

THE WINDOW

■ No. 1 - September 1984

Newsletter of the Anglican-Lutheran Society

Lutheran World Federation defines its role and speaks on "the unity we seek" at Budapest Assembly

The seventh assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, which met in Budapest July 22-August 5, approved items related to the LWF's self-understanding, the "unity we seek" with other Christians, Lutheran response to the 1982 World Council of Churches' text on baptism, eucharist and ministry (BEM), and a series of "issues and tasks" for global Lutheran consideration in connection with worship and Christian life.

An assembly "statement on the self-understanding and task of the LWF" defines it as an "expression and instrument" of a world-wide "Lutheran communion." The document suggests that the LWF has some measure of churchly authority, and is not simply a functional association of its 99 member denominations, which account for about three-quarters of the world's 70 million Lutherans. The statement locates the LWF in the "one ecumenical movement" in cooperation with other Christian world communions and the World Council of Churches.

The assembly also approved a constitutional change to specify that its members consider themselves in "pulpit and altar fellowship" (what other Christians often refer to as "full communion" with each other).

The unity statement lists a variety of forms of communion which express the unity "given in and through the proclamation of the word and sacrament." Such unity means "a committed fellowship, able to make common decisions and to act in common."

In connection with that statement, the assembly received a page of background on unity issues. It notes that the new statement deliberately avoids phrases about unity from the 1977 LWF assembly in Dar-es-Salaam, and from the 1975 WCC assembly in Nairobi - respectively,

"reconciled diversity" and "conciliar fellowship." Ecumenists have debated the degree to which the two concepts are complementary, contradictory and/or the same thing in different words.

The recommendations on BEM urge Lutherans to study it ecumenically and to use it as a "stimulus to church renewal." An assembly working group report on BEM (turn to page 4)

Debut for "The Window"

Welcome to the first number of our journal The Window. The committee are grateful to the Rev Ronald T Englund for offering to undertake the editorship and we hope that this issue will fulfil the expectations of you, the membership.

It seems to me that a successful journal should seek to inform, educate and entertain its readers. I put information first because I believe that the greatest barrier to increasing Anglican-Lutheran cooperation is ignorance of each other's teaching and tradition. Education means that we hope to learn more about each other from articles which will be written to cover the whole range of interest to be found amongst our members. And entertainment I include as essential because, if the journal is not enjoyable to read, it will not be read at all. How can we achieve these aims? Only if we have your help as active members who will send us contributions, articles, suggestions and criticisms (constructive ones, preferably).

Finally, in our hopes and prayers for God's blessing upon our Society, let us remember the words of Richard Baxter: "In necessary things, unity; in doubtful things, liberty; in all things, charity."

Ian R Phelps
Chairman

Book review

Overcoming Anglican-Lutheran ignorance

The greatest obstacle to Anglican-Lutheran friendship is ignorance. Most works on modern European Lutheranism available to the English reader are written by Britons, whose own ignorance leads them to stress matters Lutherans regard as peripheral, and to ignore Lutheran essentials. Likewise even Lutherans who live in England do not appreciate the importance Anglicans attach to such issues as "the historic episcopate." It is very difficult to find a single book or booklet which will help non-English readers. They must devote to Anglicanism a great deal of widely-based reading, for which most Lutherans simply do not have time.

This makes Anglican-Lutheran Dialogue a particularly valuable booklet. It was published in 1983 by the Anglican-Lutheran European Regional Commission as the report of three meetings in the previous three years. It describes agreements and convergences in doctrinal issues in fourteen pages. In six pages it focuses on the present situation of the Anglican and Lutheran churches in Europe.

Lutherans will find the two pages on Justification a reassuring joint statement on "works" and "faith," while being short enough to read. Anglicans will find the discussion on Ordained Ministry and Episcopacy reassuring, too. Lutherans, after all, are the only other non-Roman Western Christians who have never sought doctrinal reasons to attack the historic episcopate.

High Anglicans will particularly welcome the agreement that in the Lord's Supper, Jesus Christ, true God and true man, crucified, risen and ascended, is truly present in his body and blood under the elements of bread and wine" (para.28). Evangelical Anglicans will welcome the "common understanding of God's justifying grace, i.e. that we are accounted righteous and are made righteous before God only by grace through faith because of the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and not on account of our works or merits" (para.20). How may these two positions be reconciled? Anglicans without an answer would do well to seek out the nearest Lutheran.

However, neither person should expect immediate satisfaction. Appendix 2 is a measure of the progress which has been made among the professional ecumenists. The doctrinal statements it provides from the 1972 report of the initial Anglican-Lutheran International Conversations show far less common language. In that beginning, both sides inserted several separate statements on subjects, such as tradition and episcopacy, which each Church habitually approaches in different language. Most Anglicans and Lutherans at the parish level probably still use the language of this Appendix. It took twelve years to arrive at the common language of Anglican-Lutheran Dialogue. Conversation at the parish level will require some patience and a readiness to listen to familiar words being used in unfamiliar ways.

Section Four, "The Present Situation of the Anglican and Lutheran Churches in Europe," shows the local perspective of the European Regional Commission. Other Commissions, in the USA and Tanzania, face conditions profoundly different from those in Europe. Once truly churches of their nations, the state Churches of Europe are struggling to develop a new role which will reflect modern realities while remaining true to the best of their heritages. The members of the Commission were moved, we were told last

(turn to page 4)

Anglican-Lutheran Society

President

The Rt Rev John Gibbs
Bishop of Coventry
The Bishop's House
23 Davenport Road
Coventry CV5 6PW
(Anglican)

Chairman

The Rev Dr Ian R Phelps
Church of the Ascension
41 Bramber Avenue
Peacehaven, Sussex BN9 8HR
(Anglican)

Secretary

The Rev Thomas Bruch
6 Pebble Cottages
Hothorpe Road
Theddington, Lutterworth
Leics. LE17 6QT
(Lutheran)

Treasurer

Ms Gudrun Kaper
15a Lathbury Road
Oxford OX2 7AT
(Lutheran)

Committee Members

Mr John Eibner (Lutheran)
The Rev David C Johnston
(Anglican)
Mr Dana Netherton
(Anglican)
The Rev Lennart Sjöström
(Lutheran)
The Rev Dr Jan Womer
(Lutheran)

The Window

Editorial offices at:
Lutheran Special Ministries
8 Collingham Gardens
London SW5 0HW, England
Telephone: 01-373 5566

Editor

Rev Ronald T Englund

Associate Editor

Christine A McGee

The Window is sent quarterly to members of the Anglican-Lutheran Society and to Associate Groups. Annual membership subscription rates are: Ordinary Member £5.00; Student and OAP £3.00; Family Membership £7.00. Associate Groups are asked to give an annual donation of £10.00. Write to the Rev Thomas Bruch, Secretary (address above). Make cheques payable to the Anglican-Lutheran Society.

CONCORDIA

For Books on Luther, Lutheranism, and related Subjects
10% discount to Society Members

Write or 'phone for catalogues:

Concordia Publishing House Ltd
Hothorpe Hall, Lutterworth,
Leics. LE17 6QX. 0858 880860

Anglicans urged to encourage "mutual eucharistic hospitality" with Lutheran Churches

Anglican Churches should officially encourage "mutual eucharistic hospitality" with Lutheran Churches, according to a recommendation of the sixth meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) held in Nigeria in July.

The ACC commended the report of the Anglican-Lutheran Joint Working Group which came out of the meeting at Cold Ash, Berkshire, from November 28 to December 3, 1983.

The ACC endorsed mutual eucharistic hospitality between the churches, if this is not already authorized, "where pastoral need exists and when ecumenical situations make this appropriate."

The ACC also recommended that "as a further step towards full communion, where there is already some degree of mutual ecclesial recognition based on agreement

in faith and a commitment to unity, the Churches should consider making provision for appropriate forms of intermin eucharistic sharing along the lines of that authorized in the USA and recommended in Europe."

A third recommendation of the ACC "endorses the proposals for closer collaboration between the ACC and the Lutheran World Federation and their staffs set out in Anglican-Lutheran Relations (report of the Joint Working Group) Recommendations II, a-f, as financial circumstances may permit."

(Note: Copies of the Report of the Anglican-Lutheran Joint Working Group, Cold Ash, Berkshire, November 28 to December 3, 1983, are available from the Anglican Consultative Council, 14 Great Peter Street, London SW1P 3NQ.)

Anglican-Lutheran Society membership reaches 87

Membership in the Anglican-Lutheran Society stands at 87, according to the Rev Thomas Bruch, secretary. Included are people from many European traditions within Lutheranism (Finnish, German, Hungarian, Latvian, Norwegian, Polish and Swedish), as well as from North American Lutheranism. Anglican members come from churches in England, Wales, Scotland, France, Germany, Norway and the USA.

Bruch reports on various matters concerning membership in the Society:

At its first meeting the Committee considered two important matters related to membership. After considerable discussion concerning group membership, it was agreed that membership in the strictest sense be limited to individuals or families (i.e., husband and wife). The Committee decided, however, that congregations or other groups could become Associate Groups of the Society. They would be asked for an annual donation of £10, which would entitle them to five copies of the newsletter. Associate Groups would not be given a vote at the Annual General Meeting but representatives would be welcome to attend.

The Committee also discussed the renewal of subscriptions. As the expiry and

renewal of subscriptions at different times throughout the year could lead to confusion and oversight, it was agreed that annual membership in the Society should eventually correspond to the calendar year.

To bring this about, the Committee agreed that:

a) subscriptions received before September 1, 1984 should cover the period until the A.G.M. in 1985 (March 9);

b) subscriptions received after September 1, 1984 should cover the period to the end of the calendar year 1985;

c) thereafter the membership year would correspond to the calendar year, subscriptions falling due on January 1 each year. The same procedures will apply to Associate Groups.

Members and Associate Groups will automatically receive The Window, and this first issue has also been sent to persons who have expressed an interest in the Society, as well as others who may wish to support it.

Those who are not yet members of the Society will receive, with this sample copy of The Window, a subscription form for membership.

LWF on its role, unity

from page 1

commends it in several areas, but also raises some questions, notably about its treatment of the age at which people may be baptized and the role of lay people. The group urges Lutherans to celebrate the eucharist every Sunday, and to "examine our ministries...in order to determine whether they should use the three-fold pattern."

In a review of bilateral theological dialogues between Lutherans and representatives of other traditions, the assembly voted a "high priority" for Roman Catholic discussions, while also endorsing dialogues with Eastern Orthodox, Anglicans, Reformed, Methodists and Baptists. Also encouraged were Lutheran discussions with representatives of theological trends which exist in several traditions, such as conservative evangelicals (conservatives), evangelicals and charismatics.

The 14 recommendations on worship "affirm in practice the central place of the service of the Word through proclamation and sacraments." Among other issues raised are "how to regain or strengthen the integrative force of the Sunday service so that it becomes the 'plenary assembly' of the congregation," "how to respond as Lutherans to the role of the holy spirit in worship," "how to make better use of symbols, non-verbal elements and architecture in the shaping of worship," and how to "remain in contact with ecumenical developments in worship and find ways to make them come alive in the life of the member churches."

(from Ecumenical Press Service)

Bach Vespers September 23

The Rev Alan Luff of Westminster Abbey will preach at the Bach Vespers at 7pm Sunday, September 23, at the Church of St Anne and St Agnes, Gresham Street, London EC2. Cantata 78, "Jesu, der du meine Seele," will be included in the service. These popular monthly Vespers in which a Bach cantata is included as he intended give Anglicans opportunity to attend a Lutheran service at a time which may be easier than Sunday morning. Coming dates (Sundays at 7pm) include October 28 and December 2.

Three aims for Society

The aims of the Anglican-Lutheran Society are:

1. To pray for the unity of the Church, and especially the Anglican and the Lutheran communions.
2. To encourage opportunities for common worship, study, friendship and witness.
3. To encourage a wider interest in and knowledge of our respective traditions and contemporary developments within them.

Overcoming ignorance

from page 2

March, to discover that this was the common experience of the Church of England and the Lutheran state Churches in Europe.

Certainly this reviewer, an American, finds that in this matter he has less in common with his fellow Anglicans than he has with Lutherans from America. For example, in paragraph 102 there is expressed a common fear lest "clergy serving their own nationals abroad" proselytize in those countries. There is no corresponding hope that they might help evangelize there, where 90 percent of the populations attend no church at all. It would seem to this American that there is room for both Churches to work together, in England as well as in Germany, Sweden and so forth. But then, Americans do not understand state Churches of any denomination. In discussing the role of Anglican and Lutheran Churches in European society, Americans cannot speak for Europeans...and this includes Britons. American Anglicans cannot; neither can American Lutherans.

This booklet should be mandatory reading for all Anglicans interested in modern Lutheranism, and for all Lutherans who live in England.

Dana Netherton

Anglican-Lutheran Dialogue, The Report of the European Commission - published in 1983 by SPCK, London. Paper, 51 pages. Price £1.95. (Copies available from Lutheran Special Ministries, 8 Collingham Gardens, London SW5 OHW for £2.15 which includes postage & packing. Make cheques payable to "St Anne's Music Society.")