

The Window

OCTOBER 2020

THE ANGLICAN-LUTHERAN SOCIETY

Issue No. 123

We hope you enjoy this issue of your Newsletter.

Naturally there are a number of articles about the COVID-19 pandemic

There's the start of a discussion about reception in one kind

Some books to tempt you



Prizes and Awards for Church Leaders

News of Ecumenical Meetings and Links

A Review of Multi-Lateral Ecumenism from a Roman Catholic Perspective

How Anglican and Orthodox Calls in 1920 still inspire efforts towards Unity

Revised Plans for 2021 Ecumenical Kirchentag and our Society's gatherings

And much more



The Very Rev Dr John Arnold has decided that the time has come for him to retire as Anglican President of our Society. He and his Lutheran counterpart, the Rt Rev Jürgen Johannesdotter, have not regarded 'President' as simply an honorary title. Both have been active in the Society's life and work, rarely missing an annual meeting or an international conference, and promoting the Society at every opportunity. We hope that Jürgen will continue as Lutheran President but now we have to bid farewell to John, not from the Society but from his role as President.

Because he lives with his wife Anneliese in Canterbury, John has been able to attend meetings of our Executive Committee which normally take place in the UK. He has put at our disposal his wealth of ecumenical experience whilst always reminding us, 'I'm only here out of interest. I don't have a vote!'

John always exhibits a boyish enthusiasm that is infectious. He has a genuine interest in everything and everyone, truly delighting in other peoples' achievements and success. Simone Weil suggested that "attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity", and in that sense John is generous indeed.

He is very learned, but wears his learning lightly so that, whilst people might be in awe

OUR ANGLICAN PRESIDENT RETIRES

Our Secretary, Canon Dick Lewis, pays tribute to a remarkable man and a great ecumenist

of his grasp of complex and perplexing issues, they are never in awe of him. He has such a wicked sense of humour, and a fund of wonderfully cryptic stories which he skilfully uses to defuse potential conflict or to illuminate a tricky situation. One of his favourite words is 'fun', and John is always fun to be with.

John is unfailingly kind. Newcomers to the Executive Committee, for example, will find him sitting beside them decoding acronyms, spelling out tricky names, explaining how church structures relate to one another, and simply being helpful. The world of Church and ecumenism is a world he comfortably inhabits. In his writings, his preaching and his teaching he has the gift of presenting complex issues in a very accessible way.

Having learnt Russian and served for a while in The Intelligence Corps, John studied Modern Languages and Theology at Cambridge University. Once ordained he served a curacy in Sheffield whilst at the same time holding a research fellowship at the university focusing on the Russian author and philosopher Fyodor Dostoevsky. He was appointed Chaplain of Southampton University and then joined the Church of England's Board for Mission and Unity as its Secretary before being made Dean first of Rochester Cathedral and then of Durham.

Bishop Michael Igrave, our Anglican Moderator, says, 'The Deanery of Durham is one of the grand jobs of the Church of England (much more exalted than most bishops), and I think it was the post in which John most fully found himself. His relish in it was much in evidence to those of us who attended the conference there a couple of years ago. Who can forget that wonderful lecture on the Northern Saints with its great evocation of the battlefield at Heavenfield, from which John drew such striking modern resonance. ➡

LOOKING AROUND

Archbishop Mark MacDonald, National Indigenous Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Canada, wrote this article for the October edition of *Anglican World*



“I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting.” (John 4.35) Jesus said these words in the context of his encounter with a Samaritan woman. To his followers this was shocking. She was incompatible with their understanding of the fellowship of the Messiah; she was not fit: not by religion, not by ancestry and not by morality. But he, prophetically looking through the lens of this improbable relationship, saw a multitude of people made whole, reconciled, and, as a family, living the life of the World to Come.

These words and this approach have echoes in the other gospels. The approach clearly frames the Early Church’s vision of its future work. It isn’t based on the capacity of available resources or the possibility of desirable recruits. It appears to be based on nothing more than a confidence in the prophetic word. The prophets indicated that God would raise up a people who embodied a redeemed diversity, a communal redemption that would confound human expectation and prefigure the World to Come.

All the work of the Early Church was directed towards this redeemed fellowship. Its movement toward that goal was not shaped by the Church’s in-hand resources or the members that were presently a part of their fellowship. They built their communal structure for a future that went beyond who they were in their present circumstances. Theirs was a church designed for who they were to become, a people gathered by God toward a world that was to come.

The work of the Early Church was enchanted by a vision of the future that God was calling them to. From the teaching of Jesus the members of the early congregations derived the primary elements of that future: rather than being built on any assumptions of human strength, they would grow by compassion for those in pain, need and strife. Their great harvest would be the poor and the outcast. They would embody the reconciling forgiveness of the World to Come in the makeup of their common life. They would build their life on the morality and vision of God’s future.

The goal of our work in this age is not to be designed by our perceptions of the present reality of who we are. We are to look around and see a human need that God is calling to hope. Our church structures and life are not to be based on the past or present but on a future that God is calling us to. Let us shape our fellowship and the various structures of our communal life for a people who are called to be the dawning of God’s new World.

⇒ I have quoted that on one or two occasions since:

Oswald and the Christian Northumbrians fought a decisive battle against the pagan Mercians, with their left flank covered by the ruined Roman Wall and the Cross planted on a small piece of rising ground to their right. And here you have the three ingredients which go to make up the Middle Ages: the remnants of empire, the vigour of barbarism, and the Christian religion – just the three things which make Africa, for example, so dynamic today.

John was President of CEC, the Conference of European Churches, from 1993 to 1997, and has been a Trustee of St Ethelburga’s Centre for Peace and Reconciliation and of the London Diocesan Committee on Christian-Jewish Understanding.

People tend to regard John as a “one-off” and are surprised to discover that he is one of twins. Can there really be another like him, they ask themselves! Many are astonished to learn that he and his brother were born in 1933, for his youthful exuberance certainly belies his age. The one thing that does betray it, he says, is his inability successfully to engage with Zoom meetings and because, at the moment, so much of the Society’s business has to be conducted online, he feels this is the right time to step down.

John’s contribution to our Society has been immense, and we are very grateful. He has offered us riches beyond price and the members of the Executive Committee express thanks and appreciation by awarding him honorary life membership of the Society. We wish him a long and happy retirement. John’s hobby is translating Russian poetry. Asked why, John’s eyes twinkle and he replies, ‘Because it’s impossible!’



Dr John Arnold
our retiring
Anglican
President

AMONG THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD

LWF President, Archbishop Panti Filibus Musa, addresses first online European Church Leadership Consultation (LWI)

'There's a "prophetic defiance" in us not letting go of each other because of COVID-19, finding ways to be connected, devising paths to continue expressing the relationships into which God is calling us,' said the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) President, Archbishop Dr Panti Filibus Musa from the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria. He was speaking at the start of the European Church Leadership Consultation on 22nd September.

The consultation took place online for the first time, and was described by Archbishop Musa as 'breaking new ground for all of us.' Strengthening communion relations regionally goes hand in hand with being globally connected to the LWF member Churches and 'if there ever was a time requiring us to truly stand together, it is now,' he said.

Living and working together

The Archbishop recalled that since the LWF's founding in 1947 it has had a strong diaconal presence. "Lutheran" has come to mean that God's love as incarnated in Christ is moving a global community to serve other people, making no distinction between those they serve.

'We shall never become an exclusive club, enjoying the gift of our relationships, as if our neighbour doesn't exist or doesn't matter,' he stated. 'A communion that has Christ at its centre will be a communion centring its witness towards the world, among the people of the world.'

Witnessing in a world with COVID-19

The coronavirus is primarily a health issue, yet it has created significant challenges in almost every realm of life: social, economic, and political. 'It also presents us with a deeply existential and spiritual challenge,' Archbishop Musa said. He expressed 'deep pain over the immense loss of life,' and reminded his audience that behind every one of the high number of deaths reported is an individual person. 'Every death is a lament,' he said, quoting a pastoral letter from the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil.

The LWF President also expressed deep concern about the 'alarming rise of domestic violence affecting children and women,' as well as a 'dismaying increase in femicides [killing of a woman or girl (usually by a man) solely on account of her gender - Ed] around the world.' He shared that last week the LWF Communion Office sent a survey about the reception and implementation of the LWF Gender Justice Policy to its member Churches. 'I could not think of a more relevant time to send out this survey. We have the tools and we share a commitment to fight gender-based violence. We have good practical resources. Now, we shall get even more serious about it.'

The pandemic is ongoing, and Archbishop Musa warned that 'complacency is our biggest enemy.' Worship in Nigeria is held 'respecting rigorous distancing rules', he reported, with fewer people but an increased number of services.



Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert

He shared that the LWF's COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund has 'helped 65 churches respond locally to a variety of challenges they and their communities were facing.' The Church is endowed with a vitality that is beyond our doing and capacities,' he said. 'We are not empty-handed as we face challenging realities; we are God's children endowed with the creative and inspiring power of the Holy Spirit to understand, adapt and grow into what I believe will be a new reality for Churches in the time to come, and also for our global communion and its structures.'

A time of crisis and transformation

Opening worship for the Consultation was led by Bishop Tor Jørgensen and a team from the Lutheran Church in Great Britain. That Church was due to host the consultation, and it was to be held in Mansfield College, Oxford. The watchword of the consultation, "The Holy Spirit gives power, love and self-discipline" (2Tim 1.7), was the text for Bishop Tor's sermon. He said that 2020 will probably be remembered as a year of crisis – not only due to COVID-19, but also because of the ecological and refugee crises.

'Crisis is a time of transformation,' he explained, 'filled with fear and anxiety but also with life and hope.' The Church has experienced these many times from the very beginning, the life of the apostle Paul being an iconic example of this experience. From prison he sends a message of faith, hope and love to his co-worker Timothy and to congregations across Europe. 'The Holy Spirit is not limited to physical meetings,' the Bishop said. Paul had used the means of his days to 'open the mind of his readers, to comfort them and encourage.' This consultation takes place using modern technology, he continued. 'with the expectation that the Spirit will be here with us, comforting and inspiring us' and trusting that the Spirit 'empowers us with love and sound minds in these days of transformation.'

You can read some thoughts of the three European Vice-Presidents of LWF on page 30.

AN ONLINE RETREAT?

Among the many people ordained in recent weeks was Ash Leighton Plom, one of our members living in Exeter in the South-West of England. Nothing was quite as he had expected as he tell us here.



I was initially very sceptical when I found out that the retreat before my ordination retreat would not involve going away, but would be at home, online. This felt like another "casualty of COVID", and I was quite sad about it. I confess that whenever I had imagined my retreat I had pictured going away to an abbey or retreat house somewhere, enjoying lots of silence and an enforced break from my life's usual routine. Sitting in my study with my webcam and headset on just did not seem to be quite the same!

Equally, a major aspect of a normal retreat would, for me, have been meeting my new colleagues in person, spending our last days as lay people together, and prayerfully accompanying one another towards the moment of ordination. In ordinary circumstances we would have gathered at the abbey or retreat centre together, prayed together, eaten together, listened to reflections together, and gone straight from the retreat to the cathedral, there to be ordained in one service together. This year, with COVID-safe precautions in place, we could not get this formative time together, and even the ordination service itself was split into four separate services, with four of us ordained at each, rather than one service for all sixteen of us. I felt this was going to dent our nascent sense of corporate collegiality considerably.

But in actual fact, I take my hat off to the diocesan team who led the retreat. For example, we were allowed to gather on the Wednesday as a cohort for a rehearsal of the ordination and we received the Bishop's Charge (basically a sermon from him to us, exhorting us to be good deacons!), and made our Declarations and Oaths (to declare that we're Anglicans, and that we promise to be loyal to the Bishop of Exeter and Her Majesty the Queen). Sharing these moments was profound, and got the retreat off to a special start right away.

So, when we met that evening on Zoom for the retreat's introductory

session online, we had already begun to form something of a special, spiritual and experiential bond. This was followed by saying evening prayer together, using liturgy that had been prepared and sent to each of us especially for our retreat. The readings, hymns, and prayers all spoke of topics around call, spirituality, preaching, and serving others, and started to nourish us at once.

The main content of the retreat was delivered over four 30-minute sermon-like talks, two on the Thursday and two on the Friday. Session One was titled "Called by name", and challenged the "imposter syndrome" that a lot of ordinands feel as they approach ordination: "Why me? Surely not? I'll be no good at this!" The Rev John Lees, the retreat leader, set out insistently and reassuringly that we have each been called as individuals, by God, to serve our parishes, at this time. Following sessions built on these themes of being set apart by Jesus to be set among, at this exact time.

The organisers also provided regular opportunities between the sessions for us to break out into smaller groups on Zoom to reflect together on the input we were receiving, to share what we were each valuing, and air anything which we were finding difficult. This helped embed some of that collegiality I had been hoping for from a physical retreat, and which we all started to feel at the rehearsal service and vows on the Wednesday.

The input from John, and the group reflections, were all interspersed with plenty of time for our own reading and praying, punctuated by saying Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, and Night Prayer together, again using liturgy which had been especially provided and which was rich and deep in its focus on the retreat's themes of call and purpose.

The final session was called "A man on a beach", which brought our attention back to the one whose call we are

following: Jesus Christ. This session was powerful both theologically and pastorally: it reminded us of God incarnate, crucified and resurrected, and tangibly present through Sacrament, Scripture, and the Spirit today. I think we all therefore emerged from the retreat for our ordinations sure of our call, sure in the one who has called us, and sure in what he has called us for: to love and serve our congregations and parishes, now, at this particular time. *Ad maiorem Dei gloriam. Alleluia!*

HONOUR FOR RUSSIAN CHURCH LEADER

On 1st September the Archbishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Russia (ELCR), the Most Rev Dietrich Brauer, was awarded the German Federal Republic's Grand Cross of Merit. The German Ambassador in Moscow, Géza Andreas von Geyr, made the presentation on behalf of Federal President Frank Walter Steinmeier in recognition of the Archbishop's work in strengthening "solidarity and peace between people of different faiths in word and deed." He had made a "significant contribution to strengthening interdenominational relations in Russia and abroad."

'This award is both a recognition and an appreciation of the commitment by Archbishop Brauer and the ELCR to peace, ecumenical cooperation and reconciliation - both in Russia and among nations. But I see it also as an encouragement to strengthen the Church's presence and engagement in the public space,' said the Lutheran World Federation's Regional Secretary for Europe, the Rev Dr Ireneusz Lukas. (LWI)

COMMUNION IN ONE KIND?

Dr Richard Stephenson, a veterinary surgeon and a member of our Executive Committee, reflects on the withdrawal of the communion cup in many Anglican churches.

Worshippers in Anglican churches will have noticed some dramatic changes following their reopening after the COVID-19 'lockdown'. The congregation is spaced out in 'social bubbles' sitting two metres apart; filling in the 'track and trace' forms; the obligatory wearing of face coverings; no singing; passing the peace by a nod or friendly wave; no coffee after the service and half the congregation joining virtually online via YouTube. Whilst all of these have some theological implications there is one change which in former times would have literally caused riots in the pews - the administration of communion under 'one kind'. Anglican and Lutheran reformers both insisted on the necessity of communion in 'both kinds', the issue almost defining

Protestantism for many of the early reformers, and opposed with equal vehemence by the Roman Catholic authorities.

Visitors to the Market Church in Wittenberg are immediately struck by the amazing altar triptych by Lucas Cranach. It is on a truly monumental scale and its vibrancy can only really be appreciated by seeing it *in situ*. Lutheran Altar triptychs of the era are rare; most Lutherans simply continued with whatever art was present in their churches when they 'reformed'. However, in Wittenberg the riots inspired by Andreas Karlstadt whilst Luther was 'imprisoned' in the Wartburg Castle had resulted in severe iconoclasm which gave Cranach the opportunity to make a bold, Lutheran theological statement with new reformation art. The triptych shows the three (yes three) sacraments of the new reformed catholic church.

On the left-hand side Philip Melanchthon baptises an infant. That Melanchthon performs the sacrament is historically inaccurate, of course. He was never ordained and certainly never baptised. But he did write the Augsburg Confession. The message is clearly aimed at Anabaptists. The baptism of infants is not only to be permitted; it is to be encouraged. Baptism saves.

On the right-hand side Pastor Johannes Bugenhagen, the parish priest, holds the 'keys' of St Peter as he exercises the office of confession – a wealthy arrogant man is sent away with his sins bound, whilst a truly penitent poor man is granted absolution.



*Cranach's triptych
in the Market
Church in
Wittenberg*

It is however the central panel that speaks most loudly to us today. It is the Holy Supper itself. There Christ institutes the sacrament seated with his apostles. Luther has joined the supper with the disciples and remarkably he passes the chalice from the table to a servant (probably Cranach). Again, the message is very clear – Luther gives the chalice back to the people which the Roman Church had withheld.

The debate on whether the sacrament can be divided is peculiar to the Western Church. The Orthodox are so emphatic that it should never be administered separately that both hosts are mixed together in the chalice and served on a spoon. Their view is that a separated sacrament is a defective one. This is not an opinion shared by Lutheran reformers. It was not Luther's or Melanchthon's contention that the body of Christ did not contain blood and was therefore only partly effective for the 'forgiveness of sin and strengthening of faith'. For them the issue was being faithful to the command to EAT AND DRINK and 'do this in remembrance of me'.

The 'old' Roman practice of only administering the host to the laity arose at some point in the middle ages and was crystalized as doctrine by the 13th Session of the Council of Constance in 1415, continuing until the second Vatican Council.

Article XXII of the Augsburg Confession is unambiguous: "To the laity are given Both Kinds in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, because this usage has the commandment

⇒ of the Lord in Matt. 26:27, “Drink ye all of it,” where Christ has manifestly commanded concerning the cup that all should drink. And lest any man should craftily say that this refers only to priests, Paul in I Cor. 11:27 recites an example from which it appears that the whole congregation did use both kinds.”

Likewise Article XXX in the Anglican 39 Articles is titled “Of both kinds” and states that the Cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the Lay-people: for both the parts of the Lord’s Sacrament, by Christ’s ordinance and commandment, ought to be ministered to all Christian men alike.” And the still extant Sacrament Act of 1547 at section VIII requires administration ‘under bothe the Kyndes’.

Certainly communion in both kinds caused controversy for Luther and the early reformers. The Roman Catholic ‘confutation’ of the Augsburg confession goes to some lengths to dispute that the Early Church ever gave the chalice to laity, citing as a somewhat tenuous justification, Christ on the road to Emmaus – ‘they recognised him in the breaking of the bread’.

For those early Lutheran worshippers in Wittenberg the sharing of the common cup at the Mass would have been the most notable and obvious change in their church, as Luther was anxious to retain many of the ceremonies and certainly the majority of the liturgy of the ‘unreformed’ church. Melancthon is quick to make the point in the Apology to the Confession: “At the outset we must again make the preliminary statement that we do not abolish the Mass, but religiously maintain and defend it. For among us masses are celebrated every Lord’s Day and on the other festivals, in which the Sacrament is offered to those who wish to use it, after they have been examined and absolved. And the usual public ceremonies are observed, the series of lessons, of prayers, vestments, and other like things.”

The Church of England sought to distance itself from the rituals and ceremonies of the medieval church more conclusively than Luther – the Book of Common Prayer (1662) limiting the manual acts to be used during the consecration to the laying of the celebrant’s hand upon the elements. Nevertheless, that both kinds should be administered to the laity is a requirement.

Suspension of the common cup in response to Covid-19 is not unique. As recently as the ‘Swine Flu’ epidemic the Bishops of the Church of England authorised communion in one kind. However, I rather suspect that when, on the 10th March, the Archbishops advised priests to suspend use of the Chalice, they did not envisage that the ‘pause’ would still be going on in October and on into the foreseeable future. In the absence of widespread vaccination, it is hard to envisage an end to the need for social distancing and extreme hygiene, and we do not know when (if ever) an effective vaccine will be widely available. Which leads me to ask, could this become a semi-permanent change and, if so, is it acceptable? Is there an alternative?

It may seem intuitively obvious that sharing a cup between numerous people is an invitation to spread infection and disease. However, it is a fact that there is no published evidence to suggest that sharing the chalice has ever propagated infection. Alcohol is a potent disinfectant, and silver is an unfriendly substrate for viruses to survive on. That, coupled with constant wiping of the rim, serves to protect the communicant from infections. Indeed, it is the wiping of the rim that is the crucial part of cleaning as the contact time with silver/alcohol between communicants will be insufficient to sterilise a bacterium or virus. A properly used purificator will remove 90% of bacterial contaminants.

The scientific literature is sparse on the subject, but some studies have been performed. Loving and Wolf, in their ‘*The Effects of Receiving Holy Communion on Health*’ (Journal of Environmental Health), compared the health of 307 people who regularly received communion, 53 who attended but did not partake of the chalice, and 211 people who did not attend church at all. No difference could be found in the rates of illness between these groups. Likewise, it has been shown that neither Herpes nor AIDS are likely to be transmitted via the chalice, although an absence of evidence does not mean it is impossible (Kingston Eur. J Epidemiol 1988 p 164 – 170).

SARS – CoV-2 – is a novel viral agent and we cannot be confident that what holds true for the bacteria and viruses that we commonly encounter in our daily lives would also be true for COVID-19. The whole population of the UK was ‘naïve’ to this pathogen prior to January of this year. The general age demographic of many practising Anglicans (average 61 years old compared to the general population’s 40 years of age) puts them firmly in the ‘high risk’ group. If it is therefore necessary from a public health point of view to refrain from using communal cups during the Eucharist at the present time, might ‘individual cups’ be the answer?



Under Church of England ecclesiastical law, the use of ‘individual cups’ even in the time of a pandemic is not permitted. Many larger congregations may use multiple Chalices and it is not entirely clear when multiple chalices become individual cups – a fair degree of common sense must be exercised. ⇒

⇒ Given the determination of Lutherans to stick to the 'do this' principle, coupled with the clear indication in the words of institution that Christ used one single cup, it is surprising that some Lutheran Synods do allow the use of individual cups – particularly in North America where both the ELCA and LCMS have many congregations where this practice is permitted (usually a single Chalice will also be available). The use of small cups seems to have arisen in around 1890 as a response to public health concerns and is certainly not an historic practice. Luther himself clearly specified the use of one single cup as do the scriptures. Matthew and Mark agree that Jesus took the cup (Matthew 26.27-28; Mark 14.23). Luke and St Paul report him as saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.' (Luke 22.20; I Corinthians 11.25)

Individual cups are by no means a fool proof method of avoiding the hazard of transmitting COVID-19. They require additional handling before use and cleaning afterwards, which poses a risk to both communicants and the person responsible for the ablutions. In any event, as pointed out above, for Anglicans they are not just theologically dubious but illegal!

Intinction is seen by many as a more hygienic option than drinking from the chalice. There is the theological difficulty that it does not replicate what occurred at the last supper. Christ did not intinct but specifically instructed his followers to 'drink'. However, as I have already mentioned, a form of intinction is the universal practice of the Orthodox Church so it cannot be said to be a novel introduction. From the health perspective it is often suggested that the risk of the dirty finger tips of the communicant contacting the wine during the intinction process (which is said to occur between 25% and 75% of the time) make it a less hygienic practice than actually drinking from the cup.

Is it safer? In 1995 Loving published, "A controlled study on intinction: a safer alternative method for receiving Holy Communion". In his elegant experiment samples of wine (which was 19% alcohol) from the chalice were cultured after 43 parishioners had intincted. The parishioners had not washed their hands prior to receiving communion. They had also been instructed to shake hands with ten other people to recreate a realistic bacterial environment on their hands. 16.3% of people accidentally allowed the wine to contact their fingers during intinction (informal estimates suggest this happens on about 1 in 4 occasions in a real communion service). In 100% of these cases no bacteria could be cultured from the wine.

The results of the study did indicate that the already low risk of transmitting disease is reduced by intinction. But it needs to be clearly understood that this work related to bacterial and not viral disease, which is a very important point given the aetiology of the current pandemic! Previous studies on viral transmission from the common communion cup have understandably focused on HIV which, due to its need for blood borne transmission, is emphatically not a sensible comparator with Coronavirus which is air borne and more infectious. I'm surprised that there appears to have been no scientific study of whether COVID-19 can survive on the rim of a chalice. When it was decided that

cricket should resume, Public Health England was quick to commission work on cricket balls. They were duly sprayed with the virus and then subject to testing – the results showing that the leather of the ball rapidly kills COVID-19. Even in our secular UK society, millions of people attend churches every week, so should church leaders have asked for similar work to be done to ascertain if there is a COVID safe way of resolving this problem?

It would be interesting to know how Lutheran and Anglican Churches around the world are dealing with the conflict between public health and the administration of the sacrament. Do please write in (angluthsociety@outlook.com) and share your thoughts and your experience.

A USA PERSPECTIVE

Our Coordinator in the USA, Tom VanPoole, heard that Richard Stephenson was writing his article and offered this response.



With the caveat that I have no theological training at all, I offer my two cents as a Lutheran layperson who reads a lot.

Back in February or early March, before the virus compelled us to suspend in-person worship completely, we actually discussed precisely this issue in my own congregation.

Basically, although our Lutheran instincts tell us that communion in both kinds is always the norm, there are sometimes reasons to only receive one element, and the theology of concomitance is sound as long as it is not used to deny communion in both kinds to some communicants.

Despite the Smalcald Articles (Part iii, article vi) denigrating concomitance as "the specious learning of the sophists and the Council of Constance", the ELCA's 1997 guidance document, "*The Use of the Means of Grace*", explicitly acknowledges that, for pressing reasons, one might choose to receive only one element. (See page 48, Application 44C and Background 44D in that document.)

One of the companion books to Evangelical Lutheran Worship, "*The Sunday Assembly*", astutely observes (on page 217) that

"...people who can receive communion in only one kind may still need to hear the promise of the other gift... even though they do not eat or drink that gift. The body and blood of Christ is given and shed for them."

As I mentioned above, I am not a theologian., so I have taken the liberty of copying my response to a friend, neighbour, and fellow parishioner who is a retired professor and prolific author on liturgical theology. If he chooses to chime in on the subject, don't be surprised.



YOUTHFUL “FRONTLINE WARRIORS” IN RELIEF EFFORTS IN INDIA

As well as trying to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India (UELCI) have found themselves caught up in a fight against a “social and economic pandemic” which is being experienced by thousands of people in vulnerable communities as one of the repercussions of the coronavirus.

The Lutheran Churches in India responded immediately to disadvantaged populations in the overcrowded areas in the eastern area of Chennai. Government restrictions prevent the churches acting as distribution centres so the issuing of relief packages had to be done from door-to-door. The UELCI Executive Secretary, the Rev A Joshua Peter, says that in this diaconal ministry young people are playing a pivotal role, and ‘like frontline warriors’ they deliver provisions door-to-door under the leadership of local parishes and communities. ‘The involvement of these young people is highly commendable,’ he adds.

Several of the UELCI churches have distributed raw and non-perishable food and sanitation kits, and have led risk reduction and preparedness programmes aimed at slowing the spread of the virus by both providing information and also easing the economic suffering felt markedly in these communities throughout the region.

Among those reached by the young people have been widows abandoned by their adult children and people in the transgender community. Both these groups are ostracized and were already struggling for financial security before the COVID-19 pandemic.



COMMUNION IN ONE KIND CONTINUED

⇒ Tom’s neighbour did indeed ‘chime in’.



The Rev Dr Gordon W Lathrop, Charles A. Schieren Professor of Liturgy Emeritus, United Lutheran Seminary, Pennsylvania, commented:

What you have written, Tom, is quite right and well put. I hope it is helpful to the Anglican-Lutheran Society and to your friends. From a Lutheran point of view,

both Bread and Cup should be present and part of the Great Thanksgiving at any Eucharist. If anyone cannot commune in one or the other kind, they should still be assured of the presence of Christ fully for them.

If I were presiding in such a case, I would urge this communicant to stand before the minister of whichever element could not be received, hear the word of distribution, and acknowledge it with an Amen and even a bow. In the present plague-time, when it might be possible for the whole assembly to receive only the Bread and only one minister to receive the Cup, I would still urge the same. After receiving the Bread, everyone in turn (physically distanced) stands before the Cup-bearer to hear and respond to the word of gift, even though they do not receive.

As they move into the next phase of relief efforts the UELCI has commended its churches for their diaconal work so far. The first phase was categorized as an “immediate” response, but the UELCI expects that further phases will continue for the next three years in order to address the devastating toll COVID-19 continues to take on society.

Most of the 12 UELCI churches were approved for funding from the LWF COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund (RRF). Recent statistics show over 6.5 million infections and nearly 100,000 deaths from the Coronavirus in India. This autumn a resurgence in COVID-19 infections has caused states that formerly relaxed their lock-down measures to reinstate or extend them.

Migrant Workers remain at risk

The Rev Joshua Peter laments the added economic and social stress COVID-19 places on the migrant community. Stuck in limbo with neither home nor work many of them have attempted to walk back to the parts of India from which they came because COVID-19 restrictions in May closed the industries where they typically worked. Many migrant workers were quarantined in a stadium in Chennai where conditions were dangerous.

There are 140 million internal migrant workers from rural Indian regions who work in the larger cities of India in the manufacturing and construction industries. Joshua said the migrant workers, although able to return to jobs whenever restrictions are partially lifted, still face challenges because with fewer available working hours it is impossible for them to earn the kind of money they were making before the pandemic struck. (LWI)

ONLINE WORSHIP INCREASES OUTREACH AND ATTENDANCE IN GERMANY

German Church study shows positive effects of digitalization (LWI).

Lockdown, confinement and the prohibition of actual church services have sparked immense creativity in German churches, a recent study finds. 'We found that many congregations have very quickly adapted to the new reality', says Bishop Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, who heads the Council of the *Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland* (EKD), which initiated the study. 'We have seen an incredible creativity, both in digital and non-digital formats. The Holy Spirit works despite face masks and social distancing.'

The study "*Digital Formats of Worship During the Corona Crisis*", conducted by the EKD, examined digital formats used by four German Churches, three of them also LWF member churches: the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northern Germany, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg, and the Evangelical Church in Central Germany. Almost 900 parishes, congregations and regional offices replied to the survey, sharing a number of creative examples of how to be the Church during confinement.

Minecraft worship

Zoom-worship, church service from the living room, morning prayers on Facebook, spiritual influencers, Minecraft-services, and intercession hotspots are just some examples given by Rev Stefanie Hoffmann, Senior Church Councillor in the Digitalization Department of the EKD. The EKD on their platform "*Kirche von zuhause*" provided parishes and congregations with advice, tools and webinars on how to continue church life without physical worship.

Lack of technical expertise was rarely an excuse not to go online, Stephanie Hoffmann says: many congregations were helped by younger members.



Regensburg Dom Cathedral, Germany, through a smartphone. Photo: ANBerlin/flickr

Online offers were often accompanied by offline provision for those who did not have reliable internet or the technical skills to use it. 'We heard about telephone prayer chains, and about worship DVDs which were distributed in the congregation,' Stefanie said. Congregations sent postcards and handed out "Easter worship bags".

Pastors have been known to tour their congregations and give sermons and prayers outside via loud speaker. An Easter *flashmob* action invited people to play a specific hymn on Easter Sunday at 10am from their balconies.

Promoting the priesthood of all believers

6.5 million people were reached through digital worship formats, an increase of 287 percent compared to regular worship, said Daniel Hörsch, who conducted the study. While the metadata still needs to be evaluated, these numbers show 'new local horizons.' 72% of the congregations and parishes which only started digital formats during the COVID-19 confinement want to continue, according to the study.

'Digitalization is a challenge for how we proclaim the gospel,' Daniel Hörsch said. 'It promotes the priesthood of all believers, and has opened up questions we might already have raised in more analogue times.'

Apart from making worship more accessible for people interested in experiencing it, many of the new formats also considerably reduced the spoken word in favour of music and interactive formats. Working out how to engage these new and younger audiences in the church effectively is one of the resulting tasks.

New questions

The new formats, however, have also raised new questions. One touches on Holy Communion. 'As protestant Christians we believe that Christ is present in any worship service,' Bishop Bedford-Strohm said. The EKD therefore advised their members to try a "fasting" Holy Communion. But the idea of communion online has sparked some theological discussion within the church.

Pastoral care, especially in care homes for senior citizens and for the dying was another challenge. 'Online worship will never replace personal interaction in our church,' the Bishop said. He expects "Hybrid formats" to become more popular: live worship which is also available online.

But there has never been any question of following the authorities' instruction to refrain from worship during the peak of the crisis in the country. While it sometimes proved difficult when the German federal system was issuing contradicting instructions, the instructions were followed without question, which is a good sign of combining the freedom of a Christian with responsibility for the neighbour. 'As a Church we never understood ourselves as a lobby group pushing our own agenda', Bishop Bedford-Strohm concluded.

Share your experience of virtual worship via angluthsociety@outlook.com

LUTHERAN AND ROMAN CATHOLIC HONOURED FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO ECUMENISM

Augsburg Peace Prize awarded to Bishop Bedford-Strohm and Cardinal Marx (LWI)

In a strong sign for Christian ecumenism the Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria, Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, and Cardinal Reinhard Marx, Archbishop of Munich, were awarded the 2020 Augsburg Peace Prize for their “unconditional will to live together in peace”.

These two church leaders reached out to one another on behalf of many Catholic and Protestant Christians, said Augsburg Mayor Eva Weber on 8th August in announcing the prize winners at this year’s Augsburg Peace Festival. They emphasized the similarities in Church and Society instead of differences.

‘On the 500th commemoration of the Reformation in 2017, Archbishop Reinhard Cardinal Marx and Bishop Heinrich Bedford-Strohm set a historic sign for all Christians worldwide,’ Mayor Weber said, ‘and they have impressively testified that true communion in faith is possible despite different confessional affiliations.’

On 11th March 2017 they jointly presided over a service of repentance and reconciliation in Hildesheim, Germany. The painful divisions between the two separated Churches were considered, and requests for forgiveness for the failures of both sides exchanged. Also, thanks and joy were expressed for what both Churches have in common and what they value in each other.

The liturgy of this service, titled “Healing of memories – witnessing to Jesus Christ” built on the 2016 Joint Catholic-Lutheran Commemoration of the Reformation in Lund, Sweden, at which Pope Francis and Bishop Munib Younan, then President of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) commemorated the 500th anniversary of the posting of Luther’s 95 Theses.



Bishop Heinrich Bedford-Strohm (left) and Cardinal Reinhard Marx exchanging a sign of peace during the service of reconciliation that took place in Hildesheim, Germany, during the 2017 Reformation Commemoration. Photo: epd/Jens Schulze

An ecumenical boost

The commitment of Bishop Bedford-Strohm and Cardinal Marx for joint ecumenical steps was underlined by the Augsburg Protestant Regional Bishop Axel Piper who chaired the jury. The two theologians ‘think and speak in the same spirit,’ he said. With their common ‘passion for God and the world’, their work for the peaceful development of ecumenism has been exemplary.

‘Christianity in Germany and Europe will only have a future if we work together powerfully and stay together ecumenically. That is important, and that is where I see the prize as an encouragement,’ said Cardinal Marx in his reaction to the award.

Bishop Bedford-Strohm expressed his hope ‘that we will also be able to make progress regarding joint Holy Communion. I see this prize as a public sign that this is expected of us and as an encouragement to continue the path of ecumenism. That is why I am pleased to receive this prize together with Cardinal Marx.’

The Prize and the Augsburg High Peace Festival

Since 1985, the city of Augsburg and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria have together awarded the Augsburg High Peace Festival Prize every three years. The prize honours personalities who have rendered outstanding services to a tolerant and peaceful coexistence of cultures and religions.



The winner of the prize is announced on 8th August, the day of the High Festival of Peace. The award shown here is endowed with EUR 12,500. The presentation will be made on 10th October.

The Augsburg High Peace Festival has been celebrated in the city since 1650. Its origins go back to the Peace of Westphalia of 1648, which ended a long period of warfare and religious conflict in Europe.

ECUMENISM IS NOT AN EXTRA

The Rev Dr Jonathan Linman is the new Pastor at Resurrection Evangelical Lutheran Church in Arlington, Virginia, where our USA Coordinator, Tom VanPoole, is a member.

Dr Linman was a member of the recently concluded round of US Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue on “Faithful Teaching” and is currently Lutheran Co-Chair of the Coordinating Committee for the Lutheran-United Methodist Full Communion relationship.

In August he circulated this reflection to his congregation and agreed to allow our Editor to include this slightly edited version in this issue.



During the Covid-19 Pandemic I have been writing regular midweek reflections. They are a vehicle for my teaching ministry on various topics, but they are also a good way for my congregation, and now you members of the Anglican-Lutheran Society, to get to know me as a person of faith, and as a pastor. The topics I address inevitably express my priorities in ministry and in mission.

In that spirit I want to address ecumenism, the effort to seek greater Christian unity among the churches. For many Christians today, the ecumenical movement is passé. Many have moved on to other commitments, for example, inter-faith dialogue (also a crucial endeavour in our multi-faith world). Others have resigned themselves to the apparent reality that decades of theological dialogues have resulted in disappointment when it comes to greater visible Christian unity. Still others recognize that new fissures have been developing among Churches leading to new and renewed divisions. Finally, too many, in my opinion, see ecumenism as extracurricular, a nice and occasional add on to ministry initiatives if one has extra time and energy.

I hold to none of the above positions. As a person of faith, seeking ecumenical relationships has been a feature of my Christian practice for as long as I can remember. Even as a kid, I was an eager participant in the Lenten ecumenical prayer breakfasts sponsored by the ministerial association in my hometown. I joined the seminary at Yale University Divinity School precisely because of its ecumenical orientation, though it was while there that I also rediscovered my passionate Lutheranism. During three decades as a parish

pastor, I have been a leader in ecumenical ventures at local, synodical, national, and even to some extent, international levels.

In short, for me, ecumenism, seeking the greater visibility of Christ’s Church, is central to my Christian understanding, not ancillary, not an extra, not an add-on. Why? Because Jesus prayed for the oneness, the unity, of his followers. In the lengthy prayer for the disciples toward the culminating conclusion of John’s Gospel, the gospel writer records these words, this prayer: “I ask not only on behalf of these [disciples], but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” (John 17.20-23)

Most ecumenists I know see this Biblical passage as a theological foundation for ecumenism. I share that view and see John 17 as more than a Biblical proof text for pursuing Christian unity.

I call your attention to two features of this passage from John, this portion of the lengthy high priestly prayer which he attributes to Jesus. First, the oneness, the unity of Jesus’ followers is a participation in the unity of the Godhead, what would become a Trinitarian understanding of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – “as you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us.” Thus, the ecumenical movements that promote Christian unity have a mystical, transcendent dimension through our participation in the very life of God. Wow! That is awesome, awe-inspiring, wondrous, amazing – if we let these sacred realities soak into our awareness. Ecumenical work is holy work.

The second feature of the passage from John that I want to emphasize is that the oneness of Jesus’ followers is not for its own sake; it is not inwardly focused. No, our unity is outwardly focused, for the sake of the world, “so that the world may believe....” Thus, ecumenical initiatives that seek greater visible Christian unity have an evangelistic thrust, end, and purpose. When Christians fight with one another over seemingly petty theological matters, it is a scandal to the world. In contrast, when Christians



Bronze doorway in Speyer Cathedral, Germany

⇒ happily live, work, pray, lead, and serve together, united even amidst their diversity, it is a loving, faithful witness to the world. “See how they love one another,” it had been said of early Christians (a quote attributed to Tertullian at the end of the second century in a letter to Roman authorities). In short, ecumenism serves evangelism.

Thus, because of the sacred, mystical aspects of Christian unity, and because our unity is a witness to a cynical world that may nurture belief in our gracious and loving God, I see ecumenism as central to Christian ministry and mission.

But there is more. Ecumenism, at its best, is not about seeking the lowest common denominator of shared beliefs among Christians to produce some kind of generic, “tradition-less” Christianity. No, ecumenism is at its best when Christians engage each other from the fullness of their different particular theological, spiritual, and historical traditions. From one important vantage point, it is a sad and scandalous feature of Christian history that there are so very many different distinctive Churches, or “brands” of Christians, so many denominations, as they are commonly called. That is true, and these varied traditions have often resulted from church fights ending in schism. But there has always been diversity of practice and thought in Christianity from the very beginning. When we come at this diversity from the perspective of appreciating difference and at the same time nurturing conditions in which that diversity is not the cause of church infighting, then the multiplicity of Christian traditions can become a beautiful wonder to behold, a lovely tapestry comprised of different parts where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Moreover, no single Christian tradition can encompass the fullness of the mystery and Revelation of Christ. Thus, we need each other for a sense of complementarity and completion. Furthermore, when engaging Christians of other traditions meaningfully and robustly, we learn a lot more about our own distinctive traditions. I am a much stronger and devoted Lutheran because of my long-standing commitments to ecumenical engagement.

So, you can count on the fact that ecumenism will play some significant role in my ministry at Resurrection Lutheran Church and in the wider Arlington community, in our Synod and perhaps beyond. What in particular that will look like remains to be seen, as the pandemic-induced sheltering in place inhibits any meaningful, ecumenical outreach at this time. But watch for an unfolding of ecumenical commitments. “so that the world may know that [God has] sent [Jesus] and [has] loved [Jesus’ followers] even as [God has] loved [Jesus].” (cf. John 17:23).



FIRST WINNERS OF NEW ECUMENICAL AWARD

The first Harding Meyer Prize in Ecumenism has been awarded to French, German and American theologians (LWI)

A French Mennonite, a German Protestant and a Catholic theologian from America have been awarded the first ever Harding Meyer prize in Ecumenism. The award, announced by the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg, is named after the visionary German ecumenist and veteran of many international dialogues, who died in December 2018.

Mennonite theologian Anne Cathy Graber was named as a recipient for her 2017 work entitled “Mary: A Study comparing John Paul II’s Redemptoris Mater and Luther’s Commentary on the Magnificat in light of Ecumenical Dialogues”. The study explores the growing consensus on many of the traditionally controversial questions of Mariology, even though some of those areas are still in need of further clarification.



A second recipient of the 2020 award is German Protestant theologian Jan Gross, for his work on the Lutheran-Reformed dialogue in Europe. His 2018 study entitled “Plurality as a Challenge: the Leuenberg Agreement as a Mediation Model for Reformation Churches in Europe” is an examination of Harding Meyer’s contribution to the Agreement and his influence on the achievement of church fellowship among the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe.

The third prize winner is American Catholic systematic theologian Jakob Karl Rinderknecht, nominated for his 2016 “Mapping the Differentiated Consensus of the Joint Declaration”. Harding Meyer was a key influencer and author of the first draft of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ), signed by the Lutheran and Catholic leaders in 1999. The agreement has now been broadened to include the Anglican, Methodist and Reformed Churches.



The award, to be made every two years, aims to continue the legacy of Meyer’s work, especially regarding his two key principles of reconciled diversity and differentiated consensus which allow Churches to seek reconciliation and church unity without sacrificing their own distinctive identities.

HOSPITAL WORKERS CONTINUING PASSION

All over the world people in the caring professions are going the extra mile in order to care for their clients. Here three of the medical personnel at Jerusalem's Augusta Victoria Hospital share their passion for the work they are doing amid the many challenges they face. (LWI : All photos: LWF/AVH/Ezdihar Shaheen)

Every day, the staff of Augusta Victoria Hospital which stands in the campus of the Lutheran World Federation in Jerusalem, work around restrictions in movement across the Palestinian Authority area which makes life very difficult for people who need lifesaving treatments. This year's global COVID-19 pandemic has made their work even more difficult.

The Hospital in East Jerusalem is a centre of medical excellence serving all five million Palestinians. It offers specialized care not available in other hospitals in the West Bank and Gaza. This includes radiation therapy for cancer patients and paediatric hemodialysis. Patients are referred to the hospital by the Palestinian Authority.

Dr Ali Sabateen is head of the infectious diseases unit and the Coronavirus Centre. 'I chose medicine for times such as these,' he says. 'I am willing to put myself at risk so as to treat my patients. During this pandemic, I do not treat them like strangers, but rather as my daughters, sons, mothers, and brothers. We continue our work during this pandemic with sincerity and passion. I love the humanitarian aspect of my work, dealing with emotions, and pain.'



Reena Abu Sneineh works as a nurse in the screening team in the triage tent. 'I love Augusta Victoria Hospital,' she declares, 'and I adore my profession. I must endure all the circumstances surrounding me to continue providing my service, and I will make all the necessary sacrifices so as to be able to save our patients. But it is challenging to convince

some of them that the new measures, such as measuring temperature at the entrance of the hospital and before moving them from one ward to another, are really necessary.'

'I continue working throughout the pandemic because I am conscious of the threat of the virus spreading amongst my

nation, especially here in East Jerusalem in light of the occupation, and the vulnerable health system in general,' says Dr Baha' Salameh who is responsible for sampling and patient affairs in the Coronavirus Centre. 'We are at a crossroads. We must protect our dialysis and cancer patients from the spread of the virus between them, and at the same time protect their companions and our medical staff in order to continue providing services without putting our patients at risk.'



These are just three of many millions of people of all faiths and none who selflessly put the needs of others before their own safety and security. Please remember them in your prayers.

BIBLE STUDY FOR THESE COVID-19 DAYS

The global coronavirus pandemic, which has brought death to hundreds of thousands, serious illness to millions more, and financial hardship throughout the world, has become a fundamental test of faith and invites Christians to earnest re-examination of their relationship to God, to each other, and to the natural world.

In "Healing the World: Bible Studies for the Pandemic Era", the World Council of Churches offers eight Bible studies to help individuals, groups, and communities of faith to come to terms with some of the emotions engendered by the pandemic and the prospect of building the world anew.

Your Editor has used them with the people in his church and they have found them very helpful. The Bible studies have been provided by ecumenical Christians from across the world: from the Philippines, Germany, the UK, Togo, Malaysia, India, Sweden and Jamaica.

They journey through key episodes in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament to ponder not only the meaning of the particular passages in their original contexts but also in our own, and the opportunities they present to formulate authentic responses to the COVID crisis and our changed lives. Each study concludes with some questions, suggestions for activities, other resources, and a prayer.

The Bible Studies are available to download ready to use at <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/HealingtheWorldbiblestudies.pdf/view>



COPING WITH COVID-19 IN THE BLACK FOREST

Regina Stierlen has been a member of our Society since the early days. She sends warm greetings and shares a little of what life has been like in her parishes during these unusual past months.



The Martinskirche in Wittendorf

I really do hope the Anglican-Lutheran Society's work and its conferences will continue to flourish. It is such a good thing! I so enjoyed the wonderful conference in Durham, and I have fond memories of the others; Stavanger, Tallinn, Dublin, Ratzeburg, Gotland... Meeting those Christians from all over the world, worship and teaching, and outings, it is such a genial combination! Thank you!

I care for two parishes here in the Wittendorf-Lombach neighbourhood. They have a total of slightly more than 1,250 parishioners in the Protestant church district of Freudenstadt on the western edge of the Protestant regional church in Württemberg in the Black Forest.

Here people are quite cooperative and we are rather self-sufficient in this small village. Our little grocery shop-cum-bakery and our local butcher have seen a revival during this corona crisis, with more customers than before, especially after all the problems there have been with big butchers and infections. We don't understand what lies behind the big demonstrations in Berlin, but at the same time people here are getting fed up with being told how to behave!

In parish life we miss choir practices, women's meetings, children's and older teenage groups, as well as our meetings for senior citizens. But Sunday mornings are well attended, although we strictly keep the two-metre distance and some people listen to the services outside via a loudspeaker.

We have had months without visiting anybody which was hard. Now we have to ask people whether we should come or not. Things have not always been as clear as they might have been and the constant messages from the Church Board in Stuttgart have often been open to inter-

pretation so that each parish has done whatever they have understood to be right or were ready to be responsible for, which has meant that some have been more ready to take risks while others have been more obedient to the rules, which people find irritating.

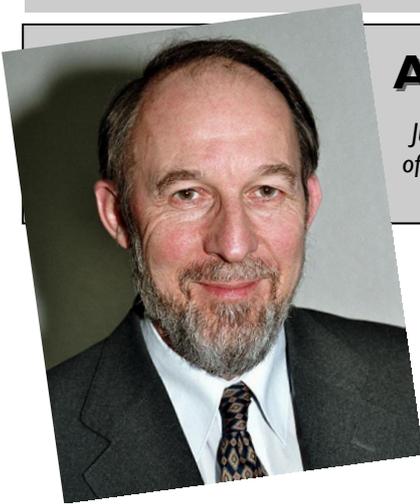
Our church in Wittendorf, the *Martinskirche*, was refurbished between April 2019 and February 2020. We had just had the first services there when the lockdown came! It is so strange to have a refurbished church here in Wittendorf and have to mark most benches as 'forbidden'. I should also mention that since March we have had church bells ringing each evening at 7.30 all over Germany, and people know it is an invitation for prayer or music. There is great comfort in praying for each other, pastoral care via the telephone, and so on.



After Whitsun we started refurbishing the smaller church, *Johanneskirche* in Lombach. Here you can see the scaffolding eight storeys high around the tower, and inside the benches have gone, and so has the altar because the sandstone is damaged by dampness and also saltpetre. It was a very strange moment when the altar was taken out; it was like removing the heart!

We will get a new sandstone floor and a wooden floor, the walls will be painted, a new electricity system and heating system will be installed and a proper place where the churchwarden can survey everything during the service. Also, a major change will be a new reception/entrance area, a glass annexe to the medieval tower, and the whole church being made accessible for wheel-chairs. The old entrance had one step down as soon as you opened the door and then another tricky one to get into the aisle. It was all very dark, and there was no porch for wedding couples to shelter in during bad weather!

While all this is going on we worship in the church hall. We would have had to do so during the corona crisis anyway because more people can get a seat there. We hope to get the refurbishment finished in the autumn. Whilst it is more or less the same procedure as we had to follow in Wittendorf, from which I learnt a lot, this has been slightly different. The architect is a great communicator and ☞



A LIFE DEDICATED TO CHURCH UNITY

Just after the last edition of The Window was circulated we learned of the death on 21st May of the Rev Dr Sven Oppegaard, former Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Affairs at the Lutheran World Federation and an ordained pastor of the Church of Norway.

Sven Oppegaard had a decades' long collaboration with the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). He was worship coordinator for the Ninth Assembly in Hong Kong, China in 1997, and shortly after that he was appointed as LWF Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Affairs.

He oversaw LWF's preparations for the signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification on 31st October 1999. It was a milestone in the Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue process in which he had been involved for almost 20 years. His theological and liturgical expertise, as well as

great sensitivity to the many ecumenical questions of the day, ensured that the liturgy celebrating the JDDJ signing in Augsburg, Germany, was a truly momentous event.

When articulating LWF's ecumenical vision, Dr Oppegaard never lost sight of the fact that the goal of doctrinal consensus on justification was to make progress on pastoral issues impacting the lives of the faithful and congregations. His insights and dedication also enabled the Lutheran-Roman Catholic International Joint Commission to continue with the theological exploration on apostolicity, resulting in the study document, "The Apostolicity of the Church".

As a research scholar, Dr Oppegaard was involved in the Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue since the late 1970s, having worked also at the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg, France. His contribution spanned

many other dialogues in which the LWF is engaged. He was co-secretary for bilateral dialogues and relations with the Anglicans, Methodists, Orthodox, Reformed, and with the World Council of Churches.

He was instrumental in ensuring that the Lutheran-Mennonite dialogue got off to a strong and hope filled start. It culminated, after his retirement in 2006, with the commission's report titled "Healing Memories: Reconciling in Christ", and the liturgy of confession and repentance at the LWF Eleventh Assembly in Stuttgart, Germany in 2010.

The Rev Dr Sven Oppegaard brought his deep liturgical and pastoral expertise to ecumenical theology, forging a way toward ever greater understanding, appreciation, and reconciliation. We remember his wife Susan, their children and grandchildren, as we thank God for his life and witness.

has been very effective in coping with and convincing the church board, conservation board, and so on. He is very diplomatic and down to earth. It has been a great lesson in spiritual guidance and decision-making. Apart from that we have fewer meetings (and how glad I shall be to get back to personal meetings instead of video-conferences).

Confirmation was held in September instead of March, with two services for four teenagers each instead of just one. We could never seat all the guests in one go, so we had a guest list of who would participate and we designed a seating plan just for the families. There was no room for people from the village or the congregation into which the young people are being confirmed, accepted and welcomed. It was all very embarrassing, but we tried to make the best of it. I am so glad to be working with a church council that is highly motivated and ready to deal with difficulties.

In September we also held a service for new first grade children. Again, their parents were disappointed because they could not bring more than two people to accompany the children, whereas normally the whole family comes, it is a big event, and there is lunch afterwards.

Nobody knows what the regulations surrounding Covid-19 will be in the autumn once people have returned from vacations abroad. They will probably get even stricter. The most challenging question is how will we 'return to normal' after the crisis? We should not just go back to the hectic

way things were before, but learn how to get our priorities rearranged by listening to God and learning new lessons.

We have a young curate starting in October for two years in October. He has a doctorate in New Testament, he is married to a youth worker and they have three children. I do hope all goes well. As I write this our main task to find a flat for the young family. I pray that he will learn a lot here and will be a blessing for the parish, reaching people I cannot reach, and I hope he will be able to accept my way of being a minister!



Johanneskirche in Lombach without the scaffolding

APOSTOLICITY AND THE PORVOO COMMUNION

David Carter reviews a book by one of our Swedish members. It is by the Rev Dr Erik Eckerdal and is entitled "Apostolic Succession in the Porvoo Common Statement : Unity through a Deeper Apostolicity"

Erik is a priest of the Archdiocese of Uppsala. He studied history, philosophy and theology in Linköping, Uppsala, Nottingham, UK, and in Rome. He now heads Diakonistiftelsen Samariterhemmet in Uppsala (the House of the good Samaritan) working in elderly and disabled care, education and real estate in service of church and society.

Eric's thesis makes a substantial contribution to knowledge and understanding of the Porvoo Common Statement and the resultant communion of fifteen Lutheran and Anglican Churches across northern Europe. Perhaps an even wider significance for ecumenical dialogue and rapprochement as a whole attaches to his most stimulating appraisal of the role of what he calls *substantive apostolicity*. His chapter specifically relating to that theme, and relying on further insights into the eschatological calling of the Church gleaned from some eminent Roman Catholic scholars such as Fr Jim Puglisi, certainly deserves close study and reflection from all concerned with unity across the entire range of Churches.

Traditionally, there have been three main approaches to the question of apostolicity in the Church. The first, held by Roman Catholics, Orthodox and traditional Anglo-Catholics has been that an unbroken succession in episcopal ordinations is central and indispensable, though we may note that there were a few nineteenth century Tractarians who, aware of the great continuity in Eucharistic worship in the Scandinavian Churches, were saddened that some had lost the unbroken succession and that even the Swedish claim to succession seemed doubtful.

The second was the approach of the magisterial reformers, including the Lutherans, who held that apostolic doctrine was central and determinative. They claimed to have recovered it in its original purity from Scripture and an early Church, unsullied by later medieval additions and errors.

Finally, early Methodism and many continental pietists, such as Count Zinzendorf and the Moravians, laid stress on the recovery of apostolic fellowship and church life. As James Rigg, a Wesleyan Methodist, put it in 1897, Methodism was 'a revival of primitive Christian fellowship and dis-



The Rev Dr Erik Eckerdal

cipline...in the individual believer and in the Christian community'.

Erik shows that one of the key effects of ecumenical dialogue and rapprochement since the Second Vatican Council has been to open up the Churches to the developing awareness that varying authentic elements of apostolicity have been maintained in other communions. This has enabled an increasing recognition of the One Apostolic Church in others even where certain elements considered vital still remain lacking. This developing consensus was particularly underlined in the 1982 Faith and Order statement of the World Council of Churches BEM M34, with its stress on the varying elements that make up apostolicity and its call to Churches that had maintained the apostolic succession of bishops to recognise the apostolicity of mission maintained in Churches still lacking such a succession.

Erik shows these key developments as making possible the advances in the dialogue between British and Irish Anglicans and Scandinavian Lutherans recorded in the Porvoo Common Statement on the total apostolicity of the Church. Traditionally, Anglicans had placed particular stress on the episcopal succession, the Lutherans rather more on pure doctrine, though the Churches of Sweden and Finland had valued their possession of episco-

pal succession as enabling relationships with Anglicans alongside their continuing relationships with Churches that lacked such a succession. Anglicans also were keen to establish a relationship with the three Nordic Churches that had maintained episcopacy after a single break in the succession during the Reformation.

Erik charts the process of receiving the Porvoo Declaration and proposals in three different Churches, the Church of England, the Church of Sweden and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark.

In the Church of England, approval was overwhelming with most Anglican leaders willing to accept that apostolicity was not dependent purely on the one strand of episcopal ordinations but on the overall life of the Church, in doctrine mission, fellowship and sacramental worship. Succession in historic sees was as important as succession in ordinations. Individual Anglican theologians, such as Mary Tanner, John Hind and Canon Halliburton made many fruitful suggestions, the latter arguing persuasively that when the presbyter Bugenhagen ordained several priests as bishops for Denmark, he was well aware of the Alexandrian practice in the primitive church, of the presbyters ordaining new patriarchs.

In Sweden, there was also very little opposition - indeed Erik mentions that the one hostile motion was withdrawn before debate. Denmark was very different. There, problems were caused partly by a lack of clear decision making structures, a legacy of the complicated relationship of Church and State there since the Reformation. He also refers to the pietistic heritage of much of the Danish Church which was not happy with what some regarded as Anglican colonialism over episcopacy, and to the fact that the matter was referred down to parish level. Seventy per cent of parishes were unhappy with the proposals and that

caused the Danish bishops to decide that the ELCD should not sign up to Porvoo, thus making Denmark, along with Latvia, which Erik does not discuss, the only two dissenters out of the twelve Churches in conversation. Denmark was eventually to join, helped by the Anglican decision to ordain women to the episcopate. However, Denmark was meanwhile to accede to the Leuenberg Declaration and the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe; moreover, it has also continued to avoid 'catching the apostolic succession' through letting other Porvoo bishops share in Danish consecrations, two aspects of its membership that seem inconsistent to Erik and others.

In his concluding section, Erik records that some of the decisions of Nordic Churches since the inauguration of the Communion seem inconsistent with the Porvoo Agreement. He is unhappy with the continued refusal of the Danes to accept co-consecrators from the other Churches in their episcopal consecrations. He records the fact that the Church of England and the Finnish Church disputed whether the Church of Sweden should have made its 2006 agreement with the Swedish Mission Covenant Church, an agreement that they felt inconsistent with Porvoo. The Swedes followed this up with a further agreement in 2016 with the united Swedish mission, a body embracing Baptists and Methodists. Erik is determined that the Porvoo Communion should remember its call to develop a unity transcending previous differences and within which there is genuine development in mutual reception from both partner traditions.

Erik gives considerable attention to views of Porvoo expressed by other communions and within the Lutheran World Federation. He shows how different Roman Catholics have debated the ultimate acceptability of the Porvoo consensus in their communion. Some think that unbroken episcopal succession remains essential and non-negotiable, others that reception of a broader apostolicity on Porvoo lines might prove ultimately acceptable, perhaps supplemented by an '*ecclesia supplet*' understanding. He records the view of Michael Root, a distinguished American Lutheran, that Porvoo might prove the basis for a future joint Angli-

can-Lutheran communion.

Erik argues that the holistic understanding of apostolicity as involving both true doctrine and succession of faithful ministers, plus mission, service and communion in the many gifts bestowed by the Spirit for the building up of the people of God, represents faithfulness to the implicit holistic self-understanding of the Church in its two earliest centuries. He contrasts the primitive sense of the Church as the instrument of the Spirit with later medieval attitudes which saw the Church virtually as possessor of the Spirit. He relates how the understanding of ordained ministry as service by particular members called out within their local communities for such service gradually became replaced from the third century by the increased understanding of bishops and later presbyters as priests and thus members of a separate caste. The high Middle Ages saw priesthood primarily as about unique power over the Eucharist, rather than as service which also involved sacramental presidency. The result was an unbalanced ecclesiology against which there was equally distorted reaction at the Reformation in most of the provinces that separated from Roman allegiance. The original balanced ecclesiology of communion had been replaced by an hierarchical ecclesiology, which was later to be confronted with other *possessive, fragmented ecclesiologies* to use Erik's terminology. Porvoo represents a serious attempt to re-read the history of sixteenth century confrontations and develop a balanced ecclesiology acknowledging the full apostolicity of the Church in many facets of its life, mission, worship, sacraments, common life and gifts of the Spirit as distributed throughout its membership.

We may accept Erik's view that the establishment of the Porvoo Communion is indeed a key ecumenical achievement, an encouragement to many in the rest of the Church Universal. His book is a well deserved tribute to the Porvoo process and all who have helped develop it.

I would add in conclusion, however, that there are wider issues of episcopate in general to be considered on a broader base in which, in particular, the Reformed and Free Church traditions, with their strong experience of

the local congregation, and the Roman Catholic Church with its stress on the Petrine ministry at the universal level, need to be engaged. I am glad to note - from elsewhere than in this book - that the Porvoo Communion is in dialogue with both the Orthodox and the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe - all three partners in these two dialogues would do well to note the insights that come from the history and experience of the other two.

In the not-to-be-forgotten ecclesiological process of Churches Together in England in the late 1990's, *Called to Be One* - a process guided by the late Canon Martin Reardon, himself a Porvoo theologian - Mary Tanner called on all the Churches to examine their bonds of communion at every level. To such a wider consultation Pope Francis brings three vital assets: his stress on the fact that his ministry is within the Church, not above it; that it is directed to mission, particularly to the most neglected; to which he adds a key third emphasis on the parish, an emphasis vital to awakening enthusiasm for the unity of the wider Church since it is at the level of parish, circuit/local congregation that the ordinary lay Christian receives and learns to live out his or her faith in Christ.

When considering episcopacy, more attention needs to be given to the stress given by the late Fr Jean-Marie Tillard on the bishop as witness to the particular gifts and traditions of his local church, rather than as a 'conduit' for the dictates of the Holy See. This seems an important contribution to owning a genuinely legitimate and enriching diversity in the whole Body.

The late Harding Meyer once called for a differentiated consensus on the episcopate, on bishops as witnesses to continuity and to catholicity. I would support this, particularly as linked to further consideration of the Petrine ministry at one extreme and the parish/congregation and its varied local ministries at the other. Oversight in love must both be embodied in particular responsible individuals and shared collegially. There are further steps to be taken beyond Porvoo, grateful as the rest of us from traditions other than the Anglican and Nordic Lutheran can be for its inspiration, and its very thorough examination in this book.

A LASTING DUTY TO STAND UP FOR THE OPPRESSED

The Most Rev Dr Tapio Luoma is the Archbishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. He was recently interviewed about his role as a 'Thursdays in Black Ambassador'

You are becoming a 'Thursdays in Black' ambassador in the midst of reports that cases of domestic abuse and violence are rising due to the rules in many countries to stay at home to "stay safe" from COVID-19.

How can churches and individuals respond to the continuing urgency of sexual and gender-based violence?

Dr Luoma: Violence against women is a violation of human rights and churches are called to stand up for the abused and defenceless. Churches can do this by raising awareness by calling for the authorities to address the problem through legislation, protection and support; by ensuring that their own teaching and practices duly contribute to advancing women's rights; by providing women and girls with organized support and means of empowerment. They can and indeed they must do all these things because God is a God of justice.



Where do you see hope that change can happen?

Dr Luoma: The Christian tradition comes with a lasting duty to stand up for the oppressed. In the Gospel, Jesus proclaims that God's rule will set the oppressed free. Each generation must therefore recognize where people's rights are being violated and involve themselves in advocacy on their behalf. I am encouraged that many churches are taking on such a role, that they are

taking seriously the gravity of violations women still suffer in our societies and that they are actively looking for ways to address the problem.

To give one example, my own Finnish Lutheran Church is the leading provider of family counselling services in Finland. This is an important opportunity to employ various means to prevent domestic abuse. It also gives the churches expertise and therefore authority to speak up and raise awareness in society.

What message do you hope to convey as an ambassador for Thursdays in Black?

Dr Luoma: As an ambassador for Thursdays in Black I wish to extend my greetings to my fellow Christians. Working against sexual and gender-based violence is part of our common call. As a calling rooted in God's will, it will not return to us empty but it will accomplish God's purpose and succeed in its task.

TRILATERAL CONVERSATION PUBLISHES FINAL REPORT ON BAPTISM

Representatives of the Roman Catholic Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) met from 2012-2017 to explore their understanding and practice of Baptism.

"Increased mutual understanding and cooperation" while growing together in faith

The final report on the Lutheran-Mennonite-Roman Catholic Trilateral Conversation has been published. It concludes five years of intense theological consultations between the three communities on the understanding and practice of baptism in light of contemporary pastoral and missional challenges facing all three Christian communities.

"Strengthening relationship"

"*Baptism and Incorporation into the Body of Christ, the Church*", summarizes the rich discussions that have taken place over five years on three fundamental themes: 1) the relation of Baptism to sin and grace, 2) the celebration of Baptism and the communication of grace and faith in the context of the Christian community, 3) the living out of Baptism in Christian discipleship. 'It is a great joy that The Trilateral Report is now available,' says Prof Dr Dirk Lange, LWF Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Relations. 'It builds on and strengthens the relationship between our three communities as we move from conflict to communion.'

"Gift and call"

The report follows upon the Lutheran-Mennonite bilateral report "*Healing Memories*" which led to a powerful service of reconciliation in 2010, and the Mennonite-Roman Catholic bilateral dialogue that led to "*Called to be Peacemakers*".

'It reminds us of that deep bond in faith that unites us,' Dr Lange added. 'Baptism is the introduction into the body of Christ that transcends the borders of nations and confessions of faith.'

'The Report challenges us to become more deeply aware of baptism as both gift and call for everybody's life of faith. We rejoice to be on the pathway to increased mutual understanding and cooperation as we help one another grow in faithfulness to Jesus Christ and respond to the many pastoral and missional challenges of today's world.'

You can find the Report online, ready to download at <https://www.lutheranworld.org/content/resource-baptism-and-incorporation-body-christ-church>

EMBRACING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES AND VALUES

In their 'Voices from the Communion' series LWI interviewed Dr Mary Philip, Associate Professor for Lutheran Global Theology and Mission at the Martin Luther University College, Canada. A trained zoologist and theologian, she was born in Saudi Arabia, calls India "home", and currently teaches in Canada. 'I am a hybrid and so is my theology,' she says.



You are Editor-in-Chief of "Consensus – A Canadian Journal of Public Theology", and the latest edition focuses on "Sustainability and Religion". It carries contributions to the interdisciplinary conference that took place in Bergen, Norway, in February this year*. Could you describe the aim of this edition?

Climate change is the pivotal issue of the 21st century. The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) was clear in stating that climate change is not an abstract reality to the Lutheran communion of Churches, and sustainability is central to the issue of climate change. Sustainability is also the core of the United Nations' Agenda 2030. The goal is to encourage development and progress while protecting the planet.

However, as was stated in the call for papers [for the Bergen Conference], sustainability is not merely a technical term, describing practices in the various sectors of society but a concept that runs deep in the cosmologies and the wisdom traditions of our faith, which calls us to be active participants in the care of creation, and in the work towards a more just, sustainable and peaceful world.

This needs to be a way of life. All of us, regardless of the region and religion, have a role to play in equipping today's generation to create pathways for sustainable living, and we have to educate ourselves as well.

In what ways does the topic of sustainability encourage cooperation between theologians, applied scientists, lawyers and political leaders?

The magic word is "interconnectedness." Actually, it is not magic. It is the essence of being earthlings. We share one planet and are one humanity. The choices I make in one corner of the earth have consequences far and wide.

Achieving or striving to achieve sustainability in one area or one discipline will not solve the problem. It needs to happen everywhere, and everyone needs to play their part.

Whether we are theologians, scientists, lawyers or political leaders, we share our concerns, and our common commitment to care for the earth from our respective traditions and disciplines. We must explore ways of living together in such a way that my welfare comes not at the expense of another's. Interdisciplinary dialogue around sustainability has the capacity to provide the space to explore ways of fostering ecological consciousness through education. No discipline is an island, whether it be theology, social science, jurisprudence or politics. They are interconnected!

John Donne said this in the 16th century, 'No man is an island, intire of itselfe; every man is a peece of the Continent, a part of the maine; . . . any mans death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee.' It still holds true. We are all in this together!

The conference took place before internationally drastic measures were taken against the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Looking back, how might the experiences made in the last months have influenced the discussions at the conference?

History has seen its share of pandemics – black death, small pox, cholera, Spanish flu, SARS, Ebola – some more devastating than others. COVID is the latest in the line and we are still nowhere in figuring out much about this pandemic.

However, what COVID did is to create a rupture, a crack, a much-needed pause.

I am not saying that the pandemic is a good thing. But, it forced us to stop doing things that were getting dangerously normal. While nature got a reprieve from greedy humans, it also unveiled the many inequities in societies around the world. It is the poor and disenfranchised that are bearing the brunt of COVID.

When I hear the oft repeated question, 'when do we get back to normal?', I want to scream out loud, 'NO!' We cannot go back to what was normal. We have to put the brakes on, pause, and think: What have we been doing? If we are to have any future on this planet, we have to re-think, reimagine and re-story ourselves, and our relationships with each other and the earth that houses us.

The words of activist Sonya Renee Taylor are pertinent here. 'Our pre-corona existence was never normal other than we normalized greed, inequity, exhaustion, depletion, extraction, disconnection, confusion, rage, hoarding, hate and lack. . . We are being given the opportunity to →

⇒ stitch a new garment, one that fits all of humanity and nature.'

Or, as my compatriot Arundhati Roy would say, 'Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next. We can choose to walk through it, dragging behind us the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world, and ready to fight for it.'

I would like to think the discussions in the conference would take this into consideration and have our discourses in such a way that the COVID, as much as being a threat, could be a threshold as well; a threshold into a new and better world.

You are passionate about issues concerning women, climate change and eco-theology. How do these three aspects interrelate?

Climate change has gender-specific implications. Gender inequalities exist in most parts of the world, but climate induced disasters worsen the existing disparities. It is a fact that women are primarily the ones that have been caring for and preserving the earth. However, women are more vulnerable to climate change because of the roles they have in society, especially in terms of production and domestic life.



Thus, climate change disproportionately affects those that least contribute to it – women and children (and not to mention, the world's poorest). In other words, women face eco-racism. Women are also susceptible to eco-anxiety as they are more affected by natural disasters, again because of their social role, poverty and gender inequity.

But like the lotus that blooms in the muddy waters, women resist and refuse to give in and instead become agents of change, of environmental and eco-justice. The UN Watch report on Gender and Climate shows women as having a strong body of knowledge and expertise that can be used in climate change mitigation. Women have an eco-sensitivity and eco-consciousness, and see the spirit of wisdom as the

healing and life-giving force, combining the sacred inherent in the natural world like trees, and plants and water with the understanding of *Sophia*, or wisdom, thereby developing an eco-theology which undergirds their practice. The Lutheran churches worldwide are involved in the discourses on climate change and sustainability in religion. We cannot but advocate for the increased participation of women in climate initiatives.

At Martin Luther University College you teach courses on eco-consciousness and the Earth Charter, among others. What is your observation: how well-established is eco-theology at universities and colleges worldwide?

Not as much as it should be. While eco-theology as such is not taught in universities, according to data collected by Times Higher Education (April 22, 2020), many universities worldwide are taking measures to educate students on climate change and sustainability, with Canada among the top five. Educational institutions cannot but be engaged in discourses that question and challenge traditional perceptions of our relationships with the Earth and, by extension, our relationships with each other and the divine who we address in various names. Universities and colleges need to inculcate in their students a new consciousness, an eco-consciousness or an earth consciousness that values the collective and not just the individual, that values connection and not separation. They need to redeem our stories from those of dominion to stories of connectedness so as to restore the damage committed against peoples, places, plants, animals, mountains, rivers and oceans.

More importantly, educational institutions need to practice what they strive to teach their students. They too need to walk the talk that they are asking their students to walk and accept sustainable practices and values, to be committed to live out what they are inculcating in their structures, systems, processes, and *modus operandi*. This is crucial.

* *The Interdisciplinary Conference referred to in the introduction on "Sustainability and Climate in Religion" took place in Bergen, Norway, from 12th to 14th February 2020. It was a joint event of the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Church of Norway, Council for Religious and Life Stance Communities in Norway, Al Mowafaqa and the LWF. Consensus, Volume 41, Issue 1 (2020) curates contributions to the conference. One of them is by Mary Philip, entitled "Women, Climate Change and Eco-theology".*





MULTILATERAL ECUMENISM : A ROMAN CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE ON THE PAST SIXTY YEARS

This article by the Rev Dr Andrzej Choromanski of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity was first published in Italian in "L'Osservatore Romano".

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It provides some excellent background to the Roman Catholic Church's engagement in the ecumenical process since the Second Vatican Council.

Relations with the World Council of Churches

In the field of multilateral relations, the major partner of the Catholic Church is the World Council of Churches (WCC). Founded in 1948, it is the broadest and most inclusive ecumenical organization, bringing together 350 Christian denominations including Orthodox, Lutherans, Reformed, Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists as well as United and Independent churches. Altogether they represent over 500 million Christians worldwide.

First contacts with the WCC go back to the time of preparations for the Second Vatican Council. An invitation was issued by the Holy See to send observers. As in the past the Popes had always declined invitations from the WCC to send observers to its assemblies, there was uncertainty as to whether such an invitation would be answered positively. However, knowing that Saint John XXIII desired to open the Catholic Church to the modern ecumenical movement through the Council, the leadership of the WCC recommended sending observers. During the same period the Holy See sent for the first time Catholic official observers to the WCC's Third Assembly in New Delhi in 1961. Eventually, Willem Adolph Visser't Hooft, Dutch Reformed and then Secretary General of the WCC, and a Greek theologian from the Bossey Ecumenical Institute, Nikos Nissiotis, attended all four of the

Second Vatican Council's sessions. They were among the more than 100 non-Catholics who from 1962 to 1965 joined different sessions of the Council either as delegated observers or as ecumenical guests. They influenced the work of the Council and made a real contribution to the preparation of the major documents, including the constitutions on the Liturgy and the Church, the decree on ecumenism and declarations on religious freedom and on non-Christian religions. They helped the Council to evolve from what could have been a purely internal ecclesial matter into a genuinely ecumenical event that impacted not only the Catholic Church but the whole of Christendom. During the four years of the Council, Willem Visser't Hooft built up a trusting relationship with Cardinal Augustin Bea and his compatriot Father Johannes Willebrands, both at the time responsible for the new Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity that Pope John XXIII had set up on 5th June, 1960. Since that time a multiform collaboration has developed between the two entities.

Although the Catholic Church is not a WCC member, Catholics officially appointed by the Holy See are members of its various commissions and teams, and different dicasteries [departments—ed] of the Roman Curia collaborate with their corresponding programmatic areas. There is joint preparation of the texts for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, an active presence of Catholic members in the

Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, fruitful collaboration with the Office for Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation, as well as on joint projects promoting justice and peace, concern for migrants and refugees, and the care of creation.

From the point of view of the pursuit of the goal of full visible unity, the most important aspect is the collaboration between the WCC and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU), which takes several tangible forms. One of them is the Joint Working Group (JWG) which since 1965 has been a catalyst of fruitful cooperation in the fields of ecumenical formation, of mission and evangelism, youth, justice and peace, and emerging questions related to contemporary modern life. There also exists a fruitful cooperation in the area of ecumenical education and formation. The PCPCU has for many years appointed and sponsored a full-time Catholic professor on the staff of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, near Geneva. Since 2018, this professor has been the first Catholic dean of the Institute to be appointed by the Faculty in its over 70-year long history. Every year in January the students and staff of the Institute come to Rome for a one week study visit which culminates in the participation of the group in the ecumenical vespers presided over by the Holy Father on the closing day of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

As the resolution of doctrinal divergences is indispensable for recovering full visible unity, the Catholic Church acknowledges the special importance of the work carried out by the Faith and Order Commission. It is the most widely representative theological Commission in the world, ⇨

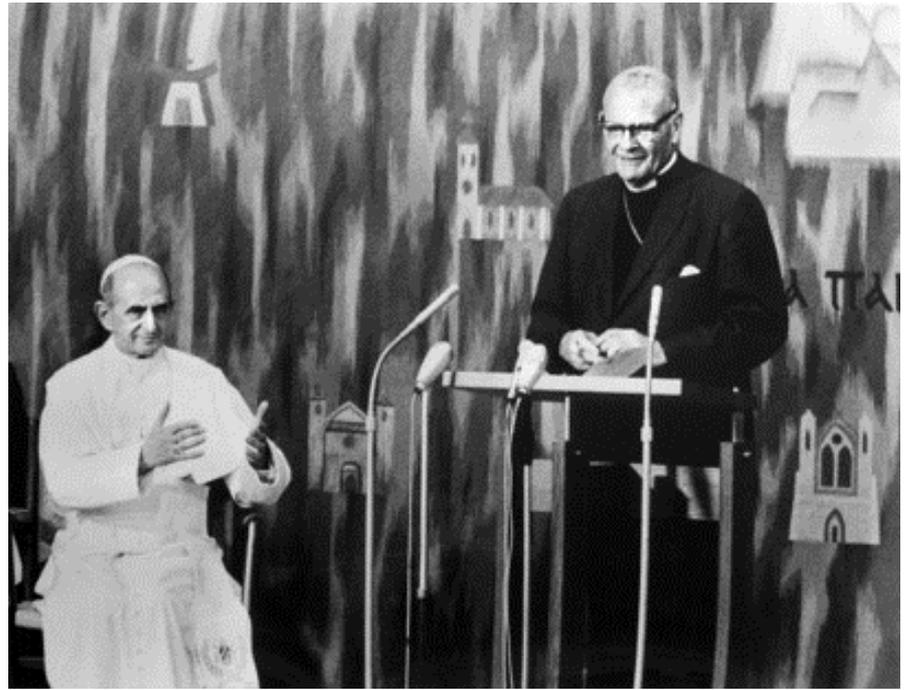


Pope John XXIII welcoming the non-Catholic observers to the Second Vatican Council

⇒ comprising Orthodox, Anglican, Protestant, Evangelical, Pentecostal and, since 1968, Catholic theologians who constitute ten percent of the membership. The Commission has published an impressive number of studies on topics including Holy Scripture and Tradition, Apostolic faith, anthropology, hermeneutics, reconciliation, peace, preservation of creation, and visible unity. The most important of these texts are two convergence statements that have helped Churches to overcome some of the biggest doctrinal divergences. Both were prepared with substantial input from Catholic scholars in the drafting process.

In 1982, the Commission published 'Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry' (BEM), known as the Lima Statement. It explores the growing convergence on three themes on which Churches have been divided over centuries. BEM is recognized as one of the most influential achievements of multilateral theological dialogue. The Faith and Order Secretariat received 186 official responses from Churches. The Catholic response presented in 1987 speaks with appreciation about the text but also points out some specific topics for further studies, in particular ecclesiology. BEM has influenced Catholic-Orthodox and Catholic-Protestant dialogues regarding the mutual recognition of baptism.

After the publication of BEM, ecclesiology became the major study theme within Faith and Order. In 2013 the Commission published the second convergence document 'The Church: Towards a Common Vision' (TCTCV), which is the result of a two-decade long and intense theological work including two intermediate texts. The Geneva Secretariat has received over 75 responses sent by Churches, National Councils of Churches, theological faculties, ecumenical study groups and individuals. In 2019 the PCPCU presented an extensive Catholic response with input from Episcopal conferences and experts from around the world. The Response shows that TCTCV reflects the growing consensus in the field of ecclesiology pointing out some aspects which need further reflection regarding the nature of the Church, its mission and understanding of its unity.



Pope Paul VI being greeted by Rev Dr Eugene C Blake, Secretary-General of the WCC on 10th June, 1969 Photo: United Nations

Special moments in the history of the relations between the Catholic Church and the WCC were three papal visits to the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva. To open the road was Saint Pope Paul VI on 10th June, 1969. This was a gesture of high symbolic significance. The relationship between the Catholic Church and the WCC was still at its beginnings, and the question of whether the Catholic Church might join the WCC was being intensely discussed. Addressing this issue Paul VI said: 'In all fraternal frankness, we do not consider that the question of the membership of the Catholic Church in the World Council is so mature that we can or must give a positive answer. [...] It has serious theological and pastoral implications; it therefore requires in-depth studies, and embarks on a journey which, we must recognize with honesty, could be long and difficult.'

A report of the JWG published in 1972 came to the conclusion that there were no fundamental obstacles preventing possible membership. There was no doubt that the Catholic Church could accept the doctrinal basis of the WCC rooted in the Trinitarian faith. However, after a sound study, the Holy See decided not to seek WCC membership. This was in part because of the disparities between the structure and size of the Catholic Church and in part because

of its theological self-understanding as universal fellowship with a universal mission and structure. From this perspective the Bishop of Rome cannot be considered as one among many heads of Churches, but as the point of reference of the unity of all the baptized. So the question of Catholic membership remains open but is not considered a priority at the present time either by the Catholic Church or by the WCC.

Fifteen years later Saint John Paul II visited the WCC on 12th, June 1984. In his speech during an ecumenical worship service he insisted that the involvement of the Catholic Church in the ecumenical movement was irreversible and recalled that the newly promulgated Code of Canon Law required Catholic bishops to promote Christian unity. He also encouraged the intensification of the multilateral doctrinal dialogue understood as the 'common search for the one truth.'

Pope Francis visited the WCC on 21st June, 2018, to commemorate the 70th anniversary of its foundation. This "ecumenical pilgrimage", as it was called, was placed under the motto of "Walking, Praying, Working Together" which reflected well the kind of relationship that the Catholic Church has been developing with the World Council of Churches for ⇒

⇒ over half a century. During an ecumenical prayer service, the Holy Father encouraged all Christians to ‘pray, evangelize and serve together.’ In a meeting that followed the prayer service he underlined that in the face of social disparities, ecumenism today must include the collaboration of Churches for those who are in need, migrants and refugees and the many victims of wars, injustice, and natural disasters. He particularly stressed the need to intensify common efforts for mission and evangelism. ‘I am convinced,’ he said, ‘that an increased missionary impulse will lead us to greater unity. Just as in the early days, preaching marked the spring-time of the Church, so evangelization will mark the flowering of a new ecumenical spring.’



Pope Francis visiting the WCC under the motto “walking, praying and working together.” Photo: Marie Renaux/WCC

Pope Francis was also the first pope to visit the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, meeting with the Faculty, students and staff. The Rev Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, then WCC’s General Secretary, described the visit of Pope Francis as ‘an historical milestone in the search for Christian unity and for the cooperation among the churches for a world with peace and justice.’

These various aspects of “walking together” are concrete achievements in the sound and time-tested relationship between the Catholic Church and the WCC.

Global Christian Forum

Another multilateral body in which the Catholic Church is actively involved is the Global Christian Forum (GCF), an initiative that emerged at the end of the last century responding to a new ecumenical situation marked by a rapid spread of Evangelical, Pentecostal and Independent

Churches, the majority of which do not join any ecumenical organization while at the same time many remain interested in interacting with other Christians. To respond to this need the GCF was established as an ‘open space’ where representatives of all Churches and Ecclesial Communities could meet periodically on an equal basis and with balanced participation of all streams of modern Christianity. The Forum provides a platform for building relationships of trust and understanding among church leaders, to foster mutual respect, and to explore together common concerns. One of the Forum’s unique contributions to ecumenism is the practice of sharing personal and community faith stories during meetings. Thanks to the GCF many Evangelical, Pentecostal and

Charismatic communities, which for decades had no relations with historic Churches, are now fully involved in the ecumenical movement.

The PCPCU has participated actively in all the GCF projects since its beginnings and together with the WCC, World Evangelical Alliance and World Pentecostal Fellowship constitutes its four ‘pillars’. Large

Catholic representations attended the three GCF global gatherings in Limuru, Kenya, 2007, in Manado, Indonesia, 2011, and in Bogota, Colombia, in 2018. An important GCF gathering took place in Tirana, Albania, in 2015 to address the theme of persecution, discrimination and martyrdom of Christians in the world today. The President of the PCPCU, Cardinal Kurt Koch, who led the Catholic dele-

gation delivered an encouraging message to the participants from Pope Francis. Without doubt the GCF process can be acknowledged as an important step taken by Christians on their ecumenical path towards full visible unity.

Conference of the Secretaries of the Christian World Communions

Another aspect of multilateral ecumenism in which the Catholic Church is involved is the Conference of the Secretaries of the Christian World Communions (CS/CWC), an annual meeting that brings together general secretaries from diverse Christian communions as well as representatives of some global ecumenical organizations. The Catholic Church is represented by the Secretary of PCPCU. It meets every year in the autumn in a different country and is hosted by a different church. CS/CWC is an informal forum aiming at the exchange of information, giving direction to the ecumenical movement and strengthening growth in inter-Church communion. Participants present written reports on important events in their particular Communions and give an update on the bilateral and multilateral dialogues in which their Communions are involved. The Conference does not pass resolutions and does not issue public statements. Meeting without interruption since its foundation in 1957, the Conference has significantly contributed to building trust and partnership among Church leaders and between their respective traditions and to foster the coherence of the ecumenical movement worldwide. The 2019 meeting took place in Christiansfeld, Denmark, and was hosted by the Moravian Church.



Bishop Brian Farrell from PCPCU addressing the Global Christian Forum in Bogotá, Colombia

SOMETHING NEW WAITS TO BE BORN

Archbishop Linda Nicholls is the primate of the Anglican Church of Canada. Her article, reprinted here, first appeared in *The Anglican Journal*, September 2020.



Going back is never what you thought it would be! Do you remember returning to your hometown and discovering a new building on the corner? Or that the old ice cream store is gone? Or that your favourite park has been redeveloped? The memory of home and familiarity of places and people are disrupted by the way things changed while you were away. The comfort you long for is not there in the same way as you expected.

That will undoubtedly be our experience as we continue to emerge from different phases of the COVID-19 lockdown. We long for everything to go back to “normal,” as it was before the beginning of the pandemic. Instead we are facing new protocols and habits. Even the most familiar tasks, such as grocery shopping, have become adventures in wearing masks, one-way aisles and plexiglass dividers between shoppers and staff.

In worship services we will be socially distanced too - your favourite pew closed off, no lingering at a coffee hour and, so far, no singing! Going back will be different from what we expected. In fact, there really will be no going “back,” since everyone and everything around us have been changed by the pandemic. Some are ready to resume gathered activities while others, for a variety of reasons, are fearful of ever gathering beyond family and a few friends.

If you are ready and willing to gather, you may dismiss the fears of others as overly cautious. If you are hesitant to gather again, you may feel unappreciated. The desire for the comfort of familiar relationships will not be met.

This is a time when the description of our calling as the body of Christ is more critical than ever. We are not going back. We are moving forward in a pilgrimage. We are on this pilgrimage together, and it will take extra efforts for us

to see and hear the different perspectives around us. If we charge ahead with the most fearless, we will split the very community we long to preserve. We need one another - the fearless and the cautious, the grieving and the adventurous - especially so that we see and know what we are losing and ensure that we carry with us what we need for the continuity and longevity of our life together.

Every voice is needed. We may well be in the midst of a “great rummage sale” (to borrow from Phyllis Tickle, the author of *The Great Emergence*) in which a testing of what we need to carry with us will be critical - and it will be a discernment for the whole community to undertake.

In this time I feel a deeper connection with the disciples in the first months and years after the resurrection, as they faced such rapid change in their expectations while they experimented with how to share the glorious good news they knew. They tested and tried ways to gather; they drew on their memories of times with Jesus, before and after the resurrection, to shape gathering around meals and bread and wine; they listened to the Spirit speaking in their hearts and souls and they prayed together at every step.

There will be tensions ahead as we emerge into a new and different world. Anxiety, fears and a desire for the familiar may bring conflict. We cannot go back to what was before; it is gone and something new is waiting to be born.

Be gentle with one another. Each has a part of the story we need in the emerging patterns for church life. Make praying together a central part of whatever your parish, deanery, synod or diocese does to plan for the future. The Spirit is with us to lead and guide. Thanks be to God!

USING JAPANESE HISTORY TO EXPLORE THE MEANING OF FAITH

The Rev Dr Roy Long recommends a play by a Japanese Roman Catholic author, Shusako Endo: *The Golden Country* (Boston, Tuttle Publishing, 2003. ISBN: 0-8048-3337-0) which is an adaptation for the stage of Endo’s novel *Silence*, later made into a film.

The main character in this play is Fr Christopher Ferreira, a Portuguese Jesuit missionary. Set in 1633, the play tells how Christians were being cruelly persecuted a century after Christianity first appeared in Japan. Their choice was either apostasy or an agonising death. Ferreira suffers days of cruel torture before, much to the surprise and disbelief of the Christian community that he has helped to establish, he apostatises,

and joins in the persecution of Christians. Fr Francis Mathy, in his introduction to the play, says it “poses basic questions about the meaning of faith, love and fate, [and] provides valuable historical background.” The play is set in its particular historical context, but it raises all sorts of questions of a wider significance. What is the nature of faith? How do Christians respond to persecution? (This is a very important question, granted

the increasing persecution of Christians around the world.) How should Christianity adapt to the culture of peoples among whom it finds itself?

Shusako Endo (1923-1996) and his family became Roman Catholics when he was eleven years old. Much of his writing deals with Christ-like figures, and with the question of why Christianity failed to gain a place in Japan after its early introduction.

ORTHODOX AND ANGLICAN APPEALS FROM 1920 REMAIN INSPIRATION FOR UNITY

Clare Amos, the author of this article, is a former programme coordinator for Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation at the World Council of Churches, and a former director of theological studies in the Anglican Communion Office in London.

One of the foundational moments in the modern ecumenical movement is an encyclical letter issued 100 years ago by the Ecumenical Patriarchate on 1st January 1920. As its opening words state, it was addressed “Unto the Churches of Christ everywhere” and sent as a letter to the leaders of key Christian Churches. Its first words are an appeal to “Love one another earnestly from the heart,” quoting from 1 Peter 1:22.

The letter suggested that doctrinal differences among the Christian Churches do not, or at least should not, prevent “rapprochement” between Christians. Though making clear their concern about intra-Christian proselytization, the authors of the letter then went on to speak warmly and positively about the need for Christians of different Churches to consider each other not as strangers, but as members of the same family and body of Christ – spelling out a number of practical ways in which this might be demonstrated publicly.

Several references in their letter make it clear that the authors were influenced in part by the recent establishment of the League of Nations. They considered this presented a challenge that religious authorities needed to keep up with; religious leaders should not “continue to fall piteously behind the political authorities, who, truly applying the spirit of the Gospel and of the teaching of Christ, have under happy auspices already set-up the so-called League of Nations in order to defend justice and cultivate charity and agreement between the nations.”

Widespread influence

In turn this letter from the Ecumenical Patriarchate clearly influenced other significant Christian traditions. One of the recipients of the letter was the Archbishop of Canterbury and at the meeting of the Lambeth



Metropolitan Germanos of Thyateira, one of the first six presidents of the WCC at its foundation in 1948, Photo: WCC Archives

Conference later in 1920 an “Appeal to all Christian People” was issued by the bishops of the Anglican Communion in a resolution: “Reunion of Christendom.”

The motif of penitence for the division of the Christian Church strongly underpinned the content of this Anglican appeal, as it spoke of “our share in the guilt of . . . crippling the Body of Christ and hindering the activity of his Spirit.” It argued that “The times call us to new outlook and new measures. The faith cannot be adequately apprehended and the battle of the Kingdom cannot be worthily fought while the body is divided, and is thus unable to grow up into the fullness of the life of Christ.” Rather more definitely than the document of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Lambeth Appeal argued for the formal reunion of Churches (though explicitly seeing the conservation of episcopacy as a condition of such reunion). Undoubtedly it gave an impetus to the schemes that eventually led to the formation of the United Churches, first in South India, then in North India, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Looking back

Looking back on both documents from the perspective of 100 years one can give thanks for what has been achieved. Many – though not all – of the practical sugges-

tions offered in the letter of the Ecumenical Patriarchate have formed a regular part of the programmatic work of the World Council of Churches (WCC) since its establishment in 1948. Indeed a key architect of the Patriarchate’s letter, Metropolitan Germanos of Thyateira, played an ongoing role in both the Faith and Order and Life and Work movements of the 1920s and 1930s, and was elected as one of the first six presidents of the WCC at its foundation in 1948. And although the steam seems slightly to have run out of organizational unity schemes, such as were envisaged by the Lambeth Appeal, the United Churches, which were part of its initial fruit, continue to bear institutional witness to the importance of Christ’s prayer of John 17, “that they may all be one . . . that the world may believe.”

Just as there were connections made between the Letter from the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the establishment of the League of Nations (something also true, though less explicit, with regard to the Lambeth Appeal), so later there would be a congruence between the establishment of the WCC and the United Nations, and to this day the WCC works closely and in partnership with many of the UN agencies.

But I note with a certain wry sadness that back in 1920 the hoped for secular spirit of internationalism provided an impetus to Christian unity. There were – and still are – many hurdles on both roads ahead. But now in 2020 so many countries, including my own (the UK which in January this year left the European Union), are turning towards forms of nationalist populism. The Churches perhaps need to repay that original debt from 1920, by continuing to hold before the eyes of the world an expansive vision, which summons the secular world to a generous inclusivism, “for the healing of the nations.”

THE UNITY WAS GROWING IN FRONT OF MY EYES

The Week of Prayer for Unity normally takes place either in January or June. The Rev Eva Guldanova, a Lutheran minister, ecumenical theologian, and assistant to the General Secretary of the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Slovakia, describes how the material was much appreciated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

What stood out for you during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2020?

Eva Guldanova: I had the privilege of translating the material for the 2020 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity into Slovak in the autumn of 2019, and for me that was a bit like a spiritual retreat. I was praying the prayers and reflecting on the theme as I was striving to put it beautifully into the words of my mother tongue.

I was glad to be able to participate in several events during the week itself. On Sunday 19th January, the Ecumenical Council of Churches prepared the traditional ecumenical service broadcast on national TV. It took place in the Ursuline Sisters' Church of St Anna in Trnava. I especially enjoyed talking with the sisters during the festive lunch after the service about their spirituality and about how seriously they took the preparations for the service.

The recording of the ecumenical service was made available by the Slovak TV so that the public could view again during the peak of the coronavirus pandemic when people were isolated in their homes. I believe it brought comfort and encouragement to many.

We also used the Week of Prayer materials during our weekly Taizé prayer, for the joint ecumenical service of Christian communities in Bratislava, and the ecumenical service of theological faculties – joyful events that have already become traditional.

The 100th anniversary of the birth of Chiara Lubich the founder of the Focolare Movement, a significant ecumenical leader, also fell during the Week of Prayer. We remembered her in a lovely mass of gratitude.



For the service broadcast on national TV, the Ursuline sisters in Trnava had decorated the altar space with a boat evoking St Paul's shipwreck in Malta. Photo: Nata Hovorkova/Ecumenical Council of Churches in Slovakia

My Lutheran home congregation in Bratislava–Dúbravka marked the invitation to prayers for Christian unity in ways that were new for us. Throughout the week itself we shared daily Biblical reflections and prayers on Facebook.

Every year, the Week of Prayer brochure invites readers to use the materials to pray for unity throughout the year. We took this invitation seriously this year and decided to dedicate one Bible study meeting each month to learning more about ecumenism. The plan was to welcome into our circle each month people from a community who had an ecumenical vocation. We wanted members of our congregation to learn about that community, experience a little bit of its spirituality, hear faith testimonies of people connected to it and reflect on how we could either join their effort or join forces in service of the needy and in promoting Christian unity. So in February we welcomed some sisters and brothers who organize weekly Taizé prayers, and in the following months we were planning to learn about and from the Focolare Movement, the St Egidio Community, and the local ecumenical scene. Unfortunately, in March the corona crisis hit and we had to postpone these encounters. We hope to resume them as soon as we are able.

As one of the organizers, I was responsible for making contact with these communities. Each of the preparatory meetings was for me a beautiful moment of deep spiritual connection, sharing and mutual enrichment. I met with the sisters and brothers of these



Mass held at the Cathedral of St Martin in Bratislava in gratitude for the life of Chiara Lubich. Photo: The Rev Eva Guldanova



A REMARKABLE BOOK WELL WORTH READING

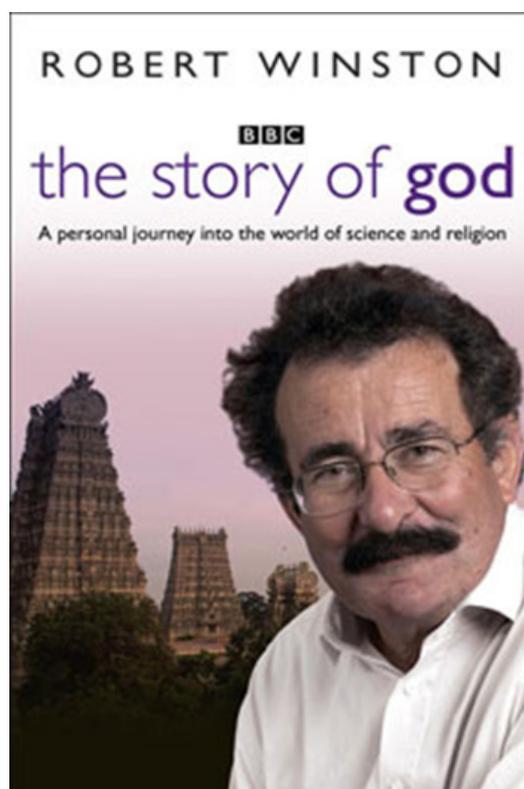
The Rev Dr Roy Long on Robert Winston and the Story of God.

Lord Robert Winston is a polymath of the first order. My sources tell me that he is a professor, a medical doctor, a scientist, a television personality, and a Labour politician who sits in the UK House of Lords. He is also, as I learned from his book **The Story of God: A personal journey into the world of science and religion** (London Bantam Press, 2005. ISBN: 0593-05493-8) something of a theologian. The book which rested unread on my shelves since it was first published in 2005, was written to accompany a TV series which explored how religious beliefs developed through the centuries, and the relationship of faith to our modern scientific and secularised age. Having picked the book up, I found it difficult to put down and I learned a great deal from it, though when he writes about Martin Luther I found myself querying some of what he had to say.

For the most part, Robert Winston's treatment of Luther is straightforward and generally accurate, but a number of things cause me concern. Firstly, and it has to be said, like many other writers he has the tendency to put all Protestants under the same roof as Luther. In particular, he characterises Luther as a theologian who makes the individual the active agent in his/her salvation (see p.313), something which ignores the great emphasis which the Reformer places on faith as the gift of the Spirit and the Church as the community of salvation (see Article 3 of Luther's explanation of the Apostles' Creed in the Shorter Catechism).

Dr Winston also tends to use throw-away summaries which need further explanation. For instance, he suggests that Luther formulated the phrase "*cuius regio eius religio*" (p.234); while it is true that Luther asserted the right of the prince to serve as "*summus episcopus*" in the emergency situation brought about by the reforming movement, this particular formulation, that the faith of the prince should be the faith of his people, is one that originated after Luther's death. Actually misleading is Dr Winston's observation that for Luther the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist were simply "symbols of the faith" (p.232). He takes a similar position about Calvin's view of the Eucharist, stating that "it was nothing more than a symbol"; while this might be true of some other Swiss theologians, Calvin's position is a much more nuanced one.

Granted the reservations expressed in the preceding paragraphs, this is a remarkable book, and written by a remarkable scholar, so it is to be highly recommended.



⇒ communities at their location and experienced beautiful hospitality and Christian love. The unity was growing in front of my eyes.

How has your relation to other Christian communities been changed by praying together?

Eva Guldanova: Being together, singing, praying and working together creates a sense of community across confessional barriers. Receiving God's blessing together helps us to experience the unity which was granted to us by God from the beginning of Christianity and also encourages us and strengthens us to work to manifest that unity, to make it ever more visible.

Through our shared prayer and encounters I have come to appreciate the different Christian communities and their spiritualities. I learned from each of them, grew deeper in my faith, was challenged and changed. I encountered beauty and often silent awe, a profound humility and gratitude. God is great and the ways to praise God are countless.

What are your plans and hopes for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2021?

Eva Guldanova: I am excited that the materials for this year and the whole setup will be slightly different as it has been prepared by the monastic community at Grandchamp in France.

For me it is an invitation – an invitation which I would like to also extend to people around me – for deepening the spiritual aspect of ecumenism. I like the different elements in the ecumenical liturgy – seeking reconciliation and unity, God's healing and wholeness within oneself, with Christian sisters and brothers, and with all people and the whole of creation. I hope to go deeper in all of these three dimensions of relationships in my life of faith.

I am already reflecting on spending some time of silence, prayer and contemplation in 2021 with some monastic community, ideally one that cherishes ecumenism, perhaps even in Grandchamp itself.



Sven serving as lay preacher at St Nicomedes' Church Tübingen-Weilheim

SVEN MICHAEL GRÖGER

Our newest member in Germany tells you a little about himself, his family and his reason for joining our Society

When I (a 30-year-old Lutheran from Württemberg in south-west Germany, a young theologian not yet ordained and currently working on his doctorate in church history on Anselm of Canterbury, and now a new member of the Anglican-Lutheran Society) was asked to write an article for The Window about myself and why it was that I had joined the Society, I felt honoured and happily agreed. But how can I describe briefly and in a meaningful way what has kindled my love for Anglicanism, how it has influenced my theological and spiritual journey, and what led me to join the Society?

Maybe it's about my personality. In many situations I come to think of myself as a *via media* character – which means that I like one thing, but I also like what is commonly considered its opposite, without any contradiction for my part. I love the south, especially Italy and Rome. I studied there for one year in 2011-2. I was sponsored by the ecumenical study programme of the Melancthon Centre (probably the most formative experience in my life so far!). I love the ancient Roman stones bringing to life centuries of (Christian) history; the Tuscan Renaissance with its unparalleled artisanship; then there is the melodious extroversion of the Italian language; and of course, the joys of pizza, pasta, and heavy red wines. And I love the north, especially the British Isles: the sacred majesty of the great Gothic cathedrals; the mystical aura of Ireland's hills and coastlines (where my wife Lisanne and I spent our honeymoon); the cosiness of enjoying a pint and a hearty English meal in the next pub. Many of the people I know

tend to prefer one over the other. I don't.

Maybe it's about mind-set. Over the years I have been in touch with Lutherans and Calvinists, Roman Catholics and Eastern

Orthodox, Anglicans and Methodists, Baptists and Waldensians. I consider myself an ecumenical theologian, a *via media* theologian of some sort. I am Lutheran, but I come from a Church (Württemberg) which 'looks different' from other Lutheran Churches. While Lutheran in doctrine, the liturgy has been influenced by the neighbouring Reformed in Switzerland and Alsace, so it is quite 'low church' and sermon-centred in style. That's what I grew up with. It wasn't bad: I embarked on my journey with Jesus Christ from there. But then, very early on in my studies at Tübingen University, the



Sven and his daughter Greta at Gloucester Cathedral

world with its diversity and its riches suddenly began opening up and coming closer. When I began delving into Roman Catholicism I was struck, fascinated, enchanted by the riches of the theological and liturgical tradition. And when I learnt that there are some Protestants, Lutherans, Anglicans who had preserved much more of the ancient catholic tradition than my church had, I was at first bewildered, unsure how this could possibly go together. But out of astonishment was born curiosity, and from curiosity came reading, and from reading came thinking, and then the contradiction started to resolve itself, and I found the first traces of a theological *via media*. I am trying to follow it to the present day, and Anglican theology and spirituality have been a major influence on the way.

Maybe it's about experience. Over the years, one of the most important events of the year for my wife and me has become the 'Lessons and Carols' service at St George's Church (aka the Lutheran *Stiftskirche*) in Tübingen. The first time I attended this service (at the time a freshman at university) I hardly knew any of the hymns. Now Advent and Christmas in our family are not complete without a due portion of traditional English carols. And I could mention as well other funny things we do when we get the chance to, like 'cathedral hopping' or perhaps 'Evensong tourism' – it's not only the mind, but also the heart that has been shaped.

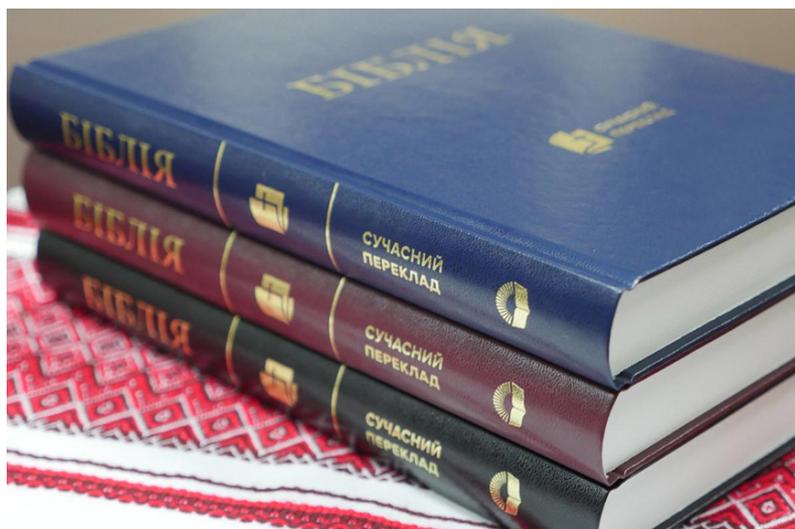
All these pieces (and some others that have to go unmentioned here) put together may be an explanation of how I've come to be interested in, fascinated by, attracted to Anglicanism. In the end, however, most things I've said so far are based on vast generalisations, even clichés, on theory or short encounters hardly scratching the surface. That's what one can learn from books, from articles, from YouTube videos, from holiday trips, from occasional events. That's undoubtedly good, that's important, that's necessary. While studying in 

UKRAINE: JOY OVER NEW BIBLE TRANSLATION

An everyday language translation, grounded in ecumenical partnership (LWI)

'What joyful news for all Christians of Ukraine!' says Pavlo Shvarts, Bishop of the German Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine (GELCU). 'We now hold the long-awaited new full translation of the Bible in modern Ukrainian in our hands.'

The new translation was officially launched by the Ukrainian Bible Society in May this year. It is the result of a long-term effort that started in 1992 and includes the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, which were translated from old Hebrew and ancient Greek.



Copies of the Modern Ukrainian Bible Translation. Photo: Ukrainian Bible Society

'Martin Luther emphasized the authority of the Bible,' says Bishop Shvarts, 'and he emphasized the necessity of translating the Bible into the everyday language of common people ... Languages are under constant transformation and therefore we require new translations of the Holy Scriptures from time to time, so that the Word of God remains clear and understandable by the people in modern society.'

The GELCU has already had positive experiences using the new translation for Bible classes and personal devotions. Now it was decided to use it officially during the church services and for quoting Bible passages on the church's website and social media.

The publication of the Modern Ukrainian Bible Translation is 'the result of teamwork – that is why we can confidently call it interdenominational and ecumenical,' says the Bishop. 'Translators were striving for a balance between the literal meaning of the text, and its adaptation to the Ukrainian literary and cultural context ... I am proud that our small church is among the members of Ukrainian Bible Society and hope to continue our fruitful cooperation.'

The Ukrainian Bible Society was founded in 1991, just two months before the country declared its independence from the Soviet Union. Today, twenty Churches are members, among them Orthodox, Catholic, Lutheran, and other protestant churches.

One of the leading figures of the translation process was Rafail Turkonyak, Archimandrite of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. He is an "expert in ancient languages" and "biblical enthusiast" who also has great skills in the Ukrainian language. To ensure input from interested parties, the Ukrainian Bible Society had published preliminary versions of some books of the Old Testament and had invited suggestions for editing. 'This is a good practice that allows the reader to work with the text and to contribute to creating a high-quality translation,' says Bishop Shvarts.

The GELCU is a member of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) through the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Russia and Other States.

⇒ Germany, Anglicanism (as well as many other denominations) did not play any particular role in the curriculum, and I suspect that many of my fellow Christians here don't know much about it. So I would love to see this change, to see more people here learn about Anglicanism from books, articles, YouTube videos, holiday trips, and occasional events.

I myself, however, felt the need to bring it to another level, to really get in touch with fellow Lutherans and

Anglicans, share theological, liturgical, spiritual, practical insights, to also hear about challenges, troubles, sufferings (not just looking at the glorious façade), learn from the experiences and wisdom of people in other Churches, other denominations, other countries, so that we might face together the challenges of modern life, of Christian life in this age, of communicating and living out the Gospel today. That's why I joined the Anglican-Lutheran Society, and (if COVID-19 allows) I hope to get in touch with some of you soon.



Sven, his wife Lisanne and daughter Greta

DIGITALIZATION OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES, RAISES THEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS

European Church Leadership Consultation discusses times of transformation (LWI)



*The Vice-Presidents of the European regions: Pröpstin Astrid Kleist (Central and Western Europe), Archbishop Antje Jackelén (the Nordic Countries) and Archbishop Urmas Viilma (Central and Eastern Europe)
Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert*

Something the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has done is to accelerate developments and changes that European Churches and Societies have been facing in recent years. Being Church online raises new theological questions. Sources of church income and funding have been disrupted. The pandemic and changes in European Societies require new forms of pastoral care and accompaniment. On the second day of an online European Church Leadership Consultation at the end of September the Vice-Presidents from all three European regions of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) offered their personal insights.

Believing without belonging

Pröpstin Astrid Kleist, the Vice-President for Central and Western Europe, sketched developments in Church and Society over the past few years. She identified individualization as a critical factor when it comes to church membership and other 'long-term and binding commitments.'

'We are no longer born naturally into a religious tradition, but we decide for ourselves whether we want to belong, and how. Sociologists of religion, therefore, speak of a patchwork religiosity,' she said, adding, 'The decline in the importance of institutionalized religion is not accompanied by a loss of the importance of individual religiosity and spirituality. However, it is less binding, less traditional and less socialized,' but much more diverse. So Churches will have to ask critically, 'What open spaces and resources will be needed in the future to be relevant ... for the people to whom we feel sent?'

Being church online

Sharing insights from Central and Eastern Europe, Archbishop Urmas Viilma elaborated on the impact of the "technological jump" the Churches had undergone during the pandemic. 'We have seen the development of two Churches – an online one in addition to the physical one,'

the Archbishop said, adding that they differ in both their audiences and their forms of participation. 'We received good feedback from non-members who started joining our online worship services,' he said. Also, leaders received direct feedback on their services as people could easily switch between them, following music styles and formats that suited their individual preferences.

As many worship activities took place online, theological questions arise: What is "real" and what is "virtual"? What is the role of the pastor? How are we to administer sacraments? These themes require in-depth theological reflection in future, the Archbishop added.

Pastoral care has also proved to be a difficult task in the past six months. 'It has been a challenge not to leave anyone out,' he said. The telephone proved to be a useful tool in this regard. People – mainly the elderly or sick – often live in more isolated situations and many of them cannot easily access the internet.

Burdens to be shared and shouldered jointly

Archbishop Antje Jackelén, Vice-President of the Nordic Countries, quoted a joint statement issued by Lutheran and Catholic bishops just before the outbreak of the pandemic in their region. "Our physical and mental boundaries are being tested by the spread of the new Coronavirus and the developing refugee situation on the external borders of Europe." Both developments "required personal and shared responsibility across Europe."

'Burdens should be shared and shouldered jointly – if we fail, we lose our humanity,' Archbishop Jackelén said.

Generally speaking, 'diaconal work has been quick to adapt to the new situation,' she explained. 'Needs were clear: food, medicine, and the consequences of isolation and loneliness.' Overall, interaction and contact with governments and civil society organizations had increased considerably and was appreciated by these institutions.

She also felt that pastoral work proved more challenging, but also resulted in new and creative actions. Questions arose regarding the parishes of the national church when online services and central helplines 'blur the boundaries' between the clearly defined geographical parish borders.' They are 'in demand more than ever', she said, with the number of contacts rising significantly.

'In the aftermath of the pandemic, we will face economic problems – both in Church and Society,' she pointed out. 'Digitalization as a means to reduce costs – for administration or to maintain the basic work in congregations – may be one of the ways to be considered for the future.' Also, raising money for international work could be assisted by digital tools.

GERMANY'S ECUMENICAL KIRCHENTAG TO BE 'HYBRID' EVENT DUE TO COVID-19



Bettina Limperg, Protestant President of the Ecumenical Kirchentag. Photo: ÖKT

The organizers of Germany's biggest ecumenical gathering, planned for 2021, have announced they intend the event to go ahead but on a reduced scale. This is due to the COVID-19 pandemic and there will have to be strict hygiene and social distancing measures.

The Third Ecumenical *Kirchentag* is due to take place from the 12th to 16th May, 2021 in Frankfurt. It was expected that more than 100,000 participants from Germany's main Christian Churches and others from around the world would be taking part. But at an online press conference on 22nd September, the Protestant and Roman Catholic organizers of the event said they were now planning for up to 30,000 participants in Frankfurt. Others would be able to take part virtually through streaming, hybrid events and online chat.

'The Third Ecumenical *Kirchentag* is needed, especially now,' the event's Protestant President, Ms Bettina Limperg, an eminent lawyer, told the press conference. 'Space must be found in the public arena for dialogue, fellowship, discussion and conflict.'

The Roman Catholic President is Dr Thomas Sternberg, who is chairman of the Central Committee of German Catholics. He said that, as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world is changing. The issues it has raised include what holds society together, the sustainability of the current economic system, dangers to creation, and how ways of living out the Christian faith are changing.

Dr Sternberg said a comprehensive health and safety plan would be presented in October, following discussions with the authorities. 'We can organize the Ecumenical *Kirchentag* responsibly, carefully and in a new way yet at the same time it will be a genuine and intensive Ecumenical *Kirchentag*,' he said.

The programme for the *Kirchentag* will be divided into four subject areas. First, Faith, Spirituality and Church; then Living Spaces, Living Environments and Living Together; thirdly Creation, Peace and World Community; and finally Economy, Power and responsibility.

The event has been organized in the past by the German Protestant *Kirchentag* and the Central Committee of German Catholics. They hold large-scale Protestant and Roman Catholic gatherings in alternate years. But this time, as well as the Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches, other Christian Confessions and Churches from Germany are involved in this Third Ecumenical *Kirchentag*.

The first Ecumenical *Kirchentag* in Berlin in 2003 gathered about 200,000 participants. At the Second Ecumenical *Kirchentag* in Munich in 2010 there were about 130,000 present. Both previous events had more than 5000 international participants and the organizers hope that some international participation will be possible in 2021, depending on official regulations.

The motto for the event is "*Shaut hin*" (Take a Look) and is based on the verse from Mark 6.38: "Jesus said to his disciples, 'How many loaves do you have? Take a look'."

ANNUAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE

Your committee is working very hard to ensure that next year our activities are not ruined by COVID-19 as this year's have been.

The **Annual Meeting** will be held on Saturday 6th March 2021 come what may. If the COVID restrictions have been relaxed a little by then it will be a 'hybrid' event. This means that people who are able and comfortable about visiting London can actually meet one another in the Church of All-Hallows-by-the-Tower. But the event will be streamed so that members around the world who cannot get to London can join in a virtual way. Full details will be in the January issue of *The Window* and on the website as soon as they have been finalised.

Cancelling the **Rome Conference** was a deep disappointment, but all may not be lost. Plans are being made for a two-day virtual conference in the late spring. Some of the contributors have agreed to make their presentations online and we hope to make the conference as interactive as possible. More about that in the next issue.



The Window

supports members of the Anglican-Lutheran Society in better understanding our different traditions and social contexts so that we can more faithfully proclaim together God's love and justice in the world

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The Anglican-Lutheran Society

10 Sandwich Street, London WC1H 9PL
Tel: +44(0)1626852677
Email: angluthsociety@outlook.com
Registered Charity No.1015153

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Secretary

The Rev Canon Dick Lewis - Anglican
dick@ccwatford.u-net.com

Treasurer

Mr Patrick Litton - Anglican
treasurer.als@gmail.com

Membership Secretary

Mrs Helen Harding - Anglican
angluthsociety@outlook.com

Committee Members

The Ven Christine Allsopp - Anglican
Mrs Sally Barnes - Anglican
The Very Rev Tom Bruch - Lutheran
The Rev Jonathan Collis - Anglican
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Mrs Helen Harding - Anglican
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The Very Rev Eliza Zikmane - Lutheran

Co-opted Members/Observers

Mr David Carter - Methodist
The Rev Fr Phillip Swingler - Roman Catholic

National Coordinators

The Rev Susanne Skovhus, Denmark
sus@km.dk
The Rev Dr Jaakko Rusama, Finland
jaakko.rusama@helsinki.fi
The Rev Jochen Dallas, Germany
jodanide@gmail.com
The Rev Fredrik Ulseth, Norway
fredrik.ulseth@online.no
The Ven Richard Wottle, Sweden
Richard.Wottle@svenskakyrkan.se
Mr Tom VanPoole, USA
anglicanlutheran@gmail.com

Editor of The Window

Canon Dick Lewis
Email : angluthwindow@hotmail.com

NEWS OF SOME MORE OF OUR MEMBERS IN GERMANY



One of our members is Pastor Woldemar Flake. He is the Ecumenical Officer in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hanover. He says, 'Due to COVID things have been difficult in terms of ecumenical relations recently. Several visits planned for this year had to be cancelled. But step by step we are continuing to develop the new link between the Anglican Diocese of Leeds and the Lutheran Church of Hanover.'

He continues, 'My family and I are deeply distressed by the disastrous way Brexit seems to be turning out and I am deeply convinced that links between Britain and the rest of Europe will be more vital than ever. After all, when he was a little boy my son used to cheer for the English national football team while waving the German flag and vice versa...!'

'When I think about Brexit I mainly feel sorry for the young people. I am sure that the majority of them will not be attracted by chauvinism in the long run – so, there must be some hope.'

Another member is Michael Thoma. He is *Stadtdekan* in the city of Augsburg. Your Editor wondered what the duties of a 'City Dean' might be, so he went online and discovered that Michael is responsible for the Central area of the city, serving as one of a 'college of deans' who together have oversight of the city and district of Augsburg, Aichach-Friedberg and Wertingen where there are around 90,000 parish members. His responsibility in the city covers things like synods, committees, the welfare of the general church community, diakonia, ecumenism, adult education and public relations. Quite a task!



Michael writes, 'The main challenge through this pandemic is being forced to reduce the seats in our churches during services and church music. At the moment this is a problem merely for church music, but it will become a challenge at Christmas; then our creativity will be needed.'

'Then, because of social distancing, pastoral care and counselling is difficult. Senior citizens are often missed at services and meetings, so we have to phone or visit them. But not all of them want that. Visits at hospitals or retirement homes can be done by special pastors, so there is no problem with that at the moment.'

'On top of everything, our church is going through a process of reform and will get a new employment plan. We wait and see ... everything has its time!'

Pastor Hans-Joachim Blankenburg now lives in retirement in Bad-Kissingen. Almost since our Society was founded he has been a member. When we first met him he was a Superintendent in the German Democratic Republic and described vividly what life was like for the church communities under the communist regime. At a recent meeting your Executive Committee resolved to mark his valued contribution to our Society by granting him Life Membership.