



Saksbehandler: Beate Fagerli

Saksdokumenter:

Porvoo Consultation on Diaspora and Migration – Communiqué
Rapport nr. 18/2012 **Rebecca Maduley Kurubai**

Report of the Porvoo Consultation on Diaspora and Migration
Uppsala, Sweden, March 21–24, 2012

Saker i de økumeniske organisasjonene

Porvoo

Sammendrag

20.–24. mars 2012 avholdt Porvoofellesskapet en konsultasjon om migrantmenigheter og menigheter i diaspora. Noen menigheter betegnes ofte som migrantmenigheter, noen betegner seg som menigheter i diasporaen. Konsultasjonen tok sikte på å se på ulikheter og fellestrekk mellom disse.

Den norske kirke deltok med tre deltakere; Rebecca Maduley Kurumbai, Torbjørn Holt og Beate Fagerli. Rebecca Kurubai er luthersk prest opprinnelig fra Tanzania, som jobber med integrering av innvandrere i Stovner menighet. Hun holdt preken under åpningsgudstjenesten. Hennes rapport ligger vedlagt. Torbjørn Holt er sjømannsprest for Sjømannskirken i London og bidrog med et «case study» derfra.

Forslag til vedtak

Mellomkirkelig råd tar følgende saker til orientering:

1. Porvoo Consultation on Diaspora and Migration – Communiqué
Report of the Porvoo Consultation on Diaspora and Migration
2. Uppsala, Sweden, March 21–24, 2012

Communiqué
Porvoo Consultation on Diaspora and Migration 2012

22 members of the Churches in the Porvoo Communion and observers met in Uppsala, Sweden from 21 to 24 March 2012 to consider issues relating to diaspora and migration.

In section b (iv) of the Porvoo Common Statement, members commit themselves “to welcome diaspora congregations into the life of the indigenous church for mutual enrichment.” The original reference was perhaps only related to branches of one Porvoo church located in another Porvoo country, but in the light of increasing migration into northwest Europe and consequent ethnic diversity both in the indigenous churches and in what had been described as “diaspora congregations”, it was appropriate to consider this principle in a changing context.

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The consultation heard case studies from representatives of Norwegian, Latvian and Chinese congregations in London and from Finnish and Sudanese Anglicans in Finland, and visited Finnish and Anglican churches in Stockholm as well as a Church of Sweden parish, hosting an Ethiopian Mekane Yesus (Lutheran) congregation. Both the presentations and the visits raised questions about the static and dynamic roles of culture and language for identity among migrants and diaspora communities.

Kristina Hellqvist, advisor to the Church of Sweden for refugee and integration issues, provided some statistics about migration in Europe, and a summary of some recent issues, and Barbara Moss from the Church of England Diocese in Europe spoke on “Challenges of Integration”, emphasizing that integration is not the same as assimilation; both the hosts and the new arrivals must be prepared to be transformed by the process.

The same theme was illustrated in the first of three bible studies ably led by Revd Dr John Perumbalath, who presented the book of Ruth as an example of Naomi, on her return home, providing for the needs of Ruth, the young immigrant, for a home and security. The second bible study, from 1 Peter, identified the theme “Christians in Exile” as applied to diaspora congregations then and now, pointing out that all Christians are migrants in the sense of being people on a journey: they have not yet arrived, and never should – a message echoed in the final statement of Mika Pajunen’s account of Finnish Anglicans: “Our story is not over – keep moving!”

The talks and visits were supplemented by discussions in small groups and workshops on three themes:

- The significance of different causes of migration for the particular identities of diaspora congregations;
- Diaspora congregations becoming part of the indigenous churches;
- Challenges raised by second-generation members of diaspora congregations.

Keynote listeners Bishops Jana Jeruma Grinberga (Lutheran Church in Great Britain) and David Hamid (Church of England Diocese in Europe) and Revd Dr Christopher Meakin (Church of Sweden) attended the small groups and workshops, and summarized the highlights of the proceedings.

Recommendations

1. To ask the Porvoo Contact Group:
 - to explore how the sharing of stories, including biblical narratives, which has been such an important part of this consultation, may be brought to a wider audience;
 - to find ways of encouraging further theological reflection;
 - and to develop and collate appropriate resources for our member churches.

2. To ask the Porvoo churches, in collaboration with their national ecumenical instruments, to collect existing guidelines or draw up new ones for the sharing of church buildings and other resources, including sample contracts and other working agreements, in order to identify and inform about good practice.

3. Recognizing that changing patterns of migration have led to the formation of gathered congregations within Porvoo churches with a geographical parochial system, to ask those churches to reflect on how members of these diaspora congregations may be welcomed into membership of the host church in the place where they worship together.

4. To ask the Porvoo churches:
 - to encourage their clergy and ordinands to become competent in engaging with cultural differences;
 - to build up databases of deacons, priests and pastors able to minister in languages other than the majority languages and English;
 - and to ensure that the speakers of these languages can find, in their own languages, access to this information.

5. To encourage host and migrant congregations to become involved together in the local ecumenical scene as equal partners with their Christian brothers and sisters, sharing their gifts for mutual enrichment.

Report of the Porvoo Consultation on Diaspora and Migration Uppsala, Sweden, March 21–24, 2012

By Rebecca Maduley Kurubai

Introduction

I am grateful and thankful that the Church of Norway nominated me as a representative to this consultation. I thereby had the opportunity to see the unity of the Lutheran Church with the Anglican Church. This experience was very precious for me. On top of that we experienced migrant peoples from all over Europe who have come to other countries in Europe from other places in the world. For me, an African in Norway, this experience was even stronger. We had good fellowship and discussions together. Many thanks also to the church of Sweden for their warm heart and for their good hospitality, may God bless all.

The Consultation experience

We were focused right away from the start, from the preaching on the opening day, with the theme from the book of Ruth about Naomi and her daughters in-law. The aim of the conference and our different experiences of migration, were in focus.

Then followed different presentations by migrant Christians who were present in the consultation, for example from Church of Sweden, the Latvian Church in the UK, the Norwegian migrant church in London (Seamen's Mission), and the Sudanese Church in Finland. These church representatives brought an understanding of **how, what, and**, things to identify when dealing with migration and Christianity in a foreign land. There are challenges, not all is as harmonious as it ought to be. People have got different cultures and perspectives and a different way of doing things. Even though our common ground and faith is Jesus Christ our Lord, some of our culture has to be changed to fit the environment.

The meetings

Every morning we began with a prayer session, then we proceeded with a session of deep Bible study, to try to understand migration, its roots and perspectives, as told through Bible stories. There are a lot of migration stories in the bible, but the question is how do we understand it?

For example, it is common for Bible stories on migration that migrants are not integrated in the sense that they are leaving their identity and faith in the one God, Yahweh. How do we see these questions today? We come to a point where it is important to maintain identity, and at the same time, there is a balance to keep with the indigenous church of the host country in order to ensure some kind of integration. In our workshops we had discussions on how to keep identity and how to integrate, these are to a certain extent complicated questions. From Torbjørn Holt we heard the experience of the Norwegian people in London and their Church and life. The younger generations integrate more easily than older generations. The older generation struggles to keep their identity no matter what. This was interesting to hear. Because back in Oslo, we have many migrant churches who also keep their original language as an important part of their identity. Then the question is, why should we have ethnic oriented churches? These challenges must be faced by both groups, the church of the indigenous people and the migrant people as well. We reflected upon this according to our own experiences.

The migrant groups cannot find a home for themselves by themselves, but the host communities can find a home for the migrants. What are the churches' responsibilities for this? The discussions at the consultation was mostly based on experiences which found that it is better if the host churches share power and resources with the foreign churches.

Integration

Integration starts with the family. The major focus on integration was a challenging one, particularly in the sense of integrating different cultures and diversities into an ecumenical reality. In this part of the consultation I was learning a lot. I shared my experiences from the Church of Norway, where we try to integrate with one another also by giving up some of our traditional cultures which create walls between us. I look to the Epistle to the Ephesians, 2.19-22, that says, "You are not aliens in a foreign land, but fellow citizens with God's people, you are built upon the foundation laid by the Apostles, the Prophets, and Christ Jesus himself is the foundation stone. In him the whole building is bound together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you too are being built with all the rest into a spiritual dwelling for God" (personal citation).

There are some challenges

- There is the challenge of each person's experience with different cultures.
- It is not always easy to deal with other cultures and traditions.

- I had thought that most migrant groups in relation to Diaspora are people from Africa and Asia migrating to Europe, but after this consultation I learned that there are still challenges for and from people from other European countries. For example, when visiting a Diaspora church in Stockholm, we experienced the Finnish Lutheran Church in Sweden. There are many challenges they face, e.g. concerning integration.
- How can a possibility to promote cooperation between Diaspora congregations and indigenous people be created?
- How, in the right way, should Diaspora communities deal with questions of identity?
- It is not easy to maintain migrant congregations with their local language, but it is possible in Oslo, e.g. like the Chinese congregation and some of the African congregations. It is good awareness building to prepare them for the future in a way that they may have to consider Norwegian language in the services for the sake of their own children.

Conclusion

The atmosphere of the consultation was warm, so were the perspectives and understanding. We prayed together for stronger relations of the Diaspora congregations and the indigenous churches. There should be active accommodation of Diaspora communities, for this is the same church of Christ. The doubt and skepticism which is normally there in both the Diaspora group and the indigenous group must be eliminated as much as possible. A Porvoo concern should be to strengthen even further the relationship between the Lutheran church and the Anglican church. The movement of people within the modern global society cannot be avoided, as the church we must be prepared for the best service, for the ministry of our Lord Jesus. All these experiences have helped me to strengthen even further the improvement of the work here at Fossum international English services.

Special thanks to all the participants and the consultation itself, which dug deep, in order to make us real brothers and sisters within our own fellowship at the consultation week. We ought to present that fellowship experience back in Oslo. We thank God that the work for integration among our communities here has begun already, although it is not yet enough. We have to do more, communicate more and share more of the good news of the Gospel. May God almighty bless all the leaders who worked so hard to make this wonderful work of Christ succeed.

