

The Lutheran Church in Great Britain

Minutes of Synod 2011

Saturday 26 March 2011

At St Luke's Lutheran Church, 9 Alma Road, Leeds

Present:

Trustees:

- Mrs Linda Bruch Trustee (Treasurer)
The Very Rev'd Tom Bruch Trustee (Ex-officio)
Mr Stanley Goh Trustee (Secretary)
The Rt Revd Jana Jeruma-Grinberga Trustee (Ex-officio)
Mrs Annette Higgins Trustee and Appointed Representative, St Luke's Leeds (Vice-chairperson)
Mr David Lin Trustee (Chairperson)
The Revd Robert Wojtowicz Trustee (Member)

Pastors:

- Pastor Tim Dearhamer Pastor, St Anne's Lutheran Church London
The Revd John Evenson Pastor, St Mark's Birmingham
The Revd Mark Hardy Pastor, St Luke's Leeds
The Rt Revd Walter Jagucki Pastor, St Luke's Leeds
The Revd Dr Roy Long Convenor, Theological Committee
The Revd Libby Toomsalu Pastor, St Luke's Leeds

Appointed Representatives:

- Marlies Adam Appointed Representative, Trinity Congregation, Nottingham
Carly Chan Appointed Representative, London Chinese Lutheran Church
Mrs Vera Erdmann-Sudol Appointed Representative, Christ the King
Mrs Halina Martin Appointed Representative, St Matthew's Bradford
Mr John Pyuza Appointed Representative, Imani Congregation Reading
Wellu Shilla Appointed Representative, St Mark's Birmingham
Seium Tsegai Appointed Representative, Wengielawit Congregation
Mrs Rosemary Warner Appointed Representative, St Anne's Lutheran Church London

Guests:

- Deacon Seija Frears Guest, St Luke's Leeds
Mr Felix Kallaghe Guest, Imani Congregation Reading
Mrs Grace Kusiluka Guest, St Anne's, Swahili Congregation
Mr Amani Mgonja Guest, Imani Congregation Reading
Mrs Margaret Pickford Guest, Trinity Congregation, Nottingham
Mr Moses Shonga Guest, St Anne's, Swahili Congregation

Minutes:

Ms Rosanna Mason, LCiGB

Apologies:

- The Revd Tumaini Kallaghe Trustee (Member)
Mrs Elizabeth Dawid Appointed Representative, St Martin's Manchester
Mrs Yvonne Whyte Appointed Representative, St Paul's Corby

Meeting began at 11.00 am

Table with 2 columns: Item Number and Description. Row 1: 1. Introductions. Row 2: 2. The Annual General Meeting. Row 3: 2.1 Apologies were received from Pastor Tumaini Kallaghe, Mrs Elizabeth Dawid and Mrs Yvonne Whyte. Row 4: 2.2 Synod unanimously received the Trustees' Annual Report and Examined Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2010.

2.3	<p>Synod discussed the appointment of an examiner for the LCiGB Accounts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>LCiGB Treasurer Mrs Linda Bruch (LB) explained she hoped to appoint an examiner closer to where she now lives in Cornwall.</i></li> <li>• <i>Pastor Tim Dearhamer (TD) questioned the independence of the 2010 examiner, who has other connections with the LCiGB through the Lutheran Council. LB confirmed a new examiner would be sought for the 2011 accounts.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Synod unanimously approved that the Board appoint an examiner for the accounts.</b></p>	
2.4	<p>Remuneration of the examiner was discussed and a benchmark fee of £250 - £350 suggested. <b>Dr Roy Long (RL) moved that Synod authorise the Board to agree a fee for 2011, and Synod review the fee next year. Synod agreed.</b></p>	
2.5	<p>There were no amendments to the Memorandum and Articles of Association.</p>	
2.6	<p>There were no resolutions.</p> <p><i>At 11.20 Charles Maluila joined the meeting</i></p>	
2.7	<p><b>Election of Trustees</b></p> <p>DL and all other elected Trustees stepped down at this point, and the elections were chaired by Bishop Jana Jeruma-Grinberga (BJ).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sufficient notice had been given that Members could nominate appropriate persons to stand for election, however no nominations were received. Notice will be given again next year.</i></li> <li>• <i>Next year elected trustees will draw lots to decide which of the longest standing trustees will stand down in accordance with the Articles of Association. Each subsequent year one third of trustees with the longest service will stand down (or lots will again be cast amongst the remaining original Board members).</i></li> <li>• <i>All of the previously elected Trustees had kindly agreed to stand for re-election (Mrs Linda Bruch, Mr Stanley Goh, Mrs Annette Higgins, Pastor Tumaini Kallaghe, Mr David Lin and Pastor Robert Wojtowicz).</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Synod voted unanimously (21 votes) to re-elect the above named Trustees.</b></p> <p>There were no votes against and no abstentions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Bishop Jana and David Lin thanked Synod for their confidence in the trustees.</i></li> </ul>	
2.8	<p>WJ noted that Pastor Magdalena Mueller, Pastor Barnabas Daniel and Pastor Daniel Bruch names were not listed in the Synod handbook, and that formal titles for pastors should be used. The omission of Pastor Barnabas Daniel was a mistake for which apologies were given. BJ agreed to clarify the status of the other two persons, as they are not serving currently in the LCiGB.</p>	<p>Action: BJ to clarify the status and formalise titles.</p>
2.9	<p>Synod discussed some additional AGM items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Pastor John Evenson (JE) suggested the agenda for the next AGM include a section for AOB.</i></li> <li>• <i>TD asked why there was not yet an official disciplinary grievance procedure for Pastors, as mentioned in the Rules and Regulations which had been mailed to Pastors in September 2010. Dean Tom Bruch (TB) confirmed the Trustees were currently working on a policy with reference to the procedure of the Evangelical</i></li> </ul>	

	<p><i>Lutheran Church in America and other Lutheran churches. However a Code of Conduct is already in place.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>JE suggested the Rules should include the role of trustees, written from the point of view of the church body rather than in response to solely Charity Commission guidelines. LB confirmed trustee and officer job descriptions were currently being drafted. When complete they will form part of an induction pack for new trustees.</i></li> <li><i>JE requested the trustee job descriptions be brought to the next Synod for approval. TB clarified that job descriptions could be presented for comment and the Council would consider all recommendations. However approval is the job of the trustees. If Synod were to believe the trustees were not making good decisions then Synod should elect new trustees.</i></li> <li><i>TD had heard officers-only meetings were being held, but were not mentioned in the governing documents. TB clarified the officers do indeed meet but decisions are only taken by the full Council.</i></li> <li><i>JE and Mrs Marlies Adam (MA) questioned whether minutes from Council meetings should be circulated to all Members. MA also requested news from other congregations be shared. BJ clarified that summaries of Council discussions had been circulated via a monthly e-bulletin from the Administrator. Reporting is also made via the Trustees' Annual Report, which goes into some detail.</i></li> <li><i>Ms Carly Chan (CC) reported members of the London Chinese Lutheran Congregation were asking for more accountability from the trustees. BJ suggested the Annual Report be passed on.</i></li> <li><i>RL stated that LCiGB email communications were sometimes not well thought-through and could be misunderstood. His theological report had not been formally acknowledged by letter, for which BJ and DL offered apologies, adding that Dr Long had of course been invited to speak on his paper at Synod, a sign of recognition of his contribution which was better than merely acknowledgement by letter.</i></li> </ul>	
2.10	DL drew the AGM to a close at 12.00 noon.	
<b>3</b>	<b>The Church Session</b>	
3.1	The Agenda for the Church Session was approved by Synod.	
<b>4</b>	<b>Bishop's Reflection</b> Bishop Jana spoke of her vision for the future of the LCiGB.	
4.1	<p>Synod responded to the Bishop's reflection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>JE celebrated the fact that much of BJ's dream was already true.</i></li> <li><i>RL mentioned time management and good stewardship of time available, which may include saying no to some requests.</i></li> <li><i>GK spoke of needing unity to receive the dream, unity coming through Jesus as the centre as 'our boss'.</i></li> </ul>	
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Interim Report for Synod on the Diaconate, presented by Dr Long and Deaconess Seija Frears</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Dr Long (RL) firstly brought greetings to Synod from the Revd Wayne Stumme (first Pastor of St Paul's Corby). He then reported the sad death of the Revd Bill Wegner (previously Pastor of St Anne's London and the first Secretary of the</i></li> </ul>	

	<p><i>LCiGB) and the death of Pastor Heino Lanniets in Canada, also previously a Pastor of St Paul's Corby.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Papers referenced in the presentation were Dr Long's report "Interim Report for Synod on the Diaconate" (approved by the Theological Committee, amended and approved by the Ministerium, and now awaiting formal response from the Council) and his more recent "Five Papers on Church Ministry". [Papers from both speakers are attached as Appendix I].</i></li> <li><i>RL's presentation discussed the scriptural context of diaconate from the basis of service and ministry through faith and grace.</i></li> <li><i>Deacon Seija Frears (SF) firstly shared her own journey of service as a Deacon of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church, and then gave a reflection on the wider picture of diakonia as 'service on the cutting edge'.</i></li> </ul>	
5.1	<p><b>Recommendations to Synod:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>SF suggested Synod reflect on the formation of a Diakonia Committee, establishing diakonia training, and a specific recommendation yet to be formulated about what to do about people who want to be deacons in our church.</i></li> <li><i>RL suggested Synod to research and establish a concrete process for selection and training of Deacons. RL suggested the LCiGB Pastors in the North, who currently meet once a term, be tasked with discussing this at their next meeting in the Summer term and come up with suggestions to be presented to the Ministerium. The alternative option would be to establish a Diaconate Committee, which may be more difficult to convene.</i></li> <li><i>BJ reminded Synod the timetable LCiGB had set itself when it embarked on the exploration of Diakonia was that a report / recommendation would come back to the Synod in 2012, having first been through the Ministerium and the Council.</i></li> <li><i>ST gave greetings to Synod from Wengielawit Congregation, particularly to RL and BJ. ST picked up on RL's point that Christians should serve instead of preaching, and asked whether the lack of preaching was why young people in the UK are turning to Islam. RL clarified that sound teaching and proclamation of the Word were of the utmost importance. This requires ministers. However there is also a 'quiet' ministry in a secular environment of service and Christian witnessing.</i></li> <li><i>TD mentioned Dallas Willard as an example of the flexibility Deacons can have by remaining within secular institutions rather than being purely identified with the church.</i></li> </ul>	
	<p><i>The meeting broke for lunch from 1.15pm to 2.10pm</i></p>	
6	<p><b>Post-lunch Notices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>BJ gave greetings to Synod from Pastor Tumaini Kallaghe, who is sadly unwell and unable to be here today, and from Pastor Johann Schneider who has just had a hip operation.</i></li> <li><i>BJ distributed the LCiGB prayer calendar and asked that each congregation hold the other congregations in prayer regularly.</i></li> <li><i>Synod expressed a vote of thanks to the ladies from St Luke's who prepared the excellent lunch.</i></li> </ul>	
7	<p><b>Congregational Developments</b></p> <p><i>Each Congregation's Appointed Representative gave a brief report to Synod, answering the following three questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>What was the best thing in 2010 for your congregation?</i></li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What was the worst thing in 2010?</i></li> <li>• <i>And what is your hope for 2011?</i></li> </ul>	
7.1	<p><b>St Anne's London</b> have a new Council and are working with Pastor Dearhamer to address the long term problems of the church.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The best aspect of 2010 was the large number of children (20) and a 'church sleepover', which will be repeated this Easter Sunday.</i></li> <li>• <i>The negative point is the financial state of the church, needing full participation from the whole congregation, and several fundraising activities.</i></li> <li>• <i>The Swahili congregation had an African Evening which will be repeated in June 2011, and everyone is invited to come. Many Swahili members moved home and the congregation has reduced in numbers. In 2011 they will be increasing Bible teaching, particularly for children.</i></li> </ul>	
7.2	<p><b>London Chinese Lutheran Congregation</b> thanked Dean Tom for acting as Pastor whilst LCLC are without a Pastor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>In 2010 they had a wide variety of guest preachers and speakers. They have had new young people joining the congregation, and a new prayer group on Thursday afternoons (the first group in 20 years), the venue has been donated to them free of charge.</i></li> <li>• <i>The challenge has been not having a permanent Pastor to offer pastoral care.</i></li> <li>• <i>LCLC's hope for 2011 is to become a healing, restoring, delivering church under Christ.</i></li> </ul>	
7.3	<p><b>Christ the King</b> has a small congregation, and it's nice to see new faces visiting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>They need to encourage visitors to return to the church.</i></li> <li>• <i>Older members are declining in number due to ill health.</i></li> <li>• <i>Their aim for 2011 is to come into compliance with charity and employment regulations.</i></li> </ul>	
7.4	<p><b>St Mark's Birmingham</b> now has a service twice monthly, an increase from last year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>They have financial challenges as a small congregation with a high number of students.</i></li> <li>• <i>They hope for 2011 to continue their services and that more students will join them.</i></li> </ul>	
7.5	<p><b>St Matthew's Bradford</b> are a congregation of 45 people including 5 children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Congregations from Bradford and Leeds occasionally meet for worship together.</i></li> <li>• <i>Last year there were two weddings, one of them held at St Luke's.</i></li> <li>• <i>They would like more new people, especially younger people.</i></li> </ul>	
7.6	<p><b>Imani Congregation Reading</b> is a young congregation, but 'old in God'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>In 2010 they secured a worship venue they are very grateful for. They had Wednesday Bible studies and Friday prayers, and recently started a church choir.</i></li> <li>• <i>The challenge was the necessity to move around before they found a church venue.</i></li> <li>• <i>They hope to keep growing spiritually and to involve a lot of people, and to</i></li> </ul>	

	<i>expand the church's programme to grow the church.</i>	
7.7	<p><b>St Luke's Leeds</b> held their 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2010 with a pilgrimage to celebrate, which was a great success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Their challenge was a financial one, however they have come together through low times and have encouraged one another.</i></li> <li><i>The hope for 2011 is to continue providing a Christian presence in Headingley, and to take part in the local ecumenical activities as well as serving their own brothers and sisters in Christ.</i></li> </ul>	
7.8	<p><b>Trinity Congregation</b> is a small congregation that feels like a family, and support one another during the week, as well as at Sunday services and in prayer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>They are very grateful to Pastor Libby for travelling to take services for them.</i></li> <li><i>They would like to have a Pastor living close by, and believe that would help them to grow.</i></li> <li><i>The congregation supports Marlies' chaplaincy work at the University.</i></li> <li><i>They would like to have more links with other Lutheran congregations, and to increase and strengthen their own congregation, and to have a resident Pastor.</i></li> </ul>	
7.9	<p><b>Wengielawit Congregation</b> celebrated their 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2010.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Their membership and congregation have grown and they have seen significant developments since their congregation began.</i></li> <li><i>Some of their young people have been influenced by Islamic literature, and keeping the congregation together was a hard challenge.</i></li> <li><i>Their hope for 2011 is to invest more energy and time into their Sunday School, investing in their young people and transferring Lutheran values to ensure the congregation stays strong into the future.</i></li> </ul>	
7.10	<p><b>Feedback from Synod on Congregational Developments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Mr Seium Tsegai (ST) observed that many congregations had described themselves as 'small'. He asked the Council to give thought to a strategic long term plan for growth for the LCiGB, and for it to think 'big'. BJ responded that this was a very pertinent area and that Council would give the question more thought, to begin forming a strategic plan.</i></li> <li><i>RL noted there are currently 10 serving pastors, 3 of whom will be at normal retirement age in the next 3 or so years. Strategic planning should include training of pastors, in appropriate languages, who are willing to go to the locations in which there is a need.</i></li> <li><i>TD mentioned that immigration issues contribute to the restrictions on pastors in terms of their location.</i></li> <li><i>What is the role of the Lutheran Church in the UK? Is it just to chaplain Lutherans who are already here, or to witness to the 'indigenous' population? Is there a Lutheran mission in this country to non-Lutheran-churched British people?</i></li> <li><i>WJ offered his view that the ministry of LCiGB is the ministry of presence. He recounted the story of three South African ladies who were staying briefly in Leeds, and had wept when they found there was a Lutheran church in Leeds, saying there was a sense of homecoming.</i></li> <li><i>RL asked if provision was being made for the small congregation at St Paul's Corby. BJ responded that Pastor Evenson and herself were both making occasional visits. Services also rely on either David or Yvonne Whyte transporting the elderly congregation members. The Latvian Lutheran</i></li> </ul>	Action: Council to reflect on Synod's suggestions during strategic thinking

	<p>congregation in Corby are also in need of a Pastor, and thought is being given to the possibilities for sharing a Pastor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GK raised the need for English language teaching for able Lutherans. RL noted LCiGB doesn't yet have a definition of a bi-lingual service. Mrs Wiera Erdmann-Sudol (WES) responded that Pastor Robert Wojtowicz often conducts services in both Polish and English, as does Bishop Emeritus Walter. DL mentioned the Chinese Lutheran Congregation in London has conducted tri-lingual services (Cantonese, Mandarin and English) to cater for the needs of the increasing attendees from China, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore.</li> <li>• Pastors also have tent-making work due to lack of adequate funding. What implications does this have for lay people to take on some of the duties which have traditionally fallen to Pastors?</li> <li>• TD raised the question (for future consideration) of how the Porvoo agreement might affect the need for a Lutheran presence in the future.</li> </ul>	
8	<p><b>Outreach, Missions and Service</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SF shared highlights from the Leeds Chaplaincy, including a student who had asked for more than one Bible study group per week.</li> <li>• MA announced that next year's Leicester University Chaplaincy Day speaker for March 2012 would be Fr Timothy Radcliffe.</li> </ul>	
9	<p><b>Other Matters Pertaining to the Spiritual Growth of LCiGB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anniversary Celebrations have not yet been planned due to resources being directed towards preparations for Synod. Events will take place on 8 or 15 October, which allows some time for planning.</li> <li>• The current edition of The Forum includes a request from Sarah Farrow for members to send her their memories of being part of LCiGB for inclusion in The Forum.</li> <li>• Tithing: Affiliation fees have been replaced with a tithing process, LB will forward a procedure for how to tithe to those congregations who are participating in the scheme.</li> </ul>	<p>Action: Everyone to send memories to Editor of The Forum</p>
9.1	<p>50/50 Anniversary Appeal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Congregation Treasurers met in January for a training day, at which the theme of "change" emerged.</li> <li>• Treasurers requested more training days on Stewardship, Fundraising, Employment, Mission, etc.</li> <li>• For this, the 50<sup>th</sup> year of LCiGB, "50" will become the fundraising theme for 2011.</li> <li>• Paper collection boxes labelled "Change for Church" were distributed for members to encourage their congregations' members to collect their loose change to donate to LCiGB for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Appeal. For more boxes please email Rosanna at the LCiGB office (admin@lutheranchurch.co.uk)</li> <li>• There have already been significant donations towards our 2011 fundraising target through personal donations and sponsorship of Bishop Jana's Lenten Walk, and we have been greatly encouraged by God's grace and provision.</li> </ul>	<p>Action: All congregations to encourage members to engage in contributing to the 'Change for Church' appeal</p>
10	<p><b>AOB</b></p>	
10.1	<p>Strategic thinking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TB explained to Synod that the Council had a residential meeting in February, which was set aside specifically for strategic thinking, however due to the number of issues which needed to be dealt with in preparation for Synod, little time was left for strategic thinking. More time has been set aside and another</li> </ul>	

	<i>meeting scheduled, and a discussion blog created for Council to debate strategic matters.</i>	
10.2	<p>Charity Registration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The paper "Information for Congregations Preparing to Meet Charity Registration Requirements" was tabled, and TB encouraged congregations to read this and take it back to their congregations to move things forward. Congregations were asked to complete and return a form to the LCiGB, indicating how they wished to proceed. Any queries please contact Rosanna Mason who will forward the query on.</i></li> </ul>	Action: RM to post "Information for Congregations Preparing to Meet Charity Registration Requirements" document on the website.
11	<p>The Church Session closed at 3.30pm and was followed by a celebration of the Eucharist.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>DL expressed a vote of thanks to Bishop Walter and St Luke's Church for their warm hospitality, to Rosanna Mason for the administrative preparations for Synod, to the Trustees for their hard work, and to Synod for their trust in and support of the Trustees.</i></li> <li><i>Pastor Libby Toomsalu (LT) offered a vote of thanks to the Trustees for their work and service to the LCiGB.</i></li> <li><i>28 April 2012 was suggested date for the next Synod, and Imani Congregation in Reading kindly offered to host.</i></li> </ul>	

## Appendix I

### Papers presented by Dr Long and Deaconess Frears | Interim Report for Synod on the Diaconate

#### **PART ONE: MY STORY (Deaconess Seija Frears)**

##### **Early childhood in Finland**

My family in Finland was originally not very religious but my mum used to send my brother and I to the local Lutheran church for Sunday school every week. There was another friend of ours, Hannele, who took part and often there were only three of us and the teacher or occasionally even three teachers!

When I was 13 years old there was an evangelistic meeting in our Lutheran church hall Hannele invited me as she was attending with her elder sister. During this meeting I realised for the first time in my life that I was a sinner. I had stolen my brother's sweets and understood that it is precisely this sin, shame and fear that separate me from a Holy God. I wanted to have my sins forgiven and invite Jesus into my heart but when the leader asked us openly to indicate this I shied away. I still remember as I was leaving the upstairs church hall talking to Jesus in my heart and waving good buy as I said to Him: 'Sorry Jesus, this did not work out then!' But God did not leave me in my despair. When I descended the stairs I saw the leader of the meeting behind me and realised that this was my moment: turned to him and said hastily: 'I would like to talk with you about Jesus!' So we sat in the front pews of my local Lutheran church where I confessed my sins and invited Jesus to be my Lord and Saviour. My friend Hannele made this same decision on the same evening and we are happy to share the same second birthday remembering each other every year and encouraging each other in our Christian Pilgrimage through this life.

This event changed my entire life. At that moment I did not understand too much about God's righteousness, about atonement, about sin and a holy life or about many other things but I knew I belonged to God and was His child. From that moment on God has been extremely faithful and good to me. I joined the local church youth group and with their teaching and social programs grew in the Lord little by little not even realising it at the time.

##### **Becoming a deaconess**

After the High School I had to decide what to do with my life: what further education to pursue or what career to follow? My friends and I applied to many institutions and the only thing I knew to do was to pray: 'Lord I will go where ever you open a door!' The Lord opened a door to study to become a Deaconess in the Lutheran Church. Initially I had hoped to become a teacher but quite enjoyed the student years and bonded well with my fellow students and teachers in the Deaconia Institute in Lahti. This time included a short period in a male prison in Eastern Finland and work in Tampere city with young people who had drug and behavioural problems. I was also fortunate to work as a trainee in my Deaconess friend's congregation in Tampere, Viinikka, which gave me a youthful and enthusiastic insight into the profession. At the end I was very happy to be in Jesus' service as a Deaconess and thought that He had brought me to that place for His own good purposes which I didn't fully know or understand at the time.

##### **Haifa, Israel**

After this I wanted to learn more about real life and departed alone for one year in Israel. I lived in a Kibbutz near Haifa, was given my own Kibbutz family with whom I met regularly, started to learn Hebrew and enjoyed meeting young people from all over the world as the Kibbutz movement was very popular in those days. Later on in the year after I had gained enough language proficiency and my nursing papers were approved by the Health Authorities I could start to work in Haifa Rotchild Hospital as a nurse in a surgical ward. At that time Jews, Arabs and us foreigners were working closely together for all who needed hospital care. During the week-ends, I had already from my time in the Kibbutz, found out that there was a local Lutheran Church Congregation which met in Haifa every Sunday and was also a part of very international community. Very early in my stay in Israel I joined the Haifa Lutheran church family and felt very much part of it. Every Sunday I met a Finnish family who worked in the adjacent Ebenezer Home for the elderly and helped regularly with the Church activities. Their simple Christian lifestyle and love impressed me greatly. Another things that impressed me profoundly was that God can be trusted with my life, God will sustain and provide in new circumstances, God will lead on when we ask Him to do so and that God is just a great God!

##### **Back to Finland: What next?**

I returned to Finland after the year abroad, as I had to start to pay back my loan from Finnish Government which had enabled me to complete my studies. My work in the Casualty Department of Tampere Central Hospital was very interesting, challenging and I learned a lot every day. I lived nearby in residential halls for the staff. During my time in the A & E (Accidents and Emergences) the biggest thing I learned was the power of team work. It was great to be part of a team that worked together for a common goal to save lives and to make people get better.

One day I was reading the Bible and praying when I suddenly realised that God had not cancelled His Great Commandment to **'go and make disciples of all nations**, (baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything Jesus had commanded them' Mt 28:19-20a)

This thought was like a bolt of lightning! Yes, I need to do something about this, this commandment from God Himself has never been cancelled, I'm required to respond! I did not have any visions or other ideas but rationally thought that I either need to help send other people or need to go myself! To find out what God wanted me to do I thought that since I have no hindrances to go myself I will do all within my means to go and if God stops me then my place is to stay and send others.

After contacting the 'Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission' (FELM) they asked me to become a specialized nurse before anything else could happen. God provided me a place in Tampere Nursing College straight away. Then there was a half year missionary course in Helsinki in the Mission Head Quarters, another half year's language studies in England in Whitby and by the time of sending me out to the field the Mission Board had three options: Nepal, Taiwan, or Israel. At the last minute there was an urgent call for church work in Bangkok Thailand with a new Lutheran Ministry in co-operation with Norwegians and the Hong Kong Lutheran Church.

##### **Bangkok, Thailand**

So it was decided that my place would be in Bangkok helping to start new congregations. However after language school it was felt that the Mission needed me to help to run a church kindergarten and also at the same time help the same congregation with the church work. The Banana Tree Kindergarten which is now called the 'Emmanuel Church Kindergarten' has about 100 children and a staff of about 12. Some of the children come from impoverished area nearby and the idea is to give the children an education so they can do better in their lives afterwards. In 1994 The Lutheran Church in Thailand was born with more than 10 congregations, it's own theological education, and Radio Ministry, also with it's own Deaconia department -under which there is a 'Home of Grace'

for single mothers. Also to improve Deaconia work in different congregations a Deaconia Committee, which later became a Deaconia Department in the newly formed Lutheran Church in Thailand, was formed to provide training days, give a Forum for discussion and net work with those who were interested about this way of serving the Lord and setting up deaconia projects. During my 6 ½ years in Bangkok I learned more about Christian team work. The fundamental lesson was that although each one of us worked independently in different church centres or other ministries like in the kindergarten, theological teaching or deaconia projects etc. We were all united in our weekly prayer time. We shared a common goal to advance the Kingdom of God and were all brothers and sisters. We normally met together in a big group, either in an international group or people only from our home countries, and then were divided in smaller prayer groups each time of different composition. Just as in the hospital team, we learned to live, work and appreciate each other as we talked with God with all of our siblings regularly!

### **Back to Finland: What next?**

My time in Bangkok was cut short as I developed an allergy for the dust and pollution of the city. I wasn't the only one; previously 5 other colleagues had developed either an asthmatic condition or similar type of allergy. So it was decided that I should return to Finland to recuperate. After being in Finland for a couple of years and having worked as a deacon in Tampere, Viinikka, Lutheran congregation -where I had previously participated as a trainee- and doing some nursing in Tampere Central Hospital in the A & E, I felt good again and contacted the mission for possible further work abroad.

### **Marseille, France**

At this time the Mission had got a request for church workers in Marseille France and in 1992 after completing my language studies I packed my car and drove down south to the Mediterranean city of Marseille. There I worked in a small - Paroisse St Gabriel- which was a Lutheran Outpost in order to enlarge the Lutheran Church in southern France. The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission works there with the Mission Interieur of the Lutheran Church in France.

The work had been started in Marseille some years earlier and consisted of a double strategy which meant reaching out to the local Muslim community and establishing a Lutheran presence. It was a small team which had encountered several changes in a short period of time and so struggled with the work, vision and unity. My work included both youth work and women's work during my 6 years in Marseille. The most important lessons gained from my time in France was that of a consistent weekly prayer sharing time with my German friend Rita and spending substantial time meditating and studying the Word of God. At the same time a door into a new life situation opened as it was during this time I met my future husband Andrew.

Andrew's parent had served in Morocco as missionaries for decades and Andrew was born there. So he is a missionary kid and we shared the different experiences of the mission perspective and God centred life as we got married in Marseille in 1999.

### **York & Leeds, England**

Moving to England opened another new door as I met Bishop Walter, was asked to join the Leeds Universities Chaplaincy Team and was I installed as a deacon in St Luke's Lutheran Church in Leeds. My main role in the chaplaincy team is as a Lutheran chaplain and an International Students Chaplain which has been a very exciting and inspiring experience. Having served in the Chaplaincy now for more than 10 years one can really join Rudyard Kipling when he says something like: 'I may not be where I intended to go but I'm where I should be'.

I definitely feel that God has called me to serve Him by serving others and proclaiming the Good News about Jesus Christ to all who don't know Him.

This we do in Leeds through the International Students Club, which offers social and cultural weekly meetings to all international and home students reaching out to 30-120 students.

We also offer God's Good News in two Bible discussion groups; one for explorers and one for Christians; 4-15 people attending. We run a new small group called 'Culture Cafe' for international students in Leedsmet university.

There is also a monthly meeting for 'International staff. We regularly visit student residential halls on Thursdays carrying out an international religious survey at the same time to find out what young people think about life's deeper questions and to offer New Testaments for those who are interested. My colleague Laurence Pusey regularly visits in India and Uganda telling British students how God heals the sick over there. This discussion often leads to the western need rather to have an inner healing for the brokenness of our lives as our health system is so effective that physical needs are often easily met but we might need God's healing touch to heal our inner brokenness.

I also tutor beginners Bible studies to students on a one-to-one basis.

## **PART TWO: REFLECTIONS ABOUT DEACONIA**

Apostle Paul writes in his letter to Colossians (Col. 2:6-7)

**"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and over flowing with thankfulness."**

This passage was an eye opener for me when I heard a preacher explaining that we continue our Christian life in the same way as when we first invited Christ into our lives! We keep coming to Jesus for grace and forgiveness, being renewed by Him and then going out into the world to serve Him where ever He sends us to do His work. Sin, shame, fear and guilt separate us from God but on the cross Jesus took that curse on Himself so that we will be free and forgiven in Him.

As Paul says later in the letter of Colossians (Col.2:13-15)

**"When you were dead in your sins ..... God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."**

**Gal 3:13 ' Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: " Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.'**

For me deaconial service with practical actions and the Word of God are inseparable. There is no serving of God if I don't abide in Him and if He is not in me. Service and actions separated from God's Word & prayer would mean something else than Deaconia work. Only with and through the written and incarnated living Word does Deaconia work become His work. Only through the power of the Gospel are the lives of people transformed. (Rm 1:16)

For me the aim of deaconia work is that people would come into the Kingdom of God and that their faith would always grow and be strengthened. Sometimes the Word of God can only live in my own heart when I serve and pray for the people. I need to learn to really listen to people! Sometimes it is not yet appropriate or good to share too much but often one day the right time comes and then it is good to be bold and tell the Gospel which has God given power to transform lives. So that God's name would be glorified.

I was very impressed by Dr Roy Long's research documents about both 'the Ministry of Deacons' and 'Ministry in the Old and New Testaments' which clearly highlights the same idea, especially the later paper. From the life and teaching of Bonhoeffer we uncover the same discovery that 'the gospel preached and lived out in obedience to God's commands' is our calling as Christians. (Bonhoeffer by Eric Metaxas page 108) Bonhoeffer taught his students in a very practical way inviting them to the family summer house to spend time together. 'Bonhoeffer, pastor, martyr, prophet, spy' book tells us (page 129-130): 'One hiking trip, Bonhoeffer made them (his students) meditate on a Bible verse after breakfast. They had to find a place on the grass and sit quietly for an hour and meditate on the verse. Many of them found it difficult....Inge Karding was among them (telling): 'He taught us that the Bible goes directly into your life, (to) where your problems are.' (extract from the book)

For Bonhoeffer meditating on Bible verses and singing formed integral parts of theological education. Bonhoeffer's recurring theme of incarnation- that God did not create us to be disembodied spirits, but flesh-and-blood human beings- led him to the idea that the Christian life must be modelled by Jesus. Jesus did not only communicate ideas and concepts and rules and principles for living. He lived. And by living with his disciples, he showed them what life was supposed to look like, what God had intended it to look like. It was not merely intellectual or merely spiritual. It was all these things together; it was something more. Bonhoeffer aimed to model the Christian life for his students."

It had all started some years earlier when Bonhoeffer was visiting America: (on the page 124) quoting from the book: "Somehow Bonhoeffer's time in New York, especially his worship at the "negro churches" (black churches), played a part in the change that happened in him. He had heard the gospel preached there and had seen real piety among suffering people. The fiery sermons and the joyous worship and singing had all opened his eyes to something and had changed him. Had he been 'born again'? What happened is unclear, but the results were obvious. For one thing, he now became a regular church goer for the first time in his life and he took Communion as often as possible." (page 110) "the only real piety and power that Bonhoeffer had seen in American churches seemed to be in the churches where there were a present reality and past history of suffering."

In the black church (page 108)(which Bonhoeffer attended )(pastor) "Powell combined the fire of a revivalist **preacher with intellect and social vision**...he believed that without both, one had neither, but with both one had everything and more. When the two were combined, and only then, God came into the equation. Then and only then was life poured out. For the first time Bonhoeffer saw the gospel preached and lived out in obedience to God's commands."

The challenge is how to keep Jesus in the middle of my life- so that my life would always be centred on Christ- and my serving would be fresh and renewed by God given visions. How to keep near Jesus? Two questions have helped me very much along my pilgrimage; at the end of the day I ask myself these questions: 'What am I happiest about today?' and 'What am I least happy about today?' **Where the activity is in my life at the moment- there is God!**

For me deaconia work has always an aspect of a pioneer work: To see what needs to be done and do it! It is the challenge of the cutting edge! Especially not to lose the edge! Not to become stagnant but keep moving with a loving God where He sees the greatest need which can be, physical, social or spiritual, or all of them!

This is a picture of a Deaconia emblem in Finland, which we carry on our dress. What do you see? 4 hearts, 4 anchors and one cross. The motif for the emblem comes from 1 Cor. 13:13

**"And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But greatest of these is love."**

4 hearts and 4 anchors for the 4 corners of the world to spread the hope and help in God and to tell about His affection and sacrificial love for us. One cross for one faith in one God.

'This is love: not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.' 1 John 4:10

'Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.' Heb 11:1

"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we stand now. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.' Rom 5:1-5

**Jesus did not differentiate His ministry. He lived and modelled one life where everything co-existed. Jesus fed the hungry, healed the sick, preached the nearness of God's Kingdom, raised the dead, taught the crowds, and washed His disciples feet!**

I think that we already actually do quite a lot of deaconia work in our Lutheran Churches without realizing it! For example here in Leeds I see in the life and work of Bishop Emeritus Walter the same wholeness with which he preaches the gospel on Sundays and visits the sick and needy during the week.

**However I recognise that sometimes distinctive ministries will be helpful for the sake of clarity and the correct usage of manpower. On the other hand it might be interesting to explore the possibility of overlapping ministries.**

Some time ago I read an article in 'Concordia', (Concordia 5/2010) which is a Theological magazine in Finland, about the life of early bishops and deacons. **This article highlighted the fact that in the church we need proper juridical structures to be appropriately accountable to guarantee the Lord's work going on consistently. However not to suffocate all the creativity we also need organic charismatic thinking and behaviour to balance things out to guarantee that we listen and discern the Lord's voice in the life of the church and the congregation.**

To discover our God given gifts to serve Him in the way He has planned for us in a place which He sees as good for each one of us in our Lutheran Church. I would suggest that we could do a short practical exercise during the lunch break. Some time ago we had a training day for the staff in Leeds Universities Chaplaincy and were asked to place ourselves on a chart displaying; on the **north section of the chart: law & obedience to rules**. On the **south: understanding**. On the **west : realistic & pragmatic** tendencies. On the **east: vision and inspiration**. One should draw only one line; like a clock pointer from the centre for the direction which shows the tendencies that are most prevalent in me at the moment. Collecting a summary of these pointers we will see more clearly where we are as a community and church family.

I very much liked this exercise as it shows that when we have a good variety of different people with different God given gifts our Team works the best when we appreciate the way God has called us and gifted us to form His body here on earth. Also it highlights to me that someone else doing deaconia work would maybe emphasise other aspects than those I feel are important. Because of the character God has given me I like new challenges and enjoy pioneer work. Someone else might emphasise other aspects in Deaconia work.

To explore more about how other new minority Lutheran Churches see the Deaconia Ministry I would like to suggest to the Synod that we would invite someone who has good experience on this topic to make a presentation or even a whole training day for us.

For example Deaconess Anneli Konni from Finland, who is my former teacher from Lahti Deaconia Institute and my former colleague from Thailand. She was the head of a newly established Deaconia Department in the Lutheran Church in Thailand and taught deaconia in the Theological Institute in Bangkok. She also started different deaconia projects in the country as well as helping to shape the congregational deaconia work. I feel she could give us some important insight that we are now pondering how to proceed in the Lutheran Church in Great Britain regarding deaconia matters. She is also a personal friend of Marja-Liisa Morgan.

Finally I just want to thank St Luke's Lutheran Church and the whole Lutheran Church in Great Britain for calling me to God's work in these isles and supporting my work financially and through prayers.

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**Some questions for reflection:**

1. Would it be good to form a deaconia committee to advance diaconal matters in LCIGB-congregations and enhance congregational deaconia work and training?
  2. Would it be good to suggest for each congregation to appoint a person who is interested in diaconal matters to be a deaconia link person between possible deaconia committee and the congregation for support, encouragement and training?
  3. Would it be possible to include some training about deaconia matters for future LCIGB pastor candidates program?
  4. Would it be possible to include deaconia matters for ministerium meetings?
  5. Would it be good to organise a seminar/training day for all who are interested in deaconia work in LCIGB?
  6. Any other comments or ideas?
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Dr Long's paper will be published to the website when available: [www.lutheranchurch.co.uk](http://www.lutheranchurch.co.uk)