

The Window

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THE ANGLICAN-LUTHERAN SOCIETY

Issue No. 106

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ANNUAL MEETING HAS PILGRIMAGE THEME



'When April with his showers sweet with fruit the drought of March has pierced unto the root and bathed each vein with liquor that has power to generate therein and sire the flower ... then do folk long to go on pilgrimage, and palmers to go seeking out strange strands, to distant shrines well known in sundry lands.' So begins Geoffrey Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales', and whilst it may only be March and not April, we hope that all the Society's members will want to go on pilgrimage to our

Annual General Meeting

from 10am to 3.30pm on

Saturday 7th March 2015

at the Church of

St George the Martyr

Borough High Street, London SE1 1JA

The theme will be 'Pilgrimage' and we are fortunate to have Bishop Martin Lind (pictured here) as our keynote speaker. He sees pilgrimage as significant in a Christian understanding of the spiritual life, and has experience of many different kinds of pilgrimage. You can read his introduction to the topic on page 3.

But we will not just be talking about it. The day will begin with a 'Mini-Pilgrimage' arranged by Bishop Michael Igrave. Southwark is an area full of historic interest. For many hundreds of years it has been associated with pilgrims and pilgrimage. Chaucer's Canterbury pilgrims started from the Tabard Inn which stood just up the road from the church where we shall be meeting. People for whom a brisk 75 minute walk might be impractical will be able to share the experience back in the church, so no-one will be left out.



The Annual General Meeting itself will be of particular importance this time as the Executive Committee members have completed their term of office and a new committee has to be elected to guide our Society through the next three years. So do please be sure to attend. The programme is as follows:

- 10.00 Registration with tea and coffee
- 10.30 The 'Mini-Pilgrimage'
- 11.45 The Annual Meeting and Elections
- 12.30 Lunch
- 13.30 Bishop Martin Lind with questions
- 14.30 Discussion
- 15.30 Tea and Depart

The church stands just opposite Borough tube station (on the Northern Line). The cost of the day will be just £20 for members (£25 for non-members) which includes lunch and all refreshments. If you have any issues you would like to be raised at the meeting please contact the Secretary, dick@ccwatford.u-net.com. It would also help the caterers if you would tell Helen Harding if you intend coming: harding232@gmail.com or phone 0044 (0)1626 852677.

NORWAY'S ALS COORDINATOR IS SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL'S FIRST ECUMENICAL CANON

The Rt Rev Christopher Chessun, the Bishop of Southwark Diocese in the Church of England, has recently announced that he would be making the Rev Canon Jacob Knudsen Southwark Cathedral's first Ecumenical Canon with effect from Advent Sunday, 30th November, 2014. Jacob is Sub-Dean of St Olav's Cathedral, Bergen, Norway,

The Dean of Southwark, the Very Revd Andrew Nunn, is visiting Bergen early in January to complete the process of Installation. Canon Knudsen is unable to be installed in Southwark Cathedral, as would usually happen, because he is suffering from ill health.

An Ecumenical Canon is a minister or a lay person in a Church or denomination which is in communion with the Church of England. They must either live or work within the Diocese of Southwark, or be active in an ecclesias-

tical institution in another country with which the Cathedral has, or intends to have, a close relationship.

So Jacob fulfils all the qualifications. Southwark and Bergen Cathedrals have been formally linked since October 2000 and he, on behalf of the clergy and people of Bergen Cathedral, has ensured the continuing life and development of the link. With his wife, Karen, he has become a very good friend of many people in Southwark.

The Dean and Chapter are delighted to welcome this appointment and can think of no better person to be the Cathedral's first Ecumenical Canon.



And neither can we! We offer Jacob our sincerest congratulations! Please remember him and Karen in your prayers as they both courageously cope with the anxieties and frustrations caused by his illness.



CHRISTIANS MUST NOT LOSE HEART

In his Christmas message from Bethlehem, Bishop Munib Younan, President of the Lutheran World Federation, regretted that so many things are happening in the world that prompt people to ask "Where is God today?" He went on to catalogue some of the extremism and the atrocities that have captured

the headlines recently, the kidnappings, murders, disease and natural catastrophes.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, in his Christmas message to Church Leaders around the world, referred to the massacre of the innocent children in Bethlehem. 'The deceit and cruelty of governments and rulers has not changed in the 2000 years since King Herod,' he wrote. Many Christians are being uprooted, harried, hunted, and tortured, he went on. They have seen their livelihoods, their futures destroyed.'

Both Leaders are all too aware that millions of others are suffering too. The scourge of Ebola is afflicting people in West Africa, and immense economic poverty continues to spoil the lives and diminish the dignity of human beings in almost every corner of the world.

However, both Church leaders remain optimistic. Even if people do feel that God no longer has a place in our world, God is actually present here with us. God has been made flesh. He was born in Bethlehem. 'So when I heard that Malala Yousafzai had been selected to receive the Nobel Peace Prize,' wrote Bishop Munib, 'I felt a sense that God was still working in this world. A survivor of violent hatred, her adversity has made her into a tireless promoter of education and gender justice, a combination many parts of the world badly need today.'

The Good News proclaimed by the angels to the shepherds in the fields centuries ago still rings true: "God is with us today." Christians must not lose heart. 'Let the humility of the child Jesus draw us afresh into humble love towards one another,' wrote Archbishop Justin. 'We must be willing to die to our preferences and privileges, so that the people of God may live and reflect the unity in trinity of the God who held nothing back, not even his own Son. Let us love the world as he loved it, so that the world may know that he is indeed "God with us".'



PILGRIMAGE – IN OUR TIME

The Rt Rev Martin Lind, Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain and our keynote speaker at the Society's AGM, offers this reflection to help us prepare for our journey to Southwark on 7th March.

At the time of the Reformation pilgrimages were forbidden. For us this may be difficult to understand. But the more we know about medieval pilgrimages, the more we can perhaps sympathise with the hesitation there was about pilgrimages in those days. Often pilgrimages were misused in most remarkable ways!

But what of today? What of our own times? Well, in recent years there has been a great deal of talking about pilgrimages, and of speaking of ourselves as pilgrims, but very few of us have actually been walking!

Is it necessary to walk? Is it not enough to preach about it, talk about it, and reflect upon it? Will actually walking add another dimension? Is there another kind of spiritual experience to be had in actually walking from one place to another? How might that experience be described?

In my view such walking provides a summary of my life. By that I mean that every pilgrimage helps me to come closer to my own life, to my own personal identity, and to my own spiritual centre. Who am I? This is a relevant question in every pilgrimage.

In the Bible there are many examples of pilgrimages. One of the most interesting is the story of the two disciples walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus on Easter day (Luke 24). In some traditions it is presumed that the two disciples were a man and a woman. From the Bible text we only know the name of one of the disciples, the man Cleopas (Luke 24, 18). Maybe the other is Mary, the wife of Cleopas (John 19, 25). If it were a man and a woman, it will give the story an inclusive flavour.

Anyway, they were walking. Soon a companion joined them whom they did not recognise, but we know that this man was Jesus. His first question was, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' This is of utmost importance. He does not start preaching. He does not start interpreting the scriptures. He starts with their situation. He is genuinely interested in them, in their life, and in what is engaging them in that moment.

This is not just a very stimulating model for adult Christian education, challenging all



those preachers who start to talk about Jesus and the Bible without knowing to whom they are talking. It is also a liberating word to all of us who want to set out on a pilgrimage. The first question is never religious. It focuses first and foremost on our life, on what we are doing.

The Emmaus story tells us that this was the first question Jesus asked. We may reflect further and think that this ought to be the first question for us as pilgrims. Who am I? What about my life? What are the strong points and what are the weaknesses in the life I am living?

After this contextualised start, Jesus can really explain the Biblical story and the Christian faith. It all ends up with the holy meal. The meal is intimately part of the faith. And it is only in the holy meal that the disciples discover the identity of their Master.

Every pilgrimage is an attempt to underline the truth that human beings belong to the creation, to the Christian faith, to the holy meal, and to the future. In our individual and shared pilgrimages we walk into the future, which is both unknown and uncontrollable. As we walk along we may meet the Saviour on the road. We may believe that he is in that future, waiting for us. Indeed, we may believe that he is our future.



CHURCHES EXPERIENCE CHANGE OF MINDSET

In the Anglican Journal last September Murray MacAdam wrote about the experience of Anglican and Lutheran congregations in Peterborough, Ontario, Canada. It is an example of what can happen when Churches in a covenant relationship engage in some 'blue-sky-thinking'.



Photo: Murray MacAdam

Faced with dwindling congregations housed in large, costly buildings, is there another way for parishes to forge new ways of working together that build unity, share resources and present a different image of church to society?

Two years ago an Area Bishop in Toronto, the Rt Rev Linda Nicholls, recognised that churches in Peterborough, Ontario, were facing a real challenge. Church attendances had halved over the past 20 years, and the congregations in five local churches were feeling the pinch. So the Bishop encouraged them to explore new ways of working together and meeting community needs. 'Our challenge is not first about money or buildings,' she said, 'Our challenge is how we continue to be that witness to Christ in ways that are sustainable, best using the resources we have.'

After much prayer and discussion a covenant was signed in May 2014 in which four Anglican parishes - All Saints', St Barnabas', St Luke's and St John's - and Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church, pledged to work together. A council of clergy and parishioners from the five congregations was set up to manage the project.

Each parish and congregation retains its own identity and worships in its own building, but a great deal is being done together. For example, the clergy meet regularly for prayer and discussion, a study group on the psalms moves from church to church with shared leadership, and there are joint worship services. Together, the congregations are looking at ways of sponsoring refugee families, and working groups have been set up to focus on such topics as family ministry, education and training, health and communications.

Last September nearly 300 members of the five congregations gathered for a special service. It started by encouraging people to talk to someone they didn't know as a way of building community, and during the service a team of Biblical storytellers recounted the core elements of Christian faith in dramatic fashion.

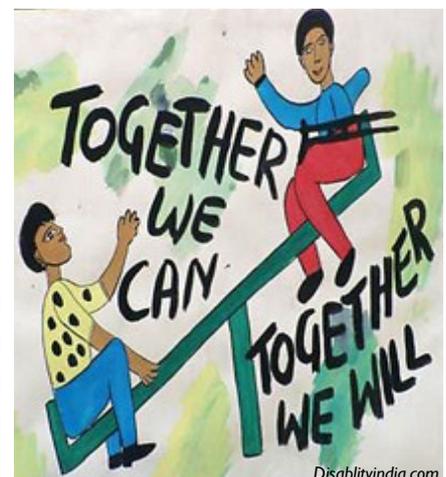
Already the experiment is bearing fruit. Aspects of administration are being managed in a more cost-effective way, and together they can do things they could not manage alone. For example, a special events choir, the Covenant Choir, made up of 28 members from the five congregations, has

already assisted at several funerals at three different churches. Through covenant meetings, lay members have become acquainted with people from other congregations, and friendships have developed as a result.

But most significantly there has been a change in mind-set. Canon Gordon Finney, incumbent of St John's, Peterborough, says, 'When faced by an issue our first impulse now is to co-operate, to ask ourselves, "Is this something we can do with other parishes?"' That is not always easy. Everyone has to trust everyone else and be ready and willing to let go of old habits. And a major issue will be how to deal with five big sets of church buildings.

Despite the challenges, the Rev Geoff Howson, incumbent of All Saints', regards the Covenant as a bold effort by local Anglicans and Lutherans to move from a maintenance model to a missional model of ministry. 'We're in for the long haul to make this thing work,' he says.

The Rev Scott Schellenberger, Pastor of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church, agrees. 'We were welcomed into the Covenant with open arms and accepted the invitation quickly,' he says. 'We have shared in worship experiences and scripture study, and the doors are opening to so much more. I am very excited about the way the Spirit is moving us.'



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RECONCILIATION IS THEME FOR ACTS OF REMEMBRANCE

Caren Braun, Press and Public Relations Officer for the Evangelische Kirche in Aachen, and Pastor Christa Hunzinger, Coordinator of European links in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Northern Germany, told Dick Lewis about two services held on 11th November 2014



The German Colour Party (left) standing with officers and men from the Yorkshire Regiment next to veterans in the Royal British Legion

History was made in Halifax, West Yorkshire, UK when, for the first time, a German delegation took part in the town's Remembrance Day observance. At the invitation of Canon Hilary Barber of Halifax Minster and the Mayor of Calderdale, and with the full backing of both the British and German governments and the Royal British Legion, a colour party of soldiers from the German Ministry of Defence local garrison in Aachen marched in the Remembrance Day procession alongside their counterparts in the Yorkshire Regiment and laid a wreath of poppies during the ceremony at the Cenotaph. Representatives of the of the *Evangelische Kirche im Rheinland* (the Rhenish Church), the city of Aachen and the German Consulate, together with the people of Calderdale, also laid their wreaths and together the two communities mourned the loss of so many lives on both sides during the two terrible World Wars that were inflicted on Britain by Germany.

Canon Barber feels that this step has been long overdue and is something that should have happened many years ago. 'Whilst it is never the time to forget, it is now the time to seek healing and reconciliation,' he said. 'After more than 65 years of friendship and relative peace across Europe it now seemed appropriate to come together and reflect on the evils of war and the loss of life on both sides.'

For the British and the German participants, the joint procession, the Act of Remembrance at the Cenotaph and the service inside Halifax Minster were all very emotional experiences. Caren Braun noticed that quite a few people had tears in their eyes as they listened to German Lutheran Pfarrer Jens-Peter Bentzin's sermon.

After thanking the people of Halifax for their invitation, Pastor Bentzin took the story of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4.1-16) as his text. He spoke movingly of the horror unleashed by the German invasion of Belgium in 1914 and of the fact that many in the German Churches, far from warning against it, welcomed the war and described it as 'God's divine service'.

'It was a failure of the Church, theology, civilization and culture of my own country,' he confessed. 'And we lament our failure to prevent what happened 25 years later in an even more brutal form, with an even greater contempt for human life. In World War II there was more criminal energy. There was the Blitz, tyranny, terror, genocide - and the horror of the Shoah [holocaust].'

He had been deeply moved, he went on, by the generosity of the people of Halifax for reaching out to the residents of Aachen in a spirit of reconciliation. 'We humbly embrace this gift,' he said, 'and in a spirit of friendship and joint lamentation we mourn the very sad loss of young and hope-filled life on both sides of the trenches.'



Turning to the scriptures he described Cain as 'a man of action who believes he can do what he wants.' He is the kind of man who has to come out on top. Frustrated at God's incomprehensible rejection he reacts completely irrationally, not against God, who inflicted his defeat, but against his innocent brother Abel. 'Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.'

'And this is how Cain rode gladly westwards from Aachen,' Pastor Bentzin continued, 'and Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him, in Liège, in Mons, in Ypres, at the Marne, the Somme, the Isonzo, in Verdun, Gallipoli, Galicia, Serbia, Mesopotamia, Palestine.'

And what of Abel? His name can be translated "triviality" and "frailty". As the younger brother he always played second fiddle, he always drew the short straw. 'He is the perfect example of the "easy victim",' Pastor Bentzin told his listeners, 'It comes as no surprise that he lost the fight for his life.'

Cain was certain that God would take the side of the strongest and fittest. But God decided differently. He took the side of the weak. God felt closer to Abel than he did to Cain.



'On the belt buckles of the German soldiers who marched into Belgium was embossed "Gott mit uns!" – "God for us!"' Pastor Bentzin told his congregation. 'It seems to me that whenever we

misuse God for our own needs and say "God is for us and against them", we abruptly change into Cain, the first murderer, and we hear God's question: Where is Abel your brother?'

We all of us carry the mark of Cain, Pastor Bentzin suggested, and we can see it in our handicaps and shortcomings, in our swift resort to violence, in trying to find simplistic solutions to conflicts, and in our unwillingness to speak out about true values and the right to life. Most of all we see it in our inability to love.

He quoted St John's first epistle, 1.11; "For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of the wicked one, and slew his brother."

We should always love, because God loves us so much that, 2000 years ago, he gave his only Son. That event, that first Christmas, speaks so powerfully that it even brought a temporary halt to hostilities during the first year of the conflict. Pastor Bentzin reminded his listeners of the 'Christmas Truce' on Christmas Eve, 1914, of the singing of "Stille Nacht", and of soldiers on both sides meeting in no-man's land.

'Cain and Abel were meeting together on the soil where the voice of the blood of their countless brothers still cried out to God! A miracle had happened!' he exclaimed, 'Just a few fragile and precious hours, perhaps days, and only just the once. But the real miracle is that every one of us can lessen the unjust suffering in the world. The more we do this the more this miracle will happen, and the more our faces will lose Cain's features and resemble more and more those of Abel, and we shall see each other as God sees and accepts us.'

Many came up to thank him afterwards, and Pfarrer Bentzin found it a very moving experience. 'It was a once in a lifetime experience to preach to nearly 1000 listeners in the Minster,' he said. 'The warmth and hospitality we received from the Halifax people has really blown us away.'

Regular readers of *The Window* will know that the parish of Halifax Minster in the Church of England and the *Kirchenkreis Aachen* of the EKIR have maintained a partnership for several years now, and the two cities have officially been twinned since the late 1970s.

Another service is 'act of reconciliation'

While Pastor Bentzin was preaching in Halifax Minster another German Pastor was giving the sermon in St Luke's Church in Ferryhill in the North-East of England. The Rev Christa Hunzinger (right) had been invited to take part in their Remembrance Service by the Vicar, the Rev Keith Lumsdon (left). For more than 20 years the congregation at St Luke's has been involved in a partnership between the Anglican Diocese of Durham and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northern Germany, and the two ministers have become good friends.

'I was grateful to be invited to preach at St Luke's in Ferryhill - it is not something to be taken for granted that a German should be able to preach, someone from a former enemy,' said Pastor Hunzinger. Like Pastor Bentzin she referred to the Christmas truce of 1914, but this time as it was told in the film "Merry Christmas". 'It really is a beautiful symbol for working for reconciliation,' she said. 'A German opera singer, Nikolaus Sprinks, starts to sing for his comrades, "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht", and then, suddenly, a



Photo: Keith Blundy

ANOTHER CANADIAN FOR KEY ANGLICAN POST

In March 2015 Canon John Gibaut (*left*), the Director of the World Council of Churches Commission on Faith and Order for the past seven years, will replace Canon Alyson Barnett-Cowan (*right*) as Director of Unity, Faith and Order in the Anglican Communion. His Department is responsible for promoting and participating in dialogue with other denominations and expressions of Christianity, and in recent years it has also come to deal with some of the internal tensions inside the Anglican Communion.

Like his predecessor, Canon Gibaut is Canadian. 'I think John is incredibly well-suited to his new role for all sorts of reasons,' commented Archdeacon Bruce Myers, Co-ordinator for Ecumenical Relations for the Anglican Church of Canada's General Synod. 'He's spent the last seven years as an agent of reconciliation within the ecumenical movement, working with literally dozens of different churches and expressions of Christianity trying to find theological solutions to some of our historical divisions.'

Canon Gibaut is passionate about ecumenism. 'This is the witness that the world needs. Communion is a gift by which the Church lives, but at the same time it is the gift that God calls it to offer to a divided and wounded humanity. So you and I can disagree



sharply on an issue ... but still, I am in communion with you, and nothing can shake that. That is the witness that the world needs today from the Church.'

His understanding of communion will certainly be important for the global Anglican Church. It continues to struggle with the question of how Christians who disagree on certain

theological issues should relate to each other. But, as Archbishop Fred Hiltz of the Anglican Church of Canada points out, Canon Gibaut is prepared for the challenges of the position. 'He's coming in with eyes wide open, and he's bringing a brilliant mind and a huge heart for the communion. I think we're going to be incredibly well served,' he said.

Photo: Bruce Myers

continued from previous page

bagpipe from the other side accompanies him. Nikolaus sees this as an invitation and he jumps out of his dugout into the open space between the front lines. He is totally vulnerable as he stands there singing about the dawn of redeeming grace. Working for reconciliation will never be a safe and comfortable thing. We have to leave the dugouts and the comfort zones we have built around us and have the courage to take a dangerous step - without a safety net. The hand we reach out towards our "enemy" can be refused.'

Keith Lumsdon invited her to join him in receiving the wreaths of poppies and the flags, and placing them near the altar. 'This was the first time in my life that I held a flag in a church. Our history has made me very suspicious of flags. In Nazi times there was a terrible misuse of flags. German Christians even placed the flag with its swastika (*Hakenkreuz*) next to the altar.'

At the ceremony at the cenotaph many people from all

kinds of different groups placed wreaths with poppies, and Pastor Hunzinger noted how all sections of Ferryhill society took part in the Remembrance Service; young and old, representatives of the government, of the fire brigades and the military forces, as well as youth groups and children. 'We no longer have this in Germany,' she commented. 'I was surprised that, over this weekend, everyone wore poppies - even the judges and dancers in their beautiful gowns on TV's "Strictly Come Dancing" show.'

'In Ferryhill I learnt a lot about English traditions,' she concluded, 'and ways to remember the victims of the war - and by this I also learnt to look at our own traditions of remembrance from a new perspective. I am very thankful that I was invited to come to Ferryhill to share what we have, what we love and what we mourn, and to share our faith.'

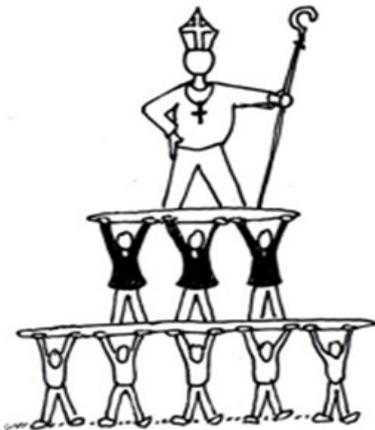
Keith Lumsdon is convinced that it was the right thing to do. 'I see it as a wonderful act of reconciliation,' he said.

A DIFFERENT WAY OF BEING CHURCH

Our Editor, Dick Lewis, on how 'congregations' might become 'mission communities'

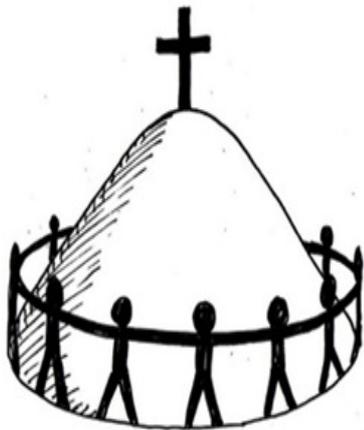
Introduction

Our Churches are living through times of great change, and the pace of change is ever increasing. People may be resistant to change, but it is happening whether they like it or not. All over the world ministers and their congregations are trying to keep up, but many are finding it hard to cope. Every day there seem to be new challenges to face. During a recent visit to Canada the Archdeacon of the Anglican Diocese of North Queensland, Australia, the Venerable Chris Wright, said, 'I think that in the next 20 years the Church is going to be so different from what we have now, we perhaps won't recognize it. We will still have bishops and we will still have clergy, but we will do things in different ways and we will be a more community-based body of Christ.'



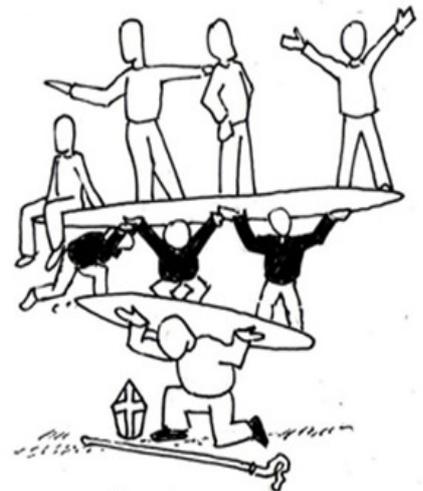
Top-down

model'. The minister or leadership team is regarded as bottom of a pyramid. Their task is to equip, encourage and support the 'front line troops', the people who are doing the real work of the Church in the world - the lay members.



Christ-as-Head

One of the implications of what he said is that the ways in which Churches understand ministry, and how ministry is to be exercised, may change. Probably the most common model of ministry found in the Church of England, to which I belong, and possibly in other Churches in the western world today, is the 'top-down' model. A single minister or leadership team spearheads the mission of the local church. Who these people are, and what they are called, depends on the Church's tradition but these are the people responsible for proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of God, teaching, baptising, and nurturing new believers. The task of the 'ordinary' lay members is to support their leaders and pray for them and the work they do as representatives of the whole Church. The leaders can call on their members for help when it is needed in providing pastoral care, perhaps, or in establishing a Christian presence in the various groups to which they belong.



Bottom-up

A second model, one that has come more to the fore in recent times, is the 'bottom-up

But a third model is emerging. This model sees Christ as the head of the Church. It is his mission and ministry in which all his followers are engaged, whether they are ordained or lay, and whether they are members of a leadership team or not. People all have their own particular gifts and calling. They all have their part to play. Everyone is called to some kind of practical service. For some this may involve being set aside for specific ministries like visiting, preaching or sacramental ministry. But their roles do not convey status or power. They are understood to be different but complementary and essential aspects of membership of the Body of Christ. Each member is called to be, and to recognise themselves as, a minister, and to share leadership with the whole community.

At our conference in Hungary last September, in their session entitled 'Involving the Laity', Dr Roy Long (Lutheran) and Dr Robin Greenwood (Anglican) both touched on this third model. I hope you have read their presentations. They can be found via the home page on the Society's website.

'Each Christian community is a unique and distinct commonwealth, in which individuals share their individual gifts and talents for the well-being of all,' Dr Long reminded us. 'St Paul gives us a beautiful picture of this in his first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 12. The Holy Spirit has called men and women to faith, so that they can say that "Jesus is the Lord", and they are each endowed with particular gifts; wise speech, putting the deepest knowledge into words, healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, and so on.' He went on to wonder if the Church's ministry has become so over-professionalised that the gifts given to lay men and women, whether or not they are accredited ministers, are frequently overlooked and undervalued.

Dr Greenwood felt that this was indeed the case. 'Facing up to ways in which the Church has degenerated into a clerical hierarchy is a stimulant for rediscovering its character as an organic body of integral parts,' he said. 'There are leaders who, recognizing this as a time of dissolution for failing systems, are trusting the capacity of dedicated and aware laity to self-organize, reflect on what they are discovering and choose to be part of a process of change. But they need far more support from the wider Church than is recognized currently. It takes great courage and motivation not to conform to old expectations.'

Support for this process of change is slowly beginning to appear in the wider Church. In many parts of the world strenuous efforts are being made to involve lay men and women in the everyday life of congregations and in the mission and ministry of local churches. Local Shared Ministry schemes, as they are sometimes called, are being set up in places as far apart as New Zealand and the USA, Britain, Canada and Australia. Every member of the congregation is encouraged to see themselves as part of a ministering community. In other words, lay and ordained people are encouraged and expected to work together as fellow disciples. All are members, all are ministers, and all are leaders.

Local Shared Ministry is not about filling the gaps left because there may be fewer paid or stipendiary ministers, though it has to be admitted that this is sometimes a strong motivating factor. It is much more about discovering a different way of being Church. However, to bring about change as radical as this is no easy task.

What are the obstacles to lay involvement?

Like Archdeacon Chris Wright, I believe that bishops and clergy (or their denominational equivalents) will continue to have their proper place within the life, mission and ministry of the Church. But having spent more than twenty years of my ministry helping to enable and train lay people as ministers, I have come to the realisation that the culture of the Church of England, the Church I know best, and the self-understanding of many of the ordained ministers, are real obstacles to lay involvement. In many parishes, for example, it is assumed that a team must be led by an ordained person. What is not understood, however, is that many ordained ministers, especially those who, like me, have spent most of their working lives in the Church, are not necessarily well-equipped to be collaborative leaders because the model of ministry with which they are most familiar is 'delegation' rather than 'partnership'.



'I like things to be done my way - but by somebody else!'

'Delegation' is not necessarily a good management model. In business, for example, the owners of enterprises, or their chief executives, may surround themselves with subordinates. These will be people chosen for their ability to run parts of the business, but the proprietors or chief executives still jealously guard their own position. Final authority rests with them, and they may be reluctant to include among their subordinates anyone who might rival their executive power. This is the kind of 'minister-plus-assistants' model that is very familiar in many Church of England parishes. There are parishes that have moved towards a 'minister-with-team' model. But where that happens all too often the 'team members' simply have tasks delegated to them, and are expected to refer most decisions back to the minister for approval.

There is another kind of model found in business settings. It has a number of people in the same line of business combining to create a larger, more influential unit. The leader is a chairman, not a chief executive, someone whose skills are not in taking decisions but rather in pulling together the work of a group of competent yet independent people, without trying to force them into a common mould. The chairman provides help rather than supervision, and people are expected to make mistakes and learn from them as they move the enterprise forward together.

Local Shared Ministry schemes depend much more on this second model than the first, but many of the Anglican and Lutheran ordained ministers I know seem most at home with the first. Twenty years ago Canon Robert Warren wrote, 'If new structures for the mission of the Church are to emerge there will need to be a matching change in the Church's understanding and practice of leadership within the ordained ministry.' (*A Time for Sharing: Collaborative Ministry in Mission*, 1995, Board of Mission of the General Synod of the Church of England)



Twenty years later I can see only very few signs that theological education and training for ministry, ordained and lay, is embracing such new understandings, or that clergy and congregations are being encouraged to shape up to them.

What kind of ordained ministers does local shared ministry need?



Canon Warren offered an interesting way of thinking about parish ministry. The one person in an orchestra who does not play an instrument, he said, is the conductor. The conductor directs the efforts of a group of talented players with a wide variety of different musical instruments so that the music they make together is as close as possible to what the composer intended. In a similar way, he suggested, a minister should identify the gifts of the members of the local congregation and harmonise their individual (and sometimes idiosyncratic) contributions to conform to the will of God. 'For this to happen,' he wrote, 'the ordained minister will need to affirm, train and support such gifts as well as, where necessary, confronting the hidden power agenda that may be shaping what is going on.'

This is a useful illustration. But it assumes the conductor to be a minister. All too easily we can overlook the fact that lay people also have a role in affirming, training and supporting the ordained ministers' gifts as they evolve through time. To use a different musical analogy, local shared ministry might be something akin to playing in a jazz band in which every player in turn, including the 'leader', offers their own improvisation on the shared theme according to their particular ability, instrument and insight.

However, this kind of approach can only work if all the ministers, including the ordained, are 'enablers', people who are able to take a step backwards and encourage and help other people to 'do it themselves'. All too frequently, in many aspects of life today, the professional classes take power and decision-making away from people. Clearly, the Church should never behave in such a disabling way because Christians believe that God has given everyone gifts to use in his service. This kind of thinking might make some ordained ministers feel rather insecure. If it does, they will need to own up to it and deal with it if they want to become effective 'enablers'. Enabling the laity to shape both their own ministry and that of their clergy and ministers requires both courage and humility. Above all, if they are to function effectively in communities in which all can be ministers and all can be leaders, ordained and accredited ministers will need to be open to change.



What kind of lay people does local shared ministry need?



Shared Ministry involves a new understanding of what it is to be 'Church'. Instead of seeing themselves simply as the 'minister's support troops', lay members of a congregation will be the kind of people who encourage each other to see themselves as belonging to an effective 'ministering community'. They will recognise that between them they have a huge variety of gifts and abilities. They will begin to identify and test out the particular kinds of ministry to which each person may be being called. They will look to the Holy Spirit to release resources that can all too easily remain locked up within the congregation.

Local shared ministry needs people willing to work together in a collaborative and non-competitive way. Some may have gifts and experience in pastoral care, for example, or may be called to be preachers or teachers, while others will be equipped to engage in practical, diaconal work. There may be some people being called to some accredited lay ministry or to the priesthood. The process of discernment will be complex, so the laity will look to the wider Church to assist them with it. Those who are called to preaching or priesthood may be required to go through the selection and training schemes chosen by their denomination, while others may need to undergo education and training programmes organised locally to help them develop their particular gifts and skills.

Local Shared Ministry is not about turning lay people into mini-ministers. It is about recognising how Jesus calls everyone to follow him, to share in his continuing ministry in the world and, in different circumstances and at different times, to use their gifts to serve him in a variety of ways. It is about providing regular opportunities for people, both ordained and lay, to

explore new ministries, and for the whole worshipping community to meet the challenge of discovering how God may be calling each member at any particular time. This may well be difficult for the institutional Churches because, instead of slotting people into the Churches' ministerial and organisational boxes, they may need to be much more adaptable in deploying the human resources at their disposal, responding to changing needs and circumstances as they arise. Shared Ministry should certainly not be regarded as a threat by ordained ministers. Indeed, it might free them up to exercise the particular ministry to which God has called them, instead of trying to be a 'jack of all trades'.

What's happening where you are? Share good news and practice.

This is the kind of ministerial model that might frighten both ordained and lay people. But it is a way of being Church that some Anglican congregations in Australia and New Zealand and Anglican and Lutheran congregations in Canada are beginning to explore. It might truly enable the laity to play their full part in the work of the Kingdom. During his visit to the Canadian Churches, Archdeacon Chris Wright spoke of parishes in his area of North Queensland where parishioners share leadership responsibilities among themselves and are less reliant on a single full-time priest. 'The clergy often have other paid jobs, and are non-stipendiary,' he said, 'and you have a lay leader in the parish and other people looking after pastoral care and visitation, and nursing homes and Bible studies and outreach programmes and Sunday school and school ministry, and most of those people are lay people.'

He suggested that it may be 20 years before many local churches have a more community based ministry of this kind in which lay people and lay and ordained ministers work together, deepening their spirituality and prayer life, growing more confident in faith, taking responsibility for mission and ministry, discovering new gifts, releasing hidden potential and managing change creatively. But there are signs that changes are already happening, and it may be that you are already familiar with this kind of thinking.

You may work and worship in congregations where something along the lines of Local Shared Ministry is already a reality. You may be engaged in theological education where part of the curriculum you teach is designed to enable your students to understand and to work with this model of ministry.

If you are, we really would like to hear from you, and for you to share some of your experiences. We would also like to hear about other approaches that you know of that really do enable the laity - and the clergy - to fulfil their own particular callings in the life and ministry of Christ's Church.



AFRICAN LUTHERAN THEOLOGIAN'S NETWORK FOCUSES ON CHURCHES AS PEACEMAKERS

A central theme of the African Lutheran Theologians' Network meeting in Johannesburg from 8th-15th November 2014 was the practical role churches should play as peacemakers in conflict situations in their countries and within the church.

'The Bible verse about turning the other cheek prompted a long discussion on how to relate this text to conflict in churches,' said the Rev Dr Kenneth Mtata, Study Secretary for Lutheran Theology and Practice at the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Department for Theology and Public Witness. 'Many participants gave examples from their own contexts. This is very interesting because in churches conflict often arises due to the failure to uphold the laws which govern that church.'

The Network attracts theologians from

all over Africa. They meet to discuss the interpretation of the Bible from a Lutheran perspective, and to address contextual questions. This meeting focused on gender justice and human development, with a special emphasis on mentoring young theologians. It used as its main text the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 5, in which Jesus calls on his disciples to be agents for peace and reconciliation.

'In our current situation in Cameroon, we want to preserve peace between Christians and Muslims. This peace may be weakened by attacks by Boko Haram Islamists from Nigeria against churches, which can create mistrust between religious communities,' said the Rev Dr Samuel Dawai, Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Cameroon and Director of the Institute of Theology in Kaele, Cameroon. 'For example, in a

confirmation class, I will say that Christians should behave in a way that avoids provocation, mistrust and confusion between Christians and Muslims. Inside the church, to resolve conflicts, we teach a behaviour that promotes justice and peace to avoid frustrating situations that cause divisions within African churches.'

Dr Dawai emphasized that peacemakers enjoy a wonderful promise of being called the sons and daughters of God and will enter with Jesus as brothers and sisters into the family of God. 'Churches in Africa have a responsibility to their countries and continent to help solve social, economic and political problems,' he added. 'The most urgent issues that African theologians have to address are poverty, peace, the coexistence of religions and good governance.' (LWI News Service)

LAN IN THE CHURCH

The Rev Ola Osbeck is a Social Deacon in the Church in Sweden who attended the Society's Conference in Hungary last September. Here he describes one aspect of the work he is doing back home.



Lan is an abbreviation for a computer network (Local Area Network), a number of computers connected together so that their operators can share and play together. This is one way in which today's young people can take responsibility for creating their own activities, organizing, planning, being as technical as they like and, most importantly, doing what we call Lana, sitting for a few days and playing. A Lan session can run around the clock and extend over two or three nights. An interesting finding is that these Lans are a meeting place for people of all ages, from 13 to 14 year olds to those aged 25 years and more, and all have fun together. It is fascinating to see how young people teach the older

ones the new games, while the older ones teach the younger ones some of the more complex features of the more established titles.

We want to encourage young people to create a positive arena that is their own. This means that we try to provide stimulating activities whilst at the same time supporting them with our presence. Sometimes we have a Liturgy that we design together.

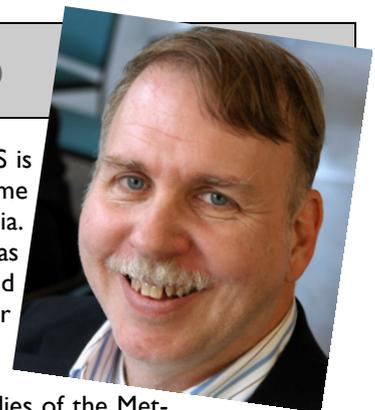
Lan offers many positive perspectives. It attracts people away from using drugs at home, for example. Alcohol and drugs are never to be found at our sessions, and all people need are high energy drinks and cola!

WOW is not misspelled! WOW is short for World of Warcraft, the world's largest computer network game with over 60 million players worldwide. Here you meet people from different cultures and ages, mostly young people but also older ones.

Research has shown that those who play computer games in this way develop competencies and skills that are needed in the community. For example, recognizing opportunities in various situations and acting on them, and solving problems together. A lot of the gameplay takes place in teams, and together people have to make quick decisions by taking in and analyzing a variety of information.

NEW USA COORDINATOR APPOINTED

Tom Van Poole is succeeding Laura Lincoln as the ALS North American Coordinator. ALS is known as the International Lutheran-Episcopal Society (ILES) in the USA. Tom first became involved with the Society in 2000 when he attended our conference in Alexandria, Virginia. Since then he has attended every ALS conference except Ratzeburg in 2001 (his flight was cancelled) and Mirfield in 2012. His wife Mimi also came with him to Liverpool in 2003 and has been a faithful attender ever since. Both Tom and Mimi were group facilitators at our conference beside Lake Balaton last September.



Tom has represented his congregation as a lay voting member at the annual synod assemblies of the Metropolitan DC Synod of the ELCA since 2001, and has represented his Synod on the Virginia Council of Churches Coordinating Cabinet since 2011. He is particularly interested in ecumenism, worship, and history.

On weekdays Tom is a civil engineer. For the last 29 years he has worked for the Virginia Department of Transportation.

Tom and Mimi have been married for 10 years and live in his hometown of Arlington, Virginia, just across the Potomac River from Washington, DC. Tom and Mimi have particularly enjoyed the friendships they have made within the Society. As National Coordinator, Tom hopes to be able to make more people in North America, both clergy and laity, aware of the ALS and our activities.



FIRST USA COORDINATOR TO RETIRE

Laura Lincoln was the Society's first official 'National Coordinator' for the USA. Here she explains how her many new ecumenical ventures, and an important aspect of her family life, are forcing her step aside. The role of National Coordinator is going to be taken over by Tom Van Poole (see previous page).

Ecumenism in Texas is very much a mixed bag, reflecting the reality of the changing life of the Church.

For some, the formal agreements are important, and they would like to continue conversations between denominations along official theological and academic lines. For others, ecumenism is expressed through expanding relationships. Where there were divides forty years ago, and it would have been difficult for some clergy to be seen in public speaking with some other clergy, those strictures are largely gone. There are a few notable exceptions (for example, The Missouri Synod Lutheran Church is still isolationist in its sensibilities), but for most parishioners and clergy, denominational distinctions are viewed more as options rather than opponents.

That said, the many full communion agreements made in the 20th century have yet to come into wide application. We Christians are creatures of habit and not fond of change. Moving into more visible unity is blocked much more by inertia and lack of imagination than it is by theological concerns. It will take some doing to move past this particular stage of being "stuck".

However, I have great hope. I am currently heading a project called "ONE" (one-baptism.org). It was born out of the demise of the Texas Conference of Churches. I had been its Executive Director since 2010, until the Board voted to close earlier this year because TCC's institutional structure was too unwieldy, hierarchical, and fiscally unsustainable for the anti-institutional era in which we now live. The structure could not be sustained ... but the relationships remained. ONE exists as a platform of connection for those who were previously networked via the TCC, as well as for new individuals wanting to explore what shape(s) ecumenism will take in this new century.

Like ALS/ILES, ONE is intentionally grass-roots and has no funding. The thinking behind this is to encourage ecumenism to be understood as a theological foundation for everything we do as Christians. Too often in the past ecumenism was relegated to special events and episcopal clubs. It did not sink into the blood and tissue of our lives together as Christians. No wonder the TCC (and many other state ecumenical agencies in the USA) closed. ONE is about the business of infusing an ecumenical sensibility into every aspect of congregational life.

The steps we are taking to move in this direction are simple. For example, we have set up a shared Google calendar for the congregations in Austin, TX. This encourages collaborative planning for everyone's benefit (you have better turn-out for events if you are not scheduling in competition with something else that would be equally attractive). It also reminds people of the breadth of the Christian commu-

nity in this area. We often need help remembering to look past our own property lines.

Another action of ONE is the formation of a collaborative group of church leaders from various denominations (American Baptist, Presbyterian Church USA, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and Roman Catholic) who for a period of two years are pledging to pray for one another, come together regularly in conversation, and travel together to explore different expressions of ecumenism in the United States. We hope a grant from the College of Pastoral Leaders programme of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary will enable the travel. Keep your fingers crossed for us!

I mentioned earlier that ONE is not funded. That's not entirely true. We have office space at an amazing reduced rate at the Presbyterian Seminary (it pays to have a beer with the president of a seminary now and then!). I also work as an Organizational Psychologist (LLincoln-Consulting.com) to pay that rent, and buy any supplies needed.

I specialize in working with non-profits, particularly churches. In that guise, I've become involved in an interesting project that I expect will have unintentional ecumenical repercussions. Allow me to set the stage. My synod (read "Diocese" for the Anglicans), is the Southwestern Texas Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The synod is quite large, extending from the southernmost tip of the state to just north of Austin. The western boundary is the border with Mexico, and the eastern boundary is the Gulf of Mexico. It would take me about 8 hours to drive to Brownsville, the most southern town, from Austin. Within that vast territory, there are approximately 140 ELCA worshiping communities (congregations, campus ministries, missions, etc.). That's a lot of space in largely rural and low income areas. Add to that geographical reality the fact that our numbers are dwindling. People are seeking God, but they are not coming to church and contributing financially. Consequently, almost half of that 140 does not have a full-time pastor.

So, turning back to the project, I was asked to develop a training programme for Lay Preachers and Lay Visitors (along with a module to help pastors and leaders both select the appropriate people, and redirect the willing-but-not-quite-able). A condition of many of the part-time pastor contracts is a



promise of one Sunday a month off. This is certainly reasonable from an employment standpoint. For a worshipping community used to celebrating Communion weekly, this is problematic.

Once this training programme is developed (the goal deadline was December 15th, 2014), pastors will be able to find help with preaching and visitation ministries. So far, however, we haven't discussed what happens with celebrating the Eucharist. I suspect that many will simply let go of the practice of weekly Communion, while others will find laity within their congregations to preside at Table on an as-needed basis.



Godly Play classroom at New Life Lutheran Church, Dripping Springs, Texas

This conundrum is an example of a pragmatic response to the changing face of Church in the 21st Century. Along with the changing dynamics for many congregations within my synod, are the beginnings of new expressions of what it is to be a congregation. New Life in Dripping Springs, TX, is a worshipping community that gathers in an outdoor space. They are building a sheltering structure with restrooms and a kitchen, but will never have a traditional church building. One weekend per month they gather at a community service project setting, instead of their usual gathering place, and pray there before rolling up their sleeves and setting to work.

A mission developer is starting another new project as I write this. He will spend his time meeting with people in pubs, music venues, on the street, and wherever people gather. He is not looking for members as much as he is lifting up conversation about Christianity in a largely un-

churched population. He will never build a traditional church building, but we hope he will build community.

I don't know where ecumenism will go as we explore these new and changing ideas of what it means to be God's people in the world. But I do know that being connected with one another is key to this next stage of Christian leadership.

That connection is at the heart of one of my other new roles. I was elected Chair of the Capital South Conference of my synod. This is a group of 20 worshipping communities. It's my job to try to keep them in conversation and planning with one another, and to lift up what is unique and gifted about each one so that we can all learn from one another. We now have a Facebook page, a digital newsletter, and a shared online calendar. I'm also making it a point to visit all 20 communities, trying to worship with a different one each Sunday.

My last new role, taking up a great deal of time (that I happily give!) is being a grandma. My husband and I are the go-to sitters for our daughter and son-in-law who moved to Texas in June. They have work schedules which change weekly (she is in retail; he is a musician and sound technician), so Tim and I are perpetually on call to care for 22-month-old Fiona, pictured below during a visit we made to Spirit in the Hills Lutheran Mission, Spicewood, Texas. We are more tired than we used to be, but sleep soundly!

So, while I have enjoyed being the National Coordinator for ILES, you can see that my plate has gotten very full. Ecumenical relationships of every shape are important to me, so I don't want to be the one who lets everyone down by not fulfilling my responsibilities. It's time to step aside, and let someone else have the fun!



LUTHER ON CHRISTMAS AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

In *Martin Luther's Christmas Book* (ed Roland Bainton, Augsburg Fortress Press) we are reminded how, each year in Wittenberg, Germany, Martin Luther preached on the Christmas story. On one occasion he compared the town of Bethlehem's lack of care for the holy family with our care for our neighbour. *There are many of you in this congregation who think to yourselves, "If only I had been there! How quick I would have been to help the Baby! I would have washed his*

nappies/diapers. How happy I would have been to go with the shepherds to see the Lord lying in the manger!" Yes, you would! You say that because you know how great Christ is, but if you had been there at that time you would have done no better than the people of Bethlehem. Childish and silly thoughts are these! Why don't you do it now? You have Christ in your neighbour. You ought to serve him, for what you do for your neighbour in need you do for the Lord Christ himself."

LUTHERANS AND ROMAN CATHOLICS MOVING 'FROM CONFLICT TO COMMUNION'

The Rev Martin Junge, General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, and Cardinal Kurt Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, have announced plans for a common liturgical guide in connection with the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017. To be published later in 2015, this Lutheran/ Roman Catholic material is intended to enable churches all over the world to review the 500 years of Reformation.

The guide follows on from the dialogue document 'From Conflict to Communion' which was published by both partners in 2013. It will enable congregations to create liturgical services that incorporate three elements from the document, first penitence for the wounds mutually inflicted, then joy at the insights and dimensions of the Reformation, and finally hope for unity.

The announcement was made on 18th December 2014 at the Lutheran Church in Rome. Martin Junge (left) emphasized that the relationship between Lutherans and Catholics really is becoming transformed 'from conflict to communion'. This is important for a world in which religion and faith are regularly portrayed and perceived as trouble makers, he said, adding that Lutheran and Roman Catholic Churches are moving towards a profound communion that frees us to serve God and the world.



There was agreement that there should be some kind of joint act of repentance. 'I think it would be a fine thing if such a symbolic act could take place between Catholics and Lutherans,' said Cardinal Koch. And Martin Junge agreed, citing the experience of the Lutheran World Fellowship and its dialogue with the Mennonite World Conference. 'We were not getting anywhere because there were memories that were still too vivid,' he said. The act of repentance during the LWF Assembly in 2010 in Stuttgart had cleared these obstacles out of the way. However, whilst there is a need for penitence, it is also important not to forget the positive experiences and common ground, and that all Churches have the same mission, which is to bear clear witness in word and deed.

HELP IN OVERCOMING DIFFERENCES

Living Reconciliation, by Canon Phil Groves and Angharad Jones (published by SPCK and Forward Movement), is a very practical book. Its authors believe that reconciliation lies at the heart of the Christian faith. Individuals, parishes and communities must learn how to agree to disagree. In eight chapters examples from the scriptures, and the stories of faithful people, illustrate different ways in which reconciliation can be lived out. Tragically, people who are at odds with one another, or with institutions, simply just do not know where to start, but here they are shown how the resources that exist within a church can be used to explore peaceful ways of handling disagreement.

There are stories from places and from groups of people who have had serious differences of opinion about sexuality and other sensitive issues, but who have sat down together, used the listening process, and have built a relationship that enables them to respect each other's differences of opinion.

Living Reconciliation can be purchased online through living-reconciliation.org. A free study guide and supporting videos can be found on the website as well.

CAN YOU HELP IN STUTTGART?

Gudrun Kaper, our Coordinator in Germany, is looking for members to staff the Society's Kirchentag stall.

The Society has booked space for a stall in the *Markt der Möglichkeiten* (Marketplace of Possibilities) at the *Kirchentag* in Stuttgart from 3rd to 7th June, 2015. Those who helped with the stall in Hamburg know that it is great fun, but also hard work. Joachim Bremer, who did a great job in Hamburg and was with us during the conference in Hungary, is already working on a plan for the set-up.

So please consider prayerfully if you could be part of our stall-team this summer, offering about 8 hours of your time during the period of the *Kirchentag*, and perhaps helping with setting up the stall on 3rd June or taking it down during the evening of 6th June. Don't worry if your German is only very rudimentary. Many visitors to our stall will be multi-lingual. To have a stall at a major event of this kind is important. It costs €395 to have a stall, and a bit more to equip it effectively. So if you can't join the staff team perhaps you could help by sending a small donation towards the cost using the Paypal scheme on the website and marking your payment 'Kirchentag Stall'.

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW AND SAVE MONEY!



The Executive Committee has decided that in 2015 members' subscriptions must be increased. This will be the first increase for some years and the aim is to help finance the development of your Society's work.

Membership will cost £25 for individuals and £35 for couples. Group membership will remain unchanged at £50 and so will the special rate of £12 for the unwaged (that means people with neither regular earned income nor workplace pension). Students preparing for accredited lay or ordained ministry will continue to be offered free membership.

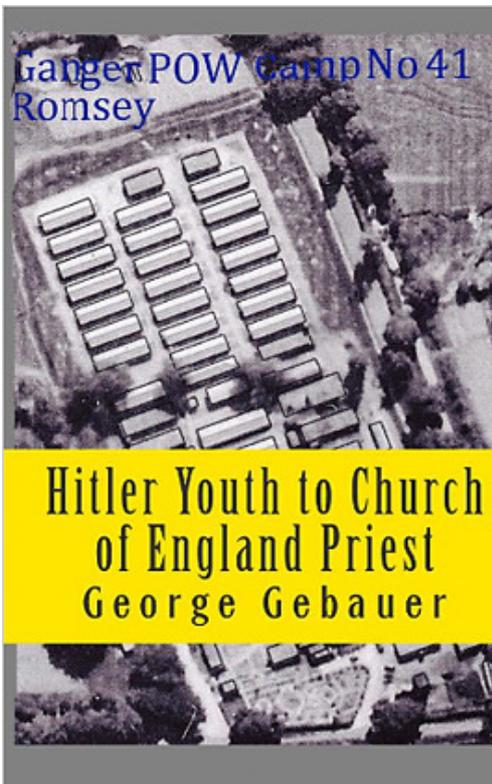
However, **if you renew your subscription BEFORE OR AT THE AGM**, it will remain at the old rate of £20 for individuals and £30 for couples. Enclosed with this edition of the newsletter is our invitation to renew your subscription, and clear instructions as to how to do so, wherever you are living. Do it now, and claim the discount!

A NATURAL AND ORGANIC TRANSITION

Our Anglican Co-President, Dr John Arnold, recommends Hitler Youth to Church of England Priest by George Gebauer (published by Create Space, 2014, £7.99, ISBN: 978-1-496-12924-6)

This delightful book is a rarity – an autobiography from the time of the Third Reich and the Second World War which is *not* a misery memoir. On the contrary, George Gebauer (born 1925) tells a tale of human sympathy and divine oversight, beginning with his childhood in a poor but happy working class family in Berlin. (For a bleaker view, read Hans Fallada's *Little man, what now?*) Just as he had been confirmed in his Lutheran parish church together with most children of his age-group, so at the age of fourteen he joined the Hitler Youth, which seems to have played much the same role for him as Scouting did for his contemporaries in England. He also seems to have been untouched by Fascist ideology; and the pre-military training was little different from our own cadet corps. Even in the army, he led a charmed life, as he says of his posting to France, 'Luck was with me, as it had been all my life.'

In the battle of Normandy he was captured by the Americans and transported by them to the west coast of the USA, an odyssey he describes with childlike awe and wonder. He was transferred to England, to a POW camp near Romsey, and billeted in a



farmhouse nearby, where he married the farmer's daughter, inherited the farm and was set to live happily ever after.

As part of his integration into English ways he was drawn into the life of

the local parish, asked to ring a bell, act as sidesman, read a lesson, join the PCC, become a Reader and then, 'As I got deeper into my studies I had an urge to make a greater commitment to the Lord and felt the call to the priesthood.' This involved selling the farm and training under the incomparable Harold Wilson at Salisbury, one of the few theological colleges then with a civilised attitude to married couples.

Everything, including the transition from Lutheran to Anglican, flows on naturally and organically with no sharp breaks or sudden conversions, no angst or profound insights. It is a story of constant kindness rather than of cruelty, and of providential care rather than of irruptive miracles, and it is none the worse for that. In fact, it is a joy to be reminded of a lost and golden age of cheerful Tommies, good neighbours and helpful vicars, even if the background is catastrophic, almost apocalyptic, devastation and loss. Perhaps it can help us to understand what St Paul meant when he said that we are those, upon whom ages overlap.

MEISSEN COMMISSION MEETS IN BERLIN

'The Meissen Commission of the Church of England and the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD) held its 24th meeting in Berlin, right in the heart of political life in Germany, from Thursday 25th to Sunday 28th September. Their theme was *Reformation and Politics*.

The Commission visited the German Bundestag and met the President, Dr Norbert Lammert, to discuss current political questions, and their understanding of church and politics in Germany were aired. Dr Lammert encouraged the Meissen Delegation not to abandon their fundamental beliefs, but to work at expressing them in ways that suit the present day context. 'Die Kirchen sollten nichts Anderes, aber manches anders machen als früher', he said. 'Churches should not concern themselves with different issues; but they should do some things differently.'

In another encounter at the Bundestag, Mr Heiko Schmelzle, a Member of Parliament belonging to the Christian Democratic Party, reflected with the Meissen Commission members on political engagement on the basis of Christian values. The Commission also visited the EKD Representative to the Bundestag and the European Union, and shared in a podium discussion on the contentious question of equipping the German army with fighter drones. They also received up to date information on the refugee work being done by the Evangelical Church in Berlin Brandenburg-Schlesische Oberlausitz.

The Commission also thought about partnerships in both England and Germany, and they hope that in the next few years partnerships between parishes, church groups, regional churches and dioceses will grow as both Churches journey on towards full visible unity.



The members of the Commission with Dr Lammert (centre) at the Bundestag

With its long and successful ecumenical work in mind, the members of the Commission then addressed the question of what contributions Meissen could make to the Reformation Jubilee in 2017. The EKD Ambassador for the Reformation Jubilee, Dr Margot Kässmann, provided them with background information and a review of the current plans. She invited the Commission to participate in planning the "Weltausstellung Reformation" (A Global Exhibition on the Reformation) in Wittenberg in 2017.

Members of the Commission then visited the memorial site of Plötzensee, the Evangelische Gedenkkirche, and the Catholic Church Maria Regina Martyrum in the area, and were able to reflect on each other's contexts and histories. Their time together ended with a Communion Service in Berlin Cathedral at which the Anglican Co-chair of the Meissen Commission, the Rt Rev Nicholas Baines, Bishop of Leeds, preached and the EKD Co-Chair, Bishop Dr Friedrich Weber, brought greetings.

The Commission's next meeting will be in Liverpool next October.

ALS COMMITTEE MEMBER ORDAINED IN LONDON



The Church of St Mary-at-Hill Church in Eastcheap, London, is now home to St Anne and St Agnes Lutheran Church. On Saturday 22nd November 2014, ALS committee member Jo Jan Vandenheede was ordained at a service there conducted by the Rt Rev Martin Lind, Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain.

In January Jo Jan leaves his home in Belgium to become Pastor to the congregation at the Gustav Adolf Nordic Church in Liverpool. He knows the congregation well - and is well-known by them! - because he did a placement there as part of his preparation for ordination. He is pictured here (left) with the Bishop, and with Paulina Hlawiczka who was ordained at the same service, and who will serve the Trinity congregation in the city of Nottingham.

LARCUM TIME AGAIN IN VIRGINIA!

Virginians interested in ecumenism have been blessed since 1983 to have an annual ecumenical conference involving Lutherans, Anglicans (Episcopalians), Roman Catholics, and United Methodists (LARCUM). Tom Van Poole, our new USA Coordinator, reports on the latest event which took place 5th-6th December 2014 in the Ghent neighbourhood of the City of Norfolk, Virginia.

Not long after I arrived I heard a greeting from across the parking lot of First Lutheran Church as fellow ALS members Stan Sawyer and Marcus Engdahl arrived. ALS members were also deeply involved in planning the conference, with Tom Prinz and Scott Ickert (pictured here) both on the organizing committee.



This year's theme was "The New Landscape of Post-Christian Christianity." The main speaker for all four sessions was the Rev John Armstrong, president of the ACT 3 Network, a mission for empowering leaders and churches for unity in Christ's mission. He was raised and ordained in the Southern Baptist Church, educated at Wheaton College (where he still serves as adjunct professor of mission), but is now a minister of Word and Sacrament in the Reformed Church in America (the American offshoot of the Dutch Reformed Church), and a member of a Lutheran congregation.



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Friday afternoon's session at First Lutheran Church started with prayers led by Bishop Jim Mauney of the Virginia Synod of the Lutheran Church. In a presentation titled "Keeping Wind in the Sails: What Might You Do in Your Context to Move the Boat Forward?", Father Tom Ryan, CSP, director of the Paulist North American Office for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations joined Mr Armstrong in discussing creative and fresh ways to work together in collaborative mission.

At Christ and St Luke Episcopal Church, Friday evening started with

John Armstrong's presentation "Spiritual but Not Religious: What Is Happening to the Religious Landscape in America?" He told us some very interesting statistics about religious attitudes in America today, some discouraging but some surprisingly encouraging, that point the way to advancing the church's mission. Worship that evening was a beautiful service of lessons and carols for Advent. Suffragan Bishop Susan Goff of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia preached and Bishop Herman Hollerith of the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia presided.

During the service the seven bishops present signed the LARCUM covenant, beginning with Bishop Mark Bourlakos, the new Episcopal bishop of South-

western Virginia. The Christ and St Luke Choir was a real treat.

Saturday morning's venue was Sacred Heart Catholic Church, with Morning Prayer led by Bishop Francis DiLorenzo of the Catholic Diocese of Richmond, and Bishop Paul Loverde of the Catholic Diocese of Arlington preaching.

John Armstrong then spoke again, this time on "Our Missional Moment: How Should the Church Serve in a Post-Christendom Future?"

Our final session was at Ghent United Methodist Church, where Mr Armstrong's theme was "Belonging and Then Believing: What Has Ecumenism Got to Do with Our Future?" With the next generation looking to belong to a community before they concern themselves with doctrinal differences, ecumenism has a major impact on the success of our mission.

Methodist Bishop Young Jin Cho preached at our closing worship and then we said our goodbyes to old and new friends from across the Commonwealth of Virginia.



The closing service in the Ghent United Methodist Church in Norfolk, Virginia

LIVING OUT ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS

The Anglican-Lutheran International Co-ordinating Committee (ALICC) held its second meeting in Hong Kong from 19th to 25th November, 2014, under the leadership of the Rt Revd Dr Tim Harris of the Anglican Church of Australia (who acted as co-chair because Archbishop Mauricio was unable to attend) and Bishop Michael Pryse of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

The Committee continued its work of mapping Anglican and Lutheran relationships around the world. A template was drawn up showing the differing patterns of relationships and the contexts in which they are lived out. For example, some are national Churches meeting with other national Churches, while others are Anglican and Lutheran communities sharing the same geographical area. Sometimes the two denominations are of similar size, while in other places one Church is much larger than the other. The Committee

them in their contexts. The Committee is also planning to produce a devotional resource for use by individuals and communities, using ALICC's theological themes - communion in mission and diakonia, and there are plans to develop a range of liturgical resources.

On the Sunday, members of the Committee were welcomed and enriched by attending the Sunday Eucharist at the Martinson Memorial Lutheran Church. That afternoon it was their joy to participate in the consecration of the Revd Canon Dr Timothy Chi-pei Kwok as Bishop of Eastern Kowloon at St John's Cathedral, and in the banquet that followed. They are deeply grateful to Archbishop Paul Kwong and to the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui (The Hong Kong Anglican Church) for their generous hospitality.

The Committee met Dr Gareth Jones of Ming Hua Theological College and discussed matters relating to Anglican theological education, and was welcomed to the Lutheran Theological Seminary where Dr Nicholas Tai, one of the committee members, is on the faculty. They took part in morning devotions, heard about the history and development of the college and its contribution to the formation of church leaders in mainland China and in the Mekong Delta, and had lunch with students and faculty. Here you see them pictured during a visit to a Lutheran house church that ministers to refugees.



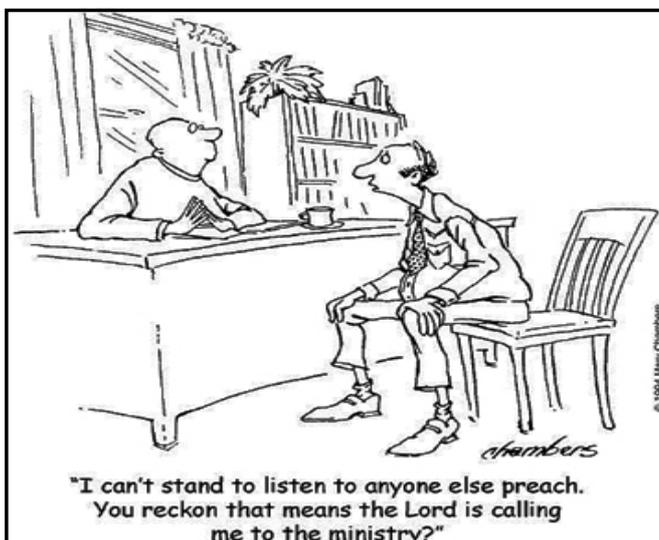
Members of ALICC meeting in Berlin. Back row: Rev Augusta Leung (A), Canon John Lindsay (A), Rt Rev Tim Harris (A), Rt Rev Michael Pryse (L), Mr Neil Vigers (A) Front Row: Rev Joyceline Fred Njama (L), Preb Helene Tarneberg Steed (L), Rev Anne Burghardt (L), Rev Darcy Dlamini (A), Canon Dr Alyson Barnett-Cowan (A), Rev Prof Nicholas Tai (L)

hopes to provide examples of the kinds of joint initiatives which might be appropriate for some partnerships rather than others.

They are also exploring the theological theme of 'Communion in Mission', and hope to provide resources for deeper mutual engagement with this theme, which undergirds the living out of the ecumenical calling. In particular, they developed plans for resources through which Lutherans and Anglicans can commemorate together the year 1517, a moment of greater direct significance for Lutherans, but one which launched a wider reforming movement which wrestled with what it means for the Church to be both catholic and reformed. The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) theme for the year 2017 is 'Liberated by God's Grace' and includes the subthemes of 'salvation not for sale', 'creation not for sale' and 'human beings not for sale'.

ALICC will encourage Anglicans to use the resources being produced by the LWF in ways that are appropriate for

The next meeting of ALICC will be later this year (2015) hosted by the Lutheran World Federation.



The Window

supports members of the Anglican-Lutheran Society in better understanding our different traditions and social contexts so that we can more faithfully proclaim God's love and justice together in the world

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BISHOP STEPHEN SYKES' CONTRIBUTION TO ANGLICAN-LUTHERAN RELATIONS

*Bishop David Tustin (ALS Anglican Co-President, 1986-99)
pays tribute to a fine ecumenist*

Bishop Stephen Sykes died in September 2014 at the age of 75, following a long and debilitating illness, followed by his wife, Joy, just eight weeks later. She, too, had suffered a long illness.

At the climax of his academic career Stephen had been Van Mildert Professor of Divinity at Durham University (1974-1985) and Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge University (1985-90). He served as Bishop of Ely (1990-99) before returning to Durham as Principal of St John's College until he retired in 2006. Whilst many achievements were noted in his obituaries, little was said of his outstanding contribution to Anglican-Lutheran relations.

In 1981 he took over the mantle of Professor Geoffrey Lampe, who had chaired the biennial Anglo-Scandinavian Conferences from 1965-1979. These ecumenical conferences, dating back to 1929, were not designed to negotiate ecumenical agreements, but to foster better acquaintance and understanding between bishops and those teaching in universities and seminaries. In the 1980s Stephen Sykes chaired five such conferences in Denmark, Finland, England (twice) and Sweden, and on the last occasion broadened the membership to embrace representatives of the Baltic Lutheran Churches. These conferences, in parallel with the Anglo-Scandinavian Pastoral Conferences begun in 1977, helped to pave the way for official ecumenical dialogue which later bore fruit in the Porvoo Common Statement (1993). Stephen's personal friendship with Nordic and Baltic church leaders during his time as a professor at Durham and Cambridge was a strongly positive influence.

From 1986 to 1993 Stephen also served as an Anglican Communion delegate on the Anglican-Lutheran International Continuation Committee, the dialogue body at world level. He made a substantial theological contribution to their deliberations in Wimbledon (1986), Niagara (1987), Kuala Lumpur (1989) and Johannesburg (1993). In particular, he formed a creative partnership with Dr Walter Bouman (of Cleveland, Ohio) in drafting the Niagara Report on 'Episcopate' (published 1998); their role in shaping this historic document should not be underestimated. It marked a major breakthrough in ecumenical understanding, and was to form the basis of three subsequent regional agreements between Anglican and Lutheran Churches, namely those in the British/Irish & Nordic/Baltic region, in the USA and in Canada.

In April-May 1992 Stephen, as Bishop of Ely, was the first Church of England leader to open up direct links with the small Lutheran Church of Lithuania. His visit to Bishop Kalvanas signalled an Anglican welcome to this hard-pressed and bravely re-emerging flock as it found its place within what has now become the 'Communion of Porvoo Churches'.

Anglicans and Lutherans across the globe have cause to be profoundly grateful for the depth and quality of Bishop Stephen Sykes's contribution to the convergence of our two traditions and to our growing partnership in mission. To the end of his life he keenly desired to see this momentum continue increasing.