
The Porvoo Agreement Contact Group

MINUTES

The ninth meeting of the Porvoo Agreement Contact Group was held at the Central Church Offices of the Scottish Episcopal Church, Edinburgh, from Tuesday, 7 October to Saturday 11 October 2003.

Present:

The Bishop of Uppsala	(Co-Chairman)
The Revd Dr Johan Dalman	(Sweden)
Mrs Elspeth Davey	(Scotland)
The Revd Dr Stephanie Dietrich	(Norway)
The Revd Canon Desmond Harman	(Ireland)
The Revd Canon John Lindsay	(Scotland)
The Rt Revd Carlos Lopez Lozano	(Spain)
The Revd Canon Dr Trevor Park	(Diocese in Europe)
The Revd Robert Paterson	(Wales)
The Revd Darius Petkunas	(Lithuania)
The Revd Dr Sigurdur Arni Thodarson	(Iceland)
The Revd Veiko Vihuri	(Estonia)
The Revd Canon Dr Charles Hill	(Co-Secretary, England)
The Revd Dr Matti Repo	(Co-Secretary, Finland)
The Revd Mrs Ane Hjerrild	(Observer, Denmark)

Apologies:

The Archbishop of Dublin (Co-Chairman), and The Rt Revd Fernando Soares, due to illness.

1. Welcome of New Members, Introductions.

The Chairman noted with regret the absence of his fellow Co-Chairman, the Archbishop of Dublin, and of Bishop Fernando Soares, and wished them both a speedy recovery. He also expressed the condolences of the Contact Group to the Church and people of Lithuania, following the death of Bishop Jonas Kalvanas earlier this year.

Mrs Elspeth Davey was welcomed as the new representative of the Scottish Episcopal Church. The Rev Canon John Lindsay was attending the Contact Group for the last time. The Chairman expressed the gratitude of the Contact Group to Mrs Davey and Mr Lindsay for the arrangements in Edinburgh.

The Rev Dr Stephanie Dietrich (Norway), the Rev Dr Johan Dalman (Sweden) and the Rev Mrs Ane Hjerrild (Denmark) were welcomed back to the Contact Group.

The Rev Sven-Bernhard Fast (Sweden, Co-Secretary) had now moved on to a new post, and the Rev Dr Matti Repo (Finland) will be proposed to the Primates' and Presiding Bishops' Meeting as the new Lutheran Co-Secretary.

The Contact Group briefly reviewed the programme and agenda of the meeting. The meeting of Primates and Presiding Bishops would take place, with the attendance of the Contact Group, on Thursday 9th October.

2. Country Reports

Denmark

The Danish Church has been conducting research into how the church comes into contact with its members. This has meant examining a range of issues including episcopal letters, outreach and mission (such as the 'Night Church' initiative at the Cathedral in Copenhagen), the development of new spirituality in contact with young people, and support for street pastors and other specialised ministers.

England

Somewhat obscured by controversy on other issues, an important aspect of church development in 2003 has been the initiative 'Restoring Hope in the Church', based on a video/CD-ROM which covered the basic mission agenda for local parishes. This is to take into account major developments in local communities, changes in churchgoing habits and attitudes towards the church, and draw in a wide spectrum of people, lay and ordained, to collaborate in ministry.

Estonia

The tabled report focused on religious education in a country where there is no compulsory denominational education. The church is working towards a non-denominational input into schools, so that religious education will eventually be accepted and considered as an ordinary part of the national curriculum in Estonia.

Finland

Dr Repo reported on a new law on religious freedom which had come into effect as from August 2003. The new law emphasises the idea of the freedom of religion, in contrast to the older one (1923). The law also covers religious teaching in public schools, but instead of previous 'confessional teaching' a new concept 'teaching ones' own religion' was introduced. Religious minorities receive their own teaching as well, when there are enough children in the school. Combined with the new law, a law on funerals and graveyards has been approved. The state gives the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland particular status in this respect, with pre-conditions which included the rights of non-members: regardless of their membership in religious communities, all shall be granted the service for an equal price.

Iceland

In a tabled report covering a number of areas, the most significant issue was a project concerning the basic aims of the church. It was hoped to explore this in more detail during the Porvoo Theological Conference in Iceland next year.

Ireland

Canon Harman tabled a report on developments in Ireland, with particular reference to the 'Hard Gospel –dealing with difference in the Church of Ireland ' project which is now being considered in the dioceses, linked to study material in preparation for use in parishes. The initiative also involved the Roman Catholic Church.

Norway

A recent questionnaire sent out to the Porvoo churches on ordination reflected a situation where cathedral deans no longer conducted ordinations, but a new theology of ordination was under discussion by a committee under Bishop Osberg. An important problem was the provision of ordained staff in rural areas. The Church of Norway looked forward to responses from the other churches.

A review was also taking place of Christian education and the catechumenate. In Norway, schools do not provide religious education in a society which is becoming more multi-faith. Fewer people are being baptised and confirmed, a situation which the church needs to follow up. State money has provided for the church to investigate the Christian dimension of education. After three years, the project will be evaluated. This is a new joint venture with the state, and the church will be consulting local parishes. Three staff members in Church House are involved in the project.

Comments on the Norwegian project centred on Confirmation. In Finland, 92% of young people are confirmed, and a new training programme based on the new catechism has evolved, following a building boom in youth work centres in the 1970s. Confirmation classes are very much part of the Finnish youth culture. In the Church of England there is a clear trend towards adult Confirmation as a milestone on the pilgrimage of faith. In Scotland, the Doctrine Commission is looking at Confirmation and the development of a new rite. Is it a case of confirming, or affirming, baptism? The Easter Eve celebration is also emerging as an occasion for the renewal of baptismal vows. In Spain, the same process is spread over basic training in Christianity, more intense training in biblical knowledge, and finally training in the church - a number of people from the Roman Catholic Church have been confirmed. In Lithuania, both Orthodox and Lutheran teaching is available in the public school system. Girls are confirmed at 13, and boys at 14, before admission to Holy Communion. In Estonia, there is no religious education in schools, and most people being confirmed are adult.

Scotland

The Scottish Churches Initiative for Union (SCIFU) had presented its final report in 2003, which was accepted by the SEC, the Methodists and United Reformed Church, but rejected by the Church of Scotland. The SEC is continuing to consider the recommendations of the report in dialogue with the Methodists and United Reformed Church, and this may lead to interchangeability of ministers where appropriate.

The SEC liturgy is now downloadable from the Internet, including experimental initiation rites and a new marriage rite, part of which is not gender specific.

Of the seven Scottish dioceses, four are likely to experience episcopal retirements during the next four years.

Sweden

A printed report was tabled by Dr Dalman. On the question of inclusive ministry, progress is being made on how minorities existed in the church. People seem more interested nowadays in mission questions rather than in gender equality. An issue of provincial jurisdiction has arisen, regarding a separate 'mission province'. Strong forces are pushing for progress on gender neutral marriage law, changes in adoption and insemination law. There is some tension between an individualistic strain of congregationalism and the policy of the national Church on both local and national issues, effectively on the issue of human identity.

Wales

A report was tabled by Mr Paterson, focusing on the mission theme of 'thinking outside the box'. The future of the church is one of small congregations - this means that buildings ought to be used by other groups, as shared community facilities. The biggest problem concerns pews and fixed seats.

Comments on this included the view from Denmark where a conference for mission specialists is proposed which may focus on the problem of outreach in the inner cities, and the influence of new spiritual directions. Perhaps one form of institutional Christianity is simply being replaced by another.

The broader question is whether God is taking us on to something new, in which the church needs to travel more lightly. Perhaps Christians are putting their hearts in the wrong place, the church is overburdened with property and training its ministers for the wrong job? Are we infanticizing people when they come into church? Good leadership is essential - but not the only essential - for growing church at a time when the clergy are suffering an identity crisis caused by the burden of having to maintain a 'traditional' church. It is difficult to reconcile the expectations of the clergy and parishioners.

3. Preparations for the Meeting of Primates and Presiding Bishops

Contact Group members would sit alongside their respective bishops. The programme was reviewed, including arrangements for photographs after the morning Eucharist, and special guests at the dinner.

The Contact Group and Primates would have separate lunch arrangements, which would include for the Contact Group a presentation on the SEC Provincial Conference to be held next year. Contact Group members are invited to the conference on the theme of 'Our Offering God's Blessing'.

4. Consecrations

The enthronement of the Archbishop of Canterbury in February was an important symbolic occasion. The Porvoo churches were well and prominently represented, and a

special lunch meeting was organised for the Primates attending. Archbishop Williams is strongly committed to the work of Porvoo.

At consecrations in Scandinavia, the question arises as to whether the representatives of visiting churches should lay on hands. In Sweden, the number is restricted by custom, and only a small number of the representatives actually lay on hands. A new service order also explains how the laity can be involved in the laying on of hands. The situation is complicated by the presence of representatives from different relationships of communion who might legitimately expect to lay on hands. The matter is to be kept under review and treated sensitively.

Contact Group members agreed that attendance at a consecration should not involve just being at the ceremony, but that an expanded programme for the visiting Bishop should be arranged. Contact Group members should be more active in coordinating this work.

Because of the relatively large number of consecrations each year in the Church of England, Canon Hill reported on a new arrangement for designating particular partner churches as Porvoo representatives at consecrations - this would be available some time in advance, but will not override the importance of affirming particular links (diocesan or personal) influencing the choice of episcopal representatives at consecrations.

It was felt that the Contact Group ought to produce an interim report on issues surrounding consecrations, including the diversity now produced by increased number of women bishops.

5. Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark and Porvoo

The Contact Group considered recent informal discussions between Anglicans and the Danish Church as part of an update on the general question of Denmark and Porvoo.

Mrs Hjerrild outlined the context of the Danish decision (1995) not to sign the Porvoo Agreement. There was no theological reason for not signing, but the Danish church had to affirm that within the threefold ministry male and female pastors and bishops are in a situation of complete equality: this was a practical issue.

The original process only involved bishops - the Council for International Affairs of the Danish Church came into existence only in 1990. The bishops finished the preliminaries of the Porvoo process, but there was no Synod to consider the issue, or even an official bishops' meeting. The bishops sent the Porvoo Common Statement to all congregations, but without any accompanying study guide. This was the first time the parish councils have faced a heavy theological document and there were problems with emotions and understanding. A key issue was the role of the episcopate in the signing of a binding statement. For some, it was simply a question of affirming an already existing community and fellowship between churches.

In addition, church members were concerned about the role of women bishops and the authority of clergy ordained by them, and by the fact that the two small Anglican congregations in Denmark were strongly Anglo-Catholic, and not greatly involved ecumenically.

The theological discussion revolves around the concept of unity with the Bishop as its sign. Or whether communion is simply a concept of 'community'.

Dr Hill explained the background to a draft Anglican response to the letter from the Danish bishops of 1995. The response had been prepared by Dr Paul Avis of the Council for Christian Unity, in consultation with the Faith and Order Group (FOAG) and the Porvoo Panel of the Church of England, and with the Primates of the other Anglican churches of the British Isles. The Contact Group welcomed this document and considered whether it should be a purely Anglican response, or issued in the name of the Porvoo churches as a whole. It is also important to consider what is the will of the Danish Church: to sign Porvoo, or to maintain the present relationship? The situation may be complicated by Danish membership of the Leuenberg Church Fellowship. We are asking questions about the fundamental concept of unity and its goal in different ways.

It may be appropriate to create a situation whereby the Danish Church can take up the issue once again. On the other hand, if in the eyes of the Danish Church nothing has changed in Porvoo, the issue could not be taken up again. The Porvoo process involves a family which lives with a certain amount of diversity: mission should be its focus, not the (disunifying) difficulties. Perhaps an accommodation should be found.

It was felt that the Anglican response ought to consider in more detail the validity of episcopal orders - what are the consequences if someone has been commissioned as a bishop in another church with which one's own church is in communion? On the issue of the ordination of women to the episcopate, the Church of England and the Church in Wales maintain an unchanged position.

The Contact Group agreed

- (1) that the document should be published as a clearly Anglican response, but with the approval of the Contact Group as a whole, ending with the expression of a hope for the future.
- (2) that the Church of England and the Church in Wales formally clarify the situation of clergy ordained by women bishops in relation to their churches.
- (3) that it may be necessary to convene a special Anglican consultation to sharpen the response.
- (4) that the relation of Latvia to Porvoo should also be part of this picture.

6. Relations with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and Other States (ELCROS), and with the Ingrian Church.

Canon Hill outlined informal contacts which had taken place with the leadership of ELCROS since the Porvoo celebrations in October 2002. Dr Repo described the very good relations between the Church of Finland and the Ingrian Church which covered essentially Russian territory. The central issue was to what extent the two churches might enter into relationship with the Communion of Porvoo churches.

A few years ago it was felt strongly that the Porvoo signing was the completion of a process into which new members were not to be integrated. The Porvoo relationship was commended as a model which could be exported to other areas, but the enlargement of the original communion was not advocated. In due course, this view has changed, particularly in the light of the geographical, historical and cultural closeness of the Russian and Ingrian churches to the original Nordic and Baltic co-signatories. The Estonians, for example, would probably welcome the integration of these churches into Porvoo - the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Siberia had strong links with the Estonian Church.

A central question is whether membership or close association with Porvoo should be restricted to those who have been part of the process from the beginning. In addition, how does one evaluate the historical links? For example, the roots of the Ingrian church and its relationship with Porvoo churches go back to the 16th century.

Porvoo is based on a particular process and common statement: for new relationships a new process and a new common statement would be required. The Contact Group agreed that this question needed further investigation, including reflection on the theological goals involved. For example, ought there to be a closer relationship with the Old Catholic churches?

The Contact Group would ask the Primates to consider how we might set up a process which will respond to these questions.

7. The Porvoo Theological Conference, Iceland, 2004

Members of the theological conference planning group gave details of discussions and proposals made earlier this year, tabled in written form.

For the worship, which would be provided by the Icelandic hosts, it is important that this tied in well with the work of the conference. A short act of worship in the morning would be followed by a Bible study.

A facilitator will be appointed to address the particular issue of how we communicate the outcome of the conference. This should include (as the conference proceeds) the mapping out of tools for Christian discipleship, and the nature of the vocation implicit in discipleship. It is important to avoid the risk of just describing contexts on a purely academic level - specific challenges should be addressed. Perhaps the title of the conference should be adjusted in this respect.

Various persons were considered for appointment as facilitator: Anne Maria Aagaard, Turid Karlsen Seim (Oslo).

Following a model from the Church Leaders' Meeting, it is suggested that each day reflections should be posted on the wall.

In order to coordinate papers, those responding to the main papers should be able to contact the speakers in good time.

It would be useful to have a paper on what makes a growing parish - what sort of theology do such parishes have in common? The conference should also consider ministry in rural areas, where clergy are in short supply. We need to be reminded of what vocation means from a biblical perspective. It was suggested that Professor John Riches, from Scotland, might be invited to lead the Bible studies.

Speakers should be invited to give papers on the understanding that they might be published. The conclusions must be available and usable by the participating churches. The context is varied, but the content should have a common thread of the usable and adaptable, and the conference should produce a document on which the churches can act.

The conference planning group will meet again in London in early December, comprising Johan Dalman, Charles Hill, Inge Lindhardt Jensen, Matti Repo and Robert Paterson.

It was reported that the Anglo Nordic Baltic Pastoral Conference will also meet in Iceland in 2004, although this is unconnected to the Contact Group.

8. Relations with the Conference of European Churches

The Contact Group reviewed the General Assembly of CEC which had taken place in Trondheim at the end of June. The conference itself was criticised for the opening phase which was dominated by long speeches from the platform, and allowed too little interaction. It was felt that the location was rather expensive, and the conference was too retrospective. It moved smoothly, but the way of working drew criticism.

The hearings and the Assembly were important and a good use of resources. Bishop Carlós is now a member of the Central Committee and will keep the Contact Group informed of relevant issues.

The new Commissions for Church and Society and Churches in Dialogue will have various members from the Porvoo churches. Members discussed whether this work should be coordinated, and whether delegates should be aware of the Porvoo dimension in the work. The CEC presence in Brussels was regarded as very important - but also the involvement of CEC in Eastern Europe, an area of work which should be extended. Some working procedures were considered to be anachronistic.

The Contact Group decided that Porvoo members of committees should convene to agree on common policies.

9. Review of Porvoo links

The Contact Group were pleased to hear of very positive developments in new links such as Oxford/Växjö and Norwich/Lulea.

Discussions were under way on the possibility of a link between Manchester and Tampere, and the Oxford covenant might be a good model for this partnership.

The Dean of Llandaff is interested in a cathedral link, for example Uppsala. A Church in Wales delegation visited Sweden five years ago and took a particular interest in the common theme of minority languages (Welsh/Sami).

In Norway, the bishops' committee would like all dioceses to have a twinning arrangement, not necessarily all with Anglicans.

Regular invitations to Synods operate on a rota basis in Ireland and England. The Spanish Synod will be held in Barcelona in December and Porvoo representatives are very welcome.

The Diocese of Porvoo held a pilgrimage to Santiago and this could be a useful model for other churches to adopt.

Among the clergy exchanges reported was one involving a clergy couple from Coventry who had undertaken a specially arranged programme in Stavanger.

10. Publications and Internet

The new Porvoo information pack from the Church of England is due to be published soon, and it is hoped to include a substantial amount of this material on the Internet.

On the prayer booklet, which had been edited and printed by the Church in Wales and distributed by the Church of England, it was asked whether we need to print as many copies in future, or whether to have a restricted print run and publish primarily on the Internet. It was decided to share the costs of the current printed edition across the Porvoo churches in proportion to the number of copies distributed in particular countries. On the editorial content, it is suggested that information on the links should be included in the booklet, and Mr Paterson will draw up a list.

The new Porvoo website was now fully in operation, and the Contact Group expressed its gratitude to the Church in Wales.

Dr Dalman will review the progress of the hymnal.

On the question of liturgy: the easiest way to provide accessible resources for Porvoo services and other liturgical needs will be through cross-reference links on the Porvoo website. Contact Group members were asked to send in the appropriate information to Mr Paterson.

11. Interchangeability of ministers

Issues had already been discussed at the Primates' meeting. In Norway, an Anglican deacon will be ordained priest next year, possibly by the Bishop of Nidaros, who has agreed in principle to take part in this historic event. The Diocese in Europe is exploring legal aspects of the event. This is a natural follow-on from the invitation for bishops from the Porvoo churches to preside at Confirmations. In Helsinki, the chaplaincy has a half share in a Finnish curate, and a number of new dual appointments may be possible in Norway.

In Sweden, church law holds that the presiding minister at an ordination determines the denomination of the rite. There could therefore be legal problems if an Anglican Bishop were ordaining in Sweden.

On Confirmation, it would be useful to have clarification on the status of Confirmation in other churches (when this happens presbyterally) from the Anglican side. Is the preparation for Confirmation more important than the actual laying on of hands? The Contact Group decided to draw up resource material on ordination and Confirmation rites in the Anglican churches, to be discussed at the next Contact Group meeting.

As a way of promoting ministerial exchange, the Uppsala courses on the Church of England designed for Nordic clergy have proved to be a most useful resource, involving 100 ministers so far.

It might also be possible for ordinands to complete part of their studies abroad. In the Church of Ireland for example students might complete their final year in Ireland and then move on to a first post in that country. The Contact Group will also need to review how introductory papers for bishops could be put together, if an ordinand from another Church is applying for a post. One problem in Ireland is that some posts are very isolated, with clergy paid directly by congregations. Not so many appointments are in the gift of bishops.

More work will need to be done on the lines of the proposed Church of England information packs for clergy applicants, which can be adapted for specific churches.

12. Developments in Ministry

Beyond the points covered at the Primates' meeting, the Contact Group reviewed developments on the diaconate. A meeting of ANDREP is scheduled for December 2003 in London. The Contact Group considered whether a special consultation on the diaconate should be arranged for the Porvoo churches – is Porvoo helping or hindering the renewal of the diaconate? There are a number of well-defined positions on this dimension of ministry, but perhaps there is a need to go beyond the positions of ministry specialists, and further explore the theology and an understanding of what already exists in this area, without trying to rush towards a future 'common understanding'. Diversity exists even within the separate signatory churches.

It was agreed to consider arranging a consultation on the purpose of the diaconate, which would work among other things on the questions of affordability, hierarchy, collaborative ministry and involvement of the congregation in diaconal activity. In Sweden, for example, the Church is considering broad questions about the quality of ministry (who can do what, instead of being task oriented). Those heavily involved in certain areas of ministry tend to give an interpretation which is not shared by the broader Church and Synod.

In order to set up a consultation it was agreed that the Church in Wales and the Church of Norway should draw up a list of key points for consideration, and establish what sort of network should be created for an ongoing consultation to take place.

13. Sharing of Literature

The imminent Church of England report on issues of human sexuality will be circulated among the Porvoo partners.

Comments on a recent Lutheran World Federation statement on episcopal ministry would be welcome. Lutheran members of the Contact Group will be arranged to coordinate this.

The report of the Anglican Communion/LWF working party on Growth in Communion was available on the Internet. It should be circulated and considered in detail by the Contact Group next year.

Selected papers from the two most recent Meissen theological conferences have now been published in a bilingual volume by the EKD, through the Otto Lembeck Verlag.

A volume with several theological articles on Porvoo has been published through Eerdmans and the WCC: Ola Tjørholm (ed.), *Apostolicity and Unity: Essays on the Porvoo Common Statement (2002)*

Contact Group members were asked to make sure that details of the Contact Group appear in the yearbooks of Porvoo member churches.

14. Membership of Porvoo

Following the Primates' and Presiding Bishops' discussion of the approaches made by the Ingrian and Russian churches, it was proposed that, through the good offices of the Archbishop of Finland, an official letter from the Co-Chairmen of the Contact Group should be sent to these churches. The intention would be to open a discussion on a possible process. Those closest to the two churches (Finland, Estonia and the Diocese in Europe) would consult on, and coordinate this preliminary response.

Canon Hill will draft a letter for the Co-Chairmen.

15. Terminology

Following last year's meeting of the Contact Group, a basic list of English language terminology has been derived from the Porvoo documents published so far. The list was tabled, and Contact Group members asked to add items by the end of the year. The revised list will then be shared out among members so that simple definitions of the terms listed will be prepared and reviewed at the Contact Group meeting next year.

16. Pilgrimage Sites and Retreat Centres

Canon Hill tabled material on sites of pilgrimage and retreat centres in England. The pilgrimage material will be included on the Porvoo web site, and a link to the retreat association site (which provides an ongoing list and directory of retreat centres in England) will be added.

Bishop Carlos will provide material and resources on the Santiago initiative which has proved very successful recently with Porvoo groups.

17. Funding from the European Union

Funding is available for various projects, provided that three EU countries are involved - for example in the construction of an ecumenical chapel in Oliva, Spain.

It is proving difficult to obtain the overview of this area which had been proposed at last year's Contact Group meeting. It might be easier to contact the religious advisers of President Prodi. A key dimension would be to network EU funding specialists in the Porvoo churches, and to consider how the gathering of information and the drawing up of proposals operate in member churches. Specific stories will give a snapshot of what is available and what might be possible. Contact Group members were asked to consider what the next best step is in their particular Church.

18. Theological issues

A number of issues already considered at the Primates' and Presiding Bishops' Meeting were developed.

a. Relations with Methodist churches

Methodist numbers are declining in Sweden. Cooperation between the churches is taking place, including some amalgamations. The same is true for Finland and Norway. In Scotland, Methodism is stronger in the north of the country, and despite the failure of SCIFU, there is a strong will to form local covenants. In Wales, long-standing covenant arrangements exist, but the prospects do not look good.

b. Finnish and Swedish agreements with the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD)

The agreements deal essentially with the question of how to receive pastors from the Reformed and United sections of the EKD. That is not meant to be 'letting in Leuenberg by the back door' but a limited pastoral arrangement to provide a practical way forward for particular congregations.

c. Ecumenical Kirchentag in Berlin, May/June 2003

No formal Porvoo event took place, but a record number of leaders and groups from the Porvoo churches were much in evidence at this huge gathering, and the international centre provided a good opportunity for encountering people from our partner churches.

d. The Leuenberg Church Fellowship

The ecclesiological document *Die Kirche Jesus Christi/The Church of Jesus Christ* will be reported on officially by the Faith and Order Advisory Group of the Church of England (FOAG). The report will be of interest to Porvoo partners.

e. The Old Catholic Churches

The Contact Group affirmed that it would be very useful to organise a consultation with the Old Catholic churches, although resources are limited. Perhaps clarification of the relationship was best done through individual church initiatives. Canon Hill will attend the Anglican/old Catholic Co-ordinating Committee as an observer at its Canterbury meeting in March 2004.

f. The CEC *Charta Oecumenica*

In the Church of England, the *Charta* was about to be issued to all members of General Synod with a commentary and suggestions for action by the local church. In Norway, the *Charta* was under consideration by the Norwegian Christian Council, and in Sweden it had been sent out for study in the parishes. The Scottish Episcopal Church had made a low-key response – the *Charta* had not been seen to be dealing with major issues for Scotland. The Danish Church felt that the document did not say anything new, but it was being reassessed in the wake of the CEC General Assembly. In Wales, the *Charta* had been published and revised by the national ecumenical body, with a commentary. The Church in Iceland had not shown a great interest in the *Charta* - it was seen rather as a Central European document, but it may awaken interest later. It is not yet translated into Icelandic. In Estonia the document was being considered by the Synod, and a four language version had been produced in Finland, although there had been difficulties with translation, due to slight difference in the German and English versions.

g. The Lutheran World Federation

A consultation on partners in mission had been organised. Is not easy to have one single jurisdiction in this area, which ranges from the democratic American structure to very different indigenous situations and varied spirituality.

19. Porvoo and the Youth Agenda

Proposals made at the previous theological conference were reviewed. A proposal to engage in research on related youth cultures from Ireland and Norway does not seem to have made progress. This will need to be taken up again.

On the question of a Porvoo youth encounter: a Baltic sea ecumenical youth encounter, related to CEC was being organised in Latvia, and it is hoped that this will be open to Anglicans as well. The Church of Sweden youth organisation is in the process of contacting youth officers in the Porvoo churches, and any Contact Group members who had not already done so were asked to send details of their national youth officers to Dr Dalman.

20. Future Initiatives

a. Interfaith Consultation

A Porvoo interfaith consultation has been organised in Norway for December this year, and the Contact Group will review both the model for consultations and the practical outcomes at its next meeting.

b. Communications Officers

The original idea to set up a meeting for communications officers parallel to the theological conference in Iceland next year has proved to be unworkable in terms of organisation. It would be preferable to set up this network step-by-step: a contact list will be drawn up, and perhaps one communications officer from each side, Anglican and Lutheran, might be invited to the theological conference. The planning group meeting in December will look into this. A meeting of communications officers for the Celtic churches is now in progress, and Mrs Davey will report back on this initiative.

In January 2004, the Anglican Communion is holding a telecommunications meeting in Canterbury - Canon Hill will check with Canon Jim Rosenthal of the Anglican Communion Office on implications for the Porvoo churches.

c. Anglo-Nordic-Baltic Theological Conference, Riga, August 2003

The conference, with the theme 'Atonement and Memory' was a great success, as testified in a report supplied by Canon Martin Kitchen, of Durham.

The next conference will meet in 2005, in the eastern part of Finland, to explore East/West traditions.

The Contact Group felt that it was important to vary the range of participants at such conferences, which included church leaders, academics and priests.

The Anglo-Nordic-Baltic Pastoral Conference was continuing to meet, as a cost-effective small-scale encounter. At this conference it was policy that no one should participate on more than three occasions.

d. Porvoo Evaluation Project

An academic evaluation of the development and impact of Porvoo was proposed at last year's Contact Group meeting, to coincide with the Porvoo anniversary in 2006. It is now time to make definite arrangements for the project. This could be done in conjunction with the School of Ecumenics at Carmarthen.

According to Dr Dalman, Professor Sven-Erik Brodd (Uppsala) is interested in establishing a network of researchers engaged in the study of Porvoo-related matters. Some funding might be available through NORFA.

Mr Paterson and Dr Dalman will draw up a list of established names of people who are able and willing to take part in this research and confer with Professor Leslie Francis at Bangor, to see how the project might be taken forward.

In Helsinki, a seminar on Anglican theology is taking place. Dr Repo will confer with colleagues to see whether Porvoo is included in this work, and will report back to Dr Dalman.

21. Contact Group Meetings and other Dates

2004 Contact Group and Theological Conference, Iceland Tuesday 21st September – Monday 27th September (main departures on Tuesday 28th)

2005 Contact Group and Primates/Presiding Bishops in Oslo (perhaps involving the diaconal institution guesthouse at Louisenberg, about 25 minutes from the airport) as follows: with

Monday 10th October all arrive in the evening

Tuesday 11th October Primates' and Presiding Bishops' Meeting

Wednesday 12th October Contact Group

Thursday 13th Contact Group, departing perhaps after tea, or on the Friday morning

2006 Church Leaders' Meeting

Thursday 16th April – Monday 20th April, to be held in Wales.

Revd Canon Dr Charles Hill/Revd Dr Matti Repo, Co-Secretaries, December 2003

Third Meeting of Primates and Presiding Bishops of the Communion of Porvoo
Churches

Edinburgh, 9th October 2003

Present

The Rt Revd Bruce Cameron	Scottish Episcopal Church (Chairman)
The Most Revd Dr Robert Eames	Church of Ireland
The Most Revd Dr Karl Gustav Hammar	Church of Sweden
The Most Revd & Rt Hon Dr David Hope	Church of England
The Most Revd Jaan Kiivit	Estonian Evangelical-Lutheran Church
The Most Revd Dr Jukka Paarma	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
The Most Revd Karl Sigurbjörnsson	Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Iceland
The Most Revd Janis Vanags	Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Latvia
The Rt Revd Finn Wagle	Church of Norway
The Rt Revd Carlos Lopez Lozano	Spanish Episcopal Reformed Church
The Rt Revd Dr Ragnar Persenius	Church of Sweden (Porvoo Co- Chairman)

Apologies

The Most Revd Dr Barry Morgan	Church in Wales
The Most Revd Dr John Neill	Church of Ireland (Porvoo Co Chairman)
The Rt Revd Fernando Soares	Lusitanian Church, Portugal
The Rt Revd Erik Svendsen	Denmark
The Most Revd and Rt Hon Dr Rowan Williams	Church of England

In Attendance:

Ms Elspeth Davey	Scotland
The Revd Dr Johan Dalman	Sweden
The Revd Dr Stephanie Dietrich	Norway
The Revd Canon Dr Charles Hill	England (Co-Secretary)
The Revd Mrs Ane Hjerrild	Denmark
The Revd Canon John Lindsay	Scotland
The Revd Dr Trevor Park	Diocese in Europe
The Revd Robert Paterson	Wales
The Revd Darius Petkunas	Lithuania
The Revd Dr Matti Repo	Finland (Co-Secretary)
The Revd Dr Sigurdur Arni Thordarson	Iceland

In the evening, a dinner was held in honour of the participants by Bishop Cameron at the Signet Library, following a tour led by Mr Andrew Kerr. Before the business meeting the participants attended the Eucharist in St Mary's Cathedral.

1.1 Perspectives on Porvoo

The Church Leaders' Meeting held last year in Estonia had enabled the churches to make a detailed explanation of major issues. This year the 850th anniversary of the Diocese of Trondheim, the consecration in Uppsala and the enthronement of the Archbishop of Canterbury had allowed good opportunities for Primates and Bishops to be personally involved with the Porvoo partner churches. The main task ahead was to encourage dioceses and congregations to share in this experience.

The Revd Darius Petkunas expressed the gratitude of the **Lithuanian Church** for the condolences expressed at the death of Bishop Kalvanas. The new Bishop will be elected at the end of April 2004, and continued prayer was asked for.

In **Finland**, a major discussion on the diaconate was under way, with no clear consensus yet. Changes in the church law had removed obstacles to the implementation of Porvoo (for example, on the requirement for ministers to have Finnish nationality). Finnish pastors were involved in Anglican ministry, with permission to officiate, and this has made the Porvoo Common Statement more widely known.

Porvoo is becoming more and more a part of the life of the **Church of Norway**. Belonging to the Communion is a gift and challenge, deepening our understanding of what it needs to be church - recent events of note have included the ordination of Anglican deacon at Nidaros, the enthronement of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the North Sea Sailing Seminar. The prayer booklet is widely used. Common topics of concern for the churches are emerging: relations between church and state, reforms within the church (new financial systems and local reorganisation), the question of Christian upbringing of children and teenagers.

In **Ireland**, the church was trying to find practical ways of transferring the Porvoo spirit into parish life and language. The cycle of prayer was in regular use and the church would be glad to look at the possibility of welcoming junior clergy from the other Porvoo churches. The Church of Ireland would like to create more diocesan links, but this will proceed slowly, and involved the sharing of burdens as well as hospitality. The church is having to contend with a tremendous problem of asylum seekers, especially in the Irish Republic. It would be useful to have advice from Porvoo partners on how we the Church can give welcome and support.

The **Latvian** church welcomed the opportunity to attend these meetings. Latvia was still not yet able to sign Porvoo, because of tensions within the Synod, but could consider the question once more in a few years time. The ground needed to be prepared in a positive way. Important issues for the Latvian Church were: the need to discuss ecclesiology from the perspective of the church as the Body of Christ; how to deal with ecumenical theology and questions - Latvians were rather sceptical on such issues, as during the post-Soviet period people were more focused on discovering their Lutheran identity; in the Lutheran World Federation, the Latvian church felt that decisions made on controversial issues make ecumenical ties more difficult; Latvians had not had much contact with other denominations - in Riga, the Anglican St Saviour's Church has a Lutheran pastor as a priest, but expressing controversial views on sexuality. The Latvian Church welcomed the visit of the Bishops of Salisbury and

the Sudan in October, and hoped that the positive contacts could be extended. The church was in a critical financial situation, with reduced support for church projects leading to staff cuts and slowing down the ability of the church to respond to messages from abroad. Archbishop Vanags asked for understanding in this respect.

The **Spanish Episcopal Reformed Church**, affirmed like its Portuguese counterpart, the underlying importance of being part of the Porvoo Contact Group. This contact has enriched church life, inspiring visits from Nordic and Baltic countries, and the building of links with retired people from the Porvoo countries living in Iberia. A special initiative involving a Porvoo pilgrimage to Santiago had been successful. Invitations would be sent out for the Synod meeting in December. A new worship order has recently been received, and some interest in the new Catechism of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland has arisen. The church was collaborating with the Roman Catholic Church to create a new council of Christian churches in Spain.

In **Estonia**, the Anglican chaplain from Helsinki was now licensed to officiate in the Evangelical Lutheran church. The Church Leaders' Meeting in Tallinn in 2002 was very important for the Estonian Church, in a country where the passing of a new religious law has meant the need to renew the church constitution, and consider some of the principles of the Porvoo Common Statement, especially in regard to ministry.

The **Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark** wanted to take part as much as possible in Porvoo, and welcomed the opportunity for contact with different forms of Anglicanism. Since the last Primates' meeting, the Danish Church has signed the Leuenberg Concordat. It is hoped that eventually full membership of Porvoo will be possible, based on a strong sense of Danish identification with the communion of churches.

In **Sweden**, Porvoo continues to build on the very good level of understanding with the partner churches. The Church of Sweden itself has been occupied with issues of church and state. It has been refreshing to come into contact with the Celtic nations: closeness to nature informs our understanding of God and inspires spiritual openness in a secularised society. Initiatives are under way to train Swedish clergy to serve in Anglican parishes, and around 100 clergy have followed such courses. When clergy returned to Sweden, Porvoo is brought back to the grassroots of the church. 11 out of the 13 Swedish dioceses now have Anglican links. The church is clearly seen as trans-national.

The **Church of England** has continued to develop Porvoo links involving dioceses, parishes and others. The Porvoo Panel oversees and encourages these links, providing material for clergy. Invitations to consecrations are given at regular intervals, and a steady stream of permissions to serve involve Porvoo clergy. The Tallinn meeting was much appreciated, where the agenda on mission coincided with Church of England priorities. The church was looking in detail at new ways of 'being church' beyond the old parish system, with an emphasis on nurture. This meant asking radical questions about ordained and lay ministry. The church also valued Porvoo contact on environmental and interfaith issues, and church-state relations. In England a slow re-configuration was taking place, with projected reforms of the House of Lords and the office of the Lord Chancellor.

In **Iceland**, Porvoo was becoming more visible in the life of the church. The former chaplain in London has been consecrated as a suffragan Bishop. A Porvoo discussion group meets regularly, and the Icelandic Church was greatly looking forward to hosting the theological conference in September 2004.

The various reports from the churches underlined the need for practical ways of making Porvoo real, and highlighted the potential for exploring key issues which can be given a new dimension by discussion with Porvoo partners.

1.2 Developments within the Anglican Communion

The news was dominated at the moment by issues of human sexuality and their consequences the Anglican Communion. The greatest challenge was the appointment of the Bishop of New Hampshire. This appointment was totally within the provincial rules and structures of ECUSA, but had caused ripples and storms across the Anglican Communion, resulting in a threat to unity.

There were two basic positions: either one could be a listening church, or the primacy of Scripture should determine our attitude. This was a grey area. It is felt by some that this controversy had been inflicted upon the Anglican Communion too quickly, and it was difficult to maintain a wait-and-see attitude in a situation which was perceived as involving lack of trust. In addition, the issue straddled both ecclesiology and theology - it is too soon to say which of the two dominated the agenda. In mid-October a two-day consultation will be held for Anglican Primates at Lambeth Palace, and difficult questions were being asked about what the meeting might achieve.

Feelings were running high, with some Primates calling on the Anglican Communion to remove ECUSA. Others were pleading for a sense of realism. The Communion was a brotherhood of like-minded churches, without a constitutional framework - there were no rules about membership, or legally formulated government.

The Anglican churches might have to go forward with the concept of impaired Communion. A similar challenge had been made over the nomination of the suffragan Bishop of Reading. In Canada, one diocesan synod has approved the blessing of same-sex unions. In November 2003 a substantial Church of England reader on human sexuality will be published, but without any change in the position of the Bishops on these matters.

The issues involved reflected the struggle of every 'open' church, part of the question of how individuals see their identity. The Church of Sweden has been working on these issues since the 1970s, trying to resolve the question of unity and diversity. The challenge is how to live together as the Body of Christ and accept divergent views of Scripture and tradition. In spite of the current controversies, the question will recur. From a Swedish point of view the real question is how we help people to live in loving faithful relationships, irrespective of sexual orientation. The debate on this issue will take place in the Church Assembly. Communion is a gift, with Christ at the centre, and we cannot put conditions on it. Communion is a matter of trust, and the issue was not about being 'liberal', but about how to understand human beings and the nature of God.

For the Latvian church, this is not a question necessarily of saying that others are wrong. The problem is where individual churches make decisions without the prior discussion of Communion. Being in Communion is a real across to bear.

The Lutheran World Federation allows diversity on such matters, and lets individual churches find their own way, without veto. The problem is that in reality people want a clear 'either... or'. The Anglican Communion is a victim of the media controlled hype.

It was also noted that some parishes are putting on pressure, threatening to withdraw funding or looking for alternative episcopal oversight. This may reflect an increasing congregationalism and 'lawlessness'.

1.3 Developments within the Lutheran World Federation

Reflections on the recent Assembly in Canada were shared.

The Assembly had taken place in a positive ecumenical atmosphere, with the Anglican Church of Canada acting almost as a co-host, and the worship taking place in Roman Catholic buildings.

The outgoing president, Bishop Krause, had drawn attention to issues of globalisation, interfaith dialogue, world peace, and to the future of traditional churches in relation to growing charismatic movements. A challenge for Porvoo would be whether it is possible to gather in these movements with the historic churches.

On issues of sexuality, the churches of Western Europe, Scandinavia and North America were ready to discuss matters which those of Africa and Eastern Europe regarded as taboo subjects.

Some Lutherans felt that rather than being taboo, the subject was simply too premature: there was a consistent refusal to mention marriage as an essential element of the family.

An important issue not on the agenda was the refusal of the Canadian authorities to deny visas for 50 delegates, mainly from poor Africa and Asian churches. This was a response to the post 9/11 situation, and fear of terrorism, which raised new barriers between rich and poor countries and churches. It impaired the LWF as Communion. The Assembly had spent two weeks debating the healing of the world against the local background where the government had refused visas to some delegates.

The Assembly discussed the question of Communion - what it meant and how could be strengthened. The recent agreement with the Roman Catholic Church on the Doctrine of Justification was welcomed and will continue to be discussed during a period of reception. It will be useful to have an Anglican response.

The Assembly had taken a strong position against American policy in Iraq and affirmed the stronger economic relations between Lutherans and Anglicans in various parts of the world, including Porvoo. There might be a request for the Porvoo

churches to share their experience of a structured relationship with other parts of the world.

The year 2017 will see the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, and Lutherans look forward to a hopeful common future with Anglicans. There is still a need to clarify concept of ministry, particularly the apostolicity of the church, and diaconal ministry.

The Assembly also called for a deeper analysis of the effects of globalisation, and the different levels of development between North and South, which may include the question of how small African churches might be integrated with other churches.

2. Ministry and Mission

2.1 Ordination and the Sharing of Appointments

The Church of Ireland would like to encourage placements for Porvoo clergy, and is happy to consider recommended candidates. There is scope for shorter appointments, lasting for less than three years, but it is best to have at least two years in post in order to have some substantial experience to take back to the home church.

The Church of Sweden has a strong tradition of sending ministers for three years to Africa. This formula might be adaptable for the Porvoo context, given sufficient language training.

The Church of England Porvoo Panel is about to issue a new Porvoo information pack with considerable detail about ministerial appointments. The pack could easily be adapted for specific churches.

The Spanish Episcopal Church is seeking to collaborate with American Lutherans on the appointment of a fraternal worker, and would welcome advice on the procedure for granting a licence.

The Church in Iceland had a surplus of trainee clergy, and wondered whether they might finish their training in the Anglican churches. In principle, this might well be possible. From the Icelandic point of view it is important that ordinands should have a common framework of training in a Porvoo church. This item could be addressed by the Church of England Porvoo Panel. It was reported that an Anglican deacon had recently completed two months of training with the Church of Norway.

The Latvian Church reported on the ongoing issue of ministry at St Saviour's Church in Riga, where the Lutheran pastor held an Anglican licence.

The smaller Anglican churches in Porvoo still need to work on opportunities for developing interchangeability of ministers. The discussion also referred to the ongoing wound of the non-acceptability of ministers ordained by women Bishops.

2.2 Consecrations

In discussion, it was felt that Bishops attending consecrations ought to widen their contact with the host church. There was some lack of clarity about aspects of

conducting consecrations, with particular reference to the selection of those who lay on hands. In Sweden the decision on procedures is made by the Archbishop - the question was asked whether those bishops not invited to lay on hands disapproved. The Swedish practice was to invite one Anglican and one Nordic Bishop to lay on hands. It was important to experience the different norms across the various traditions. In the Church of England rite, it was part of the apostolic office for the laying on of hands to involve all the bishops present. This is not the case in all Anglican churches.

2.3 The Diaconate

The Church in Finland was engaged in a long process of renewing the diaconate, and the issue was to come before the Synod in November. According to a committee, the present episcopal commissioning of deacons should be developed into an ordination, and the youth leaders and cantors (all three full time ministries) were to be consecrated inside this broad diaconate. Thus, they would become members of the ordained ministry instead of being lay ministers. The Church of Norway was engaged in a major discussion on ministry, including the position of the caritative diaconate as part of the faith of ministry.

The Church of Sweden is re-thinking the issue although it has already decided that the deacons are part of the three-fold ministry. Presently, they conduct only caritative and no liturgical tasks. To ordain other than priests and deacons would mean to incorporate them under the supervision of the bishop - other employees are supervised by the rector in the parish. The Church saw the training of deacons as a major challenge. All parts of the ministry should be treated equitably. There was the possibility of a non-ordained 'qualified' ministry beyond the basic baptismal commission, but not going as far as ordination. This possibility was limited by financial constraints.

In Estonia, the deacon was part of the classic threefold ministry, but essentially a step to priesthood, with the authority to preside at the Eucharist. The Estonian church was interested in the discussions going on in various Porvoo churches.

The Church of England General Synod had debated a major report on the diaconate, but reservations expressed by Readers led to the report being referred back to the Ministry Division. The church regarded the diaconate as part of the apostolic ministry, although scholarship has tended to stress its ambassadorial nature. The central question is whether the permanent caritative diaconate is part of the ordained ministry, indeed whether diaconal functions can embrace a range of 'ordained' functions. In Spain, permanent deacons were providing ministry to diaspora congregations in cities, with a clear caritative element.. In Wales the Diocese of Monmouth has a high number of vocational deacons.

3. Membership of Porvoo

3.1 The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark

Following informal contacts in 2002 between English and Danish bishops, it was noted that an official response had not been made to the Danish bishops' letter of

1995, which had set out the reasons why the Danish Church could not sign the Porvoo Common Statement.

The Danish bishops had raised questions which were primarily to do with Anglican ecclesiology and therefore a response would be primarily an Anglican document. It is important not to push too hard, given that the discussion of church structures is difficult in the Danish context. The response which had been drafted by the general secretary of the Church of England Council for Christian Unity, Prebendary Dr Paul Avis, on behalf of the Porvoo Panel, and approved by the Anglican Porvoo Primates, was effectively an invitation to further process.

For the Danish side, questions on the ministry of women bishops across Porvoo remained. The issue of the validity of orders of clergy ordained by women bishops was separate from the decisions of individual churches on whether to ordain women bishops themselves. These difficult questions were at different levels of consideration within the Anglican churches of the British Isles.

It was agreed that the response to the Danish bishops' letter should be formally issued by the Anglican churches, noting that it has been shared with the leaders of the Porvoo Lutheran churches.

From the Danish point of view, some tangible action needs to happen to allow a change of position. The original bishops' letter also reflected particular internal Danish questions about the changes involved when the church enters into new relationships. Given that three of the 12 bishops in Denmark, all leading large dioceses, are women, means that the question is of great importance. It is also important to give a clearer indication in the response that some of the Anglican co-signatories of Porvoo accept the ministry of women bishops - changes need to be made to paragraph 11 of the document: a more descriptive paragraph could end with a greater expression of generosity, given that there are now seven women bishops in the Lutheran churches of Scandinavia.

It was suggested that a clear signal should be given to Denmark, as the issue reflected on the nature of Communion itself. Porvoo has made understanding of the role of bishop much more dynamic - paragraphs 13 and 14 may be too static, and more reference to the Porvoo Agreement would be apposite.

In the Church of England, the current Rochester Working Group on the theological issues surrounding the ordination of women to the episcopate is due to report to the House of Bishops early next year. An important issue is the incoherence of agreeing first about ordaining women to the presbyterate rather than to the episcopate.

The differences across the churches mean that we have to respect each other's position on this issue, and live with the anomalies. In this discussion, there was a danger that the issue becomes polarised in terms of progressives and conservatives - sensitivity should work in both directions.

It was agreed to ask the Porvoo Panel to look at possible changes to paragraphs 11 and 13, to submit a final version to the Anglican primates, before official transmission to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark.

3.2 The Russian (ELCROS) and Ingrian churches

Over the last 12 months informal contacts have taken place between the Evangelical Church in Russia and Other States and representatives of the Church of England and the Diocese in Europe. The Archbishop of ELCROS, the Most Reverend Dr George Kretschmar, has expressed the wish for close cooperation or even association with the Porvoo churches. A similar wish has been expressed by the Ingrian Church in contact with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland.

The Ingrian Church covers 80 congregations and is a sister church of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland. The Finnish Church would welcome the prospect of a closer relationship with Porvoo for this small regional church which has limited resources. In the same way ELCROS may well benefit from a close association with Porvoo.

Whether such a relationship or association might go as far as membership of the Communion is as yet unclear. Various questions of principle and process need to be considered: should the original process of dialogue and agreement be regarded as complete? Porvoo was an agreement rooted in the 1990s - an extension would create something beyond Porvoo.

It was felt that the way forward was to explore further in the context of the informal contacts which have occurred recently. Detailed questions need to be asked about the expectations of the churches, and about some of the complex issues that they face internally. It is not yet clear whether the enthusiasm for Porvoo is shared widely by the leadership and membership.

It was agreed that a consultation with these churches should be arranged under the leadership of the Finnish and Estonian churches, in conjunction with the Bishop in Europe.

4.1 The Anglican/Methodist Covenant

Major progress in relations between the Church of England and Methodist Church have resulted in proposals passed by the General Synod and Methodist Conference for Covenant on the lines of the Meissen Agreement. The Covenant will be signed on 1st November, and a joint implementation commission will consider the issues to be faced at national level. Progress towards unity at the local level included a very close relationship between the Diocese of York and the York District of the Methodist Church.

In Scotland, the Scottish Churches Initiative for Unity had failed to establish agreement on the part of the Church of Scotland. The SEC was in discussion with Methodists and the United Reformed Church to apply the original proposals in a trilateral relationship.

In Ireland, the covenant with Methodists had been signed in 2002. The Methodists had been invited to join many of the central committees of the Church of Ireland.

This is a covenant, rather than a unity agreement, and will allow small congregations to work together at the local level.

In Wales, a covenant was signed in 1975 between five major churches, and is a precursor of the English agreement. Recently however, proposals for an ecumenical Bishop in Wales failed, raising the issue of how serious is the churches' commitment to the covenant.

A successful agreement with the Methodist Church is reported from Portugal. In Spain, some similar ecumenical cooperation has been possible.

The Lutheran World Federation and the World Methodist Council engaged in dialogue in the years 1979 to 1984 on the issue of closer fellowship. In Finland, a dialogue with Methodists has just begun, considering in the first instance the doctrine of justification.

4.2 Finnish and Swedish Agreements with the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD)

The recent accord between Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland and the EKD is based on some 25 years of agreement, and offers a practical bridge to the Reformed sections of the EKD. Six Finnish pastors serve in Germany, and two German pastors in Finland. In Sweden, there are three German congregations (two of them funded by the Church of Sweden) and in Germany four Swedish congregations (paying German church tax). The agreements regulate pastoral responsibility for the congregations, with a theological preamble. The Swedish agreement will be ratified by the Synod shortly, and builds on long-standing links between the Church of Sweden and churches in the former GDR.

The agreements legislate for the exchange of ministers, including those not episcopally ordained, who will be serving German congregations. Theologically, there are implications for the relationship between Porvoo and Leuenberg, although the Finnish and Swedish agreements are pastoral and specific to particular congregations, whereas the Leuenberg Agreement reconciles confessions as a doctrinal text with broad status.

4.3 Porvoo Churches and the Leuenberg Church Fellowship

The Church of Norway presented issues from its signatory protocol of 1999. Of central interest was the compatibility of Norwegian membership of Leuenberg with other agreements. In joining Leuenberg, the Church of Norway was now acknowledging the removal of impaired Communion of the churches.

The Leuenberg Church Fellowship was about to change its name to 'Community of Protestant Churches in Europe'. The Church of Norway disagreed with this move, which does not reflect its own ecclesiology, and does not support calls for a 'Protestant synod' in Europe.

In recent years, Leuenberg has initiated some important study processes: for example, dialogue with Baptist churches, and raising the profile of Protestantism in relation to missionary tasks.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark considered the Leuenberg Church Fellowship to be a very positive step both for Europe as a whole, and for Denmark in particular. The Fellowship brought together majority and minority churches, expressing unity in Communion, but not unification. The Danish Church would also reject the idea of a Protestant synod. But there is a strong call for the voice of the church to be heard in relation to the European Union. Much positive work was being done in dialogues on mission, on the shape and organisation of Protestant churches, and in dialogues with the Orthodox churches (in association with CEC) and Baptists.

4.4 Porvoo and the Conference of European Churches (CEC)

The General Assembly of CEC, held in Trondheim at the end of June, had been the greatest ever ecumenical event held in Norway. The gathering was blessed by sunshine and warmth, by a high standard of worship, and with a strong Orthodox representation - the Ecumenical Patriarch had spoken at the opening service. At the final service, the Archbishop of Canterbury had reaffirmed the Assembly themes of healing and reconciliation.

With regard to the business of the Assembly, a mixed impression emerged. Delegates worked on an important Church in Society and solidarity agenda. A key role was given to close cooperation between CEC and Roman Catholic bishops' conferences, and to the *Charta Oecumenica*. CEC is planning an Ecumenical Assembly for Europe in 2007, perhaps in the eastern part of the continent.

It is unclear whether the Roman Catholic Church will formally enter CEC, which could then speak as one ecumenical body for the whole Europe.

The North Sea Sailing Seminar, held just before the General Assembly, focussed church and public attention on the need to protect the riches of the sea. For Norway this was an important event, and concluded with a declaration on responsible stewardship. In turn this is a key topic for the Porvoo churches: the declaration is an example of how churches, governments, environmentalists and researchers can work together to meet 'the cry from the wounded planet'.

5. The future agenda of Porvoo

5.1 tasks for the Contact Group

Porvoo shows Communion in diversity in action. This is an important experience to share with others, particularly when other dialogues may not be so ambitious. In preparation for the 10th anniversary of Porvoo in 2006, it would be appropriate to put together presentation for the worldwide church. The Porvoo churches are now affirming a common history, linked by the North Sea, and traceable back to medieval times.

Looking forward, the churches have a strong common mission on the environment and other public issues. The agenda is clearly outward looking. There is a need to consider how the churches can speak with a more prophetic voice on issues such as Iraq, sexuality, what it is to be human, and the broader political agenda.

5.2 Theological Conference 2004

The rationale and themes of the forthcoming Porvoo Theological Conference, with its focus on tools for discipleship, were explained.

5.3 Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Porvoo Primates and Presiding Bishops will be on Tuesday 11th October 2005, in Norway.

Revd Canon Charles Hill/Revd Dr Matti Repo, Co-Secretaries of the Porvoo Contact Group, December 2003

Rapport nr. 32/03

Rapport fra

Porvoo kontaktgruppemøte 7.-11.10.2003 Edinburgh

Primates Meeting 9.10.2003

v/ Stephanie Dietrich, teologisk rådgiver i Mellomkirkelig råd, medlem i Contactgroup ex officio

Denne rapporten er et supplement til den offisielle rapporten som kommer fra Porvoosekretariatet noe senere. Jeg ønsker å fokusere på noen av sakene som kan være av spesiell interesse for Den norske kirke.

”Country reports”

Fra medlemslandene: Et gjennomgående trekk i alle medlemslandene er at kirkene møter nedgang i medlemstallet og må vurdere på nytt hvordan man ønsker ”å være kirke”, og hva som skal gjøres for å utvikle kirkesamfunnene til å bli levende steder for fellesskap med Kristus. Situasjonen fører både til et økt behov for økumenisk samarbeid, behov for ekklesiologisk refleksjon og fornyet tenkning omkring bruk av ressurser. Rapporten fra norsk side om dåpsopplæringsprosjektet møtte stor interesse blant representantene fra de andre Porvookirkene. De baltiske land strever både i forhold til økonomi og ståsted i samfunnet.

Teologiske emner

På møtet ble det en gjennomgang av de eksisterende og pågående økumeniske avtaler/samtaler. Særlig viktig ble samtalen rundt avtalen mellom EKD og den svenske/finske kirken om gjensidig anerkjennelse av hverandres embete. Det ble forklart hvorfor disse kirkene ikke kan undertegne Leuenberg, men har inngått en tilsvarende avtale bilateralt med EKD. Utover det ble det gitt uttrykk for, også fra anglikansk side, forundring over den manglende kommunikasjonen rundt denne avtalen. Bakgrunnen for inngåelsen av avtalen var heller pragmatisk, fordi Den svenske kirken/finske kirken har utveksling med prester fra EKD der det ville være unaturlig å underkjenne ordinasjonen deres. Jeg prøvde å etterspørre hvordan man kunne inngå en slik avtale med EKD kirkene, men ikke med andre unerte eller reformerte kirker i Europa. Svaret var at man heller ønsket konkrete bilaterale avtaler med enkeltkirker enn å inngå en ”samleavtale” gjennom det å undertegne Leuenbergkonkordien, som man anså for å være et foreldet, forkortet og ekklesiologisk utilstrekkelig modell for kirkefelleskap. Dette ble tematisert både på Contactgroup-meeting og Primates Meeting.

KEKs generalforsamling

Mange av de tilstedeværende ga uttrykk for at man var svært fornøyd med konferansens ramme og jobben arrangørene har gjort, samtidig som det ble gitt til dels meget skarp kritikk av KEKs arbeid og gjennomføringen av selve konferansen og arbeidsmåten. Mange følte at delegatene ikke fikk anledning til å delta i det faglige arbeid som skulle gjøres, at samtalene var lukket og at de viktige temaene faktisk ikke fikk rom på generalforsamlingen. Det ble

også diskutert hvorvidt Porvoofelleskapet samlet sett skulle ta et initiativ overfor KEK for å synliggjøre den fellesmisnøyen so finnes. Det ble ikke fattet noe vedtak på det.

Utveksling av prester

Når det gjelder utveksling av prester, ble tematikken rundt anerkjennelse eller underkjennelse av hverandres embete et viktig tema. Spesielt underkjennelsen av ordinasjonen gjennomført av kvinnelige biskoper var et brennbart og viktig tema. Det viser seg nå at splittelsen ikke bare går mellom de anglikanske og nordiske kirker, men også innad mellom de anglikanske kirker i Storbritannia/England. Både Church of Ireland og Scottish Episcopal Church har nå åpnet for muligheten å ha kvinnelige biskoper. Det betyr også at de nordiske kirker som har kvinnelige biskoper etter hvert vil kunne sende dem til bispevigslar i Irland og Scotland og på denne måten synliggjøre likestillingen i embetet.

Videre ble spørsmålet fremmet, hvorvidt **biskopene i de forskjellige land kan ordinere hverandres embetsbærere** mens de befinner seg i de respektive land. For eksempel skal Finn Wagle muligens prestevigslar en anglikansk diakon neste år (uten nærvær av en anglikansk biskop). Spørsmålet ble fremmet hvorvidt dette er i samsvar med Porvooavtalens intensjon. Det bør utformes en felles policy når det gjelder dette spørsmålet. Kan for eksempel nordmenn som ønsker å arbeide i England som prester bli ordinert av anglikanske biskoper, og dermed være ordinerte prester i Den norske kirke? Hvorvidt er utdannelsessystemer kompatible? Det krever også en samkjøring av utdannelsessystemer, og en diskusjon om utdannelsen er likeverdig i de forskjellige land.

Samtidig ble det understreket av utveksling av studenter er i samsvar med Porvooavtalens intensjon og svært ønskelig.

Den Svenske Kirken tilbyr kurs til forberedelse for prester i de anglikanske kirkene. Det ble understreket at disse kursene er åpne for deltakere fra alle de skandinaviske land.

Church of England arbeider for tiden med å forberede en informasjonspakke om tjenesten i anglikanske kirker. Den informasjonspakken vil gjøres tilgjengelig på Internett og kunne gi informasjon til mulige kandidater for prestetjeneste i Church of England. Videre ble det understreket at det å tjenestegjøre i en anglikansk kirke ikke er uten problemer, både kulturelt og språklig sett. Dessuten er den økonomiske situasjonen i anglikanske menigheter svært forskjellig fra situasjonen i de nordiske folkekirkene, siden mye av arbeidstiden ofte vil gå til "fundraising"- et ukjent fenomen i de nordiske folkekirkene.

Den danske folkekirkens forhold til Porvooavtalen og et anglikansk svar på biskopenes brev

Både på Contactgroup-meeting og på Primatesmeeting ble det drøftet hvorvidt det skulle sendes et offisielt svar på de danske biskopenes vurdering av Porvooavtalen i 1995. Man ble enig om at det svaret som forelå måtte bli et anglikansk svar på biskopenes redegjørelse. Ane Hjerild fra Den danske folkekirke informerte om forholdene i Danmark og utviklingen mot en synode. Det var enighet om at man ønsket at Danmark på sikt kunne bli fullverdig medlem i fellesskapet, men at prosessen enda ikke var moden for å ta det opp til revurdering i Danmark, både av strukturelle og teologiske grunner.

Diakonater

Alle kirker arbeider med spørsmålet, men forståelsen av diakonater er fortsatt svært forskjellig. I de anglikanske kirker arbeider man mot opprettelsen av et permanent diakonat. Det ble påpekt at spørsmålet om diakonater både handler om teologiske spørsmål, men også om svært menneskelige spørsmål, som har med maktstrukturer, posisjon og hierarkier å gjøre.

Spørsmålet ble reist hvorvidt det er nødvendig å ha én felles forståelse av diakonatet. Vi snakket om at det ikke er nødvendig å ha en felles forståelse av diakonatet, men at det er svært nødvendig å snakke sammen om forståelsen av diakonatet. Forslaget om å arrangere en konsultasjon (på linje med Interfaithkonsultasjonen i Oslo i desember), der fagfolkene i hver kirke snakker sammen, ble fremmet. Et viktig poeng i denne sammenhengen er at det å ordinere mange forskjellige personer i kirkene skaper en enda større kontrast mellom de ordinerte og de som ikke er ordinert. Det vil også kunne skape meget uheldige konsekvenser i kirkemøtesammenheng, når det blir spørsmål om å være "innenfor" og "utenfor". For mange av de små anglikanske kirkene oppleves spørsmålet om diakonatet ikke så brennende. De anser det for å være et luthersk eller et "Porvoo-pålagt" spørsmål, og det er vanskelig å oppnå interessen til folk i kirkene. Mens mengden av teologiske studierapporter vokser, ser det ut som om uenigheten omkring forståelsen er like stor som tidligere, men muligens enda mer profilert innad i kirkene.

Et spørsmål som også ble drøftet, både på Primates Meeting og Contact Group Meeting, er spørsmålet om å **åpne opp fellesskapet for ELCROS og the Ingrian Church i Russland**. Disse kirkene har historisk sett hatt en del kontakt med den finske kirken og kirken i Estonia. Debatten rundt disse spørsmålene gikk på 2 plan, både et prinsipielt og et mer praktisk. Prinsipielt sett anser man Porvooavtalen som en avtale mellom bestemte kirker som var med i samtalen som førte frem til avtalen. Den kan derfor ikke bare utvides gjennom det at folk slutter seg til avtalen på grunnlag av en konfesjonell enighet. Samtidig så har disse kirkene en veldig vanskelig posisjon i sin nåværende kontekst og både ønsker og trenger støtte og samvær med andre kirker som de føler seg i familie med. Deres henvendelse bør derfor ikke bare avvises, men representanter fra kirkene bør møtes sammen med Porvoorepresentanter for å finne ut mer om bakgrunn og motivasjon til disse kirkene, uten nødvendigvis å åpne opp for medlemskap. (I så fall ville Porvoofellesskapet bli utvidet helt frem til Sibir!) Den finske kirken, som har kontakt med noen av kirkene, får ansvar for å følge opp deres forespørsel og å arrangere et oppklaringsmøte med representanter derfra, sammen med noen fra de anglikanske kirkene.

På møtet i kontaktgruppen ble det drøftet en rekke praktiske spørsmål, så som oppdateringen av WEB-siden og opprettelsen av en ordliste på Porvoo terminology. Dette vil gjøre avtalen mer tilgjengelig for mennesker som ikke har full oversikt over terminologien i anglikanske og lutherske kirkene innenfor Porvoofellesskapet. Videre skal det lages liste og oversikt over alle retreatsteder og pilgrimsprosjekter innenfor Porvoofellesskapet, og det ble diskutert hvorvidt det vil være mulig å søke midler fra EU til finansiering av Porvooprojekter.

Et tema som ble drøftet på både Contactgroup møtet og Primatesmeeting var **deltakelsen ved hverandres bispevigslar**. Det ble påpekt at kirkene har forskjellige tradisjoner når det gjelder for eksempel antall deltakere ved selve håndspåleggelsen. Anglikanske biskoper opplever det som veldig vanskelig å delta ved bispevigslar uten å være med ved selve håndspåleggelsen. Det ble understreket at man bør ha gjensidig respekt for hverandres tradisjoner, samtidig som det også er viktig å synliggjøre de økumeniske deltakere ved slike anledninger. Når det kommer gjester fra Porvooland ved bispevigslar, bør det vurderes om de kan brukes på flere måter enn bare under selve gudstjenesten, for eksempel ved å arrangere seminarer og bruke biskopene ved flere arrangementer.

Når det gjelder kontakten mellom ungdomsrepresentantene og oppfølgingen av ungdomsmøte følges det opp gjennom at Svenska Kyrkan tar kontakt med ungdomskonsulentene for å arrangere et møte. Tilsvarende skal spørsmålet om kontakt mellom informasjonsavdelingene i

medlemskirkene følges opp. Et tidligere initiativ fra Church of Ireland møtte ikke tilstrekkelig interesse. Det vurderes om det er ønskelig med en deltakelse av både en luthersk og en anglikansk pressemedarbeider på den teologiske konferansen på Island i 2004.

Anglo-Nordic-Baltic Theological Conference Riga 2003

Fra flere hold ble det gitt uttrykk for kritikk når det gjelder denne konferansen, både når det gjelder invitasjon, gjennomføring og praktiske ting – slik som at landet som arrangerer skal betale for oppholdet. Mange av de små kirkene har valgt å ikke sende noen representanter til konferansen, av ressursmessige årsaker.

Porvoo Prayer Booklet/Porvoo Hymnal/Porvoo Liturgy Book

Frem til i dag har de anglikanske kirkene betalt for produksjonen. Det viser seg nå at produksjonen er blitt såpass kostbart at medlemskirkene er bedt om å dele på kostnadene. Det vil bli sendt regninger til kontorene. Det har også vist seg at det er svært vanskelig å produsere den planlagte Porvoosalmeboken, ikke minst på grunn av copyright-reglene. Prosjektet er derfor lagt på is. Det skal ikke produseres én felles liturgibok, men det er ønskelig at enkeltkirkene legger en link til sine hjemmesider på WEB sidene, slik at henvisningene til liturgier som er lagt ut på Internett er tilgjengelige for alle.

Viktige datoer:

Biskop Finn Wagle har invitert Primates Meeting i 2005. Dato er tirsdag, 11. oktober 2005. Contactgroupmeeting blir onsdag og torsdag, 12.-13.10.2003, slutter kl. 17 på torsdag. Individuell avreise etter det.

2006 Church Leaders Meeting 16th-20th. 2006 Dublin or Wales

Avsluttende kommentar:

Både møtet i Contactgroup og Primates Meeting bar preg av at avtalen har begynt å få konkrete følger på mange plan, og samarbeidet fungerer svært godt. Både samtalene og de konkrete tiltak som skjer i kirkenes liv synliggjør at Porvoovtalen på mange måter fungerer svært godt og etter sin hensikt.

Det var interessant å oppleve at en vanskeligste diskusjonen på Primates Meeting gikk mellom representanter fra lutherske kirker i Norden og Baltikum om sosialetiske spørsmål, og ikke mellom lutherske og anglikanske kirker.

Det som ellers viser seg å være et av det mest brennende spørsmål for vårt fellesskap er spørsmålet om **anerkjennelsen og underkjennelsen av ordinasjoner gjennomført av kvinnelige biskoper**. Spørsmålet er om dette bare er et spørsmål om tid, eller om det dreier seg om en reell splittelse mellom våre kirker. Det truer i hvert fall det kirkelige fellesskap innenfor Porvoo i mye større grad enn man tidligere hadde trodd. Etter min mening er det ikke mulig å snakke om "full communion" og anerkjennelse av hverandres embetet så lenge denne splittelsen vedvarer. Det var interessant å høre Erkebiskopen av York, David Hope, som i utgangspunkt er svært negativt til åpningen av preste/bispeembetet for kvinner. Også han innrømmer at det er en teologisk inkonsekvens i det å ordinere kvinner til preste-, men ikke til bispetjeneste, slik situasjonen er per i dag i Church of England. Det vil være en viktig oppgave også fremover å synliggjøre hvor sårbart og brennbart dette temaet er for oss når det gjelder Porvoofellesskapet.

SDI 16.10.2003

Konferanserapport

fra Vebjørn L. Horsfjord

Konferanse:	Porvoo Consultation on Inter Faith Relations
Hvor:	Hotell Norrøna, Oslo
Når:	30. november til 3. desember 2003
Tema:	Religionsdialog i Porvoo-kirkene
Arrangør:	Porvoo-fellesskapet. Mellomkirkelig råd var vertskap

Målsetning

Konferansen hadde to målsetninger:

- (1) Utveksle erfaringer mellom nøkkelpersoner i de lutherske og anglikanske kirkene i Norden/Baltikum og De britiske øyer for å styrke arbeidet med religionsdialog.
- (2) Utarbeide forslag til råd/retningslinjer for hvordan kirkene kan nærme se interreligiøse spørsmål.

Deltakelse

Deltakerliste ligger vedlagt.

Det var 28 deltakere fra Porvoo-kirkene i England, Skottland, Irland, Wales, Finland, Sverige, Latvia, Island og Norge i tillegg til representanter fra LVF, EKD og KEK (som også representerte Folkekirken i Danmark.)

Fra Den norske kirke deltok Johan Hake, Gerd Marie Ådna, Knud Jørgensen (deler av tiden), Knut Kittelsaa, Anne Hege Grung og undertegnede.

Kajsa Ahlstrand (Svenska Kyrkan), Michael Ipgrave (Church of England) og undertegnede utgjorde arrangementskomiteen, og konsultasjonen ble gjennomført i forståelse med (og med oppmuntrende støtte fra) Porvoo Contact Group. Erkebiskop John Neill fra Dublin ledet konferansen.

Program/Gjennomføring

Programmet ligger vedlagt.

Programmet var bygd opp rundt to ekskursjoner mandag og tirsdag: Mandag var fokus på møtet med andre verdensreligioner, med vekt på islam. Bydelen Grønland sto i fokus med blant annet besøk i Norges største moskee (målt i medlemstall), Central Jamaat-e Ahl-e Sunnat. Tirsdag var fokus på møtet med nyere åndelighet/religiøsitet. Vi besøkte dialogsenteret Emmaus og fikk en introduksjon til deres arbeid og refleksjoner.

Bibelstudier var en viktig del av programmet. Misjon ("mission") hos Paulus, Matteus, Lukas og Johannes var fokus i fire presentasjoner. Refleksjon over temaet i mindre grupper la til rette for bibelsk forankring av samtalene på konferansen og brakte opp temaer som ble trukket inn blant annet i arbeidet mer rådgivende retningslinjer ("guidelines").

Det ble holdt nattverdgdustjeneste etter Den norske kirkes liturgi (på engelsk) hver morgen kl. 0730 i Trefoldighetskirken.

Tirsdag kveld sto biskop Gunnar Stålsett som vertskap for en mottakelse for konferansedeltakere og partnere i interreligiøst arbeid i Norge. Bispekontoret stilte Oslo bispegård til disposisjon, og Mellomkirkelig råd sto for gjennomføringen og dekket utgiftene.

Rådgivende retningslinjer/guidelines

Arbeidet med retningslinjene hadde et dobbelt siktemål: Selv om slike retningslinjer ikke har noen formell status i medlemskirkene, tror vi de kan være til inspirasjon for de enkelte kirkenes eget arbeid. Retningslinjene bygger på summen av erfaringer i mange ulike kirker slik at vi lærer av hverandre. For mange kirker (inkludert Den norske kirke) vil det være aktuelt å oversette retningslinjene for bruk internt. Arbeidet med retningslinjene fungerte også pedagogisk i konsultasjonen. Arbeidet brakte en rekke kompliserte spørsmål til overflaten og satte i gang nyttige diskusjoner.

Det var ikke satt av tilstrekkelig tid til å bli ferdig med retningslinjer som alle kunne enes om. En mindre arbeidsgruppe ble nedsatt og arbeidet ble gjort ferdig og fikk tilslutning fra konferansedeltakerne på e-post i ukene etter konsultasjonen. Retningslinjene ligger vedlagt *)

Utveksling av erfaringer

Landene i Norden/Baltikum og på De britiske øyer er tilstrekkelig like når det gjelder interreligiøse utfordringer til at utveksling av erfaringer er meningsfull og tilstrekkelig forskjellige til at vi har noe å lære av hverandre.

Tilstedeværelsen av andre religioner i alle disse landene er nært knyttet til innvandring, selv om det i alle land også finnes konvertitter og religioner med lang historie i landet (for eksempel jødedom).

England skiller seg ut med sine store innvandrergupper og lange erfaring med religionsdialog. England er det eneste landet der det finnes større områder hvor kristendommen er minoritetsreligion (for eksempel i Leicester, som var godt representert på konferansen).

Sverige, Norge og Danmark utgjør så et mellomskikt av land med betydelige innvandrerbefolkninger og en del arbeid med religionsdialog. Situasjonen er likevel ikke lik i disse landene: I Sverige er det andre nasjonaliteter enn i Norge som utgjør de store innvandrerguppene (for eksempel få pakistanere), og mange innvandrere er ortodokse kristne. Danmark opplever en utfordrende politisk situasjon hvor innvandring og kulturmøte står høyt på dagsorden og hvor retorikk om danskheten gjerne knyttes til Folkekirkens stilling slik at religionsmøtet kan bli vanskelig og betent.

De øvrige landene som var representert har langt mindre innvandrerbefolkninger og færre som tilhører andre religioner. De er også generelt kommet kort i sitt arbeid med religionsdialog. Island og Litauen framstår i denne sammenheng som usedvanlig homogene: På Island bor det 12 pakistanere og 24 tyrkere. Det er totalt 229 muslimer. Buddhistene utgjør den største minoritetreligionen med 461 medlemmer.

Norge skiller seg ut på to punkter: Et sekulært livssyn (Humanetisk forbund) er svært mye større her enn i noe annet land, og deltar i det organiserte interreligiøse arbeidet, noe som virker fremmed i andre kontekster. I det nasjonale interreligiøse rådet, Samarbeidsrådet for Tros- og Livssynsamfunn, er dessuten de fleste religioner i øyeblikket representert ved etnisk norske representanter. Dette bidrar til at den interreligiøse samtalen og samtaler om integrasjon av innvandrere er mer atskilt hos oss enn i de fleste andre landene.

Mye av religionsdialogen i andre land er knyttet nettopp til integrasjon. Dermed blir innvandreres rettigheter samt spørsmål om arbeidsledighet, fattigdom et cetera av stor betydning i kirkenes arbeid på dette området.

Av minoritetsreligionene er islam den største i nesten alle land som var representert. Det er naturlig at møtet med islam får særlig oppmerksomhet. Vi ble imidlertid minnet om at religionsmøte ikke bare dreier seg om forholdet mellom muslimer og kristne. Sikker og buddhister og delvis hinduer er grupper av en viss størrelse også i vårt land.

Konsultasjonen satte også fokus på møtet med nyreligiøsitet og den mer hjemløse religiøsiteten. Dette fikk likevel mindre oppmerksomhet i samtalene enn det fortjener. Det er viktig å legge det religionsdialogiske arbeidet opp slik at det møter den faktiske religiøse situasjonen blant folk. Fokus kun på de religiøse lederne og på de "rene" tradisjonene kan i verste fall bidra til å sementere skillelinjer og hindre den naturlige åndelige søken blant alminnelige mennesker. For å hindre dette, er det ekstra viktig å trekke inn ungdoms erfaringer med religionsmøte.

Økonomi

Konsultasjonen var selvbærende og finansiert gjennom deltakeravgift. Mellomkirkelig råd dekket deltakeravgift og andre utgifter for Den norske kirkes deltakere samt deltakeravgiften for den latviske deltakeren, som bor i Oslo.

Mellomkirkelig råd stilte dessuten undertegnedes arbeidstid til disposisjon for forberedelse og gjennomføring av konsultasjonen.

Vurdering

Konsultasjonen var en oppfølging av en mindre, uformell konsultasjon i England i november 2002. Selv om representasjonen fra de ulike kirkene varierte, var det mange nøkkelpersoner til stedet som vil være viktige i det nettverket som nå bygges opp i Porvoo-kirkene.

Utveksling av erfaringer og arbeidet med retningslinjer ga nye innsikter og inspirasjon som vil bli tatt med i det videre arbeidet. Retningslinjene har også verdi i seg selv.

Konsultasjonen viser også en arbeidsmåte som kan være nyttig på andre arbeidsområder innenfor Porvoo-fellesskapet: Porvoo-kirkene har nytte av å lære av hverandre, og slike konferanser krever ikke noen omfattende organisasjon og kan arrangeres på en form for ad hoc-basis.

Mellomkirkelig råd fikk – etter egen vurdering berettiget – ros for den tekniske gjennomføringen av konsultasjonen som la til rette for den gode stemningen og samarbeidsånden som preget diskusjonen også når det var betydelige meningsforskjeller.

Oppfølging:
Oppfølging av arbeidet med rådgivende retningslinjer og tilrettelegging for bruk i Den norske kirke.
Oppfølging av nettverket innen Porvoo-kirkene.
Mulig ny konsultasjon i 2005.

*) Ettersendes til Mellomkirkelig råds møte i februar 2004

Porvoo Communion Consultation on Inter Faith Relations

Oslo, 30th November – 3rd December 2003

(as of 29.11.2003)

Saturday 29th November	
8.00 pm	For those arriving on Saturday, there will be a pre-conference reception at the Swedish Church in Oslo Dept from hotel lobby at 7.45 pm
Sunday 30th November	
11.00 am	Worship at church in the city centre
lunch	Participants' own responsibility
2.00 pm	Opening of consultation at Hotel Norrøna Overview: Inter faith issues in the Porvoo Communion and in the worldwide Anglican and Lutheran Communion Sharing of Experiences
4.00 pm	Tea
4.15 pm	Bible Study: Mission in Paul Presentation by Dr. Jorunn Økland, University of Sheffield followed by groups
6.00 pm	Sharing of Experiences cont'd
7.00 pm	Evening prayers
8.00 pm	Dinner
Monday 1st December	
7.30 am	Eucharist at Trinity Church
8.15 am	Breakfast
9.00 am	Bible Study: Mission in Matthew Presentation by Professor Hans Kvalbein, The Norwegian Lutheran School of Theology (Menighetsfakultet) followed by groups
10.30 am	Introduction to suggested guidelines

11.30 am	Departure for visit to Grønland, inner city Oslo
12 noon	Introduction to inter faith context in Grønland
12.45 pm	Lunch
1.45 pm	Visit to Mosque: CENTRAL JAMAAT-E AHL-E SUNNAT
3.00 pm	Walk to hotel/free time
3.30 pm	Tea at hotel
3.45 pm	Group work: Consideration of guidelines in light of visit to Grønland Evening prayer at hotel
6.30 pm	Dinner (restaurant)
8.00 pm	Panel discussion: Issues in inter faith dialogue
Tuesday 2nd December	
7.30 am	Morning Eucharist at Trinity Church
8.15 am	Breakfast
9.00 am	Bible Study: Mission in Luke Presentation followed by group work
10.30 am	Work on guidelines cont'd
11.15 am	Departure for visit to Emmaus Dialogue Centre
11.30 am	Introduction to Emmaus
12.30 pm	Lunch at "Noah's Ark"
1.30 pm	Meditation in Paulus Church
1.45 pm	Introduction to dialogue with new religious movements and with Buddhists
3.00 pm	Walk or take tram back to hotel/Free time
5.00 pm	Consideration of guidelines in light of visit
6.30 pm	Reception by the Bishop of Oslo, Gunnar Stålsett at Bishop's House
8.00 pm	Dinner
Wednesday 3rd December	
7.30 am	Eucharist at Trinity Church
8.15 am	Breakfast
9.00 am	Bible study: Mission in John

	Presentation by Professor Notto Thelle, University of Oslo followed by group work
10.30 am	“Shared action on an inter faith basis” Lecture by Bishop of Oslo, Gunnar Stålsett
11.30 am	Coffee
11.45 am	Adoption of guidelines Next steps in a Porvoo inter faith consultative process Final prayers and closing
1.00 pm	Finish

Porvoo consultation on inter-faith issues

Participants (29.11.2003)

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RAPPORT ETTER CONSULTATION ON INTER FAITH ENCOUNTER IN THE CHURCHES OF THE PORVOO COMMUNION, OSLO 30.11. – 3.12. 2003

Jeg deltok som en av seks representanter for Den norske kirke i denne konsultasjonen. Bakgrunnen for min deltakelse var arbeidet med kristen-muslimsk dialog i Trondheim. Konsultasjonen samlet deltakere fra ti av Porvoo-fellesskapets kirker på de britiske øyer, i Norden og i Latvia, og dessuten fra LWF, EKD og KEK. Alle deltakerne hadde erfaring fra religionsmøte og dialog, dels mange års erfaring. I alt deltok vel 25 personer, herav 18 ordinerte. Konsultasjonen ble ledet av den anglikanske erkebiskopen i Irland, John Neill, og ble avholdt på hotell Norrøna i Oslo.

Konsultasjonens program var innholdsrikt og variert, og besto av gudstjenester, bibelstudier, bønnesamlinger, presentasjoner av de enkelte lands erfaringer, ekskursjoner til kirker og moskeer, et bydelssenter og et dialogsenter, samt i flere omganger drøftinger omkring et utkast til "*guidelines for inter faith encounter in the churches of the Porvoo communion*", dels i gruppemøter, dels i plenum. Konsultasjonen var preget av deltakernes solide erfaring med religionsmøte og dialog med andre religioner. Samtalene i konsultasjonen foregikk i en atmosfære preget av trygghet, innlevelse, god evne til å lytte, åpenhet for andres synspunkter, og samtidig med en klar forpliktelse på kirkens tro og identitet og med et sterkt engasjement.

For meg var det særlig viktig å kunne sette erfaringene fra den dialogen som er kommet i stand mellom Den norske kirke og Muslim Society Trondheim inn i en større sammenheng, og å registrere både fellestrekk og ulikheter ved sammenlikningen med tilsvarende dialoger i andre deler av Porvoo-fellesskapet. Disse erfaringene vil være til stor nytte i de videre samtalene med muslimer i Trondheim.

La meg ganske kort og stikkordmessig nevne noen momenter som jeg opplevde som særlig viktige i samtalene, uten å presentere noen full utredning av dem:

- At vi søker en begrunnelse for dialog i vårt eget gudsbilde: i gleden over det mangfold Skaperen har gitt skaperverket, i Kristi utstråling av Guds herlighet og i Guds Ånd, som skal kjennes på sine frukter.
- Den vekt samtalene la på å fortolke og forstå enhver dialogs samfunnmessige "omgivelser", inklusive det generelle mangfold i våre samfunn – et resultat både av økt migrasjon og av større bevegelse i vår søken etter åndelige verdier og impulser.
- Understrekingen av viktigheten av den indrekirkelige samtale for å fortolke alt dette, og for å skjelne rett i våre forsøk på å forstå hva Gud utfordrer oss til, så vi fortsatt kan

være Kristi trofaste disipler og la oss lede av hans Ånd i det religiøse mangfold vi er kalt til å leve i.

- Fokuseringen på sentrale, allmenne verdier i møte og dialog med andre religioner: At vi må snakke sant om den andre, respektere retten til trosfrihet, være til hjelp for hverandre i møte med ulike utfordringer i samfunnet, søke samarbeid om konkrete oppgaver, bidra til å sikre barns rett til innføring i egen tro og forståelse for andres, og generelt øke engasjementet og toleransen for ulike religioners rett til fredelig samliv i våre samfunn.
- Drøftingene av hvordan misjonsaspektet i vår egen tro forholder seg til dialogperspektivet i vårt møte med andre, av rammene for bønn i et flerreligiøst fellesskap, og av den virkning en varig dialog med andre religioner har på forståelsen av vår egen tro.

Drøftingen av alle disse momentene ga meg erfaringer som vil være til nytte i det videre arbeidet med religionsdialog i Trondheim.

Måltidene ble inntatt på forskjellige spisesteder og restauranter i sentrum av Oslo, og fellesskapet ved bordet forsterket og utdypet kontakten mellom deltakerne. Konsultasjonen ga meg, og jeg antar også de andre deltakerne, opplevelsen av å delta i et nettverk med stor innsikt i konsultasjonens tema, et nettverk som kan vise seg å bli et viktig referansested for den enkeltes videre arbeid.

Jeg takker for denne anledningen til fordypning i et sentralt og aktuelt temaområde for kirken, og håper samtidig at mine bidrag i konsultasjonen også kan være elementer i den løpende samtalen innen Porvoo-fellesskapet på dette viktige området.

Med vennlig hilsen
Knut Kittelsaa

Kopi til:
Nidaros biskop
Deltakerne i muslimsk-kristen dialog i Trondheim

