

The Window

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Newsletter of the Anglican-Lutheran Society

May 2000

Coleman and Pettersson named new co-moderators at ALS Annual General Meeting at Swedish Church

New co-moderators were elected to one-year terms by the Anglican-Lutheran Society at its annual general meeting March 18 at the Swedish Church in London.

The Rev Brian J. Coleman, rector of All Saints Church in Guildford, England since 1992, was named Anglican co-moderator. He succeeds the late Bishop Gordon Roe, who died in July 1999.

The Rev Helge Pettersson, Rector of the Norwegian Church and Seamen's Mission, St Olave's Church, London since 1988, was named Lutheran co-moderator. He succeeds the Rev Ronald T Englund, now of Falmouth, Massachusetts, USA, who will continue to edit *The Window*.

Brian Coleman has served parishes in England and was chaplain and lecturer at St Michael's College in Sarum from 1969-77. A charter member of the Society, he served as treasurer for many years. He has visited Lutheran churches in Europe and the United States.

Helge Pettersson has worked in seamen's ministry for 30 years, serving in Brazil, Belgium and the USA as well as in Norway. In 1997 he received the St Olav's Medal from HM King Harald V of Norway.

The AGM also elected The Rev. Canon Richard (Dick) C. Lewis, long-time member of the Society and vicar of Christ Church, Watford, England since 1976, to the ALS Committee.

The meeting began with a Eucharist at the Swedish Church at which Canon Guy Smith, ALS treasurer, presided. Pastor Ronald Englund was preacher.

Brian Coleman chaired the business meeting. Guy Smith, treasurer, presented the audited accounts which show a balance of £1948.93 (US\$3,120) in the UK. The Society has 235 members.

Reports were presented from national correspondents in Finland, Germany, Sweden and the United States.

Clive Strickland, an artist who is a member of the Society, told of his exhibition of paintings of London City Churches which was on display at the Swedish Church.

The Rt Rev Michael Bourke, Anglican Bishop of Wolverhampton, gave a lecture on the Meissen Agreement (see pages 2-3).



The Rev Brian Coleman (left) and the Rev Helge Pettersson (centre), new co-moderators of the Anglican-Lutheran Society, chat with the Rev Canon Dick Lewis, new member of the ALS Committee, following their elections at the Annual General Meeting held March 18 at the Swedish Church in London.

"Living into Full Communion" is timely theme for ALS Virginia Conference from July 21-24

There could hardly be a more timely theme than "Living into Full Communion", the Anglican-Lutheran Society Conference to be held at Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Virginia, USA, from July 21-24.

If the 2.4 million member Episcopal Church endorses "Called to Common Mission" (CCM) at its general convention in Denver, Colorado in July, it will be in full communion with the 5.2 million member Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

More than 25 people, including seven from England, have registered already. More registrations are welcome as there are nearby motels when the accommodations at the Seminary are filled.

Church leaders from Europe and the United States will discuss and compare Anglican-Lutheran agreements including the Porvoo Agreement between the British and Irish Anglican churches and the Nordic

and Baltic Lutheran churches; and the Meissen Agreement between the Church of England and the Evangelical (Lutheran and Reformed) churches in Germany.

Our speakers include two European church leaders with extensive ecumenical experience, especially with the Porvoo and Meissen agreements. They are The Rt Rev David Tustin, who is retiring this year as Anglican Bishop of Grimsby, England; and the Rev Margarethe Isberg who will become Dean of Västerås Cathedral in Sweden next month. Speakers from the USA include Dr Michael Root of Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio; the Rev William Petersen of Bexley Hall, Rochester, New York; and the Rev Paul Lee of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington, DC.

(See page 4 for details on costs and how to register for the Virginia Conference.)

“Meissen – Fragile Porcelain or Robust Relationship?”

The Rt Rev Michael Bourke, Anglican Bishop of Wolverhampton, England, gave the lecture on “Meissen – Fragile Porcelain or Robust Relationship?” at the Annual General Meeting of the Anglican-Lutheran Society on March 18. He co-chairs the Committee which oversees the 1991 Meissen Agreement between the Church of England and the Evangelical Churches in Germany. Here is an lightly edited text of a most relevant address:

“For historic reasons, the English churches have always had closer links with the Reformed on the Continent than with the Lutherans. I would say that Anglican encounters with Lutheranism have uncovered a mixture of ignorance, striking similarity and fascinating strangeness.”

Ignorance

“This is summed up in a story told by Dean John Arnold (Anglican president of the Anglican-Lutheran Society) about two churchwardens who told the Archdeacon that they had discovered an old and battered Bible in the church tower. ‘The Bible’, they complained, ‘had been printed by a man called Gutenberg and it had been scribbled all over by somebody called Luther – so we threw it away.’” Bishop Bourke noted that while there were close connections with Lutherans at the beginnings of the English Reformation, later links were with the Roman Catholics and with the Puritans. “So our relationships with the Lutherans have always been something of a journey of discovery.”

Similarities

“What Anglicans have discovered is a delightful similarity between our traditions. Our churches, in England and in Germany, are folk churches with a parish system, and a sense of responsibility for public life as well as private piety. There are similar liturgical forms and fine traditions of liturgical music and choral worship.”

“Anglicans have always envied the way in which Lutherans preserved their monastic buildings and their medieval treasures of church art. . . . In contrast our English churches betray the scars of the Puritan cultural revolution from which very little survived. It was left to Sir Christopher Wren in the 17th century and the Oxford movement in the 19th century to make our churches beautiful again. I have sometimes wondered if England’s loss of so much pre-Reformation church art has contributed to the Anglican insistence on episcopacy as a ‘visible sign’ - in our case virtually the only visible sign of ecclesiastical continuity.”

“These similarities have contributed much towards the popularity of the Meissen Agreement, signed on 29 January

1991. We have sought to build strong relationships between our churches on every level – not only through theological conversations but through parish visits.”

“The Meissen Agreement has also established the two libraries – one of German Protestant studies in Durham, England; and an Anglican library in Tübingen, Germany.”

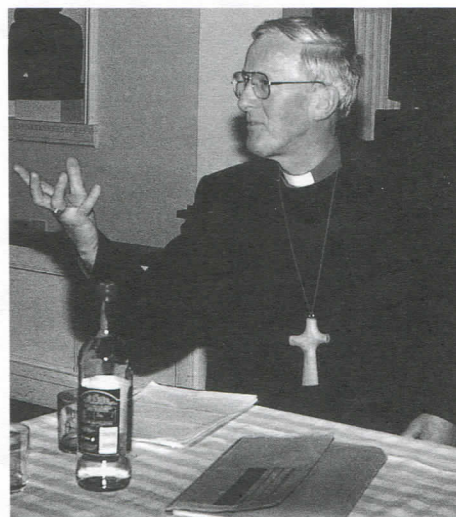
“We are also committed to developing shared forms of episcopé – oversight. This is expressed principally through mutual invitations to each other’s Synods, and also through inviting church leaders to attend the House of Bishops and its equivalent.”

“All these contacts, through which a strong bond of mutual understanding and commitment have grown, reflect the similarities between our two traditions. They add pressure to express our unity more fully, especially through exchanges of priests and pastors. . . . The unresolved issue, of course, is the Anglican insistence that a united Church must include the historic episcopate as a condition of ministerial exchangeability.”

Fascinating strangeness

“I remember my first encounter with Lutheranism during a year at Tübingen from 1964-65. I was surprised and impressed by the theological thoroughness of the German system and the emphasis on confessional orthodoxy. . . . Lutherans have a highly doctrinal faith: the Augsburg Confession plays a central role in a way that has never been true of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England. As we have seen in the recent debates of the Declaration on Justification with the Roman Catholic Church, this doctrine is taken very seriously indeed by Lutherans. It is the central dogma of Lutheranism: not only a criterion, but the criterion of everything else. Justification by faith alone is the centre of Scripture itself, the canon within the canon from which the whole Bible is to be interpreted.” Bishop Bourke said that he continues to be surprised over this Lutheran emphasis which “I am not sure that I have wholly fathomed.” He said that “it reflects a deep cultural and perhaps also a linguistic divide between our two traditions, and explains, I think, why we find it so difficult to find a common approach to the unresolved issue of episcopacy. For the centrality of the doctrine of justification has far reaching ecclesiological consequences. It puts the emphasis, not on the visible Church, but on the invisible Church, the Church which God alone knows, consisting of those to whom God imputes justifying faith.”

“This accounts for the unease which our



Bishop Bourke lectures at the AGM

Lutheran brothers and sisters in the Meissen theological conferences have repeatedly expressed about the idea of ‘visible unity.’ The commitment to visible unity is one of the central undertakings of the Meissen Agreement. The Lutheran reservations stem partly, I think, from the fact that it was the Roman Catholics who first used the phrase ‘visible unity’ to portray a church visibly re-united in allegiance to the Pope. But the misgivings also have to do with this relationship between the visible and the invisible church and the doctrine of justification.”

For Lutherans the unity of the church means primarily agreement in faith, unity in fundamental doctrine, which you might call ‘audible’ unity rather than ‘visible’ unity. At the last Meissen Theological Conference we had a fascinating linguistic discussion about the German word ‘sichtbar’ (the usual translation of ‘visible’). Our German colleagues were much happier with the word ‘wahrnehmbar’ (‘discernible’) - it was as if the word ‘sichtbar’ had too much of the sense of ‘visual’, and the unity of the Church has to be discerned at all sorts of levels, visible and invisible.”

Centrality of doctrine or worship?

“The assumption about the centrality of doctrine (a centrality which Anglicans give to worship) also colours the understanding of the episcopé (oversight). For Lutherans, if I understand them correctly, episcopé primarily means the supervision of the local church to ensure that its teaching and practice are orthodox. Once this central insistence on true doctrine has been met, the Lutheran churches display a generous sense of freedom. When I have attended meetings of German church leaders, I have been struck by the vigour and openness with which they are able to disagree with each other. Our Anglican encounter with Lutherans helps us to see how they

experience Anglicanism. They speak of 'Anglo-Saxon pragmatism.' I think the roots of this are in the historical anxiety of the Church of England about *authority*. Where does authority lie? If the Lutheran concern is with the *content* of orthodoxy, the Anglican concern is with its *criteria*. How do you decide what the Christian faith is? That is evident in the structure of the Thirty-Nine Articles. The first four deal with the Trinity, the Incarnation and Atonement, the Resurrection of Christ and the Holy Spirit. These are the beliefs which all hold in common. Then, before we come to the disputed matters of the Reformation, there follow three articles about the authority of the scriptures and the creeds. Only in Article 11 do we come to the doctrine of Justification."

"This is in striking contrast to the Augsburg Confession, where the order is much more systematic: God, Original Sin, the Son of God, Justification. . . . In Anglicanism, justification by faith is affirmed, not so much because it is the linchpin on which all else depends, but because it may be *proved from scripture*. As long as they may be 'proved from scripture' a variety of theologies is possible."

Which first – church or doctrine?

"At the risk of caricaturing, you could say that for Lutherans it is doctrine that makes the Church, whereas for Anglicans it is the Church that makes doctrine. Anglicans have majored more in church history than doctrine. . . . It is notorious that since the Reformation there has been until very recently no professorial chair of systematic theology in England."

"What holds the Church together is its common loyalty to scripture, the recognition of the same Gospel (in a sense not too carefully defined) in our various theologies, common worship and membership in the same Church expressed through communion with the Bishop. For the Church is not a collection of individual believers, but a covenant community, with a structure. . . . In order to be part of the true Church, the local church needs to be linked with the global church, and in continuity with the historic church as well as the historic faith of the apostles."

"The mutual fascination between Anglicans and Lutherans is that we each find it quite difficult to comprehend how the other thinks; and yet we recognize that we both affirm the same Gospel. We know that our own understanding and articulation of the faith are not to be identified with faith itself, and that our formulations are fallible and provisional. No one has a monopoly on inconsistency. We know, for example, that Anglicanism can encourage every-member ministry and a sense of voluntary lay participation, despite its heavy

theological emphasis on ordained ministry and priesthood; and that some Lutheran Churches can be heavily clericalised and professionalised, despite the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers."

"In the Meissen Agreement, the Church of England and the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD) recognize each other as true Churches in which the Word of God is authentically preached and the Gospel sacraments are administered. The Anglican insistence on the historic episcopate does not mean that we do not recognize the ministries and sacraments of the German churches. It means that the historical succession, as a sign but not a guarantee of the Church's continuity in the apostolic faith, is a valuable and necessary element of a visibly united Church. This position, set out in the Anglican document, *Apostolicity and Succession*, and incorporated into the Porvoo Agreement with the Nordic and Baltic Lutherans, represents a real shift in Anglican thinking."

Theological pluralism

"From an Anglican perspective, the Leuenberg Agreement between the Lutheran and the Reformed churches in Germany is interesting because for the first time it acknowledges the validity of theological pluralism. Churches with different confessions of faith can recognize the true Gospel in each other's theological traditions, and on this basis can enter into a unity of reconciled diversity. For Lutherans, the Augsburg Confession, Article 7, includes the famous phrase *satis est* - it is sufficient for unity that we recognize each other's doctrine and sacraments. On this basis the reconciliation of different forms of ministry or church structures is not necessary for unity, hence the preference for the expression "reconciled diversity"

rather than "visible unity."

As the Meissen dialogue continues, it remains to be seen how far this principle of theological generosity can be extended. If you can recognize the true Gospel in another church, even if that church has a different theology from your own, then unity with that Church must mean making some allowances for that church's self-understanding. If Anglicans have moved towards the recognition and acceptance of non-episcopal ministries as true ministries of Word and Sacrament, is it possible for Lutherans to move towards an acceptance of the historic episcopate which they recognize as part of legitimate Christian diversity?

The American agreement

"One of the next things we have to do in the Meissen theological dialogue is to evaluate "Called to Common Mission", the revision of the "Concordat of Agreement" between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Episcopal Church. It is attempting to express precisely this principle of mutual generosity. Some of my German friends may detect in the proposals of this American agreement too much of the spirit of Anglo-Saxon pragmatism. I would respond by arguing for *principled* pragmatism, based on the insight that *faith* is not the same thing as the *doctrine about faith*. All our theologies are subject to the 'eschatological proviso' - in St Paul's words, 'We know *in part*.'"

"Mutual learning and commitment have been built from strong bonds of fellowship. Theological work must be responsible and we must carry our churches with us if the Meissen porcelain is not to break. Time alone will tell whether our theological journey will lead to a break-through or a dead-end. We ask for your prayers.



Lively conversation marks meetings of the Anglican Lutheran Society. Five members chat during lunch at the Annual General Meeting on March 18 at the Swedish Church in London. From left: The Rev Canon Philip Morgan of Winchester, England; The Rev Francis Chadwick of Barton St. David, England; The Rev Holger Harrack of Wilhelmshaven, Germany; The Rev Lennart Sjöström of London; and the Rev Canon Guy Smith of Arley Kings, England.

Lutheran Church Council reaffirms Episcopal pact

Despite some lingering resistance, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has reaffirmed its commitment to full communion with the Episcopal Church at its meeting in Chicago April 7-9.

"Called to Common Mission" (CCM), which would bring the 5.2 million member ELCA into full communion with the 2.4 million Episcopal Church, was adopted by the ELCA last year. The Episcopal Church will vote on the agreement in July.

The ELCA Council decided that January 1, 2001 would be the implementation date for CCM. A small minority in the ELCA have opposed the agreement, claiming that it violates Lutheran confessional statements and tradition in consecrating bishops to the historic episcopate.

Many Lutheran churches have historic episcopate

Many Lutheran churches throughout the world recognize the historic episcopate while others are seriously considering adoption of this sign of continuity in the apostolic faith. P. Raymond Gallie of Woodland Hills, California, USA, an Episcopal layman who was formerly a Lutheran, has compiled a list of Lutheran churches which have the historic episcopate. He notes the following:

Church of Sweden; Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland; Church of Norway; Evangelical Lutheran Church in Iceland; Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church; Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania.

Also the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church (India); Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan; Salvadoran Lutheran Synod (El Salvador); Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania; Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe; Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia; and the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria.

Many Lutheran churches are looking to full communion with Anglicans. This situation continues to develop and change. What have we missed?

St Olav's Festival June 23-25

A first ever St Olav's Festival in London June 23-25 will bring Norwegian Lutherans and British Anglicans closer together. The event opens with a service and concert at Southwark Cathedral on Friday, June 23, at 7pm and will close with a Eucharist at the Norwegian Church in London at 5.30pm Sunday, June 25. E-mail: london@sifh.no or phone: +44 (0)20 7237 5587.

Conference Registration

"Living into Full Communion"
July 21-24, 2000
Virginia Theological Seminary
Alexandria, Virginia, USA

The entire cost for the weekend, including room and board, is US\$350 per person for a single room; US\$310 per person for a double room. Day rates are \$25 which include meals.

Send \$50 registration fee to Dr Scott Ickert, 6201 N. Washington Blvd, Arlington, VA 22205, USA. Make cheques payable to "Anglican-Lutheran Society."

Or send UK£30 registration fee to Canon Guy Smith, 11 Church Walk, Arley Kings, Stourport, Worcs, DY13 0AL, England.

Those in other countries may contact The Rev Ronald T Englund (address lower right.).

Anglican-Lutheran Group holds first meeting

The Anglican-Lutheran International Working Group held its first meeting February 12-16 at the Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Virginia, USA.

Established in 1998 by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Anglican Communion, the group is made up of 13 members – seven Anglicans and six Lutherans. The group's mandate is to monitor the development and progress in Anglican-Lutheran relations throughout the world.

The group is co-chaired by Anglican Bishop David Tustin from England and Lutheran Bishop Ambrose Moyo of Zimbabwe.

The next meeting is set for Skálholt, Iceland, from March 23-28, 2001.

Thanks to Church of Finland

The Anglican-Lutheran Society is grateful to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland for a grant of FIM 6,000 (US\$925 or UK£600) for the year 2000. The Rev Risto Cantell, executive director of the church's Department for International Relations, informed the Society that the gift will be made this month. We thank our Finnish friends for this ongoing support.

"Towards a Joint Mass"

Lutherans and Anglicans in Finland will begin discussions on a joint Porvoo Communion Liturgy at a seminar, "Towards a Joint Mass", to be held at the Finnish Lutheran Church House in Helsinki on November 16. The coming issue of *The Window* (August) will give full details. For advance information contact: The Rev Dr Jaakko Rusama, phone: +358 50 582 2262; fax: +358 9 561 39800; -mail: jaakko.rusama@abo.fi

Bergen Cathedral Dean named correspondent

The Rev Jacob Frode Knudsen, sub-dean of Bergen Cathedral, has been named the national correspondent in Norway for the Anglican-Lutheran Society. He has been the "residerende kapellan" (canon residentiary or sub-dean) since 1990.

Ordained a priest in the Church of Norway in 1975, Dean Knudsen has served the Norwegian Seamen's Mission/Norwegian Church Abroad in Dubai and in San Francisco, California, USA.

We are grateful to Dean Knudsen for his willingness to help the Society. The ALS also has national correspondents in Finland, Germany, Sweden and the USA.

Annual membership fees for the Society in Norwegian krone will be: individuals – NK150; couples – NK200; groups – NK 300. For the present, cheques should be paid to Jacob Frode Knudsen at Domkirkegaten 3, N-5017 Bergen, Norway. Phone: +47 55312309; Fax: +47 55310589; E-mail: jacob.frode.knudsen@bkf.no

The Anglican-Lutheran Society

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