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The Report of the Anglican-Lutheran European Regional Commission Helsinki, 1982

Preface

The following Report is the outcome of three meetings of the Anglican-Lutheran European Regional Commission over the period 1980-82. This Commission was set up at the request of the Anglican Consultative Council and the Lutheran World Federation.

In accordance with our brief we have understood our work as a continuation of the international Anglican-Lutheran dialogue of 1970 to 1972 and as being closely related to the Lutheran-Episcopal dialogue in the USA, other bilateral dialogues of our two Communion, and the multilateral conversations of the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC. Our report should be read and evaluated with these dialogues in mind.

We were requested by our mandate to seek further clarification especially in the area of eucharistic theology and ministry. Since we were a regional commission we felt that these and some other doctrinal questions should be considered within the framework of the common situation and tasks of our churches in contemporary Europe.

We rejoice in the agreements and convergences we are able to record. This Report is submitted through the Anglican Consultative Council and the Lutheran World Federation to our Anglican and Lutheran churches in Europe. We hope and pray that it will help to deepen our fellowship, broaden the exchanges between our churches, and thereby further our common witness and service in present-day Europe.

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Helsinki, September 1982

I. Introduction

1. The Lambeth Conference and the Executive Committee of the Lutheran World Federation agreed in 1968 to appoint an Anglican-Lutheran International Commission. Between 1970 and 1972 this Commission met four times. Its final report, the so-called Pullach Report (cf. Abbreviations) was received by the LWF Executive Committee (1972) and the Anglican Consultative Council (1973) and transmitted by them to their respective member churches for study and action. They also agreed to set up a small *Joint Working Group*. Its mandate was to evaluate reactions to the Pullach Report and to suggest further steps in Anglican-Lutheran relations.
2. This Joint Working Group met in Geneva in December 1975 and proposed three regional dialogues in the USA, Europe and Tanzania. This proposal was welcomed by the LWF Executive Committee and the Anglican Consultative Council. The appointment of the *Anglican-Lutheran European Regional Commission* (ALERC) followed these decisions and this Report represents its findings and proposals.
3. A preparatory meeting of some members of the Commission took place in November 1979 in St. Albans, England. In planning the work of the Commission it was agreed that a repetition of previous work should be avoided and that its theological discussion should have practical pastoral implications, especially for the present European situation. It was further agreed that the specific theological problems which were referred to the new Commission by the Joint Working Group, particularly questions of ministry and eucharistic theology, should be dealt with in this wider pastoral context.
4. The *first meeting* of the Anglican-Lutheran European Regional Commission was held in Edinburgh, from 14 to 18 August 1980. Its main topics of discussion were 'The Identity and Integrity of the Anglican and Lutheran Traditions in Present-Day Europe', 'Worship and Eucharistic Theology', and 'Ministry'. The two latter issues were considered in the light of the first, thereby following the approach which was proposed at the preparatory meeting.
5. The *second meeting* of ALERC took place from 2 to 8 July 1981 in Pullach, near Munich, in the Federal Republic of Germany (where the Report of the International Conversations was concluded in 1972). Discussions at this meeting concentrated on the sacraments, worship and spiritual life, and on the ordained ministry, especially episcopacy, apostolicity and apostolic succession.
6. The *third meeting* of ALERC took place in Helsinki, Finland, from 26 August to 1 September 1982. Here drafts for this final Report, prepared in advance by members of the Commission, were discussed, revised and adopted. Editorial revision of the Report was concluded in September and October 1982.
7. During each meeting the Commission visited local congregations and met representatives of the Churches of the respective countries. In its work ALERC paid special attention to the results of the first (1969-72) and second (1976-80) series of the Episcopal-Lutheran dialogue in the USA, so far the most important Anglican-Lutheran dialogue on a national level (for the two Reports cf. Abbreviations). On the basis of this dialogue, the two traditions in the USA agreed in September 1982 to a closer relationship which includes what is described as an 'interim sharing of the Eucharist' as a step towards full communion. The publication of the Faith and Order statement *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* in 1982 helped to relate our Report to the wider ecumenical convergence.

II. The Relationship between the Anglican and Lutheran Churches in Europe

Our Common Heritage

8. In the early stages of the Reformation close ties existed between the Reformers in Britain and on the Continent. Under Henry VIII and Edward VI many English Reformers were strongly influenced by Luther's writings. Attempts were made, though politically motivated, to formulate an official consensus between English and German theologians and churchmen (*The Wittenberg Articles* 1536). This early Lutheran influence has left its mark on Archbishop Cranmer's first Book of Common Prayer, the Book of Homilies, English translations of the Bible, and, through a number of earlier doctrinal statements, on many of the *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion* (*The Ten Articles* 1536, *The Bishops' Book* 1537, *The Thirteen Articles* 1538).
9. The theological common ground between Lutherans and Anglicans was soon superseded by the fast advance of Reformed, Calvinistic concepts. In England such views concerning the real presence in the eucharist and

predestination found wide acceptance. Moreover, many of those who had been exiled on the Continent in the reign of Mary returned under Elizabeth I as zealous advocates for further reform of the English Church, following the example of the Church of Geneva.

The Parting of the Ways

10. From the second part of the sixteenth century the internal Puritan threat to abolish the episcopal system disturbed the unity of church and state in England and called forth a defence of the Church of England which emphasized its own identity by advocating its particular 'middle way' between Rome and Geneva. In the same period some Lutheran Churches on the Continent retained a similar structure to the English Church, as in Sweden and Finland; others were forced to abandon the episcopal system. In either case the awareness of a family relationship between the Anglican and the Lutheran Churches was still strong. Mutual recognition and intercommunion were freely practised.
11. But this period also witnessed the beginning of a separate development. The defence against Puritanism was in the main directed against the Reformed and Independent traditions, yet it also gave rise to critical attitudes towards all the Reformation Churches on the Continent. The Anglican theological method had as its main criterion the interplay between Scripture, tradition and reason. The Lutheran criterion of *sola scriptura* did not exclude a high esteem for tradition, but could not attribute to reason the same role as in English theological thinking.
12. Other developments and influences, many of them non-theological, led to further estrangement between the Anglican and Lutheran Churches. Perhaps the most influential force in this development was the Oxford Movement. Lutheranism was identified with Protestantism as it was encountered in England. Lutherans, on the other hand, tended to see in Anglicanism an expression of semi-Catholicism which they could not acknowledge. In practice this resulted in barriers to intercommunion and the failure to recognize each other as Churches. The deepest difference was seen in the understanding and structure of the ministry with its wider implications for eucharistic theology and ecclesiology.
13. However, even during these centuries of separate development many relationships between Anglican and Lutheran Churches continued. In both traditions there were individuals and groups who renewed contacts, enabled mutual theological exchange, and fostered a close relationship between Anglicans and Lutherans, especially in Scandinavia. The history of Anglican-Lutheran relations is a complex one and cannot be reduced to one simple pattern.

Contemporary Convergence

14. The Ecumenical Movement, new theological developments, modern forms of communication, common challenges to the churches in their respective societies, mobility of population and other factors have contributed to a better mutual knowledge between Anglicans and Lutherans. There have been increased contacts between them, a convergence of theological positions and church structures, and the growth of similar views and methods concerning the fulfillment of the mission of the Church in present-day Europe.
15. This increase of mutual contact and knowledge, accompanied by convergence in thought and practice, has strengthened an awareness that the Anglican and Lutheran Churches have much in common and that they share a joint responsibility in facing similar problems and tasks. Against this background, the basic question for Anglicans and Lutherans in Europe is whether our agreement and convergence in faith and practice is of such weight that remaining differences should no longer be regarded as a barrier to closer fellowship. Such fellowship, based on mutual recognition of churches, sacraments and ministries, would provide new opportunities for sharing in each other's life, worship, spirituality, ministry and mission.
16. In the course of our dialogue we were aware of the fact that the relationship between Anglican and Lutheran Churches in Europe must be seen in a wider context. Our Churches are part of two worldwide communions. In many other parts of the world Lutherans and Anglicans live in more immediate contact with each other. There, too, attempts are being made to achieve a closer relationship. Both our Communions are engaged in dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Churches, and other Christian world communions. Both also participate in the multilateral dialogue within the WCC. Our dialogue in Europe has greatly profited from these other dialogues and will, we hope, contribute in its turn to the wider ecumenical search for visible unity.

III. Doctrinal Issues: Agreements and Convergences

Justification

17. It is in view of our common situation that the doctrine of Justification takes on a fresh relevance. Today, as at all times, there are people who are burdened by their awareness of personal guilt or their sense of estrangement from God. Their troubled conscience leads them to ask whether there is a merciful God. But in addition there are now many people in our societies who suffer in a different way under a burden of fear, frustration and alienation. They have lost any sense of meaning in life. They have no confidence in the future. The reasons for this sense of despair are well known: the threat of nuclear destruction, economic instability, disappointment with the belief that technology and science are able to master our human destiny, a loss of personal certainty and identity, and a refusal to continue to serve the idols of progress, achievement, success and status.

When applied to this human condition, the Gospel of God's free and gracious initiative and acceptance is a power which liberates human beings from their burdens and sets them free to be God's co-workers in serving and preserving our world-his creation.

18. The doctrine of Justification is a fundamental part of our Anglican and Lutheran heritage, rooted in the Reformation rediscovery of important aspects of the biblical witness. Throughout the centuries this doctrine and its role have been interpreted in a variety of ways both within our Churches and between them. Today we share a common understanding of its fundamental thrust and also note with gratitude an increasing agreement with Roman Catholic theologians in the understanding of this doctrine.
19. Anglicans and Lutherans believe that by baptism the baptized person is received into a gracious relationship with the Triune God, and thereby incorporated into the community of God's adopted sons and daughters, his Church. This new relationship is continually sustained and renewed by God's forgiveness of sins on account of Christ's death and resurrection *for us* and is received in faith, the gift of the Holy Spirit.
20. We therefore share a common understanding of God's justifying grace, i.e. that we are accounted righteous and are made righteous before God only by grace through faith because of the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and not on account of our works or merits (cf. LED 1980, pp. 22-3). Both our traditions affirm that justification leads and must lead to 'good works'; authentic faith issues in love. We understand sanctification in relation to justification not only as an expression of the continuity of justification, the daily forgiveness of sins and acceptance by God, but also as growth in faith and love both as individuals and as members of the Christian community.
21. It is the individual person who is called to believe that he or she is accepted by God. There can be no substitute for this direct, personal relationship between a human being and God. Yet both our communions also agree that justification of the individual believer cannot be isolated from the corporate life of the community of faith. This double dimension-individual and corporate-is already rooted in baptism. It is in the Church that God's justifying grace is proclaimed and received through the proclamation of the Word and the celebration of the Sacraments, and that the fruits of justification are manifested in acts of love and service. The Church is, indeed, the community of justified sinners, empowered by the Holy Spirit to lead a life of service to all human beings and of praise to God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Baptism

22. We reaffirm the statement on baptism in the Pullach Report (ALIC, paras. 64-6) and recognize in the Faith and Order text on baptism (BEM, pp. 2-7) the faith which our two communions share. It is therefore sufficient for our purpose to underline some basic convictions.
23. In both our traditions the sacrament of baptism has always been seen as intimately related to God's gift of forgiveness and justification (cf. para. 21). Baptism is the effective means by which God brings persons into the community of the church and whereby he adopt them into a new relationship as his sons or daughters. The gift of baptism, rightly understood, is inseparable from faith and conversion, that is the continuous return to the new relationship with God established in baptism.
24. A feature of Anglican and Lutheran liturgical revision has been an increasing stress on baptism as the sacrament of incorporation into Christ and his Church. When seen in this perspective, infant baptism--still the predominant practice in Europe--is to be understood as entry into the communion of those whose sins are forgiven, which is itself a forgiving community. Whether infant or adult, the gift of baptism is freely given, not earned. God takes the decisive initiative through the sacramental action of the Church. But God's gifts are not mechanical and they

have to be appropriated personally, for the whole of Christian life is a gracious relationship of faith, repentance, forgiveness and sanctification.

25. As a consequence of our common understanding of baptism and our similar pastoral and liturgical practice, Anglicans and Lutherans have both experienced similar tensions in the face of the gradual secularization of modern Europe. In both Churches there is a lively debate on the appropriate baptismal policy to be pursued in largely 'post-Christian' urbanized cultures. In our attempts to involve the whole Christian community in the responsibility for the Christian upbringing of baptized children we can learn much from one another.

Neither tradition today would simply identify the Church with society. Nevertheless Anglicans and Lutherans also resist the temptation to regard the Church as a gathered sect having no relation to the culture or society within which it finds itself. At this point our common understanding of baptism and of our pastoral task reflects an agreement on the nature of the Church.

Eucharist

26. Though God inaugurates our new relationship with himself through baptism and faith, this relationship with God-and with our fellow members of Christ's Body-is nurtured and deepened through the eucharist. The agreement expressed in the Pullach Report reflects the fact that there has never been substantial dispute between the two traditions on the nature of the eucharist (ALIC, paras. 67-9). The wider ecumenical consensus on the eucharist, both in our respective discussions with the Roman Catholic Church and in the multilateral forum of the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC, confirms the conviction that we have a basic identity of understanding (cf. ARCIC, pp. 11-25; RCLJC, *The Eucharist*; BEM, pp. 10-17).
27. In our two traditions the eucharist is understood as the memorial of the crucified and risen Christ. But the eucharistic memorial is not simply the calling to mind of an event in the past: it is the sacrament of Christ's sacrifice, accomplished once for all on the cross but still operative on behalf of all (cf. ALIC, para. 69). Both Anglicans and Lutherans understand the eucharistic memorial to be no mere figurative symbolism but the Church's effectual proclamation of God's saving acts in Christ.

Sacraments are instruments and means through which Christ's redemption is offered to us: they are not simply human ceremonies but come to the Church from Christ (cf. ALIC, para. 67) and are means by which, through 'outward and visible' signs, we truly receive Christ's grace. It is through this contemporary application of Christ's salvation, particularly in the eucharist, that the Church becomes truly itself and the other means of grace find their place.

28. Although Christ is present and active in the entire eucharistic celebration, Anglicans and Lutherans have also affirmed a particular sacramental presence of Christ (cf. ALIC, para. 67). In virtue of the living Word of Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit the bread and wine are the sacrament of Christ's body and blood. In the Lord's Supper, Jesus Christ, true God and true man, crucified, risen and ascended, is truly present in his body and blood under the elements of bread and wine (cf. ALIC, para. 68). Under these elements Christ comes to us in order to renew our entire being.

While both our Churches have traditionally understood the effects of the eucharist in terms of forgiveness, Anglicans and Lutherans today also wish to stress its fruits in the building up of the community of the Church and in the strengthening of faith and hope and of witness and service in daily life. In the eucharist we already have a foretaste of the eternal joy of God's kingdom.

Spiritual Life and Liturgical Worship

29. The living Christ is encountered in different ways in the Church. It is the same Christ who is present and active in the Church's proclamation, in the sacraments, and also in forms of personal and corporate worship. The spiritual life of individual Christians is fostered by devotional reading, private prayer, and preparation for Holy Communion; and this results in faithfulness to the vocation to which the Christian is called. Contemporary Anglican and Lutheran spirituality also stresses the corporate nature of the common life of the body of Christ, and private prayer is related to the 'common prayer' of the Church's liturgy. This orientation is also expressed in the commitment of Anglican and Lutheran religious communities. The spiritual life is a normal and essential element of common life in Christ which belongs to all members of the Church by virtue of their baptism.

Our two traditions today can help each other in the urgent task of discovering appropriate forms of spirituality in the largely secular societies of our countries. Such forms should also affect our style of life in a world which is marked by the imbalance between affluent and poor countries, injustice, the exploitation of human beings and natural resources, and the threat of war and the annihilation of life.

30. Our similar tradition of liturgical worship—that is to say the ordered, structured and authorized common worship of the People of God—is one of the most important bonds which link us. The close resemblance in structure and content between the revised liturgies of the Churches of the Anglican Communion and of many Lutheran Churches has brought us even closer together (ALIC, paras. 92-5).

While there has been an important contribution by the liturgical movement in many of our churches, it has also regrettably affected the attention given to preaching. A proper understanding of the relation of worship, word and sacrament calls for a revaluation of the liturgy of the word. Here again Anglicans and Lutherans could have much to learn from each other.

31. There is a difference in emphasis between the two traditions over the doctrinal role of the liturgy. Anglicans place less weight on confessional documents but understand liturgical rites as constitutive of doctrine. In practice, however, in both our traditions, in addition to our doctrinal statements, we affirm *lex orandi lex credendi*. The common Anglican and Lutheran approach to worship presupposes the same understanding of the Church beneath any particular differences of liturgical practice or theological emphasis. Our common tradition of spirituality, liturgy and sacramental life therefore provides a ground for the mutual recognition of our Churches, sacraments and ministries.

Ordained Ministry and Episcopacy

32. In the context of the broad ecumenical discussion on the ordained ministry, Anglicans and Lutherans increasingly note much agreement and similarity in their understanding and practice of the ministry. This wider ecumenical discussion, including multilateral dialogue in Faith and Order and the bilateral conversations of our two Communion both between themselves and with the Roman Catholic Church, has led Anglicans and Lutherans to rediscover considerable common ground in their understanding of the ordained ministry. This understanding was shaped by the Reformation tradition as well as by their common insistence on continuity with the biblical witness and the tradition of the early Church. This rediscovery has helped them to conclude that the obvious differences in the ordering of their ministries no longer imply a deeper ecclesiological difference. Such a difference was in fact never recognized officially by the two Communion.
33. This agreement and convergence on the level of doctrine is complemented and furthered by the common pastoral and liturgical experience of ministry in our Churches. We have learned that in the Anglican and Lutheran Churches pastors are called to fulfil very much the same functions and responsibilities. They face similar challenges, problems and opportunities. As for the office of bishop in our Churches, this similarity of practice is even more important in view of certain differences in the interpretation of the significance of the office of bishop.
34. Together with other Churches, Anglicans and Lutherans are rediscovering the importance of the ministry of the whole People of God, the *general priesthood of all baptized believers*. This priesthood has its foundation in the unique priesthood of Jesus Christ and is given through baptism. Its members are called and sent by Christ and are equipped with the gifts of the Holy Spirit to fulfil their priestly task in everyday life as well as within the Christian community. They do this by offering themselves, their love and commitment in witnessing to Christ and serving others. In our largely secularized societies this witness and service of committed Christian lay people is more than ever required as an essential part of the missionary vocation of the Church.
35. Both Anglicans and Lutherans hold the *ordained ministry* of Word and Sacrament to be a gift of God to his church and, therefore, of divine institution (cf. Confessio Augustana Art. 5, and the Anglican Ordinals). 'The chief responsibility of the ordained ministry is to assemble and build up the body of Christ by proclaiming and teaching the Word of God, by celebrating the sacraments, and by guiding the life of the community in its worship, its mission and its caring ministry' (BEM, Ministry, para.13). This service is essential for the Church. It is exercised in a public manner, i.e. in responsibility to God and to the Church. This responsibility has its basis in the gift and commitment of ordination.
36. In our traditions we hold that in the act of ordination the Triune God, through the Church, calls, blesses and sends the ministers of Word and Sacraments. They receive a special authority and responsibility from God in

Christ and at the same time and by the same act they receive authority to minister from the whole People of God. They enter a commitment for which they are accountable and are assured of God's gracious assistance, especially in times of difficulty, through the Holy Spirit. Ordination is for life and cannot be repeated. It is administered with the prayer of all the people and the laying on of hands of other ministers, especially of those who occupy a ministry of oversight and unity in the Church (cf. ALIC, para. 78).

37. We agree in stressing the interrelation between the general priesthood and the ordained ministry. The community needs ordained ministers, because the source of its life is Word and Sacrament, because it needs to be equipped for its witness and service. Ordained ministers, on the other hand, can fulfil their calling only in and for the community and with the support of the community and in co-operation with other ministries which exist within it (cf. BEM, Ministry, para. 12). Though they exercise their ministry within the community, they also stand, under the Gospel, over against the community.

In their service, they are related to the priesthood of Christ and accordingly also to the priesthood of all baptized believers (cf. para. 34 above), which they help to strengthen and build up through Word and Sacrament, their intercession and their pastoral guidance. In this sense ordained ministers in Anglican Churches and in some Lutheran Churches are called priest.

38. Anglicans and Lutherans participate in the growing ecumenical agreement that the *apostolicity* of the Church, and the apostolic succession, which serves this apostolicity, are expressed and maintained by a variety of elements and activities. The notion of the apostolicity of the Church 'includes continued faithfulness to the apostles' teaching, which teaching found normative expression in Holy Scripture and, under Scripture, in the ecumenical creeds. It involves participation in baptism, in the apostles' prayers and the breaking of bread which continues in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church. Abiding in apostolic fellowship is given expression through sharing in the Church's common life of mutual edification and caring, served by an ecclesiastically called and recognized pastoral ministry of Word and Sacrament' (LED 1980, p. 32). The continuing participation in the apostolic mission is another element of the apostolicity of the Church. This involves being sent into the world as well as serving all those who are in spiritual or material need.
39. *Apostolic succession* is the way in which the continuity of the apostolic character and mission of the Church is served and maintained throughout all the changes of history. It cannot therefore be limited to the succession in episcopal consecration and ordinations. 'The whole church as the *ecclesia apostolica* stands in the apostolic succession' (RCLJC, *Ministry*, para. 61). However, the orderly transmission of the ordained ministry is one important element in the process of apostolic succession because it is a sign of the apostolic continuity of the Church and serves it.
40. Anglicans and Lutherans agree that the service of *episcopate*, i.e. the function of pastoral leadership, co-ordination and oversight, is essential to the ordained ministry and is necessary for the life, unity and mission of the Church. In both our Communion this *episcopate* is exercised in the supervision of local congregations and clergy by bishops or other ministers with special responsibilities such as 'superintendents', and also in the ministry of parish pastors.
41. In the Anglican Communion episcopacy has been preserved in a succession unbroken at the time of the Reformation. In the Lutheran Communion *episcopacy* has been preserved in some countries in unbroken historical succession. In other places at the time of the Reformation a break of continuity with existing episcopal structure was unavoidable because otherwise the most vital element of the Church's apostolicity –the Gospel– would have been lost. However, even in such Churches, offices of pastoral supervision were introduced at the time of the Reformation (e.g. new bishops in Denmark and Norway; 'Superintendents' elsewhere). In many other Lutheran Churches the office and title of bishop has been re-introduced in this century (e.g. in the USA). There is a general tendency to introduce the office of bishop in those Lutheran Churches which up to now have called and ordered their presiding ministry in a non-episcopal fashion.
42. Concerning the *function and responsibilities of bishops* we agree to the following description: 'Bishops preach the Word, preside at the sacraments, and administer discipline in such a way as to be representative pastoral ministers of oversight of the area to which they are called. They serve the apostolicity and unity of the Church's teaching, worship and sacramental life. They have responsibility for leadership in the Church's mission. They relate the Christian community in their area to the wider Church, and the universal Church to their community. They, in communion with the presbyters and deacons and the whole community, are responsible for the orderly transfer of ministerial authority in the Church' (BEM, Ministry, para. 29; cf. also Confessio Augustana, Art. 28; the Anglican Ordinals; the Lutheran Church Constitutions).

But in Churches of both traditions there often exists a tension between such a description and what is expected of bishops both in Church and in society. In both our Communion there is a growing recognition that bishops need collegial fellowship with one another in fulfilling their responsibilities. Their leadership in the Church is not exercised in isolation but is related to synodical forms of decision-making and church government.

43. These facts and developments indicate a wide agreement in the understanding of the ordained ministry. Furthermore, even in matters of former disagreement new convergence has been achieved, e.g. in the more comprehensive understanding of apostolic succession and in the affirmation of the essential role of *episcopate* within and for the Church. Concerning the question of the *historical succession* of bishops, there still remains a difference between us because, while Anglicans cannot envisage any form of organic church union without the historic episcopate, Lutheran churches are not able to attribute to the historic episcopate the same significance for organic church union. Yet even this remaining difference, when seen in the light of our agreements and convergences, cannot be regarded as a hindrance to closer fellowship between our Churches.

The difference between us is also further reduced by new developments on both sides. Lutheran theologians and Churches are increasingly prepared to appreciate episcopal succession, in the words of the Faith and Order text, 'as a sign of the apostolicity of the life of the whole Church. Yet, at the same time, they cannot accept any suggestion that the ministry exercised in their own tradition should be invalid until the moment that it enters into an existing line of episcopal succession' (BEM, Ministry, para. 38). Anglican theologians and Churches on their part are more prepared than in the past to recognize, again in the words of the Faith and Order text, 'that a continuity in apostolic faith, worship and mission has been preserved in churches which have not retained the form of historic episcopate' (BEM, Ministry, para. 37). The members of the Anglican-Lutheran European Regional Commission are convinced, as has been expressed at several places in our Report, that there exists sufficient agreement between our Communion for the mutual recognition of Anglican and Lutheran ministries.

The Nature of the Church

44. Anglicans and Lutherans agree in their basic approach concerning the understanding of the Church. For them the Church of Jesus Christ is not constituted by individual believers who choose to come together to form the Church. We believe the Church to be a given reality both divine and human. The Church, the communion of the living and departed believers of all times and places, has been, is, and will remain until the final fulfillment of all things in Jesus Christ.
45. The Triune God constitutes and sustains the Church through his saving action in Word and Sacrament. He keeps the People of God—the Body of Christ, the Temple of the Holy Spirit—in the truth. He calls and gathers people into communion with him and with one another and sends them as his messengers and co-workers into the world. Thus, the Church is called to be the new humanity in Jesus Christ and, consequently, to be a sign and instrument of God's will for all humanity.
46. Anglicans and Lutherans confess the Church as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. We reaffirm the short exposition of these four 'marks' in the Pullach Report (ALIC, paras. 51, 53-6).
47. The Church, as a divine reality and the first-fruits of the Kingdom of God, transcends our present finite reality. At the same time, being a human institution and organization, it participates in all the ambiguities and frailties of the human condition. It is always in need of reform and renewal.
48. Anglicans and Lutherans, together with other Christians, have rediscovered the communal character of the Church at a time of loneliness and estrangement. The Church lives in *koinonia* and is a community in which all members, lay or ordained, contribute their gifts to the life of the whole.
49. In this perspective of *koinonia*, we are able to agree with the description of the Church offered by the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission: 'In the New Testament it is clear that the community is established by a baptism inseparable from faith and conversion, that its mission is to proclaim the Gospel of God, and that its common life is sustained by the eucharist. This remains the pattern for the Christian Church. The Church is the community of those reconciled with God and with each other because it is the community of those who believe in Jesus Christ and are justified through God's grace. It is also the reconciling community, because it has been called to bring to all mankind, through the preaching of the Gospel, God's gracious offer of redemption' (ARCIC, Introduction, para. 8).
50. Living in *koinonia* the Church does not exist by itself and for itself. It is not a self-sufficient island. Rather, it is

called to worship and praise God and to bring before him all the joys, sufferings and hopes of humankind. It is sent into the world to continue Christ's loving service and to witness to his active presence among all people. It is an instrument for proclaiming and manifesting God's sovereign rule and saving grace (cf. ALIC, para. 59).

51. Anglicans and Lutherans therefore agree that the mission of the Church arises necessarily from its nature. They confess together that their Churches have often failed to be obedient to their God-given mission. In Europe, the fact that some of the Anglican and Lutheran Churches were, or are still, established and have the character of 'folk churches' has sometimes endangered their mission. These Churches have often identified themselves with prevailing political structures and ideologies. But such abuses should not obscure the importance of the necessary relation between the Gospel and the culture of the society to which the Church is sent.

IV. The Present Situation of the Anglican and Lutheran Churches in Europe

52. In the discussions of the Anglican-Lutheran European Regional Commission we have discovered much in common and that the challenges and tasks confronting our churches in modern Europe have many similarities. But we have also discovered that it is dangerous to generalize about our Anglican and Lutheran traditions because they are embodied in such diverse political, cultural and economic situations. Consequently, it has not been easy to find a terminology to express what we have in common. There is no single word which adequately describes the basic similarity between our two traditions. This similarity is to be seen in the way our traditions understand their relation to the society in which they are set. That relationship stems from an understanding of the Gospel which sees the world as the object of God's saving love, and the Church's task as witnessing to the saving acts of God in Jesus Christ in and for the sake of the world. Anglicans and Lutherans belong to traditions in which the Church tries to comprehend the life of all society, consciously relating to all aspects of life, institutional as well as personal, open to all and serving everyone, rather than a Church which is solely conscious of its role as the Church over against society.
53. For our Churches there is an interdependence between the complex changes in society and changes in the structure and life of the Church. How we understand the world and the Church's relation to it inevitably affects our self-understanding as a Church. Generally speaking in Europe we are emerging from a period in which church and society were almost identical, and in this Christendom model the Church and the world were understood to be coterminous. In the radically changing world of modern Europe one of the difficulties faced by Anglicans and Lutherans is that our Churches are seeking to relate to the older Christendom model of society which has all but disappeared and that their pastoral organization remains dominated by the needs of that former society.
54. The breaking up of the old homogeneity, which we call secularization, is faced by our Churches in both Eastern and Western Europe: in the West this is seen as a socio- economic and intellectual development, in the East in more ideological terms. But secularization does not appear to mean the end of man's religious concern, for there is a growing interest in religion in many European countries both East and West. It does, however, mean an increasing separation of church from society, with the consequence that the Church becomes more marginal to society's life. In the Christendom model the Church was a focus of community life and in a real sense its sacralized expression. The pastor fulfilled many functions which derived from his role within the community. In the predominantly urban society of modern Europe this is no longer the case, even though the process of secularization has been uneven, especially in rural areas.
55. The parochial system was an effective way of relating the Church to a society composed of small rural communities. Today, however, the same system can be a burden, when, for example, with diminishing resources the same pattern of pastoral care (ideally one minister in every parish) is stretched to cover several rural parishes. In the urban parish the problem is often how one church community can effectively relate to a population of ten thousand at the very least. Moreover industrial and urban communities are no longer contained within the old parish boundaries. To minister to people in a geographical parish is to minister to them only in their domesticity, leaving untouched large and significant areas of human experience. Modern man sleeps in one place, works in another, spends his leisure in a third, receives his health care in yet another. The problem facing the Church in such a fragmented society is how to minister the wholeness of the Gospel to the totality of human experience and not simply to one area of it. On the other hand it is also true that as society tends to become more complex and less personal, a need is felt to reaffirm smaller communities within which men and women can find identity, significance and dignity. It is not therefore a choice between parochial and sector patterns of pastoral organization and ministry but a matter of finding a way of adjusting these patterns so that they are complementary. The Church must not abandon its parochial inheritance, yet a simplistic reaffirmation will not of itself solve its contemporary problems. New patterns of church life and ministry must be explored, so that the

challenges of modern society can be tackled in their different contexts and yet integrated in order to achieve a wholeness in the Church's proclamation of the Gospel.

56. In modern Europe, where the Church is often marginal to the life of society and is held to be of little significance for actual living, religion is in danger of becoming the private possession of a group. Moreover, the Church no longer has a monopoly of allegiance and is one group among many. In this situation there are strong temptations to sectarian escape. Ceasing to minister to the wider community in its institutions and structures, the Church concentrates its attention only upon the faithful. It confines its attention to 'religious activity'; matters of belief, liturgy and ritual, church organization and practice, and the interior spiritual life. Yet there remain in the wider community many vestiges of religious belief and practice, especially in the 'rites of passage' (baptism, weddings and funerals) which the Church is expected to conduct and over which there is much ambiguity. In the resulting tension between the older pastoral practice, derived from the time when the Church embraced the whole community, and the present realities of a secular Europe, many pastors feel drawn towards a gathered Church of like-minded people held together by conscious and deliberate choice. To succumb to this temptation would, however, be to deny our two traditions. The Anglican and Lutheran Churches in Europe are challenged to re-interpret their traditions, not in a withdrawal from society but in rediscovering their identity and self-understanding in relation to society in its complex contemporary character.
57. Though the complex changes in modern Europe are looked upon by many in our Churches as a threat to their existence and traditional role in society, these same changes have also brought opportunities. Radical change results in an insecurity which is accompanied by a new quest for human significance and values, a search for direction and meaning, for hope, confidence and real community in a fragmented and deeply threatened world. In modern Europe, both East and West, there is in many places a new openness to religious truths and a new willingness to listen, which challenges our Churches to relate to today's society and its needs. To accept this challenge, however, will demand a shift of emphasis from a traditional role of maintenance, where the Church cements together the fabric of society, to a more critical role in which there is a continual questioning of the community's structures and policies and an attempt to articulate society's proper values and objectives.
58. In fact our two church traditions are already engaged in this task of relating the Church to contemporary society. This contemporary attempt to serve society has shown there is a recognized need for bridge-building across social, cultural and political barriers. The Church can be an intermediary between diverse groups and make genuine meeting possible where there would otherwise be breakdown and an absence of new initiatives. In this way Churches can also contribute to the interpretation of change in society and can themselves become centres of hope, critical and yet able to affirm much in the modern movements for human rights, peace, ecology, social justice and developmental issues. But this requires solid theological reflection, a process of building up a consensus in our Churches, and the discovery of effective ways to communicate the perspectives and insights which emerge. Opportunities for the Churches of our two traditions to share this experience and benefit from mutual insights would be of great value.
59. Such a recovery of the Churches' role in society is not to be understood as simply a question of creating a climate in which the Gospel can be proclaimed. It is itself a proclamation, since it is a witness to the beliefs and values by which the Churches live. Attitudes which emphasize achievement and success as the goals of human fulfillment are challenged by the Christian belief that man is justified by Christ's grace through faith. The assumptions that social engineering can produce a perfect society are challenged by the Christian belief that man is sinful and stands in need of salvation. The Church thus witnesses both to the truth and to the relevance of the Christian Gospel.
60. Our two traditions are realizing that they have to become missionary Churches again and discover new ways of reaching post-Christian society with the liberating message of the Gospel. They must adapt their pastoral life to meet both the needs of the practising members of the Church and those of society as a whole. They have to show with new vigour that they are not just in the world but that they are sent into the world as instruments of God's saving will.
61. The conversations of our joint European Commission have shown that as Anglicans and Lutherans try to come to terms with the challenges of modern Europe we discover how much our traditions have in common and we recognize the urgent need for closer relationships. This should not be interpreted in an exclusive sense over against other Christian traditions. Yet, since both traditions reflect similar theological presuppositions with regard to their inner life, their task, and also their relation to the societies in which they find themselves, exchange, encouragement, enrichment and communion are an evident necessity as well as a dominical imperative.

V. Recommendations

62. On the basis of the agreement we have reached, and in the light of the earlier agreement recorded by the International Conversations together with the long-standing dialogue in the USA and the wider ecumenical consensus, we as a Commission believe that there are no longer any serious obstacles on the way towards the establishment of full communion between our two Churches. What differences of theological emphasis remain we regard as not serious enough to divide our Churches, though we recognize that our agreement needs to be tested and received by the Churches before it can be implemented and a changed relationship result.
63. On the basis of the theological agreement that has been reached on Justification, Baptism, the Eucharist and Ministry, and the considerable convergence we have noted on Apostolic Succession and the Historic Episcopate, we are able to acknowledge each other as true Churches of Christ preaching the same Gospel, possessing a common apostolic ministry, and celebrating authentic sacraments. But we recognize that it will take time for this agreement to be received by our Churches and that a changed relationship, if it is to be real in the actual life of our Churches and not simply amongst theologians, will need to be implemented by stages.
64. We therefore propose the following interim steps towards the full communion which we believe is now ultimately possible and which must also necessarily involve not only the complete interchangeability of our ministries but also a visible sharing together in the *common life* of the Body of Christ (cf. Anglican Consultative Council 5, Full Communion, pp. 45-6).

We recommend that

- a) Anglican and Lutheran Churches in Europe should welcome communicants from the other Church and encourage their own communicants to receive Holy Communion in Churches of the other tradition, both where pastoral need arises and also when an ecumenical occasion makes this appropriate (cf. ALIC, para. 96).
- b) Our Churches in Europe should now also make provision for a fuller mutual participation in eucharistic worship than has hitherto been authorized, by allowing Lutheran pastors and Anglican priests to celebrate the eucharist together, subject to the tradition and law of the respective Churches and where local conditions make this desirable.
- c) In a similar way and under the same conditions provision should also be made for occasional mutual participation in presbyteral and episcopal ordinations. This would give visible expression to the degree of communion we already share and to the role of the episcopate in relation to the catholicity of the whole Church. Such participation would be understood in terms of the agreement we have reached on the relation between apostolic succession and the historic episcopate and would contribute towards good relations between Lutheran Churches which have retained the historic episcopate and those which have not.
- d) Our Churches in Europe should give particular attention to the earlier practical proposals of the International Conversations (cf. ALIC, paras. 100-6). We emphasize again the importance of pastoral and theological exchanges and the recommendation that there should be 'more frequent exchanges of theologians and scholars' as well as of 'theological students and younger clergy' who 'can learn much and give much by spending a period of their early ministry in the context of a Church other than their own' (ALIC, para. 104). We would also encourage the 'twinning' of cities, dioceses and even parishes as an important way of opening the riches of each other's traditions to the people of our two Churches who share the common pastoral situation and challenge we have described.

[**Editors' note:** In this appendix the report of the European Regional Commission cites paragraphs 100-106 of the Pullach Report. In the present publication these paragraphs are not reprinted here.]

APPENDIX 1

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Lutheran

The Revd Dr Günther Gassmann (Co-Chairman)
The Rt Revd Dr Johannes Hempel
The Revd Dr András Ruess
The Revd Professor Torleiv Austad
The Very Revd Toivo Arvi Seppänen
The Revd Professor Lars Österlin (Co-Secretary)

Anglican

The Rt Revd John Gibbs (Co-Chairman)
The Revd Professor James Atkinson
The Rt Revd Richard P. C. Hanson
The Revd Chancellor O. Geoffrey Rees
The Rt Revd Neil Russell (Corresponding Member)
The Revd Canon Christopher Hill (Co-Secretary)

APPENDIX 2

[**Editors' note:** In this appendix the report of the European Regional Commission cites paragraphs 17-95 of the Pullach Report. In the present publication these paragraphs are not reprinted here.]

Abbreviations

- ALIC *Anglican-Lutheran International Conversations*. The Report of the Conversations 1970-1972 authorized by the Lambeth Conference and the Lutheran World Federation: Pullach, 1972. SPCK, London 1973.
- ARCIC Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Final Report*: Windsor, 1981. CTS/SPCK, London 1982.
- BEM *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. Faith and Order Paper No. III. World Council of Churches, Geneva 1982.
- LED 1972 *Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue, A Progress Report*. Forward Movement Publications, Cincinnati 1972.
- LED 1980 *Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue*. The Report of the Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue: Second Series 1976-1980. Forward Movement Publications, Cincinnati 1981.
- RCLJC Roman Catholic-Lutheran Joint Commission, *The Eucharist*, and *The Ministry in the Church*. Lutheran World Federation, Geneva 1978 and 1982.

[www.anglicancommunion.org/media/102172/the_helsinki_report.pdf]