

**APPENDIX I****THE PORVOO COMMUNION****CONTACT GROUP MEETING DURHAM 5 - 8 SEPTEMBER 2000****INTRODUCTION**

A meeting of the Porvoo Contact Group was held in Durham, between 5 and 8 September 2000. We stayed in St John's College which is across the road from the lovely Cathedral and Close. The accommodation was very reminiscent of my student days, not an experience I expected to be reliving at this stage in my life! The proximity and intimacy of the student bar was however one advantage and this facility helped oil the wheels of communion amongst the Contact Group.

The Contact Group meeting immediately preceded the Porvoo Theological Conference which was attended by theologians from each of the Porvoo churches and organised by the Contact Group.

**EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION**

Each Contact Group member submitted a short report on the current concerns of their church and highlighted specific developments since the last meeting. There was a very strong emphasis in all the reports on ecumenical relationships as each church seeks to find an acceptable formula for such relationships.

**BUSINESS**

The following are the key areas of business discussed at the meeting:

**1. *Draft Guidelines for the Appointment of Clergy from the Porvoo Churches to Posts in the Church of England***

The Church of England's draft guidelines were discussed by the Contact Group. The Guidelines cover aspects of the appointment of clergy in considerable detail with a view to publicising this important aspect of Porvoo contact and of creating a uniform approach across the Church of England. The Guidelines would be presented to the Church of England House of Bishops early in 2001. It was felt that it would be very useful to have similar documents from the Lutheran and Celtic Churches. Each document would have to have a specific provision regarding child protection legislation and also appropriate provision where oaths of loyalty are involved.

**2. *Good Practice in Porvoo Links and Exchanges***

The meeting examined an information pack drawn up by the Meissen Commission to promote diocesan and parish links with a view to drawing up a similar document for the Porvoo Churches. It was felt that links ought to be regularly reviewed, for example, every three years and it was important to provide a forum in which the

stories of links could be publicised and recorded. A pack is to be presented and discussed at the next Contact Group meeting.

**3. *The Diaconate***

The Diaconate is an ongoing area of debate and research in each of the churches and amongst the various church groupings. The meeting grappled with how to bring all the strands of research and methods of practice together in a meaningful way to aid discussion and make a contribution to the debate. It was agreed that a report on the diaconal situation should be made to the next Church Leaders' Meeting in 2002.

**4. *Theological Institutions***

Contact between institutions of theology and ministry training was reviewed. Some interchange was reported and some institutes are actively looking for student exchanges. On the Anglican side, the diverse nature of theological education made international ecumenical work difficult to co-ordinate. It was felt that such links could be built into existing diocesan twinings. A further difficulty existed in trying to co-ordinate the diverse structures of initial training and continuing ministerial education in the Porvoo churches. The Contact Group would undertake to produce a paper for theological institutions on the issues and possibilities.

**5. *The Charta Oecumenica***

The Conference of European Churches has drawn up an ecumenical Charter for Europe in the wake of the Graz Assembly of 1997 and responses to the draft charter were sought by the Geneva Office for September 2000. Contact Group members reported on the submissions sent in by their respective churches.

**6. *The Regional Growth of Porvoo***

Recent informal approaches by other churches regarding possible membership of Porvoo led to the question of whether the Porvoo process is actually finished and closed. Developments between Lutherans and Episcopalians in the United States had encouraged other churches to make requests concerning membership of the Porvoo Communion. Porvoo was about relationships, it was not an organisational structure and an extension of the Communion would lead to the inevitable problems of over complicated networks. On the other hand this may be the only way forward for ecumenism. The new situation presented the Porvoo Churches with a challenge to assess the distinctiveness of their Communion, and it was very important to keep all our ecumenical partners fully informed of developments. Porvoo is essentially a communion of episcopal churches. The Contact Group was aware that new fellowships may lead to a neglect of older relationships and that it was necessary to consolidate the Porvoo Communion, to develop existing friendships based on the concrete interchange of clergy and laity. The topic would be one that would be on the agenda for the Church Leaders' Meeting in 2002.

**7. *Review of What the Porvoo Communion has done and What there is yet to do***

The list of work done since the signing of the agreement includes – six meetings of the Contact Group, two Primates meetings, one Church Leaders' Meeting, one Lawyers' Meeting, one Theological Conference, five prayer cycles, setting up of the Porvoo Website, national networks such as the Porvoo Panel in the Church of England, the sharing of documentation, synodical visits, twinnings and exchanges at diocesan and parish level, attendance at consecrations, staff visits, fringe visits, production of study guides and books, Porvoo Research Project, attendance and licensing of clergy, courses for clergy and ecumenical officers, contact with *diaspora* congregations and fact finding visits by specialist groups.

A list of areas still to be completed or initiated include work with young people, contact between specialists in the field of information and media, the Porvoo Hymn Book, liaison between theological colleges and institutes, common approaches to continuing ministerial education, a review of the website, greater consultation between the churches on matters of significance, consultation on foreign mission and relief organisations, clarification of unresolved questions such as women bishops and diaconal ordination.

It was decided that the themes arising from the two lists should form the basis of an amplified and fully resourced website and that themes should also be integrated into subsequent editions of the prayer booklet.

**8. *Prayer Booklet***

The Contact Group considered the general function and use of the prayer booklet. It was decided that dioceses would be offered the choice of proposing their own local prayer request or leaving their space open to a general Porvoo item. The booklet would continue in its present form with slight modifications to the subjects for prayer and a review of the legibility and size of the map on the British Isles. In addition it was decided to look into the production of a booklet of prayers with examples of liturgy.

**9. *Porvoo Hymn Book***

The Hymn Book was nearing completion. 5,000 copies are due to be produced.

**SUMMARY OF FORTHCOMING MEETINGS/DATES TO NOTE:**

September 2001	Contact Group Meeting in Denmark
November 2001	Primates' Meeting in Sweden
March 2002	Church Leaders' Meeting in Estonia
October 2002	Contact Group Meeting in Finland followed by a special commemorative Porvoo Gathering

**APPENDIX J****REPORT OF THE PORVOO THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE****DURHAM, SEPTEMBER 2000****Rev Dr AW McCormack**

I attended the Porvoo Theological Consultation on Diversity at the invitation of the General Synod. The consultation was residential and was based in St John's College, Durham. Other members of the Church of Ireland present included Rt Revd John Neill (Co-Chair), Rt Revd Dr Richard Henderson (who led Bible study) and Valerie Beatty (RCB). A group of over 30 people were gathered from the various signatory churches of the Porvoo Agreement and from a number of interested, but not (yet) subscribing, churches. It was especially good to have representation from the Baltic Lutheran churches.

The consultation established the principle that theological reflection and discussion should be based in the context of prayer and fellowship. Each day was therefore highly structured and centred around the offering of common prayer in the College Chapel and the study of Scripture in the consultation room.

The consultation carried out its business both in plenary sessions and in smaller workshops. I chaired one of the three groups of delegates which met daily, and my secretarial assistance was provided by Magister Joar Haga, of the Church of Norway, one of the consultation staff.

Towards the end of the consultation a report of proceedings with a specific series of recommendations was produced by the group leaders under the editorial direction of the Rt Revd Stephen Sykes, of the Church of England. This report has not yet been released for publication.

It was a humbling experience to be present at the Durham consultation and I had the strong sense of Christians honestly struggling together with the du jour issue of what unity and diversity in communion might actually entail. I feel very strongly that the document produced in Durham should not be allowed by any of the member churches to be filed away and forgotten. For example, one of the exciting recommendations, that there should be a properly constituted study into the emergence of common youth cultures in north European Christianity, is an achievable aspiration of the greatest urgency and importance. I would myself be very keen to be part of such a study and offer my services to the Church of Ireland in this regard.

It also seems to me that another recommendation, enhancing mobility within the communion, is an easily achievable aim. Professor Bartlett of the Theological College (in informal discussions) has already responded warmly to the idea of developing links and exchanges with Theological Colleges in Norway, Finland and Sweden. For my own part, I have recently welcomed Professor Jan Olav Henriksen, one of the Norwegian delegates in Durham, to lecture in Trinity College, while I intend to take the Chapel Choir to visit Finland, Estonia and Sweden in June 2001. Yet what is needed if the Porvoo Agreement is to have any real impact on the Church of Ireland is a mechanism for the activities of individuals and groups to be supported and co-ordinated in some concrete way by the central agencies of the Church. The enthusiasm of individuals and groups needs to be supported in real ways - and obviously and occasionally in financial ways.

The Porvoo Agreement was designed (we learned at Durham) to be active at the popular level of the member churches: it is a challenge to the Church of Ireland to act centrally to make this so.

**APPENDIX K**


---

**THE PORVOO COMMUNION**  
**PORVOO THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE**  
*CONCLUDING DOCUMENT*

---

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Theologians of the Anglican and Lutheran Churches of northern Europe met from 8-13 September 2000 in Durham to seek together, through prayer and study, how fellowship at every level in the Porvoo Communion might be deepened. The meeting took place as a direct consequence of the commitment in the Porvoo Common Statement to establish appropriate forms of collegial and conciliar consultation on significant matters of faith and order, life and work, and to 'encourage consultations of representatives of our churches and to facilitate learning and exchange of ideas and information in theological and pastoral matters' (paragraph 58b viii/ix). Our exploration of the complex task laid before us has been permeated by the spiritual communion and fellowship we have experienced in worship, Bible study and prayer. The Porvoo Agreement calls us to 'a deepening of fellowship, to new steps on the way to visible unity and a new coherence in our common witness in word and deed to one Lord, one faith and one baptism' (paragraph 29).

The six day residential conference gathered representatives from the Porvoo churches who through their professional background, their office or the responsibility they hold take a leading role in the doctrinal work of their church. In response to the request by the Porvoo church leaders' consultation in Turku in 1998, which had designated the theme 'Diversity in Communion', the delegates focused on a possible common understanding of unity and common mission.

Papers and group discussion focused on four main themes: Scripture, human sexuality, ministry, and the contemporary world in which the church exists. The discussion was informed by a detailed consideration of the nature of communion in the light of the Porvoo Common Statement and the wider issues of ecclesiology, identity, and reception.

In two respects in particular, namely in relation to the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate, and to views about homosexuality, there are profound differences of conviction between and within the member churches of the Porvoo Communion. It was evident that these differences comprised not merely diverging judgements, but also varieties of approach, method and understanding in theological questions. We did not attempt to resolve all these matters, but we made a preliminary effort to evaluate their weight and significance for the future deepening of fellowship between us. Important considerations emerged, some of which we have set down in what follows.

As Anglicans and Lutherans we have already considerable experience of diversity and (indeed) tensions within our own communions. But more fundamentally we acknowledge together that diversity was built into the experience of Christian unity from the very first. Studies of the New Testament period have shown that there was a plurality of ways in which the apostolic gospel was preached and lived. Consequently, although unity of heart and mind between fellow Christians is

a gift of God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, it still had to be sought in daily life. Diversity is and always has been the natural condition of fellow Christians. But the same study of the New Testament documents makes plain that diversity contained dangers of factiousness and deviation in faith which had to be taken with the utmost seriousness. This is still the case today.

## **2. RECOGNITIONS**

*In the discussions focusing upon how our churches are facing issues of unity and diversity, the following recognitions emerged:*

### **2.1 DIVERSITY AND DIVISION**

There are significant differences of history and cultural context between, for example, Baltic Lutheranism and Nordic Lutheranism, or between these and English, Irish, Welsh or Scots Anglicanism/Episcopalianism. Comparative study of European sociology illuminates many of these diversities, which play a role in ecclesial experience.

Despite our diverse origins and histories, nonetheless all our churches are presently in different ways struggling with the challenges of reaching out to and representing all social groups. They also face declining rates of attendance. This situation also challenges us to reflect anew on the extent to which our churches can still provide a unifying force in society. It also asks us to rethink our role as servants to a society increasingly marked by plurality and different modes of life-styles as well as religious attitudes. Sometimes the churches must consider acting as a counterforce to prevalent social and cultural trends.

Moreover, the diversities within the respective churches are often greater than the diversity which exists between our churches, for example on issues of class, race, gender, sexuality and spirituality. There is a need to recognise the distinction between diversity and division. For example, in some churches charismatic movements may be both enriching and divisive. Diversity has very different connotations in different societies: a courageously prophetic stance in one context would not necessarily be so in another.

### **2.2 A SHARED LIFE**

Communion demands interaction and points of interchange. We have to share a common life to reach the point where we come to a common mind. We need to identify points of interaction and co-operation where questions of diversity are not seen as complicating factors, for example diaconal work, and spiritual formation.

### **2.3 YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE CHURCH**

Our churches differ from one another considerably in the degree to which there is established and effective contact with children up to the age of confirmation. But all of us are aware of a serious and increasing gulf between the churches and the cultures of young people. Some even ask whether ours is in danger of being the last Christian generation in Europe. The handing on of the faith we consider to be the greatest challenge in mission which we face together as a community. There is an urgent need for the churches to develop a new language which can link the Christian narrative to people's lives and to the emerging symbols and carriers of meaning.

### **2.4 MISSION AND COMMUNICATION**

The church has to be aware of the complex issues behind the choice of reiterating the gospel in its traditional form and rephrasing it in interaction with contemporary society. These may be stages of a process rather than simple alternatives. But there is a need to articulate the gospel in a way which can be heard by people profoundly influenced by postmodern culture. The

concept of forgiveness is still a part of public discourse with which the Christian message resonates. There is a new interest in the telling of story as the raw material for doctrinal statements, which opens up new possibilities for reading Scripture and understanding the faith.

## **2.5 SPIRITUAL RENEWAL**

The challenge of renewal is a profound one for all members of our churches. We find it difficult to address spiritual and moral matters in the context of an increasingly materialistic culture, the influence of which is inside our own heads and hearts. It is hard to express the profound questions of life and provide good possibilities for Christian growth in a 'culture of entertainment'. At the same time there are signs of dissatisfaction with superficiality, and of the acknowledgement of deeper longings. The church is a worshipping community, not a community of opinions. Spiritual renewal for its members, not least for its clergy, will involve prayer and practice as well as theological study.

## **3. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE PORVOO CHURCHES**

### **3.1 RESHAPING THEOLOGY**

To continue theological discussion between the Porvoo churches with the aim of:

- (i) appreciating the integration of life and theology in a Christian context;
- (ii) providing an account of *communio* which supports diversity but which is also aware of the need to identify limits;
- (iii) promoting socio-ethical studies involving all Porvoo churches;
- (iv) directing attention to divisions and diversities related to race, gender, class, sexuality and spiritual culture within the church, helping each other overcome negative consequences for church and society.

### **3.2 SHARING THEOLOGY**

To encourage specific initiatives to:

- (i) promote the interchange of teachers, students and clergy;
- (ii) promote the interchange of ordinands through fact-finding projects for small groups representing the internal diversity of individual churches, to describe the other church in terms acceptable to the host church. The aim is to further self-understanding as well as intra-communion understanding;
- (iii) encourage the establishing of relationships between agencies, groups and individuals working in the field of *diakonia* and education;
- (iv) facilitate the exchange of literature between the churches;
- (v) offer theological tools, as already described in the Porvoo Common Statement, to address diversity in the local context.

### **3.3 YOUTH CULTURE**

Given the priority of this issue across the European churches, to commission a Porvoo study to look into youth cultures, with the following aims:

- (i) to find ways of facilitating the mutual interchange between 'church' and 'youth' cultures, between the resources of theology and the semantics of youth cultures;

- (ii) to contribute to the understanding of being Church within the new generation;
- (iii) to develop ministry in areas of concern distinctive to young people.

### **3.4 DEVELOPING MEANS OF MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

To promote mutual accountability between our churches, by ensuring that

- (i) where a signatory church of the Porvoo Communion is in dialogue with churches outside the Communion, then other signatory churches within the Communion be invited to contribute to those consultations;
- (ii) where a signatory church of the Porvoo Communion intends to take an action which is likely to affect the boundaries of diversity within the Communion some structure of sharing information and concerns be established;
- (iii) the churches actively seek advice from each other on matters of liturgy;
- (iv) the churches promote ecumenical awareness among clergy especially in churches which have traditionally a majority position;
- (v) in the light of current economic circumstances, the churches continue to address questions of poverty and debt in our countries and overseas. Currently this implies energetic and urgent engagement in the Jubilee 2000 campaign.

### **3.5 MISSION**

To ensure that the diversities and divisions within our community do not hinder us from working together in mission in order to face the present crisis that the Christian churches of Europe face today by

- (i) studying the issue of a shared language/discourse between Christian and non-Christian in response to the stress on common mission contained in the Porvoo Common Statement;
- (ii) exploring how the gospel can be expressed in action and new ways of communication;
- (iii) studying the possibilities for new symbolisms to be 'baptized' and incorporated into liturgical practice as well as to link them to the narratives of the Christian faith;
- (iv) promoting the notion of *ecclesia domestica* (nurturing spiritual formation at home) in order to connect life, church and faith.

## **4. AFFIRMATION**

The recommendations of this document have been formulated with the explicit intention of deepening our fellowship by means of 'new steps on the way to visible unity and a new coherence in our common witness in word and deed to one Lord, one faith and one baptism' (Porvoo Common Statement, paragraph 29). We who present this document commit ourselves to further the implementation of the recommendations in dialogue with the appropriate bodies within our churches.

St John's College Durham, 13th September 2000