

The Window

OCTOBER 2022

THE ANGLICAN-LUTHERAN SOCIETY

Issue No. 131

We hope you enjoy this issue of your Newsletter.

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And much more

ANNUAL MEETING 2023 IN COVENTRY, UK TO FOCUS ON VIOLENCE

This is not our normal type of newsletter. Usually they contain information from our members and news of the Society's activities as well as information from Anglican and Lutheran sources around the world. But, because our conference in Norway last July was so rich and full, you will already have received a special issue of *The Window* in September describing much of what went on in our conference in Trondheim. So this October newsletter offers insights into some of the goings on in the wider Church.

The cloud of violence and war hangs over us at this present time. It is not simply that war is being waged in Ukraine. As this issue is being prepared there is conflict in about 39 countries around the world, and each day brings news of violence on the streets of nations that are not at war.

Churches across the globe are struggling with issues of peace-making and reconciliation, and within Churches there are debates about whether or not it is morally right to offer military equipment and support to combatants.

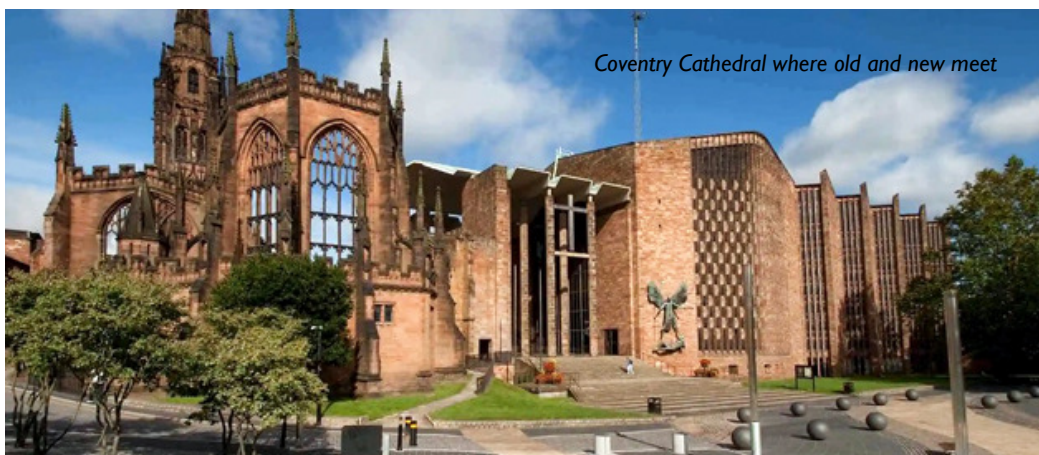
Your committee considered this at a recent meeting and decided that it would be useful to make the topic for our Annual Meeting

“Ecumenical Responses to Violence” and that an appropriate place to hold the meeting would be **Coventry Cathedral** in the UK, where they have developed a particular ministry of reconciliation. Speakers from Anglican, Lutheran and Roman Catholic agencies are willing to guide our thinking, and the cathedral is very pleased to host our meeting. So make a note of the date, **Saturday 11th March 2023** starting at 10.30 London time.

Fuller details and a booking form will appear in the January newsletter.

Meanwhile, inside this edition some themes of the conference in Norway are explored. We meet the Rev Dr Samuel Dawai, a teacher in Cameroon who is as passionate about theological education as Canon Hilda Kabia, one of our speakers in Trondheim. We learn of a book published recently by the Most Rev Olav Fykse Tveit, Presiding Bishop of the Church of Norway, “Visions of Christian Unity”, which develops some of the themes in his opening address at our conference.

There are two reflections on the Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops last July, news of an exciting development in the Lutheran Church in Poland, and a raft of appointments in ecumenical organisations. So read on!



Coventry Cathedral where old and new meet

SO MANY CHRISTIANS ARE BEING PERSECUTED

The Danish 'Think Tank for Persecuted Christians' published a new report, 'The Extent of Persecution', on 19th August this year.

As its title, "The Extent of Persecution", suggests this report sheds some light on questions like what persecution entails, the number of Christians exposed to persecution, and to what extent the development of freedom of religious belief has progressed.

The report has a special focus on digital persecution in China, the blasphemy legislation in Pakistan, the lack of religious freedom in Qatar, the depopulation of Christians from Palestine, and the dialogue with the Russian Orthodox Church about religious freedom. The main conclusion is that in 2020 at least 10,000 Christians died, that 70,000 experienced harassment in the form of abductions, rapes, forced marriages and lack of civil rights, and that some 310 million Christians live in countries where Christians experience social discrimination.

These figures do not focus on particular cases, but they do say something about the seriousness and scope of a freedom that is often taken for granted - but which millions of people still lack and have to live without.

So what is this "Think Tank"?

The "Think Tank for Persecuted Christians" was the idea of a Danish parish priest, Jørgen Peder Jørgensen of Aabenraa. He approached bishop-emeritus Karsten Nissen and they invited a number of interested people to a meeting in March 2019. The "Think Tank" was then founded at a further meeting in Aarhus on 14th August that same year.

The aim is to disseminate documented knowledge about violations of religious freedom both nationally and internationally, focusing on the situations of all who are religiously persecuted, but particularly on persecuted Christians. Doing this should enable congregations and others to show solidarity with, and support for, persecuted Christians.

The "Think Tank's" Mission

The idea is to bring together people with a special knowledge of international and national social relations, theology and the media. By working together these people can spread the word about the religiously persecuted, with this special emphasis on persecuted Christians. In the first place this information will be made available to the Danish public, Danish politicians and the Danish churches and church organisations. They, in turn, can make use of it in their work promoting freedom of belief and religion for all people, and share it more widely through their own links, both ecumenical and international.



Vision

Put very simply, the vision is that knowledge of the conditions of the religiously persecuted should become a natural part of the Danes' common knowledge, and that through the work of the "Think Tank" they will become aware of how they can actively support persecuted Christians. They also envisage freedom of belief and religion being included in open political debate so that Denmark's foreign policy would be shaped to actively promote freedom of belief and religion for all.

Basic Practice

In a context in which many different interests are trying to play down the agenda that is called "persecuted Christians", the "Think Tank" maintains its independence from political, ecclesiastical and commercial bodies, and does not wish to convey knowledge about persecution of religious minorities in order to promote generalised criticism of any particular religions or theological views. But, whilst it is not an organisation holding any specific religious or theological position, it does seek to engage in dialogue aimed at creating understanding and cooperation between religions. Its aims are to communicate as objectively as possible knowledge about the persecution of Christian minorities, to enrich debate and to explore the kinds of attitudes that exist concerning the persecution of religious minorities.

Christians constitute by far the largest group among the religiously persecuted, and the "Think Tank" holds the view that Christians in Denmark and elsewhere have a special obligation to help and support persecuted fellow believers. That is why "Think Tank for Persecuted Christians" was chosen as the title, because of the special focus on persecuted Christians. But its members eyes are not closed to the persecution other religious minorities are exposed to. They see their work as part of a general struggle for freedom of belief and religion for all, including people without any formal belief. The fact that they have Christian roots obliges them to work for everyone's freedom of belief, ➡

ENGLAND HAS NEW ECUMENICAL OFFICER

Doral Hayes joins Churches Together in England Team.



Churches Together in England (CTE) has appointed Doral Hayes to the role of Principal Officer for Ecumenical Development and Relations. She started work in September and her focus will be to inspire and encourage ecumenical work at a local, intermediate (county or city) and national level.

Doral was Ecumenical Facilitator for Churches Together in Hertfordshire, working with both local and regional church leaders to support worship and service together across the county. She has been Executive Development Officer for the Association of Inter-church Families, working in the UK as well as internationally to support and advocate for inter-church couples. Doral is also a member of the English and Welsh Anglican Roman Catholic Committee and the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland's Writers Group for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

'I am delighted and humbled to have an opportunity to serve the Churches in this way as they journey together towards greater unity. I look forward to working with the great team at CTE, as well as colleagues across England, and I am grateful for all the different experiences that God has used to bring me to this place of service,' she said. She takes over from Jenny Bond, who is taking early retirement.

Doral is a committed ecumenist who, having been raised in an inter-church family, brings a wide range of personal and professional ecumenical experience. Prior to working ecumenically, Doral held roles in health education and learning and development. Holding a Masters degree in Contemporary Christian Theology, Doral is currently completing a Doctorate in Practical Theology at Roehampton University, her research focusing on what the Churches can learn from the lived experience of inter-church families as they journey towards greater unity. A licenced lay minister in the Oxford Diocese of the Church of England, Doral regularly preaches and leads worship in her local parish. She is married to Declan, a musician, has two teenage children and enjoys singing and walking Seamus, a crazy whippet [that's a kind of dog! - Ed].

⇒ not just Christians. In spiritual matters there has to be freedom. The Christian's responsibility to show charity does not only apply to other Christians, but to every human being, regardless of a person's faith or lack thereof.

Types of work

A professional opinion poll has been conducted which gives reliable insight into the knowledge and attitudes towards persecuted Christians that Danish people have. The "Think Tank"'s members and resource people meet at least twice a year. They also hold press conferences, public meetings, seminars and conferences as required. They will

- make international reports and news about persecuted Christians available to the Danish public in ways that are easily understood
- suggest proposals for prayer and practical support for persecuted Christians
- examine the information received to ensure that it is based on properly documented evidence
- submit articles, comments and accounts to the Danish news media
- hold public meetings at regular intervals that focus on specific areas and problems
- hold seminars and conferences on special themes related to the "Think Tank"'s purpose
- call press conferences when deemed necessary
- publish an annual publication partly reporting on current work and partly focusing on specific areas and topics

Cooperation

The "Think Tank" is not the only organisation that collects information and seeks to provide help to individuals or groups who are persecuted because of their Christian faith. So its members cooperate with other organisations already engaged in that work and encourage people to support them.

The "Think Tank" benefits from resource people who have special knowledge and experience within the area, and there is close cooperation especially with the Middle Church Council, which has a special focus on persecuted Christians, and with the Danish Church's diocesan councils and committees for inter-church work and with the Roman Catholic Church and other Danish Churches. Cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' special unit for Freedom of Belief and Religion also has a high priority.

Finances

So far, the "Think Tank"'s finances are very modest. A grant from *BorgFonden* [a foundation that supports organisations that assist people – Ed] provided the funding for the opinion poll, and there has been funding for establishing a website. Financial support is being sought from the diocesan council of the Danish Church and interdenominational diocesan committees. Fees for lectures on the persecuted Christians by the "Think Tank"'s members will also provide a certain annual income. Of course, voluntary contributions are always welcome!

A UKRAINIAN ANGLICAN ON SURVIVING THE SIEGE OF KYIV

Alla Gedz is a member of Christ Church, Kyiv, which is in the Church of England's Diocese in Europe. As the Russian army invaded her country, she documented her experiences on her Facebook page, lying low through artillery bombardment and travelling cautiously back and forth between her home in the city and her dacha, or summer cabin, on the outskirts of town.

Sean Franklin, a freelance journalist, contacted Alla and this interview was published in the Anglican Journal, August 2022.

Tell me about the experience of living through the fighting. How close did it come to you? What was it like trying to keep safe?

Until February 24, I understood that hostilities could begin at any time and no one would save me. So I was praying and preparing mentally for this as best as I could. But, at the same time, I tried to live a normal life. We grow fruits and vegetables at our dacha. And knowing that our dacha could be bombed, we still put things in order there, preparing for the new season.

American President Biden constantly shouted: "Be careful! There will be the war! Do something!" Our President constantly said: "There will be no war! Don't panic!" I still clearly remember our President's speech late on the evening of the 23rd February: "There will be no war! Sleep calmly!"

That night, many were woken up by explosions. Thus began a new life - a new countdown! Realising that every day can be the last one, live it to the fullest, trying to support those who are nearby. Because tomorrow we may not see each other again, or the morning just won't come.

I live near the Kyiv (Zhulyany) airport and understood the danger of what was happening. When tanks appeared near my home, and the explosions did not stop even for a short time, I begged all my Facebook friends to pray. Then [Ukrainian soldiers] made a checkpoint near my building, just adding concrete blocks to my building. There were always soldiers under my windows. During the day, we peered cautiously out the windows and watched the gun-fights. We live on the first floor. And the windows are low enough so that you can enter the apartment through them. My building remained intact - and this is a real miracle! Soon we boarded up all the windows, taking apart all the furniture and cabinets in the apartment.

When the fighting started, I was bedridden and could hardly get up. Having some health problems, I constantly need outside help. When the explosions started and the sirens sounded, I just prayed. I couldn't get up, and we didn't have anywhere to go, there was no bomb shelter near us.

From shock and trauma, my body quickly grouped up and I began to move around a little. We learned that the neighbours from our building were hiding in a neighbouring building in the basement. And when we realized that our building could be blown up at any moment and it was at the epicentre of events, we collected documents, took a few T-shirts and other things to change clothes and also took

some baby food, which I need for life, and went to the basement.


The basement was dark, wet and cold. The floor was earthen, and it was obvious that the moisture there never dries up. We climbed under the sewer pipes and stayed there for many hours. It was constantly dripping from the pipes, but it was really quieter and calmer there.

No wonder my asthma and bronchiectasis are getting worse. I have spent the last few weeks in hospital but am still having some trouble breathing. My husband has already contacted a number of voluntary groups about an oxygen concentrator, but so far without success.

Based on your Facebook posts, it looks like you left Kyiv for some time and you're back now, is that right? Where did you go, and what was travelling like?

When we had the opportunity, we went to our dacha, which is located 100 km from Kyiv. Our dacha is a small piece of land with a wooden wagon where we usually live in the summer. Thanks to kind people, we were able to buy some food and fill the car with fuel.

It wasn't very safe there. Explosions were constantly heard and our little house periodically bounced. But no one ran around with machine guns and there wasn't shooting near us. The closest town that was bombed was 15 km away from us. I was able to sleep. The feeling of inevitable death and horror began to leave me little by little.

Our dacha is almost in the middle of the field. There is no water or gas there. But there is electricity, so we could use an electric heater to heat our small cabin and an electric stove to cook our food. After a while, we ran out of food and needed to fill up the car again. And since food and fuel became a big shortage, we decided to go to 



Alla Gedz stands in front of a building in her neighbourhood damaged during the siege. Photo: Contributed

⇒ Kyiv. We periodically travel to Kyiv when we need food or a doctor's consultation. Being able to take a shower and feel like a human being, and not just an incomprehensible being, is also one of the main reasons for returning home. I thank the Lord for saving our apartment, where we can take a shower and wash things, until this moment. (We don't have a washing machine; we wash by hand). Every time we leave, we realise that we may never come back. Travelling is very dangerous. All the way I usually pray, but my body is in a permanent state of freezing and tension.

I am not yet ready to share the details of what is happening on the roads. But passing shot and crushed cars, multiple roadblocks with incomprehensible people who rudely checked our car and threatened to shoot us, I understand that life is a very fragile thing.

[Editor's note: One of Alla Gedz's Facebook posts describes an argument with Ukrainian soldiers at a checkpoint over whether they were allowed to take her passport away to look at it. The soldiers, she wrote, said they could do whatever they wanted, even kill her.]

I hear most of the fighting has moved to the east. What is it like where you are now?

Now we are at our dacha. It's quiet and calm here. Birds are singing. And outwardly, nothing reminds you of the war. Kyiv is quite calm, despite the constant sirens. Military operations are still taking place in the north (Sumy, Chernihiv ...) east (Mariupol, Donetsk, Luhansk ...) and south (Kherson, Odessa ...) of Ukraine. Many cities are bombed and many people die every day.

How are the rest of the congregation of Christ Church, Kyiv, doing, if you've heard from them? Have you been to any services since the invasion?

It's hard for me to say how all the members of the church are doing. I hope they are safe. I kept in touch with one sister. She lives alone and has major health problems. She was in a very dangerous situation. But she hasn't responded to messages for over a week. I want to believe that everything is fine with her and she has evacuated.

What role has your faith played in getting you through these experiences?

I sincerely believe that I am alive and my home is not destroyed because precious people have been praying for us. And, God, for sure, held me very tightly in His arms.

UKRAINIAN CHURCH IS A NEW MEMBER OF THE LUTHERAN FAMILY

The Lutheran World Federation has welcomed the German Lutheran Church in Ukraine into the community and at the same time issues a reminder that wars and conflicts are raging in many other parts of the world.

The German Lutheran Church in Ukraine has been admitted as a member of the Lutheran World Federation. The Church has previously been represented by ELCROS (The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States) but due to the war in Ukraine, the Church has wanted to join the LWF. Against this background, Bishop Henrik Stubkjær, together with the other members of the LWF Council, has chosen to welcome the German Lutheran Church in Ukraine as an independent member of the international Lutheran Church community. The Church has about 1,000 members and 24 congregations as well as four associated Reformed congregations.

Bishop Pavlo Shvarts expressed great joy that the Church could join the international Lutheran community. 'We want to remain free, and free in the faith,' he said. Referring to the situation in the Donbas region of Ukraine he added that 'we will become a persecuted minority if Russia takes control.' At the same time, he took the opportunity to thank the Lutheran Churches in Europe for the help and support and open arms that have come to meet Ukrainian refugees.

In his opening speech at the Council meeting, the LWF President, Archbishop Musa Panti Filibus, had mentioned that people should not be blind to the fact that there are many wars and conflicts taking place around the world and that we should not focus our attention solely on Ukraine. It is estimated that there are conflicts in 39 countries, some-

thing which is helping to increase the food crisis. Moreover, according to the United Nations High Commissioner, there are currently 100 million refugees and internally displaced persons in the world. That number has not been so high since World War II. The Lutheran Churches have an important role to play in a world characterised by freedom and insecurity, not least through the LWF's relief organisation World Service, which is chaired by Bishop Henrik Stubkjær. The LWF Council also recalled the "forgotten" conflicts in the world and the need to work for peace and stability in countries such as Cameroon, Columbia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Myanmar, Nigeria, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Syria and Yemen.

To the left, Bishop Henrik Stubkjær is seen voting during the council meeting that admitted the Ukraine Church to LWF. Photo: LWF/SGallay.



ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: CHRISTIANS TO BE COMMUNITY OF PEACE

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev Dr Justin Welby, addressed the World Council of Churches' 11th Assembly on 7th September in Karlsruhe, Germany



The Archbishop spoke of how the WCC Assembly's theme, "Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity", resonated with the theme of the Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops, held in August under the theme "God's Church for God's World."

He commented on the ways in which the participants at the Lambeth Conference were able to move forward. 'We found our way forward through, not by solving the issues,

but by living in the light of Christ, by saying we do not agree, by being honest without excluding one another,' he said. 'At the beginning many felt they could not participate - by the end almost all did.'

The challenge to Christians, the Archbishop said, is in daily conversion of life. 'The next decades are looking no better, economically, militarily, spiritually, socially, scientifically, technologically, especially for the poorest and the weakest,' he said. 'In this time of world crisis, Christians are to be a community of peace, the creation of God, not us, in Christ through the Spirit.'

We live amidst the ecumenism of suffering, Archbishop Justin continued. 'We are well practised in the ecumenism of service,' he said. 'Our Theological understandings have advanced greatly.' But none of us is yet imbued with the spirit of the love of Christ, he emphasised. 'Christ's prayer for visible unity, to convert and draw us close enough to each other, and although not united we share as one people in the paschal mystery,' he said, 'is something we believe but we do not show it day to day.'

The luxurious expense of well-practised Christian division is no longer affordable, he concluded. 'My simple challenge to all of us today, is to re-find the spiritual passion of the past for ecumenism; theologically, in solidarity with those who are suffering, in love that covers a multitude of sins,' he said. 'To do that we must face our fears of each other and of the world together, we must love one another, we must give common witness and work together towards the more visible unity that we reimagine in the grace of God.'

NEW BISHOP FOR ROSKILDE IN DENMARK

Ulla Thorbjørn Hansen, former Dean in Slagelse Deanery, was elected on the 15th of June as the first female bishop in the diocese of Roskilde in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark. She is the 65th bishop in Roskilde Diocese.

On the 4th of September the consecration of Ulla Thorbjørn Hansen took place at the Cathedral of Roskilde. She succeeds the retiring Bishop Peter Fischer-Møller, who has held the role since 2008, and she is the first female bishop in the Diocese of Roskilde. She is particularly concerned with diaconia - the social work of the Church - and pastoral care.

'As Bishop in Roskilde,' she says, 'I will do my utmost to live up to what has been entrusted to me. A measure of my ministry will be whether the Lutheran Church in Denmark is a Church where no-one doubts that pastoral care is there for them. I want to create safe workplaces with safe, well-functioning working environments.'

Before being elected as bishop, Ulla Hansen served as pastor in St Peders-Havrebjerg parish and as Dean of the Deanery of Slagelse. She was the national head of the so-called 'emergency pastors' and has earned a masters degree in pastoral care alongside her theological studies. She has also been a member of the Inter-church Council's working group on Public Theology.



A PASSION FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

The new Lutheran World Federation's Regional Secretary for Africa, the Rev Dr Samuel Dawai, reflects on the liberating message of the gospel (LWI)



Photo: LWFIS.Gallay

The new Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Regional Secretary for Africa, the Rev Dr Samuel Dawai of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of Cameroon (EFLC), took up his role in July this year. He is a New Testament scholar and has served his home church for 26 years as a parish pastor, biblical scholar and Director of the EFLC's Kaélé Seminary in Northern Cameroon. As Regional Secretary, he is responsible for 31 LWF member Churches in 23 countries in Africa. He is based in Yaoundé, where he sits in the office of the LWF's country programme in Cameroon.

In this interview he shares his journey to academia and the LWF, and his vision for the region.

Tell us about your religious and spiritual upbringing?

My parents became Christians as adults. My father served the church as a deacon, caring for small communities within the church, but it was my mother who taught us to pray. Church programmes like Sunday School, youth groups, Bible studies and evangelism in the villages where there was no church also shaped me. I grew up mostly in the village and partly in the city. In the village, everyone is religious; which implies that the connection to African tradition and spirituality sets the rhythm of life. This African spiritual environment formed us as well as Christianity and kept us in a relationship. All these religious activities and rhythms of life shaped our life together, including events that involved the entire community such as planting and harvest, child naming, marriage, and mourning the death of loved ones. These rituals give order to our daily lives and provide a meeting point for an African religious environment and a Christian religious environment. Both connect us to God.

Is this what led to your entering the ministry?

In 1991, I was asked to lead the youth

group in my congregation. It was during this time that the question of becoming a pastor began to grow in me. "Why not serve the Lord? Why not serve God as a pastor in the Church?" Following talks with two pastors who convinced me that I could serve the Lord, I pursued theological education. Later, theological studies answered those earlier questions and confirmed my call.

I taught at the seminary for 15 years. I have a love and passion for teaching, but now it is time to change to this new calling.

Tell us more about your background in theological education?

My pastoral and theological training started in 1993 at the Kaélé Seminary where I obtained my pastor's diploma in 1996. I continued my theological studies at the Faculty of Protestant Theology in Yaoundé and obtained my Bachelor's degree in 1998 and my Master's degree in 1999. After serving in a parish for three years, I joined the Faculty in Yaoundé to start my doctoral studies, which I completed with a PhD in 2007. My doctoral studies included a stay at the Protestant Faculty of Theology in Montpellier, France. To this I must add my participation in a number of theological seminars organised by the LWF from which I learned a lot about Lutheranism.

What was it like, teaching theology?

I have spent the better part of my career teaching theology. I taught New Testament theology both in the Protestant School of Theology in Maroua and the EFLC seminary in Kaélé. I was passionate not only about the gift of imparting knowledge to students, but more importantly, about sharing knowledge about the gospel and discussing Christian faith and experience from a Lutheran perspective. My passion was not only to talk about Jesus, the apostles, the early church, but also to engage the

students in what it means for us today to be Lutheran Christians, especially in the African cultural, social and economic contexts.

My journey as a teacher of theological education has taught me that the teacher is first of all a learner. You must always question what you know already in order to learn more. Also, theological reflection and biblical interpretation are contextual, hence every theologian must approach teaching with a spirit of openness and humility. If God is the object of theological reflection, we must make ourselves small in order to understand God better. I have also learned that for theological education to be effective it must have a meaningful impact for pastors, and be accompanied by a true spiritual relationship with God.

You talked earlier about a meeting point between African traditional religion and Christianity, what is your experience when it comes to theological education?

My spiritual and theological journey, like many other African Christians, has enabled me to understand that in Africa it is essential for theological education to enter into dialogue with African traditional religion. The person with whom we share the gospel is not in a spiritual or religious vacuum. He or she receives a gospel that is infused with culture, and therefore it is not easy to completely separate what is cultural and religious in a Cameroonian and African context, so to speak. Hence the need to ask the question: "What is the relationship between the gospel message and culture?"



⇒ Indeed, despite the development of Western culture and Christianity, African systems of values, thought and beliefs impact everyday life. These systems are expressed in myths, tales, morals and proverbs that convey both philosophical and religious values to endorse or to condemn the actions of the living. They are processes that constitute both opportunities for theological expression and challenges to Christian faith and theology.

Can you give some examples?

Let me share this English translation of a Cameroonian proverb: “The guinea fowl without chicks is nothing but shiny feathers.” It is used to explain that a woman without children is a woman without honour and real femininity, and to promote a strong belief that a marriage only has real value if the woman can provide her husband with offspring. Similarly, a woman who does not have children will be shamed in society. So the challenge for the African theologian is to effectively demonstrate that such a belief is contrary to Christian ethics and values. On the other hand, a story, a rite, a dance, a parable, can provide opportunities for catechesis, composition of hymns, and other forms of teaching, in order to convey the liberating message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Other examples of African beliefs that pose enormous challenges to theology include the conviction that water and living creatures, plants and all animals, are inhabited by spirits, which is conducive to a life filled with fear or to the development of syncretism in the lives of Christians.

Another example is the value systems (what is good or bad): for example, there are cultures in which there is no notion of guilt, but people instead have the notion of shame. The challenge here is to develop new theological expressions that can be accepted and understood.

When it comes to the rituals and ceremonies that mark the main events of life, (birth, marriage, death, burial and so on), here again, how can these be integrated into the liturgy of the Church?

To this cultural and religious reality, we must also add the achievements that have been made since the times of the missionaries and which now need to be studied again.

The multiple challenges to theology require a contextual approach. This contextual approach is not to impose ready-made theological notions that have been constructed in a Western context, but to formulate the biblical and gospel message in the already existing cultural and religious context. Therefore, theological institutions in Africa need to develop a theology of life that responds to the spiritual, social and economic needs of the local people.

As regional secretary, what would you like to bring to LWF’s member churches in Africa?

My wish for Lutheran Churches in the African region is that they strengthen the understanding of leadership that makes the Church sustainable. I am happy that this discussion has been ongoing in the LWF. It includes supporting Churches in their strategic efforts to move toward economic and financial autonomy.

What I can bring is listening and accompanying them in their moments of joy and celebrations and in their challenges: encouraging them to implement the values promoted by the LWF while respecting the rules of procedure in the area of resource sharing such as scholarships and support for development projects.

Of course, there are other challenges that affect all Churches and religious organisations. In Africa, there is rapid development of the revivalist, neo-Pentecostal Churches, which promote deceptive theologies for the people. Prosperity theology, for instance, drains our youth. Many say they believe in Jesus and expect wealth, only to find that they have been sold false dreams.

Through theological education, the Churches in Africa must re-educate people on basic Christian concepts of faith such as resurrection, grace and love. For me, resurrection is about victory over the forces of darkness and evil. If our Christians understood this correctly, many would not run to the false prophets who multiply every day

in Africa. To understand grace correctly is to live with freedom from guilt and from the dictatorship of perfection. Understanding love would strengthen our contribution to seeking peace where there is conflict.

My wish is to see our theological institutions train qualified teachers who teach the liberating Gospel of Christ to future pastors so that they will be able to impart this message to their congregations.

How do you see the connection between member churches and LWF’s global mission?

Without member Churches, there is no communion. It is because of the Churches that there is an LWF and its mission as a communion of Churches. I think of the image the Apostle Paul gives in the Epistle to the Corinthians, where he talks about the Church as a body with different members, and each member has its role, and between its members there is synergy, and this communion gives each member that synergy. There is solidarity and synergy such that without the members, the communion relations and the humanitarian work of the LWF would not be possible.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Dr Roy Long commends a book introducing the Church of England to people unfamiliar with it.

I have been reading a new history of the Church of England. Entitled **A People’s Church: A History of the Church of England** (London, Profile Books, 2022. ISBN: 978-1-78125-249-9) it is by Dr Jeremy Morris, the former Master of Trinity Hall in the University of Cambridge. It is a fascinating read, both interesting and informative, mixing the strictly chronological with chapters dealing with specific topics such as the role of music in the Church (Ch.13) and the Church in industrial society (Ch.16). At over 400 pages you will need time to read it, but it is well worth the effort. I thoroughly recommend it.

IRISH ANGLICANS AND MORAVIANS ARE CLOSE TO MINISTRY SWAP

The General Synod of the Church of Ireland has agreed that interchangeability with the Moravian Church be enacted, as reported by Pat Ashworth in the Church Times of 13th May 2022, just after that month's Window was circulated.

The Church of Ireland can now implement arrangements for interchangeability of ministry with the Moravian Church, thanks to a shared commitment to threefold ministry that, among other provisions, enabled any Moravian deacon entering the ministry of the Church of Ireland to exercise diaconal ministry in the manner traditionally understood by the Church of Ireland, and vice versa.

Any Church of Ireland priest who wishes to serve a Moravian congregation would be received as a Presbyterian, and vice versa. Furthermore, the Church of England "is content that Church of Ireland bishops should take a full part in the consecration of Moravian bishops, even when this takes place in England, provided the local Church of England bishop is informed as a courtesy."

The agreement was endorsed by the Church of Ireland's House of Bishops in November 2021. The Bishop of Tuam, Limerick & Killaloe, the Rt Rev Michael Burrows, who proposed the motion, described conversations between the two Churches since 2015 as 'in-depth, extremely amiable, and helpful', and the Moravian Church itself as a historic Church, 'representing something distinctive and renewing'.

He continued: 'We are daring to hope the Church of England will learn something from us.' The Church of Ireland, he said, wanted to build on the Anglican-Moravian Fetter Lane agreement of 1995, in which the two Churches achieved significant theological convergence. 'With each agreement on ecumenism, we are binding up *episcopate's* wings - to make it an office of unity,' he said.

Bishop Sarah Groves, of the Moravian Church, declared herself 'absolutely delighted to be at this place at this time'. Moravian bishops were bishops for life, she said. They are elected by the province at synod, able to operate anywhere in the Church, and paid the same as deacons. They were a focus for unity. She also expressed herself as delighted to be called "a bearable anomaly". The talks between the two Churches had clearly shown that 'you learn not just about the other Church but about yourself in the process,' she said.

The Dean of Cork, the Very Revd Nigel Dunne, hoped that the Synod would legislate to underpin this legislation, giving



it 'a legal base from which to develop our future relationship'. Canon Helene Steed (Diocese of Down) saw it as an opportunity to widen ecumenical discussion and involvement. 'It is about the whole household of God, not just bishops and clergy,' she said. George Woodman (Diocese of Connor) had been much moved to find the church of Gracehill, Ballymena, on a map of settlements in a visit to a folk museum in a remote part of Moravia. He welcomed the interchange of ministries saying, 'Such a move is worth making when links with Europe outside the immediate West are fragmenting.' The Bishop of Derry & Raphoe, the Rt Rev Andrew Forster, said, 'Today is about continuing and deepening those relationships . . . The motion leaves space for that relationship to grow. That's what it's all about.' The Archdeacon of Belfast, the Ven Barry Forde (Diocese of Connor), drew on the experience of the covenant with the Methodists to emphasise the importance of looking at what would happen after the agreement, in shared spaces and in villages and towns. 'Let's not find ourselves saying afterwards that "it can't be done because this is the way we've always done it".'

Bishop Burrows, concluding, suggested that the Church of England sometimes found the mechanics of these processes trickier, and was perhaps 'often quite glad its Celtic neighbours were exploring the ground ahead'. The motion was passed unanimously, "That the General Synod, pursuant to its Resolution of 2015, recognises that the conditions now exist for the implementation of arrangements providing for the interchangeability of ministries with the Moravian Church, in accordance with the attached agreement made between representatives of our Churches and endorsed by the House of Bishops; and empowers the standing committee to take steps to set up the necessary reference group."

SHOULD THE CHURCH BREAK WITH LUTHER?

In a controversial new book, Danish Lutheran theologians state that the medieval theology of Martin Luther is out of step with the times and with faith in the 21st Century

This year, there has been an intense debate in Denmark about the Church's relationship with Luther. The debate was partly fuelled by the publication of a new book called "Må vi være her? - Folkekirken efter Luther" ("Is there a space for us? - The Folk Church after Luther") by Louise Højlund Franklin, Anders-Christian Jacobsen and Liselotte Horneman Kragh.

The primary focus of the book is whether the beliefs of the Church are shared by its members. As Christians we have the duty to spread the good news - to give the news of freedom. It's a huge task that requires a lot from us, but the Evangelical Lutheran Church is not up to the task, according to the authors. The book argues that the Church must change to become relevant, as well as taking the experience of the members seriously.

The authors suggest that the Church needs to try to figure out why people are not turning towards it in these uncertain times. What is the reason that people choose not to? According to the book it might be because of the foundation of Lutheran theology: What should I do to avoid eternal damnation? That might have been a typical question in the 15th Century but perhaps not today! Nowadays we would more likely pose questions such as: Does God exist? and How does Christian teaching make sense in modern society? The questions are different, and therefore we need different answers.

The authors argue that we should critically re-examine aspects of Luther's theology, his view on the nature of human beings as sinners, for example, and the 15th century fear of hell. In his theology one can find the answer to avoiding damnation, but not the answer to the questions people are asking today, they say.

The book suggests that the shadow of Martin Luther looms over us all to such an extent that it is hard for ordinary Danes to understand what to do with this institutional faith. More and more ask: What does it mean for us? (p20)

Not everyone agrees with the authors, of course. Some think that the problem lies in secularisation or loss of tradition, and warn against 'throwing out the confession with the bath water.' And so the theological debate will continue!



NEW ANGLICAN DIRECTOR OF UNITY, FAITH & ORDER

The Executive Director of the Living Church Foundation, Dr Christopher Wells, is to be the next Director of Unity, Faith and Order for the Anglican Communion. Dr Wells will succeed the Venerable Dr William Adam who has been installed as Archdeacon of Canterbury.

Dr Wells, seen here with the Secretary General-Designate of the Anglican Communion, Bishop Anthony Poggio and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, will lead and support the work of the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order (IASCUFO) – the international body that advises Provinces, the Secretary General and the Instruments of Communion on ecumenical relations and doctrine - and lead staff member for Anglican Communion delegations to official international ecumenical dialogues.

Since 2009 Dr Wells has served as Executive Director of the Living Church Foundation, an American-based charitable organisation, governed by members of the Episcopal Church

of the USA and the wider Anglican Communion, which aims to champion "the catholic and evangelical faith of the one Church and to hasten the visible unity of all Christians." It has published *The Living Church* magazine since 1878 as well as other publications and on-line resources.





Photo: Lambeth Conference/Neil Turner

LUTHERANS AND ANGLICANS GROWING IN COMMON FAITH

Finnish Bishop Matti Repo, Lutheran Co-chair of the ecumenical Porvoo Group, attended the Lambeth Conference in Canterbury last July/August

Three decades on from a groundbreaking agreement establishing full communion between Anglican and Lutheran Churches in Europe and the Baltic states, a group of Scandinavian Lutheran bishops was in Canterbury, England. They were full participants in the 15th Lambeth Conference of Anglican leaders from around the globe from 26th July to 8th August

The theme, “God’s Church for God’s World”, focused on identity and priorities for the Anglican Communion over the next decade, including issues of ecumenical and interfaith relations. The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) General Secretary, the Rev Anne Burghardt, also addressed the conference, reflecting on the goals and progress of the ecumenical movement.

Finnish Bishop Matti Repo was one of the Scandinavian Lutheran participants. Co-chair of the Porvoo Contact Group, which works on the implementation of the 1992 Porvoo Common Statement. That agreement, which brings together fifteen Anglican and Lutheran churches in Europe, was named after the Finnish city where the first shared Eucharist took place following the successful conclusion of the theological dialogue.

Bishop Repo, tell us more about the origins of this landmark ecumenical development?

Yes, Porvoo is the result of a long dialogue which traces its roots back to an earlier Lambeth Conference, held over a century ago in 1920, when the bishops issued an appeal for the unity of all Christian people. That appeal

led the Church of England to begin building relationships with Scandinavian Lutheran churches, first in Sweden in the 1920s, and then in Finland and the Baltic countries in the 1930s.

These early dialogues were interrupted by the Second World War but started again in the following decades and were taken up at global level in the 1960s between the Anglican Communion and the LWF. Building on other ecumenical agreements, in particular the World Council of Churches 1982 document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Lutheran and Anglican theologians were able to overcome their burning questions about the historic continuity of bishops as a requirement for unity.

So the Porvoo agreement marked the successful end of the journey towards unity for these two communions?

Yes, in a sense that is true, but at the same time we have to ask ourselves how we live as Churches in communion? Do we just belong to our own church families or, if not, how can we come closer in our daily lives, sharing in a common mission and service? That is why we have this contact group that I chair with Anglican Archbishop Michael Jackson of Dublin, to get to know one another better and to help our Churches build relationships at parish and diocesan levels.

Cardinal Koch of the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity issued a challenge during his presentation to the Lambeth Conference; the burning question facing all in the ecumenical movement today, he said, is how do we grow into life together as one?

What are you doing in your Church in Finland to build those relationships with Anglicans?

The Anglican Church in Finland is very small, but in my diocese of Tampere we have an English-speaking congrega-

tion mostly served by Lutheran clergy. There is an Anglican priest in Helsinki who comes maybe once a month, but mostly worship is held in a Lutheran church with a Lutheran pastor paid for by our Lutheran parish federation.

Another example is extensive collaboration with the Anglican diocese of Manchester for confirmation training. Every summer a group of Lutheran teenagers travels to England for their confirmation camp and similarly, a group of Anglican candidates comes to us in Finland. They get to know each other and realise that they share a common faith, so their eyes are opened to the unity of the Christian Church. It is vital that we take the youth in our Churches seriously, so other dioceses in Finland are beginning to imitate this initiative.

Could the Porvoo Agreement serve as a model for other Churches too?

Yes, the small Anglican Churches in Spain and Portugal have also joined the Agreement so we can support them too. More recently, we have been able to deepen our relations with the Methodist Church, thanks also to the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, which the Methodists signed in 2006 [joining together with Lutherans and Catholics, and later with Anglicans and Reformed Churches as well].

But in our context in Finland, it is not easy to develop practical ecumenical initiatives as we have very different financial resources and positions in society. We need to develop structures for mutual exchange and learning and maybe for shared decision-making too. We need to be more accountable to each other and to find ways of common witness and service. For example, since 2015 we have received increasing numbers of people from non-Christian countries in the Middle East and North Africa: how can we develop ways of welcoming them together, as well as providing food and shelter? ➡



WALKING A NEW PATH TOGETHER TOWARDS CHRISTIAN UNITY

LWF General Secretary addresses Lambeth Conference of Anglican Church Global Leaders

How do we – as Christian world communions – define the goal of visible unity for our Churches? Can we find a way forward, walking together towards a shared vision? Or do we “simply fall back and expect the other to look like us?” Those were key questions posed by the Lutheran

World Federation (LWF) General Secretary, the Rev Anne Burghardt, to over 650 Anglican bishops, leaders and representatives of other world communions gathered together at the 15th Lambeth Conference in Canterbury, England.

‘The welcome from the bishops has been generous and the work of discernment is seriously engaged by the all those gathered at Lambeth,’ said LWF Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Relations, Prof Dirk Lange. ‘Every day, in prayer, small Bible Study groups and respectful dialogue sessions, participants have been discovering a path of unity and reconciliation for both the Church and the world.’

Day nine of the conference was dedicated to Christian unity and interfaith relations. Anne Burghardt joined panelists from the Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Anglican and Pentecostal traditions sharing perspectives on the doctrinal, spiritual and social justice dimensions of the ecumenical journey. Noting that this Lambeth Conference comes just over a century on from the 1920 Lambeth Appeal which called for “a reunited Christendom,” the LWF leader said that a definition of unity ‘for which we all yearn ... is not always easy to define.’ Decades of dialogue, she said, have helped to shape that definition, in particular the key statements on unity from the World Council of Churches (WCC) New Delhi Assembly in 1961.

Reaffirming the importance of “spiritual ecumenism,” she stressed that ‘liturgy and prayer can turn us around, shape us anew, re-orient us differently towards one another and

to the suffering world.’ ‘Is this a time,’ she asked, ‘when our solidarity with the suffering neighbour and the distressed creation may open up a new hermeneutical framework for our doctrinal and theological reflection?’

Speaking of the full communion agreements that have been achieved between Lutherans and Anglicans in different parts of the world, she noted that ‘visible unity does not necessarily mean institutional unity,’ but rather ‘koinonia between our Churches,’ as the WCC document “*The Church Towards a Common Vision*” spells out. She mentioned the Porvoo Agreement between some Lutheran and Anglican Churches in Europe (including her own Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church), also the Waterloo Declaration between Anglicans and Lutherans in Canada and also the “*Called to Common Mission*” Agreement between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Episcopal Church in the United States as examples of this shared communion.

By these agreements, ‘living traditions are shared among different Church families’ while maintaining ‘their special spiritual and theological “accents”.’ The notion of “differentiating consensus,” developed in the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue, ‘points in the same direction,’ she added, and led to the signing of the Joint Declaration of the Doctrine of Justification in 1999, now affirmed by five world communions (Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist and Reformed). This statement, she said, ‘seeks implementation on the local level, so local, neighbouring parishes, rather than living in isolation or occupied only with themselves, turn to each other to proclaim Jesus, share Jesus, engage in the world out of love for Jesus, and do it together.’ In that ecumenical dynamic, she concluded, ‘we evangelise, but we do it together, not for the sake of the Church, but that God’s immeasurable goodness and God’s good intent for all people and all creation be known.’

In the remaining days the gathering continued to explore what visible unity signifies and how it is already being lived out in hospitality, generous discipleship and joint witness to the gospel in the world.

⇒ **Where does your own passion for ecumenism stem from and how do you share it with others?**

I was ordained in 1985 but even while I was studying I was interested and active in local ecumenical work. What shot me into this orbit was when I was sent to serve in a Presbyterian church in Michigan in the United States. As well as learning to speak English, those few weeks also helped me to realise that I can start taking concrete steps in this direction

too. After many years in parish ministry, I served as ecumenical secretary in my Church’s Department for International Relations, as well as Co-secretary for the Porvoo Group that I now chair.

Finland is a traditionally homogeneous country so most people know very little about other Christians. They may know there is an Orthodox church or a Pentecostal church in town, but they never go there as they are a bit mistrusting of anything in the

liturgy that seems unfamiliar to them. The Finnish media is interested in Pope Francis but people don’t know much about the Catholic Church either.

But the religious landscape in our country is changing: the Orthodox Church used to be the second largest faith community but now we probably have more Muslims in Finland than Orthodox. These changes are a real challenge for all our Churches. We want to address them and find a way forward together.

GUIDELINES FOR MINISTRY IN A MULTI-RELIGIOUS WORLD

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America shares suggestions for planning interfaith services and events

Responding to the rapidly changing religious landscape in the United States, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has published a new set of guidelines for ministry in a multi-faith world.*

Designed for pastors and deacons and others engaging in interfaith work, the document contains a wealth of considerations and planning suggestions for organising inter-religious services such as weddings, funerals and ordinations, or responses to national tragedies and crises. These guidelines grow out of a 2019 Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment which the ELCA developed to provide a theological grounding for the growing engagement of Lutherans with people from other faith communities, but it will be of use to members of other denominations.

The new document is the fruit of widespread consultation among ecumenical and interreligious partners, with over 2,600 people responding to a survey to share “experience, expertise and collective wisdom” with the drafting committee.

‘Our landscape is changing so rapidly that every community is being shaped by new religious realities,’ says Kathryn Lohre, ELCA’s Executive for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations and Theological Discernment. While people often think of religious diversity in urban areas, she notes that waves of migration and refugee resettlement mean that rural areas and small towns also experience new levels of ethnic and religious diversity.

Despite this growing diversity, she continues, ‘the response to a tragedy in one place will still look very different to the response in another



ELCA’s Kathryn Lohre, front centre, with the Executive Committee of Shoulder to Shoulder, a national coalition of faith-based organisations committed to ending discrimination and violence against Muslims in the United States. Photo: El-Hibri

which may be newer to the challenges of a multifaith reality.’ Though the committee received requests for templates to help with the organisation of inter-religious events, she says, ‘we decided that there is no one-size-fits-all model because contexts absolutely matter and relationships must be at the heart of this ministry.’

Consultation between Lutherans and their interfaith partners must guide responses and planning, the guidelines insist, in order “to honour the integrity, distinctive commitments and gifts of each tradition.” It is vital to “spend time building relationships of trust and respect before attempting to put together a formal event that can lead to misunderstanding or even harm.”

The new document acknowledges the “misunderstanding, prejudice, abuse and violence” that has characterised relationships between Christians and other faith traditions in the past. “We must be sensitive to the ways we may have hurt each other (in the past and in the present),” it says, because “even simply acknowledging such a history is an important step in the direction of healing and reconciliation.”

Mutual learning to enrich self-understanding

The new guidelines and the Declaration both clearly articulate the Church’s commitment to evangelism, affirming that “the gospel, or good news, is at the heart of our faith,” inspiring and shaping “the way

we engage with our neighbours.” Kathryn Lohre recognises that inter-religious tensions persist, often inflamed by xenophobic and anti-Islamic rhetoric. ‘Not all people in our Church accept that we ought to be engaging in this kind of ministry,’ she notes. ‘Yet the guidelines point out that interfaith engagement usually enriches our own faith as we have to be clear about who we are and what we believe,’ she says. Our goal is ‘to up-end fears and show that by loving our neighbours, we can find deeper, richer self-understanding within our own faith context,’ she adds.

As a mother of four, Kathryn points out that ‘my own children are aware of this truth about religious diversity in a way that I wasn’t when growing up, even though I had friends who were Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist.’ Such awareness of mutual enrichment marks ‘a step beyond tolerance to engagement’ and gives her much hope in her day-to-day work.

She and the other authors of the guidelines are encouraged by the positive feedback they have received, including from their interfaith partners who were asked to review the final draft before publication.

‘Our inter-religious partners can hold up a mirror to reflect how they see us,’ she says. ‘In doing so, they can help us to see more clearly who we want to become and how we can continue to grow together.’

* You can find the Guidelines on the ELCA website at <https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Guidelines%20for%20Ministry%20in%20Multi%20Religious%20World.pdf>

FIRST NINE WOMEN ORDAINED AS PASTORS IN POLAND

After decades of debate, The Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland reaches a milestone in its history.

‘The whole Lutheran communion celebrates with you today,’ said Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Vice-President Urmias Viilma as Presiding Bishop Jerzy Samiec ordained nine women to the priesthood at a service in Warsaw’s Holy Trinity Church back in May, just after the last issue of *The Window* was circulated.

Archbishop Viilma noted that the LWF’s commitment to women’s participation in the ordained ministry ‘has been articulated as a clear goal at six consecutive Assemblies’ and that ‘impressive progress has been made toward this goal in recent decades.’ In October 2021 the Synod of the Polish Church voted to allow women’s ordination, opening the way for them to run parishes and also to stand for the ministry of bishop. Women have been serving as deacons, leading services and administering the Sacrament of Baptism since 1999, and Holy Communion since 2016.

Addressing the newly-ordained pastors, Archbishop Viilma thanked them ‘for not giving up your calling over the years in the midst of many challenges.’ He also acknowledged the ‘many other women in Poland who served the Lutheran Church throughout their lives as theologians and deacons, catechists, Sunday school teachers, youth workers and in many other capacities.’

In her sermon, one of the newly ordained pastors, the Rev Halina Radacz, reflected on the true marks of Christian discipleship. ‘We want to speak about love and bear witness to it; we want to speak about equality for all and show that it is possible; we want to teach mutual respect and show how to do it,’ she said. ‘So perhaps we are getting closer to the idea of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who wrote: “The Church is the Church only when it exists for others”.’

The Rev Izabela Sikora, another of the newly ordained women, from Szczecin in north-western Poland said the event marked a transformative occasion for her, but was also a ‘symbolic moment for those who walk after us.’ Her ordination, she said, ‘is about listening to God’s word, to the story of our beginnings, when God created man and woman in his image.’

The Rev Karina Chwastek-Kamieniorz from Golezów, the largest country parish in southern Poland, noted that from a practical perspective she will continue doing the same pastoral work she has done for many years; leading worship, conducting weddings, baptisms and funerals, teaching and visiting parishioners at home. But she hoped the decision to ordain women would bring equality of salaries and



Beata Janota, Wiktoria Matloch, Katarzyna Rudkowska, Halina Radacz, Małgorzata Gaś, Katarzyna Kowalska, Karina Chwastek-Kamieniorz, Izabela Sikora, and Marta Zachraj-Mikołajczyk, (front row) the nine Polish deacons who were ordained as pastors in Warsaw on 7th May. Photo: LWF/Agnieszka Godfrejow-Tarnogórska

an end to discrimination against women in the Church.

LWF’s Programme Executive for Gender Justice and Women’s Empowerment, the Rev Dr Marcia Blasi, said: ‘We rejoice as a communion with these women who have prepared, worked and waited hopefully for this day, as well as with the church leadership that took this step forward. Moving towards gender justice in the Church and society is our shared commitment and witness to the love of God in the world.’

ANOTHER ORDINATION



Society member Sandy Goldbeck-Wood (3rd from left), who attended the conference in Trondheim, was ordained by Bishop Tor B Jørgensen on 31st July in Bodø Cathedral.

“GOD IS ON YOUR SIDE”

Right Rev Dr Emily Onyango is Assistant Bishop in the Anglican Diocese of Bondo, Kenya. She was ordained in 1987, the second woman priest ordained in all of East Africa.

In 2021 she was appointed as Assistant Bishop.

She also serves as a lecturer at St Paul's University.

In this article she reflects on her path to becoming a church leader, the resistance she encountered, and her message to young people today.



At an inaugural “Ecumenical Women Church Leaders Initiative Consultation” last May a dozen African women met in Geneva and online to exchange experiences and critical reflections. Bishop Emily Onyango was among them and gave this interview.

When you were growing up, what drew you to the ministry?

I admired my Sunday School teacher, the way she handled herself. She was a missionary. I admired her kind of life, her kind of teaching. I also admired my Christian religious education teacher in secondary school, the way she brought up people from the Bible like Jeremiah, so that the lives of biblical people became very admirable. I must say, there was a lot of influence from my family. My parents were committed Christians, and the way I saw them ministering to people - especially young people - greatly influenced me.

How does being a lecturer help strengthen you as a church leader?

I find teaching a way of conversation. I think we empower and understand each other because there's discussion. I also like to understand the context of where people are coming from. It sets a ground for my work.

Where do you find support, as assistant bishop and as a lecturer?

I find support in my colleagues. We formed a group where we share with each other. That group remains very key to me. When I was being ordained as a priest, one of the things the bishop told us was, “Never forget your colleagues, your friends, whom you knew, before you started climbing up the ladder - because they know who you are.” So I've tried to keep friends who are not in the ministry - friends who can really hold me accountable. I try to find people who are not necessarily in the church hierarchy,

friends I can just go and talk to, who can accompany me.

Have you encountered resistance because you are a woman?

Right from my appointment there were people who were resisting. They used different tactics. It's interesting that some women in the Church also wondered: “How are you going to serve?” There's an expression we used: “smiling off”. So I don't have to really react. I smile and say, “Let's see how it will go.” I actually pray for grace so that my actions will really convince them. I think originally there was a lot of resistance.

When you were ordained, there was controversy because you were a single woman. Did you feel you received support from the Church?

Interestingly, not so much. It was just a few colleagues who also felt women could minister who really supported me. But I think the worst discouragers were the people in the hierarchy of the Church. The congregation I served became very supportive because they saw in me somebody who was coming to serve. I got support from the congregation, from the Christians, and from friends. But the hierarchy of the Church was not very supportive; in fact, sometimes when I attended a meeting and was introduced as a reverend there was laughter.

How much has changed?

So much has changed! When we started teaching, in the seminary most of the time, the Church never sent women, but now there are scholarships, and we are in the seminary even if we are not all ordained and given positions. The numbers somehow changed, and so has the attitude.

What is your message to young people?

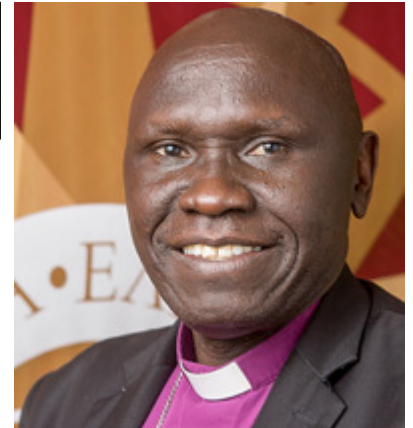
My message is that Christ has called us. We are made in His image. We are people of dignity, and I think many times young people are not sure of their identity. I can tell them the sky is the limit to pursue whatever God is calling them to do, especially their calls in the Church. God cares for them. Many times young people in my diocese and the dioceses of Kenya feel left out. But I think the Church is their place and God wants to meet all their needs. God is on their side!



TWO MORE KEY APPOINTMENTS

SOUTH SUDANESE BISHOP NAMED SECRETARY GENERAL OF ANGLICAN COMMUNION

Bishop Anthony Poggo, a former child refugee who went on to become a bishop in South Sudan and the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Adviser on Anglican Communion affairs, has been named the next Secretary General of the Anglican Communion. He succeeds Bishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon, who announced in September 2021 that he would be retiring in August 2022. Bishop Poggo took up his duties in September.



The Secretary General heads the International Secretariat of the Anglican Communion Office (ACO) and is also secretary of the Lambeth Conference. The Secretary General is responsible for Primates’ Meetings and meetings of the Anglican Consultative Council and its standing committee. ‘Please pray for me as I take on this role in leading the ACO team,’ he said, ‘so the Anglican Communion family may continue in its role of being “God’s Church for God’s world” in such a time as this.’



CHURCH OF ENGLAND’S NEW NATIONAL ECUMENICAL ADVISER

In May this year the Rev Canon Dr Jeremy Morris was appointed National Ecumenical Adviser for the Church of England. He will manage the Church of England’s ecumenical relationships at home and abroad and will work through the Office of the Archbishops to support the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in their ecumenical engagements.

Jeremy Morris is a former Master of Trinity Hall, Cambridge and was previously Dean of Chapel of King’s College, Cambridge. A specialist in modern religious history, including the Anglican tradition, the ecumenical movement, and arguments about secularization, he has taught theology and church history in Cambridge for over 25 years. His recent book

on the Church of England was referred to during our Trondheim Conference and is reviewed in this issue of *The Window*.

Dr Morris was formerly Director of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Examination in Theology (‘Lambeth Awards’), and was deputy chair of the Faith and Order Commission of the Church of England. He has been actively involved in ecumenical affairs for many years, including as a member of the Malines Conversations Group (Anglican-Roman Catholic), of the Porvoo Research Network, and of the Anglican-Old Catholic International Co-ordinating Council. He says, ‘I am really delighted to be joining the Faith and Public Life Division as National Adviser for Ecumenical Relations. This for me is a dream job, bringing the opportunity to unite my intellectual interests, ecumenical experience and theological commitments for the benefit of the Church of England nationally. These are challenging times for all Christian Churches and their mutual relationships, both internationally and in Britain, and it is vital that the Church of England continues to play a full part on the ecumenical scene and to work constructively alongside its ecumenical partners for the good of all Christ’s people.’

A CLERICAL WHODUNNIT

The Rev Dr Roy Long recommends a new clerical detective

The Reverend Richard Coles is a familiar figure in the UK on both radio and television. He is a regular co-presenter of BBC Radio 4’s “Saturday Live” and a few years ago he was a participant in BBC1’s “Strictly Come Dancing”. Until very recently he was vicar of Finedon, a large village near Kettering, close to where I live in Northamptonshire, but has now retired out of the county. He continues to work on radio and TV, but has added crime fiction to his accomplishments, and his first work has just been published. It features a clerical detective called Canon Daniel Clement.

Murder Before Evensong* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2022. ISBN: 978-1-4746-1-263-0)**, is an interesting and readable book, set in the fictitious village of Champ-ton a couple of decades ago. Interestingly, Canon Clement’s police counterpart, Neil Vanloo, hails from Manchester and has a background in the Moravian Church – surely a literary first! A second book featuring Daniel Clement is, apparently, soon to make its appearance. If you like your whodunits domestic and rural, ***Murder Before Evensong is just the thing.

ONE CENTURY OF ECUMENICAL THEOLOGY IS NOW AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

The World Council of Churches' first substantial digital publication and its largest free collection, the Faith and Order Papers, is now available online for scholars, ecumenists, and anyone interested in traversing the twists and turns of the path towards Christian unity.

The Rev Dr Odair Pedroso Mateus, the Interim Deputy General Secretary of WCC and Director of their Commission on Faith and Order, describes "ecumenical theology" as a theology focused on overcoming the divisions among the Christian Churches.

The library of ecumenical theology is a "library of ecumenism in the making," he says, documenting not only the theological results of studies and conferences, but also the processes whereby the studies and conferences were conceived, implemented and concluded.

Dr Mateus wrote recently that during the 20th century, "no other movement or institution embodied with comparable longevity and persistence the service of theology to the search for Christian unity as the 1910 movement on Faith and Order followed after 1948 by its the World Council of Churches Commission on Faith and Order". He feels that, though this statement lacks some modesty, it is not inaccurate!

It was Dr Mateus, together with WCC Communications Director Marianne Ejdersten, and consultant and former WCC staff member J Michael West, who were moved to digitise the Faith and Order library and to think about ways of facilitating access to its content.

'Access is free of charge, including downloading,' Dr Mateus explains. 'The library's opening page, on the WCC website, includes abstracts of almost all documents.' The abstracts have been written by theologians young and old from all continents and main Christian traditions. They give the reader an idea of the content of the document in order to facilitate research.

Michael West explains that the publications themselves are broken into two series (before and after the start of the WCC in 1948) that capture the insights and convictions of several generations of ecumenists and theologians on a full



range of theological and practical issues: ecclesiology, Christology, liturgy, social ethics, the work of the Spirit, biblical authority and hermeneutics and, of course *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*.

Transcending borders

Some 60 experts contributed abstracts to the project. Dr Mateus likes to go through their names, followed by the name of a university and a city somewhere out there. 'It gives you a sense of something that transcends borders, that builds bridges rather than walls,' he says. 'Ecumenical theology is theology in the service of peace.'

Internet Archive, WCC's partner in the project, strengthened the presentation and searchability of the collection. 'Integrating the abstracts and key words into the collection enhances its searchability and usefulness for theological and historical research,' Michael West asserts. He explains that editing and composing abstracts showed him how radical the ecumenical movement was at its origin a hundred years ago. 'Participants were strongly urging Christians and Christian Churches to set aside their beefs and some of their most cherished distinctive theological stances and practices for the sake of presenting a common, authentic witness to and for the world.'

Protecting our memory

Yet it's just this kind of theology - the kind focused on overcoming divisions among churches and cultures - that runs the risk of being forgotten in the

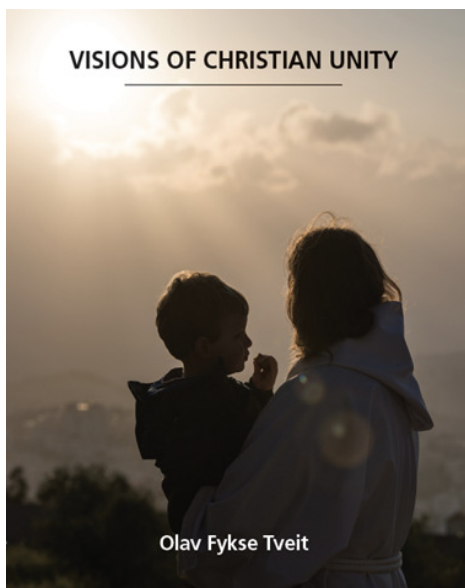
coming years and decades because the important transformations that Christianity is undergoing in our days throughout the world have not so far produced greater visible unity among Churches.

This is the global Church landscape in which the memory of one century of ecumenical theology will be protected in the hope that it will become once again an urgent requirement of Christian witness. Dr Mateus says that this was his major concern when he and his colleagues started digitisation of the Faith and Order Papers. He is glad that the theological memory of Faith and Order has been protected in this way.

A €36,000 grant from the Otto Per Mille Foundation helped to realise the project and the web-based digital collection will be used by theologians, researchers, students, church leaders and others in the worldwide fellowship. This is the first part of a larger investment in digital presence of the WCC material. 'We are very grateful to the editorial team and the project team, the leadership, Internet Archive and the Otto Per Mille foundation for their contributions to establish the first collection online.' Marianne Ejdersten says.

You can access the Faith and Order Papers free of charge at <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/publications/faith-and-order-papers-digital-edition>

SOME MORE BOOKS TO TEMPT YOU



VISIONS OF CHRISTIAN UNITY

Bishop Olav Fykse Tveit, Presiding Bishop of the Church of Norway, sketches an ecumenical movement that reveals an horizon of hope and casts light on many of our most pressing global challenges.

Rather than focusing inward, Bishop Tveit's vision is of an ecumenism that levers the Christ-inspired unity of the global fellowship into transformative engagement with the world. He shows how the recent journey of the Christian fellowship reframes its diversity and differences through solidarity in witness and service.

In the preface, he explains that he is offering visions of what Christian unity might mean for our faith and for the human future. "In fact, I believe in the tremendous potential of Christian Churches united in love and solidarity to heal and rescue our one human family," he writes. "We live in a time when the Churches and the world are in desperate need of people committed to fellowship and solidarity in multilateral relations and organisations."

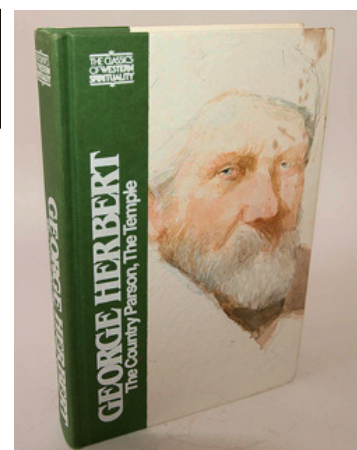
The book, World Council of Churches, 2022, ISBN: 978-2-8254-1707-2, can be purchased or simply downloaded here:

https://www.oikoumene.org/sites/default/files/2022-08/VisionsChristainUnity_Web_MedRes.pdf

GEORGE HERBERT (1593-1633)

The Rev Dr Roy Long explains how the radio and YouTube sustain him spiritually

For a variety of reasons, mainly health related, I can no longer attend church services, so I am increasingly dependent on the radio for worship and religious programmes. I listen regularly to BBC Radio 4 and my day usually starts at 5.45 am with "Prayer for the Day", followed at 7.50 am with "Thought for the Day", and at 9.45 am with the 15 minute "Daily Service", which offers worship in a variety of Christian traditions. These, together with programmes such as the weekly "Beyond Belief", give me a widely varied and genuinely ecumenical menu of religious offerings. The inevitable Lutheran vacuum is filled by the YouTube offering of Sunday morning services from Luther-Tyndale Memorial Church, which Pastor Claudio Flor kindly sends me. To all of these must be added, of course, the weekly service at 8.10 am on Sunday mornings.



I have begun writing this piece after listening to the morning worship on Sunday 8 May 2022, which came from the chapel of St John's College, Cambridge, and which took the form of a commemoration of the early 17th century priest and poet George Herbert, best remembered by present day churchgoers as the author of several much beloved hymns such as "Teach me, my God and King" and "Let all the world in every corner sing".

Herbert was born in 1593 and was the younger brother of Lord Edward Herbert of Cherbury. He was educated at Westminster School and at Trinity College, Cambridge. By all accounts he was an accomplished musician – he played both the lute and the viol and was blessed with a pleasant singing voice. At first it seemed that he was destined for the life of a courtier, but under the influence of his friend Nicholas Ferrar, founder of the Little Gidding community, he opted instead to study divinity. He was ordained in 1630 and was persuaded by Archbishop William Laud to accept the living of Fuggleston with Bemerton, close to Salisbury.

From 1630 to his untimely death three years later, Herbert spent his days in study and devotion to his pastoral duties. His best known prose work, only published much later in 1652, is entitled *A Priest to the Temple; or the Country Parson*, in which he presents an idealised picture of an English clergyman – a man well-read, temperate, dutiful, a man of prayer, and devoted to his parishioners. Herbert was also a poet, and his collection of poems entitled *The Temple* was published after his death by Nicholas Ferrar. His poems, which are characterised by a deeply held sincerity, show a mastery of rhyme and rhythm.

Both *A Priest to the Temple* and *The Temple* are available in a volume in the series *Classics of Western Spirituality* entitled **George Herbert: The Country Parson, The Temple**. (New York, Paulist Press, 1981. ISBN: 0-8091-2298-7. The volume is edited John N Wall Jr, who also provides a very useful and informative introduction.



DROP-IN WEDDINGS: TIE THE KNOT IN ONLY 15-30 MINUTES!

Multiple churches across Denmark have allocated specific days to host drop-in weddings.



A drop-in wedding is a stripped-down version of the regular wedding ritual. So the ceremony follows the same liturgy, the only exception being that there is no address by the priest to the couple. The entire ceremony lasts around 15-30 minutes, and churches usually offer a glass of champagne to celebrate the big day afterwards!

Drop-in weddings are an easy and inexpensive option for couples who want a traditional church wedding but want to avoid the process of planning and spending a lot of money, or who want a more traditional venue than the city hall.

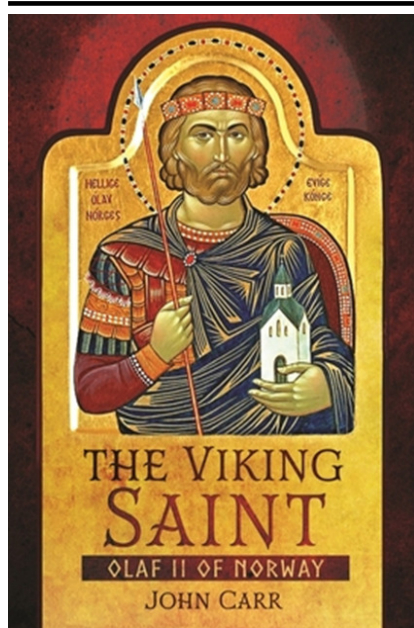
A couple in Jutland who chose a drop-in wedding said, 'To begin with we thought we just wanted an ordinary church wedding, but we didn't want to spend much money, and we didn't want the pressure of expectations regarding the number of guests or expensive clothes. When we saw the offer of drop-in weddings, we knew it was the right way for us to

get married in a more sustainable fashion. The ceremony was beautiful and solemn, and we left with the blessing and the Christian message in our hearts.'

What people need to know about drop-in weddings

- One of the couple must be a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark
- They must both be at least 18 years old
- Both must be Danish citizens.
- There are special rules for foreigners who want to get married in Denmark.

Do you know of anything similar where you live? If you do, please write and tell us at angluthsociety@outlook.com



THE VIKING SAINT: OLAF II OF NORWAY

This biography by John Carr provides a detailed account of the life and times of this 11th Century Norwegian King. Whilst those who attended the conference in Trondheim last July may find it of particular interest, it will also appeal to the general reader.

The Vikings and sainthood are not concepts normally found side by side. But Norway's King Olaf II Haraldsson (c995-1030) embodied both to an extraordinary degree. As a battle-eager teenager he almost single-handedly used boats to pull down London Bridge (as in the nursery rhyme "London bridge is falling down") and took part in many other Viking raids. Olaf lacked none of the traditional Viking qualities of toughness and audacity, but after a dramatic conversion experience and baptism in Rouen Cathedral, Olaf grew into a burning missionary whose faith was all the more remarkable for being combined with his typically Viking determination and energy - and sometimes ruthlessness as well. His overriding mission was to Christianise Norway and drive out heathenism. His techniques, vividly described in this book, could be crude, to say the least!

His unstinting efforts, often at great peril to his life, earned him the Norwegian throne in 1015, when he had barely reached his twenties. For the next 15 years he laboured against immense odds to subdue the rebellious heathen nobles of Norway while fending off Swedish hostility. However, eventually both combined against Olaf in 1030, when he fell bravely in battle at Stiklestad, not far from Trondheim, still only in his mid-thirties, defeated by the army of the Danish King Cnut who already ruled England.

After his body was found to possess healing powers, reports of them spread from Scandinavia to Spain and Byzantium. We heard of some of them from Dr Stang at our conference in Trondheim. Many more are chronicled by John Carr in his book. Olaf II was canonised a saint 134 years later. He remains Norway's patron saint as well as a legendary warrior. Yet more remarkably, he remains a saint not only of the Protestant church but also of the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox Churches - perhaps the only European fighting saint to achieve such acceptance. There have been at least eight Church of England churches dedicated to St Olaf, including one in Hart Street in the City of London, and one in York.

The Viking Saint: Olaf II of Norway by John Carr, 2022, Pen and Sword Military, Yorkshire & Philadelphia, ISBN13: 9781399087810 pp224. Also available on Kindle.



WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM A UNITED CHURCH IN ENGLAND WITH 50 YEARS EXPERIENCE?

Sarah Ball, Churches Together in England's Senior Communications Manager asked the General Secretary of The United Reformed Church, the Rev Dr John Bradbury.



How do you see the United Reformed Church at 50?

The time we are living in is actually a very complicated time to be church. I think 50 years ago there was clearly a kind of wave of ecumenical hope. The expected unity that might have followed on from the creation of the United Reformed Church somewhat fell apart as the covenant proposals fell apart in the 1980s. And so the United Reformed Church found itself existing when it wasn't expecting to! We face all the immediate challenges of everything about the Christian faith in the middle of the 21st century in a highly secularised and secularising context. So I think we find ourselves at this time in quite a reflective space. We're asking questions about where our vocation takes us next.

So is there a tinge of sadness that the URC has got to 50 years old?

There is an element of that, yes. But there is clearly a lot to celebrate. We are a church of roughly 1200 congregations, with roughly 45,000 members and around 300 stipendiary ministers.

What do you think makes the URC special?

One thing that makes us special is that we are living sign of that which is possible under the grace of God, when very different traditions come together. We've come to think of it as kind of quite normal that when we were formed two very different sorts of tradition came together. One is fundamentally top-down, the other is fundamentally bottom-up! When you map those onto each other you would say, OK, how are we going to

make this thing work? We are a united church – a sign of hope when things seem ecumenically difficult. We are also a reformed church, very alert to the reality that faith is a living and active thing, and that the Holy Spirit is always calling us on.

What is the URC's role in ecumenism in England?

Although we are small, I think it's fair to say we tend to get about ecumenically. In a lot of places where there is a local Churches Together group, you will find the URC in the thick of it. When one looks at the ecumenical instruments in the three nations, you will see our people playing significant roles in those.

Being ecumenical is something quite instinctive to us. A third of our local churches are LEPs (Local Ecumenical Partnerships) and therefore it's a very integral part of our identity – drawing close to our sisters and brothers in Christ in other traditions.

There are moments we find the current ecumenical context frustrating. I think it frustrates us at times that some traditions have become very wary of forming LEPs which can become quite bureaucratic and complicated, but now there's help to make

them much more light touch. I think, you know, we would very much wish to see everybody exploring these opportunities, particularly in housing developments or places where the church simply is not around at the moment.

Does the recent appointment of one of your ministers as a President of the World Council of Churches show you have an international role as well?

Well, yes, absolutely. Susan Durber's appointment as one of the Presidents of the World Council of Churches is a very exciting moment. I see it as one of the gifts that we can offer, helping the way to change and unity.

Where do you see the URC in the next 50 years?

It's very hard to imagine 50 years hence, isn't it? My sense is that the kind of deep commitment to social justice issues that we carry within us, the commitment to issues of inclusion and our deep commitment to community engagement will show us something of the shape of what the future United Reformed Church might look like.

Do you think you'll still be in existence in another 50 years, or will that ecumenical dream have been realised?

Goodness... God only knows. I simply do not know what's possible in the next 50 years. God rarely does anything other than that which is very surprising. So while some may say it feels like we are in an ecumenical winter. At the moment, I genuinely think anything is possible.



Faith – Hope – Love – Since 1972

FLOOD IN GENERAL SYNOD ARCHIVES MARS 'UNIQUE AND IRREPLACEABLE' MATERIALS

The August edition of the Canadian Church's 'Anglican Journal' carries an article by Matt Puddister, a staff reporter, which shows how important it is to digitise our archives.

Archivist Laurel Parson knew something had happened at the Anglican Church of Canada's General Synod Archives as soon as she came to work on the morning of Monday, 18th July. She found boxes on the table she had not put there, and the vault door wide open. 'It was a mess,' she says, 'The ceiling tiles had fallen down on the ground and there was water everywhere.' The archives are stored in a vault located beneath a mechanical room containing a water tank and heating, ventilation and air conditioning equipment. A door had sprung open, water had cascaded through the ceiling and into the vault, which is fire-proof but clearly not water-proof!

The Archivist immediately took historical materials out of wet boxes and put them in new dry boxes. The documents were placed in a room with a powerful fan to dry them as quickly as possible. 'My first thought was, "The longer they sit in those wet boxes, the more water they're going to absorb, and it's going to be harder to restore them to their former condition";' she recalls. "They will never look the same exactly again, once they've been wet. But at least we can stop ink running and preserve the original documents."

The General Synod Archives have been an important source of information about the Indian Residential School system; they were the source of about half the 300,000 digitised pages of residential school-related documents turned over by the Anglican Church of Canada to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in 2015 and helped the TRC estimate the total number of children to have died in the schools.

An estimated 114 cubic feet of boxes full of documents were damaged by the water. The records include a wide



variety of materials concerning the history of the Anglican Church of Canada, from newsprint to typed sheets in file folders. The materials contained in the archives, Laurel Parson says, are unique and irreplaceable. But while the records have been damaged, no records have been completely destroyed or lost. A company that specializes in restoring damaged documents has taken the re-boxed documents, freeze-drying half the damaged materials to prevent any possibility of mould. The other half have been moved to processing where they will be dried, re-boxed, and sent back to General Synod.

The General Synod is very fortunate. There are some wet documents but nothing has been lost this time. Efforts are being made to ensure that flooding the archive vault can never happen again.

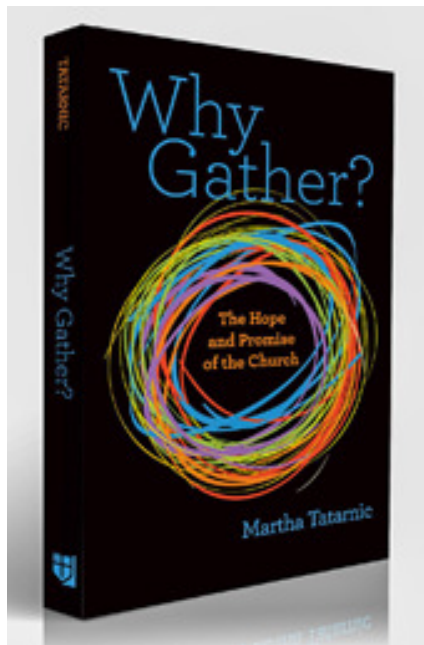


BOOK EXPLORES GATHERING IN A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD

Ruth Jellicoe Sheeran is the retired chief librarian of the John Bassett Memorial Library at Bishop's University in Lennoxville, Quebec, and currently serves as Rural Dean of the St Francis Deanery in the Diocese of Quebec, in the Anglican Church of Canada. Her review of a book advocating "ultrarealism" appeared in the September issue of the *Anglican Journal*.

The pandemic brought us remote learning, remote working, remote meetings, remote parties. Now that we can gather again, why should we make the effort when we could just continue to worship remotely from the comfort of our homes? The short answer is, of course, community.

The isolation of the pandemic pared down our lives to the fundamentals and forced us to ask what is truly essential. In her recent book, *"Why Gather?: The Hope and Promise of the Church"*, Martha Tataranic explores these questions in relation to the Church. She examines the meaning of our faith communities in this (we hope) post-pandemic world and brings a new understanding of what the Church offers and what we give in return.



Tataranic speaks to us in a very personal fashion on a variety of topics, and reveals both her challenges and her successes. She introduces us to her family and friends whose stories illustrate her arguments: her young son with his searching questions; the Muslim woman who wishes to understand Christianity; the couple whose love deepens through the anguish of terminal illness.

She examines the experiences of members who have suffered from actions of the Church – from the LGBTQ2+ members devastated by the decisions of General Synod to Indigenous people who remain faithful despite the long history of abuse. And because the book is so open and honest, we are moved to reflect on our own lives and think deeply about our own faith journey.

Tataranic introduces "ultrarealism," a concept used in long-distance running which involves "seeing, accepting, and embracing the actual circumstances in which you find yourself ... responding to the moment in front of you rather than the moment you worry might be coming or which circumstances you wished were different." She applies this technique to a wide-ranging discussion of the Church and, from different angles, examines what the Church is in the moment – not what we wish it still were or what we wish it could be. She quotes a colleague who said, "I'm tired of being given yet another hypothetical vision of what the church should become."

Sometimes it seems that a living, breathing community is a mixed blessing. We often think that all would be well if only some of those annoying members would leave. The hymns would be uplifting if not for that person who sings loudly off-key. Meetings would be productive if not for that know-it-all who believes that his idea should prevail. But the person who sings joyfully off-key does all the dishes after the parish tea, and the dependable know-it-all shows up early on Sunday morning to shovel the snow. From the ultrarealist perspective, Tataranic writes, we realize that in fact this is who we are; it's these very people – rough edges and all – who make up our beloved communities. Jesus walks with us as we are now; he is not waiting for the new and improved version. "The Body of Christ is the real, complicated, messy communities of people who have found themselves gathered together and who have been met by the surprising power of God's love ... Our lives are bound up in one another whether we like it or not. God has very clearly chosen ... to speak in and through our difference and our connectedness."

There is much to ponder in this insightful work, and the message will resonate regardless of the reader's circumstances. Tataranic is the priest in a large inner-city parish in St. Catharines, Ontario. She mentions community outreach, study groups, mid-week services, youth activities and faithful parishioners who lead programmes. But this is only one reality of our Church.

There is a wide diversity of communities, from large vibrant congregations in urban centres to tiny churches in rural areas struggling to survive. (In some parishes in the diocese of Quebec we rejoice when a congregation doubles in size to ten at the Easter service.) But using a positive ultrarealist mind-set we can celebrate who we all are right now – messy, complicated, and loving faith communities that are joyfully gathering together.

Tataranic closes by saying, "We keep gathering in witness to the point of connection that is true for all of us ... that we are stuck with each other, and we can choose one another, and the God of grace and love is even now drawing near in us. We keep gathering because this witness to connection and truth is a life-giving offering for the brokenness of our world."

The pandemic has been destructive and at times brought out the worst in us, but it has also, paradoxically, given us a renewed appreciation of our shared humanity.

WHY GATHER? The Hope and Promise of the Church by Martha Tataranic, 2022, Church Publishing, pp256, ISBN: 978-1640655515

LED BY THE HEART ON THE JOURNEY TO CHRISTIAN UNITY

Anglican theologian Paul Avis awarded Harding Meyer prize in ecumenism for work towards 'Reconciling Theology'.
Here in this interview he reflects on his ecumenical journey (LWI)

Leading Anglican theologian and author, the Rev Dr Paul Avis, has been named as the recipient of the 2022 Harding Meyer prize in ecumenism. The prize is awarded every two years to honour Harding Meyer's pioneering work in promoting reconciliation between the divided Christian Churches.

The award winners are selected by the *Lutheran Foundation for Interconfessional Research* in partnership with the *Strasbourg Institute for Ecumenical Research*, where Meyer worked from 1971 until his retirement in 1994. Announcing their decision, members of the jury cited Paul Avis' latest book, *Reconciling Theology*, noting how it continues to explore the methodology developed by Meyer, extending its application to the Anglican tradition in particular.

In the preface to his book, Dr Avis, who was the General Secretary of the Church of England's Council for Christian Unity, recounts how he first encountered issues of "Conflict and Agreement in the Church" in two volumes he picked up in a Christian charity shop in the early 1970s as a young doctoral student. Those volumes, he recalls, 'seized my imagination' and 'helped to launch me on an intellectual, spiritual and ecumenical journey.'

Can you tell us about your connections to the Strasbourg Institute and to the Lutheran World Federation (LWF)?

Yes, I have had quite a lot to do with the Institute and have loved going there and working with members of the LWF. I didn't know Harding Meyer personally, but I am captivated by some of his key principles in ecumenical theology, and in particular that of 'differentiated consensus' which I regard as a major breakthrough. That concept helps us to accept the reality that you cannot agree on everything, but you need to prioritise what you **can** agree on and use that as a basis for tackling further challenges. This was pivotal in the signing of the 1999 *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (JDDJ) between Lutherans and Catholics, and that was a crucial ecumenical achievement.

That document has been endorsed by Anglicans, Methodists and Reformed Churches since then, with the five partners meeting for a major consultation in 2019. What do you see as the potential of this multilateral platform?

I think it has lost momentum and that is a great pity. Once you have got agreement on justification in the bag, as it were, you should be able to use the same method for making progress in other areas such as the exercise of authority which comes up regularly in many of the different dialogues. Those other world communions which have aligned with the JDDJ have done so on their own terms. As Anglicans, we never had a formal disagreement with the Roman Catholic Church over justification so we didn't really need the



The Rev Dr Paul Avis. Photo: unknown

document, but we did want to support its methodology.

You have been working in ecumenism for the past half century – how do you see this current phase of the journey towards Christian unity?

We are in a bit of a lull, I think, either because resources are limited or because Churches and world communions have had other things on their minds. I think they have also become a bit inward looking – this is certainly true of the Anglican Communion – also less theologically serious, but more pragmatic perhaps. But I believe we must hold on to what we have already gained and use it as a basis for moving forward.

Some observers suggest that the inability to make theological progress has led the Churches to adopt a more pragmatic approach of doing things together?

I wouldn't oppose theological seriousness with practical action, but the latter should be informed and guided by the former's principles in order to explain **why** we do things together. I think theology is an eminently practical discipline, it should not be theoretical or up in the clouds, but rather lived out and practiced by all Christians. →

⇒ **There are also some who suggest the ecumenical movement has lost sight of its original goal of full, visible unity among Christians: do you agree?**

No, I don't think that is correct. I am glad that the recent Lambeth Conference clearly reaffirmed the goal that has guided us since the 'Appeal to All Christian People', issued by the Anglican bishops a century ago at the 1920 Lambeth Conference. That is to affirm the goal of full, visible unity of the Church of Christ and I think we are on track with that in terms of vision and progress towards that goal.

As Lutherans and Anglicans in many countries, we have already achieved unity through agreements on full pulpit and altar communion, haven't we?

Yes, and I greatly rejoice in those agreements for ecclesial or 'full' communion, although I believe this is not the end of a journey but something we can 'live into' more and more. For us, in the Church of England, we have the Porvoo Agreement, meaning there are no barriers between us in ministry and sacramental life. This has been very fruitful and I want to see it go from strength to strength.

Yet it can often seem hard to encourage a new generation of ecumenists who may have lost hope of seeing the kind of progress that was more apparent in past decades.

I think there is progress to be seen if we look in the right places. This might mainly be at the local level, in England especially between Methodists and Anglicans for example, as well as our ongoing interaction with Lutheran Churches. When dioceses get involved in twinning with different

Churches, this has proved to be very fruitful and I would encourage more people to do that.

But the theological work is crucial and that is what I try to do in my book which won the Harding Meyer prize. We need to burnish our vision of unity, understanding how the Church of Christ is fragmented by our disunity. When we understand Christ's will and purpose for his Church, which is certainly not in its present, sorry and divided state, that galvanises me, and I hope others, to do what I can to overcome those divisions.

Finally, do you see the idea of receptive ecumenism as a key to future agreements between the Churches?

I have always seen this as a very fruitful pathway for all the Churches, both at the top level and at local levels. We have to ask ourselves what we, as needy people, can learn from others – this is the spirit of all ecumenical relationships. Receptivity is the key to successful ecumenism and a humble, learning spirit is vital.

I think it is in the heart of some people to want to overcome separation and to bring people together. Certainly, I have always been led by my heart and that provides me with the motivation for the 'head' work I do as I contribute to this longed-for reconciliation of Christian theologies and people.

Paul Avis' book, **Reconciling Theology**, is published by SCM Press, London, 2022, Paperback, ISBN-10:0334061385; ISBN-13:978-0334061380, pp256,

BURUNDI: TOGETHER ON THE ROAD TO RESILIENCE

A brick-coloured dirt road contrasts with the surrounding nature of banana trees and rice crops

This road is the red line connecting Bujumbura, the former capital of Burundi, to the small town of Cankuzo, near the border with Tanzania. LWF Burundi is particularly active in this isolated and sometimes forgotten part of the country (LWI).

The return journey of Burundi refugees

On the side of this road is a memorial, with the inscription "Plus jamais ça" ("Never again" in French) which recalls the country's darkest hours. In 1993, Burundi was the scene of a civil and ethnic war. It was the result of years of tension between Hutus and Tutsis. The war lasted 12 years and resulted in 300,000 deaths. Although a 2006 agreement restored peace, Burundi experienced a new crisis in 2015 when its President pushed for a constitutional reform to allow him to run for a third term.

This road connecting Bujumbura to Cankuzo goes all the way to Tanzania. Many Burundians take it to seek seasonal work there. Hundreds of thousands used this road to flee to Tanzania during the years of conflict. Today, many of these refugees are returning to Burundi. They face poverty and lack of land and professional opportunities.



On the road to cooperation

LWF Burundi launched its operations in 2006 to support the population facing these challenges. Part of the answer lies on another road, a secondary one this time, going through the Mishiha hill in Cankuzo province. This is where LWF Burundi, with Canadian Food Grains Bank and Canadian Lutheran World Relief, has launched ten micro-projects benefiting 4,500 people. Emmanuel Ndamurokore, LWF food security specialist explains, 'Everyone is participating in building the strength of the community. Internally displaced persons, returnees and even the most vulnerable groups see the importance of their contribution. Together, they set priorities and decide which micro-projects to implement.'

In a country long divided, cooperation and collaboration are key to success. Currently, community participants are working together to build another country road and ⇒

⇒ make a little income along the way. For every six kilometres of road rehabilitation, the group will work for 14 days.



Sezariya Ntihakose is a widow and mother of three. In 2015, she fled Burundi for Tanzania, scared for her life. Even after returning home in 2019, she walked two hours a day to work in Tanzania. With the additional income from the road-building project, she no longer needs to walk there every day. She explains, 'I am very happy because we now have a well-maintained road,' before adding with a laugh that she is 'also happy to receive

3,000 Burundian francs (USD 1.5) per day!'

Beyond additional income, beneficiaries gain skills in various areas through tailored training. 'I learned about gender equality in the household and how to fight against sexual and gender-based violence. I also participate in the Farmer Field School where I learn about agriculture. I am a member of the committee and I have done several different trainings. I can now share what I have learned with the community,' Sezariya explains.

Collaboration is also at the heart of another project implemented by LWF Burundi with the support of its partners German National Committee and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It enables 1,000 young people in the Cankuzo and Ruyigi provinces to make a little income, while ensuring food security for the most vulnerable households. Participants learn modern farming techniques and also join cooperatives to diversify their activities.

Sidace Minani is the president of one of such cooperative, which has 32 members (18 women and 14 men). They have all received training in agriculture and accounting, seeds and a milling machine. 'Before, we used to grow large fields and use a lot of seeds for a small harvest. Now we use less seeds, but we have better results,' explains Sidace. The group's work is so good that it is inspiring others: 'I'm grateful to see how well my group members are doing and that new members want to join us. Many ask to join the group and others ask us to train them. We have helped our neighbours apply the techniques we have learned,' says Sidace with pride.

With the profits made, the group has managed to diversify its activities. It launched a bakery in April 2022, using its own flour. The cooperative has also set up a village savings and loan association (VSLA). Jonas Hakizimana, a member of the group, laughs as he explains: 'Before I joined the group, I lived in a house with a grass roof. When it rained, I would wake up in the middle of the night because the water would fall on my ears! I am married but I felt less than a man! After the training, I joined the group and started saving money. I decided to invest in an iron roof for my house and now I sleep much better!'

Women pave the way

While working together is key, so is equality. Women have a harder time. They have no access to inherited land and are responsible for running the household in addition to their work in the fields. They have little knowledge of their rights and the actions they can take to defend them.

Making their own income is a first step towards new skills and more autonomy. Down the road from the bakery run by Sidace and his group there is another cooperative at work. Here P line Nkuzimana chairs a group of 35 women who create colourful woven baskets made of dried grass and old shopping bags, and work hard to improve their designs and the quality of their goods. They also make clothes. With these new skills has come additional income. 'With the money, I can buy notebooks, pens, and uniforms for my children,' says P line, a mother of six. She has also invested in livestock, rabbits and chickens.



Further up the hill in Cendajuru, other women are committed to their community. They participated in LWF training in leadership and conflict resolution. Community members come to them for support and advice on their day-to-day difficulties.



Clothilde Mbonigaba (middle) is part of this group. She shares her experience: 'This training allowed me to acquire a lot of skills and knowledge because often women do not know their rights. I learned how to give advice to other women, how to support women in difficulty, how to create a women's association or how to create a vegetable garden. I am happy to do this work. I am recognized by people in the community, and I am proud that they come to me for advice.'

While stable, the situation in Burundi is still precarious. It is consistently ranked among the poorest in the world. However, like Sezariya and the others collaborating on the Mishiha Hill road, the path to resilience for Burundi passes through collective effort and cooperation.

THE DIOCESE OF VÄXJÖ, SWEDEN, CELEBRATES 850TH ANNIVERSARY

The Venerable Christine Allsopp, a member of our Society's Executive Committee, was delighted to attend a much delayed celebration.



It was first planned to celebrate the diocese's 850th anniversary in 2020, then 2021, but finally the celebrations have taken place. The Diocese of Växjö is in the south of Sweden, part of the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church (Svenska Kyrkan) and is linked with the Diocese of Oxford. It was, therefore, a great delight to visit Växjö with a colleague in order to take part in the celebrations including the Jubilee Mass at Växjö Cathedral on 25th September 2022. I am a member of the Oxford - Växjö Diocesan Link Committee so this was not my first visit but it had also been mentioned to our hosts that I had a role in the Anglican-Lutheran Society.



Växjö Cathedral

Did it matter that the date for the celebration had to change? It was agreed that it did not, for it is not known exactly when Balduin became the first bishop of Växjö, only that it happened "around the year 1170". The original diocese was quite small, but expanded over the centuries to cover most of Småland and in 1915 it was merged with the then Kalmar Diocese.

The diocese's first bishop was therefore not, as many might expect, St Sigrid. According to legend he was a missionary bishop, Småland's apostle, who in the eleventh century came

from England with authority to preach the gospel in heathen lands, build congregations and ordain deacons and priests. According to Lars Aldén, the Chairman of Växjö Diocesan Historical Society, St Sigrid is an inalienable part of the diocese's prehistory. In jubilee times it is known St Sigrid's Diocese!



Peter Linde's statue : St Sigfrid & his Nephews

The anniversary high mass began with a long procession including representatives of the parishes of the diocese. I regret that I speak almost no Swedish, but was honoured to be invited to read the epistle during the service. Happily it was agreed that I could read it in English but I did manage to end with the words "Så lyder Guds ord" ("This is the word of the Lord"). Bishop Fredrik Modéus preached the sermon and splendid music was provided by the St Sigfrid Chamber Choir and by the cathedral's brass ensemble. The music was unsurprisingly Swedish, so it was a great surprise for us to process out at the end of the service to the tune "Jerusalem"! [A tune recently adopted as England's unofficial anthem - Ed]

Also attending the service were representatives from the Nordkirche (The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Northern Germany) including Bishop Tilman Jeremias, Bishop of the Mecklenburg and Pomeranian District.



We were well looked after by Erik Keijser (left) and Mattias Ösburg (right) who act as Växjö diocesan link officers respectively for Nordkirche and Oxford alongside their other Växjö diocesan responsibilities. Erik and Mattias had both accompanied us on Saturday on a visit to three very different churches in Kalmar in the east of the diocese: a rural church in Dörby with a high number of confirmands; *Två Systrars*, dedicated to the two sisters Martha and Mary; and to Kalmar Domkyrka. The Two Sisters Church was built in 1984 and, seeking to hold together social action with prayerful worship, had a kitchen designed for professional catering but mostly staffed by volunteers. The diocese is unusual. It has two cathedral churches. When Bishop Fredrik visits Kalmar Domkyrka he wears the Kalmar Bishop's Cross. ➡

⇒ Back in Växjö, we had dinner at the Bishop's House, "Östrabo", an eighteenth century manor house on a hill overlooking the city which is also home to the Diocesan Office. This was also the venue for lunch on the Sunday which was an opportunity to meet with a wider sector of society as Bishop Fredrik is a firm believer in "Open House" and during the year offers these facilities for meetings and discussions on a variety of topics.



The Bishop's House

We spent our final day in the diocese travelling west by bus to Ljungby to visit three more churches and to meet some of the local members. In the centre of Ljungby the church has enviable facilities with office space and rooms for children's work. Elsewhere in Ljungby the Mariakyrkan was built in 2001 and is the newest

church in the diocese. The church in Angelstad serves a rural parish of a thousand, 80% of whom are still

church members. The church buildings are lovingly cared for and the importance of encouraging baptism families and children was actively demonstrated.

Throughout our stay we appreciated wonderful hospitality and especially valued time spent in clergy homes. Our informal conversations ranged from the pros and cons of living in a vicarage provided by the parish to concerns for the future as fewer Swedes choose to pay church tax,

especially in urban areas. As one vicar expressed it: "We have too few priests and too many buildings!"

"HEAVENLY DAYS" EVERY THREE YEARS

Thousands in Roskilde, Denmark, told 'We must seize the future with hope' (LWI)

For four days over the Ascension weekend, the churches in Denmark invited guests for the 2022 "Heavenly Days". More than 30,000 people came together in the city of Roskilde and in the Cathedral for the largest ecumenical festival held in Denmark under the theme, "We must seize the future with hope." There were visitors from the Danish Parliament and from abroad, all celebrating the interconnectedness between Church, Society and Culture.



The Right Rev Peter Fischer-Møller, Bishop of the Roskilde Diocese and Chairman of the Danish Church Council on Ascension Day. Photo: Rune Hansen

Bishop Peter Fischer-Møller, the retiring bishop of the Roskilde Diocese and Chairman of the Danish Church Council, expressed gratitude to all who had worked together to provide 'many great experiences for the many international guests.' He also thanked Roskilde Municipality for hosting the festival and the cathedral staff for keeping the cathedral open around the clock. 'But first of all we must direct our thanks to heaven,' Bishop Peter told the attendees.

The Lutheran World Federation's General Secretary, the Rev Anne Burghardt, sent a greeting. 'The future can be full of surprises particularly if we are willing to let God into our lives. Christ says, "Remember, I am with you always to the end of the age." He comes to us with messages that sometimes don't seem to have anything to do with sound and pragmatic human logic, but they are full of grace and love

calling us to seize the future in his Spirit,' she said.

"Heavenly Days" takes place during the Ascension holiday every three years in different locations around Denmark. The event first took place in 1968. In Roskilde, along with theological presentations and sermons, there were more than 400 activities such as community-led events, concerts, workshops, lectures, pilgrimages, and food!

The next "Heavenly Days" will be at Ascensiontide 2025 in the Diocese of Aarhus.



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 together God's love and justice in the world

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The Anglican-Lutheran Society

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SOUTH AFRICAN THEOLOGIAN TO BE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN 2023



South African theologian and academic, the Rev Jerry Pillay, will take over as General Secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in January 2023. He was elected on 17th June as the ninth General Secretary in the WCC's history since the fellowship of 580 million Christian in 352 churches worldwide was formed.

The WCC has in its fold most of the world's Orthodox Churches, Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, and Reformed Churches, as well as many of the United and Independent Churches.

'Our task here is not to play Church. Our task is actually to follow God's command,' he said. Jerry Pillay is a member of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa and is currently Dean of the Faculty of Theology and Religion at the University of Pretoria.

He believes that growing up during a period of conflict and suffering in South Africa will stand him in good stead when he takes up his position as the head of the ecumenical body in January because he will be a leader who believes in dialogue.

'Important for me is the idea of justice and unity. I think unity is the task of the WCC - to continue to work at visible unity, and Christian unity is so important. And I will say it again, that a divided Church presents a very weak and feeble and fragile witness to a very fragmented world.'

But while unity is essential, so is justice. 'Some people tend to favour one over the other. I hold both in equal terms,' Dean Pillay says. The God of justice demands that we 'care for the poor and the neglected ... and stand with the oppressed in their situations.'

Jerry Pillay takes the place of the outgoing Acting General Secretary, the Rev Ioan Sauca. He took up that role in April 2020 when the previous General Secretary, the Rev Olav Fykse Tveit, was appointed as the Presiding Bishop of the Church of Norway.