



Saksbehandler: Beate Fagerli

Saksdokumenter:

Report of the Northern European Preparatory Meeting for the CPCE General Assembly, Oslo, April 26–27, 2012

CPCEs generalforsamling 2012

Sammendrag

Et nordeuropeisk forberedelsesmøte til CPCEs generalforsamling i Firenze fant sted i Oslo, 26.–27. april, 2012. På møtet ble studieprosesser, ressursdokumenter, planer og program diskutert.

Fra studiedokumentene «Scripture, Confession, Church» og «Ministry, Ordination, Episcopé» ble særlig noen tema trukket frem som viktige områder å arbeide videre med i Leuenbergfellesskapet. I CPCE-sammenheng har det fra noen kirker vært fremmet forslag om en protestantisk synode i Europa. For de nordeuropeiske medlemskirkene er ikke spørsmålet direkte relevant, men henger sammen med spørsmålet om hvordan en definerer en synode. Hvordan kirkene definerer «kirke», og hvilken plass synoden (kirkemøtet) har i kirkene, behøver fortsatt klargjøring. Også spørsmålet om hvordan kirkene praktiserer tilsyn, bør studeres nærmere, dette gjelder både synodalt og biskoppelig tilsyn. Videre bør en se nærmere på hvilken plass kirkens tjenester har i kirkene, ikke minst den diakonale tjeneste. Alle disse sidene ved å være kirke berører det å være i forpliktende kirkefellesskap med andre kirker. Et viktig spørsmål for fortsatte læresamtaler vil derfor være hva som ligger i den gjensidige forpliktelsen (eng. mutual accountability) i kirkefellesskap.

Leuenberg-fellesskapet forbereder også 500-årsmarkeringen av reformasjonen frem mot 2017. Det nordeuropeiske forberedelsesmøtet la vekt på at dette arbeidet bør være økumenisk og skje i samarbeid med fagmiljøer og andre organisasjoner, som Det lutherske verdensforbund. Det var også interesse for å se nærmere på mulighetene for et nordisk samarbeid, for eksempel rundt temaet *kirke og stat*, i sammenheng med CPCEs studieprosess om «Ekklesia semper reformanda».

Studiedokumentet «Stand up for Justice» og kirkenes engasjement for kristne i Midtøsten er arbeidsområder som vinner stor gjenklang i de nordeuropeiske medlemskirkene. Men det ble presisert at CPCE bør unngå overlapping med økumenisk arbeid som foregår i andre organisasjoner, og heller prioritere arbeid som er spesifikt protestantisk og kan bidra inn i en bredere økumenisk sammenheng. Ressursdokumentet «A Time to Live and

a Time to Die» anses nettopp som et dokument hvor CPCE kan bidra inn i en større økumenisk og samfunnsetisk debatt. Det er ønskelig at dokumentet gjøres videre kjent, for eksempel gjennom oversettelse.

To kandidater til CPCEs råd ble presentert: Kirsten Jørgensen fra Den danske folkekirke og Kristin Graff-Kallevåg fra Den norske kirke.

Et felles nordeuropeisk forberedelsesmøte ble opplevd som nyttig. Det anses ikke nødvendig med en enda tettere organisering av en nordeuropeisk sub-region i CPCE, men et fortsatt nordeuropeisk kontaktnettverk er ønskelig.

Forslag til vedtak

MKR støtter vurderingene i det nordeuropeiske forberedelsesmøtet. Videre ber MKR den norske delegasjonen bringe følgende innspill til CPCEs generalforsamling i Firenze, 20.–26. september:

...

Økonomiske/administrative konsekvenser

Dersom Kristin Graff-Kallevåg velges inn i CPCEs råd, må det tas høyde for at reiser og opphold dekkes over MKRs budsjett i neste seksårsperiode. Det er ikke ventet at disse utgiftene behøver å økes ytterligere i perioden, ettersom MKR også i inneværende periode har dekket reise og opphold for medlem i rådet og presidiet.

Report of the Northern European Preparatory Meeting for the CPCE General Assembly, Oslo, April 26–27, 2012

v/Beate Fagerli

Present:

Rev Harvey Richardson, delegate Methodist Church in Great Britain, bishop Erling Pettersen, delegate Church of Norway, Ms Ingvill Hagesæther Foss, delegate Church of Norway, Rev Dr Stephanie Dietrich, Church of Norway (CPCE Vice President), Dr Ulla Schmidt, adviser, member of the Ethics working group, Ms Berit Hagen Agøy, observer Church of Norway, Rev Jenny Sjögren, observer, Church of Sweden, Ms Rebekka Højmark Svenningsen, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark, Rev Dr Tomi Karttunen, observer Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland, Ms Kristin Graff-Kallevåg, Candidate CPCE Council Church of Norway, Rev Kirsten Jørgensen, Candidate CPCE Council Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark, Ms Beate Fagerli, guest Porvoo Communion/Church of Norway

Introduction to CPCE, main themes and future plans

Stephanie Dietrich introduced the group to the CPCE, which became the new name of the Leuenberg fellowship of churches in 2007. The majority of member churches are smaller minority churches in Europe, while the majority churches in Northern Europe are members or observers. The organisation is small, working partly as a network, through study groups and working groups, with a small head office in Vienna. CPCE also keeps important relations with CEC.

Some of the main themes of the Assembly are the understanding of ministry and ecclesiology, as well as scripture and confession. We see a development in the understanding of the ministry of the church, ordained ministries and other ministries, particularly referred to in the study document on ministry. The relationship between church and state in different churches and church reforms are important issues.

Altar- and pulpit fellowship is one side of the Leuenberg agreement. However, the churches also commit themselves to closer relations in mission and service. In the Leuenberg fellowship of churches the notion of unity is expressed through “visible unity in reconciled diversity”, a notion which needs to be filled with more content than only structural unity”. It is about living together in witness and service

Quite a bit of discussion has taken place on the relation between Porvoo and Leuenberg, not least between Nordic churches, related to the understanding of compatibility between the Leuenberg and Porvoo agreements. In addition new discussions have taken place, with the Baptists in Europe and the Anglicans in the UK. CPCE has also been involved in the international Lutheran-Orthodox relations. A “series of conversations” on models of unity is also likely to take place with the Roman Catholic Church. Bilateral dialogues are also undertaken within the region, where CPCE is involved. Proposals for dialogue on the plurality of religions are likely to be dealt with at the Assembly. CPCE also wishes the reformation anniversary to be seen in a greater ecumenical context.

From the discussion:

- Church of Norway and ELC Denmark has been quite clear on not wanting to establish a Protestant Synod in Europe. But we are churches sharing the same faith, bound together through this mutual recognition, and this needs to be more than signing a document. Celebrating worship together is an important part of visible unity. Ordination from other countries is recognized, which is also an effect of lived community. However, what it means to stand in witness and service together needs continuous reflection. It is not likely that the assembly will deal with the question of a Protestant synod, as there are different definitions of synod. It is expected that a study project on church community should deal with the question.
- There is some cooperation with LWF on the Reformation anniversary. It would be important also to remember the English reformation in preparations for the 500 years anniversary.
- Cooperation with CEC and other organisations remain important. CPCE is a small organisation and must prioritise. But there are specific aspects of Protestant theology which are still interesting to explore, and can be specific contribution to the wider ecumenical movement.
- The work on education for church ministry has produced a document which tries to sketch out the main areas of theological competence that the churches are asking for. The question of how much education is needed in order to serve in the church has not been solved, but the document tries to sketch out what people should know about this question.
- Proposals for future projects will be distributed in May.

Presentation of CPCE Council Delegates

The two candidates for the CPCE Council, Rev Kirsten Jørgensen and Ms Kristin Graff-Kallevåg, were presented. It is likely that at least one candidate from member churches in Northern Europe will be elected to the Council. In previous periods ELC Denmark and Church of Norway have shared a CPCE Council member and a proxy. Proxies take part in some Council meetings.

A nominations committee will be elected at the beginning of the assembly. Presentation of candidates will take place, and a final list of proposals will be presented.

Scripture Confession Church

Ms Beate Fagerli introduced the Study document on Scripture, Confession, Church.

From the discussion:

- The work after the hearing process has been good, reflecting the feedback from the churches into the process. The chapter on the understanding of the Church has been left out and should be followed up in a separate study after the Assembly.
- A question remains whether the document helps the churches in dealing with interpretation of Scriptures. Do our churches think that it is a document that mirrors our understanding in a way that means we could accept it as our own?
- The theological working group in the ELC Denmark has expressed the need to bring some Lutheran insights into the document. It has also discussed whether the presence of Islam affecting our understanding of Scripture is a matter that must be underlined in the document; what relations do religions have to their sacred texts? Very little encounter with the whole question of fundamentalism.

- In ELC Finland the relationship between Scriptures and the Gospel has been underlined, the Bible is not simply identified with the Word of God. It is a problem if the tradition of hermeneutical interpretation means understanding the Word of God only as proclamation. There is a need to distinguish between law and gospel. The question on hermeneutics can also be compared with the document on Ministry.
- There is also a problem with the understanding of the relationship between Bible, doctrine and confession. The binding character of the confession remains unclear.
- The issue of mutual accountability will be proposed to the assembly for further doctrinal study.

Ministry Ordination Episcopate

Rev Dr Tomi Karttunen introduced the Study document on Ministry, Ordination, Episcopate. (See document)

From the discussion:

- Rev Harvey Richardson chaired the working group on the study document, and presented some of the intention of the working group, seeing the document as a spring board for a further process. There are signs of new understandings of ministry, but the use of language is a key question in understanding ministries, as well as ordination, consecration, commissioning etc.
- The ELC Denmark found that the hermeneutical insights in the document are better than what is found in Scripture confession Church. Also the issue of the Priesthood of all believers is a very relevant one to the church.
- Church of Norway has been going through a discussion which has not yet come to an end. The church has adopted a holistic understanding of mission (LWF), but needs further study on the diaconate. The question of oversight and episcopate also needs further work. If there were to be voting on doctrinal issues, the synod has preference. There is still a perception of the episcopate as personal, but how do we understand the communal aspect of the episcopate, which relates not only to the other bishops, but to the synod?
- In these issues internal differences can be found within the churches. How to understand the term Church in the recommendations, when one and the same church has more opinions? At the same time, to put on the agenda that the churches need to reconsider their practice is quite deliberately done. When you are in communion you have to acknowledge the ministry of other churches.
- The document emphasises the need of ordination, which is a step forward. It also reflects the variety of ministries. We are in communion with non-episcopal churches, and have to recognize their oversight structure. There is also a huge emphasis on synodic oversight, both in a collegial communal and personal way. The Lutheran emphasis is on the communal dimension, while the reformed tradition emphasises the communal exercise of oversight.
- Maybe it would be an idea to emphasise further study on the diaconate. There is diversity in understanding the diaconate, but diaconia is central to what it means to be a church, and how the understanding of ministries is reflected.

Stand up for justice!

Ms Ingvill Hagesæther Foss introduced the study document Stand up for justice.

How are the challenges raised by the document going to be worked on? Can we get as far as common statements? Are there specific Protestant views on ethics, and are some ethical questions so critical that they have to do with confession? What will the result of the liturgical proposal be? Should this be a declaration from the CPCE Assembly – is this something we should commit to together? The document is not to be adopted, but to be used as a resource document.

From the discussion:

- What are the liturgical implications? It doesn't help if you don't do anything. However, standing up for justice actually means fighting injustice. This document helps in challenging injustice.
- The ELC Denmark finds the document a well formulated discussion on how to work on these issues in an in-depth way, and issues raised are also relevant to Denmark. But the commitment to a common voice represents a difficulty, how is the level of commitment understood?
- It's interesting to see how small the role of confessional identity was in these statements. On social issues the confessional differences are not important.
- What is the added value of CPCE working on these issues when we are working on these issues with others? Information on political reality we welcome, but we see a clear differentiation of work between CPCE and CEC. What does it mean to give a clear Protestant witness?
- Useful exercise and interesting material. Not bound to follow up, but useful when discussing ethical questions.
- Regarding committing ourselves to promote "Christian values" is a problematic expression. Also, the relationship between a theology of creation and theology of redemption needs further work. What does it mean ethical commitment is part of the being of the church? Is it a fruit of faith, a quality of the church, or the mark of the church?
- Happy with young people challenging the churches, pinning down some disturbing things when looking at Europe today. Although this is not being voted on, concerns have a place in a CPCE context. How can this be taken to the assembly?
- In this document some concerns are expressed that can be found in contemporary theology, which gives an indication of what matters for many Christians. In our reflections on what is it to be Protestant, this can be used in further theological/ecclesiological discussions.

Middle East:

The situation of Christians in the Middle East was raised, and delegates shared information on their churches engagement in the region. There is quite a keen interest in the region, and churches are engaged in agreements with churches in the region, the EAPPI programme, Sabeel, exchange of worship material and more. Furthermore, information on the Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches was shared.

Regional proposals and contributions to the General Assembly

Ms Rebekka Højmark Svenningsen introduced the regional proposals.

"Anchor in Time" is a document on Protestant Worship in Southern, Central and Eastern Europe. The challenges raised by this varied group are not very different from the challenges we face, although our churches face differences. Their proposals are interesting, even when they cannot be

applied directly. Still, it is surprising to see how much of this we could use, and it would be useful to make it available on the website.

“Identity and integration” is a document which is not supposed to be voted on, but encourages interreligious exchange and dialogue, and recommends that churches welcome migrants into their communities. It also encourages church action on intercultural and interreligious skills. The Council recommends that the churches read it.

Ethics

Dr Ulla Schmidt gave an introduction to the work of the expert group on ethics.

The General Assembly in Belfast 2000 decided to strengthen its work on ethics, picking up on one of the Leuenberg declaration articles. Among other initiatives a working group was set up as an expert group of academics working in the field of ethics, preparing resource documents and reflection. Issues that have been addressed are armed intervention, human rights and religions, social justice and recently the document “A time to live and a time to die”, which came as a result of the council asking for work on issues relating to the end of life. The group understood the question to be to prepare a resource document which could aid churches in different contexts in handling issues on the end of life. The group found that the churches have two mandates in this area: 1) a public mandate to advice on the area politically and 2) to assist congregations and members by providing them a basis for reflection. Furthermore, the group found it necessary to contextualise issues like geographical and social changes that affect these questions within a clinical, and a legal and political context. A challenge has been that member churches live in different legal contexts, the resources they need are therefore different.

From the discussion:

- The material has already come to good use. Norway is now making a major reform that involves the church and the deacons in a special way, shifting from regional to local organisation, a “joint action reform” in health care. Local groups will be much more responsible for tough decisions. The experience from a consultation in Stavanger is that we had a lot to offer as churches to palliative care. The document should be translated.
- Many churches haven’t found proficient statements; this document offers a relevant Protestant stand and advice on action. It does raise Interchurch issues, but is a good resource for churches in professional context, or for churches that lack resources. It should be distributed more widely, and with a revision it can be relevant for many years to come.
- Although it is not an Assembly issue, the group asked that the Council find a way of treating the document at the assembly.

European forum: Europe’s churches turn to the future

Rev Jenny Sjögreen introduced the document.

What does it mean to be a church with reformation roots at the present time? In their responses to CPCE, churches have come up with answers raising a number of issues: Firstly, there is a need for spiritual renewal. Churches are becoming social clubs that seldom speak of faith. Then, there are

changes in structures, e.g. Church of Scotland, which cannot afford to have territorial ministry anymore. Thirdly, there are different social expressions of the churches.

From the discussion:

- Plans for the 500 years anniversary of the reformation were shared.
- Church of Norway has not proceeded far with its plans, but has thought of connecting to several processes. Would a Nordic cooperation project be of interest? It could e.g. focus on the loosening of bonds between church and state. Cooperation with LWF would be important, faculties and universities should be involved.
- ELC Finland has put down a working group, which has made preparations and suggestions, some of them connected to the 100 years anniversary of Finland. There is also an ecumenical dimension to the planning, part of that is the reception of the Lutheran catholic dialogue report.
- The LWF focus is "from conflict to communion".
- Within CPCE the difference in situation of the churches vis-à-vis other churches influences very much the attitude when it comes to ecumenical cooperation on the anniversary.
- The Day in Florence is different, bringing us from looking back to looking to the future. This is thought to be more of a workshop, a thematic day. Many churches in Europe are in a huge process of reform. *Ecclesia semper reformanda* will be a key word.
- How can the English reformation be understood with regards to a date in 2017? It is a decade of reformation, really. One could discuss what it means to be reformed, and being churches shaped by the reformation.
- The CPCE Synodal meeting in Bad Boll brought up lay leadership of the churches as a sign of *ecclesia semper reformanda* and churches looking to the future.
- Our documents focus on how we find a new organization, but we need to look for spiritual and theological content of the church changes.

Assembly Programme and Agenda.

Stephanie Dietrich took the group through the programme.

It was suggested that the Northern European group should meet twice at the Assembly, to share insights and be a resource to new people. Rev Jenny Sjögren and Rebekka Højmark Svenningsen agreed to initiate and organise the meetings.

Regional process

The question of a northern European region was brought up. It was felt that there was no need for a sub-regional organisation as such, but that it may be useful to network from time to time on specific issues. It was agreed to ask smaller churches in the region of their needs. It was also agreed to look at the possibility of working together on the reformation anniversary.

The idea will be evaluated at the sub-regional meeting during the Assembly.