

# The Window

JANUARY 2019

THE ANGLICAN-LUTHERAN SOCIETY

Issue No. 118

A very  
**HAPPY NEW YEAR**  
to all our readers.

We hope you enjoy  
this issue of your  
Newsletter.

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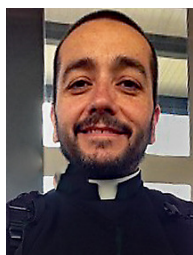
And much, much  
more

## LIVING IN DIVERSITY: ANGLICAN, LUTHERAN AND ROMAN CATHOLIC EXPERIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY

**Our Annual Meeting on Saturday 23rd March 2019**

This year's Annual Meeting will be held in **the London Room at St George's Roman Catholic Cathedral, Westminster Bridge Rd, South Bank, London SE1 7HY**. The room will be clearly signed and easy to find, registration and coffee will be from 10 to 10.30am when a brief Annual General Meeting will be held before we move into the topic for the day.

At last year's meeting we considered ways in which local churches across Europe were coping with migrants and refugees. This time we shall see how local congregations and communities are addressing the issues of working in London's very diverse population.



There will be three presentations. **The Rev Dr Hugo Adán** was born in Madrid, Spain, in 1975. He studied Philosophy in Madrid, Dublin and Rome and Theology in Madrid and Rome. His Doctorate in Sacred Theology specialised on truth, meaning and texts (Systematic Theology). He was ordained deacon in 2003 and priest in 2004. He has worked in parishes in Madrid, Barcelona, and Mwanza and Nyakato in Tanzania, always in very deprived areas. He has also taught theology in the universities of Barcelona and Rome (Gregorian). Here in the UK he lived for two years in Cambridge, one of them as part of the L'Arche community, then for three years in Catford at St Laurence Church. He is now Rector of Holy Trinity with St Matthew's in Elephant and Castle and has founded the Hispanic Mission and is parish priest of the first fully bilingual parish of the Church of England. He is married to Jocelyn Freeman, a wonderful Welsh professional pianist.

**Dr Chris Asprey** completed a PhD in theology from the University of Aberdeen, and lectured in Christian doctrine at the Institut Catholique de Paris from 2008 to 2015. Since 2010, he has been a member of L'Arche, a worldwide federation of Communities made up of people with and without learning disabilities founded by Catholic writer and philosopher Jean Vanier. Chris is involved in London L'Arche as service coordinator and fund-raiser.



**The Rev Sarah Farrow** was ordained in 2016 and is Lutheran Student Chaplain for the Council of Lutheran Churches and an Assistant Pastor at St Anne's Lutheran Church, a very diverse community. She recently completed her MA in Theology with St Augustine's College focusing on traditions born out of the Lutheran Reformation and how they might contribute to a theology of children's participation in worship.

The day will also include Taizé worship in the cathedral's Day Chapel.

The charge for the day is £20 (FREE for students preparing for an accredited ministry in their Church, ordained or lay) and Lunch and refreshments will be provided for all who let us know they are coming. Contact Helen Harding at [angluthsociety@outlook.com](mailto:angluthsociety@outlook.com) or by post to **Glen View, Station Road, Trusham, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ13 0NL, UK** to book your place.

## A NEW BEGINNING: UN NUEVO COMIENZO

*Having in mind the topic of our Annual Meeting in March our editor, Dick Lewis, thought this contribution to a recent edition of 'Living Lutheran' might help set the scene. It is by Nelson H. Rabell-González who was born and raised in Puerto Rico and is a graduate of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, USA*



Photo: Nelson H. Rabell-González), a pastor at St Paul Lutheran Church in Lodi, California, taking a selfie with some of his new congregation.

Starting something new is never easy. Starting outreach to a community that's been neglected or ignored is even harder. I'm learning these lessons in my new call as associate pastor and Spanish ministry outreach minister at St Paul Lutheran Church in Lodi, California.

Located in California's central valley, Lodi is 60% Caucasian and 38% Latino, with a growing population from Pakistan and members of the Sikh community. With an abundance of fresh produce, good wine, good weather and its close proximity to San Francisco and Sacramento, Lodi is a wonderful place to live. Nevertheless, the city has many challenges. Six years ago, members of St Paul and its senior pastor, Mark Price, began preparing their congregation to call a Spanish-speaking pastor to guide their outreach to the growing number of Latinos in Lodi. The process was long, but finally on December 17th, 2017, the congregation voted to call me as their associate pastor and guide for Spanish ministries.

This community of faith has worked hard to become a congregation that is welcoming to Lodi's LGBTQIA community, people with non-mainstream sexual orientation or gender,

and now it is opening its doors to the Latino community and other minority voices. Even though Lodi has had a turbulent history regarding race relations, members of St Paul are striving to make Lodi a welcoming and inclusive city for all.

Once, in the mid-1990s, there was a cross-burning incident at a high school after the city's first Martin Luther King Jr. celebration. Members of St Paul and other community leaders organized a group called The Breakthrough Project to counter the hateful rhetoric of the local Ku Klux Klan chapter. Today, nearly half of the current membership of this civil rights and anti-racism organization is from St Paul. As you can imagine, I'm now part of The Breakthrough Project as well.

Let me share some of the new things God is doing in our midst. After five months of ministry, we have close to 40 Latinos connected with our congregation. Forty percent of St Paul's youth group attending the ELCA Gathering in Houston were people of colour. In just a few months, our diversity has grown, and we are working to keep this momentum going.

## ANGLICAN BISHOPS WITNESS CANONIZATION

Former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams led a delegation of 10 Anglican bishops to the Vatican on 14th October, 2018, for the canonization of Oscar Romero, the Archbishop of San Salvador, who became an outspoken advocate for the poor during the Salvadoran Civil War. He

was assassinated in 1980 during mass.

'In the hearts of the people of Latin America, Romero was already considered a saint,' the suffragan bishop in Europe, the Rt Rev David Hamid, blogged after the event. 'For the poor of the Americas, this is a moment of great joy.'

After the service, during his weekly Angelus address to pilgrims in St. Peter's square, Pope Francis expressed 'deep gratitude' that the delegation of Anglican bishops had attended the ceremony during which Pope Paul VI and five others were also canonized.

## A DAY FOR PROMOTING TOLERANCE AND DIALOGUE

*More than half of Germany's 16 federal states have now declared Reformation Day a public holiday (LWI).*

Back in 2017, 31st October was proclaimed a public holiday across the whole of Germany. This was to mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. However, in Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia, people have for some years enjoyed a day off on Reformation Day. Now the North German states of Bremen, Hamburg, Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein have also decided to make 31st October a public holiday, bringing the number of states making it a day off to nine.

There is no doubt that celebrating the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation in 2017 increased the awareness of the German people to both the international and the historical significance of that event. But it did more. It brought to their attention the level of ecumenical cooperation among Church leaders and the kinds of interreligious dialogue that are going on.

Bishop Ralf Meister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover told his Synod last May that Reformation Day was not about celebrating Martin Luther. 'It is a day on which we will seek to promote tolerant relations among religions, confessions and worldviews, based on dialogue,' he said.

This approach has been reflected in some of the events on Reformation Day, 2018. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brunswick invited the new Catholic Bishop of Hildesheim diocese, Dr Heiner Wilmer SCJ, to preach at its service in the cathedral. 'That is a wonderful ecumenical symbol and underlines the good cooperation between Christians in Lower Saxony,' commented the Rt Rev Christoph Meyns, their bishop.

In Hamburg, Bishop Kirsten Fehrs of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northern Germany, Canon Peter Mies, the Catholic Dean for Hamburg, and the Rev Uwe Onnen, chair of the Council of Christian Churches in Hamburg, held a joint service. Bishop Fehrs said, 'I am very happy that we can celebrate this day in ecumenical unity and cultural openness, and not separately in our denominations.'

In Wittenberg, the place where the Reformation is said to have started in 1517, there was town festival, guided tours through the historical sites, concerts and lectures. But at the heart of the celebration was worship in the churches of Wittenberg.

Bishop Tamás Fabiny of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary preached at St Mary's city and parish church, where Luther was a regular preacher. And in the Luther Garden, with its 500 trees connecting Churches of different traditions worldwide, teenagers and young adults from the German National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation (GNC/LWF) planted the final symbolic tree of this living monument, as the picture above shows.

There were many other symbolic celebrations on Reformation Day, some of which are reported elsewhere.



*A tree symbolizing the ongoing Reformation of the churches: (from left) Sebastian Bugs, Sophie Bimmermann and Lasse Schmidt-Klie, members of the GNC/LWF Youth Committee planted the final tree in Wittenberg's Luthergarten on Reformation Day, 2018  
Photo: GNC/LWF / Florian Hübner*

## BISHOP FOR REMOTEST ANGLICAN DIOCESE

Bishop Dale Bowers, the new Bishop of St Helena, is the first to be consecrated on that remote island in the South Atlantic, and only the second of a line of 16 bishops to have been born there. St Helena has an important place in the history of the area now covered by the Anglican Church of Southern Africa. It was the first part of the province to experience Anglican ministry and St James' Church in Jamestown is the oldest surviving Anglican church in the Southern Hemisphere. The first Anglican chaplain to St Helena was appointed in 1671. The Diocese, which includes a parish on Ascension Island, is the fourth oldest in the province of Southern Africa, after Cape Town, Grahamstown and Natal. It celebrated its 150th anniversary in June 2009. St Helena is one of the remotest islands in the world, located more than 1,200 miles (2,000 kilometres) from the nearest landmass. It is the place where Napoleon Bonaparte was exiled and died. Until an airport was built in 2016 it was only accessible by ship, but last November, Archbishop Thabo, Primate of Southern Africa, flew to St Helena with the Bishops of Matlosane and Pretoria and his Chaplain for the consecration service in a packed St Paul's Cathedral.



## HAS ECUMENICAL DIALOGUE LOST ITS POWER?

*Dariusz Bruncz, a member of our Society in Poland, asked the question of Professor Odair Mateus, pictured below, the Director of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches*



**You are director of the Faith and Order Commission (FOC) which is – to put it plainly – the doctrinal branch of the World Council of Churches (WCC). It is often said that ecumenical dialogue is at its end and has lost its vital powers. Is this really so?**

That is a very complex question, but I do not think that we are now at the end of the ecumenical dialogue. There are still many questions that remain among the Churches and that we might call divisive. These are problems that prevent Churches from being in full communion with each other. This means that our ecumenical theological dialogue will continue. I do not think that from a FOC perspective we have reached the point where we could say that the essential theological debate on the main divisive issues is finished and we can do something else. No, we have not reached that point. The other issue which deserves to be taken into account is this: we have made great progress in ecumenical theological dialogue in many areas; theologians of different Churches have engaged in many discussions on behalf of their Churches and have come to important agreements; but the Churches have not translated theological agreements into communion.

### **Why is that?**

That is the question that we must ask the Churches; why is it so difficult? When theological discussions have shown us that reconciliation is possible, why does implementing this mutual recognition and reconciliation become so difficult? There is this big gap between successful theological ecumenical work on the one hand and the much slower reception process on the other hand. So these are two major factors, but perhaps I should

include a third. As we make big theological progress, while we are in dialogue with historic Churches like Roman Catholic or Orthodox or Reformation Churches, Christianity has been changing its appearance dramatically, especially outside its ancient geographic areas, and it appears much more diverse in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This is a new situation. When the WCC was established, 70% of Christianity was European, and now almost 70% is non-European. This raises new issues of ecclesiology, which are essential to the ecumenical debate. At the same time as we move forward theologically we are facing a new range of ecumenical questions in relation to the ecclesiological profile of the global Christianity.

**But how we can bring those two worlds together? Your own home context contains both the Reformed-Presbyterian tradition and Orthodox ecclesiology. These are two worlds which seem to me difficult to bring together, or am I wrong?**

Your formulation is a little bit too dogmatic. I agree with you that we are very different, of course. The Orthodox world and the Reformation world are very different, not only because the second one emerges from Western Christianity and since the time of St Augustine Orthodoxy was not really influenced by the debates in the West. But both the Reformation tradition in the West and the Orthodox Churches claim common sources of authority, common faith in many ways, and a common loyalty to the Creeds of the Early Church, like the Nicene Creed which is part of many Reformation confessional writings. We cannot be happy with being separated as we are, when we experience a certain 'oneness' in Christ that is recognized in the many elements of 'our' Church life that we find in 'other' Churches. That is what the WCC stands for. It is an encounter between Orthodoxy and the Reformation Churches, including Anglicans. When the WCC was established, it was created by the Greek Orthodox Churches, Lutherans, Reformed and the Anglicans, because they could not say that we are entirely foreign to each other and because they could say that though we are very different we should not content ourselves with our differences. Yes, differences can seem enormous but we have been building our dialogue on the foundation which holds us together – on Christ.

**Some years ago there was a big crisis in the WCC because the Orthodox Churches felt that they were not being well represented. They also felt the Council was becoming more and more a Protestant organisation. A few weeks ago there was united service in Amsterdam's Nieuwe Kerk commemorating the WCC's 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and it was very Western Protestant with almost none of the Eastern accents which had been present in 1948. How do you see relationships with the Orthodox within the WCC?**

What happened in Amsterdam was a commemoration of the first assembly organised by the Church that hosted it - so it was the Dutch Protestant Church. We as the WCC could not be absent from such an event, but we were attending the service as a guest. How could you expect such a service would have the liturgy of the Orthodox Church? But among the guests at this service were also representatives of Orthodox Churches, of course. It is true that the WCC was emerging from movements related to Western Churches at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and that it was created in a Western institutional manner. But it was created because the Orthodox were the first ones to call for the creation of a space which could bring together Churches that were so very different. It is a paradox in the sense that the WCC was created partly because the Orthodox wanted it, but it had also to be a product of those times. The fact that the Orthodox have felt a little bit uncomfortable is entirely understandable. As the years passed, and the number of Protestant Churches in the WCC grew immensely, the Orthodox presence became disproportionate to its spiritual and theological contribution to the ecumenical movement. The Orthodox bring their unique spirituality but the institution seemed to value that contribution less and less.

**And what was the reaction of the WCC?**

The WCC addressed this issue. It became very challenging when many issues arose concerning the pluralistic society and human sexuality. They were controversial not only for the Orthodox churches but to other Churches as well. It was against this background that the Special Commission in the WCC led to a significant transformation of life within the WCC. We no longer make decisions by a simple majority like Western parliaments do. We abandoned this means of decision making because, given our present composition, we needed to find a better way of making decisions than simply counting the number of votes. We moved to the consensus model, and this is something that we are still improving, and is inspiring us to consider addressing other internal tensions.

**Can we say that conditions are better than 20 years ago and the Orthodox side is more willing to engage ecumenically in a lively way?**

I would say that the WCC has every intention of adapting its way of operating, serving the ecumenical movement so that the Orthodox Churches feel themselves more and more at home in something that they helped to create. Whether those Churches are more or less committed is a question which they alone can answer, and I can't simply say yes or no to the second part of your question, but I would like to point you to the document regarding the Orthodox relations to other Churches from the Holy and Great Council that took place in Crete at Pentecost 2016. That text recognizes what they call a big crisis in the ecumenical movement, but it strongly reaffirms the commitment of Orthodoxy to the work of the WCC, including ecumenical dialogue with other traditions, and particularly with the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC. [You can find the full text at <https://www.holycouncil.org/-/rest-of-christian-world> - ED] I think it is possible to say that ecumenical work has become more critical in the recent decades because of new challenges, but that the Orthodox Churches remain committed to the ecumenical work. This affirmation came from the Orthodox Churches that attended the Council, and we know that four were absent (Georgia, Russia, Antioch and Bulgaria).

**The Bulgarian and Georgian Orthodox Churches have resigned their membership of the WCC. Are there any contacts with them, or have the communication bridges between them and the WCC been completely destroyed?**

Both those Churches helped significantly in the work of the Faith and Order Commission. When you read the documents of our Commission from our first conference in 1927 you will see Bulgarian theologians very active. In the following years the Georgian theologians contributed as well. The Patriarchs of those two Churches had prominent positions in the WCC in the sixties and seventies. We remain open, and we do whatever we can to facilitate communication. The Ecumenical Institute in Bossey (Switzerland) regularly receives students from these Churches and many are undertaking their studies in Europe. We do not discriminate against them just because their Churches have withdrawn from the WCC. We try to show that we are looking forward to seeing those Churches back in the WCC. We need their spiritual wealth so that they can share it with other WCC Churches.

**In the late sixties, after the Second Vatican Council, it seemed almost certain that the Roman Catholic Church would soon be joining the WCC. But in the seventies the idea seemed to have been dropped, perhaps partly because of a more conservative shift after embracing the Vatican II. The idea died, yet two months ago Pope Francis was at the WCC headquarters. Is the possibility of the Roman Catholic Church becoming a full member in the WCC back on the agenda?**

*Continued next page*

Immediately after the Second Vatican Council there was a perception and expectation that, since the Roman Catholic Church had embraced ecumenism, it would be logical to embrace membership of the WCC. When the WCC held its general assembly in Uppsala in 1968, the then editor of *Civica Catholica*, Fr Roberto Tucci SJ, who later became a cardinal, addressed the assembly and included in his speech the possibility of membership, which led to great excitement. In the sixties the WCC, with Orthodox Churches from the Eastern Europe and emerging Churches from the South that were living in a postcolonial order, began to look like a non-Roman Catholic Vatican – which it has never been! There was this idea: if we bridge Rome and Geneva we may be destroying the walls that have separated us. A joint working group from the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church, which still exists today, began to study their possible membership in 1968/69 and up to 1972, but gradually the perception grew that this is less feasible than it might first appear. You mentioned the conservative wing in the Roman Church, and that could have been one of the factors, of course, but it was certainly not the only one. In 1972 it finally became clear that membership would not come very soon.

### Were there any particular difficulties?

Imagine the situation if the Roman Catholic Church decided to fill out the form and apply for membership. How many delegates would it have the right to send to a meeting? Which questions might they not be able to decide alone, by voting for instance? How would the Roman Catholic Church change the balance in the WCC in which many member Churches are national Churches? Should the WCC be completely reinvented? So the issues were much more complicated than the conservative wings in the Catholic Church itself. Regrettably, the question of membership disappeared in the seventies. During the Pope's visit in Geneva there was no discussion about future membership of the



*Pope Francis and WCC General Secretary Rev. Olav Fykse Tveit.*

Catholic Church – and, by the way, we did not discuss anything because it was not a visit to discuss anything whatsoever but a celebration of all the things which we are able to do together now. We were thanking God for the 70th anniversary of the WCC and our common work. Of course, it is important that the Roman Catholic Church is a full member of the Faith and Order Commission and that it is involved in its government even though it is not a WCC member. We are working closely together in many areas like interreligious dialogue or missiology, for example, as we did during the last World Mission Conference in Arusha (Tanzania). We are working together at the creation of the Global Christian Forum, which is the instrument we have designed to generate a new ecumenical space for global Christianity to meet and to engage in conversations with more historic Churches and new Churches (Pentecostals, non-denominational Churches etc.).

### What are the current topics of activities of the Faith and Order Commission?

Faith and Order is not a theological department of the WCC because every department must do theology for itself. But we are basically working in three areas. The first one is a very traditional one: our differences in relation to the World Church. What is Church? What is essential to be the Church? What prevents us from reaching agreements in divisive areas? We have been working on a common understanding of the Church, and in 2012 we sent the fruit of our work to WCC Churches and beyond. We received about 70 responses. We analysed all the answers and are finishing the work right now and are moving from analysis to synthesis, and we are hoping to present the results during the next General Assembly which will take place in Karlsruhe, Germany, in 2021. The other area is the pilgrimage of justice and peace, which means that as we Christian Churches are committed to ecumenical movement, we recognise that our mission pushes us to engage together in responding to the challenges of justice in today's world (refugees, our way of responding to this challenge, the politics of fear, and so on). We are proposing theology in relation to all those questions. The third area, which we have already briefly mentioned, is the issue of tension between the Churches, especially in moral issues, ethics and sexuality, which have become a matter of division in recent decades. We have been working on the question of what lies behind the moral discernment. When we make a moral decision as a Christian Church in a part of the world and we come to conclusion A, and a church next to our border comes to A-, should we simply launch an anathema on each other or should we try to understand each other and ask ourselves why we have come to such different views, and what are the pastoral implications? So we are examining the complexity of these issues and their importance for the dialogue.

### Is there a willingness to embrace this complexity?

Again, it is difficult to say yes or no. But I can say that it is a duty of Faith and Order to address the issues because those questions are a potential source of division, and to tackle them in such a way that will allow us a maximum of dialogue on issues that sometimes look very polarising. If Faith and Order does not do that then it is not faithful to its vocation.



## WARTIME REMEMBERED IN PULPIT EXCHANGES

*On 11th November 2018, the centenary of the ending of the First World War, church leaders from Britain and Germany preached in each other's churches, as reported in Church Times (16th November 2018) and London and Leeds Diocesan Websites.*

### London and Berlin

Canon Alison Joyce, who is Rector of St Bride's Church in Fleet Street, in the centre of London, travelled to Berlin where Pastor Barbara Neubert had invited her to preach at St Paul's Church. And Pastor Barbara Neubert made the journey in the opposite direction and preached in St Bride's.

The two churches have something in common. They were both destroyed by bombs during the Second World War, and both were rebuilt in the 1950s.

Canon Joyce's grandfather fought at the Battle of the Somme in 1916 and her father served in the Royal Naval Reserve during the Second World War. 'I cannot tell you how much it would have meant to my grandfather, and to my father, for them to know that I am here today, in Berlin,' she told the congregation at St Paul's. She reminded them that violence breeds violence and that cycles of aggression and retaliation can seem endless, 'until someone comes who is prepared to receive the full force of that violence and, instead of retaliating, absorbs it.'

During her sermon at St Bride's Pastor Neubert said, 'In Germany we still face the immense burden of understanding the evil we did to so many people from 1933 to 1945, and so we can forget about what happened only 20 to 25 years before, between 1914 and 1918.' She said that the British custom of remembrance serves to keep in mind the men and women who suffered greatly during that Great War. 'It teaches us a lot about what is needed to live in peace together.'

After the service she hinted that exchanges of pulpit of this kind have a greater significance now that Brexit is happening, something she personally very much regrets. 'An exchange of pulpits and worshipping together are what we as Christians can do to stay united. I hope that this makes peace in Europe stronger,' she said.



Canon Alison Joyce (left) with Pastor Barbara Neubert



The Most Rev Ralf Meister (centre) with the Rt Rev Nick Baines (right)

### Leeds and Hanover

For Remembrance Day Weekend (10th-11th November), Leeds Diocese welcomed a delegation from Hanover to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Armistice. On 10th November the internationally-renowned *Mädchenchor Hannover* gave a Peace Concert at Halifax Minster, and on 11th November over 1900 people gathered inside Ripon Cathedral for a historic Remembrance Service, the highest number ever.

The Most Rev Ralf Meister, Landesbischof of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hanover and Honorary Canon at Ripon Cathedral, preached at the service, joining in reflections with the Bishop of Leeds, the Rt Revd Nick Baines, as well as the *Mädchenchor Hannover* again. Both events were

not only signs of friendship between the two countries, but also represented solid steps into the new Meissen partnership between the Dioceses of Leeds and Hanover.

The Bishops took part in the civic parade through the city to Ripon's Spa Gardens for the two minutes silence at 11 o'clock, before moving into the packed Cathedral to call on the Church to unite in promoting peace and reconciliation.

'This war [in 1914-18] admonishes all of Europe to seek and strive for peace,' said Bishop Ralf Meister in his sermon. 'I now see with dismay and even fear that many misdeeds of this history are being misappropriated by leaders such as Mr Trump as examples to stir a new nationalism. Do we always draw the wrong lessons from history? Do we not see how easy it is to sleepwalk into war?'

'Peace needs passion. It is no dreamlike image, but a solid, most active option, for political action,' he said.

## PASTOR JOHANN SCHNEIDER REMEMBERED

*Bishop Walter Jagucki recalls a long-serving member of the Church and of our Society*

When I visited Johann a few years ago in his new house in Deal in Kent, in the south-east of England, I had a truly memorable time. On the second day Johann invited me to his daily morning prayer in his living room. The room opened through a patio door into a lovely garden. Here Johann meditated and prayed. It was a blessed moment and I was reminded of a scene from the Book of Daniel where in chapter 6 we read: "Daniel's house had windows in the upstairs that opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he knelt there in prayer, thanking and praising his God." Johann's faith in Jesus was steadfast. Prayer was part of his life and ministry.

Johann arrived in Britain in 1938 as a youngster from his native Czechoslovakia. He finished his education with a PhD in statistics. He married his beloved Barbara who shared his life to the full. The Schneiders adopted Peter who now lives in the USA and Monika who lives in Kent. After Johann's retirement they moved from London to Deal to be closer to Monika. Early on both Johann and Barbara joined St Mary's German Congregation in London. Here Johann devoted his time and talents to Jesus. Under the leadership of Pastor Hans Herbert Kramm, Johann served as a layman. In 1951 Pastor Kramm introduced monthly services in English and in 1956 this became St John's English Lutheran Congregation, today St Anne's Lutheran Church. Johann was a founding member of the Congregation and a member until his death on 15th October, 2018.

To serve as an ordained minister was Johann's deepest wish. He retired from his secular job in the Department of Statistics and at the age of 61, after three years of study, was ordained by the Dean of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain (LCiGB), Robert Patkai, assisted by the Senior Pastor of the German Synod, Eckhard von Rabenau, and myself as Deputy Dean of LCiGB. Johann served both congregations, St Mary's and St Anne's, as Assistant Pastor. In 1988 he was appointed Interim Pastor of St Anne's for 9 months where he served with dedication at a difficult time. It was at that time Pastor Johann also became convener of annual retreats for LCiGB clergy showing imagination in choosing topics and speakers.

At my consecration as Bishop of LCiGB in 2000, Pastor Johann agreed to be my chaplain and I often relied on his advice and wisdom. His knowledge of Lutheran theology and especially the teaching of the role of sacraments in the life of the Church was well known.

Pastor Johann was a true ecumenist. He was a long standing member of the Anglican-Lutheran Society and he regularly attended the local Anglican parish church in Deal. From time to time he was invited to celebrate the Eucharist in the church.

The last few years without Barbara were "not to my liking" he used to say. However, he treasured Monika's and the



*Pastor Johann with his wife Barbara*

extended family's dedication, and always welcomed friends. He will be greatly missed by us all.

"If we live, we live to the Lord and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's." (Romans 14.8)

### 34 YEARS AGO

In *The Window* dated February 1985 an article headed "Anglican-Lutheran Work Thrives in Virgin Islands" Pastor John Hugus told of an exciting experiment by which the Church of the Holy Spirit on the isle of St Thomas became the first to be dedicated as an Anglican-Lutheran ecumenical mission. In the same issue the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, spoke of his hopes for closer relationships between our two communions. There were also two articles in one of which Anglican foundations of faith were explained for Lutherans while in the other Lutherans in Great Britain were introduced to their Anglican neighbours. Looking back over the past 34 years of ecumenical work great strides have been made, thanks be to God.



## WOMAN PRESIDENT FOR BRAZIL'S LUTHERANS

*The Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (IECLB) has elected a woman president for the first time. The Rev Silvia Beatrice Genz took office in January 2019.*

Pastor Silvia Beatrice Genz was born in the municipality of Linha Nova, in south Brazil. Her work in parishes has been geared toward building communities through leadership training, community action and conflict resolution through reconciliation. As a theologian, she is an advocate of Evangelical-Lutheran confessional theology with an ecumenical stance.

From her work as a community pastor and participant in synod assemblies, she brings the conviction that the leadership of the Church must become closer to that of the communities, through the presence of synodical pastors. 'It is important to strengthen our reflection on faith, gratitude and commitment; the community should encourage as many people as possible to participate in the planning of existing actions, as well as new missionary fronts,' she says. She also emphasizes the need for communities to focus on stewardship using the tithe system rather than social quotas or membership dues.

Pastor Genz believes that the public testimony of the Church is relevant when it speaks of its identity in concrete contexts and 'providing a safe space, living the faith in com-



Pastor Silvia Beatrice Genz pictured here with The First Vice-President, Pastor Odair Braun (right) and Second Vice-President, Pastor Mauro Batista de Sousa.

munity, creating a democratic environment that recognizes women and men as persons created in the image and likeness of God, affirming dialogue as a way of ensuring respect for differences, and maintaining the purpose of being a seed of peace and hope in the midst of situations of conflict and war. The public testimony of the IECLB, should favour the construction of peace processes, without ceasing to be the clear voice of solidarity with the suffering and distressed.'

## CHRISTMAS : A TIME FOR INCLUSIVE CELEBRATION

'Let us promote inclusion from the family to society level.' This was the clarion call made by Rachna Singh, National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) executive committee member, and Sanjay Singh, director of the Church of North India stewardship ambassadors' ministry, during the Christmas celebrations of people with disabilities on 1st December 2018 at the NCCI Campus in Nagpur.

The gathering, which sought to model inclusive Christmas celebrations, was attended by over 350 people, including 200 children and other people with disabilities who reflected on Jesus, a migrant child who was born on a cold winter evening in the wilderness of Judea. The attendees celebrated glad tidings of great joy: the joy of inclusion and social justice as the wise men and shepherds are brought together.

Children with disabilities brought the message of inclusion to the celebration through dance, songs and enactments. Besides various presentations from different people, the story of Christmas was re-told in a manner that children with disabilities understood. Characters included an autistic Joseph, a Down-Syndrome Mary, a commodified baby Jesus, and Santa on a wheelchair. As a sign of solidarity, participants donned a disability ribbon, a sign of commitment saying, 'I will uphold the dignity and rights of persons with disabilities. I commit to advocate for just, inclusive communities.'

The celebration, which is held annually on the Eve of Advent to mark the begin-

ning of the Christmas season, was organised by the NCCI – Indian Disability Ecumenical Accompaniment. It was attended by representatives of a number of different faith-based and secular organisations in India. At the end of the celebration, children and people with disabilities received gifts from the hands of Santa on a wheelchair, pictured here.



## PARISH CLERGY IN SHORT SUPPLY

*How should the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark respond to the shortage of parish clergy? Some suggestions have been made that might have some Anglicans scratching their heads, as Dick Lewis explains.*



*Theologians being ordained in Budolfi Church in Aalborg.  
Photo: Christian Pedersen.*

I read the other day that there is increasing concern in Denmark over the shortage of clergy to fill vacant positions. In 2016 the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs set up a committee to consider both the recruitment of new pastors and issues of staff retention.

One idea the committee has come up with is that academics in general should be able to apply for pastoral office provided they complete a theological postgraduate course. The postgraduate course would have an expected duration of two to three years and be tailored to each individual applicant.

Per Bucholdt Andreasen, chairman of the Pastors' Union, is a member of the committee. He says, 'If it is not possible to produce a sufficient number of theological candidates, we think the best solution is to open up to other graduates.'

However, Kirsten Busch Nielsen, Dean of Copenhagen University, thinks he has a better solution. 'The Church is experiencing a clergy shortage in this country. But at the same time we have unemployed young theologians. So ways should be found to motivate them to apply for the vacant positions.'

The trouble seems to be that many fully-trained Danish theologians have simply given up any idea of working as pastors and are finding work outside the Church. The committee thinks it might have something to do with pay. 'We think that one of the great challenges is that pastors are in the lower end of the scale when it comes to academic salaries,' Per Bucholdt Andreasen says.

All this seems very strange to an Anglican like me, and is something that marks the Lutheran Churches as being rather different from my own. The Church of England recognises that, within the Priesthood of All Believers, everyone is being called by God to fulfil roles within the Body of Christ. Some among them may be called to be parish priests. The Church's task is to help people in the discernment of their calling and then to equip them for their task.

Speaking for myself, I am glad that my bishops did not consider a theological degree, or any other degree plus two or three year's theological education, to be a necessary qualification for ordination. I did not graduate until I was 50 years old, and by then I had 25 wonderful years of parish ministry behind me. During that time I had encouraged a number of men and women, some graduates and others non-graduates like myself, to respond to God's call to the priesthood, and the Church found appropriate ways of preparing them for ordination. At the same time I was also able to encourage many more, non-graduates and graduates - including theologians - to fulfil other ministries within the Church as lay people. And as for pastors being at the lower end of the pay scale, all I can say is that the Lord has always provided, and I have regarded it a privilege to receive a stipend (however modest) for doing what I would gladly have done for nothing!

Do you have views about how people might be selected for ordination? Have you suggestions about how the shortage of parish clergy might be dealt with? Please do share them with your editor, [dick@ccwatford.u-net.com](mailto:dick@ccwatford.u-net.com)

## DROP-IN BAPTISM EVENTS

You may recall that a recent issue of The Window carried an article about 'Drop-In Baptisms', an experiment started at Christ Church on Vesterbro, Copenhagen in September 2017. Since then around 175 Danes have gone into churches in and around greater Copenhagen and been baptized at drop-in events. 'We all know that at first sight the rituals of the church can seem strange and alienating to people who are not regular church goers,' explains Mette Gramstrup, Pastor of Christ Church on Vesterbro. 'But the church must never be a deterrent. It must be a community that anyone can join without having to pass an exam.'

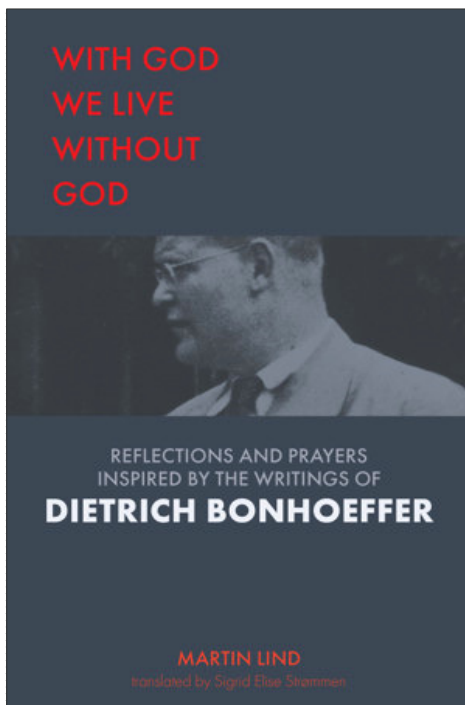
In Denmark about 70% of children are baptised, but this number is slowly decreasing. When those who have not been baptised reach teenage or as young adults start families they sometimes feel that they would like to be baptised but hesitate because they don't want to draw attention to themselves or indulge in the celebration that friends and family might expect after their baptism. The hope is that that drop-in baptism, which has already proved popular in Sweden and Norway, will provide an informal means of bringing new people into the Church.

## NORDIC PERSPECTIVE ON BONHOEFFER

*The Rev Dr Roy Long reviews Bishop Martin Lind's, With God we live without God: Reflections and Prayers inspired by the writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Durham, Sacristy Press, 2018. ISBN: 978-1-910519-93-6 (Pbk).*

After a distinguished career as a pastor, academic and bishop in the Church of Sweden, Dr Martin Lind became Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain in January 2014. It is fitting that his short book, *With God we live without God: Reflections and Prayers inspired by the Writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, a translation from the Swedish original, should appear in English as he prepares to leave his present post.

Dr Lind has been interested in the "Church Conflict" in National Socialist Germany and obtained his Ph.D in 1975 for a thesis on Christianity and Nazism, so it is unsurprising that he should have paid particular attention to the life and thought of the German theologian and martyr, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945). Members of the Anglican-Lutheran Society who attended the conference in Mirfield in 2012 will remember his interesting and erudite presentation on Bonhoeffer. It is sad that his earlier book, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Tankar om en 1900-talsmartyr* (Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Thoughts on a 20<sup>th</sup> century Martyr), published in 2006 has not yet been translated into English because in an area of study that has long been dominated by German and English-speaking scholarship, Dr Lind has provided a significant Nordic perspective on this important theologian. Meanwhile, readers will have to be



satisfied with this thoughtful and interesting series of personal reflections and prayers inspired by Bonhoeffer's writings.

The book under review consists of a brief, but excellent, introduction to Bonhoeffer's life and thought, followed by thirty short original meditations and prayers, which are grounded in a selection of extracts from Bonhoeffer's writings. These thirty reflections go some way to coming to terms with the

paradoxical title to the book and they engage with Bonhoeffer's thoughts about "religionless Christianity". But readers should not be deceived by the apparent simplicity of the meditations: there is much depth and breadth of thought in them.

This is an elegantly produced book, though the handsome, but sombre, front cover might not be immediately attractive to potential purchasers browsing the shelves of a bookshop. There is one infelicity in the otherwise informative introduction to Bonhoeffer's life, and concerning the translation of the Swedish term *präst*. From Sweden across to Iceland, similar words are used to describe ministers who are ordained in the national Lutheran Churches, and in this context it would be quite proper to use the English word "priest". German and English-speaking ministers would not however, use this term, as the translator does on pages 3 and 4; it would, perhaps, have been more accurate to use the term "pastor". It is doubtful that Bonhoeffer would ever have called himself a "priest", except in connection with the concept of the priesthood of all believers.

Readers will gain many insights from this valuable book. It is well worth the recommended price of £7.99.

## CHILE IS ANGLICAN COMMUNION'S 40TH PROVINCE

More than 800 people attended a service in Grange School, Santiago, when the *Iglesia Anglicana de Chile* – the Anglican Church of Chile – was inaugurated as the latest province of the Anglican Communion. It was part of the Province of South America but was given provincial status after a period of sustained growth.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Rt Rev Justin Welby, presided and the congregation included diocesan and auxiliary bishops, pastors, leaders and

lay members from the four dioceses of the new province, Santiago, Valparaíso, Concepción and Temuco, as well as priests, bishops, academics and representatives of missionary societies from across the world including the UK, Hong Kong, Ireland, the USA, Australia and several countries in South America. The service was led by the Presiding Bishop of South America, the Most Rev Greg Venables.

In his address, Justin Welby said, 'The province [of South America] and its

new province are shining lights within the Anglican Communion which will now burn yet more brightly as a challenge and example to the rest of the Communion.' He said it was a gift of God for him to be in Chile again to experience the life, fire and perseverance of the church.

During the service, The Rt Rev Hector (Tito) Zavala Munoz, Bishop of Santiago, was installed as Archbishop and primate of the new province and presented with a primatial cross.



## NEW MEMBERS OF ST ANSELM COMMUNITY

*Last September the Archbishop of Canterbury commissioned 25 young adults from the UK, Australia, Bahamas, Canada, France, Germany, Pakistan, South Sudan, Uganda, the United States, Zambia and Zimbabwe as members of the Community of St Anselm, based at Lambeth Palace, his official London residence. Among them was one of our Society's members.*

The Community of St Anselm was launched in 2015 to enable Christians aged 20-35 to "spend a year in God's time," praying, studying and performing ministry together. Participants in the community must follow a "Rule of Life." Fifteen "residential" members live in the Palace while twenty "non-residential" participants live and work outside the palace within the London area.

Among the new intake is Maik-Andres Schwarz, a Lutheran student of theology training for ordination in the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Württemberg. He will spend a year studying in London's King's College while a member of the Community. Maik-Andres is a member of our Society and has promised to let us know how his year progresses and how he manages to combine his studies with membership of the Community.



*The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, presents crosses to the new intake of the Community of St Anselm during their commissioning service in Lambeth Palace*

## ANNUAL ECUMENICAL SEASON OF CREATION

The "Season of Creation" runs from 1st September, the Day of Prayer for Creation, until 4th October, St Francis' Day. Started in 1989 as an initiative of the Ecumenical Patriarch it has been endorsed by Pope Francis, and now many Church groups take part. In 2018 there were more than 650 events in 68 countries on 6 continents as Christians cooperated as never before to care for the Earth, our common home.

In Portugal, Catarina Ferreira from the Lusitanian Church held "Sustainable Planet" workshops for people of all ages before the participants, including

Bishop Jorge Cabral, *left in the photo below*, took part in a beach clean-up. Lebombo Diocese in Mozambique held a similar clean-up on 20th October at Miramar beach as part of their 125th anniversary celebrations.

In South Africa, the Mothers' Union based at St Mark's Church in the Seshego neighbourhood of Limpopo collected plastic bottles for recycling, raising R 10,000 (approximately £535 GBP) towards a larger church building. The Archbishop of Cape Town, the Most Rev Thabo Makgoba, was keen to play his part too. 'I pledge to use more gas at home than electricity, to plant trees after major travelling and to continue abstaining from eating meat,' he said. His colleague, Archbishop Albert Chama in neighbouring Central Africa made a similar stand: 'I pledge where possible to eat locally grown food, to plant as many trees as possible and to reduce my energy use as much as possible.'

At European Churches Environmental Network's meeting in Katowice in Poland, the Bishop of Salisbury, the Church of England's Lead Bishop for the Environment, said 'This year has been the hottest on record. Extreme weather events are happening with increasing frequency and the poorest people are most vulnerable to the impact of climate change which affects us all. For Christians, striving to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustaining and renewing the life of the earth lies at the heart of what we believe. We have a narrow window now to act if we are to protect God's creation for generations to come – as individuals, communities and as a global family.'

In the Anglican Church of Central America, Bishop Juan David Alvarado joined others from the Iglesia Episcopal Anglicana de El Salvador (the Anglican Church of El Salvador) in a public march to protest against a proposed law to privatise water in the country. Under the banner "#WaterIsRight", he said that 'water is the source of life, not a resource for it.'



## RELIGIOUS LEADERS URGED TO WORK FOR A SECURE WORLD

*In a world marked by insecurity and injustice, religious leaders need to contribute to the wellbeing of all, Archbishop Urmas Viilma, told the Sixth Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions. (LWI)*

A Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions meets every three years in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, to promote dialogue and respect among religions and cultures. In 2018 the Sixth Congress met 10th-11th October and the Most Rev Urmas Viilma, Archbishop of Tallinn in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Estonia, greeted the Congress on behalf of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). The theme of the congress, "Religious Leaders for a Secure World", reminds religious leaders of their responsibility, he said.

The question of security is not a matter for the political and military spheres. It needs to be seen in a more holistic way. The Archbishop (pictured here) reminded his audience that, in the 1990s, the United Nations Development Programme adopted a holistic approach by introducing the concept of human security. More recently, Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) promotes peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice for all, and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions. He pointed to the LWF's humanitarian, development and advocacy work, and its joint work with the UN, as signs of its commitment to the SDGs. 'Cooperation and not isolation is needed today,' he declared.

Archbishop Viilma thinks religious communities and leaders have an important role to play, especially on behalf of people who are most in need and who are often forgotten. 'We need to turn our attention to them. For example: the family that has become homeless because of war and conflict; the young person who has finished school, but is not able to find a job; the woman who is abused by her husband; the child who does not have access to basic health care; the person with disability who is hidden by the family.'

Religious leaders need to work with governments to take this commitment seriously and to take action. 'Indeed, religious communities already contribute to this sustainable development agenda through projects of service and support, and also through our teaching and preaching,' he said. But



he issued a warning. On occasion religious communities clearly do harm to people. 'There have been moments where religious leaders have not withstood fundamentalist and extremist interpretation of sacred texts clearly enough. At this international and interreligious congress, we are reminded that we need to be fully determined in our engagement for the well-being of all people. We need to stand firm and end religious discourse that promotes hatred and violence.'

Quoting Romans 12.16-18, in which Paul encouraged Christians to reach out and connect with other people and live peaceably with them, he declared that one challenge for religious communities was to encourage young people to follow that path of peace. He mentioned the LWF's Peace Messenger Training Manual, designed to help young people from different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds learn to respect diversity, take part in dialogue, accept difference and build mutual trust.

Archbishop Viilma concluded by saying that the congress provided a unique opportunity for religious leaders to meet and jointly strengthen their commitment for a just and peaceful world. 'It is my hope that such conferences will strengthen our commitment locally, nationally and internationally, so that faith will continue to be the source of joint engagement for justice and peace.'

DORTMUND

## WE NEED YOUR HELP TO MAKE OUR MARK AT THIS YEAR'S KIRCHENTAG

It's in Dortmund from 19<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> June

### What is Kirchentag?

The Kirchentag movement is the same age as the German Federal Republic. Reinold von Thadden-Trieglaff founded the German Protestant Kirchentag in 1949, together with other people who were looking for Christian engagement with society to start afresh following the experiences of the Nazi period.

### Environment

The German Protestant Kirchentag has a major objective: to be a zero-emission mega event. This needs to involve all areas, from traffic control through logistics to the provision of food. So in each town the Kirchentag visits it establishes a new, wide-reaching environmental project.

### The programme

The Kirchentag programme is enormous. Much of it is in the German language, of course, but there are many sessions in English. These sessions strengthen spiritual life, invigorate political dialogue, build up faith and challenge individual's opinions through discussion, encounter and worshipping together.

### Safety

At the Kirchentag you're always in good hands: whether you need information, visitor guidance, security arrangements or accommodation, the Kirchentag gathers professional experts in all aspects of event management, working together under one umbrella.



### How does it begin?

Kirchentag starts with a street festival with 200,000 people, including those from the whole local region representing their area. You will find culinary specialities, open air stages, cabaret, and everywhere there is music.

It all builds a good atmosphere and makes the perfect introduction to what are sure to be five very special days.

### Information network

The Market of Opportunities is one of the biggest events for networking. This is a meeting place for those who want to get things moving and for organisations and charities that want to advertise themselves.

**Your Society plans to have a stall in the Market alongside the Finnish Church Stall and needs the help of anyone planning to visit the Kirchentag.**

### It's an event for all ages

**The very youngest** have a mini- Kirchentag of their own – and yet remain in the middle of things. **The Children's Centre provides** spiritual, creative and exciting activities, and lots of fun. Other Centres will cover a range of topics such as Gender, Bible and Local Congregations, among other things. **The Youth Centre** will be a multi-coloured potpourri of creativity and experiences, including accepting responsibility, engaging in conversations, reflection, discussion – while at the same time offering space to relax.

### What about the Over-60s?

What is the over-60s generation looking for from society and what do they actually find? This question will be dealt with in **the Centre on Ageing**. Older people of today have no longer been 'old' for some time now. They have changed expectations – including what they expect of the church.

*Continued at the top of the next page*



### Inter-religious Dialogue

Every Kirchentag has encounters and conversations in **the Centre for Jews and Christians, and the Centre for Muslims and Christians**, as well as in the general coming together that is part of the Kirchentag.

### Accessible and Inclusive

Kirchentag is for everyone. Accessibility and inclusion are important aspects. All the locations for events are barrier-free and accessible. Full participation is also made possible through the interpretation of speeches with sign language, induction loop installations and on-screen subtitles, as well as many events taking place in simple language.

### That's Kirchentag!

Kirchentag is all these things put together: the discussions, the unique atmosphere, the Bible studies and the worship, the concerts and creative ideas. It is people who make the Kirchentag special. It offers a forum that enables you to really get into current issues – on the spot and directly with those who are actually responsible. It is an arena that offers space for new ideas, for forward-thinking in all areas of life, giving ample opportunities to raise challenging questions and to draw mutual strength from one another.

### We need YOUR help

Without the “helpers” and stewards the Kirchentag would not be possible. Around 5000 people help to supervise the flow of visitors, control the entrance points or oversee the collection of rubbish. Every second Kirchentag visitor is at the same time an active contributor – and thus part of the Kirchentag itself.

### YOU COULD BE AN ACTIVE CONTRIBUTOR TOO!

**Without your help we shall not be able to have our usual stall in the Market of Possibilities, telling people about our Society and the benefits of membership.**

**So if you, or a friend or even someone from your congregation, is planning to be in Dortmund between 19<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> June this year, and would be willing to offer an hour or two helping out during that period, please contact our secretary, Dick Lewis at [dick@ccwatford.u-net.com](mailto:dick@ccwatford.u-net.com) so that he can put you in touch with Jaakko Rusama who will be setting up the stall alongside the Finnish Lutheran Church stall in the Market of Possibilities.**

## STUDENTS TO ENGAGE WITH BIBLE TRANSLATION

*An initiative in Addis Ababa may help pastors to preach and teach in their own local languages.  
This article was first published in The Reporter – the official newspaper of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod*

Lutheran Bible Translators, which is an organization of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, has joined forces with Mekane Yesus Seminary (MYS) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to enable some of the seminarians to study the Biblical languages and Bible translation skills as part of their pastoral preparation. This is an important project because the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) is probably the fastest growing Lutheran Church in the world, but there are 88 language groups in Ethiopia and many of its estimated 9.6 million members never hear the Bible read in their own tongue.

In October 2017, when he was preaching on the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, EECMY Presiding President, the Rev Yonas Yigezu, spoke of the ongoing need for Bible translation. ‘The Church needs to make certain that everyone is able to read and hear the Gospel in a language that is understandable,’ he said.

The President of MYS, the Rev Dr Bruk Ayele, says that 40 candidates were proposed for the programme through their congregations and synodical structures. Following a selec-



*The Rev Yonas Yigezu (left), president of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, and Dr Mike Rodewald, Executive Director of Lutheran Bible Translators (Photo: Cindy Rodewald)*

tion process 15 have been awarded scholarships and are starting on the project. The Executive Director of Lutheran Bible Translators, Dr Mike Rodewald, thinks the seminary initiative ‘is particularly exciting ... not only for future Bible translation projects but for building capacity to proclaim the Gospel without barrier.

A common problem in the churches’ theological education is that students from minority-language communities learn through foreign languages while

at the seminary. When they later serve in parish ministry – whether in their own or a differing language community – they cannot express in their own language what they have learned and instead revert to preaching through the foreign language.’

Dr Rodewald says that the plan is to add more students as the project progresses in Addis Ababa and, when resources become available, to extend it to other Lutheran seminaries across the world.

## ST LUCY BRIGHTENS YORKSHIRE CATHEDRALS



In December 50 singers from Skara Cathedral performed a traditional service of light in Bradford and Wakefield Cathedrals in Yorkshire and the North of England. Their dioceses enjoy a strong ecumenical link.

The service celebrated St Lucia and in Sweden it coincides with the night between the 12th and 13th of December, traditionally regarded as the longest night of the year and a night when extra protection was needed. It was the custom in some parts of Sweden to prepare a meal and serve it under candlelight during that long and cold night. Swedes sometimes called it "att lussa". Lusse referred to light, *lux* in Latin, *luce* or *lucia* in Italian.

The singers were from Skara Cathedral Choir and its youth choir and their performance was based on the following story, as told by Lennart Sjöström, a member of our Society who until his retirement was Dean and Rector of the Swedish Church in London :

On December 13<sup>th</sup>, 304AD, a young girl called Lucia died in Syracuse, Sicily. She had refused to make a sacrifice to the emperor Diocletian and the punishment was death, martyrdom. Legend asserts that Lucia, during her life, was willing to sacrifice even her eyes for her true belief. At the end she said: "I know of no other God than my Creator in Heaven and I am prepared to die for him". Lucia is a symbol of light in darkness. Her body rests in the Church of St Jeremiah in Venice.

Her name and her story reached Sweden from Germany and England, where she is known as Lucy. In the middle of the 19th century, Gunnar Wennerberg brought the Lucia song to Sweden from Naples, after a visit to Italy. The song is about a little fishing port, Santa Lucia: Sul mare luccica l'astro d'argento. It was given a Swedish text and became very popular. The modern way of celebrating Lucia was introduced by the Swedish newspaper Stockholmstidningen. They organised a contest and "crowned" their first Lucia in 1927.

Now the name "Lucia" has a special place in every Swede's heart. Lucia is celebrated in practically every home and Church, community and club, school and office. Lucia appears, dressed in a white gown and with a crown of candles – with a group of girls also dressed in white. Sometimes young boys wearing tall paper cones with stars on them accompany her. They sing the Lucia song and Christmas carols.

The many legends surrounding Lucia cannot explain why, in a Protestant country, the Catholic Saint Lucia has come to mean so much. I think that Santa Lucia is for us a symbol of blessed light needed by us all. "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1.5). Santa Lucia reminds us of the greater light that is yet to come, the light we look forward to – the light of Christ. Jesus said: "I am the light of the world: those who follow me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8.12). May our Lucia Celebration prepare us and inspire us to receive Christ and his light into our hearts this coming Christmas."

## DIALOGUE BETWEEN ORTHODOX AND ANGLICANS CONTINUES

*The Joint-Chairmen of the International Commission for Anglican–Orthodox Theological Dialogue, His Eminence Metropolitan Athenagoras of Belgium Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke, Archbishop of Armagh, issued a communiqué when their plenary session ended on 20th October 2018*

The Commission met in Larnaca, in Cyprus, from 13th to 20th October, 2018. Their work was undergirded by daily prayer and worship, and they attended the Sunday Eucharist at the Anglican Cathedral of St Paul, Nicosia; a celebration of the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral Church of St Lazarus, Larnaca; and Great Vespers of the Feast of St Luke, in the Church of St Luke, Patron Saint of Aradippou, after which they joined in a cultural festival.

They also visited holy sites and relics, including the Church of Angeloktisti in the village of Kiti, the Byzantine Museum Archbishop Makarios III in

Nicosia, and the Church of the Holy Cross in Pano Lefkara. They enjoyed the hospitality of local Christians, and dinners as guests of the Mayor of Aradippou in the Town Hall, and with His Eminence Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Kition at St George's Cultural Centre.

The Commission continued to develop its theological understanding of the human person, using as its basis the statement agreed in 2015 at its meeting in Buffalo, USA, entitled "In the Image and Likeness of God: A Hope-Filled Anthropology", and it considered a draft statement on the end of human

life, "Euthanasia: the Christian approach to Life and Death". Time was also spent examining complex and pressing issues on the environment and ecology, and a document created by a small drafting group in June 2018 entitled "Stewards of Creation: A Hope-filled Ecology" received critical reflection in what was reported to be a very constructive manner. Members found substantial convergence in their views on care for creation, as well as opportunities for joint action.

Their next meeting is in October 2019, hosted by the Anglican Communion in Canterbury.



## BONNEVAUX ABBEY : A COMMUNITY IN THE MAKING

*Last summer Society member Anne Boileau went to Poitiers in France to experience something new*



At Bonnevaux Abbey, whatever you may be doing, when the bell in the tower rings you down tools, wash your hands and make your way to the Chapel for Meditation. At 6.15 am, 12.15pm and 6.15 pm the core community and whoever else may be staying at the time gather to hear a reading, recite a psalm, say the Lord's prayer in their own mother tongue and then sit still and in silence for half an hour. The builders stop work on the Abbey during this time too and quietness descends, the only sound being the birdsong outside.



The Abbey is an elegant limestone manor house, complete with cloisters, set in its own park, with a small river and a lake that's partially silted up but full of cheerful fish and alive with dragonflies. There are barns and fine stables, a farmhouse close by, park lands bright with orchids and other wildflowers, all surrounded by mixed woodlands full of deer and wild boar.

The builders and masons are specialists in restoring historic buildings. They are gradually making the place habitable. All the windows have been replaced, their stone surrounds renewed, wiring and plumbing are going in and each room upstairs will have its own small bathroom. Downstairs they will install a new kitchen, dining room and library. Soon the Abbey, part of the World Community of Christian Meditation (WCCM), will be ready to receive guests from all over the world. A large barn is being converted into a conference and meditation centre.

Another €3million is needed to complete the work, but Fr Laurence Freeman OSB, the Director of WCCM, believes that with the power of prayer this amount can and will be raised. And faith does seem to dwell in this place, which is blissfully tranquil, apart from the distant thunder of TGV trains rushing by half a mile away.

The embryonic community has four key members: Andrew Cresswell, the Director, runs the show with gentle but firm authority; his wife Delyth supports him and does a lot of the cooking. They live in an EdSpace – a kind of flatpack

Portakabin – beside the Farmhouse. David Simpson can turn his hand to most things from dealing with accounts to plumbing in a toilet. He lives in his caravan by the old cow byre with his own washing line and solar panel. Thomas, a French horticulturalist, looks after the vegetable garden and manages the gardening volunteers, some of whom are local. He lives at the Gate House. Rebecca manages other volunteers, allocating appropriate tasks to each one and making sure they're happy. She stays in a spacious tent in the shade of an oak tree. The grounds and woodlands are maintained by Jean Christophe, who has worked at Bonnevaux for most of his life.

Guests at the Abbey are welcomed, fed and watered and made to feel at home when they arrive. During my short stay I met people who had come from London, Singapore, Texas, Canada, Denmark, France and India. They usually come with two distinct (though not mutually exclusive) objectives: either they will sign up as volunteers, in which case they live and eat in the farmhouse in exchange for work, or they come as visitors and donors, and stay elsewhere, either in a nearby hotel or at a bed and breakfast called La Cadoue, a ten-minute walk away. This is where I stayed and it was very comfortable.

It may look like a kind of heaven, but it's not an easy life. Living with five other people who you never chose to live with, welcoming new guests when you've only just got used to the last lot, getting up at 5.45am every morning for meditation when, because of the hot weather, you didn't get to sleep until midnight, is not easy! Nor is having to be nice to everyone when sometimes you would prefer to eat alone, or even live alone, or sleep, or take a break from all this prayer, and from the never-ending jobs to be done, just keeping the place running smoothly. But for all that there is redemption: meditation allows frictions to be ironed out, smoothed away.

Of course the beauty of the place, the birds, the bats, the call of the crickets and the frogs, and eating and drinking convivially with fourteen others at a trestle table, in the shade of three vast plane trees, makes it all just lovely. After supper there is croquet on the lawn in front of the fine old house, mellow in the sunset, which seems to be quietly accepting its new role as a centre for meditation, and perhaps recalling that it was a Cistercian monastery, founded in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century.

Three times a day the people come together in the chapel, listen to a parable, chant a psalm, and allow the stillness to settle around them, and all will be well and all manner of things will be well, at Bonnevaux Abbey, Poitiers, France.



*Fr Laurence with Angelene Chan, the architect supervising the restoration*



# LUTHERANS, ROMAN CATHOLICS AND ANGLICANS : WHAT FUTURE ECUMENISM?

*Fr Phillip Swingler offers a Roman Catholic Observer's current reflections for those preparing for the Anglican-Lutheran Society's 2020 Conference in Rome*

*"All institutions exist for a purpose. When that purpose can no longer be attained, or falls away altogether, the social arrangement must be abandoned. That is how it has to be in a religious community, otherwise it becomes stale and moves only ex opere operato."* (Extract from Archives of the Moravian Church, Unitas Fratrum – Herrnhut Diarium, December 31, 1734)

Is the ecumenical "winter" of the past few years (caused by a diverse variety of often unfaced reasons) passing now into an ecumenical "springtime" (where new shoots of unity are springing into life)?

In the recent joint commemorations of the Sixteenth Century Reformations we can see some promising signs of hope. In his Apostolic Exhortation *EVANGELII GAUDIUM* ("The Joy of the Gospel") of 2013 Pope Francis recognises the unity that comes from our focus on the Word of God and allowing the Holy Spirit to be our guide:

*"How many important things unite us! If we really believe in the abundantly free working of the Holy Spirit, we can learn so much from one another! It is not just about being better informed about others, but rather about reaping what the Spirit has sown in them, which is also meant to be a gift for us ... Through an exchange of gifts the Spirit can lead us ever more fully into truth and goodness."*

On 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016, in the Lutheran Cathedral of Lund in Sweden, Pope Francis and Bishop Munib Younan (President of the Lutheran World Federation) and the LWF General Secretary (the Rev Dr Martin Junge) presided at the Ecumenical Prayer Service which inaugurated a whole year of Catholic-Lutheran commemoration of the Lutheran Reformation, and this event was widely understood as a significant

ecumenical promise which can be fruitful for future relationships. The invitation given in common is to discern what Roman Catholics can learn from the Reformation and what Evangelical and Protestant Christians can experience in the Catholic Church today as an enrichment of their faith. Five inter-related opportunities were highlighted by Bishop Younan and Pope Francis in their common statement of hope and intention:

- ◆ We commit ourselves to further growth in communion rooted in Baptism, as we seek to remove the remaining obstacles that hinder us from attaining full unity.
- ◆ We renew our commitment to theological dialogue.
- ◆ We pray to God that Catholics and Lutherans will be able to witness together to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, inviting humanity to hear and receive the good news of God's redeeming action, that we may stand together in service, upholding human dignity and rights, especially for the poor, working for justice, and rejecting all forms of violence.
- ◆ We pray for a change of hearts and minds that leads to a loving and responsible way to care for creation.

Martin Luther's real original concern is now visible again – he neither wanted to break with the Catholic Church nor did he want to found a new Church, but to prevent the loss of credibility of the Church he loved, and to save the Papal Church; he intended the renewal of all Christendom in the spirit of the Gospel – a task still incomplete today. He was concerned with a thorough reform of the Church and not an endeavour to break the unity of the Church. The separation of individual particular Churches from the Catholic Church can be seen as an expression of a provisional failure of much of his idealism, or at least as an emergency solution. It could be claimed that with the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) Martin Luther "found his council" for which he had

appealed in his lifetime. As the Council's document *UNITATIS RED-INTEGRATIO* ("On the Practice of Ecumenism") puts it: "All are led to examine their own faithfulness to Christ's will for the Church and, wherever necessary, to undertake with vigour the task of renewal and reform." (UR 4:412 and UR 6&7)

"Deepening rapprochement between Lutherans and Roman Catholics in the faith and the living of this faith is urgent as we celebrate a common profession of our faith in the Triune God, in common obedience to our Lord and to his Word," as Pope Benedict XVI said to a delegation from the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany on 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2011.

The formal adoption of the Lutheran/Roman Catholic Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, not only by the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church, but also by Methodist and Anglican world organisations more recently are hopeful signs of strategic movement in this direction. This needs to be rooted firmly and deeply grounded in other developments such as are focussed in the Lutheran/Roman Catholic Commission for Unity dialogue document "From Conflict to Communion" (2013):

1. **GRATITUDE** for the reunited communion in faith common to us – such as the consensus in "fundamental truths" (the Doctrine of Justification), a truly ecumenical milestone on the journey to unity.
2. **CONFESSION** of guilt and **REPENTANCE** and resulting **PURIFICATION** of historical memory (misunderstandings, malicious actions and atrocities inflicted on each other over 500 years). The Reformation is to be understood as a process of reform in the

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Church by emphasising the centrality of the Word of God in Christian Existence and in the Life of the Church, and by focusing on the person and life of Jesus Christ as the living Word of God. According to Pope Francis, “we cannot erase what is past, nor do we wish to allow the weight of past transgressions to continue to pollute our relationships.” (25<sup>th</sup> January 2016)

3. HOPE. From common repentance for sins against unity during our history, and from the grateful joy of the communion reached in the meantime, confidence for the ecumenical future flows. As Cardinal Kurt Koch (President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity) puts it: “After 500 years of separation and a long period of conflict and existing in parallel worlds, we must surely aim for a binding coexistence and let this become reality – as is happening already today. This is particularly true for the road to 2030 when we will celebrate the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Diet of Augsburg, and the CONFESSIO AUGUSTANA which was then proclaimed. With this Confession, the Reformers wanted to testify that they were in accordance with the faith of the Catholic Church. The AUGSBURG CONFESSIO, therefore, represents the decisive effort to save the endangered unity of the Church in the given situation of that time. It thus has great ecumenical significance.” (in L'Osservatore Romano, 18<sup>th</sup> January 2017, p6) And such aims can help today in our common attempts to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit in converging together “in Christ”, rather than going off again into estranging separate ecclesiological, doctrinal and moral directions.

As we focus together on Jesus Christ, the Word of God, we have to face up squarely to what is the nature and mode of His authority in the Church today. How is His pastoral service in His Church, on the way to the unity

of the Kingdom of God, to be expressed?

Over the centuries this has so often and for so long been modelled in practice on secular, social, political, bureaucratic and fiscal patterns which are not of its essence and have been harmful to unity and the life of the Gospel in the Church. Here the Protestant recognition of ECCLESIA SEMPER REFORMANDA (“the Church is always needing reform”) and the Catholic recognition of ECCLESIA SEMPER PURIFICANDA (“the Church is always needing purification” – as “Lumen Gentium” 8 of the Second Vatican Council declares) find a close correspondence in working towards renewal in evangelism, ministry and diaconal service. There are still difficult and sensitive issues to be faced together concerning the nature of God's gifts of authority, of discernment and pastoral service in all Churches facing the challenge of “post-modernity” and how to respond creatively and faithfully with our experiences of scripture and tradition. Some examples in illustration must include:

1. Facing the role of PAPACY in the Church under the Headship of Christ: i.e. PETRINE PRIMACY: a spiritual primacy of the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, as minister of Christian unity in evangelism, but a primacy with juridical teeth – which is far from being equivalent to an ultramontane nineteenth century understanding of papal infallibility and universal jurisdiction, and would be a gift in enabling (and allowing) non-Roman Churches (e.g. the Eastern Orthodox and Assyrian Churches – from whose ethos Western Churches and communities could receive as gifts much input from their theologies and practice of ministry) to express their mind in a new context and age and situation (along with Protestant and Anglican Churches) helping them to balance their particular ecclesial and cultural visions with the universal whole, and to respond creatively (e.g. to secularization, globalization, genetic experimentation and same-sex “marriage”) and to develop together an exploration of a Christian anthropology and theology of the body and of creation ecology, without leading (as has al-

ready begun to happen) to new and further divisions preventing visible Church reconciliation and unity in communal life, worship and witness.

2. The nature of VISIBLE UNITY of Christians in ONE CHURCH (common apostolic faith, common ministry and sacraments, common consultation and authority for decisions). What does “RECONCILED DIVERSITY” really mean in practice for the Churches? In the Joint Declaration of Pope Francis and the Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, signed in November 2018, they profess: “We are most grateful for the fruits of this dialogue of love and truth which confirm that a diversity of customs and disciplines is in no way an obstacle to unity, and that certain differences in theological expressions are often complementary rather than conflicting. Christian victims of violence, without distinction of rite or confession, suffer for professing the name of Christ. In them we see the body of Christ which, today too, is afflicted, beaten and reviled. We are profoundly united in our prayer of intercession and in our charitable outreach to these suffering members of Christ's Body. Just as the blood of Christ, shed out of love, brought reconciliation and unity and caused the Church to flourish, so the blood of these martyrs of our time, members of various Churches but united by their shared suffering, is the seed of Christian unity.”
3. POSITIVE AFFIRMATION of non-Roman Catholic Churches and ecclesial communities in the light of the impact of the document of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, DOMINUS JESUS : 2000 (on the salvific role and mediation of the one universal Redeemer Christ Jesus in the one continuous universal Catholic Church centred in full communion with the Bishop of Rome). The neuralgic effect of this state-

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ment needs to be balanced by the fact that it was an honest attempt to define what has always been the ecumenical position of belief in one Church where the fullness of truth in Christ and his spiritual treasures will always be found according to his promises ("The Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" 1 Timothy 3, verse 15) – a belief held by the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Church (separately now but together before the East-West schism!).

Issues (1) and (3) in particular require a truly ecumenical spirit, based on mutual respect, scrupulous honesty and participatory friendship to grow through all the Churches – seeking together the guidance of the Holy Spirit, being truthful about and to one another, joyfully and thankfully recognising that we are joined in Christ by baptism and faith and already in "imperfect" communion together, seeking more profound understanding of each other and more active pastoral and evangelistic collaboration of pastors and people locally, and realising that the Holy Spirit graces our Christian colleagues and that we can (and must) learn from them.

Cardinal Walter Kasper, in his book "Martin Luther, An Ecumenical Per-

spective" (2016), in reviewing recent ecumenical developments acknowledges that what unites us (Lutherans, Roman Catholics and Anglicans) is far more than what divides us and, where we are still divided, we continue to learn from one another as we "harvest the fruits" of our official ecumenical dialogues, and there is still need for us all to receive and propagate "Agreed Statements" in the hearts and lives of the faithful so that they become flesh in the Churches and part of their fundamental thinking and praying. On continuing contested questions and practices his observation that "we are in agreement that we want unity, but we are not in agreement about what constitutes unity" is particularly insightful. For sometimes amongst our Christian communities, not only an ecumenical vision is missing but also an ecumenical will to receive and change and to take up the notion and practical meaning of "reconciled diversity" and a "receptive ecumenism" which emphasizes "learning from each other". And this takes place in a world which has no time or respect for theological hair-splitting, and which aims to eject Christianity from the public square, and where we witness an increasing ecumenism of bloody martyrdom which does not

discriminate between denominations.

Yet we take courage from the idea that we are no longer on a violent path to division of the Church, as we were in 1517, but instead on the path to unity – as long as we remain with a desire for increasing conversion to the will of Christ for his Church and world in all things, and as we, as his Church, seek, like the Lord of the Church, to build bridges to be a true communion modelling and witnessing to that community to which God calls all humanity – so that all men and women and children may know the compassionate and tender mercy of our God revealed in Jesus Christ.

There is much to pray for, and do, and await from God as we seek (particularly in Christian friendship in the Anglican-Lutheran Society) to grow in communion, rooted in Baptism, theological dialogue, and witnessing together to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and standing together in service and caring for creation – unanimous in the Church's mission of search for the justice and peace which characterises the Kingdom of God. Together we must remember, with compassion and honesty, the past, for it will shape our future.

*"I decree that there can be no Christianity without community."* : Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, later Bishop of the Moravian Church : February 4th 1734.

## INDEPENDENT ORTHODOX CHURCH FOR UKRAINE

In 2014 Russia annexed Crimea and Russia-backed separatists seized a big swathe of territory in eastern Ukraine. Ever since, the Orthodox community in the Ukraine has been moving towards independence from Moscow and the Russian Patriarchate.

Now a new Orthodox Church of Ukraine has been created, combining the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Kiev Patriarchate) and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church. Some parishes of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) have also joined.'

When this was announced on 15th December it caused a rift in Orthodox Christianity between the Ecumenical

Patriarchate of Constantinople based in Istanbul and the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Metropolitan Epifaniy of the Kiev Patriarchate church is to be the head of the new Church. His secular name is Sergiy Dumenko and he is 39 years old. 'I would like to call all our brothers, the bishops and all believers to the newly created united Ukrainian Orthodox Church,' he has said. 'The doors of our Church are open to all.'

Ukrainian President Poroshenko commented, 'This day will go down in history as a sacred day ...

the day of final independence from Russia.'

President Poroshenko travelled with Metropolitan Epifaniy to Istanbul where, on 5th January 2019, an official "Tomos" (or decree) was signed by the Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew of Constantinople, who is head of global Orthodoxy, granting the new Church its independence.

This prompted the Russian Orthodox Church to announce that it was ending its relationship with the Ecumenical Patriarchate in protest. Patriarch Kirill of the Moscow Patriarchate accused the Ukrainian government of exerting pressure on the Orthodox Churches in the Ukraine.



## ECUMENICAL MISSION REACHES OUT TO FATHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN

*The Anglican Journal reports the second project to start under Roman-Catholic/Anglican partnership*

In Canada a play programme for fathers and their young children launched in Saint John, New Brunswick is the second project in the world to have started under an international Anglican-Roman Catholic partnership for mission.

Back in 2016, at a meeting of the International Anglican and Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM), Pope Francis and the Archbishop of Canterbury commissioned 19 pairs of Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops from around the world to undertake collaborative projects for helping people on the margins of society. The first such project was a scholarship programme for needy students in Malawi, which was launched in September 2017.

Now "Dads & Tots" sees a small group of fathers gathering on Saturday mornings to play with their children aged 3-5. They will be accompanied by two mentors, and the aim is simply to help fathers from some of the poorest areas of St John, some of whom are single parents, build their parenting skills, says the Rev John Paul Westin, Rector of St John's Anglican Church (known as the Stone Church), where the sessions will initially be held.

The Rt Rev David Edwards, Bishop of the Anglican diocese of Fredericton (which covers the entire civil province of New Brunswick) and the Rt Rev Robert Harris, Roman Catholic bishop of Saint John, liked the idea. It is a sad fact that 45% of the children in that area live in poverty (compared with 17% across the whole of Canada), and half of all single parent families live in poverty.

Last October the two Bishops officially launched the project, which has been endorsed by the Anglican and Roman Catholic co-chairs of IARCCUM. The Rector commented that there is a real need among many underprivileged fathers to learn better how to interact with their children partly because often they themselves never experienced healthy interaction with a father when they were children.



'For some,' he said, 'just knowing how to play with children is kind of a foreign concept because mostly [they] as children were just stuck in front of a TV or some kind of a game...They don't really know how to connect because they've never been taught that.'

## LENTEN DEVOTIONALS

The four heads of communion of the Anglican/Episcopal and Lutheran Churches in the US and Canada have prepared Lenten devotionals on the theme, "Set Free by Truth."

The series reflects contextually and cross-contextually on such matters as truth-telling and racial justice. Each segment presents Scripture citations, a reflection, and a prayer. They can be downloaded at:

[http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Lent\\_Devotionals\\_Reader\\_Spread.pdf](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Lent_Devotionals_Reader_Spread.pdf)



## LUTHERAN-PENTECOSTAL DIALOGUE FOCUSES ON THE POOR

*The third Lutheran-Pentecostal dialogue group meeting in Santiago de Chile called for faithful teaching on the abundance of God's gifts for the whole human race and for the earth. (LWI)*

The third meeting of the international Lutheran-Pentecostal dialogue group drew attention to the situation of the materially poor and how the churches relate to them. After a series of meetings between 2004 and 2010 the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and Pentecostal Churches began a five-year dialogue in 2016.

Each year they meet to better appreciate each other's theological and spiritual traditions and to find ways for witnessing together. Their meeting in 2018 took place in October in Santiago de Chile and focused on Christian ministry in the light of Luke 4.18-19, "Proclaiming the good news to the poor."



*The Rev Anne Burghardt (third from left) and members of the Lutheran-Pentecostal Dialogue Group  
(Photo: LWI)*

### True prosperity

The prosperity gospel came in for criticism, with members of the dialogue group instead extolling faithful teaching on the abundance of God's gifts for the whole human race and for the earth. 'The dialogue members agreed that although one needs to reject a theology of prosperity, which offers false promises and runs the risk of turning God into an object of our desires, we have to affirm an understanding of prosperity as a blessing of God freely given, and affirm Jesus' promise to bring abundant life for all people, as we read in John 10:10,' said the Rev Anne Burghardt, LWF Secretary for Ecumenical

Relations (and a member of our Society). 'Those who are so blessed are called to be a blessing to others and to work for the betterment of all society, to overcome injustices and to care for all of God's creation,' she added.

### Poverty is a reality for people robbed of human rights

Dialogue member the Rev Dr Richard Waldrop presented a paper on Pentecostals and the poor, in which he described the fundamental role of the poor in the history and development of Pentecostalism. The Rev Dr Walter Altmann gave his presentation on Martin Luther's understanding of the poor, including a Christological focus and pointing to the centrality of the cross. Both speakers challenged the prosperity gospel.

Bishop Alexis Salgado of the Lutheran Church in Chile (LCC) met with the group and discussed the local church life, including relationships between different denominations. Pastors from the two LWF member churches in the country (LCC and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile) and from various Pentecostal Churches also met the dialogue members to help them gain insights into the lives of their denominations and congregations.

During the meeting, the dialogue members participated in a service at the Lutheran Church El Redentor in the Providencia District before visiting Pentecostal churches belonging to the Methodist-Pentecostal Church and the Pentecostal Church of Chile. They also visited the memorial and museum of human rights in Santiago. There they were reminded that unlawful incarcerations, torture and killings during the 1973-1989 Chilean military dictatorship demonstrate that poverty is truly a reality for those who are robbed of fundamental rights and freedoms.

### Moving on

The next meeting will be held in 2019 in Africa, with the theme "To proclaim freedom, recovery and release" (Luke 4.18), focusing on healing and deliverance. In 2020, the dialogue will meet in North America to prepare a common document to conclude this dialogue phase.

## CHURCH LEADERS' NEW YEAR MESSAGES APPLICABLE TO ECUMENICAL AS WELL AS SECULAR RELATIONSHIPS

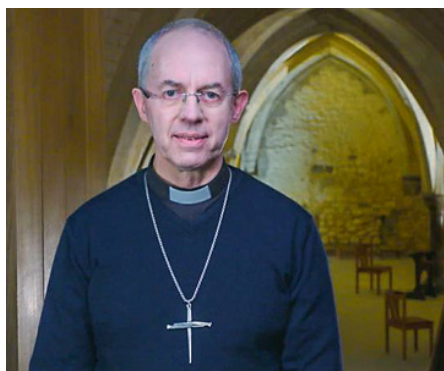
### Building peace

In his New Year Message to the Lutheran communion the General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, the Rev Dr Martin Junge, told Churches that 'when we root ourselves in Christ, we are well equipped to engage in his ministry of peacebuilding.' Drawing on the words of the Psalmist, "Seek peace and pursue it" (Psalm 34:14), he acknowledged that peace may seem elusive today with conflicts ravaging many countries and communities but churches must 'become active and engaged to be peacebuilders in their contexts.'



Dr Martin Junge Photo: LWF

Many Churches are witnessing to Christ in contexts marked by conflicts that are widely publicized in the media, but others experience difficulties that are only heard about because they share their joys and pains as Churches in communion. 'I hope and pray that Churches suffering through hardship will always find comfort in the knowledge that they are not alone! They are surrounded and also powered by their communion relationships expressed in prayer and solidarity,' Dr Junge concluded, 'so let's pursue that peace which shouldn't be taken for granted, but needs our prayer, our commitment, and our actions.'



The Rt Rev Justin Welby

Photo ACNS

### Building Community

The Rt Rev Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, urged people to adopt a 'new spirit of openness towards each other' – and especially those with whom they live. Living together is never easy, he said, and he pointed to the Community of St Anselm at Lambeth as an example.

'Because they are human,' he said, 'they clash together over something as small as washing up, or as big as their politics. But they are united by one thing: their faith in Jesus Christ. But their own faith is not what holds them together... In this community I find it so powerful that these remarkably different people choose each other.'

The Archbishop went on to draw a parallel with the whole country. 'We're wonderfully more diverse than we used to be, yet we disagree on many things. And we are struggling with how to disagree well.' Whilst it would be tempting to despair, he believes, there is yet hope if everyone is determined to discover more of what it means to be citizens together, even among great challenges and changes. 'This will involve seeing ourselves as neighbours, as fellow citizens, as communities each with something to contribute,' he said. It will not be easy, he commented, but difficult work is part of the joy of being a community, whether it is as small as the St Anselm Community or as large as the millions who make up our whole country and the wider world.

### Strengthening Society

Pope Francis also spoke of the difficulty people have simply living together. He praised the love of mothers who bring hope to disjointed society. He quoted the Virgin Mary as an example. 'She blesses the journey of every man and every woman in this new year ... and that will be good precisely in the measure in which each one will welcome the goodness of God that Jesus came to bring into the world.'

The Pope spoke of the dispersion of peoples, and the degree of solitude that is found in today's world. The more the world seems connected the more disjointed it appears to become. He criticised the quest for profit and the focus on money. It results in increasing division between the rich and the poor. 'We will all dwell in the same house, but not as brothers and sisters,' he said. 'We need to learn from mothers that heroism is shown in self-giving, strength in compassion.'



Pope Francis with mother and child Photo: Getty





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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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## YOUNG GERMAN LUTHERAN ADDRESSES SYNOD OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

Julia Braband is a 25 year-old theology student from the Evangelical Church in Central Germany which was formed on 1st January 2009 in a merger of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thuringia and Evangelical Church of the Province of Saxony. Julia may be young but she has eight years of voluntary involvement in various church governing bodies and now she serves on the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Council. But from 3rd to 28th October 2018 she found herself in the Vatican in Rome as an ecumenical guest of the 15th Ordinary General Council of the Synod of Roman Catholic Bishops.

She was one of about 40 young people from across the world who had been invited, and she was given the privilege of addressing the Assembly on their theme "Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment".

Julia strongly advocates for the full participation of young people in the life and decision-making processes of the Church. She spoke of the positive experience that the LWF has enjoyed since the decision was taken in 1984 to encourage young people to get involved in church life at every level. 'Today 20% of all members in the LWF decision-making bodies are youth and young adults under 30,' she told the assembled bishops. 'This quota is now strongly defended – not only by us young people but also by many other members.'

She encouraged the bishops to accept youth involvement as a "laboratory of faith". 'The first important step is to listen to young people and take note of their diversity,' she said in her address. 'But it is even more important to take the concerns of young church members seriously and to give them a fully-fledged voice in the community, meeting each other at eye level. That is the only way the Church can be a church for all generations.'

Julia made it clear that the journey is not yet over and that among the LWF member Churches further work remains to be done. 'For that reason, the LWF Assembly last year in Namibia once again called on all member Churches to implement the youth quota,' she said.

Speaking to a synod of Roman Catholic bishops was clearly a special event for Julia Braband, but she is used to meeting Roman Catholics. For the past few years she has engaged in good ecumenical relations between her own Church and the Federation of German Catholic Youth (BDKJ). 'I think in particular of the many fantastic events we organize with young Catholics. It's so important in our ecumenical relations to realize that we stand on common ground,' she says.



Julia Braband with Pope Francis and Thomas Andonie, Chairperson of the Federation of German Catholic Youth (BDKJ). Photo: LWF / Julia Braband