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Anglican-Lutheran International Working Group

Global Meeting Focuses on Compatibility of Anglican-Lutheran Agreements

March 23-28, 2001

Skálholt, Iceland

09.04.2001

Final Report Expected in 2002

SKÁLHOLT, Iceland/GENEVA, 9 April 2001 (LWI) – The Anglican-Lutheran International Working Group held its second meeting from 23 to 28 March 2001 in Skálholt, Iceland.

The working group heard reports from the participants on the development of Anglican-Lutheran agreements in the respective regions. Discussions focused substantially on the issue of compatibility of the different regional Anglican-Lutheran agreements that have been reached during the last decades.

The 13-member working group was established in 1998 by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Anglican Communion. Its objective is to continue the formal contact between the two worldwide Christian communions, dating back in varying forms to 1970. It is expected that the group, presently co-chaired by Lutheran Bishop Ambrose Moyo (Zimbabwe) and Anglican Bishop David Tustin (England) will submit its final report to the respective parent bodies in 2002.

At its first meeting, 12-16 February 2000 in Virginia, USA, the group identified several important concerns and practices in the two communions with implications for their ecumenical relations, and began to clarify and assess such issues.

The LWF has 131 member churches in 72 countries representing over 60.2 million of the nearly 64 million Lutherans worldwide. The Anglican Communion has some 70 million members in 37 self-governing member churches or provinces in more than 160 countries.

The full text of the working group's communiqué from the meeting follows:

COMMUNIQUÉ

Meeting of the Anglican-Lutheran International Working Group
Skálholt, Iceland, 23 – 28 March 2001

BACKGROUND

The dialogue between Anglicans and Lutherans on the worldwide level has been underway in varying formats since 1970. Prominent among the reports produced by this 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 Evangelical Church of Germany, the *Porvoo Common Statement* (1996) between the British and Irish Anglican Churches and most of the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches, and the *Reuilly Common Statement* (1999) between the British and Irish Anglican Churches and the French Lutheran and Reformed Churches, *Called to Common Mission* between The Episcopal Church (USA) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and, awaiting final decision, the *Waterloo Declaration* between The Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. A proposal for covenanting is now before the churches in Australia. Other significant developments in Anglican-Lutheran relations are taking place in Africa, and Brazil.

The Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation in 1997 and the Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops in 1998

both expressed their support of the developments toward agreements of church fellowship on regional and national levels – those achieved and those in progress – between Anglican and Lutheran churches. They also affirmed the commitment of the two communions to continue and further their bilateral ecumenical relations.

In order to continue the formal contact between the two communions, it was decided in 1998 by the authorities of the Lutheran World Federation and the Anglican Communion, that a joint working group would be established. The mandate of the working group involves monitoring the development and progress in Anglican-Lutheran relations in the various regions of the world and assessing the significance of the regional developments for the furthering of relationships between Anglicans and Lutherans worldwide.

The initial meeting in 2000 reviewed and discussed the ongoing processes related to the various developments in Anglican-Lutheran relations worldwide. It identified several issues of principle and practice in the life of the communions and their ecumenical relations calling for further examination. It began to clarify and assess such issues.

THE PRESENT MEETING

The Anglican-Lutheran International Working Group met again from 23 to 28 March 2001 at Skálholt, Iceland, hosted by the LWF in cooperation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Iceland. The following persons, appointed by the respective communions, took part:

Lutherans: Bishop Ambrose Moyo, Zimbabwe (co-chair), Professor Kirsten Busch Nielsen, Denmark, the Revd. Dr. Hartmut Hövelmann, Germany, Professor Michael Root, USA, Professor Ola Tjørhom, Norway / France, and the Revd. Sven Oppegaard, The Lutheran World Federation (co-secretary). Anglicans: Bishop David Tustin, England (co-chair), Bishop Sebastian Bakare, Zimbabwe, the Revd. Canon Alyson Barnett-Cowan, Canada, Bishop Orlando Santos de Oliveira, Brazil, and the Revd. Canon David Hamid, Anglican Communion Office (co-secretary). An apology had been received from the Revd. Professor William H. Petersen, USA. The Revd. Dr. Günther Esser from the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht joined the Working Group as an observer (the Anglicans and Old Catholics have been in communion since the *Bonn Agreement* of 1931). Ms. Sybille Graumann, The Lutheran World Federation, and Ms. Christine Codner, Anglican Communion Office, served as administrative assistants to the meeting.

The Working Group heard reports from the participants on the development of Anglican-Lutheran agreements in their respective regions. The presentations given and the discussion held focused to a considerable extent on the issue of the compatibility of the different regional Anglican-Lutheran agreements that have been reached in the course of the last decades. It also paid substantial attention to the issue whether the new regional agreements can be extended throughout our communions.

On Sunday 25 March the Working Group participated in morning worship at Hveragerði and an afternoon Eucharist service at Selfoss church. The Bishop of Iceland, the Rt. Rev. Karl Sigurbjörnsson took part in both of these services as part of his visitation program in the region. He kindly met with the Working Group and shared with it perspectives on the current pastoral and ecumenical situation of the Church of Iceland.

On Tuesday 27 March the Working Group was received by church staff at the Church Headquarters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland.

It is expected that the working group will submit its final report to the respective parent bodies after its next plenary in 2002.