

The Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church on the Threshold of the Year 2000

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The Religious Situation in Latvia Today

In religious terms, Latvia is a variegated country. The total population was 2,501,660 in 1997,¹ when there were 300,000 active or practising² Lutherans³ (12 per cent of the population), about 250,300 practising Roman Catholics⁴ (9.9–11 per cent), about 190,500 Orthodox⁵ (7 per cent), about 22,500 practising Old Believers⁶ (0.9 per cent), 60,147 Baptists (0.25 per cent) and 3,900 Seventh-Day Adventists⁷ (0.16 per cent). Approximately one third of the Latvian population, then, were active Christians in 1997.⁸ We may compare these (in many cases very approximate) figures with the data from the Latvian population census of 1935,⁹ when of a total population of 1,472,642, 55.15 per cent were Lutherans, 24.45 per cent Roman Catholics, 8.94 per cent Orthodox and 0.98 per cent Baptists, Presbyterians, Anglicans, Adventists and other Protestants.¹⁰ At that time Lutheranism was the most widespread religion in Latvia and among ethnic Latvians the proportion of Lutherans was even higher, at 68.26 per cent.¹¹

Despite the decrease in the absolute number of Lutherans in Latvia after the Second World War the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church (LELC) is still one of the most influential Churches in the country today. A significant growth in the number of congregations during the period 1988–96 is evidence of the development of the Church: in 1988 there were 206 congregations (with 230,514 members), in 1990, 265 (with 296,535 members), in 1992, 272 (with 304,368 members), in 1994, 288 (with 322,272 members), and in 1996, 294 (with 324,280 members).¹² There is a popular view that Lutheranism is the faith best suited to the Latvian character. The Evangelical Lutheran Church does not maintain data about the ethnic composition of its congregations. However, according to data from the sociological research institution the Baltic Data House, which are also used by the Church, 39 per cent of the ethnic Latvians living in Latvia regard themselves as Lutherans.¹³ This number seems exaggerated. Probably many of those who declare themselves Lutherans come from families of Lutheran tradition, although they may not even be baptised themselves. The actual number of baptised Lutherans could be anywhere between 23.5 and 36.4 per cent of the population.¹⁴ Recently, monthly or more frequently, the Baltic Data House has been publishing tables showing the trust people place in various institutions. They show that people do not place much trust in the secular authorities but much greater trust in television, radio and the Church. The word 'Church' does not refer to any particular confession, however, so cannot be related

only to the Lutheran Church.

As the Russian Empire disintegrated and the Baltic German landlords in the Baltic states lost their privileged positions in 1917, the Lutheran Church lost the traditional preconditions of its existence – the patronage of the Baltic German aristocracy over the whole Church and that of the German landlords over separate churches.¹⁵ Until that time the Lutheran Church had a peculiar status as the official Church of the province,¹⁶ despite the fact that Orthodoxy was the governing religion in the Russian Empire. In independent Latvia the Lutheran Church was at first regarded as a legacy of the feudal system wielded by the German landlords. It therefore faced the task of converting itself from a German ‘Church of the landlords’ to a true ‘Church of the people’. This reform was carried out mainly by ethnic Latvian Lutheran theologians who had studied at and graduated from the University of Dorpat. During the years of existence of this university, 1802–1918, 219 Latvians studied theology¹⁷ there, and 150 of them completed their studies.¹⁸ There is no doubt that the idea of preparing a national Latvian-speaking clergy was already in the air. However, until Latvia gained independence the average Latvian pastor, because of his academic training, was limited in the professional and political careers he could pursue. Many Latvian Lutheran theologians who could not find work in their homeland moved to the cities and districts of Russia – for example, to St Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa, even Vladivostok – to work there in Latvian or German Lutheran congregations.

At the end of the Second World War there was a similar situation. In the face of the second Soviet occupation 131 pastors – 55 per cent of the total¹⁹ – left Latvia to continue their religious mission abroad. The archbishop, Teodors Grīnbergs, wanted to stay in Latvia, but the Germans deported him first to Liepāja, but then to Germany.²⁰ At the end of the war the quarter of a million Latvian refugees in camps for displaced persons were dispersed to different countries and continents. They included Lutheran pastors. As Vilis Vārsbergs, the dean of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Latvia and the long-term president of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (LELCA), wrote:

There was no question as to who represented occupied Latvia’s oppressed and persecuted Lutherans; it was the exiles, of course. When further migration started to Australia, South America, England, Canada and finally to the United States late in 1948, and American church leaders urged the newcomers to join American Lutheran congregations, archbishop Grinbergs made his famous statement: ‘Our enemies want to annihilate us, our friends want to assimilate us, but we want to live’ – to live as Latvians and to help in whatever way possible the persecuted church and people in Latvia.²¹

In exile the Latvian Lutheran Church became one of the major centres of Latvian cultural and public life, and involved in its activities even people who had previously had no contact with religion and the Church.

That part of the Lutheran Church which stayed in Latvia was subject to efforts by the Soviet regime to make it a loyal servant. The leadership and clergy of the Church had to make various compromises, but it was impossible to subjugate the living faith. The Church was restricted in occupied Latvia, but it was not eliminated, and could continue its existence and distribute the sacraments to the faithful. For many people the Church became the only outlet for free expression and remained a ray of hope among ideologised values and perplexing relativism. This hard time is now over. During the recent national revival of the Latvian people and restoration of national

independence in the late 1980s and early 1990s the Church was one of the places where spiritual and political freedom were made manifest.

This time of religious activation coincided with the period of economic stagnation and political crisis in the USSR in which the processes of political liberalisation and democratisation (*perestroika*) started in 1985. Neither the Christian Church nor any other religious organisation played a crucial role in these processes.²² It would be more accurate to say that the processes going on in society played a crucial role in shaping the destinies of the various religions. In Latvia the religious organisations had to decide what their attitude towards the communist regime was going to be while at the same time liberalising and democratising tendencies in society were being reflected in similar tendencies in the life of the religious organisations themselves. The temporising position of the leadership of the Latvian Lutheran Church was opposed by the movement 'Atdzimšana un Atjaunošanās' ('Rebirth and Renewal') organised by the young pastors Modris Plāte and Juris Rubenis. On 14 June 1987, in an announcement addressed to the then archbishop Ēriks Mesters, 15 pastors of the Lutheran Church expressed their dissatisfaction with the Regulation on Religious Organisations. They appealed to the leadership of the Church to apply to the Council for Religious Affairs in Latvia and in the USSR and discuss possible changes in several clauses of the Regulation, especially on issues of religious education, the status of clergy and believers in mandatory military service, the legal status of religious organisations, mission work in hospitals and in prisons and publishing activity. The message was worded in terms generally in use at the time of *perestroika*.²³ On 29 July 1987 the Consistory of the Latvian Lutheran Church gave its official response to the announcement: it censured and accused the group and accused it of disruptive activities.²⁴

The initial aim of the movement 'Atdzimšana un Atjaunošanās' was to facilitate the process of revival mainly in the Lutheran Church but also in the religious life of Latvia in general. Quite soon, however, the adherents of the movement began declaring their attitudes on political issues – for example, on the issue of Latvian independence, which was what the majority of the Latvian population were hoping for. The importance of this issue was confirmed by the fact that at an extraordinary synod of the Lutheran Church in 1989 a new archbishop was elected, Kārlis Gaiītis, an active supporter of the idea of Latvian independence.

Since independence the Church has renewed its educational activity. Sunday schools have played an important role in the development of the Church. The first ones were set up in 1988, and by 1992 two thirds of the congregations of the Church had them.²⁵

Publishing is one of the most important activities of the Church. In addition to a weekly newspaper, *Svētdienas Rīts*, the Church also publishes a yearbook and a range of religious literature. The Church has its own publishing house, *Svētdienas Rīts*, which has published more than 50 books since 1992.

Until 1990, the Theological Seminary of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church was the major centre for the training of pastors. After the seminary was transformed into the Faculty of Theology at the University of Latvia in 1990, however, the Church lost this centre. Initially, the Church kept its control over the Faculty of Theology, while the latter, although it remained the only place for training pastors, tried to establish its independent position, especially by stressing its academic character. Eventually the Synod of the Church decided to open a new religious educational institution, the Luther Academy, in the autumn of 1997. The aim of this institution is the practical training of pastors. Before that, in 1995, the Church had

opened St Gregor's School for Christian Service (Sv. Gregora Kristīgās kalpošanas skola), which also trains church workers in organising charitable activity, Sunday schools, missionary work and evangelisation. Meanwhile, since 1992 the Faculty of Theology has offered courses for teachers of religion and ethics at comprehensive secondary school level.

Recent years have seen the emergence of various separate congregations within the Latvian Lutheran Church. There are now, for example, eight congregations of the Augsburg Confession. They are of the opinion that the Latvian Lutheran Church violates the rules established in its own Constitution in that its attitude towards Holy Scripture is equivocal and in that it places no limitation on who may receive communion. In September 1996 the Lutheran congregations of Dole and Bulduri announced that they would not accept communion with those congregations and pastors who deliberately transgressed or ignored the requirements of the Preamble to the LELC Constitution about the need for teaching and practice to be in accordance with the Lutheran Confession (as summarised in the *Liber Concordiae*).²⁶ Since 1996 the Institute of the Augsburg Confession has published a newspaper, *Latvijas Luterānis*, and it also publishes a journal *Mantojums (Heritage)*.

In the Evangelical Lutheran Church today attitudes towards many issues could be described as Catholic. In a wider perspective, we could probably even say that the Lutheran Church in Latvia is tending to draw closer to the Catholic Church than ever before. On the other hand, in the opinion of the new conservatives in the Church the activities of the Church are still too liberal. The position of the leadership of the Church on the issue of women's ordination is an example of this. In 1992 the Fifteenth Synod of the Church decided to accept the recommendations of the LELC Coordination Committee's January meeting at Schoffau on the unity of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church, including unity on the question of ordination. The Synod declared *inter alia* that the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church acceded to the addendum to paragraph 18 of the 1982 Lima document on the issue of women's ordination, stating that the clergy of the Church is not complete if it consists of one gender only. In recent years, however, this principle has not been followed by the Lutheran Church, and women's ordination has been suspended. This is one of the factors which is impeding the spiritual unification of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Outside Latvia (LELCOL). The conservative pastors in Latvia are mostly satisfied with this situation, however.

Opinion polls show that 73 per cent of pupils and parents support interconfessional religious teaching in state schools. Nevertheless, amendments made in 1996 to the Law on Religious Organisations (Reliģisko organizāciju likums) of 1995²⁷ mean that from autumn 1998 religious teaching will be in the hands of pedagogues of separate confessions.

The Nineteenth Synod of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church

The Nineteenth Synod of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church was convened on 27–28 May 1998. According to the current Church Constitution, members of the Synod are the archbishop, the bishops, the deans, the ministers of the congregations and one delegate from each congregation. The Synod expresses the will of the whole Church and is its supreme legislative and supervisory body. It can make decisions affecting all aspects of the life of the Church. The Synod meets at least once every three years. It is convened by the Consistory of the Church.

The Synod opened with a service in the archbishop's cathedral, Rīgas Doms. It was conducted by Archbishop Jānis Vanags, and its main theme was love: love for one's people, one's nation, and other human beings. Then the Synod started its work in the House of Riga Latvian Society. The proceedings were opened by Archbishop Vanags, who then invited the prime minister, Guntars Krasts, to take the floor.²⁸ The prime minister expressed the view that it was the Church which could help not only single individuals but the whole nation to heal their neuroses; he suggested that politicians should consider the question why it was the Church rather than any other body which had received the highest rating in opinion polls.²⁹

What were the major issues to be discussed at the Nineteenth Synod? Before the Synod Archbishop Vanags had given several interviews to the Latvian press in which he had evaluated the achievements of the Church since the previous Synod and focused on the major issues to be discussed. He noted that one of the major achievements of the Church had been the project of the Salaries Equalisation Fund. This idea had been proposed by the Church five years previously at the Sixth Coordination Meeting of the Lutheran World Federation in St Petersburg. The Fund will, first of all, ensure long-term financial independence for the Church. At the moment the activities of the Church are to a significant extent based on support rendered by foreign partners. 'The foreign support coming to the LELC is impressive, but we must understand that it is short-term support and will soon end. For the future of the Church, the Salaries Equalisation Fund is the major and most significant project in the whole postwar period', stressed the archbishop. He added that many Churches in Eastern Europe had now become interested in the project of the Salaries Equalisation Fund, with the prospect that they too might adopt the idea.³⁰

Another important issue raised by Archbishop Vanags was that of the Luther Academy, which is under the leadership of a man with enormous academic and university experience, the German theologian Dr Reinhard Slenczka, professor at the University of Erlangen. 'There is no other theologian and leader with as much experience as he in any other theological educational institution in Latvia today',³¹ said the archbishop. The Faculty of Theology at the University of Latvia, which was closed in August 1940, after the Soviet occupation, was reopened on 1 June 1990. As we have seen, it initially took over the functions of the Theological Seminary of the LELC – that is, to train theologically educated pastors. However, the academic profile of the University of Latvia meant that the Faculty was soon concentrating on producing Lutheran theologians. As Dr Visvaldis V. Klīve of the Faculty of Theology acknowledged, 'We can speak about theologians who are not pastors, but every pastor must also be a theologian'.³² Critics of the Faculty from among church circles sometimes complained that the Faculty was not training pastors or that its requirements were too high. The Faculty, however, has never seen its major task as that of providing practical professional education for future pastors: it sees this as the task of the Church itself.³³ For these reasons, and also 'to ensure close links between the study of theology and the practice of the Christian life by the students and their active participation in the work of their congregations and the whole Church', the Luther Academy was opened on 9 September 1997 as a spiritual educational institution of the LELC. In mid-1998 there were 14 students in the part-time department of the Academy, all of whom had already acquired some tertiary education. The study course at the Academy lasts three years. In the academic year 1998–99 students with only secondary education will also be admitted, but their study course will last longer. In 1999 a day department will also open at the Academy. It will run three courses: pastoral studies, pedagogics and training in congregation work. Graduates of

the Faculty of Theology will be accepted; they will have to study for one or two years to prepare them for practical work in congregations.³⁴

At the Ninth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Hong Kong in the summer of 1997 some LWF member-Churches proposed that the LWF stop rendering financial support to the Luther Academy. A decision on this issue was left to the newly-elected Council of the LWF, which was asked to find out whether women would be allowed to study at the Academy. Archbishop Vanags, the other two members of the Consistory Presidium pastors E. Bikše and J. Rubenis and the rector of the Luther Academy Dr R. Slenczka met the secretary general of the LWF, Dr Ishmael Noko, and the leadership of the LWF at the LWF head office in Geneva at the end of April 1998. The delegates explained that it would be a very good thing if there were theologically educated women in Latvia and that women would be positively encouraged to study at the Luther Academy. The issue of women's ordination was, however, quite another matter, they maintained. There was a commission of the LELC working on the issue which was being solved according to the Church's regulations. For the time being, however, there was a shortage of space at the Academy – only one room with 16 seats – and since it was the priority of the Academy to train pastors it was not yet possible to admit women.³⁵

Amongst the achievements of the Lutheran Church Archbishop Vanags mentioned the Diaconia Centre, which is functioning well and has encouraged the development of charitable work not only in Riga but throughout Latvia; the publishing house Svētdienas Rīts, which without any support from the Church or the Consistory has succeeded in publishing several dozen valuable books; and the work of the department which has successfully reasserted the title of the Church to its former properties and has given advice to congregations.

The Synod discussed and adopted several resolutions.

A Resolution on the Practice of Communion noted that 'Under today's conditions, when the Church is free to hold services, *solemnitas sacramenti* depends mainly on the attitude of the pastor and the leader of the congregation, and a careless attitude towards the ceremonial aspect of the celebration of the Eucharist should therefore be regarded as negligence.'³⁶ One resolution required that anyone who wishes to perform a public function in the Church must be appointed to a recognised post and swear an oath.³⁷ Another resolution allowed the use of the Latvian Bible text as revised in 1965 and published by the Latvian Bible Society in 1997.³⁸

A special resolution endorsed the Appeal of the LELC to the President and Government of the Republic of Latvia on the Prohibition of the Use, Storage, Manufacture and Transport of Antipersonnel Landmines and on their Destruction. This resolution states that although the Lutheran Church is separated from the state in Latvia, it cannot remain indifferent towards political and social processes.

In our understanding, the future of Latvia also depends on the attitudes of the international community, and therefore we appeal to the leadership of the Republic of Latvia to take an active part in solving international problems, one of which is the problem of the disastrous consequences of the use of antipersonnel landmines in many countries of the world. [...] With this appeal to the government to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of the Use, Storage, Manufacture and Transport of Antipersonnel Landmines and on Their Destruction the LELC takes its place alongside many nongovernmental organisations throughout the world which are not indifferent to the destinies of human beings. Many people in different

parts of Latvia have their experiences with hundreds of air bombs, artillery shells and grenades which still remain in Latvian soil waiting for their next victim. In signing this treaty our country would become one of more than 120 countries which are trying to make their contribution to solving these problems, and when it was ratified by parliament Latvia would be one of the 40 countries whose participation would allow the treaty to acquire international force. It is important for the Church to achieve integration in the community, openness to different peace-promoting processes and readiness for actions supporting ethical values.³⁹

Another resolution concerned the Diaconia Council, the Diaconia Centre and the diaconia centres of deaneries and congregations. The preamble stressed that

Charity is an aspect of the existence of the Church and an integral part of its work. Charity means the care of the Church for the entire human being, and therefore it includes spiritual care, care for the soul and serving the needs of the flesh. The charity work of the Church is carried out by congregations; thus charity is part of the life of each congregation. Mutual service in the congregation makes it possible for the Church to serve the whole of society.⁴⁰

The Diaconia Centre of the Lutheran Church develops and implements this concept of charity, including a training programme in charitable work and strategy, and supervises and coordinates the charity work in deaneries and congregations. The success of the Church's charity work has been evident in Latvia in recent years: in hospitals, prisons, the Day-Care Centre for Street Children in Riga, the Kitchen for the Poor (about 140 people fed every day⁴¹), the Hot Line, the Crisis Centre and many other locations.

An important issue on the Synod's agenda was that of the unification of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Outside Latvia (LELC and LELCOL), and of how to keep their separate legal existence while at the same time affirming 'Common Regulations'. Point 1.2 of these Regulations states that 'The LELC and the LELCOL encompass all the members of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church inside and outside Latvia who are registered members of congregations of these Churches. For all these members, the constitutions and laws of their Churches as well as these Common Regulations shall be binding'; and point 1.3 states that 'The LELC and the LELCOL are religious organisations of a publicly legal type which in their activities observe the constitutions and laws of their host countries, while remaining autonomous in their internal life.'

The Synod also discussed the issue of expected changes to the Constitution of the LELC. Before the next Synod it is planned to work out a new Constitution which would stipulate decentralisation in the leadership of the Church and thus improve the system of church management. The possibility is being considered that bishops for the various dioceses could be elected as well as the archbishop. A diocese does not perform any administrative or economic functions. Comprising several deaneries, it is the area of spiritual supervision by a bishop. The bishop convenes meetings of the diocese: to elect 12 members of the Latvian Synod; to nominate candidates for the office of the bishop of the diocese; to distribute information and to discuss miscellaneous issues. All the pastors of the diocese plus one representative of each congregation take part in the meetings. The diocesan bishops together constitute the

Bishops' College which exercises spiritual supervision over the Church.⁴²

It is also proposed to introduce substantial changes to the Synod. According to pastor Juris Rubenis, the advisor to the Consistory, the Synod, consisting at present of ordained pastors and representatives of congregations, is not as effective as it might be. In the new Constitution the idea is to establish the Synod as a standing body. Rubenis points out that in other countries synods are much smaller. There are now 101 ordained pastors in the Latvian Lutheran Church.⁴³ It is proposed that the Synod should become the legislative body of the Church, consisting of 12 members from each diocese and three individuals from each diocese selected by the Bishops' College. Bishops would take part in the Synod as advisors. The Synod would meet twice a year; between meetings the Synod's permanent commissions would carry out its decisions. The Synod would elect bishops from among the candidates nominated at the meetings of the various dioceses. Three members from each diocese would be elected to the Consistory by the Synod.⁴⁴

Juris Rubenis has said that the issue of women's ordination could be dealt with by the next Synod. The Church does not yet ordain women, and Archbishop Vanags has been against it. According to Rubenis, however, about 30 per cent of the members of Consistory could be women.

After the Nineteenth Synod Archbishop Vanags looked into the future:

As we develop our activities I would very much like to try to achieve the complete eradication from Latvian public consciousness of the Soviet-era idea of the Church as a body completely isolated from society. Quite often we hear the expression 'Church and society'. I think this is a wrong formulation, because the Church is not a building or an organisation but a community of people. Instead, I wish that we would see the Church and society as linked together. The Church is not something isolated from society, it is that part of society which has decided to follow Jesus Christ. We could mention charitable work as one aspect of this cooperation. The youth community has also become active, representing not only their own particular congregations but rather the whole Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church.⁴⁵

It seems, however, that the archbishop's words reflect wishes and hopes for the future of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church rather than the real situation today, whether within the Church or as far as its relations to the rest of society are concerned. There are several complicated and urgent problems to be solved by the Church; for example: the separation of dissident and differently oriented believers and the threat of the emergence of a parallel Lutheran Church; the aforementioned issue of women's ordination; the negative attitude of the Church towards academic theological education and modern religious teaching in schools. While 55.15 per cent of the Latvian population regarded themselves as Lutherans in the period from the 1920s to the 1940s, the percentage today, as mentioned earlier, is much smaller. This means that the Church today is in a substantially different situation which requires that it exercise a much more flexible and democratic approach in dealing with publicly significant issues. The new way of democracy has to become a much more familiar path not only for society at large but also for the Church, which claims to define standards and values for this society.

Notes and References

- ¹ *Latvijas statistikas ikmēneša biļetens (Monthly Bulletin of Latvian Statistics)* (Latvijas Republikas Valsts statistikas komiteja, Rīga), April 1998, p. 41.
- ² Those who attend services and participate in the life of their congregation.
- ³ Data from the archives of the Consistory of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church.
- ⁴ J. Čakuls, 'Cik palicis nenokristīto Latvijas lielākām kristīgām konfesijām padomju varas gados?' ('How many people have been left unbaptised by the largest Christian confessions during the Soviet years?'), *Katoļu kalendārs 1997. gadam (Catholic Calendar for the Year 1997)* (Rīgas metropolijas kūrīja, Rīga).
- ⁵ This is the number of Orthodox believers given by the Division of Religion of the Department of Social and Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Justice. The Latvian Orthodox Church itself indicates a much higher number – about 400,000–600,000 – but we regard this as overestimated.
- ⁶ This is the number given by the Division of Religion of the Department of Social and Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Justice. The Old Believers themselves do not give any figures.
- ⁷ Data given by the Union of Seventh-Day Adventists.
- ⁸ We should take into account here that there are many people who are baptised but do not attend church. For example, the total number of baptised Roman Catholics is about 500,000, but as we saw earlier there are only about 250–300,000 practising Catholics. There could be about the same number of baptised Lutherans.
- ⁹ The census instructed respondents to indicate their formal affiliation with a certain confession: that is, they were to name the confession according to the rituals of which they had been baptised or undergone some other religious rite.
- ¹⁰ *Ceturthā tautas skaitīšana Latvijā 1935. gadā (The Fourth Latvian Census, 1935)* (Rīga, 1936), pp. 71–72.
- ¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 88.
- ¹² From information produced by I. Zālīte, archivist of the Consistory of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church, in March 1997.
- ¹³ *ibid.*
- ¹⁴ At the end of 1996 there were 1,377,785 ethnic Latvians living in Latvia; that is, 55.1 per cent of the total population (*Latvijas statistikas gadagrāmata 1996 (Latvian Statistical Yearbook 1996)* (Latvijas Republikas Valsts statistikas komiteja, Rīga, 1996), p. 56). If we assume that all the 324,380 congregation members who were active Lutherans in 1996 were ethnic Latvians, we arrive at the percentage of 23.5. If we assume that all the approximately 500,000 baptised Lutherans were Latvians, we arrive at the percentage of 36.35.
- ¹⁵ At about the time of the First World War two thirds (120) of all congregations were under the patronage of the German landlords.
- ¹⁶ According to a Russian law of 1832 all the Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Russia were governed by the Consistory General in St Petersburg.
- ¹⁷ F. Bērziņš, 'Tērbatas universitāte' ('The University of Dorpat'), *Akadēmiskā Dzīve*, no. 33, 1991, p. 15.
- ¹⁸ L. Adamovičs, 'Latvieši un evaņģeliskā baznīca' ('The Latvians and the Evangelical Church'), *Latvieši* (Rīga, 1930), p. 224.
- ¹⁹ Jouko Talonen, *Church under the Pressure of Stalinism: the Development of the Status and Activities of Soviet Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church During 1944–1950* (The Historical Association of Northern Finland, Jyväskylä, 1997), pp. 33, 367.
- ²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 367.
- ²¹ Vilis Vārsbergs, 'The Latvian Lutheran Church in Exile: dialogue between Christianity and secularism in Latvia', *Annals of the European Academy of Sciences and Arts*, vol. 15, 1996, p. 38.
- ²² See, for example, R. F. Goeckel, 'Soviet policy toward the Baltic Lutheran Churches and their role in the liberalization process', *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte*, no. 1, 1993, pp. 135–38.
- ²³ Latvian State Archive (LVA), Fonds 1419, Apraksts 3, Lieta 266, pp. 47–48.

- ²⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 38–39. The Consistory is the Synod’s executive organ. It consists of bishops and elected pastors and laypeople.
- ²⁵ Arhibīskaps K. Gailītis, *Latvijas evaņģēliski luteriskās baznīcas gadagrāmata 1993. gadam* (*Yearbook of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church for the Year 1993*) (Riga, 1992), p. 170.
- ²⁶ For more detail see *Latvijas Luterānis*, nos. 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19, 1996 and *Svētdienas Rīts*, 29 September 1996 and subsequent issues.
- ²⁷ *Diena*, 27 March 1998.
- ²⁸ *Latvijas Vēstnesis*, no. 157/158, 29 May 1998.
- ²⁹ *Vakara Ziņas*, 29 May 1998.
- ³⁰ *Svētdienas Rīts*, no. 10, 23 May 1998, p. 3.
- ³¹ *loc. cit.*
- ³² Visvaldis Klīve, ‘Teoloģiskā izglītība Latvijā’ (‘Theological Education in Latvia’), *LELB’a gadagrāmata 1994. gadam* (*LELC Yearbook for 1994*) (Riga, 1993), p. 146.
- ³³ *loc. cit.*
- ³⁴ Sandra Gintere, ‘Lutera Akadēmija – LELB mācību iestāde’ (‘The Luther Academy: the educational institution of the LELC’) *Latvijas Kristīgo Demokrātu Jaunatnes savienības izdevums* (*Journal of the Youth Society of the Latvian Christian Democrats*), May 1998.
- ³⁵ Elmārs Barkāns, ‘LELB pārstāvju vizīte PLF mītnē Ženevā’ (‘The visit of the representatives of the LELC to the WLF Office in Geneva’), *Svētdienas Rīts*, no. 10, 23 May 1998.
- ³⁶ Resolution no. 1 of the 19th Synod (Latvijas Evaņģēliski luteriskās Baznīcas 19. Sinode Rīgā, 1998. gada 27. maijā, Riga, 1998).
- ³⁷ Resolution no. 2 of the 19th Synod.
- ³⁸ Resolution no. 3 of the 19th Synod.
- ³⁹ Resolution no. 4 of the 19th Synod.
- ⁴⁰ Resolution of the 19th Synod on the Diaconia Council, the Diaconia Centre and the diaconia centres of deaneries and congregations.
- ⁴¹ *Diena*, 26 May 1998.
- ⁴² *LELB Struktūra Satversmes izstrādei. Variants B. Projekts. Publicēts sinodes dalībniekiem: Latvijas Evaņģēliski Luteriskās Baznīcas 19. Sinode Rīgā, 1998. gada 27. maijā* (*The Structure of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia: Draft B of the Church Constitution. Published for the Use of Participants in the 19th Synod of the Lutheran Church of Latvia, Riga, 27 May 1998*).
- ⁴³ *Diena*, no. 123, 28 May 1998.
- ⁴⁴ *LELB Struktūra Satversmes izstrādei ...*
- ⁴⁵ *Latvijas Vēstnesis*, no. 157/158 (1218/1219), 29 May 1998.