chaplain to the Icelandic Embassy in London and Icelandic national secretary for the conferences.



**PRESIDENT OF ICELAND AT  
 ANGLICAN / ICELANDIC LUTHERAN  
 EUCHARIST IN GRIMSBY**

Grimsby, in the north-east of England, is an ancient fishing town with Nordic links and a well-established Icelandic community.

On Sunday 15th July, the President of Iceland will be visiting Grimsby for a civic event. In planning the visit, she asked for the opportunity to worship in the church where Icelandic people in Grimsby receive holy communion. That church is St Andrew's (with St Luke's), known as "the fishermen's church" where Icelandic services are regularly held, by invitation of the Church of England parish.

The celebrant will be the Rt Revd David Tustin, Bishop of Grimsby. He will be assisted at the altar by the Revd Jon Baldvinsson, Chaplain to the Icelandic Embassy in London. The Icelandic Consul and members of the Icelandic community in England will be present.

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

The next  
**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**  
 of the  
 Anglican-Lutheran Society  
 will be held from  
 19th to 25th June 1991  
 at  
 Wycliffe Hall, Oxford  
 [Further details soon]

INDEX TO ABBREVIATIONS

LWI	Lutheran World Information	L	The Lutheran
ACC	Anglican Consultative Council	CT	Church Times
AMM	Anglican Media Mailing	etd	edited
EPS	Ecumenical Press Service	ppd	paraphrased

The **Window** is sent quarterly to Members and Associate groups of the Anglican-Lutheran Society. Information about the Society and membership applications are available from the Secretary.

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## L W F LETTER TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

The following letter was sent by the General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation on April 2nd to the Most Rev. Dr. Robert Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Your Grace,

The greeting read out by David [Bishop of] Grimsby to our Eighth Assembly in Curitiba, Brazil, was deeply appreciated. Many of those assembled had themselves experienced the growing relationship between our two communions in various parts of the world and were especially pleased at your affirmation of them.

We too are happy for the many recent signs of common work and witness following several centuries, in many places at least, of polite mutual isolation. Yet, as you point out, history is witness to many significant exceptions which have shown how deep our common roots and our mutual concerns have been.

But perhaps our greatest joy is over those agreements in various parts of the world where Anglicans and Lutherans have committed themselves to joint witness and service, thus enabling them with integrity to embark upon initial stages of communion. We also note that in other parts of the world our two communions have almost spontaneously recognised all they share by virtue of baptism into Christ and have simply found it natural to practise a high level of fellowship. I think especially of our churches in the southern parts of Africa. These close and warm relations were exemplified by the roles of

our bishops and other church leaders at the celebration of Namibian independence. We join you in looking toward the day when our people and clergy may be in full communion.

In the interval between your greeting and this reply, you have announced your intention to lay down your office next year. While we understand your reasons for an early retirement, we shall miss your exemplary leadership of the Anglican Communion and the strong ecumenical initiatives you have undertaken. Those accomplishments shine the brighter when one remembers the context of history within which you have carried the burden of primatial office.

Our Assembly was enriched by the presence both of the Bishop of Grimsby and the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion. We are thankful for their presence and for your thoughtful yet stirring words of greeting.

In the name of our crucified and risen Saviour, I am

Faithfully yours,

Gunnar Staalsett, General Secretary

## LUTHERANS IN USA TO STUDY TIES WITH EPISCOPALIANS

Members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) will study a document to bring them closer to members of the Episcopal Church (USA). The standing committee of the ELCA's Office for Ecumenical Affairs, meeting in Chicago April 18-19th, approved a process for studying Implications of the Gospel, a document developed by the Lutheran-Episcopal dialogue.

Implications was adopted in January 1988 as the dialogue's report on "outstanding questions that

must be resolved before full communion" can be authorised between the two churches. The goals of the study are "to acquire information about whether or not the ELCA can receive and affirm Implications as a faithful expression of the gospel" and "to discover which recommendations, as outlined in Implications, are seen as priorities for implementation by ELCA synods, congregations and churchwide units."

ELCA congregations, seminaries, synod bishops and synod ecumenical officers are to take part in the study. The ELCA committee recommended that the document be reviewed with counterparts in the Episcopal Church whenever possible. Findings from the study will be presented to the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in August 1991.

[LWI]



## A YEAR IN AN ANGLICAN PARISH

by Rainer Kiefer, Osnabrück, Germany.

"We commit ourselves to share a common life and mission. We will take all possible steps to closer fellowship in as many areas of Christian life and witness as possible, so that all our members together may advance on the way to full, visible unity."

(Meissen agreement - mutual acknowledgement and next steps, p29)

When I arrived in London in summer 1989, I was anxious to know to what extent I would be able to experience the "sharing of a common life" and "closer fellowship" in the Anglican church.

In order to get to know Anglican church life and theology better and in the hope of understanding more about the challenges the church in the city is facing, I had applied for a placement in a Church of England parish in London. Financially maintained by my own church, the Lutheran Landeskirche of Hanover, encouraged by the EKD and supported by the Board for Mission and Unity, I finally was invited to live and work as a Lutheran "guest-worker" in the parish of St Peter's in Bethnal Green.

Looking back after twelve months of living and working in London in the Diocese of Stepney, I am grateful for the friendship and hospitality I have enjoyed and for all those experiences which helped me to get a better understanding of the Church of England.

I am very much aware of the fact that living and working in London, or more accurately in the East End, offers a rather special insight into the life of the Church of England which might be far from typical and might not have validity for the Anglican church in General at all. Considering the variety of traditions in the Anglican church which ranges from Anglo-Catholic churchmanship on the one side to charismatic and evangelical preferences on the other side, I feel it will be rather difficult to make any observations which can claim general relevance.

Despite these obvious difficulties, it might be worthwhile trying to outline three areas in which Anglicans and Lutherans in Germany and Britain might work closer together in the future.

### Worship and Liturgy

Being used to sober and word-centred services in the German Lutheran tradition, I was impressed by the Anglican liturgy (as it was celebrated at

St. Peter's) and its symbolic richness. No wonder that German friends often enjoyed the liturgical activity and the vivid movement during the worship. The procession of priest and servers through the church to the altar, the colourful vestments and the outstanding importance of the Eucharist have been unfamiliar to most of us and achieved, therefore, a certain fascination.

Every person, however, who is celebrating the Mass Sunday by Sunday, even in the Anglican tradition in Britain, must realise how difficult it is for many of those who attend services to discover the relevance of liturgy for their lives. This places a particular responsibility on those leading services to enable the congregation to re-discover the healing and liberating capacity of worship. It seems necessary to proclaim "the eternal truths" in fresh and compelling ways, in order to make liturgy meaningful and our services more attractive. In this respect we should make use of the opportunity to share our questions and our perplexity, in order to learn from each other without simply copying what would not work in our own context.

### Re-doing theology in a secular society:

In some respects the Church of England is facing similar problems to those of the Lutheran churches, at least those in West Germany. On the one hand, the churches cannot take it for granted any more that a great majority of the (urban) population accepts the role of the church as relevant for problems of daily life. The spheres of influence seemed to have moved from the centre of life to the fringes. On the one hand, the churches, especially in the cities, are meeting their greatest challenges at the very fringe of society. The churches are confronted with immense social problems and are called to take a stand for the poor and marginalised in the urban areas. Responding to these challenges could have a particular impact on our own understanding of the church and her special role in urban society. It would be sad if Anglican and Lutheran Christians, who seek closer fellowship, would miss any chance to face these questions and strive for constructive answers with joint forces.

### Ecumenism:

One of the most interesting remarks I remember, described the Church of England as being an ecumenical model in herself, because of the variety of traditions which are at home in the



Anglican church. In some respects this might even be true. Lutheran Christians in Germany might interpret this self-confident remark as an encouragement to accept a variety of traditions in church-life and service - without the fear that variety in worship automatically might water down confessional clarity.

Besides that, however, we all, Anglicans and Lutherans, have to remind each other that we share a common heritage not only among ourselves, but also with Christians all over the world who stand in Catholic, Reformed, Methodist and various other traditions. We are confronted with immense challenges on ethical and political levels and are called to seek jointly for appropriate answers.

In "committing ourselves to share a common life and mission" among Lutherans and Anglicans in Europe but also worldwide, we might succeed in creating a model for further cooperation among divided churches.

(Rainer Kiefer's initiative to work in a Church of England parish began with an enquiry to the Anglican-Lutheran Society. He will be ordained in the Lutheran Church of Hanover in August.)

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## 'ECUMENISM IS UNTYING KNOTS'

### ANGLICAN SCHOLAR

### TELLS LUTHERAN BISHOPS

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"Ecumenism is the process of untying knots," Sir Henry Chadwick, a Church of England ecumenist and authority on the early church, told the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Conference of Bishops in March. "Dialogues clearly have changed the climate among churches, even though few actions have been taken on the results of the dialogues," he said.

"The people of God normally move slowly and ought never to be stampeded," Prof. Chadwick continued. "Nevertheless, the United States is a privileged area because of the strength of Lutheran-Episcopal dialogues and agreements."

Prof. Chadwick, 69, a former professor at both Oxford and Cambridge universities, was referring to the 1982 agreement between Lutherans and

Episcopalians in the USA on limited sharing of the eucharist. He was also referring to the promise of last year's Niagara Report, an international document proposing steps to full communion between churches of the two traditions.

Noting the "ecumenism and mission are immediately related activities," he said that "among the bodies in Christendom both nearest to the ancient and mediaeval tradition and most influenced by the less radical sides of the Reformation, Lutherans and Episcopalians are most obviously akin."

Although the two bodies have different traditions regarding apostolic succession (the laying on of hands in unbroken succession since the time of Christ), Prof. Chadwick said the "Niagara theologians were clearly right to locate the primary continuity in the community [the church]."

In the Niagara recommendations, Anglicans are asked to accept Lutherans who were not ordained in the apostolic succession; Lutherans are asked to begin the practice.

"Both Lutherans and Anglicans have consistently regarded ordination as a once-and-for-all sacramental act, a doctrine which is in effect identical with the view that it confers an 'indelible character'," he said. "But we come to... a parting of the ways in the [Anglican] requirement that the bishop be recognised as the minister of ordination."

The two churches can "serve not merely each other but a wider ecumenical cause if the reconciliation of ministries in the succession of both apostolic teaching and episcopal order can be conscientiously and uncompromisingly achieved," he said.

Among Evangelical Lutheran Church in America bishops responding to Professor Chadwick, Bishop Wayne Weissenbuehler said the presentation "puts extra pressure on us to find all the unity we can. Lutherans never struggled very much over orders. But I get angry with people who see the Niagara Report as an attempt to sneak [apostolic] succession into the church."

[L]

Opinions expressed in The Window do not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Anglican-Lutheran Society.



## LUTHERAN BLESSES TWO AT ANGLICAN ORDINATION

Two Anglican clergy received a blessing from a Lutheran bishop in an unusual ordination service at St John's Cathedral in Saskatoon, Canada.

Bishop Telmor Sartison of the Saskatchewan synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada stood with Anglican Bishop Roland Wood of Saskatoon during the ordination service of Rev David Lajeunesse and Rev Roy Parker.

Although Bishop Sartison did not participate in the laying on of hands, he bestowed a blessing upon the two priests after the ordination.

Bishop Sartison's participation results from last summer's agreement between the Anglican and Lutheran churches in Canada to engage in interim eucharistic sharing.

Recently in British Columbia, Anglican Archbishop Douglas Hambridge of New Westminster and Lutheran Bishop Marlin Aadland urged members of their churches to work more closely with one another.

Archbishop Hambridge, metropolitan of British Columbia, noted the potential for the churches in sharing use of their buildings.

"I think it would be exciting for neighbouring Anglican and Lutheran parishes to explore the idea of sharing one of their buildings for worship, and using the money from the sale of the other for joint outreach ministry," he said.

He added that he and Bishop Aadland were not suggesting Anglicans become Lutherans or vice versa, but that the two work together rather than waste valuable resources.

"I don't think people need to fear that they'll be sold off or swallowed up," he said.

"It's more a case of enabling each other to respond to the Gospel more effectively.

"There are a lot of exciting possibilities for the future if we're willing to explore them."

[Anglican Journal, March 1990]

## THEOLOGIAN IN G.D.R. PARLIAMENT

With twenty four Protestant theologians in the new East German parliament, four ordained pastors have been chosen to serve in the government. The twenty-four theologians include twenty pastors. Eleven pastors and one non-ordained theologian represent the Social Democratic Party (SPD). Six pastors and one non-ordained theologian belong to the Christian Democratic Union (CDU). Other parties with pastors as representatives are the German Social Union, the Democratic Awakening party, the Democracy Now movement, and the New Forum.

The four pastors appointed to government positions are: Markus Meckel, foreign minister (head of the SPD and until the end of last year a pastor in Saxony); Rainer Eppelmann, minister for defence and disarmament (head of Democratic Awakening, a pastor of the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg, and a former conscientious objector who served a jail sentence for refusing to do military service); Gottfried Müller, minister for media and press (deputy head of the CDU, editor of the Thuringia church newspaper until last autumn, and since then head of a church publishing house in Jena); and Hans-Wilhelm Ebeling (head of the German Social Union, and former pastor of the St. Thomas Church in Leipzig). The head of the German Democratic Republic's new government, Lothar de Maiziere, is a lay member of the synod of the Evangelical Church in Berlin-Brandenburg.

The pastors elected to parliament in the GDR's first free elections have either left church service or have been given leave of absence from their normal duties in the church. Some church leaders have voiced concern that pastors should at the same time be representatives of political parties. East Berlin's general superintendent, Günter Krusche, said it would be asking too much of a pastor with a strong party-political involvement to give pastoral care to a political opponent.

Bishop Werner Leich of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thuringia said he could not see how a person could serve a political party, and yet continue to be a pastor open to the concerns of all people within the parish. Those who choose to accept state or party positions should leave church service, he said.

[LWI]



## GERMAN CHURCHES: A FORCE FOR THE FUTURE

by Paul Oestreicher

Many historians agree that when Martin Luther proverbially nailed his 95 theses to the door of the parish church of Wittenberg, he signalled the beginning of the end of the Middle Ages. It is still too early to judge whether historians will one day set the word Perestroika alongside the word Reformation, Perestroika signalling the beginning of the end of a period of European history that began with the French Revolution. It is reasonably safe to guess that by the year 2000 two centuries of rivalling ideologies will have been left behind. Eternal verities apart, the Churches will have played no small part in this fascinating period of transition. And nowhere more so than in the two largest nations of central Europe, Poland and Germany. Of Polish Catholicism much has been written. The comparable, but very different role of German Protestantism is still much less known.

The centre of gravity remains in the heartland of the Lutheran Reformation. Friedrich Schorlemmer teaches theology in Wittenberg's Lutheran Seminary. He wrote the radical theological theses that were to be the backbone of the Protestant Church's leadership during the dying months of the Marxist-Leninist regime.

The theological father of East Germany's social and political transformation will almost certainly come to be recognised as Heino Falcke, Provost of Erfurt and head of the Augustinum, the study centre which was once the monastery where the young Luther took his vows. Falcke, too radical to be made a bishop, has been a major figure in ecumenical social theology for 20 years. Schorlemmer at 46 is still young enough to make future church history, if he does not feel called to go full-time into secular politics. And through these critical months of social transformation, the elected chairman of the East German leadership was Werner Leich, Bishop of Thuringia, with his palace (yes, it really is) in Eisenach on one hilltop facing the mediaeval Wartburg Castle on the hilltop opposite.

Leich, the most "Anglican" of Germany's Lutherans bishops in style (down to purple shirt and very un-German dog collar), is heir to a strong post-war tradition of purposeful leadership. Mitzenheim, the first post-war bishop, who had staunchly resisted Hitler, decided to give the communists the benefit of the doubt and worked with them, but impressed on them both his faith and his authority as bishop. When the Red Army moved into Eisenach he had summoned

the Russian Commandant and taken him to the cellar of his palace: "General, you see this great cross lying on the floor. Hitler's fascists removed it from the central tower of the Wartburg. Your soldiers will put it back." And they did. That kind of resolution, learned in the hard school of Nazi persecution, characterised East German church leadership.

Until 1969 the EKD, a federation of Germany's Protestant Church Provinces (Lutheran, Reformed and United), had managed to survive as one, despite the division of Germany into two states. In that year the first post-war phase of German church history ended. Under immense pressure from the communist government of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), triggered by the establishment of a West German military chaplaincy, the Church in the GDR formed its own independent Church Federation emphasising, however, that this was a break in organisation only. The spiritual ties with the West German Church would and could not be severed. But East German Church leaders made abundantly clear that the communist charge of being part of a subversive "Nato Church" would never stick.

From the outset, church leaders in the GDR had offered the communist authorities their conditional allegiance. They would only say no when Christian conscience demanded it. Theologians like Johannes Hamel and Günter Jakob formulated a theology of "critical solidarity" with their new social system: co-operation with all that was defensible, critique of all that was not. East Germany's First Primate, Albrecht Schönherr, Bishop of Berlin, turned that principle into day-to-day church politics and ultimately entered into something like a formal concordat with Honecker's state, an agreement which put the Church formally on the GDR's map as the only major social force outside the communist framework.

The leadership of the state had come to see that, contrary to Marxist doctrine, religion was not going to die. So it was given limited freedoms: permission to visit prisons, build new churches, have some access to radio and television and (perhaps the most important of all) be free to receive massive financial subsidies from the West German Churches, with the GDR state cashing in on the large hard-currency transfers. The financial deal was known to many, but never made public.



Honecker was proud of the GDR's good Church-State relations. But it is now clear that the Church had got by far the better of the bargain. With no state interference in its internal affairs, it was able to sow the seeds of a free society. By opening its doors to the discontented, specially to an angry young generation, all in the context of services of intercession for peace and justice, the Church, most noticeably in the great cities of Berlin and Leipzig, began, over almost a decade, to be a focus for radical change.

When the communist dictatorship collapsed and national and local government by "Round Table" temporarily took over, almost everywhere, from national to village level, the clergy were asked to take the chair. A typical event: when the communist Rektor (Vice-Chancellor) of Berlin University was sacked, the Dean of the Faculty of Theology was elected to take his place. And when no one in the Party which he had led to ruin was willing to give asylum to Eric Honecker, discredited, cancer-ridden and homeless, Bishop Forck of Berlin arranged for him and his wife Margot, the once hard-line anti-Christian Minister of Education, to be guests in a parsonage. (Pastor Holmer's children had all been denied higher education by Margot Honecker.)

Now, after the first free elections, the Church's continuing public role is as evident as ever. Twenty-one Protestant clergy have been elected to Parliament. The Prime Minister, de Maiziere (of Huguenot descent), is a long-standing member of the Church's General Synod. The Foreign Minister is a Lutheran pastor, as is the Minister of Defence and Disarmament, a veteran opponent of compulsory military service. A state President is still to be elected. Among the names most often mentioned is Bishop Forck of Berlin and Manfred Stolpe, Secretary-General of the Bishop's administration.

All this is unprecedented in German history. And specially the Church's radical rejection of any spirit of German nationalism, now that unification of East and West is in very near prospect. The Church's structure, too, will become one again, but those whose ideals promoted this peaceful revolution are in to state of euphoria. The West German Church - the most wealthy in the world, with its system of state-aided tax - is well aware that East German Christians have non-material gifts of immeasurable value to offer. A heated debate between traditionalists and radicals is already under way about the how and the when of the unification of church structures. The radicals (if this is the right term) in East and West are in no hurry and are deeply committed

to the spiritual values of the materially much poorer Church in the East. There will be much need for patient diplomacy and for those who foot the bills not to make all the decisions.

In all this, what has been the role of the Roman Catholic Church, with its one million faithful in the East, a minority with a strong commitment? Cardinal Bengsch, in the post-war period, had a consistent policy of Catholic abstinence from public life. The Church and its clergy would neither publicly approve nor would they criticise. They maintained an intact and flourishing religious ghetto, almost wholly Western-financed, lying low and waiting for better times. Hibernating, some called it. The laity, of course, had to face all the tensions and deprivations of their fellow citizens. Was this good discipleship? Catholics themselves now wonder. The Catholic Bishop of Berlin recently apologised to the Protestant General Synod that his Church had made virtually no contribution to the process of liberation. How different from Poland and parts of Latin America.

There can be no doubt that, with its great theological traditions and its material resources - as well as its spiritual insights - German Protestantism will play a big part in the Europe of tomorrow. There is much for British Christians to learn, not least from the remarkable Kirchentag Movement in both East and West, firing the younger generation with prophetic ideals. The recent Meissen Agreement between the Church of England and the German Church (in East and West) is a sound basis for future co-operation. A sensible Church of England response to tomorrow's united Germany would be the re-establishment, alongside the present military chaplaincy, of an Anglican presence in a reunited Berlin.

**Paul Oestreicher is a Canon of Coventry.**

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