

THE ANGLICAN LUTHERAN SOCIETY

THE WINDOW

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN HANOVER, 1989

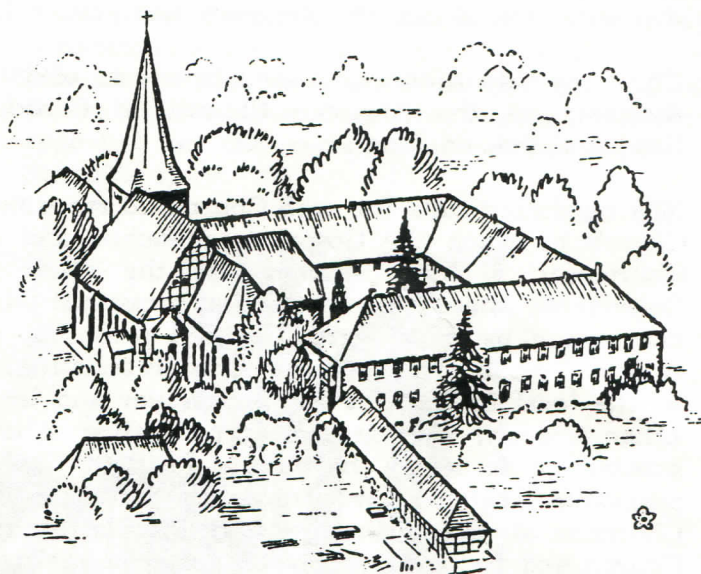
by the Revd Brian Coleman, Rector of St Peter's, Frimley.

Hanover - a particularly appropriate place for an encounter between the Church of England and the German Evangelical Churches (the EKD). Hanover has been linked with Britain since the time of King George I - indeed, it is an interesting speculation what would have happened in European history if Queen Victoria had been a man and that link had been maintained.

At the Kloster Wennigsen, a convent dating back to the twelfth century and some fifteen miles from Hanover, twenty-five people, thirteen Lutheran (including a retired American Lutheran bishop) and twelve Anglican, met on 13 - 19 September. The whole committee of the Anglican-Lutheran Society must be thanked for the great success of the conference, but particular thanks must go to Frau Gudrun Kaper, who did so much of the arrangement in Germany, and to Colin Podmore, the Conference Organiser. We are also deeply grateful to the Church of Hanover for all its help and cooperation, and to the Äbtissin Frau von Boxberg for her kindness and hospitality. The Kloster was very beautiful, a haven of peace in a busy world, and all of us enjoyed this peace, both in the worship in the ancient church and in the Kloster itself. It was a great privilege to share in worship in the two traditions, including two eucharists.

The programme was a very full one, and I can only summarise it. We heard talks from several of the leading church officials of the Church of Hanover on various aspects of German Church life, including its history and present structure, ministerial training and church-state relationships. Superintendent Hans-Joachim Blankenburg from Ohrdruf in Thuringia spoke about the Church in the DDR today. We learnt something about the 'Conciliar Process' and the movement for justice, peace and the integrity of creation. We also heard of the witness of Franz Hildebrandt in the time of the Third Reich, and had a very useful discussion on the Meissen agreement.

Each afternoon there were visits, covering a wide range of the Church's involvement in the community - for example, to a large hospital run by the Church in Hanover, the Henriettenstift; two parishes in the area (and some of us had the chance to sit in on a confirmation class on the subject of 'diakonie' or Christian social service); a nearby farm; and the Church's active industrial mission in Hanover, where we heard how they are tackling an unemployment rate of 12%. In each place, there were wide-ranging discussions and comparisons, and any language problems were soon overcome by our excellent translators. Most of us had a smattering of German, but a translator was invaluable when technical terms were involved.



JOHANNITERHAUS KLOSTER WENNIGSEN

On the Sunday, we were able to attend various churches either in the neighbourhood of Wennigsen or in Hanover. I myself attended the Herrenhausen Kirche in Hanover, and was involved after the service in a discussion not only with members of the local congregation but with visitors from Leipzig in the GDR and Poland.

So, it was a time of learning, a time of refreshment, a time of meeting old friends and making new ones. There were many conversations going on well into the night, and we had the pleasant ecumenical experience of teaching our German friends to sing 'On Ilkla Moor bah tat'. Those of us who are Anglicans learnt a great deal about the active life of the EKD and also about the Federation of German Evangelical Churches in the GDR. We look forward to a similar occasion in Britain, when we can show representatives from other countries more of the life and ethos of the Church of England.

Ein unvergessliches Erlebnis - lobe den Herren!

CANADIANS TAKE HISTORIC STEP IN ANGLICAN - LUTHERAN RELATIONS

Delegates to the second biennial convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), meeting on July 12-16, voted overwhelming approval of a joint resolution authorising interim sharing of the Eucharist with the Anglican Church of Canada. ELCIC Bishop Donald W. Sjoberg and Anglican representative Archbishop Walter Jones of the Diocese of Rupertsland embraced, following the unanimous vote for closer personal relationships. Jones told delegates, 'This is a thrilling and tremendous time.' The practice of 'eucharistic hospitality' among congregations of both denominations is due to commence on October 1.

The same resolution was passed by a vote of 297-3 at the General Assembly of the Anglican Church of Canada at St. John's, Newfoundland, on June 19.

The resolution calls for each Church to recognise the other as 'a Church in which the Gospel is preached and taught'; for each Church to welcome members of the other Church in Holy Communion where appropriate; for occasional joint celebrations of communion using the rites of the presiding minister with an ordained minister of the other Church assisting, with the approval of the local Bishop; for regular prayer and intercession for the other Church; for agreements permitting a minister of either communion to serve the people of both Churches in sparsely populated regions; for attendance by representatives of both Churches at the ordination and installation services of either Church and for co-operation in social ministries.

(LWI and ACC)

INDEX TO ABBREVIATIONS

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

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

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MAJOR ANGLO - NORDIC / BALTIC MEETING IN SWEDEN

From August 2nd to 7th, representatives of the Church of England and the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches met at Sigtuna, Sweden. This was the first meeting in a new series of official Conversations. The meeting was chaired by the Right Reverend David Tustin, Bishop of Grimsby, England, and the Right Reverend Tore Furberg, Bishop of Visby, Sweden. Representatives from the Churches of England, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Estonia were joined by observers from the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran Council of Great Britain. Greetings were received from those members of the Conversations unable to attend - representatives of the Churches of Latvia and Iceland, and observers from the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation and the Anglican Consultative Council. The Church in Wales, the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Church of Ireland have received minutes and papers from the meeting, and will be kept informed of future developments.

The work of the Conversations was grounded in daily prayer and Bible study. There was a Sunday morning Lutheran eucharist at St Mary's Church, Sigtuna and the meeting ended with an Anglican eucharist celebrated by the Bishop of Grimsby, assisted by the Bishop of Visby. The Bishop of Bath and Wells preached.

Members were generously entertained to dinner by the Parish and Municipality of Sigtuna, and by the Bishop of Stockholm and his wife.

The aim of the Conversations was:

'to agree on ways of strengthening and making visible the bonds of unity between our churches, on the basis of (i) the agreement in faith already shared between our Churches, (ii) an already existing degree of shared life, and (iii) commitment to the goal of visible unity.'

Bishop David Tustin opened the meeting by referring to the Meissen Text, On the Way to Visible Unity drawn up by the representatives of the Church of England, the Federation of the Evangelical Churches in the GDR and the Evangelical Church in the FRG, which was spoken of as a possible 'model' for the present Conversations.

Bishop Tore Furberg spoke about the Niagara Report, the Report of the Anglican-Lutheran Consultation on Episcopacy, 1987.

Two papers were read on the Goal of Unity, by Canon Martin Reardon of England and Dr Ola Tjørhom of Norway. Presentations on the Episcopal Office were made by Professor Frederick Cleve of Finland and Canon John Halliburton of England. Participants gave informal presentations on the Church in Estonia and the new ecumenical committee of the Church of Denmark. Delegates from the Nordic Churches reported on the recent visit of the Pope to Scandinavia.

(continued)



The ancient and picturesque town of Sigtuna, where the Conversations took place

Following the major presentations and general discussion, a drafting group prepared a first draft of a Report, which was approved by all the participants. After intensive discussions, a number of suggestions were made for future revision which the drafting group, after carrying out some research, will consider at a meeting at the Swedish Church in London in January 1990.

Consideration was given to the practical applications of a theological agreement. Twelve applications were identified and these are being given close attention by all the participant churches in readiness for the January meeting of the drafting group. A further meeting is scheduled for May 1990 and a full plenary meeting will take place from September 18th to 24th 1990 in London, at which it is intended to produce an agreed statement, together with detailed proposals for practical action which will benefit lay and ordained members of all the Churches at every level.

The Conversations in Sigtuna mark the beginning of what promises to be a period of rapid development in the relationship between the Church of England and the Lutheran Churches of Northern Europe.

BACKGROUND TO THE

SIGTUNA TALKS

In a greeting to the Sigtuna Conversations, the Archbishop of Canterbury wrote:

'There have long existed the warmest relations between the Church of England and the Nordic and Baltic Churches. Moreover, this has been expressed in ecclesial agreement for many years. I am delighted that the time has come now to renew these piecemeal agreements and to consider Anglican-Lutheran relationships in a wider context in the hope of establishing an ever closer relationship between our Churches. I pray that God will bless your meeting in Sigtuna and that a firm foundation will be laid for future agreement between our several Churches.'

Relationships between the Church of England and the Nordic and Baltic Churches have been developing through most of this century.

An agreement between the Church of England and the Church of Sweden, including mutual admission to communion, was endorsed by the Lambeth Conference in 1920 and by the House of Bishops of the Church of Sweden in 1922. A broadly similar agreement had been reached between the Convocations of Canterbury and York and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland by 1935 and by 1954 the Church of England had given its approval to a relationship of eucharistic hospitality with the Churches of Norway, Denmark and Iceland.

Conversations with the Baltic churches of Latvia and Estonia in 1936 and 1938 led to a Concordat in 1939.

Relationships developed further through the Anglican-Lutheran Conversations in 1970-72, which produced the Pullach Report of 1973. In 1982, ALERC (the Anglican-Lutheran European Regional Commission) produced the Helsinki report Anglican-Lutheran Dialogue. Its recommendations were considered by a Joint Working Group of the Anglican Consultative Council and the Lutheran World Federation, whose proposals for closer ecumenical co-operation are in the Cold Ash Report of 1983. A Continuation Committee began to meet in 1986 to monitor the progress of Anglican-Lutheran Relations in various parts of the world, and produced the Niagara report on the exercise of oversight (episcopate) in the Church in 1988.

The official Conversations were supported by much activity of a less formal kind. In 1929 the Anglo-Scandinavian Theological Conferences began (see next issue of The Window). There were exchanges of ordinands and younger clergy in the 1960s and 1970s, and in 1977 the Anglo-Scandinavian Pastoral Conferences were set up. The Theological and Pastoral Conferences now meet, alternately, every year in England or in a Nordic country.

The Conversations between the Church of England and the Nordic and Baltic Churches are taking place, therefore, against a rich background of ecumenical exchange at every level. They have taken as an additional inspiration and resource the Meissen Report (1988) of the Conversations between the Church of England and the German Evangelical Churches.

It is a particular pleasure for the Anglican-Lutheran Society to note that the Co-Chairmen of the Anglo-Nordic/Baltic Conversations are the Co-Presidents of the Society, the Bishops of Grimsby and Visby. The Window will monitor the progress of the talks closely.

RECEPTIONS VARY AS POPE

VISITS NORDIC COUNTRIES

At least nominally, each of the five Nordic countries is overwhelmingly Lutheran. But the reaction in each last month to the first-ever visit by a pope to that part of the world varied noticeably.

At the ecumenical reception in the historic Akershus Castle in Oslo, Church of Norway Presiding Bishop Andreas Aarflot called the presence of the pope 'a sign of movement towards improved relationships between our churches', but he also referred to 'certain positions that many deplore as regressions.'

The Lutheran bishop said that since the mid 1960s, there are 'many signs' that Roman Catholicism is 'breaking away from what many observers and historians would call its isolation and self-sufficiency through centuries.' He said Lutherans understood themselves as 'genuine churches, with the necessary sacramental and structural quality', adding that they 'look forward to the day when Your Holiness clearly and unequivocally recognises the ecclesial character of the Lutheran and other Protestant churches.'

Aarflot said 'it is in daily life, in the national churches and the local congregations, far removed from the study chambers of the (Vatican) curia, that the real ecumenical challenges are met', noting in particular questions related to mixed marriages.

In reply, the pope noted that Christianity came to Norway long before the church divisions of the 16th century. Its early period in Norway, he said, 'is in striking contrast with the period following the Reformation, when for more than 400 years, in the midst of bitterness and suspicion, Christians closed their doors to one another.'

Three of the eleven Church of Norway bishops did not meet the pope at any point during his trip. This prompted criticism from various sources. The secular national daily, Dagbladet, spoke of the national feeling of shame the bishops caused by their absence. 'By the way,' it added, 'what did the absent bishops do yesterday? Were they opening schools? Sitting in committees? Tending their gardens?'

Most of the priests and the bishop of the

National Church of Iceland attended an ecumenical gathering with the pope at Thingvellir, site of Icelandic political and church assemblies from 930 until the late 1700s. So did the Icelandic President, Prime Minister, and other government officials, plus ecumenical representatives.

The papal visit to Finland was described by one journalist as a 'flawlessly harmonious ecumenical celebration, with far more emphasis of the factors that unite than those that divide.' After an ecumenical service at Turku Cathedral, the pope met the Archbishop and the seven other bishops of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland. Archbishop John Vikstrom said recent theological dialogue has shown that many Lutheran emphases are 'part of the common and uniting heritage of the church'.

During a meeting with the ten bishops of the Evangelical-Lutheran Folk Church in Denmark, Copenhagen Lutheran Bishop Ole Bertelsen observed that the Roman Catholic Church has not 'annulled' its condemnations of Lutheran teaching. The pope observed that the excommunication of church reformer Martin Luther lapsed when Luther died in 1546. Anyway, he said, the wounds caused by that act cannot be healed today 'by a juridical act'. He said what is most needed today is 'a common, new assessment of the many questions' Luther raised.

Speaking after attending a restrained Lutheran vesper service in historic Roskilde cathedral (attended by Danish Princess Benedikte, but at which the pope was not officially greeted), John Paul observed that the building 'reminds us of a millenium of which more than 500 years were marked by an unbroken unity in western Christendom, when also the church in Denmark was living in full communion with the Bishop of Rome.' He said he hoped his visit 'might contribute to the lowering of some of the divisive, and sometimes hostile, walls that... have been erected between us.'

The Pope described himself as successor of the Apostle Peter in an office 'established by Christ in order to serve the unity of Christians.' But Bertelsen said 'visibility is not the truth. The institution does not guarantee anything. ...Church offices cannot give certainty', and so 'never in any form (can) be said to be the necessary condition of unity or salvation.'

In Sweden, King Carl Gustaf and Queen Silvia attended an ecumenical service at Uppsala cathedral during which the Pope and Swedish Lutheran Archbishop Bertil Werkstrom stood side by side before the monument to Erik, the

Swedish national saint. Both stressed the unity that comes from baptism, an Werkstrom said 'sharing of the eucharist is now both possible and important in the continuing ecumenical process. We have already recognised one another's baptism. The baptised ought to be able to gather at the same table.'

Later, at the Roman Catholic eucharist, Werkstrom and Stockholm Lutheran Bishop Henrik Svennungsson went up to the Pope at the end of a line of people receiving communion. 'I am sorry we cannot go to the same table', Werkstrom said, 'but I am here as a symbol of our common longing for unity.' The Pope blessed the two bishops.

(EPS)

ANGLICANS VISIT LATVIA AND ESTONIA TO MARK 50 YEARS INTERCOMMUNION WITH LUTHERANS

Delegates from the Church of England visited the Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Latvia and Estonia to mark the 50th anniversary of intercommunion between the Church of England and the two Baltic Lutheran churches.

The two Anglican representatives were the Rt. Rev. David Tustin, Bishop of Grimsby and co-chairman of the Anglican Lutheran International Continuation Committee, and Dr. John Fenwick, the Archbishop of Canterbury's assistant secretary for ecumenical affairs. They visited the Baltic republics in June on behalf of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The last official Anglican delegation visited Latvia and Estonia in 1938.

In Riga, Latvia, the Anglican delegates had talks with Archbishop Karlis Gailitis and attended a meeting of the consistory. Archbishop Kuna Pajula received them in Estonia, and they were publicly welcomed at a religious song festival in Otepää (South East Estonia), attended by 3,000 participants - the first such event to be held since World War II. The two visitors took part in worship services in Tallinn. Dr Fenwick preached at a service of Holy Communion, and Bishop Tustin both preached and celebrated at a bilingual Holy Communion service.

(LWI)

L W F WELCOMES CLOSER LINKS BETWEEN LUTHERANS AND ANGLICANS

Closer links between Lutherans and Anglicans worldwide were welcomed during discussions at the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Executive Committee meeting, July 31 to Aug. 9. Committee members unanimously recommended that a resolution be brought to next year's LWF Assembly that could take Lutherans and Anglicans nearer to full communion.

The resolution that will come before the Eighth LWF Assembly in Curitiba, Brazil, notes 'decisive official steps forward' in the United States, in Europe and in Canada. There have been agreements on communion between the Episcopal Church in the USA and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, between the Church of England and both the Evangelical Church in Germany and the Federation of Evangelical Churches in the German Democratic Republic, and between the Anglican Church in Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. Formal conversations are also under way between the Church of England and the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches.

The resolution says that relationships between Anglican and Lutheran churches in various parts of the world 'manifest a high degree of church fellowship.' In particular it makes four proposals - that the LWF renews its commitment to full communion and urges member churches to take steps toward realising it; that the LWF concur with the (Anglican) Lambeth Conference's 1988 resolution which recommended the Niagara Report on Anglican-Lutheran relations to its member churches 'for study and synodical reception'; that the LWF welcome and encourage steps toward church fellowship between Lutheran and Anglican churches; and that the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission (ALIC) both arrange further studies and reports and be prepared to assist Anglican and Lutheran churches in taking steps toward full communion.'

The resolution will come before the Eighth LWF Assembly in Curitiba, Jan. 30 to Feb. 8, 1990, as a recommendation from the LWF Executive Committee, and will be debated and voted on at that time.

(LWI)