

Anglican-Lutheran International Commission

Fourth Anglican-Lutheran International Commission

May 20-2, 2009
Lilleskog, Sweden

Anglican Lutheran International Commission

The third Anglican-Lutheran International Commission (ALIC) held its fourth meeting in Lilleskog, Sweden, between 20 and 27 May 2009, under the leadership of the Most Reverend Fred Hiltz, Primate of Canada, and of Reverend Dr. Cameron Harder, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon, Canada, acting as Lutheran co-chair in the absence of Bishop Dr. Thomas Nyiwé, Cameroon, who was unable to attend. Commission members sent congratulations and best wishes to their colleague Professor Dr. Kirsten Busch Nielsen, who was ordained in Copenhagen during the meeting.

The meeting was hosted by The Lutheran World Federation (LWF), in cooperation with the Church of Sweden and the Diocese of Skara.

This commission has met in Tanzania, Canada, and India. Sweden was chosen as the venue for this meeting in order to allow sustained engagement and deepening theological reflection on the theme of diakonia, which has been emerging as the central theme on which this commission wants to make its contribution. The discussion discovered strong links between the "six marks of mission," which provide a framework for Anglican engagement in God's mission, and developments in Lutheran understandings of diakonia, as seen in the *Diakonia in Context* handbook which Kjell Nordstokke from the LWF introduced to the group.

The life of the Christian Church has diaconal character, this commission believes. Using a diaconal lens has allowed the commission to examine issues of ecclesiology and ministry from fresh perspectives. Diakonia and koinonia (communion) are two faces of the same reality, two sides of the same coin on which God's image is stamped. The commission believes that a renewed and full understanding of diakonia will strengthen the mission and unity of the Church at every level. God is now calling Anglicans and Lutherans to find concrete diaconal expressions for the growing communion between them.

The inseparable relationship of diakonia and communion is integral to the church in every context, but it is expressed in particular ways in each place. As part of its mandate, the commission received regional reports, which reflect a diversity of contexts, needs, and responses. The commission is learning that there is no single pattern for growth in communion; promising initiatives are found in many forms. In some places, the prophetic dimension of diakonia has particular urgency, and in fact is the leading impetus toward greater unity. In others, the most pressing challenge is to bring diakonia closer to the heart of the churches' life together.

At this meeting, the commission was pleased to learn of a new agreement between Lutherans and Anglicans in Ecuador, the first such agreement in Latin America. Because the commission was hosted by a church which is a signatory of the Porvoo Agreement, it paid special attention to the opportunities and remaining challenges of this relationship. Commission members met with Rev. Barbara Moss at St. Andrew's Anglican Church in Gothenburg and enjoyed dinner hosted by the Anglican Communion.