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Anglican-Lutheran International Working Group

Final Meeting of Anglican-Lutheran International Working Group

May 11-14, 2002
Porto Alegre, Brazil

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Report "Growth in Communion" to be Submitted to Governing Bodies

PORTO ALEGRE, Brazil/GENEVA, 5 June 2002 (LWI) - The third and final meeting of the Anglican-Lutheran International Working Group (ALIWG) was held May 11-14 in Porto Alegre, Brazil, hosted by the Anglican Communion in cooperation with the Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil.

In their last round, members of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and Anglican Communion working group devoted a considerable amount of time to structuring a final report, "Growth in Communion," which will be submitted to the governing bodies of the two communions.

ALIWG was established in 1998 with the mandate to monitor the development and progress in Anglican-Lutheran relations in the world's regions, and assess the significance of the regional developments for furthering the communions' global relationships. At the initial meeting in 2000 in Alexandria, Virginia, USA, participants identified several fundamental and practical issues in the life of the communions and their ecumenical relations, calling for further examination.

Meeting in 2001 in Skálholt, Iceland, the ALIWG heard regional reports and studied the coherence and compatibility of the agreements reached between Anglicans and Lutherans in different regional dialogues.

The international dialogue between Anglicans and Lutherans has been underway in varying formats since 1970. Prominent among the reports produced by the dialogue are *The Niagara Report* (1987), focusing on the mission of the church and the role of the ordained ministry, and *The Diaconate as an Ecumenical Opportunity* (1995), which were produced by the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission.

On the national and regional levels, Anglican and Lutheran churches have over several years moved toward different, binding forms of church fellowship, stemming from agreements such as the *Meissen Common Statement* (1988) between the Church of England and the Protestant Church in Germany, the *Porvoo Common Statement* (1996) between the British and Irish Anglican churches and most of the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches. Others include the *Reuilly Common Statement* (1999) between the British and Irish Anglican churches and French Lutheran and Reformed churches, *Called to Common Mission* between the Episcopal Church (USA) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (2001) and last July's Waterloo Declaration between the Anglican Church of Canada and Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. A proposal for covenanting is now before the churches in Australia. Other significant developments are taking place in Africa and Brazil.

The LWF Ninth Assembly meeting in Hong Kong, China in 1997, and Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops in 1998, both expressed their support of ongoing developments and new initiatives toward agreements of fellowship on regional and national level between Anglican and Lutheran churches. They also affirmed the communions' commitment to continue and further their bilateral ecumenical relations.

The international working group has been co-chaired by Bishops Ambrose Moyo, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe and David Tustin, England.

In Porto Alegre, the ALIWG members were received by Rev. Huberto Kirchheim, president of the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil, and by Archbishop Glauco Soares de Lima, primate of the Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil.