

THE WINDOW

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**EAST-WEST GERMAN CHURCH UNITY
PLANNED
BY NOVEMBER 1991**

The Federation of Protestant Churches in East Germany is aiming to unite with the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) by November next year. According to the German Press Agency, the Federation's synod passed a resolution on church unity on September 25th, after five days of discussion. The sixty members from eight territorial churches in the GDR voted for the rapid establishment of church unity, with no votes against and one abstention. The synod was following a recommendation by the Conference of Protestant Church Leaders in the GDR and the joint commission for both church associations. At first, the unification of churches was planned over a time-scale of five years, but this was overtaken by the dynamics of the political unification of Germany.

According to the agreed timetable, the regulations of the East German church Federation will be abolished by February 1991. The synods of the EKD and the Federation are due to meet together May 25-29th next year. The constitution of the new EKD synod, linked with the election of a new council, is planned for November 3-8th, 1991.

In Leipzig, the East German synod members urged that as many of their ideas as possible should be introduced into the new all-German Protestant Church.

[LWI]

**NEW PRESIDING BISHOP FOR
UNITED EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH OF GERMANY**

The new presiding bishop of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD) is Bishop Gerhard Müller of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brunswick. The general synod of the VELKD elected the 61-year-old church historian on October 16th with a large majority. He will succeed Bishop Karlheinz Stoll, 63, of the North Elbian Evangelical Lutheran Church, who has been barely able to carry out his duties for a year because of serious illness.

Bishop Müller has made a name for himself both as a church historian and through numerous publications. His special area of interest is the history of the Reformation in the 16th century. At the beginning of this year, he was head of the German delegation to the Eighth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation in Curitiba, Brazil.

[LWI]



**LUTHERAN BISHOP RECEIVES AWARD
FROM ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY**

Karl-Heinz Stoll, retired Lutheran bishop of Schleswig in Germany has received the Order of St Augustine from the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Robert Runcie. Bishop Stoll was honoured for his role in the process leading up to the Meissen Declaration, which fosters closer relationships between the Church of England and the twenty-five German Evangelical Landeskirchen (Lutheran, United, and Reformed provincial churches).

[EPS]

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1991

Membership in the Anglican-Lutheran Society is renewable annually on 1st January. If a renewal form is inserted in this issue of THE WINDOW, your subscription for 1991 is now due. We hope that you will wish to continue your membership and will return the completed form with remittance as soon as possible. New members who joined in the last few months of 1990 will have their memberships extended to the end of 1991 at no extra charge.

Subscriptions may be sent to the Society's address in London, or to:

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INDEX TO ABBREVIATIONS

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

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

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THE WINDOW

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CONSERVATIVE ANGLICAN LEADERS
MEET TO PLAN FOR 1991 CONVENTION

Nearly 200 conservative Anglican church leaders met in Washington to explore ways to fight what they consider liberalism in US Anglicanism, especially at the next Episcopal General Convention, in mid-1991. Representatives from the Prayer Book Society, Episcopalians United, and the Episcopal Synod of America agreed to work together to oppose the ordination of homosexuals and the blessing of same-sex unions. They also agreed to oppose language which removes masculine references to God in the Bible or the liturgy, and to support biblical authority as a more fundamental basis for Christian doctrine than tradition, reason, or experience. Clarence Haden, a retired Episcopal bishop and patron of the Prayer Book Society, says the meeting agreed that many statements from Episcopal headquarters in New York are 'not scripturally derived.'

[EPS]

CHURCH OF NORWAY CONSECRATES
NEW BISHOP OF TROMSØ

The Dean of Tromsø Cathedral, the Very Revd Ola M. Steinholt, has succeeded the Rt Revd Arvid H. Nergard as Bishop of Nord-Halogaland, the Church of Norway's northernmost diocese. He was consecrated on September 23rd in Tromsø Cathedral.

The Moderator of the Church of Norway Bishop's Conference, Bishop Andreas Aarflot of Oslo, led the ceremony. As was the case when the new Bishop of Borg was consecrated in June this year, a bishop from another Nordic church (the Church of Sweden) participated in the laying on of hands - the central act of the ceremony. This was made possible by a new ritual for the consecration of bishops, and some see it as linking the line of Norwegian bishops - broken at the time of the Lutheran Reformation - to the line of Swedish episcopacy, for which historic succession is claimed.

[LWI]

GERMAN LUTHERAN CHURCHES
TO HAVE
CLOSER LINKS IN 1991

The Lutheran churches of Mecklenburg, Thuringia and Saxony will probably join the United Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD) within the coming year. Bishop Werner Leich of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thuringia explained that such a union would be something "quite organic", following the forced separation of the churches caused by the construction of the wall that divided East and West Germany for several decades.

Within the coordinating group in which the three East German Lutheran churches are working together, it has been agreed that the merger should take place quickly and jointly, Bishop Leich said. The three Lutheran churches in East Germany split from the VELKD in 1968, and together formed the United Evangelical Lutheran Church (VELK) in the GDR, which was dissolved in 1988.

The Lutheran churches of Bavaria, Brunswick, Hannover, North Elbia and Schaumburg-Lippe, with a total membership of about 9.5 million persons, belong to the VELKD. The three Lutheran churches in East Germany have about 3.3 million members between them.

[LWI]

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF THE
ANGLICAN-LUTHERAN SOCIETY
will be held on

SATURDAY 9th MARCH 1991
from 10.30am to 4.00pm

at
30 THANET ST, LONDON WC1

At the lunchtime eucharist, the Celebrant will be the Bishop of Grimsby and the Preacher the Revd Dr Scott Ickert, LWF Lecturer, Oxford University.

All Welcome

EUCHARIST TO CELEBRATE THE MEISSEN AGREEMENT

In July 1990 the General Synod approved the Meissen Declaration, in which the Church of England, the Evangelical Church in Germany and the Federation of the Evangelical Churches (in the former GDR) commit themselves 'to strive together for full, visible unity'. The Meissen Common Statement recommended that our churches 'express in worship their commitment to share a common life and mission and to strive for full visible unity'.

To celebrate the agreement and express this commitment, there will be a celebration of the Eucharist in Westminster Abbey on Tuesday 29th January 1991 (Tuesday of General Synod week) at 7.45pm. The Archbishop of Canterbury will preside (this will be Dr Runcie's last major public service as Archbishop). He will be joined by the Chairman of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (Dr Martin Kruse,

Bishop of Berlin-West) and the Chairman of the Church Leaders' Conference of the Federation of the Evangelical Churches (Dr Christopher Demke, Bishop of the Province of Saxony). The Preacher will be Dr Johannes Hempel (Bishop of Saxony and Vice-Chairman of the Church Leaders' Conference).

Members of the Anglican-Lutheran Society and their guests are especially welcome to attend. Admission to the Abbey will be by ticket only. Those who wish to attend are asked to write to Mr C J Podmore, BMU, Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3NZ by the end of December. Tickets will be sent out in the earlier part of January. As the demand for tickets is expected to be considerable, recipients are asked only to apply for tickets if they definitely intend to be present.

CHURCHES AGREE

TO CONDUCT JOINT WORSHIP

AND OUTREACH PROGRAMMES

In an unusual ecumenical venture, leaders of Roman Catholic, Anglican and Lutheran churches in Virginia, USA, have signed a statewide agreement committing their local congregations to joint worship and outreach programmes. A "call to covenant", directed at local congregations, was signed at the close of the seventh annual Lutheran, Anglican and Roman Catholic (LARC) conference, held on November 16th and 17th at Lynchburg.

A Catholic priest and member of the LARC planning committee called the Lynchburg meeting historic. "We think it's the first such statewide agreement in the country," said the Rev R Roy Cosby, the pastor of St. Patrick Catholic Church in Spotsylvania in the Arlington diocese. The purpose of the conference is "to illuminate, celebrate and advance the cause of Christian unity among Lutherans, Anglicans and Roman Catholics in Virginia at the judicatory, regional and congregational levels," according to a statement by conference organisers.

A covenant, or formal religious promise, binds the ecumenical undertakings of the Catholic

dioceses of Richmond and Arlington; the Episcopal dioceses of Southern Virginia, Virginia and Southwestern Virginia; the churches in the Virginia and Metropolitan Washington synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and the Virginia congregations of the Southeastern District of the Lutheran church-Missouri Synod. Conference leaders said the governing bishops of the three faith communities will challenge their faithful - more than half a million church members - to greater ecumenical cooperation and commit themselves to a number of specific actions.

Some congregations have already taken steps to conduct joint ministries. The United States' only joint Catholic and Anglican parish is in Virginia Beach, and the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia allows ecumenical representatives to vote in its annual governing council.

[LWI]

Anglicans and Lutherans have been engaged in bilateral conversations with Roman Catholics for some years, on both international and local levels. The following article is written by a participant in the Lutheran-Catholic dialogue. Jared Wicks is a Roman Catholic member of the International Lutheran-Catholic Joint Commission. The article is excerpted from Ecumenical Trends, published by the [US] Graymoor Ecumenical Institute. It is hoped that in the next issue we will include an account of Anglican relations with the Roman Catholic Church.

THE U.S. ROMAN CATHOLIC - LUTHERAN TEXT ON JUSTIFICATION

by Jared Wicks

In March 1990 the Administrative Board of the US National Conference of Catholic Bishops authorised the publication of 'An Evaluation of the Lutheran-Catholic Statement Justification by Faith'. The dialogue document on justification, completed in 1983, formulates the consensus reached through five years of work by the US Lutheran-Roman Catholic bilateral dialogue.

This recent episcopal evaluation is the work of the US Bishops' Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (BCEIA). Essentially, the BCEIA hails the work on justification as a significant step towards reconciliation between Lutherans and Catholics. The bishops gratefully acknowledge that the bilateral commission has done pioneering work in an area where many, beginning with Martin Luther himself, thought that Catholics and Lutherans were deeply opposed in belief and official doctrine.

The US dialogue, however, pushed far beyond this misleading impression to identify important common convictions held by Lutherans and Catholics and to show openness and potential compatibility in areas where the two doctrinal traditions use different languages and modes of thought.

The bishops judge the consensus document to be a well-researched and comprehensive exposition of the mystery of salvation in Christ. More pointedly, the BCEIA wholeheartedly acknowledges the basic affirmation which the dialogue formulated as a fundamental conviction shared by Lutherans and Catholics. This affirmation, highlighted in the consensus paper of 1983, serves to underscore the religious and spiritual dimension underlying all ecumenical work with texts and formulations:

'Our entire hope of justification and salvation rests on Christ Jesus and on the Gospel whereby the good news of God's merciful action in Christ is made known; we do not place our ultimate trust in anything other than God's promise and saving work of Christ.'

The... evaluators see here a consensus which anchors numerous individual point of... agreement and convergence. But the BCEIA goes further: 'A Catholic can and should affirm this fundamental conviction unreservedly.'

'Justification by Faith' signalled the completion

of the seventh round of the US Lutheran-Catholic dialogue. ... The results of the first six rounds... were regularly structured by a sharp division between a common statement marking out an area of consensus, and a two-part series of reflections on remaining problems as seen by the members of the respective sides. Significantly, Justification by Faith is a single document agreed to by all the members.

Its three parts give (1) an informative historical panorama, (2) a topical analysis of points on which Lutheran and Catholics have traditionally differed... and (3) the 'perspectives for reconstruction' based on a review of biblical testimonies on justification and then articulating the growing convergence of specific points of doctrine.

Parallel with the dialogue in the US, an international bilateral commission, named by the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council... for Promoting Christian Unity, has been working since 1967. The world-level group has issued major declarations on the Gospel and the church, the eucharist, ministry in the church, and models and phases of the project of restoring ecclesial communion between the Roman Catholic and the Lutheran churches of the world.

As early as 1972, the international commission's first statement, The Gospel and the Church, notes that 'a far-reaching consensus is developing in the interpretation of justification'. This, however, was an observation made in passing, even somewhat tentatively, and not the outcome of an examination of just what Lutherans and Catholics hold today on the cluster of doctrines concerning sin, grace, forgiveness, renewal in the Lord, and sanctification.

The twelve doctrinal points which 'Justification by Faith' lists are the elements of significant 'material' agreement, e.g. on original sin and the fall, God's pure initiative to convert the sinner, justification as God's effecting what he promises, faith as a trustful and self-involving response to the Gospel, and the fruitfulness of justification in good works. Here, the bishops find the document accurately expressing truths which Catholics also espouse. ...

The BCEIA evaluation serves to indicate the

high level of seriousness with which the US bishops view their ecumenical commitment. The preparation of this reception-document required considerable time and attention from pastors already keeping busy schedules. The evaluators work from a properly episcopal concern for the integrity of Catholic faith and doctrine, but there is no evidence here of hide-bound traditionalism. They approach a lengthy and at times subtle document with a readiness to learn. Their evaluation does credit to their acumen in distinguishing between particular formulations and the substance of the faith.

One feels confident, in view of this evaluation, in concluding that a substantial agreement on justification does exist between Lutherans and Catholics. This is not the end of the doctrinal dialogue, but it is a milestone. The work of the US Lutheran-Catholic dialogue commission has

received an important stamp of approval. This is of no little importance in a time which some would characterise as dominated by ecumenical fatigue or disillusionment and which others see as marked by confessional intergralisms hostile to reconciling our diversities and healing our divisions.

In the US dialogue a consensus has been ascertained. It is not, however, a sameness of doctrine that would in effect eliminate cherished aspects of our respective traditions.

The agreement has a profound religious basis in our ultimate trust for salvation from God. The consensus does in fact seem to be sufficient for church fellowship between Lutherans and Roman Catholics.



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

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

The Anglican-Lutheran Society

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THE ANGLICAN- LUTHERAN SOCIETY

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Archbishop of Canterbury
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announces its 1991

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

An Anglican-Lutheran
Consultation

on the

Life and Mission of the Church today

19-25 June

Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, England

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