

THE WINDOW

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THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY CALLS ON CHURCHES TO 'DO MISSION TOGETHER'

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, called on the world's churches to 'do mission together'. His call came during a visit on June 3rd to the Geneva secretariat of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). In a meeting with LWF officials, the archbishop stressed that if mission is not ecumenically focussed, it will quickly prove divisive and be in conflict with the unifying role of the Gospel itself.

Dr Carey was paying a visit to the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva - the first ever by a spiritual head of the worldwide Anglican Communion. During his two-day visit he also had talks with his main host, the World Council of Churches (WCC), as well as the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Conference of European Churches. The meetings took place shortly after Dr Carey visited the Vatican.

"We must work together if we are really to express sacramentally that God loves all people", he said. During his talks with the LWF officials, Dr Carey affirmed the participation of women at all levels of the church's life, including the ordained ministry. The ministry must always be viewed 'within, not over' the whole people of God, he said. The church is first of all the whole people, the laity, he added. The archbishop cited recent work by eminent British missiologist Lesslie Newbigin and suggested that Lutherans and Anglicans do joint work on the issue of cultural values, which is the key issue in 'doing mission together'.

Dr Carey also stressed the need for mission in a sermon given in the Ecumenical Centre's chapel, during which he referred to the Decade of Evangelism currently being observed by Anglican churches worldwide. Mission work entails empowering men and women for mature discipleship, he said. He could see no future for the churches if this is not made a priority. The essential scandal is the inability of Christians to celebrate the eucharist together, he added. In their quest for visible unity, Christians need to explore their theology of baptism. He also called for a commitment to sacramentality in the churches.

In his meeting with the LWF, Dr Carey affirmed the significance of increasingly close relations with Lutheran churches both regionally and internationally. Reference was made during the talks to the concordat proposed to the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Meissen Agreement between the Church of England and the Evangelical Churches in Germany, the 'Harare Report' from an Anglican-Lutheran consultation on ecclesiology in Africa, and the report of conversations between the Church of England and the Lutheran Nordic and Baltic churches, which is reaching its final form.

The conversation also dealt with the response of the Roman Catholic Church to the final report of the First Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC I) and its significance for the reception of Lutheran dialogues with Roman Catholics, and with the relationship of Christian world communions to the WCC.

LWF general secretary Dr Gunnar Staalseth said that in times of ecumenical stagnation and confusion 'it is important to keep the goal of visible unity clear and uncompromised.' Only when rooted in the vision of unity can the church evidence a spirituality which appeals to all people, he added.

[LWF]

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

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

UPDATE ON TWINNING AND EXCHANGES DIRECTORY

The Anglican-Lutheran Society has been compiling data about twinning and exchanges between Anglicans and Lutherans. Most information so far has come from Anglican sources in Britain. Initial contacts have been made with theological colleges, diocesan ecumenical officers, cathedral staff and individuals known to have been involved in Anglican-Lutheran exchanges.

The contacts have provided not only interesting information on existing links between Anglican and Lutheran parishes, institutions and individuals, but have also encouraged those not involved in Anglican-Lutheran links to consider such opportunities. The Society's Executive Committee will be considering ways in which it can help facilitate the development of links for those who have expressed such an interest. The mailings have also increased the Anglican awareness of a Lutheran presence in Britain, and, of course, of the Society and its work. These contacts have brought about new memberships to the Society as information leaflets have been included in mailings. It has been interesting to note the many informal links already in place, and it is anticipated that this directory may prove useful for future projects.

If you are involved in (or know of) a link and have not had the opportunity to respond to our request for information, please write to the Revd Wayne D. Swanson, care of the Society. We look forward to receiving further details and information on twinings for the directory, and to its publication as soon as possible.



INDEX TO ABBREVIATIONS

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

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

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THE WINDOW

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A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO THE GERMAN EVANGELICAL CHURCHES

A review of:

The German Evangelical Churches: An Introduction Following the Meissen Agreement by Colin Podmore

Anyone considering a church twinning or exchange with a partner in Germany, anyone wanting an insight into that country's church life and history, anyone wishing to unravel some of the intricacies of German church organisation and confessional adherence should most certainly obtain a copy of Colin Podmore's lucid and wide-ranging booklet. Published as an occasional paper by the Church of England's Council for Christian Unity, of which Mr Podmore is Assistant Secretary, the thirty-two page booklet presents an informative and fascinating picture of the Evangelical churches of Germany. While this concise guide will perhaps be of particular interest to Anglicans who want to know more about the churches in Germany with which they have been encouraged, by the Meissen Agreement, to deepen their fellowship, German readers might also discover a thing or two about their own tradition.

The author sketches a number of historical high-points: the cultural and ecclesiastical links between the English and German churches, the development of the Reformation churches in Germany, the struggles and consequences of the Second World War, the experience of the church in socialism. The detail is always appropriate and never trivial.

Some common misconceptions of British Christians about the German evangelical churches are also addressed. They are not the equivalent of the English Free Churches, the name 'Evangelical' does not mean that they are counterparts of the evangelical wing of the Church of England, and not all German protestants are Lutherans.

Other aspects considered include the Church Tax, ecclesiastical organisation, the church's social and welfare programmes, ministerial training, and liturgy and liturgical dress. The last of these is particularly interesting. Most German clergy nowadays, unlike many Lutherans elsewhere, would probably regard the black gown (Talar) and white bands or ruff as the classical garb of protestantism. Mr Podmore points to the comparative recentness of the black-gown tradition in Germany; Mass vestments were generally retained amongst German Lutherans in the 16th and 17th centuries, and were still in use in the 18th century. The surplice lasted longer and is still normal for eucharistic celebrations in some areas. He offers this intriguing thought: 'In 1746 Zinzendorf had attributed the favour with which Anglicans then regarded Lutherans to the fact that they wore the same liturgical dress - white surplices, arguing that when people look alike, wearing the same dress, this establishes an especial friendship and harmony between them. It may be that the divergence in

liturgical dress between the German Evangelical Churches and the Church of England which occurred from the late eighteenth century onwards has obscured underlying affinities between them.'

Mr Podmore's book sheds light on those affinities, and will surely prove to be a valuable resource for members of the German and English national churches, and Lutherans and Anglicans elsewhere, as they endeavour to draw closer together in life and worship.

Tom Bruch

The German Evangelical Churches: An Introduction Following the Meissen Agreement can be ordered from: Mrs Joy Lyons at The Council for Christian Unity, Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 2NZ. £3.30 per copy including postage and packing. Reductions are available for orders of five copies or more.



A Lutheran Communion service in Hamburg, c. 1650, the ministers wearing Hanseatic ruffs, albs and chasubles. Painted 1649-51 for the St. Jakobi-Kirche, Hamburg, by Otto Wagenfeldt (c. 1610-1671).

THAT THEY MAY ALL BE ONE

Thoughts on the proposed Concordat between Episcopalians and Lutherans in the U.S.A.

by the Rt Revd Harry W Shipps, Bishop of Georgia, ECUSA.

The efforts that have been and now are being made to restore the visible unity of Christ's church militant here on earth have captured the minds and imagination of all who believe the present state of the separated churches to be contrary to the mind of Christ. This is true especially of those Christian thinkers who have an organic view of the church as the Body of Christ, the extension of the Incarnation through history.

Anglicans have, in spite of a dispersed authority, agreed upon the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral as the irreducible minimum 'incapable of compromise', for the organic unity of the baptised. In that framework the 'historic episcopate' finds its place. This is echoed in the Book of Common Prayer and in the canons of the Episcopal Church.

In recent decades the several provinces of the Anglican Communion have engaged in discussions and dialogues concerned with and working towards the organic unity of the churches of Christ. In some cases, notably in the Indian sub-continent, these efforts have resulted in the formation of new churches, as the Church of South India (1947), the Church of North India (1970), the Church of Pakistan (1970), and the Church of Bangladesh.

In all of these instances the stumbling block was and is the historic episcopate. Although apostolic succession of bishops, priests and deacons is not always mentioned as such, it is, in the minds of many Anglicans, subsumed by the term 'historic episcopate' as used in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral.

Amongst the unfolding events of bilateral and multilateral international dialogues is the realisation that the Anglican Communion itself is difficult to define and to identify when seeking the locus of authority and consistency in theology.

The Elizabethan Settlement of 1558 was unique in Reformation resolutions in that the Church of England intentionally meant to include all, from Catholic to Puritan. Only extreme Papists and Calvinists eluded incorporation into the one national Church. The idealism of this inclusivity, including historic episcopate, has been held up as a model for Christian comprehensiveness. However, when dealing with other churches and communions on the subject of unity there surfaces a diversity of theological positions that often frustrates mutual understanding.

There is a second difficulty encountered by Anglicans in ecumenical dialogues. Our present communion of 29 independent autonomous provinces grew quite without design. Beginning with the Anglican colonists in America who formed the Episcopal Church in the USA in 1784, most of the provinces came into being as the British Empire expanded throughout the world. Little thought was given to any kind

of interaction, commonality, strategy or mutual responsibility. Lambeth Conferences were unknown until 1867 and even then were considered suspect by some. Each province to this day cherishes its 'right' to live by its own synodical actions, its own unique canons and to develop its own prayer book. No church in history that claims catholicity has ever been so unconnected. Provincial independence has been reasserted at each recent Lambeth Conference. The few voices that do espouse a greater cohesiveness and a modest central authority for resolution of major developments largely go unheard.

The resultant lack of clarity not only makes ecumenical dialogue frustrating, it calls into question the reality of the Anglican Communion as a coherent entity. Without a really common Book of Common Prayer and possibly now without a common ordained ministry, the communion seems to resolve itself by being 'in communion' with the Archbishop of Canterbury and with those bishops receiving invitations to the Lambeth Conference. Even this is challenged. Then there is the nebulous situation of the newly formed (1948) united churches of the Indian continent.

The last two decades of the 20th Century seem to provide an ecumenical opportunity for those who are Episcopalians or Lutherans in the United States of America. It seems a natural courtship. The two churches are part of a loosely federated worldwide community or communion of churches. Both have their origins and major constituency in northern Europe. Both separated from the Roman Catholic Church within twenty years of each other in the 16th century (some Anglican apologia notwithstanding). On a worldwide basis, Anglicans and Lutherans number about the same. Both the Episcopal Church in the USA and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (E.L.C.A.) hold to the centrality of the Bible, the two Gospel Sacraments, the Creeds, and employ nearly identical liturgies. However, the historic ministry of bishops, priests and deacons separates us.

In 1982 the two Churches inaugurated the Agreement on Interim Shared Eucharist which has proven acceptable, it seems, to most in each church. This would not be true if Episcopalians were unable to construe the presence of their priest at the altar as a celebrant or at least a con-celebrant. In order to satisfy Lutheran sensitivities on the nature of the ordained ministry, the agreement does not use the terms 'con-celebrant' or 'co-celebration'. This should give us pause.

Now it is proposed that USA Episcopalians and the E.L.C.A. enter into full communion and provide for the 'interchangeability' of 'ministers', an historic and unprecedented move on the part of both churches. It had been hoped that the proposed agreement would be submitted to the respective governing bodies 'for study' in 1991 and for final

action at a later date. As it stands, the proposed Concordat must be voted up or down. It is not subject to amendment. This of course puts both governing bodies at a disadvantage and in effect makes the negotiating team that drew up the proposed Concordat the final arbiter and judge of its contents, a take-it-or-leave-it document. We should explore how the proposed Concordat conforms to the ARCI-I-agreed statements on the ministry and if this was considered.

Who, if anyone, would not want Episcopalians to deepen ecclesial relations with the Lutherans? But it must be asked, at what price?

It seems that the proposed Concordat would set aside the fourth point of the Lambeth Quadrilateral, the rubrics and ordinal preface in the Book of Common Prayer, and the teaching contained in the ordination section of the canons of the Episcopal Church. By these rules either one is a bishop or one is not. One is a priest or one is not. Furthermore, the ordained ministry is three-fold. It includes deacons. E.L.C.A. Pastors and Synod Presidents (now styled 'bishops') cannot be made something they are not by the majority vote of a General Convention. Nor can the General Convention alter the historic understanding of ordination. It can only set it aside - an action unprecedented in modern times and contrary to the faith of many in the Episcopal Church. This is what is proposed.

Furthermore, by what process will this procedure be 'received' by the 29 provinces of the Anglican Communion? Is any consensus to be sought or do American Episcopalians simply 'do their own thing' once again? Might it be that our lack of success in ecumenical endeavours has produced a certain amount of frustration that causes us to procure success even at this price?

Many Episcopalians, along with the great majority of Christians, still hold to the doctrine of validity when it comes to the Sacraments of the Church. Proper form, proper matter, proper ministers with at least a general proper intention historically have been considered norms. There is no sense of unchurching those without the historic episcopate. Baptism is incorporation into the Body of Christ. Many churches have set up or inaugurated their own ministries. They have that right. Our canons simply require their ordination should they become Episcopalians. Episcopalians have said that we do not have the option of creating our own ordained ministry because ours is an inherited ministry, not our own. Volumes have been written accordingly.

Certain 17th century Church of England bishops accepted without (re)ordination those in presbyterian ministerial ordinances following the Restoration in 1662. Archbishop Bramhill did however (re)ordain such persons¹ and the canons of the Church of England hold that such action is required. The Caroline Divines were generous to those Puritans who wished for Holy Orders, in contrast to those who believed episcopacy incompatible with their theology² or even that it was part of the 'rags of Rome' that still clung to the Church of England, then newly re-established. The *jus divinum* is

modified by 'where it may be had'. One wonders how the Lutherans really feel about the proposed Concordat. Three of the Lutheran participants in the dialogue/drafting group voted against this proposal. They were being consistent with Lutheran belief concerning the ordained ministry.

Now the E.L.C.A. is expressing itself. By a vote of 45 to 12 the Conference of Bishops of the E.L.C.A., in March 1991, recommended that 'no action be taken by the E.L.C.A. until there is agreement that the doctrine and practice of this (Lutheran) church are not compromised', obviously by the historic episcopate. Steps as proposed by the Concordat 'present to the E.L.C.A. confessional matters of fundamental magnitude which require investigation of doctrine and practice,' the bishops went on to say.

To hold that the apostolic episcopate is an Episcopalian structure demonstrates how wide of the mark some perceptions are. Lutherans have maintained a functional understanding of ordination: 'You are what you do.' Ordination is to the one office of Pastor, who may by doing episcopate be styled bishop. This is in contrast to an organic understanding of Holy Orders as clearly defined and accepted, both by Lambeth 1988 and General Convention of 1988, in the ARCI agreement on the Ordained Ministry: 'You do what you are.' The universal belief is that something ontological happens to a person ordained in apostolic succession to a particular order.

This is not to denigrate the obvious faith and worship of the E.L.C.A. as a clearly Christian community. Validity in our eyes must not be linked with efficaciousness³ for others. We must ask, is the intention to do as Christ commanded? Different convictions concerning the nature of the ordained ministry exist, as the dissenting E.L.C.A. bishops clearly witnessed. It is proposed in the Concordat that three or more Episcopalian bishops join the Lutheran bishops in future ordinations of Lutheran bishops and that the reverse be true for future ordination of Episcopal bishops. It is not clear why, in either case. The bestowal of apostolic episcopate is nowhere mentioned in the first instance. ('Stealth' bishops come to mind.) In the second instance one can only assume that the Lutheran bishops join the Episcopal to manifest fraternity. This sends mixed messages. Interestingly, the Augsburg Confession of 1530 acknowledges that the bishops are those to whom 'of necessity the Churches ought by divine right to render obedience.'

It would seem that the Episcopal Church is deceptive about motives. A future Lutheran episcopate may be in apostolic order but no one seems to mention it, let alone teach it as a condition of our coming together. Holy Orders is not a characteristic of the church that we shrink from.

With the Lutherans, the greatest omission would seem to be that no accord or mutual understanding was reached on the nature and authority of the historic episcopate. Much was said about episcopate in the earlier Niagara Report of 1987 and the Cold Ash report of 1988. But episcopate or oversight cannot be equated with the historic episcopate. The historic episcopate subsumes episcopate but the reverse is not true. All churches

have some sort of episcopate or oversight. But the historic episcopate is far more than an organ for governance. This is not always clear to non-episcopal churches. Faith and order should be paramount along with unity in time and place.⁵

Amongst some Episcopalians these days it has become fashionable to 'put down' the tactile succession of bishops and speak denegratingly of the 'pipeline theory.' It has rightly been said that the apostolic episcopate does not guarantee apostolic faith and teaching. Indeed it doesn't, nor does the lack of it demonstrate that there is a more secure source of apostolicity. Obviously the Church requires both the faith and the order of apostolicity. If the E.L.C.A. believes that the Episcopal Church is in error regarding a portion of the apostolic faith, most Episcopalians would welcome correction.

There is ample evidence that the historic episcopate does, in fact, mean something of significance to those Christian communities without it, even in the face of Episcopalians' efforts at accommodation⁶. However, this is poorly demonstrated in any of the proposed liturgies for the mutual recognition of ministries in the several ecumenical schemes, most notable COCU.

To propose a variation from the traditional practice of episcopacy is always to strike at the heart of Anglican self-understanding and to create deep divisions. We call in question the one institution which hitherto all have been able to acknowledge. By what self-definition do we exist as Anglicans if not by the standard of the historic episcopate?

"The historic episcopacy is the only ministry that exists to promote the unity and mutual responsibility of the world wide church. Those churches which lack it have no substitute"⁶.

Notes:

- 1 *The Church of England and Episcopacy*, A.J.Mason, Cambridge 1914
- 2 *The Episcopate and the Reformation*, J.P.Whitney, London 1917
- 3 *Episcopacy and Reunion*, Fairweather and Hettlinger, Mowbrays 1953
- 4 *Religious Value of Sacraments in the Separated Churches*, E.H.Schillebeeckx, Sheed & Ward (Edited)
- 5 *Keeping the Faith*, the Rev'd Dr.Lindbeck (Lutheran), SPCK 1989
- 6 Preface, *Crockfords Clerical Directory*, London 1987.

UPDATE ON THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN IN THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

by Gillian Court

At least twenty-one items have appeared in the *Church Times* since late November last year about the ordination of women. The two longest were feature articles on the death of Florence Li Tim Oi, the first Anglican woman priest, who was ordained 47 years ago, and one entitled "Women Priests: The Australian Saga", about David Perman, the former Archbishop of Melbourne, who was influential in a legal struggle over women's ordination in the Australian Anglican Church.

Florence Li Tim Oi, a Chinese woman, was ordained a priest in mainland China on 25th January 1944 by Ronald Hall, Bishop of Hong Kong, in whose diocese she was serving. She was a deaconess who had already been given permission to celebrate the holy communion when her congregation was cut off from any priest or bishop during the war. Bishop Hall wrote on 27th January to the then Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple:

Bishop Mok authorised her to celebrate the holy communion in order that a congregation of nearly 100 communicants might have regular sacramental worship. I have confirmed this... and have informed all brother bishops of the SKH (the Chinese Church) that if I got a chance of meeting her I would ordain her priest - as that seemed to me less essentially irregular than that someone not in priests' orders celebrate the holy communion.

William Temple, who said in a letter to the editor of *Church Times* that he disapproved of the ordination even as an emergency measure and that he was personally strongly opposed to the ordination of women to the priesthood, nevertheless concluded the letter with these words:

If we could find any shadow of theological grounds for the non-ordination of women, I should be immensely comforted, but such arguments as I have heard on that line seem to me quite desparately futile. I was once horrified to hear Walter Frere make the case from the supposed masculinity of God!

The Chinese bishops repudiated Florence's ordination in 1946 at their first meeting after their release from internment by the Japanese. The 1948 Lambeth Conference rejected a motion from the Hong Kong diocesan synod asking for an experimental period of 20 years in which deaconesses might be ordained to the priesthood. Florence's priesting was not regularised until 1970. When she was invited to celebrate the 40th anniversary of her priesting in Westminster Abbey, a dozen bishops, headed by Lord Coggan, a former Archbishop of Canterbury, were among those who attended the service. Florence died in Toronto earlier this year.

In 1986 there was a bomb threat at Melbourne Cathedral when

8 women were ordained deacon and the service was delayed by one hour as a result. Archbishop Penman, who died in 1989, spearheaded intensive legal discussions to prepare for the ordination of women. This year two Australian Bishops seeking to ordain women to the priesthood have been involved in appeals to the civil legal authorities to prevent them from doing so.

In February the Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn was prevented from ordaining women to the priesthood by an injunction by the Supreme Court in New South Wales. A similar injunction failed in the Supreme Court of Western Australia, which had sought to prevent the Archbishop of Perth from ordaining ten women priests. The ordinations took place on 7th March. Writs were subsequently served on the women from the New South Wales Court of Appeal but it is unlikely they will take part in the proceedings.

The Archbishop in his sermon at the ordination said:

Today we ordain ten, but we liberate tens of thousands from the stereotypes with which they have been bound...

The Church today positively needs the contribution of women in all aspects of its life.

Six bishops in Australia, headed by the Archbishop of Sydney, have written to other Bishops expressing 'dismay and regret' over the Perth ordinations.

Of the 33 provinces and member churches within Anglicanism, 15 now ordain women as deacons and 14 ordain women priests. The figure includes provinces where individual dioceses have acted on their own. There are now over 1300 women priests in the Anglican Communion: in the USA, Canada, Australia, Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, Brazil, Burundi, Hong Kong/Macao, Ireland, Kenya, India, Philippines, Uganda and West Africa. Tasmania has passed legislation to ordain women as priests and called on the Bishop to 'ordain them as soon as he believes right to do so.'

The Church of England, which has the second highest number of women deacons, will be debating legislation for the ordination of women as priests in July and November of this year. If it is passed and goes smoothly through all the procedures required by Church and Parliament (because of the Established status of the Church of England) women could be ordained priest in the Church of England late in 1993. If it is not passed, the business cannot be considered again by the General Synod until 1995.

The Anglican Communion now has three women bishops - a diocesan bishop in New Zealand and two suffragan bishops in the USA. On 4th April Maria Jepsen was elected the Bishop of Hamburg in the North Elbian Evangelical Lutheran Church. She is the first woman to be chosen as a Lutheran bishop. Peter Beyerhaus, director of the Institute for Missiology and Ecumenical Theology in the University of Tübingen called her election 'one of the greatest spiritual catastrophies to strike the Evangelical Church of Germany in recent years.' On 12th July, April Ulring Larson became the first woman to be elected bishop in the Evangelical Church in America.

A recent survey of clergy and rural parishioners in five dioceses of the Church of England indicated that 90% of the men and 96% of the women questioned said they would take communion from a woman priest, and 89% of both sexes said they would be happy to be married by a woman priest. The two questions were also asked of occasional church attenders, attenders at festivals only and those who never go to church. The percentage of those who would accept women priests was over 80% in every case but one - of those who never attended church 78% said they would be happy to be married by a woman priest.

(Acknowledgement is given to the Church Times, from which much of the above copy is taken verbatim.)

Opinions expressed in *The Window* are not necessarily those of the Anglican-Lutheran Society. Readers' views are always welcome.

THE ANGLO-SCANDINAVIAN PASTORAL CONFERENCE MEETS IN ICELAND

by Brian Coleman

For most of us, Iceland is an unknown land, 'ultima Thule', somewhere near the Arctic Circle. We have heard of its geysers, glaciers and volcanoes, it appears briefly in world news with the Cod War and the Reagan-Gorbachev Summit, and is then forgotten. Though it is the second largest island in Europe, it has a population of only just over 200,000 and most of the land is uninhabited and uninhabitable.

Similarly, the Icelandic Church is not well known, even though Christianity reached Iceland in the ninth century and was officially adopted as the state religion in the year 1000, by decree of the Althing, the ancient Icelandic parliament, far older than the British 'Mother of Parliaments'.

It was therefore a great delight and privilege when I was invited to be one of eight Anglican delegates, led by Bishop David Tustin, to the biennial Anglo-Scandinavian Pastoral Conference, which this year was held in Iceland. As well as the Icelandic representatives, there were delegates from Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland representing the Lutheran churches of the Nordic countries. We spent three days in Reykjavik, conferring at the Cathedral Community House, and three days out at Skalholt in the hills, the place from which Christianity spread to the rest of the island and the seat of its ancient bishops. In many ways, it reminded me of Iona. A fine Cathedral has been built on the site of the ancient one, there is a Conference Centre and little else save the beauty of nature, the cry of the birds, the rustling of the wind in the grass, the bleating of distant sheep, the far-off glimpse of the snow-covered cap of Hekla, the volcano once thought to be the entrance to Hell.

The programme was a very full one, with a good balance between lectures, discussions and sight-seeing. Iceland is a close-knit community, and it was no surprise to discover at the Government reception we were given that the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs was also the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Fisheries, nor that our guide, himself a pastor with a special ministry in Reykjavik and an ex-policeman, seemed to have relatives in every cluster of homesteads that we passed. We were particularly indebted to the Rev Jon Baldvinsson, Chaplain to the Icelandic Embassy in London, and to Dr Bjorn Bjornsson, of the University of Reykjavik, for arranging the programme.

We concluded on Sunday morning with a service in Reykjavik Cathedral, which sounded like Anglican Rite A translated into Icelandic, in which the celebrant wore a chasuble and the traditional ruff, and which ended with an Icelandic version of 'Rock of Ages'. Bishop David conveyed greetings in Icelandic and then preached in English, which most Icelanders can speak fluently.

Other memories? A woman pastor in a southern fishing village telling us most movingly about her ministry after a fishing disaster at the entrance to the harbour had robbed seven young men of their lives; and another, a pastor in a double sense, with a human flock of 600 and a sheep-farm of about the same number, reminding us 'In this community, two things are necessary - to be close to the people in every aspect of their lives, and to do a good funeral.'

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