

The Window

MAY 2018

THE ANGLICAN-LUTHERAN SOCIETY

Issue No. 116

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OUR LUTHERAN PATRON RETIRES

International dignitaries and leaders, including ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, joined Bishop Munib Younan at a farewell service on 10th January 2018 in Bethlehem marking his retirement as Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.

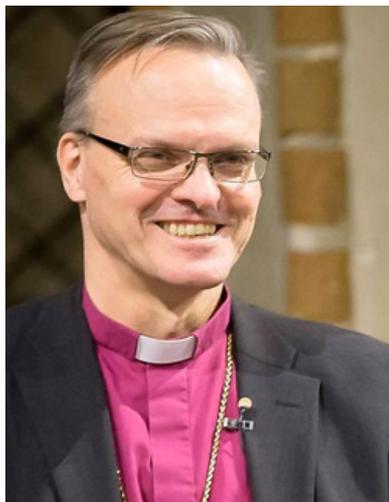
During his ministry the Bishop served as Pastor to three ELCJHL congregations, as Bishop for 20 years and as President of the Lutheran World Federation for seven years. 'The call of God never ends,' Bishop Munib said at the service. 'For this reason I will continue to be a servant of the Gospel in whatever way God calls me next. I am out of office but I am not out of mission!'



Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and Bishop Munib Younan

As a Society we are very grateful for Bishop Munib enthusiastic support as our Lutheran Patron and we are delighted that he will be joining us for our conference in Durham in August.

NEW FINNISH ARCHBISHOP ELECTED



The Bishop of Espoo, the Rt Rev Tapio Luoma, has been elected Archbishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. Born in 1962, he was ordained pastor in 1987 and consecrated Bishop of Espoo in February 2012.

Bishop Tapio acted as Vicar for Seinäjoki Parish from 2002-12, as an assessor for the Diocese of Lapua from 2001-07, and as Dean of Southern Ostrobothnia from 2010-12. In addition, he has held a seat in the General Synod and several other Church bodies. In 2000, he was chosen 'Pastor of the Year'.

The newly elected Archbishop will take up his new role on 1st June, 2018, when the current Archbishop, Kari Mäkinen, retires, and he will be consecrated in Turku Cathedral on 3rd June. Please remember him in prayer.

AGM SUCCESS

Despite flurries of snow and dire warnings about disrupted rail and air travel practically everyone who had booked into the Society's Annual Meeting on 17th March at the Swedish Church in Harcourt Street, London, was there. It was a very good day and you can read all about it inside.

CONFERENCE FULL

The group planning the Society's conference in Durham next August initially catered for up to 40 participants. The demand has been astonishing and they have had to draw a line at 74 participants! People are coming from as far away as India, and 30 have signed up for the Post-Conference tours. Wonderful!

UTRECHT AND UPPSALA COME TOGETHER IN FULL COMMUNION

Back in 2005 the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht began an official dialogue with the Church of Sweden. During the following years the Dialogue Commission met twice each year, once in Sweden and once in one of the countries with an Old Catholic Church. Their task was to investigate the possibility of the two Churches entering into communion with each other.

To begin with members of the Commission introduced the others to the history and characteristics of their own Churches. This created a foundation of mutual trust on which to begin the process of investigating the commonalities and differences in their theological and ecclesiological self-understandings.



The Archbishop of Utrecht, the Rt Rev Joris Vercammen, and the Archbishop of Uppsala, the Rt Rev Antje Jackelén, signing the agreement.

In 2013 the commission published a report entitled 'Utrecht and Uppsala: On the Way to Communion'. The first two chapters provided an introduction; chapters 3 and 4 offered descriptions of the two Churches; chapter 5 described their shared view of the Church as a gift of God's presence in the world; the final two chapters made recommendations and suggested themes for ongoing consideration. The Commission recommended to the leading bodies of each Church that communion be agreed and confirmed.

At an extraordinary meeting in London on 10th October 2013, the International Bishops' Conference decided to conduct a consultation process, both within the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht and among its ecumenical partners, taking the Commission's Report as its basis. The consultation was to be completed by 2016.

Subsequently, the responses that had been received were discussed at the International Bishops' Conference in Prague, from 15th to 19th June 2015. Their conclusion was that the outcomes of the consultation process provided a sufficient basis to officially confirm full communion as recommended by the dialogue commission. Then, in November 2015, the House of Bishops of the Church of Sweden also accepted the report.

The communion between the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht and the Church of Sweden was officially sealed at a special service in Uppsala on Wednesday 23rd November 2016 Archbishop Jackelén signed the communion agreement. It was a moving moment followed by spontaneous applause. In his sermon, Bishop Johann Dalman (a member of the dialogue commission and, incidentally, a member of our Society) emphasised how important it is for people, especially Christians, to discover what they have in common and thereby find a new 'togetherness'.

The Old-Catholics are a group of national churches which at various times separated from Rome. The term "Old-Catholic" was adopted to mean original Catholicism. The Anglican Communion signed the Bonn Agreement with the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht in 1931. This agreement of "inter-Communion" has formed the basis for an ongoing relationship mediated by the Anglican-Old Catholic International Co-ordinating Council.

Anglicans and Old Catholics are welcome to participate fully in each other's worship and receive communion at celebrations of the Eucharist; clergy may act fully in each other's churches. This was the first agreement of its kind that Anglicans had ever concluded.

NOT THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR UNITY

Tom VanPoole, our Coordinator in USA, wrote to our editor in January: 'Our Lutheran, Anglican, Roman Catholic and United Methodist committee in Virginia usually arranges a joint service in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. But not this year! Apparently none of the denominations could host the service. How important it is for those of us concerned about ecumenism to keep the

ecumenical agenda before our friends who may be sympathetic to our aims but who are not as committed as we are.'

Our editor shared this comment with our Anglican President, John Arnold, saying that his congregation in Retford had rescheduled the Week of Prayer for the summer. To this John replied: 'Your experience reminds me of the greatest *faux pas* of my ecumenical career. I was chair-

ing a working group on the Week of Prayer at a World Council of Churches Assembly and I started the discussion by saying that the problem with the January date was that people did not want come out in bad weather. An Australian woman replied, 'That's your problem. Our problem is getting the bastards off the beach!' – an unforgettable lesson in global Christianity!

THE AGM BUSINESS MEETING

It all went with quite a swing. Bishop Michael began by reminding us that it was St Patrick's Day, and of how Patrick took Christianity to a land to which he had been taken by what we would now call people traders. When he had led us in prayer the meeting began.

We met in the beautiful Ulrika Eleanora Swedish Church, where we were warmly welcomed by the Pastor, the Very Rev Eric Muhl pictured here.

The usual formalities having been completed, the apologies received and minutes approved, our Moderators, Bishop Michael and Dr Jaakko Rusama, reviewed the

past year; the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation had been well reported in *The Window*, and the Society had been present at the *Kirchentage* in Berlin and Turku. They expressed the hope that members shared information about our Society gleaned from *The Window*, the website and social media with their friends in their congregations. Our Society is an international organisation and we shall be represented at the forthcoming Conference of European Churches and General Assembly in Serbia. The Moderators ended by thanking their fellow officers and the Executive Committee members.



Co-Moderators: Bishop Michael Ipgrave (Anglican) and the Rev Dr Jaakko Rusama (Lutheran)

Secretary: Canon Dick Lewis (Anglican)

Treasurer: Mrs Lisbeth Pedersen (Lutheran)

Executive Committee, to serve for the coming three years:

The Ven Christine Allsopp (Anglican), Mrs Sally Barnes (Anglican), The

Very Rev Tom Bruch (Lutheran), Mrs Helen Harding (Anglican), Canon Perran Gay (Anglican), The Rev Eliza Zikmane (Lutheran)

Thanks were expressed to Rev Susanne Skovhus for her contribution to the Executive Committee during the past year, and for her work as co-ordinator in the UK of the Reformation 500 Commemoration as part of the team at the Lutheran Council.

The Membership Secretary's Report, and the reports of the National Co-ordinators were received and thanks were expressed for all that they do. The proposed amendments to The Constitution were approved after two small changes had been agreed. The requirements of the new General Data Protection Legislation, effective in the UK from 25th May, 2018, were explained and the meeting ended promptly at the scheduled hour. Bishop Michael thanked everyone for attending. He invited Bishop Jürgen to close the meeting with prayer.



Lisbeth Pedersen presented her first Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement which was received by the meeting. Income in 2017 was up by 20% largely due to an increase in membership. Generous donations had been received from the Council of Lutheran Churches, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and a number of anonymous donors. Expenditure had risen by 7% mainly due to printing

costs which are accounted for by the increase in membership. The balance in hand at the end of 2017 was very healthy and the committee has been considering ways of using some money to promote the aim of the Society, one suggestion being the awarding of an annual scholarship to a theological student. The committee has agreed to fund five bursaries and one part bursary for people attending the Durham Conference in August.

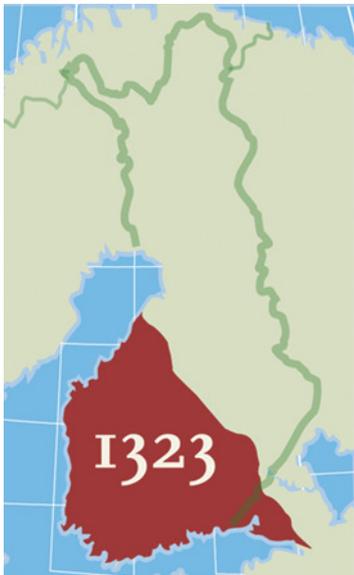
Bishop Jürgen, our Lutheran President, took the chair for the elections and thanked the retiring officers and committee members for all their hard work. The following were elected to serve for the coming year:

ICELAND'S YOUNGSTERS HELP UGANDAN YOUTH

At the beginning of March the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland holds a Youth Sunday. Young people from all around the country worship, learn and share together their view of what it means to be church. This year the young people from Keflavík, Garður, Sandgerði, Grindavík, Hafnarfjörður, Álftanes, Garðabær and Kjalarnes in Kjalarnes Deanery, a district of Reykjavík, raised funds to help build a stone house for orphans in Western Uganda who have lost one or both parents to HIV and AIDS. The youngsters gathered donations in worship services, sold coffee and cakes after church and went from house to house to raise awareness and funds. 'I wanted to participate, because I want everyone to have a home,' said one of them. 'All the children in the world should be equal.' In all, they raised 500,000 IKR (\$5,000). 'This is much more than we expected,' said the Rev Stefán Már Gunnlaugsson of the ELCI, 'For this amount four stone houses can be built.' (LWI)

FINNISH CHURCH ASSISTS ASYLUM SEEKERS, REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

The Rev Vesa Häkkinen works for the Department for International Relations in the Office for Global Mission in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. His presentation in the morning of our AGM is summarised here by Dick Lewis, but is available in full on the website.



After a brief personal introduction, Mr Häkkinen put his presentation into historical context. The first attempt to define the borders of Finland was made in 1323 by the King of Sweden, as Finland was part of Sweden at that time, and the King of Novgorod, later called Russia. It was just the dark area on the map and interestingly more than 90% of the population lives in that area today.

Internally Displaced People (IDPs) are a familiar part of the Finnish scene. After the Second World War Finland had to hand the four areas in the East shown here to the Soviet Union, and more than 400,000 Karelian people were evacuated from these areas. The fact that these people settled within five years was a kind of miracle, Mr Häkkinen told us, brought about by the determination of the Finnish Government to provide new homes in a number of locations carefully chosen to replicate the agricultural and economic conditions of the communities from which the immigrants came.



But people do not just come to Finland. An estimated 1.6 million have left Finland and moved all over the world. There were two great waves of emigration, the first at the turn of the twentieth century when many Finns went to USA and to Australia, and the second was in the 1960s when many moved to Sweden. ‘People were looking for better living conditions,’ Mr Häkkinen said, ‘something that people remember now when others come knocking on our doors seeking better conditions.’



After the Second World War Finland did not attract many immigrants. ‘Our society was quite closed,’ Mr Häkkinen told us, ‘we only spoke Finnish and Swedish, and neither is really an international language!’ It was not until he was in his twenties that he met his first African-born man. However, by the end of the 1970s he became acutely aware of refugees. There were the so-called Vietnamese boat people who were resettled in different parts of Finland. ‘Their story is actually quite encouraging,’ he said, ‘because they have really found their place in our society.’

But today the Finnish government has quite a strict immigration policy and favours strict border control. They have arrived at this position largely as a reaction to the thousands of asylum seekers that been entering the country since 2015. ‘Most of the asylum seekers come via Sweden, either by crossing the sea or by bus through northern Sweden and northern Finland,’ Mr Häkkinen explained.

A Swedish town, Haparanda, and a Finnish town, Tornio, straddle the border and even share a common bus station. There the border is open and you can drive, bicycle or walk through it and nobody asks any questions.

As buses loaded with asylum seekers began to appear, people started to wonder what might be done with them. The Finnish Immigration Service in cooperation with the Finnish Red Cross was slow to react, and it was churches and volunteers from congregations that gave the migrants support. ‘It is my belief that without the support of these church volunteers the Immigration Service would not have been able to cope,’ Mr Häkkinen commented.

But it is a fact that many people in Finland today think that refugees should simply be sent home. They do not realise that a refugee cannot simply move from the area, the town or village from which s/he came, to another part of the country where s/he might be safe. The reality is much more complicated, and Churches are working hard to counter this kind of thinking.



In this picture you can see two diaconal workers from Tornio who have played a significant role in welcoming asylum seekers there and motivating local volunteers to help. But a developing problem is “burn-out” among the volunteers. “When is this going to end?” they ask. The Church of Finland is busy providing guidelines for congregations on how to care for volunteers, and also material to help them with their tasks. For example, a website offers documents in different languages, short films about health care, about the rights of asylum seekers and how to prepare for interviews, and also recommendations and advice for the volunteers on how to work with people who come from a different culture and who have a different religious background.

Happily, many asylum seekers have found the Christian churches to be places of safety, Mr Häkkinen said with a smile, and many show an interest in Christianity. The Church of Finland honours the tradition of the church as a place of sanctuary, ‘but when in March 2016 our Archbishop, Kari Mäkinen, promised that our Church would protect refugees whose requests for asylum were being rejected by the authorities, some people resigned their membership of the Church. But in general I would say that the atmosphere in congregations towards asylum seekers was and is mainly positive.’

The welcome most congregations offer to the refugees is due to a Christian understanding that welcome to strangers is very well based in the Bible, in the life of our Saviour and in the life of the Early Church. Furthermore, Christian charity dictates that whether you are a Christian, a Muslim or a Buddhist, you are in the image of God; you are precious to God.

Mr Häkkinen gave many examples of how church volunteers had worked hard to make the newcomers welcome, and you can find them all in his presentation on the website. As a result, good relations were built up between the refugees and their volunteers, ‘and many of these relationships continue even though the asylum seekers may have been sent back to their own countries,’ he said.

He quoted one special case which had been the subject of newspaper and TV coverage. ‘An elderly woman named Linéa hired an asylum seeker named Ali, a Muslim man by the way, to be her personal assistant,’ he told us. ‘Linéa asked Ali if it would be OK if they go to the church every Sunday and every Monday to the congregational club. Ali responded, “Of course, these are the gifts from God.” Both Linéa and Ali are very happy with this arrangement, but the problem is that Ali is under threat of being sent back to Afghanistan.’ Here are Linéa and Ali out shopping.



Robust efforts have been made by Church leaders to persuade the Finnish Immigration Service to adopt a more generous stance towards refugees and asylum seekers, and Kari Mäkinen, the Archbishop, has gone on record saying, ‘The government of Finland should take more refugees than the minimum mandated share.’

A problem of some Christians’ making has been a tendency by some independent congregations to baptise people with little or no teaching at all. They tell the refugees and asylum seekers that it will be easier for them to get permission to stay in Finland if they are Christians. But the reality is that officials are suspicious when an asylum seeker comes and says, “I have papers showing that I have been baptised!” and produces four papers from four different pastors or congregations!



Naturally, Mr Häkkinen told us, Finns have not been used to people coming from abroad who are active in their religion which is non-Christian. Sometimes they have been the subject of bad publicity. ‘Every time asylum seekers have made trouble the newspapers have been very quick to say they have done this and this and this,’ he said. But when in August 2017 an asylum seeker stabbed ten people in Turku the Archbishop, the local Imam and Rabbi, and followers of various religions, all gathered in Turku Cathedral in common prayer.

Mr Häkkinen said, ‘I would say that, all in all, the Churches in Finland have been commendable both in providing practical help and in advocacy, and this has brought the Churches and other religions closer together at a practical level.’ He summarised the theological justification in five points: *(continued next page)*

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1. **The Old and New Testament testimony** is quite clear – we should take care of strangers.
2. **The example of Christ and the Early Church** – Jesus and the first Christians never abandoned anyone because of his religion, ethnicity or background.
3. **Ecclesiology** – the policy set out in ‘Common Witness: Basic Policy on Mission in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland’ is clear: “Holistic Mission also includes justice, human dignity, equality, and advocacy for people’s fundamental rights. Parishes and mission agencies may encounter immigrants, refugees, displaced people, the marginalised and the persecuted. They will support and serve them, work with them and on their behalf, and give a voice to those who have none.”
4. **The history of the Church and the empathy learned** – Christian believers have been, and possibly still are, the most persecuted believers in the world. So they understand other people who are persecuted both from a religious and a political point of view.
5. **The Tradition of the Church as Sanctuary** – 200 cities in the USA have proclaimed themselves sanctuary cities, offering shelter to illegal immigrants. In these cities there are Christian congregations and parishes which take seriously the words of our Lord, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of these least of brothers or sisters of mine you did for me.’ (Matthew 25.40)

Mt Häkkinen made three final points:

1. **The concept of truth:** Finns consider themselves people who always tell the truth and they expect others to do the same. But the problem is that **truth** is not the same as **facts**. ‘When living in Senegal in West Africa’, he said, ‘one of the most precious lessons I learned there was that ‘the truth’ is the thing that brings the best result.’ Sometimes people tell good stories in order to explain what has happened to them, but their stories might not be accurate facts about their lives. ‘If we don’t understand this,’ he warned, ‘we start to call people liars. But fairy tales and children’s stories remind us that sometimes the best story is the best truth.’



2. **The concept of conversion:** Finns are steeped in the idea that faith is a private matter. ‘So I see how the officers in the Immigration Service do not understand that a person is, number one, someone who comes from a community, and that if that person breaks his or her relationship with that community ... he or she might be told by the family, “You no longer have any relationship with us, and if you return we will kill you”.’



3. **The concept of a traumatised people:** in the media there is a lot of discussion about why so many young men are coming to seek asylum, but ‘there is less written about the fact that young men may be forced either to become soldiers and to kill their fellow citizens or be sentenced to death. Their only real choice is to flee their country.’

Vesa Häkkinen ended his presentation with a short video. It was made on mobile phones and showed people welcoming migrants and refugees to their communities in Finland.

His presentation was followed by lively discussion, chaired by the Ven Christine Allsopp, which is summarised on the website.

Vesa Häkkinen’s session brought to an end what had been a stimulating and fascinating morning. We moved from the Church where we had been meeting into the hall which, throughout the morning, had been inhabited by children, playing games and learning their Swedish language and about their culture. In no time the staff converted the room into a restaurant, and we were fed royally with soup, hot dishes and Swedish cinnamon buns, of course, with tea and coffee. Our thanks to everyone at the Swedish Church for making us so welcome, and a special vote of thanks to Sally Barnes and Eliza Zikmane who, with help from Fr Phillip Swingler, organised the entire event which went without a hitch.



THE AFTERNOON SESSION

After lunch we were shown a short film. Introducing it, the Ven Christine Allsopp explained that it had been produced by the Växjö Diocese of the Church of Sweden with which the Diocese of Oxford in the Church of England is twinned.

Because the film was mainly in Swedish she had prepared a 'voiceover' in English. What a good job she had! There was a glitch in the audio-visual equipment and the film's soundtrack was missing.

So here you can see her (dark figure bottom right) providing her commentary as we watched the silent film *'Vad är Integration?'* You can see it (and hear it and listen to her 'voiceover') via the AGM page on the website. It shows how the congregations in that part of Sweden are making a real effort to help refugees and migrants to feel welcome and to become integrated into their new communities.



THE REFUGEE EXPERIENCE

There were two presentations during the afternoon session, and the Rev Eliza Zikmane, Pastor of the Latvian Congregation in London and a member of our Executive Committee, introduced the first. It was to be given by Rūta Abakuka whose parents had both come to Britain as refugees from Latvia. But before Rūta made her presentation Eliza gave us a broad brush introduction to Latvia, the Latvian Church and how the refugee is an integral part of a Latvian's story,

The three Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, emerged 100 years ago from the destruction created by the First World War, during which about one-third of the population of Latvia had fled the country and was scattered across the vast territories of Russia. To sustain themselves, Eliza explained, those refugees established committees and organisations which successfully met their needs, so there were groups ready to take the reins when the new nation state was established in 1918.

Something similar happened in the Church. 'The first Church Council uniting Latvian congregations and the parishes of different regions was established in October 1917, not in the

territory of Latvia but in Petrograd,' she told us. 'The Council's Chairman, Pastor Kārlis Irbe, wrote, "A great part of our nation has been driven out of our country and scattered across a foreign land. They are dying by roadsides. Where are the leaders of our churches? Have they gone with their flocks and shared their fate as refugees? No! Therefore we need to establish a new Church organisation for all Latvian Lutherans".'

After returning to Latvia he became the first Latvian Lutheran bishop and was consecrated by Nathan Söderblom.'

Two decades later and again several hundred thousand people fled the Baltic

States to escape the occupations of the Second World War. However, Eliza said, this time most of them did not return home after the war but established communities in the Western World.

'When the Lutheran World Federation was founded in 1947 it worked from the very start with refugees. At that time every sixth Lutheran in the world was a refugee - that's more than 10%,' she said

'Rūta, our next presenter, was born to people who fled from Latvia to Great Britain,' Eliza told us. 'She grew up in the exiled Latvian community here that she will talk about.'



BORN INTO A COMMUNITY IN EXILE

Mrs Rūta Abakuka continued the afternoon session by telling us about her mother, Skaidrīte Dreimane, who was forced to leave her native Latvia during the Second World War and afterwards to seek refuge in the UK

Rūta's mother was born in December 1917, the youngest of four children (she's the little one on the left) brought up on the family farm in central Latvia in a happy and stable home. In 1939 she went to study domestic science and textiles in Rīga. By the time she returned home in the summer of 1940 the Soviets had already occupied Latvia. 'This Soviet occupation ruined what should have been an exciting time for a young woman,' Rūta told us. 'It brought repression, deportations, GULAGs, and terrible losses – things that have been forever etched in the memory of Latvians.'

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The first mass deportations of Latvians to Siberia came on the night of June 13th, 1941. ‘Mum phoned home on the following morning wondering if anyone would answer,’ Rūta said. ‘It was such a relief that nobody had been taken from the family home. They had been warned to spend the night away from home and were safe for the time being.’

Hard on the heels of the Soviet deportations came occupation by the Nazis. The years then passed in a blur as Rūta’s mother and other home economics students were forced to make and serve meals for German officers. Then came 1944; the Germans were in retreat and the Soviets were advancing. ‘So Mum and her sister Zenta, with their best friend Marela, decided to leave home on 24th September that year,’ Rūta told us. ‘Having endured one Soviet occupation, they did not want to go through another.’ Her mother, Skaidrīte, did not realise that would be the last time she would ever see her parents, who had decided to stay at home on the farm.



Rūta described the journey the three refugees undertook. It was fraught with danger but on 11th October, 1944, the three of them left Latvia for Germany as refugees by ship from the western port of Liepāja. They arrived at Gotenhafen where they were put on a train. How did Rūta know all this? ‘My Mum kept this very small diary during her first few months as a refugee. She was dismayed that the train was not going west, but south east. She noted all the places where it stopped. At the end of October they were at a camp in a place that I think was called Lehrte, near the Polish border. Every day the same soup, and Mum recalls feeling sick as lunchtime was approaching!’

The three refugees were sent to be farm labourers at Sehuarse Manor in Poland and, being a country girl, Skaidrīte enjoyed their two months there. But she noted in her diary that it was demeaning being watched over all the time by the Germans and not being trusted. The Soviet army was continuing to advance, so on the 26th January, 1945, they started walking west in the snow, just the three of them with a bicycle they had acquired which was useful for carrying their luggage. They crossed the River Oder and reached Berlin on 4th February, 1945. It took them three days to get across Berlin.



The three of them were now part of a stream of refugees, first going north from Berlin, then west. After one night spent in particularly squalid conditions Skaidrīte wrote in her diary on 11th February, ‘First flea seen on cardigan’. They decided to strike out on their own and soon felt very vulnerable. But something that kept them going was the kindness and hospitality of the local people. Most people they approached in Germany offered them somewhere to sleep or shared some food with them, and one couple even gave up their own bed for the night, with fresh sheets. ‘That particularly touched my Mum and she often recounted that story,’ Rūta told us.



The Soviets were closing in behind them while Americans and British were advancing from the west. For Skaidrīte, Zenta and Marela it became a race to get to the American and British side before the Soviets overtook them. ‘It was at that point that my Mum’s little diary stops,’ Rūta showed us the final entry. ‘She mentions Zenta getting hysterical at one point, also being ill, but I don’t know the details.’

They reached the British Zone and were put in a displaced persons (DP) camp in Geesthacht near Hamburg, Saules Nometne (Solar Camp). The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), who ran the camp, aimed to repatriate the DPs which was a frightening prospect for the trio, but the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force, decided that DPs from the Baltic States should not be forcibly repatriated.

While at the camp, Skaidrīte worked for about eighteen months teaching needlework and housekeeping. The Latvians were very well organised. They published their own newspapers and periodicals, staffed their own medical facilities and schools, and maintained their cultural life through art, crafts, literature, and music. ‘In this photo are both Mum and Zenta,’ Rūta said. ‘Perhaps Zenta did not have a job at the camp, so helped my Mum.’



Meanwhile, after the war Britain was very short of workers and offered work for single status volunteers. So in 1947 our trio were

among some 900 Latvian women who left for Great Britain to work in tuberculosis sanatoria. They were accompanied by six 16 year olds from the school. 'As Mum was their teacher, they were now treated as a group of nine – Mum, Zenta, Marela and the six schoolgirls had to be kept together,' Rūta explained.

When their ship docked, there, standing on the quayside, was the Rev Roberts Slokenbergs, a Latvian Pastor. He greeted every single arrival and it was such a relief to find that even in Britain there were Latvians who cared for other Latvians. Here they are, Skaidrīte, Zenta, Marela and their six youngsters, who were sent to Noranside TB Sanatorium near Forfar in Scotland.



After three years of constant movement and living under the sky or in camps, Noranside offered them a settled home. Best of all, they had a key of their own! They were safe and warm. They were all given work and with work came wages. 'Mum bought an expensive woollen suit made from Scottish wool,' Rūta told us. 'She and Zenta talked about how one day they would return to Latvia wearing their new suits. The toast at Christmas, Midsummer, and on our National Day was always the same: "Next year we will celebrate at home in Latvia!"'



Meanwhile, Latvians elsewhere in Britain had got organised. In 1949 our trio saved up enough money to go to London for a Latvian Song Festival. This made them realise that in Scotland they were quite isolated from other Latvians who had formed congregations and created all kinds of cultural activities.

Some of the people they met at the Festival were working near Aylesbury. Soon after they managed to transfer from Noranside to Aylesbury. 'There Mum met Dad, Jānis Āpša, who was living and working on a farm in Quainton, not far from Aylesbury,' Rūta said. 'How he came to be there is another story which will perhaps be told some other day.'

The Latvian National Council, of which Rūta is now a member, was formed in 1950. Another Song Festival in 1951 was held at the Royal Albert Hall with a choir of 5000 and an audience of 5000.

'The lifting of labour controls on 1st January, 1951, marked a watershed for the Latvian communities,' Rūta told us. 'People could now choose where they worked, and the small communities in camps and hostels began to break up. Around that time too, some dependents were allowed to come to Britain to be with their parents and grandparents.'

Rūta went on to describe ways in which local people helped the Latvian communities and you can read the full account on the website.



Jānis Āpša found a job as a gardener at a house in Redbourn, Hertfordshire, and he and Skaidrīte were married in 1952. She wore the Scottish suit in which she hoped one day to return to Latvia. 'Dad bought a plot of land. They built a bungalow and started a bedding plant nursery and I was born in 1956,' Rūta smiled. 'Here I am on my christening day with my godmother Zenta.'

My parents did not find life in Hertfordshire easy. There was a mistrust of foreigners, so Latvian friendships were important. In 1950 the Latvian Welfare Fund bought a former hotel, number 72 Queensborough Terrace, London, which became, and still is, an important social centre for Latvians. Here are Rūta's Mum and Dad standing outside. In 1953 the Latvian National Council in Great Britain leased Nieuport House in Herefordshire, for use as an old people's home, while the London Latvian Lutherans acquired Rowfant House. Later the Latvian Welfare Fund acquired Catthorpe Manor in the Midlands. Clubs and houses for community use were bought in many of the major Latvian centres – places like Bradford, Nottingham, Huddersfield and Doncaster.



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'I think that the toasts of "Next Midsummer in Latvia!" ended in the late 1960s,' Rūta said regretfully, 'However Midsummer continues to be an important festival for all Latvians. The Iron Curtain had been firmly established. The emphasis now was on keeping our language and traditions alive. Song festivals continued. We had to let the world know that a country called Latvia still exists. As a schoolchild this was difficult as the school atlas just showed USSR – Russia to my fellow students.'



However, a socially, culturally and politically active Latvian community in Britain survived to see and celebrate Latvian independence restored in 1991, and the Latvian community continues to thrive today. This photo is of the Latvian congregation in London. 'I am so grateful to my parents for passing on to me a love of their country, their language and their heritage,' Rūta concluded. 'It has made me who I am. When I go to Latvia, I identify with my Latvian roots. I feel at home in Latvia with all my relatives. I love seeing the sights that I had learned about as a child. But the joy of visiting the land of my heritage can't erase the bittersweet knowledge that I should have been born and raised in a free Latvia. My parents passed on to me not only their love of Latvia, but also their pain of separation — an unfathomable loss, real and palpable.

'The longing that I felt, I eventually realised, was not just a longing for Latvia, but a longing and need for a relationship with God, with Jesus Christ as my Saviour, and a place where all is set right and where all will be well.

'As we read in Ephesians 2.19: "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God".'



A REFUGEE FINDS SANCTUARY IN LONDON

The afternoon session ended with a conversation between the Rev Richard Carter, Associate Vicar for Mission at St Martin-in-the-Fields, London, and Sam, a refugee from Afghanistan. What follows is a summary by our editor, Dick Lewis, but you can read the conversation in full on the website.

Richard began by explaining that in a world with an estimated 230 million people on the move the UK response has been, in his words, 'shamefully inadequate'. Many refugees and migrants believe that when they reach the UK their troubles will be over. The reality is that their problems may only have just begun. 'I know many refugees in this country who've been here 15, 16, 17 years, and one person who comes to our group has even been here 28 years but still doesn't have the right to work,' he said.



He introduced Sam as 'one of our success stories', and asked him what it had been like growing up in Afghanistan. Sam told us that his mother had died when he was four or five years old and he was brought up in an uncle's family. But it had been an unhappy time. 'While when I was there I was a shepherd,' he told us. 'I looked after my uncle's animals. I had a good time with my friends but every day going back home was a nightmare.'

There was a lot of violence in the family, and Sam discovered later that his mother's death had been caused by the beatings his father had given her. But that was not Sam's only problem. The Taliban and a neighbouring tribe were competing over who controlled the village. 'I remember a lot of soldiers – they weren't from our area, from our village – they came with guns and horses,' Sam told us. 'They destroyed more than 95% of the whole village. They burned the houses with many women inside them.'

When he was 13 or 14 years old, Sam decided to flee. With the help of another uncle, he met a man who had arranged for him to be taken by truck into Pakistan. Richard asked how he felt as he set off on that journey into the unknown. 'I was kind of happy that I'm not going to see my uncle any more,' Sam replied. 'I had a strong hope in my heart that everything would be better.'

From Pakistan Sam went into Iran. 'There were other people going the same way but I didn't know anyone,' he explained. 'They just hand you over from one person to the next – you don't know anyone. You're just an item to hand over!'

Many times Sam had felt his life to be in danger! The party had been shot at as they crossed the border from Pakistan to Iran, but eventually they crossed into Turkey where they were housed in a barn like animals. They received one piece of bread and a very small bowl of yoghurt twice a day.

Then, one day, the police arrived. The refugees were taken away to the police station and that's when Sam had to eat his money. 'Why did you eat your money?' Richard asked.

'Because there were so many of us they couldn't search all of us at the same time. I had a 50 dollar bill and 10 dollars in change. I took the 50 dollars and put it in a plastic bag. And they call my name and I swallow the bag. Then I went to the table for them to search me. They, how you say, strip search you,' Sam explained. 'When this police officer came to take my jacket off I said "Give me one minute!" and I took off all my clothes by myself. They search my clothes, "Open your mouth!", they command. They check my hair, everything, they give me back clothes and say, "Go!". And when I left there, there was 40, 50 people already been searched, so I went between the crowds and I put my finger in my mouth and the money easily came out – and I had my money!'



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The Turkish police wanted to return Sam and the people with him to Iran. They drove them to the border, told them to take care not to tread on a mine and to go. 'If you come back we'll shoot you!' Sam was told, 'so you have no choice, just go to those lights. Those lights are in an Iranian village. When you go there they will call police and police will come and collect you.'

However, Sam and two others decided to make a run for Greece. First they had to get back into Turkey! They managed that, and after many adventures they passed through Greece into Italy. 'Sam is going to write a book one day,' Richard told us, 'and in it he'll explain how he eventually got to the United Kingdom.'

'Oh, that was the easy part,' laughed Sam. 'From Rome I catch the train to Milano. From Milano I pass a border town in France. Then I came to Paris and then to Calais. And I'd been in Calais more than about a month, about 35 days. The last day, when I made it from Calais to the UK, was a miracle. I don't know ... because everyone just become blind; they didn't see me.'

Sam was in the camp outside Calais, the one called "The Jungle". Conditions were terrible. No shower, no hot water, nothing. 'I tried to get myself arrested,' Sam told us, 'because when you're young they didn't take you to jail, they take you to a camp, you can take a shower, they give you clean socks and clean shirt, so I said, I'm going to go to camp. I'm going to get arrested, go to camp, take a shower and come back tomorrow.'



But Sam saw two trucks come in, each one carrying two tractors. Sam managed to get onto the second truck and sat behind the big tyre. In the port area the truck passed through three checkpoints and then moved to number four, the UK checkpoint. 'I see a lady by a window,' he said. 'She is like this, looking at this truck that I'm on. And somehow she looks me eye to eye ... but she doesn't SEE me!'

So that was the miracle. Sam arrived in the UK, aged 16. The truck stopped at a petrol station to refuel. Sam got off and started walking long the motorway. 'After a few minutes a police car came and stopped by me – and they picked me up!' Sam laughed.

Richard then described how Sam was taken into the care of Surrey Social Services and given a wonderful key worker named Andy. So Sam was well looked after until he was 21 years of age. Gradually he was introduced to Christianity and Andy inquired if there was a church that could help, and that's how Sam came to St Martin-in-the-Fields. But what had attracted Sam, a Muslim, to the Christian faith?

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Same explained. 'Until I left Afghanistan I was thinking the same as all Afghan people and almost every Muslim. But, since I left Afghanistan a lot of things started not making sense, a lot of questions started happening in my head. One of the reasons I came to St Martin was woman. My Mum was a woman, and my Mum was just killed by my Dad. And, I don't know, it's just like the freedom this religion [Islam] gives to man is to take away a lot from other. And I didn't want to have that God that knows [only] some people, half of them human [men], half of them not [women]. In Islam, one man he could be with two women, that's one thing that I don't agree at all. And ... my Mum is a woman.' (Long pause....)



Richard prompted Sam: 'So you came to St Martin's. What did you find about the Christian faith that attracted you when you started worshipping with a Christian community?'

Sam's reply was instant: 'The love, the care, the equality. They take care of each other. They just forgive each other. They're not seeking revenge or to hate anybody. The whole thing in Christianity is that they're talking about love, loving each other, taking care of each other. That's the beautiful thing about it. But in Islam it's not like that. Sometimes in Islam you have to take revenge, and that's something I didn't really like at all.'

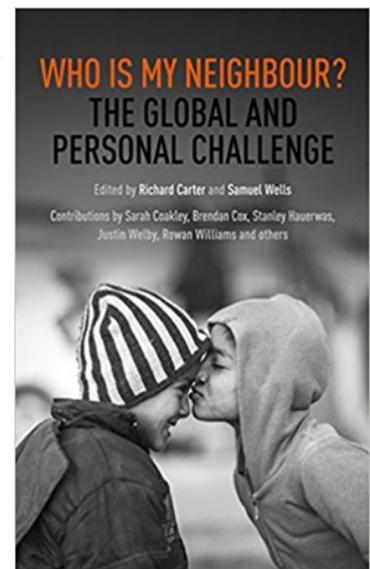
Richard completed Sam's story. After attending confirmation classes Sam decided to be baptised. The Bishop of London baptised and confirmed Sam. However, when he attained the age of 21 he received a letter from the Home Office saying that he would be sent back to Afghanistan.

'At this stage we realised that we had to fight the immigration process to keep him in this country,' Richard told us, and then he explained the battle that ensued. 'The good news story,' he concluded, 'is that three weeks ago Sam became a British citizen. But his is a lucky story and, I hate to say this, but that's because he had a lot of support and a community who loved him.'

'When we went to the court there were five people in front of us who had no support. They had no witnesses, no-one to defend them, and some of them couldn't speak good English. I'm sure each one of them had a story as painful as Sam's. Christian communities throughout this country are in a unique position. When people arrive in this country we are communities that can provide help. We are open to everyone coming. We're a community that someone coming from abroad recognises because we're people who can provide hospitality, care, affection, a sense of belonging. And so I believe that it is the Christian Church which offers a unique opportunity to respond to refugees, to make them feel welcome in our community, to become their mentors, their guides, but also to learn from their experiences and to be enriched by people like Sam. Our church has been infinitely enriched by the stories, experiences, talents and gifts of the migrant members of our congregation.'

Richard ended the session by quoting from a new book he has helped to edit: 'Who is my Neighbour? The Global and Personal Challenge':

"Each person is diminished by the pain of another person and enriched by the holiness of another. And, if we say that we can no longer hear the pain of another, we can no longer feel empathy with a migrant person or a homeless man in London, or an asylum seeker seeking a safe home, or a mother or a family threatened by global warming, or a political prisoner, or someone on the move, or someone who has been trafficked or beaten. If we can no longer feel sympathy or empathy, then we are diminished. If our Church is not living this connectedness with humanity, then God forgive us and help us, for we have lost Christ and lost the Word, the Word made flesh among us. This is unity. This is our calling. To let the Son of God be revealed in us, to be a sign of unity that brings about the connectedness of our human family. We believe it's possible to build a community with humility, generosity, gratitude, grace, truth and compassion, for which we only have one word, and the word is Church. We're called to be an example of what the reconciling, liberating and transforming love of God can do. It may be that a witness like ours will heal some of the painful divisions and self-interest of our nation at this time. Maybe it won't, but the Church has got to go on living that promise anyway."



'Who is my Neighbour? The Global and Personal Challenge', edited by Richard Carter and Samuel Wells, is published by SPCK, London, 2017, ISBN-10: 0281078408 ; ISBN-13: 978-0281078400 and available online and from all good bookshops.

SERMON ON A “MOSES BASKET”

The AGM closed with a Eucharist at which the Very Rev Eric Muhl, Pastor of the Swedish Church, presided and Bishop Michael Ipgrave, our Anglican Moderator, was the preacher. His sermon can be found on the website. It is summarised here.



Exodus 2.3: ‘The woman put her son in a basket of papyrus, plastered with bitumen and pitch.’

Bishop Michael began by describing a family heirloom, a “Moses Basket” in which he had been carried as a baby and which had been used to carry his sons. But the world into which he and they had been born was secure. The world into which Moses was born was not. The Egyptians were carrying out a kind of ethnic cleansing, he said, and to save her son Moses’ mother put him in a “Moses basket”!



‘The Hebrew word *tebah* (תִּבָּה) occurs here at the start of Israel’s exodus, and in Genesis at the start of the human story when God wants to save Noah and his family, and all the animals, from the flood. He commands Noah to build – what? A *tebah* – we say ‘ark’ but it’s the same word translated here as “basket”,’ Michael told us. In both instances a *tebah* was a vessel that saved life in time of danger. ‘In Genesis it’s big enough to hold an extended family and two of every species. In Exodus it’s small enough to cradle a little baby.’

The *tebah* represents God’s provision to save and renew life, both communal and individual. ‘Out of situations of cataclysm, of violence, disruption and persecution, through a *tebah* God brings to safety the seeds of a new humanity that will lead to a new people and a new world,’ Michael explained.

Like Moses, many people today find their situation hazardous. Bishop Michael spoke of the movements of people like Rūta’s mother after the Second World War, and of today’s streams of asylum seekers and refugees seeking safety and a better life. ‘Countless people in Southern Europe have crossed the waters of the Mediterranean Sea in untrustworthy vessels, hoping that they will be their *tebah*, their life-saving receptacle, ark or basket,’ he said, ‘and there are millions more internally displaced people in the Middle East or in their African homelands, all of them on the move.’

He spoke of a visit he had made to “The Jungle”, that squalid camp outside Calais where Sam had found himself, where he heard stories of terrible cruelty, danger and hardship which led people to embark on long journeys from home to seek a *tebah*.

The Bishop quoted some lines from the poem “Home” by Warsan Shire, who was born of Somali parents in Kenya, but who now lives in London: “no one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark ... you have to understand that no one puts their children in a boat unless the water is safer than the land ...”

“No-one puts their children” – this was the experience of Moses’ mother with the *tebah* which was a basket, the experience of Noah in the *tebah* which was an ark,’ Michael reminded us. ‘And this is the experience of the Church of Jesus Christ – Jesus, who like Moses was a child in Egypt, rescued from persecution; and his Church which, Peter tells us, is foreshadowed in Noah’s ark.’



Bishop Michael concluded, ‘Think today of Church as *tebah*, a receptacle that provides welcome and safety for the displaced, the threatened, the one for whom home has become the mouth of a shark.’

It made a fitting end to our Annual Meeting as the Society’s members from many different countries gathered round the Lord’s Table to share the Eucharist together in a church building in which a major feature was a ship, an ark or *tebah*, where each one of us found welcome, security and real hope - for Christian unity and for reconciliation in the world.

MY ADVENTURES WITH THE ANGLICAN LUTHERAN SOCIETY

Anne Boileau tells how membership of our Society encouraged her to complete her project on Luther's wife



Katharina von Bora caught my imagination when I stumbled upon her in Wittenberg in 1991. What a surprise! I never knew that Martin Luther had a wife. I thought he was a monk. I was intrigued, and twelve years later I went back to Saxony to research her life.

I found a great deal of information about her, but it was all in German. This was not a problem for me since I studied German, but I realized how famous she is in Germany, yet how unknown she is here in the UK, hidden in the shadow of her husband. I wanted to tell her story for an English readership.

So I wrote a novel based on the known facts of her life, and called it *Martin Luther had a Wife*. My agent failed to find a publisher for it, so I put it away in a cupboard and moved on. However, in 2015 a friend persuaded me to complete it in time for the Lutheran anniversary celebrations in 2017.

Through Google I discovered the Anglican-Lutheran Society and emailed the Secretary, Dick Lewis. Dick and his wife Janet read the manuscript and invited me to tea. They both liked the novel but made suggestions about how I could sharpen it up and concentrate the narrative on just one voice, Katharina's.

If you've ever had to re-visit an old manuscript that you've left behind you will know how hard that is. But the Lewis's were not so much persuasive as supportive and encouraging. I felt that they believed in me and my novel. They invited me to attend the ALS conference in Sweden in August 2016 and hold a workshop there. This was all rather daunting, but I cobbled together a suitable costume and offered 'At Home with Katharina von Bora', inviting delegates to sit down with her and have a quiet conversation.

Since then I've been on an amazing journey. I've given illustrated presentations about Katharina in various churches and village halls, in London, Cambridge, Colchester and Wormingford amongst other places.

I then wrote a play for radio called "*Martin and Katharina*", which covers just the three days of Luther's proposal and the betrothal of the couple. Lucas Cranach had to pop the question on Martin Luther's behalf. I gathered together a cast of four, then my daughter Elly sent me some authentic German sound effects, and we have had two performance readings – and another is booked for July. I've met up with three book groups who chose the novel. And I was lucky enough to attend the beautiful service on October 31st in Westminster Abbey, where we heard nine choirs from nine different countries singing Lutheran hymns in their mother tongues.

So thank you, Anglican Lutheran Society, and Dick Lewis in particular, for giving me the courage to re-visit my abandoned manuscript and get Katharina's story out there for an English readership, so that people might get to know the woman who stood by Martin Luther; who made him more human by giving him children; who soothed him at night when he suffered from nightmares; who put food and beer on his table night after night as he entertained his numerous guests and admirers; who softened his temper, sang with him, teased him, soothed his maladies, boosted his confidence when it was faltering; and in so doing must surely have had considerable effect on the timbre of the Lutheran faith itself as it took hold and spread around the world. Because, as we all know, behind every prominent man there can often be a strong and supportive woman.

ROAD OF FAITH

A journey through life, belief and humanity

The Rev Francis Chadwick is a former member of our Society. He has written an autobiography published by Mereo Books, (ISBN: 978-1861518767, PB, 392 pages, RRP: £12.99) and he thinks members might find it interesting.

Francis Chadwick was ordained priest more than 60 years ago. He writes, 'Each one of our lives comes with a roadmap ... we all need some sort of faith to lead us on our way. We need vision and determination to survive the challenges repeatedly thrown in the path of our human existence. We also need humour and courage and the ability to reflect, but above all the capacity to hang on when the going is tough.'

His has been an eventful life and in his book he looks back over the highways and byways he has explored with his family in many lands, while all the time examining his own faith. Although he has sometimes found his belief challenged by

personal tragedy, it has remained strong; through childhood, military service, family upheavals and many experiences in his work.

He was Anglican Chaplain in Helsinki from 1993-98 and attended all three signing ceremonies of the Porvoo Agreement, helping to host the English visitors and bishops at the second signing in Tallinn where he was also Chaplain. He helped the relationship between the Churches in Finland and Estonia to develop in the very early stages of making the Porvoo Agreement a reality. He has given presentations in Latvia and at the meetings of the Anglo-Scandinavian Pastoral Conferences. His is a good story, well told.

BISHOPS OFFER 'ROOM IN THE INN' TO REFUGEES IN HUNGARY

Continuing the theme of our AGM we hear how religious leaders are making a stand in a country where some people tend towards prejudice against people from other countries, and where the government is proud to call itself 'illiberal'.

When Miklos Beer, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Vác in Hungary, feeds his pet sheep and donkey the scene brings to mind the stable at Bethlehem. But there is plenty of 'room in the inn' for strangers. The bishop has personally offered accommodation to refugees.



'If a person comes through the door, asking for asylum, how can you reject them?' the Bishop asks. He is just a few months away from retirement but he speaks out strongly on behalf of refugees in a country where they are not always made welcome. He is among a number of Hungarian church leaders who have started to question their government's approach to immigrants and are calling for greater compassion towards asylum seekers.

Bishop Beer, whose family was exiled to the countryside during the Communist era, has a lovely house with extensive grounds. The house is warm and magical, and a toy train runs around a track on the floor of his study. He has accommodated two men from Africa, an Afghan, a Syrian and an Iraqi. 'The Iraqi man was an engineer who spoke good English,' the Bishop said. 'I baptized him last Easter.'

However, the Hungarian government introduced a new rule that all asylum seekers must be kept in detention pending the outcome of their applications. There was nothing the Bishop could do to prevent his guests from being taken into custody. 'The two African men went to report to the police in the town of Győr and they did not return. They are now in detention,' he said sadly. 'The other refugees left Hungary in the hope of finding better attitudes elsewhere in Europe.'

Another church leader making a stand for migrants and asylum seekers is Bishop Tamás Fabiny of the Northern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary, seen here talking with refugees in Syria. He and Bishop Beer are friends and a year ago on World Refugee Day (20th June) they made a video together with a message of

welcome to refugees in Hungary. Afterwards, they received hate mail and abusive comments on social media. 'Not from churchgoers,' said Bishop Fabiny, 'but from the general public. It made me very sad.'

Lutherans in Hungary were relatively quick to assist refugees when they began arriving in their thousands in 2015. 'We have all kinds of people in our churches,' says Bishop Fabiny. 'When the refugees began arriving at the railway stations, I was pleased to see that many of our church people went out as volunteers. They were asking, "What kind of water should we give the refugees, still or sparkling? And what kind of food do Muslims eat?'" The Lutheran Church set up a centre in Budapest offering practical support to refugees, and where asylum seekers can get help with translations and legal advice. The Church also created an "Integration House" in the north-eastern town of Nyiregyhaza, offering refugee families some temporary accommodation and help with employment.

The Romans Catholics were more cautious. Bishop Beer admits that, while he felt the building of a fence on the border with Serbia 'did not give out a good message', he was initially inclined to give the government the benefit of the doubt when it came to ensuring orderly migration. But he was shocked by billboards and other propaganda that aimed to turn the population against refugees. In 2016, the government urged a "no" vote in a referendum on whether Hungary should take its European Union quota of refugees. In the end, the vote was invalidated due to low turnout, but it left Bishop Beer very perplexed.

'Who came up with the idea of playing on the negative instincts of the people, on their egoism and selfishness?' he asked. 'Without doubt, the government campaign had an impact on the population and I'm afraid that people have' *(Continued on next page)*



HELPING MUSLIMS WHO CHOOSE CHRISTIANITY

Taking up another theme from our AGM, converts need Christian communities to help them get Christianity under their skin. Dr Duane Miller, a researcher and lecturer in Muslim-Christian relations at The Christian Institute of Islamic Studies in San Antonio, Texas, and a faculty member of Nazareth Evangelical Theological Seminary in Nazareth of Galilee, visited Århus University and Copenhagen last November to talk about his research.

In Denmark hundreds of people have converted from Islam to Christianity in recent years. In 2016 alone, it is estimated that at least 500 asylum seekers and refugees were baptized or started in pre-baptismal classes in Danish churches. Most were Persians from Iran or Afghanistan, but there have also been people with Arabic, Kurdish and other backgrounds.

Dr Miller (pictured here) gave four lectures under the heading: "Why are so many Muslims attracted to Christianity?" (You can listen to them on YouTube. This link takes you to the fourth lecture which relates to this article: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hzbid3oRQCo>). He also held a seminar for clergy where he spoke of the pastoral challenges that a priest and a congregation can face when they meet Muslims who convert to Christianity.

When Muslims become Christians they often bring with them an understanding of Christianity which is coloured by their old faith. This applies, for example, to the importance of religious practices, which in Islam are much more defined than in Christianity, where there is freedom to express the faith in different ways.

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started to see enemies everywhere. I say this with a heavy heart, but it is rare to meet churchgoers who understand the need to help refugees, and this applies to priests too. Perhaps the roots for this lie in the old dictatorship. We got rid of the Communists and now the general view is, "just leave us alone".

A particularly distressing incident in the village of Ocseny last September prompted both Bishops to speak out again. Villagers attacked a guesthouse owner who had offered his holiday accommodation to a group of refugees.

'These refugees had actually been granted asylum by the government,' said Bishop Beer. 'But this is what Hungarian society is like now. We do not care about others. There is just automatic rejection of outsiders.' Rural Hungary is depopulated and many village houses are abandoned. 'I cannot live with the idea that it is better for these buildings to collapse than to let refugees live in them,' he said.

Religious leaders are aware that it may be risky to challenge the government over refugees, not least because churches depend on the state for finance. 'The government has not said it will cut funds and I don't raise the matter either,' said Bishop Fabiny. 'But some of my pastors worry that we could be punished financially. I am responsible for the unity of my church. I have to hear their voices and I must be fair to the government too. It is a very narrow path to tread.'



Many converts read the Bible in the same way they used to read the Qur'an. When Muslims read the Quran, they do not necessarily understand what it says. They believe that they are blessed in themselves whenever they read the text. Christians, on the other hand, always read to understand. They interpret, analyze the figures of the narratives, the nature of the story and so forth, to find out how this can be applied in their lives.

Dr Miller said that the Lutheran tradition that anyone can read and get to know the Bible, and that anyone who is baptized is a priest and bishop of our Lord, is foreign to Muslims who convert to Christianity. They are used to a religious authority telling them how to access a sacred text.

But converts in Denmark, for example, are primarily seeking a community, because they want to learn what it is like to be Lutheran Christian. So Dr Miller urges ministers and congregations to welcome the converts and assist them as they begin their journey in their new faith.

But there is a snag. Members of congregations are often rather reserved and formal, while the converts are looking for community-minded groups of people. The solution is simple, but challenging. Clergy and congregations need to become more outward-looking, more open and more welcoming towards converts, whether they be migrants or local people. Church leaders and their fellow Christians should help converts to understand how to approach both Christianity and the Bible. This might be done, for example, through Bible study groups. But the most important thing is to make genuine contact with the converts and meet them where they are.

If you want to gain an understanding as to why so many Muslims are turning to Christianity, you can read Dr Duane Miller's book "Living Among the Breakage: Contextual Theology-Making and Ex-Muslim Christians", Pickwick Publications, 2016, ISBN-10: 1498284167; ISBN-13: 978-1498284165.

NEWS OF CHURCHES DRAWING CLOSER TOGETHER

DANISH CHURCH AND METHODIST CHURCH



Methodist Bishop, Christian Alsted, and the Bishop of Aalborg Stift, Henning Toft Bro, at the signing on 4th March. Photo: Lars Horn

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark and the Methodist Church in Denmark (part of the United Methodist Church) have concluded a bilateral agreement. Six years of thorough theological talks have culminated in a document entitled “*One Faith, One Baptism, One Grace.*” It brings the two Churches closer together, each recognizing the other as equal Churches and each accepting the other's baptism, Eucharist and ministry. Both Churches confirm that they can co-celebrate Church services, and a pastor of one Church does not need to be re-ordained if he or she is called to minister in the other Church.

The ELCD and the Methodist Church have enjoyed full communion ever since ELCD joined the Leuenberg Agreement in 2001, the Methodist Church having already joined in 1994. So what has happened now is a local implementation of the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe's agreement.

Henning Toft Bro, Bishop of the Diocese of Aalborg, said, ‘It has been an exciting learning process, and we have grown much closer to each other. We still have theological differences between the Churches, but with the agreement we demonstrate that we have established a very good relationship with each other, and that there are excellent possibilities for future co-operation.’

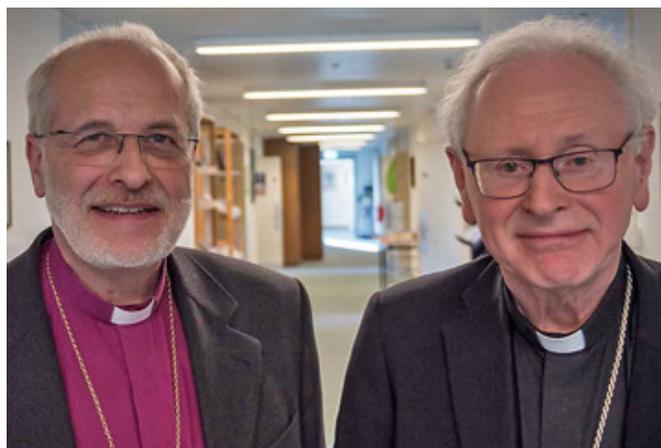
‘It will be exciting to see how the co-operation develops and functions as an inspiration for the local congregations,’ commented Bishop Christian Alsted of the Methodist Church in Denmark. Through this agreement we also meet the commitment to continued dialogue between the Churches, which is the one of the principle ideas behind the Leuenberg Agreement. So the Methodist Church and the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Denmark will continue the mutual dialogue after the agreement is in place.’

The agreement was celebrated in Strandby Methodist Church on 4th March, 2018 and in Copenhagen Cathedral on 11th March, 2018.

CATHOLIC-LUTHERAN DIALOGUE IN FINLAND

A document on Church, Eucharist and Ministry published by Lutherans and Roman Catholics in Finland in 2017 will be referred to parishes for consideration and might pave the way for an international declaration between the two Christian Churches. “*Communion in Growth*”, found that differences of emphasis on the Eucharist and the ordained Ministry need not be church dividing issues in the light of the consensus on the basic truths of faith already achieved.

The Rt Rev Teemu Sippo, Catholic Bishop of Helsinki, (right) called the declaration remarkable. ‘I don't know how many times there are sentences that begin with, “We agree ... that this and this...”’; he said. ‘And that is really amazing! We ourselves are a little surprised that there are so many thoughts which we have in common. It is more than in any other document.’



Bishop Simo Peura (left) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland's Lapua Diocese agreed, adding, ‘In the area of Ministry there is much where we have said we agree, and differences can be acceptable because there is so much in common, and we can discuss them more.’

On the Eucharist, both Churches strongly emphasize that consecrated bread and wine are the body and blood of Christ and on a theological level the two Churches do understand one another better than ever, said Bishop Peura.

The Bishops hope that the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) will ‘form a working group which should provide and produce a common declaration on these issues,’ said Bishop Peura. ‘It is important that it be done at the international level.’

“*Communion in Growth*” [obtainable online] testifies to the community that already exists between Lutherans and Catholics in Finland. Bishop Sippo says, ‘We are brothers and sisters already. And this communion should now grow. We have not reached the goal yet, but I think this document is a good way towards unity.’

CHANGES AT UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA MIGHT EASE CO-OPERATION WITH ANGLICANS

Grass-roots collaboration in congregations with United Church of Canada and Anglican Church of Canada members spur both denominations to find ways of resolving their different understandings of episcopal oversight.

The United Church of Canada is the largest Protestant Church in Canada, formed in 1925 when the Canadian Methodist Church, the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec, two-thirds of the Presbyterian Church in Canada and the Association of Local Union Churches, found in the Canadian Prairie provinces, merged to form one United Church. Later, in 1968, the Canadian Conference of the Evangelical United Brethren Church also joined.

Since 1925 the United Church and the Anglican Church of Canada have worked closely together. Dialogue began with a view to moving towards formal union but ended in 1975 due to their different understandings of the historic episcopate. Dialogue was resumed in 2003, but *episkopé* continued to be a stumbling block.

However, cooperation at grass-roots level has persisted and today there are around 44 Anglican Church of Canada and United Church of Canada shared ministries, or joint congregations. The clergy of one Church are allowed to serve as clergy for the other in what are regarded as exceptional circumstances, when special permission has been granted by the authorities of each denomination. But any agreement that allows the interchangeability of ministries is still lacking.

'Called to Unity in Mission', published in September 2016 at the completion of the most recent round of dialogue, suggests that differences between the two churches on the meaning of the ministry of *episkopé*, or oversight, is still a stumbling block. *Episkopé* in the United Church is mostly exercised in the church councils, while Anglicans see it as primarily resting in the person of the bishop. Anglicans hold that the clergy are ordained by bishops. Since there are no bishops in the United Church their ministers cannot preside at an Anglican Eucharist.

However, if United Church ministers who cannot currently celebrate the



United Church



Anglican Church

Eucharist for Anglicans according to the Anglican liturgical rites are serving as the pastor of an ecumenical shared ministry, which includes an Anglican parish, they can celebrate Communion according to the United Church liturgical rite, and Anglicans can receive that Communion from them.

But now changes to the structure of the United Church of Canada are being considered that could conceivably ease clergy-sharing and other forms of co-operation between the two Churches. These changes were among the things discussed when dialogue members met last November and the Rev Dr Sandra Beardsall, the United Church's co-chair of the dialogue, thinks there might be 'some openness and some possibilities' for the creation of 'a place for personal oversight, or personal *episkopé* as they call it' in the United Church of Canada.

The General Council of the United Church of Canada is considering a plan whereby the Church's existing four levels of governance – pastoral charge or congregation, presbytery, conference and General Council – would be reduced to three, the two middle layers being replaced by a single new layer consisting of regional councils.

Dr Beardsall says that her personal opinion – but not yet an official position of the United Church – is that regional councils, which would roughly correspond to diocesan level in the Anglican Church of Canada, could conceivably include an ordained staff member bearing at least some resemblance to a bishop.

If these regions were created people might ask, "What would a regional minister look like?," she said. 'What if at least one of the people who was going to staff one of these regional bodies was actually set apart more like a bishop ... whose role would include personal oversight?'

At this stage it is difficult to speculate on the outcome of the United Church's restructuring, and whether the differences in understanding of *episkopé* between the two Churches will persist. But the members of the dialogue have been looking at creative ways of bridging some of their differences, so this conversation around the restructuring could open new doors.

The proposal to create the new structure is now being considered by the United Church's pastoral charges and presbyteries and, if approved by them, will go before the General Council for a final decision this coming July.

The current round of dialogue between the two Churches is expected to last until Spring, 2019, when another report will be produced in time for the Anglican Church of Canada's General Synod meeting that summer.

Archdeacon Dr Lynne McNaughton, the Anglican co-chair of the dialogue, thinks that discussion on *episkopé* will continue to be one of their priorities. But the most important thing is to look at where co-operation is already happening between the two Churches at the grassroots level, and to examine how it can be further encouraged, by putting together a resource sharing examples of good practice and guidelines that have worked successfully.

Sandra Beardsall agrees. 'Our work would be better done modelling and helping people see how currently we can co-operate and go about some of this work ... how we can encourage people to see that they have a ministry that's bigger than either of our denominations.'

A TRULY MEMORABLE RETREAT

Zoltán Sefcsik, a Lutheran Pastor from Szekszárd, Hungary, shares his experiences visiting the Community of the Resurrection in Mirfield

In the summer of 2016 I had a very special guest from England, Steve Burmester, an Anglican priest from Handforth. Steve was spending the last days of his sabbatical as he visited me in Szekszárd, Hungary. It was inspiring to listen to his report about his three-month sabbatical. During our talks a desire was rising up in my spirit: I wished I had this time-out for a retreat too!

Shortly after these events, I asked my Bishop, Péter Gáncs, for a little help regarding my dream of a sabbatical. Thanks to his enthusiasm and kindness, a few months later I had permission to arrange my retreat time.

As I was considering the possible choices, suddenly a unique place came to light: The College of the Resurrection, Mirfield in UK. As it turned out our Church has the opportunity to send a student or a pastor to Mirfield for a semester. The person who pioneered this agreement and negotiated with Bishop Tamás Fabiny was



Rev Alexander Faludy, who has a special interest in Hungary because of his Hungarian ancestors. With his help, and the encouragement of the Anglican-Lutheran Society, my dream came true! After a few months of preparation, with the assistance of our foreign affairs administrators, Klára Tarr and Klára Balicza, and with the generous support of my colleagues, my congregation and my family, on a very exciting winter day this year I was finally on the way to Mirfield.

Now I am writing this report at the end of my sabbatical time, and I have to say that I consider it a gift from God and I have enjoyed every day of it. I met kind people here, people like Father Peter Allan, who is the Principal of the College of the Resurrection, and Father Oswin, the Superior of the Community of the Resurrection. Of course it was a pleasure to be able to get to know the students at the College as well. They were very helpful, open and kind to me.



Looking back and recalling my memories I would like to share a few impressions from my experience. First of all, I came here as a Lutheran pastor. What I observed regarding the character of the Church of England was surprising to me. What a wide spectrum of traditions she has! What a colourful spiritual life she lives! There is an Anglo-Catholic side of the Church and there is an Evangelical side as well. Formal and informal styles, traditional and modern shades of the same colour. On a weekend in March, for example, I was able to attend a Sunday service in Handforth, where I experienced a family service. It was a very warm and welcoming, informal style of Anglican church worship. On another Sunday I attended a service in Leeds, where the atmosphere and the form of the liturgy was still very friendly but more formal.

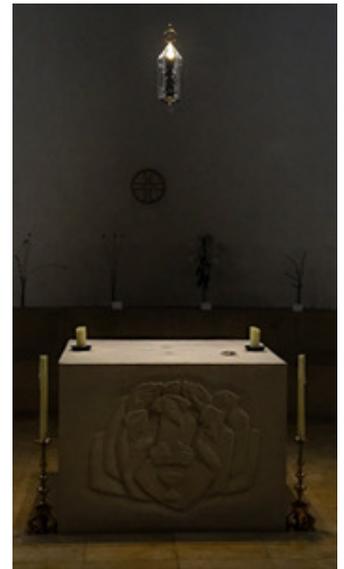
Throughout my stay I was living for two months in this very special place which is, I now know, representative of the so-called "high church", with her ancient, beautiful liturgical tradition. I assume that these differences can cause severe tensions inside the Church, but with the optimism of an outsider let me say that this diversity can be a source of creative power and blessing from our Lord.

During my stay I also did a short research piece under the title 'Searching the Paths of Prayer Life - What should we Learn from Benedictine Spirituality?' (bearing in mind that the Benedictine Community in Mirfield is actually an Anglican community). Just to mention a few key-words from my study: listening, obedience, stability, rituals, balance, the daily use of the Psalms – a very exciting list of inspiring themes! This thirty page research is going to be one chapter of a book, a collection of essays about the same theme: Prayer Life.

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It may sound strange, but I have to write about the fact, that I came here as an individual as well. It means that, after twenty years, I had the sufficient amount of time to stand before our Lord not as a pastor only, but as a person. These two months were a kind of spiritual pilgrimage. It seemed to be hard work staying in silence before our God, and just being myself and not thinking about church duties, not planning future events, or concerned with administrative work. This was sometimes bright and sunny, and at other times it was a kind of valley of shadow. I had to go down to the very bottom of my soul. I had to admit that, after twenty years, I had unconsciously collected some very clever arguments for my defence as to why the King of Kings should be merciful to me. It was as if I had said to him "You know, my Lord, I am a clergyman; I laboured so much for your kingdom, I sacrificed for you so many days of my life, so I suppose I definitely deserve to be declared a righteous man." But I have to tell you, that in the middle of my spiritual pilgrimage, I was naked, and poor, without arguments for my goodness. To my surprise and shock, in the deep I found nothing which would be able to justify me before the Lord. I had nothing - except one thing. In the Upper Church, in the Chapel of Resurrection, there is a beautiful silver pyx suspended above the altar. It is the only source of light in the darkness before evensong. In the similar way, at the end of my inner journey I found nothing else in the depth of my heart but a few words of God's promise. I found only the light of the faithful, astonishing and amazing grace of our Christ. As if he had said to me "My grace is sufficient for you." It was always, it is and will always be sufficient for you, for your ministry, for your family life. (2 Cor 12.9) ...



During this personal pilgrimage there were many important moments; for example, the Palm Sunday Liturgy. We were walking through the garden from the Calvary to the church building. During the procession we were singing beautiful hymns, but somehow our sound seemed to me a bit uncertain, the qualified singers were in the front of the line, our voices were vulnerable as we tried to follow the cross in front of us. But suddenly we got to the church, and the moment we entered was unforgettable! Our songs were lifted up by the acoustic of the beautiful building and the voice of the organ. It was like following our Christ. We had arrived at our final destination, as we entered the church we had also entered the heavenly Jerusalem!

And, finally, I would like to tell you that I was in England as a Hungarian tourist too! I had always wanted to visit this exciting country, but had had no opportunity. It was the first time that I have been here, and it was so enjoyable! I could see the Cathedral and the 'swaying' blocks of The Shambles in York. I could visit the Rylands Library in Manchester. I could see the snow covered hills of Yorkshire, and of course the friendly little town of Mirfield itself.

Living here for two months I realised that we (the English and the Hungarians) have something in common regarding our sense of humour; we both have a drop of irony in it. And I also found that your language and your music are gifts from above, God given presents to the world.

During this two months I received so many intellectual, spiritual and existential gifts, which must be, and could be, shared among my family, congregation and even my Hungarian Lutheran Church. I am really grateful to the Anglican-Lutheran Society for the generous contribution to my stay in Mirfield. Thank you! May our Lord bless all of us!

ECUMENICAL CHURCH WALK

Susanne Skovhus, our Coordinator in Denmark, reports on an annual event.

On 25th January, around 900 people from St Paul's Church (The Danish Church), The Jerusalem Church (Methodist), St Alexander Nevsky (Russian Orthodox), St Ansgar (Roman Catholic), St Alban (Anglican), and the Gustaf Church (Swedish Church) took part in the 64th Ecumenical Church Walk in Copenhagen. This event was started in 1955 by Dean Borregaard, Chairman of the Fellowship of Saint

Alban and Saint Sergius, and has taken place every year since then during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (18th-25th January) and may be the oldest event of its kind in Europe. The whole Walk is intended to be one liturgical process, made up of the different parts of the service. Each Church's musical and liturgical character is reflected, so there is quite a sense of diversity in our unity!

The walk started at St. Paul's Church in Nyboder where four different groups were formed. Then, each following a crucifer (cross-bearer), they visited the other churches in turn, pausing to worship in each one, and finishing up on this occasion at the Swedish Church where they all shared in a combined service at which the preacher was the Rt Rev Dr Martin Lind, Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain.

WHO ARE THE MORAVIANS?

Following the article in the last edition of *The Window*, Tom VanPoole, our USA Coordinator responded to the request for more information by submitting this account of the Moravian *Unitas Fratrum*

Over the past two decades, ecumenical agreements have been established between the Moravians and Anglicans and Lutherans both in the UK and in North America. But many of us know little about this small church with just over a million members worldwide. The story of the Moravian Church, officially known as the *Unitas Fratrum* (in English, the Unity of the Brethren; in German, *Brüdergemeine*; in Czech, *Jednota Bratrska*) is a fascinating adventure through history that intersects at numerous points with our own Anglican and Lutheran faith traditions.

The *Unitas Fratrum* has its roots in both the 15th and 16th centuries, before and during the early part of what we commonly consider the Protestant Reformation, and derives its popular name from, Moravia, the eastern part of what is now the Czech Republic, but was then part of the Kingdom of Bohemia. But the start of this story is in England during the reign of King Richard II. John Wycliffe and the Lollard movement found support across different social classes, including some influential members of the upper class. After the king's first marriage to Anne of Bohemia, the daughter of Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV, there was much exchange of ideas between England and Bohemia, and Lollard beliefs found



Spiezer Chronik (1485): Burning of Jan Hus at the stake in Konstanz

Hus was burned at the stake at the Council of Constance in 1415. But within a century the majority of the inhabitants of Moravia and Bohemia to some extent followed his teaching despite a crusade against them by Rome and their Habsburg rulers. They were generally known as Hussites, but have also been described as Bohemian Brethren, Utraquists (from the Latin *sub utraque specie*, "in both kinds", because they administered both the body and blood of Christ at mass), Calixtines (from *calix*, "chalice", for the same reason), and Taborites (a radical Hussite faction centred near the city of Tabor). Hussite beliefs and practices were not only the basis of the separate church that became the *Unitas Fratrum* in 1457, but also influenced the practices of the Roman Catholic Church in Bohemia for many years, as well as Czech nationalism for centuries.

During the Counter-Reformation, despite a quirky tendency of the Hussites to throw their opponents out of windows (the famous *Defenestrations of Prague*), the Habsburg rulers were able to convert many of the Bohemian populace to the Roman Church and exile those who remained Hussites. In 1722 a group of Bohemian exiles settled at Herrnhut in Saxony, on the estate of Count Nikolaus von Zinzendorf.



Zinzendorf's family were strong supporters of the Pietist movement within Lutheranism: indeed, his godfather was Phillip Spener, the author of *Pia Desideria* and "Father of Pietism". The settlers at Herrnhut eventually grew into the core of the modern Moravian Church. In 1737 Zinzendorf was consecrated as a Moravian bishop and pioneered their expansion into the

British American colonies. The Moravians at Herrnhut were strongly influenced by his pietist emphasis on "Heart Religion" rather than "Head Religion", de-emphasizing the orthodox Lutheran confessional theology. Zinzendorf also developed a system of communal living at Herrnhut and in the subsequent American settlements at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and Salem, North Carolina.

During their emigration to America, Moravians interacted with Anglicanism when they shared the same ship bound for the Georgia colony with two Anglican priests, the brothers John and Charles Wesley. Moravian pietism strongly influenced both brothers in the development of the Methodist tradition. When John Wesley returned to London in 1738, he attended a meeting at the Moravian Chapel in Aldersgate Street where he heard a reading of Luther's Preface to the

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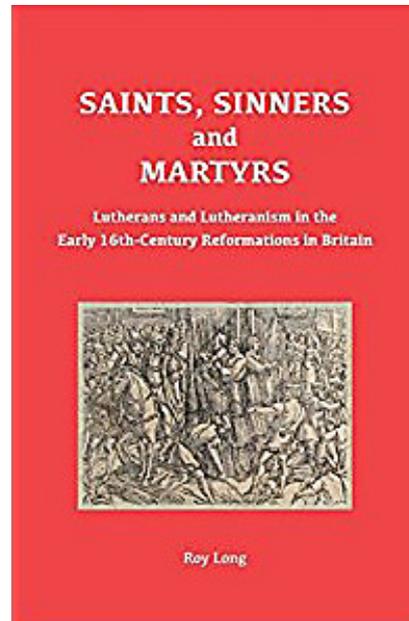
John Wesley preaching to a Native American gathering

EXPLORING BRITISH REFORMATIONS

Bishop Walter Jagucki recommends "Saints, Sinners and Martyrs : Lutherans and Lutheranism in the Early 16th Century Reformations in Britain " by Dr Roy Long, published by The Evangelical Lutheran Church of England, 28 Huntingdon Road, Cambridge, CB3 0HH, 2017

This book by Dr Roy Long deals with the historical development of the Reformation in Britain. More specifically, it is about "Reformations" in XVI century Britain. His earlier book, *"Martin Luther and his legacy: A Perspective on 500 Years of Reformation"*, is a comprehensive work starting with the year 1517 and following events in Europe and Britain up to the present day. This book, however, concentrates on developments in Britain starting with the XIV century, and only makes occasional reference to Europe.

During a discussion, an Anglican bishop friend once commented to me that, whereas the Lutheran Reformation began in 1517, in England it started in the 1530s. In a superb narrative in this book, however, Dr Long refers to the beginning of "reformations" in Britain as early as the XIVth century.



Although the author claims that he is not an historian, from the introduction on to the very end this book is packed with fascinating historical facts. The easy narrative leads the reader from John Wycliffe to the years of Henry VIII, with emphasis on the role of his wives. In the following chapters we learn about the Five Thomases - Becket, Wolsey, More, Cromwell and Cranmer, and a number of less well known and almost totally unknown saints and martyrs, including the Polish reformer John a Lasco (Jan Laski), who sought refuge in London until 1556.

This book is a great resource as the author has provided comprehensive references for further study. The non-academic style makes it an easy and enjoyable read and I highly recommend

this book to members of the Anglican-Lutheran Society and, through them, to a wide audience.

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Epistle to the Romans and had a conversion experience. 'I felt my heart strangely warmed,' is how he put it. So in a sense it may be said that Methodism is to Anglicanism as Moravianism is to Lutheranism.

In 18th and early 19th century America, Moravians and Lutherans shared both pietism and the German language, but with different results in North and South. In Pennsylvania, Count Zinzendorf's goal of a broadly protestant church unity and the Lutheran leader Henry Muhlenberg's efforts towards Lutheran unity rubbed each other the wrong way, despite the fact that Zinzendorf's aunt was Muhlenberg's early patroness. By contrast, a few decades later in North Carolina, Moravian Pastor Gottlieb Shober was not only an early member of the North Carolina Lutheran Synod, but served as the Synod President and later as the President of the National General Synod of the Lutheran Church, though this did promote some friction with the evolving confessional trend within American Lutheranism.

With their emphasis on "Heart Religion" rather than "Head Religion", Moravians are broadly ecumenical. Included in their *Ground of the Unity*, among other creeds of "special importance", are the Augsburg Confession, Luther's Small Catechism, the Anglican Articles of Religion, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Barmen Declaration. Moravian Bishops are considered to be in the Apostolic Succession, and are considered spiritual rather than administrative leaders. The motto of the Unity of the Brethren is "In essentials, unity; in

non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, love."

Distinctive worship practices of the Moravians include the Lovefeast, an Agape meal distinct from Holy Communion; the Easter Sunrise Service held at the cemetery or "God's Acre"; and the Losungen or Daily Watchwords, Old Testament verses chosen by lot annually for each day of the year and published (along with corresponding New Testament verses, prayers, and hymns) each year since 1728 as an aid to personal devotions.

Although a small Church, the Moravians were among the first and most active Churches in overseas mission work. Today they are very strong in Africa: Tanzania alone has seven Moravian Provinces, compared to four Provinces in North America (Northern, headquartered in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania; Southern, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina; Alaska; and Labrador) and one Province in Britain. In total there are 29 Provinces. Moravian Provinces are individually members of the World Council of Churches; the South African Province is also a member of the Lutheran World Federation. Provinces enter into their own ecumenical agreements with other national churches, including Anglicans, Lutherans, Presbyterians, and Methodists.

Because of their small size and geographic distribution, it may be that many of us will never have the opportunity to meet Moravians. But as we enter into closer ecumenical relationships with them, we can learn much from the Unity of the Brethren (*Unitas Fratrum*) about ecumenical openness and personal and communal piety.

WATER TO WINE – A MIRACLE THAT IS MY LIFE

John Gaddala, founder of Pragathi Seva Samithi and one of our members in South India, says 'Let me tell you my story; it is a shower of blessings from the Lord; let me share with you this Miracle... that is my life.'

I was born into a family of bonded labour; redeemed by sponsorship from a Christian Children's Fund that enables donors, sponsors and the deserving poor to come together and make a difference; and my life is, I believe, dedicated to being a servant of the Lord who worked this miracle.

My birth into a poor Dalit family, trapped in bonded labour, came just after India's Independence. The earliest experiences in my life's journey were about confronting indifference, discrimination and poverty. Life changed for me with sponsorship from the Christian Children Fund of Great Britain. I was able to pursue my education in a hostel at the Madiripuram School, under the aegis of the Church of South India's Diocese of Dornakal. Guided by very God-loving teachers, my academic work and my closeness to God improved year by year.



Here I am discussing the issues facing the Dalit community

By the Grace of God, step by step I moved ahead in administration and finally I was heading the organization that had once sponsored me for my education and future. At that time, around 1974, children who gained sponsorship were able to begin their education with boarding facilities. Many of these children have since entered the Indian Administrative services, banking and teaching, and many of them continue to support other needy children.

I started *Pragathi Seva Samithi* next, a Voluntary Organization aimed at attracting private donors, sponsors, and funds from government, so that I could continue to support needy people and help them to make a difference in their lives. Initial support came from Action Aid India, with sponsors willing to help make a difference for children's education. Slowly

the focus has moved to women's rights, Dalit rights, land rights, differently abled persons, sustainable agriculture, and self-help groups for women to help them gain financial empowerment and sustainability.



At a community supported School for disabled children at Pedda Muppalam Village, Narsimhulapeta Mandal

Once out of college, one day in the summer of 1974, someone from the Dornakal Diocese came to my home and gave me a letter asking if I was interested in becoming a teacher-cum-warden of a hostel run by the Church of South India. I duly accepted with great joy. It was a great moment for me, knowing I was going to be employed. It was like going home. My father had died while I was studying in college and my mother took care of the family – me and my two younger sisters and a brother.



Pre-School at PG Thanda, Maddipalli Village, Thorrur Mandal

Over the past 25 years, *Pragathi Seva Samithi* has enabled over 5000 farmers to shift to sustainable agriculture; enabled 3000 differently abled persons to get access to artificial limbs, wheelchairs, and crutches; addressed 700 cases of domestic violence; combatted child marriages through a shelter home for women in distress; and provided support to students so that they can be freed from child labour and continue their education.

You can discover more about this project at <http://www.pragathisevasamithi.org>

LUTHERAN TO HEAD AACC



The new General Secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) is the Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki, who has been the Director of the Lutheran

World Federation's Department for Mission and Development (DMD).

The AACC is the largest association of Protestant, Orthodox and Indigenous churches in Africa. As a fellowship of Churches it serves over 120 million Christians in 173 member Churches across 40 African countries.

Dr Mwombeki is an ordained pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. Prior to joining the LWF in 2016 he was General Secretary of the United Evangelical Mission in Wuppertal, Germany, and General Secretary of the ELCT North-Western Diocese of Bukoba. He holds a Ph.D in Biblical Studies from Luther Seminary in St Paul, Minnesota, and an MBA from California Coast University.

CHURCH OF DENMARK REACHES OUT TO IMMIGRANTS

The National Church establishes a new initiative aimed at immigrants and their descendants in Denmark



The number of people belonging to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark has fallen to 75.3% of the population, according to figures published by Statistics Denmark. However, this does not mean that the Danes are falling away from the Church in large numbers. The percentage drop can partly be explained by immigration. The statistics show that only 3% of non-western immigrants and their descendants are members of the National Church today, while among western immigrants the figure is 15.9%, and among their descendants it is 24.5%. Taking that into account 85.6% of people of Danish origin are still Church members.

Aware of this new reality, the National Church, wishing to continue its traditional role as a church for all the people of Denmark, recognises that a carefully targeted initiative

needs to be undertaken to enable and encourage these new populations of immigrants and their descendants to join the Church. They are 13% of Denmark's population, and include, for example, international students, eastern European migrant workers and highly educated workers under the Green Card scheme. The initiative, called "Migration Cooperation", has been launched in the form of a resource for local congregations to use to assist them in reaching out to these people.

Parishes and their congregations have been supplied with materials in other languages, with guidance on how to offer interpretation during their worship and pastoral ministry, and advice on what to do to reach out to immigrants in the parish. The scheme benefits from knowledge, inspiration, shared experience and materials available from other consultancy services.

'In the long run, we will contact all the congregations in the country to draw their attention to the demography of their own parish, and offer help and guidance on any area they want to work on,' says Søren Dalsgaard, Coordinator of National Church's "Migration Cooperation", which is a continuation of the Church's "Asylum Cooperation", which during the last three years has existed as a platform for coordinating and developing the churches' work among asylum seekers and refugees.

ICELANDIC BILL MAY THREATEN JEWS AND MUSLIMS

A bill before the Icelandic parliament (*Althing*) banning the circumcision of male children for non-medical reasons would badly affect the Jewish and Muslim communities. So in April the Inter-Faith Forum and the Institute for Religious Studies of the University of Iceland brought together faith leaders, representatives of medical and secular organisations and some members of *Althing* to talk things through.

Dr Olafur Thor Gunnarsson, a member of *Althing*, thought outlawing circumcision was another step in Iceland's striving to protect human rights, and that religions should conform to society's requirements. But Imam Sayed Razawi asked, "Who defines those requirements? How absolute should politically defined criteria be?" Mr Yaron Nadbornik, the President of the Council of Jewish Communities in Finland, cited legal cases in which boy's circumcision had been considered a ritual to be permitted. It contributes positively to a child's identity. Rabbi Jair Melchior said that discussions about banning male circumcision in Denmark, which prides itself on having protected its Jewish community during the Nazi occupation, were the first real threat to the very existence of a Danish Jewish community in its 400 year history.

Fr Heikki Huttunen, General Secretary of the Council of European Churches, quoted articles 1,14 and 29 of the

United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child. 'We should not forget that it is the right of every child to belong to, and to be educated in, the religious tradition of his or her family,' he said. The religious leaders hope that after this conference the bill before the *Althing* will be re-considered.

NEW CHAPLAIN IN COPENHAGEN

Susanne Skovhus, our National Coordinator in Denmark, writes that she has been in touch with St Alban's Church, the Anglican Chaplaincy in Copenhagen. They are looking forward to the arrival of a new Anglican priest on 16th June, the Rev Smitha Prasadam (pictured here), and Susanne hopes to meet her very soon after her induction.



TINY GLIMPSES OF THE MISSION CONFERENCE IN ARUSHA, TANZANIA

Among the many people who were there was our Lutheran Co-Moderator, Dr Jaakko Rusama. Here are just a few snapshots of a very full, varied and exciting event.

THE OPENING EVENT

The Conference on World Mission and Evangelism opened on 8th March in Arusha, Tanzania, with African drums, almost a thousand participants, storytelling, and a spirit of sharing that set the stage for the rest of the week. It was organized by the World Council of Churches (WCC) with the theme “Moving in the Spirit: Called to Transforming Discipleship”, and it attracted representatives of mainline Protestant, Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Evangelical, Pentecostal, and African-instituted Churches.



Dr Agnes Abuom, the first African moderator of the WCC. Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC

Dr Agnes Abuom, who is the first woman and first Moderator from Africa in the history of the WCC, and a member of the Anglican Church of Kenya, welcomed everyone in the Gathering Service. This year marks the 70th anniversary of the WCC and ‘We will therefore engage with the theme of this conference within the backdrop of celebration, commemoration and lament,’ she said. ‘We look back with gratitude to Almighty God for the vision of our ecumenical men and women ancestors; their commitment, courage and determination to pursue the call for unity of the Church and unity of humankind developed at a time in history when the world was divided and ravaged by war, inhabited by fractured communities and broken relationships.’

A keynote speaker was the Rev Dr Mutale Mulenga-Kaunda of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. She shared her personal story of struggle, conversion and hope. ‘I wrestled with prayers that seem to go unanswered. I struggled with understanding how God’s life-giving Spirit would guide my path into an unknown future,’ she said. But Africans are ecumenical by nature, she continued, easily floating in their indigenous/traditional, Islamic and Christian worldviews in order to find meaning in life and in death. ‘The church ... has to serve as a missional resource for all people that live on the margins of their society, who are seeking to overcome forces that bequeath death.’

Her contribution deepened the conference theme and set the stage for profound dialogue. Prof Emeritus Néstor O. Míguez, an Argentinian theologian, commented that her insights reveal how life prepares people for mission. ‘The

wisdom that can be gleaned from these stories, together with the wisdom developed by critical thinking guided by the Spirit of God, are the indispensable strength of transformative discipleship,’ he said.

There were messages of greeting from Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, Pope Francis, and Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury.

WOMEN REFLECT ON MISSION

The day before the Conference officially started more than 50 women from across the globe, representing diverse faith traditions, explored the theme “Women in Mission” and shared their experiences through storytelling, discussions in small groups, Bible study, ritual and prayers. ‘All too often women are marginalised,’ said Metropolitan Geevarghese Coorilos, Moderator of the WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism. ‘That needs to be reversed,’ he said.

Faustina Nillan, who is Director for Women and Children in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, said holistic mission is a unique contribution of women. ‘We are not only preaching the Bible but we are also focusing on development.’



Faustina Nillan from Tanzania
Photo: LWF/Dirk-Michael Gröttsch

Septemmy E. Lakawa, Professor of Mission Studies at the Jakarta Theological Seminary in Indonesia added ‘Women can shape new understandings especially in interreligious relationships in the aftermath of violence.’

(Continued on next page)



Real joy expressed during the Gathering Service Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC

CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

A “Call to Discipleship” was issued on the closing day of the conference. ‘Despite some glimmers of hope, we had to reckon with death-dealing forces that are shaking the world order and inflicting suffering on many,’ the statement reads. ‘We observed the shocking accumulation of wealth due to one global financial system, which enriches few and impoverishes many.’ This system has made the financial market one of the idols of our time and has strengthened cultures of domination and discrimination, the statement continues.

‘Discipleship is both a gift and a calling to be active collaborators with God for the transforming of the world,’ the statement reads. Then it goes on to list the many ways in which people might be called to transforming discipleship. “Call to Discipleship” can be accessed online.

It concludes, ‘We are called to follow the way of the cross, which challenges elitism, privilege, personal and structural power; to live in the light of the resurrection, which offers hope-filled possibilities for transformation.’



EMBRACING THE CROSS

We can embrace the cross when we hold that there is no spirituality without life and spirituality is impatient life against the disorder of humanity,’ said Rev. Dr Vuyani Vellem, one of the speakers on the theology of the cross.

The Rev Dr Roberto Zwetsch, from Brazil gave a short reflection on poverty in Latin America. ‘More than ever we need to pray and trust in the strength and power of the spirit of Christ,’ he said. ‘And thus empowered, we need to concretely embrace the pain, the struggle and the hope of our peoples ... One must take up the cross of Christ as the cross of the crucified, of yesterday and of today.’



That session closed with a reading of excerpts from Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr’s “I have a dream” speech, delivered in Washington D.C. on 28th August, 1963.

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JOIN IN THE BIBLE STUDIES



Daily Bible studies were led by theologians from diverse theological and cultural backgrounds. They are all available online from the WCC website.

‘SOKONI’ - MISSION MARKET

This marketplace - also referred to as a “sokoni” - enabled faith and community-based institutions to share what they do to improve the lives of people around them. Exhibitions gave an overview of the general mission of the Church, and among them young people were represented by Global Ecumenical Theological Institute students who had four booths focusing on different themes: *on the streets*, offering the opportunity for participants to do graffiti, other works of art and dances; *in the fire*, in which participants exchanged experiences and stories; *under the shells*, a liturgical tent, where people offered theological texts, music, songs, and poems; and *up with the kites*, where messages, poems and songs were written and suspended on a card attached to the tail of a kite. There were also many things for sale.

‘TREE-PLANTING BISHOP’

The Presiding Bishop of the ELCT, Dr Fredrick Shoo, said it had been an honour to host the Conference in Tanzania, often called the “cradle of humanity”. From workshops to the “sokoni,” or marketplace, the event had been wrapped in the spirit of African rhythms, music, and art.

‘It has been a moment of reflection for the Church as one body of disciples of Christ and on how we witness about Christ in the global context,’ he said. ‘Anytime I attend an event, I always request for at least a tree to be prepared for me for planting, even before I attend to the main agenda for which I am there. It helps people understand how important the preservation of the environment is to me. I usually ask two young people – generally from confirmation classes – to look after the new plants and show them to me when I come back. And most of the time, they spontaneously draw my attention to them, whenever I visit again.’

We pray that the good things coming from the conference will flourish in the world-wide Church.

A SNAPSHOT OF A MULTIRACIAL PASTOR

Today the Rev Maja Almaas serves as a priest in Trondheim, Norway. But that is not where she started life. In this article, which appeared in the April edition of *Living Lutheran*, she recounts her journey and issues a challenge.

I was born in USA to a white mother and black father eight years after the Supreme Court ruled laws prohibiting interracial marriage unconstitutional. If you add my European American and Middle Eastern heritages, my majority race is white. However, our country practices “hypodescent” – children of mixed unions are classified as the ‘subordinate’ ethnic group – and according to this practice I am black. In total, I represent at least three races and eight ethnicities.

I was ordained into the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA), one of the whitest denominations in the USA, according to the Pew Research Centre. Of the ELCA’s non-white minority only very few have joined the rostered ministers. How did I become one?

During my senior year of high school, I preached on Youth Sunday. I was stunned afterwards when asked if I ever considered becoming a pastor. This question continued to echo within me for the next five years.

In college, I met my future husband, a Lutheran exchange student from Norway. We became involved in Lutheran Campus Ministry at the Ohio State University, Columbus.

Both the liturgical style and the theology resonated with me, so I joined the ELCA.

As graduation loomed, it became clear to me I was experiencing a sense of call. I sought to begin the candidacy process through the Southern Ohio Synod and was granted entrance. Then came seminary. In 2009, I had the great joy to accept a call and was ordained.

I chose the ELCA because I experienced our Church at its best. By happenstance, my ELCA experience was diverse. I attended a campus ministry with a Native American pastor and joined a Reconciling in Christ (Lutheran communities that publicly welcome LGBT people) congregation in a synod with an African-American bishop. Later I discovered this is not the norm.

But it can be. Together we can stop the ecclesiology of exclusion.



BIRDWATCHING ON IONA by Anne Boileau

Iona is an island off the Scottish coast. It is the place where St Columba landed when he left Ireland in the sixth century. It is thought of as the cradle of Christianity in Scotland and the Abbey is a home to the Iona Community, an ecumenical community of Christian women and men seeking to live out the Gospel in ways that are radical, inclusive and relevant to life in the 21st century.

By the post-office a black-backed gull
treads an old refrain
so earthworms might infer it is
the drumming of the rain.

From the ruins of the Nunnery
a curlew’s tidal cry
is the mimicked song of starling
chuckling at the sky.

In naked sycamore branches
rooks flap and squabble
as did their forebears when eight monks
fetched up in coracles. #

They settled where the soil was black,
they gardened and prayed.
Columba, banished from his land,
shed tears of jade.



A curlew’s tidal cry

A robin sings



They baked and hung their washing out
and sang in polyphone.
An abbey grew out of the ground,
a forest carved in stone.

And century on century
tides rose and fell,
winds filled up their drabnet sails,
bees filled waxy cells.

Plainsong hung upon the wind,
vats brimmed with mead.
They listened for a still small voice
by rock pools and reeds.

Even now above the rows
of onions, kale, chard,
a robin sings the timbre of psalms
passed down bird to bird.

Magnificat snatched from feathered throats
whipped across machair *
in memory of monks and nuns
who lived and died through prayer.

a small round boat

* a fertile low-lying grassy plain

STANDING IN THE WAY OF THE BULLDOZER : THE TENT OF NATIONS

Richard Stephenson shares an incident from an action-packed visit to the Holy Land

During March 2018 I was privileged to go on an ecumenical 10 day pilgrimage to the Holy Land organised jointly by St Mary & St Chad's Cathedral, Lichfield, (Anglican) and St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham, (Roman Catholic). One of the objectives of the pilgrimage was to meet some of the "living stones" of the land of the Gospel. Christians now form a tiny minority of the population in most areas of Israel / Palestine and greatly value the help and support of their brothers and sisters on pilgrimage.

It was to that end that our pilgrimage set off from the "Herodium" near Bethlehem to meet an extraordinary Palestinian Christian (Lutheran) family on their 110 acre farm known as "The Tent of Nations". It was to be both an eye-opening and heart-warming visit as we learnt how this beleaguered family has applied the most fundamental and basic tenets of the Christian faith to the appalling situation they are facing, and how they manage to lead a joyful life despite all adversity. Their motto is '**We refuse to be enemies**'.



The Nassar family are now the only Christian Palestinians remaining in that particular area. Their grandfather purchased the farm in 1916 under the Ottoman Empire and took the relatively unusual step of registering their title. When the British took over they registered with the British Mandate and again with the Jordanian Government when they in turn ruled the area.

Our first problem was finding the road into the farm. The Israeli authorities had dug it up and placed a mound of rocks in the way, as you can see from this picture. After several mobile phone calls one of the volunteers from the "Tent" arrived and guided us around the obstructions. We had been warned not to touch anything on the road as it is all too common for 'Jewish settlers' to leave bags of human excrement on the path. Despite this we found beautiful orchards with carpets of wild flowers lining our way. At the farm we were met by Daher Nassar, the elder of the two brothers who keep the "Tent" running despite daily obstruction from the Israeli authorities. Because they have no water supply, they have constructed large underground

cisterns to store rain water. They have been disconnected from the electricity grid and so have installed solar panels. They are denied planning consent (despite the fact that building is going on all around them) so they have dug caves under the ground where they live.

The farm was originally named "Daher's Vineyard" after the current owner's grandfather, but was renamed in 1992 as "Tent of Nations" to honour the biblical tent where everyone was welcome, traditionally believed to have been set up not far from this area by Abraham. Today it is a symbol of tenacity, faith, determination and love – love for each other, for all the people of this land and for the land itself.

The farm lies in Area C, meaning that the Israeli authorities are responsible for security and civil land administration. In 1991 the area was declared "state land" but the Nassars were able to challenge this in court because they had documentary evidence of registration. Daher explained to us that most Arab families did not register land ownership as everything in their culture is determined by a "shake of hands". Also land registration brought with it taxes from the Ottoman Empire. The ensuing legal battle has been going on ever since and is yet to be resolved. Costs of over £250,000 have built up – but fortunately support from overseas is helping to foot the bill. The Nassar family believes that the Israeli settlers are trying to encircle Bethlehem (Palestinian State) with a continuous ring of settlements stretching right across the West Bank. Their farm is the last remaining hill top outside of Bethlehem that has not as yet been occupied. There is international concern at the illegal occupation of land by 'settlers' within the Palestinian lands, and looking at the geography of the area it is hard not to agree with the Nassars' assessment of the situation.

In addition to the court room dramas, there have been physical attacks by settlers, hundreds of fruit trees have been uprooted, and once their water tank was destroyed. On one occasion the Israeli army attempted to pave a road through their property. Each time the Nassar family has countered with a legal response and by taking constructive action on their farm – like planting more trees or simply



OXFORD HISTORY OF ANGLICANISM: A MAJOR INVESTMENT

Dr Roy Long on Anthony Milton (Ed) "The Oxford History of Anglicanism, Volume I"
Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017, ISBN: 978-0-19-963973-1

I am used to buying academic books, but it is only recently that I have become aware of how expensive they are becoming. At £95 there are not going to be many people who dash out to buy Volume I of *The Oxford History of Anglicanism*, let alone the other four volumes in the series. But this

Continued from previous page

repairing the agriculture terraces. When a Jewish European group helped sponsor the replanting of 250 uprooted trees several years ago, the family saw it as a sign of hope that they weren't alone in their struggle for justice.

The Nassars base their lives on four pillars: the refusal to become victims; the refusal to hate; the belief that their Christian faith, which has been transferred from generation to generation, is the centre of their nonviolent resistance; and their belief in justice.

The Nassar's want to run the "Tent" in an environmentally friendly way and hold summer camps for local children when they can learn about sustainable farming methods. Daher explained that, 'The camp creates a fun and safe environment and aims to give the children some freedom and distraction from their daily lives – giving them a break from the politics that overwhelm their childhood. Our goal is to build self-confidence in the children and help them understand and appreciate their own value and skills, thus planting in each one of them the knowledge that they can make a difference and be part of the change towards a better future for Palestine'. There are many international volunteers helping with the camps and working the land. Since the international visitors started coming to the "Tent" the neighbouring settlers have left the family alone – so a continued presence of visitors at the farm is very important.

I left this oasis of peace with a deep sense of admiration for the Nassar family. It was chastening to see how their humility, love and respect towards those who might normally (justly?) be described as their "enemies", is starting to create bridges between people and land, Jew and Christian, people and people. Jesus said that the second greatest commandment was, 'Love your neighbour as yourself' (Matthew 22:39) – that is not easy when your 'neighbour' is actively trying to remove you from your land.

The Nassars are members of Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem (a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land). Members of the A-LS on pilgrimage will find a visit to the "Tent" to meet "living stones" very rewarding, and their support for these wonderful Christians will be much appreciated.

Find out more at <http://www.tentofnations.org/>

first volume, edited by Anthony Milton, Professor of History in the University of Sheffield, is, in reality, almost a library in itself: its 500 pages have no less than twenty-five scholarly chapters, contributed by twenty-four historians and theologians drawn from many academic institutions.

This volume, sub-titled *Reformation and Identity, c.1520-1662*, deals with what we might think of as the period when Anglicanism was in its formative, and traumatic, stages, from the earliest days of the Reformation to the Restoration of King Charles II.

The twenty-five chapters cover a wide range of historical topics, but particularly useful is the introductory chapter by Anthony Milton himself. Entitled *Reformation, Identity, and 'Anglicanism', c.1520-1662*, this provides an overview of the development of Anglicanism in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and also in North America, and is, in effect, a summary of the other twenty-four chapters.

Naturally, as a Lutheran, I made a beeline for the sections dealing with Lutheran influence on the Reformations in the four countries that make up the present United Kingdom. Of particular interest to me were Diarmaid MacCulloch's contribution, "*The Church of England and International Protestantism, 1530-1570*", in which the writer points out the early demise of Lutheran influence on the Reformation in England.

I wonder how many 21st century members of the Anglican Churches in the UK will recognise that a significant influence on the development of the Church of England came from Switzerland, and that Anglicans were always considered to be Protestant and, indeed, Reformed.

The other chapter that drew my attention was by Anthony Milton "*Attitudes towards the Protestant and Catholic Churches*", which raises the whole question of whether Anglicanism really does occupy a *via media* and, if it does, what are the institutions that lie to the right and left?

Milton traces the slow loosening of contact with the continental Reformed Churches during the first half of the 17th century, but also notes that this was not accompanied by any sort of *rapprochement* between Anglicans and Lutherans. I was intrigued, however, to discover the names of Peter Heylyn and Jeremy Stephens, exiles in Paris in the 1640s, who wanted to bring together Anglicans and Lutherans in common cause against Calvinism.

My reading of the 500 pages of this book is best described as "a work in progress", but I hope that the editor will let me come back to the pages of *The Window*, when I have delved deeper into this fascinating volume.

MEDICS BATTLE ON DESPITE LACK OF RESOURCES

The people of Gaza need prayers and practical support in a time of upheaval and confusion

That headline could apply to the National Health Service in England and Wales, which is struggling to cope with record demands, or to the social care services across the UK that are stretched to the limit. But it actually refers to the Al Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza, run by the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, which continues to serve 1.8 million inhabitants in an area 25 miles long and 5 miles wide, despite difficulties unimaginable in the UK.

Gaza is the densest populated place on earth. One third of the children living there are malnourished because of poverty, food insecurity, or parasitic infection resulting from drinking contaminated water. The political situation is so unstable that no-one can tell when the next rocket and mortar attack might come, and all aspects of life are severely restricted including the movement of materials and people in and out of the territory, electricity generation and supplies of medicines, food and fuel.

In the midst of all the confusion the Al Ahli Hospital, in the heart of Gaza City, is a haven of peace, surrounded by well-tended grounds. Like the other hospitals in Gaza they have

to run their generators 20 hours a day as electricity is restricted. They live under the constant anxiety that oil for the generators will run out. Then what will they do?

But despite all these difficulties the Al Ahli Arab Hospital continues to supply some of the finest medical care in Gaza utilising up to 80 beds. The hospital treats anyone, regardless of their religious or ethnic community, their social class, gender or political affiliation, in a spirit of love and service.

The hospital runs a free service for the detection of breast cancer for women over the age of 40 years, has a centre for elderly women, and deploys a mobile clinic twice a week providing free medical care and food to people in the surrounding villages along the Gaza Strip. The hospital also provides general surgery, medical care, emergency (ambulance) services, orthopaedics, urology, gynaecology, out-patient clinics and very much needed psychosocial support for communities and individuals.

Please remember Al Ahli Hospital in your prayers; medical and domestic staff, administrators and the patients.

RETIREMENT OF THE REV DR SCOTT ICKERT

Tom VanPoole, our National Coordinator in the USA, reports on the retirement from active parish ministry of one of his predecessors.

January 28th 2018 was a bittersweet Sunday at Resurrection Lutheran Church in Arlington, Virginia. After almost 23 years, the senior pastor, the Rev Dr Scott Ickert, retired at the end of the longest tenure as senior pastor in that congregation's history, and the longest in his career.

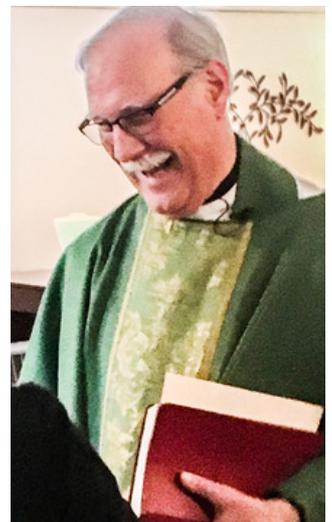
Scott not only carried out the important daily duties in the parish, but was also actively involved in aspects of the wider Church. He served on the boards of the National Lutheran Home and of Gettysburg Seminary and indulged his passion for ecumenism not least by acting as the North American Coordinator for our Society (branded the International Lutheran-Episcopal Society in the USA). He was a member of Round 10 of the US Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue, served as the ELCA observer for the US Reformed-Roman Catholic Dialogue, and was on many local ecumenical and interfaith dialogue committees with Lutherans and Episcopalians, Roman Catholics, and the Jewish community. Once, when a fellow leader asked Scott to sum up the ecumenical movement in one Bible verse, he responded, "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). This was accompanied with laughter, though it serves as a reminder that, while tremendous strides have been made in ecumenism over the years, the going is always rough and the reception process difficult.

Scott was raised in Virginia and California, educated at George Mason University and Gettysburg Seminary and, later, at the Catholic University of America where he gained his PhD in Church History. He was ordained in 1975 in the

Virginia Synod of the Lutheran Church in America, and served at First English Lutheran Church in Richmond and at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Leesburg, Virginia, before moving to Oxford, England as the LWF Fellow at Mansfield College from 1990-95. It was while he was in Oxford that he first became involved with the Anglican-Lutheran Society.

When the LWF fellowship at Oxford ended, Resurrection Lutheran Church was in the midst of searching for a new Senior Pastor, and Scott was called and has fulfilled that role ever since. Scott's final worship service at Resurrection was well-attended as many old friends came to join in praising God for his call. There was instrumental music by Telemann and Bach as well as hymns by Watts, Decius and Wesley. The preacher was Rev Dr Gordon Lathrop, a retired seminary professor who is a member of the congregation, and Scott presided at the altar as pastor for the last time.

Scott and his wife, Pat, and their family will continue to live in Arlington. We wish them a long and happy retirement.



THINGS AREN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE

This year we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the World Council of Churches. But this is not an occasion for looking back, but rather for looking at the ecumenical movement and where it stands today, says Peter Lodberg, a Professor in Theology at Aarhus University, Denmark.

Professor Lodberg was speaking at a reception in Brorsons Church on the occasion of Mads Christoffersen's 10th anniversary as General Secretary of the Danish Council of Churches. Everything is changing, he said, and today's world does not resemble the world we knew 70 years ago. And that is as true of ecumenical movements as it is of everything else.

'In a way, the ecumenical conversation has become more gentle,' he said. 'The Churches have begun to move closer together and there are not the same great theological disagreements they once had. The Lutheran-Catholic Declaration *'From Conflict to Community'* is a timely report, and the Reformation Commemoration around the world was marked in a much more ecumenical way than we have become used to. The ecumenical winter is probably not over yet, but something is happening. Perhaps the choice of Pope Francis was a sign that spring is on the way. In any case, the ecumenical conversations between the Catholic Church, Lutheran Church and Orthodox Church seem close to Pope Francis' heart.'

Globalization the Game Changer

In Denmark, until recently, the ecumenical movement has been concerned with telling people about what is happening in the big wide world, or going visiting and catching glimpses of



the World Church, Professor Lodberg suggested. But things are very different now. 'We can no longer be ecumenical tourists,' he asserted. 'The world has come home to us. Ecumenical challenges are right in front of us and have become concrete because the world has come to Denmark.'

'Globalization is a fact of life. We cannot unsubscribe! Globalization changes everything, from life and economy to faith. And it also affects our National Church. Ten years ago, no one spoke about migrant communities.'

'Today migration is very widespread, and a significant number of our church doors open onto migrant communities. We have even been discussing whether migrants need to acquire dual member-

ship of the National Church and their own migrant congregations,' said Prof Lodberg.

Relationships and Challenges

It is 10 years since the mobile phone came on the market, and that a phone could be connected to the Internet has been epoch-making. 'This iconic gadget has become widespread throughout the world. By 2020, it is estimated that up to 26 billion units will be connected to the Internet. This means that everyone in the world can follow how other people, for example, us in the north, live our lives and what religion and culture we have. Faith and technology are connected. We know the extent to which literacy contributed to the dissemination of Gutenberg's Bible. Now we are globally connected to each other in new ways.'

Professor Lodberg referred to what he described as three *oikos* words: economics, ecology and ecumenism. The world is facing tremendous global crises; worldwide inequality, climate change, the rising birth rate and the aging population. These are all things that the World Council of Churches is trying to address in different ways, including the use of technology. In other words, there are still many challenges for Churches and church communities and for future generations of ecumenists to address.

HOW THEY ENJOYED SWEDEN IN THE SNOW!



The girls choir from St Alban's Cathedral in England visited Linköping Cathedral in February and were hosted by the families of their Swedish counterparts. On Ash Wednesday they gave a concert in Vadstena Abbey Church where they also joined in a Youth Mass which took place before the concert.

They worked hard to perfect the Swedish text ready to join the choristers of Linköping Cathedral for a Sunday morning Eucharist. They are the girls in the dark tabards. Apart from the music, they remember sledging and ice skating and Swedish meatballs! St Albans and Linköping have enjoyed a diocesan partnership for many years.



The Window

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

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LUTHERAN SEMINARY INSTALLS FIRST ANGLICAN PRESIDENT

Joelle Kidd, staff writer on the Anglican Journal, the national newspaper of the Anglican Church of Canada, reports.



Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS) in Saskatoon, Canada, has appointed the Rev Dr William (Bill) Harrison as President. He is the first Anglican to be President of LTS and declares that he wants to be 'something of a bridge' between the Anglican and Lutheran Churches. 'I think that what it's going to enable is a closer conversation between Anglicans and Lutherans here on the Prairies,' he says.

LTS is an affiliated college of the University of Saskatchewan, and a member of the Saskatoon Theological Union, as is the Anglican Seminary College of Emmanuel and St Chad, where Dr Harrison taught from 2000 to 2005.

LTS is described as being "in transition". For the past few years they have been working with a new curriculum model, focused on intensive courses and distance learning courses. 'We're also facing the challenges, as most seminaries are, of smaller student populations, so that means we are re-thinking ourselves and how we work together,' says the new President.

In addition to its traditional task of preparing students to be parish pastors, the Seminary is preparing people for other types of ministry contexts. For example, it is developing a new degree programme in community health and parish nursing.

'It's true both for Anglicans and for Lutherans that less and less does ministry hinge on the work of ordained people alone, and more and more it's done by teams,' Dr Harrison says. Helping people to think in teams will be one of his top priorities. Another will be to strengthen the school's focus on mission and evangelism.

Bill Harrison earned a Bachelor of Theology from Saint Paul University/University of Ottawa, an MA in English from the University of British Columbia and a PhD in systematic Theology from Boston College. He has previously served the Anglican Church of Canada as principal of Kootenay School of Ministry in the diocese of Kootenay and, most recently, as the Director of Mission and Ministry for the diocese of Huron.