

# THE WINDOW

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ANGLICAN - LUTHERAN SOCIETY

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Winter 1992

## BOOST FOR PROSPECT OF CLOSER ANGLICAN-LUTHERAN COMMUNION IN NORTHERN EUROPE

The prospect of closer communion between Lutheran and Anglican churches in northern Europe was boosted when church representatives approved a working paper at their fourth and final plenary session, held in Finland on October 9th -13th. The document proposes that closer communion and practical cooperation be established between the Lutheran churches in the Nordic and Baltic regions and the Anglican churches in Britain and Ireland.

The document is still subject to approval by the decision-making bodies of the respective churches. If accepted by the churches, the agreement would be a most significant ecumenical breakthrough, said Dr. Günther Gassmann of the World Council of Churches, who attended the talks as a consultant.

The tasks of translating the report and editing historical materials will take several months and publication of the document, known as the Porvoo Common Statement, is not expected before September 1993. The proposals will then be brought before the relevant authorities of each church for debate and decision.

Representatives attending the meeting came from Denmark, England, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Scotland, Sweden and Wales.

The talks were begun in 1989 at the initiative of the archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, and the archbishop of Uppsala, Sweden, Bertil Werkström. Their aim was to review existing agreements and to resolve the remaining differences between the churches. All of the participating churches are led by bishops and their combined membership totals around 50 million believers.

[LWI]

*Best Wishes for Christmas  
and the New Year*

## U S LUTHERAN AND EPISCOPAL BISHOPS DISCUSS PROPOSALS FOR FULL COMMUNION

A dozen bishops from the Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) met in Baltimore on September 4th for the first time to discuss the possibility that their churches will accept a historic proposal for full communion. The Concordat of Agreement, the result of over two decades of dialogue, was released last January and must be studied before the churches take action, possibly in 1997.

'The Episcopal Church is challenged ecumenically as we have never been challenged before,' Bishop Edward Jones of Indianapolis told his colleagues. 'Never has there been a doorway toward full communion more thoughtfully crafted than this one. Never has the preparatory groundwork been so thoroughly ploughed. We have before us the opportunity as Episcopalians to offer the ecumenical movement a great and enduring gift. If we fail to do so, it will be at our own peril - as well as the peril of God's church,' he concluded.

Bishop Jones, former chair of the Episcopal Church's standing commission on ecumenical relations, said that the challenge is 'how to make clear that what is being proposed will in important ways enhance the life and mission of the church in our quest to be faithful to the Gospel.' He said that the question is, 'Can we do mission better because of the Concordat - or in what ways does our lack of full communion inhibit and weaken the mission of the church?'

ELCA bishop Ralph Kamps for Indiana and Kentucky, agreed with Bishop Jones that God was offering the two churches 'a special opportunity.' Yet he said that the perception persisted among many Lutherans that they were the only ones being called upon to change. Most Lutherans, he said, do not understand what it means for Episcopalians to suspend the rules governing ordination to allow Lutherans to serve Episcopal parishes. And they are disturbed that colleagues in the Episcopal Church would not be required to subscribe to the Augsburg Confession, the historic, 16th century foundation of Lutheran theology. The historic episcopate is also a challenge since it is not part of the Lutheran tradition in the United States.

The Episcopal News Service reported that several participants expressed concern over the timing of the proposal, arguing that failure to move ahead now might lead to a loss of interest. The



ELCA voted at its 1991 Churchwide Assembly to postpone official study of the proposal until 1993, when it completes a major study on ministry. The Episcopal Church's General Convention voted earlier this year to move ahead with a diocesan-based study of the Concordat, using Lutheran consultants. If everything goes as planned, a joint meeting of the two churches in 1997 would vote on the proposal.

[LWI]

## SWEDISH CHURCH ELECTS NEW ARCHBISHOP

Bishop Gunnar Weman of Lulea received the largest number of votes in the election for the next archbishop of the Church of Sweden. He scored 10.5 points against 7.8 points for Bishop Jonas Jonson of Strängnäs and 5.3 points for Bishop Henrik Svenungsson of Stockholm.

The Church of Sweden statement which detailed the election result did not mention what score Birgitta Larsson received. Birgitta Larsson, a laywoman and director of the Church of Sweden mission agency, was considered an outsider in the race for the Swedish church's top ecclesiastical office. The next incumbent will succeed Archbishop Bertil Werkström, who announced his intention to step down in April 1993, two months before he reaches the official retirement age of 65 years.

The electorate comprised the 72 clergy and laypeople from the chapters of the Church of Sweden's 13 dioceses; 473 clergy and laypeople from the diocese of Uppsala; 15 people from the Central Board of the Church of Sweden. The 7.6-million-member Church of Sweden is the world's largest Lutheran church. Its archbishop, first among equals in episcopal office, is the church's presiding officer.

[LWI]

## FIRST LUTHERAN WOMAN BISHOP INSTALLED IN NORTH AMERICA

Bishop April Ulring Larson was installed as the first Lutheran woman bishop outside Europe during a festive worship service in La Crosse, Wisconsin, on October 11th. She was elected in June to lead the La Crosse Area Synod of the 5.2-million-member Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). After Maria Jepsen, who was installed on August 30th as Bishop of Hamburg, Germany, Bishop Larson is the world's second Lutheran woman bishop.

In his sermon, ELCA bishop Herbert Chilstrom described the mother of Jesus and her words as prophetic and praise-filled. Mary's quality of hope is important for one who holds the heavy responsibility of the bishop's office, 'who must lead the synod to magnify the Lord and rejoice in the Saviour.' On a personal note, Bishop Chilstrom said he had witnessed many milestones in his own career, but Bishop Larson's election is 'one of the most exciting and significant, and the answer to many prayers.' He stated his 'strong hope' for more women bishops in the ELCA.

[LWI]

## INDEX TO ABBREVIATIONS

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

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

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## ENGLAND SAYS YES TO WOMEN IN THE PRIESTHOOD

The General Synod of the Church of England made what many now hail as its most critical decision since the Reformation on 11th November 1992. With over 500 members voting and following a day-long debate, a Yes vote was cast allowing women to be ordained as priests. The needed 2/3 majority for an affirmative vote was achieved in each House of the General Synod. The House of Clergy voted 70% in favour and the House of Bishops 75% in favour. In the House of Laity the margin of success was only two votes.

Ecumenical response came with a Vatican official calling the vote a 'grave obstacle' to the official Anglican/Roman Catholic dialogue. *The Times* reported Cardinal Basil Hume, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster as saying: 'The decision does not signal a breakdown in ecumenical relations. We shall continue to pray and work together despite the new and additional obstacle.' The General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation in Geneva welcomed the decision to ordain women as a positive step in relation to the Lutheran Communion.

The Archbishop of Canterbury spoke of those in opposition by saying, 'I urge those who see the future only in terms of schism to recognise that such disputes about the nature of ministry are not regarded in the New Testament as grounds for formal separation from one's fellow Christians. The step which I hope we shall take today is a development in the Church's tradition. The ordination of women to the priesthood alters not a word in the creeds, or the scriptures, or the faith of our Church.'

As is the custom in voting, silence followed the Archbishop's announcement 'that the measure has passed'. The Yes vote has caused great rejoicing in some Church circles while disappointment and anger have been expressed by others. Bishop David Hope of London said the legislation left little hope for opponents of ordaining women as priests. He said of such persons that they would 'find themselves ignored and marginalised.' Over 500 supporters of the ordination of women gathered outside Church House praying and lobbying for the passage of the legislation. 'Thank God we've joined others in the Anglican Communion,' said Caroline Davis, Executive Secretary of the Movement for the Ordination of Women (MOW). MOW will continue its work until the legislation receives the Queen's assent.

Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning of the Episcopal Church USA, the first of what is now 16 of the 30 Provinces of the Anglican Communion that have passed similar legislation, said upon hearing the news of the Yes vote that 'I am thrilled almost beyond words.'

[Special Report, *Compasrose*, 12 November 1992. etd.]

*The House of Bishops will meet in January to consider how it can maintain episcopal oversight and pastoral care to all members of the Church. Priests who feel compelled to resign will be helped financially.*

*As the Church of England is a state Church, the legislation for women's ordination must be agreed by Parliament and given the Royal Assent by the Queen before it is put into effect. It will be given a full day's debate after Easter next year in the House of Commons. Members of Parliament will be free to vote as they choose without any party political pressure. If passed by the Commons - as it is expected to be - the legislation goes to the House of Lords. When accepted by both Houses it will be presented to the Queen. The canons implementing the decision will have to go to the church synod for a vote. The first ordinations are likely to take place in 1994.*

Six leading Anglican Catholic groups met in London to make plans for an umbrella structure within the Church of England, to provide a way forward for those unable to accept woman as priests...

The groups involved in the new structure are the Church Union, the Association for the Apostolic Ministry, Women Against the Ordination of Women, Cost of Conscience, the Society of the Holy Cross, and the Catholic League...

Their leaders said: 'We urgently call on bishops opposed to this legislation to join us in giving guidance and leadership. We urge those who with us are opposed to use wisely the time before the promulgating of the canons and not to take precipitate action.'

[CT November 1992]

### FIRST WOMEN PRIESTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The first three women priests in the Anglican Province of Southern Africa were ordained on September 5th, 22 days after the Provincial Synod approved the move. The three women are the Revd Nancy Charlton, the Revd Bride Dickson and the Revd Su Groves. All three were ordained in the Diocese of Grahamstown.

[*Compasrose* No 69: Advent 1992]



## LWF WELCOMES CHURCH OF ENGLAND DECISION TO ORDAIN WOMEN

The Church of England's decision to ordain women to the priesthood was welcomed on November 12th by the general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Dr Gunnar Staalsett, as 'a positive ecumenical step in relation to the Lutheran communion of churches.' In a November 17th letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, Dr Staalsett said the Anglican church's move toward a more inclusive priesthood 'will make the growing relationship between our two communions easier.'

The Church of England action marks 'a significant change in the right direction,' said Dr Musimbi Kanyora, programme secretary for women in church and society in the LWF Department for Mission and Development. Regarding dialogue between Anglicans and Lutherans, the decision 'moves us forward to greater unity,' she said.

Dr Staalsett expressed the hope that the Orthodox and Catholics will not regard the Anglican move 'as an insurmountable obstacle' to closer relations. The decision was nevertheless criticised by conservative Catholics and Anglicans in England and abroad.

Robert Wright, a US Episcopal priest and 10-year participant in talks conducted under the umbrella of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, said the vote poses a challenge to the Vatican 'to come up with more convincing reasons as to why women should not be ordained.'

Conservative Catholics and Anglicans have built arguments against ordination of women primarily around the Gospel accounts of Jesus' ministry. According to those accounts, only men were chosen to serve as apostles, Jesus' close circle of 12 friends. But one of the most prominent Catholic theologians in the US, Richard McBrien of the University of Notre Dame, dismisses those interpretations and sees the growing acceptance of women priests as 'an irreversible trend.'

The subject has occupied the Church of England synod off and on since 1975, when it was agreed by a vote of 285-180 that 'there are no fundamental objections' to ordaining women. It then took until 1987 for the synod to ask that legislation be drawn up. The vote had been closely followed by Anglican churches worldwide because the Church of England is considered the mother church of Anglicanism and is closely tied historically to Catholicism.

The issue of women priests became a major controversy within Anglicanism, and by extension between Anglicans and Catholics, when some Anglican churches, spearheaded by the US Episcopal Church, began ordaining women in the 1970s. The 29 Anglican churches worldwide view the archbishop of Canterbury, the Church of England's spiritual leader, as their symbolic leader. About half have voted to ordain women priests despite strong resistance from conservatives who view it as heretical.

[LWI etd]

### FROM THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE TO THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

'We cannot speak of Mary's vocation without speaking of the vocation of women in our Church today. One thing is certain, God does not undervalue half the human race. Whatever our views of the ordination of women to the priesthood, he who was born of a woman would wish his Church to honour them highly, and value the wonderful variety of gifts they bring to the Body of Christ.

As we struggle with our different perceptions and theologies of the priesthood, let us renew our obedience to God's creative Word, praying that we may be the kind of Communion in which differences can be redeemed and overcome by God's grace.'

[Compasrose No 69: Advent 1992]

### SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1993

Membership of the Anglican-Lutheran Society is renewable annually on 1st January. If a renewal form is inserted in this issue of THE WINDOW, your subscription for 1993 is now due. We hope that you will wish to continue your membership and will return the completed form with remittance as soon as possible. New members who joined in the last few months of 1992 will have their memberships extended to the end of 1993 at no extra charge.

*Subscriptions may be sent to the Society's address in London, or to:*

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## 1993 CONFERENCE: LØGUMKLOSTER, DENMARK

While the Conference details are still being worked out, it seemed a good idea to write a little about the place where the conference is to be held.

Løgumkloster is a small village set in the midst of gently undulating farmland in the southern region of Denmark, not far from the German border. The village itself grew up around a Cistercian abbey founded by monks from the Cîteaux Abbey in Burgundy in about 1173. The present church, and what is left of the original monastery buildings, date from between 1225-1325. At the height of its power, Løgumkloster possessed 193 farmsteads and four churches; enough, eventually to form an *amt* or political district of its own.

As the Reformation grew in Denmark during the 16th century, so abbeys like Løgumkloster declined. And in 1548, when the last abbot died, the monastery was secularised and its estates fell to the Duke of Gottorp, and eventually (1713) to the Danish Crown.

A later Duke of Gottorp built a large country house as his hunting lodge next to the church in 1614, using much of the stone from the now disused monastery buildings. Over succeeding centuries the house has been the residence of the local prefect, the revenue officer and, until 1973, was used as a lawcourt and the residence for judges and officials. The house is now a centre for continuing education for clergy from the Church of Denmark and houses a director and a large library.

Situation in the grounds of the historic church and house, is the more recent Løgumkloster Refugium. The Refugium, where we shall stay during the conference, is a purpose-built conference and retreat centre founded as an independent institution by various churches and cultural groups in Denmark. Together with the facilities of the centre for continuing education, the Refugium offers an ideal place for a relaxed, comfortable and, hopefully, stimulating conference for the Society. Having spent two days there in 1991, I can vouch for its comfort and for the quality of the food.

We hope that the conference will be able to focus to some extent on the recent developments in Anglican-Lutheran relations concerning the Nordic and Baltic countries, as well as learning something more specific about our 'host' church in Denmark. One important area to explore, which certainly the Church of England and several of the Scandinavian churches have in common, is the relationship between church and state and between church and culture.

I hope that this will in some small way whet your appetite for the 1993 Conference. Details about both the content of the Conference and the more practical arrangements about cost and travel should be available soon. More when we have it.

Jonathan Draper

## RUSSIAN SWIMMING CENTRE RETURNED TO USE AS LUTHERAN CATHEDRAL

The old St Peter's Cathedral in St Petersburg, Russia, will once again be a Lutheran place of worship, more than 50 years after it was closed and converted into a swimming centre.

The first worship service to be held in the renovated church building took place on October 31st. The Church Office of the Evangelical Church in Germany announced that the authorities in St Petersburg had decided to make the church available to the German Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republics of the East (GELCRE). However, the building will remain the property of the state commission for the conservation of monuments. The commission was originally responsible for the building's conversion in 1963 into the 'most beautiful swimming centre in St Petersburg' (then known as Leningrad).

The episcopal see of the GELCRE is at present in Riga, Latvia. According to the German Protestant news agency EPD, this role is to be restored to St Peter's.

[LWI]

*The Anglican-Lutheran Society was established in 1984 with the following aims:*

- \* *to encourage a wider interest in and knowledge of our respective traditions and contemporary developments within them;*
- \* *to develop opportunities for common worship, study, friendship and witness;*
- \* *to pray for the unity of the Church, and especially between Anglicans and Lutherans.*



## - A LETTER TO THE EDITORS -

I have read Colin Podmore's 'The German Evangelical Churches' with great interest and admiration for his feat of accurate compression. But there is one point where this brevity has led to a misleading impression, particularly for Anglicans. I think it needs correcting for real understanding.

He writes (p5): 'In Germany as in England the Reformation took place under the authority of the state.' While formerly correct this omits the biggest difference which to my mind is not (as stated in the next sentence) the creation of many territorial churches. To oversimplify a bit - in England the Reformation happened backwards. First came the king's desire for divorce, then the break with Rome, later the theological and liturgical reformation, and last of all it spread to the hearts and minds of ordinary people. In Germany it began in the confessional, with pastoral concern, then came the proclamation of a theology which recalled the Church to essentials; the result was a popular movement

which spread like wildfire. Only then the princes got on the bandwagon, while liturgical reform slowly got under way.

Because this Reformation came from below it produced such an explosion of song which continued for over two centuries, in spite of the Thirty Years' War. You can sense the feeling of joy, of liberation, of rediscovery of the light of the gospel, in the earliest of these hymns.

What is true is that the compromise 'cuius regio, eius religio' resulting from the political stalemate between emperor and princes is responsible for the later distribution of Protestant and Roman Catholic areas. Particularly in the Hapsburg dominions, as well as in Bavaria, the Counterreformation was enforced with brutality. (That also led to the Thirty Years' War.)

Yours sincerely,

J R L Schneider

## - COLIN PODMORE REPLIES -

Dr Schneider is absolutely right in his analysis of the stages through which the Reformation went in England and those through which the Reformation went in Germany, and in pointing out that the one is the reverse of the other. On reflection, I can see that it would have been a good idea to point this out somewhere, although (as he suggests) I was constantly trying to keep the length down. However, I am not myself convinced that the particular paragraph concerned

is misleading. I rather assumed that people would be familiar with the basic story of the beginnings of the Reformation in Germany, but I can see now that I probably assumed too much. The point of it is to explain why the Reformation produced territorial churches in Germany but a single national Church in England. The paragraph certainly wasn't intended to imply that this was the biggest difference between the two Reformations.

### Diary Date

The AGM of the Society will be held in London on Saturday 13th March 1993.

*Further details will be available in the near future.*

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