

APPENDIX H**PORVOO CONTACT GROUP MEETING, HASLEV, DENMARK****26 SEPTEMBER - 1 OCTOBER 2001**

The annual meeting of the Porvoo Contact Group took place in Haslev, Denmark over six days at the end of September. Fourteen churches were represented and the proceedings were co-chaired by Bishop John Neill and Bishop Erik Vikström, Bishop of Porvoo. There is always a tremendous sense of fellowship amongst the Contact Group as we share Holy Communion at the beginning of the day which sets the focus for our work that day and Evening Prayer at the end of the day committing our work to God. There are always a few new faces at these meetings but the majority of us know each other well, which means that we have developed a real sense of communion where issues of common concern are robustly debated.

The meeting focussed on four main issues: theological issues; the diaconate; follow-up to the Theological Conference held in Durham last year and planning for the future meetings.

THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

Apart from the Porvoo Agreement most of the churches in the Communion have relationships with other churches or church groupings. The development of these relationships is discussed and in particular how they impact on each Church's Porvoo relationship. Examples of these relationships are the current Anglican/Methodist talks, the Reuilly Agreement, Meissen, Leuenberg and Old Catholics.

THE DIACONATE

Gunnel Borgegård from the Nordic Ecumenical Council presented the second of three reports on the ministry of the deacon entitled 'Ecclesiological Explorations', published by the Anglo-Nordic Diaconal Research Project (ANDREP). This second report takes the form of a series of papers by the researchers, who have explored the historical antecedents to the diaconate, disentangled the varied usage of key concepts such as *caritas* and *diakonia* and examined the deacon as a voice of prophecy and transformation, with a social and liturgical ministry that takes on its full meaning as sign and instrument of the Kingdom of God. The contributors are Risto Ahonen, Sven-Erik Brodd, Olav Fanuelsen, Christine Hall, Robert Hannaford, Kjeld Nordstokke and Ninni Smedberg. Copies can be obtained from the Nordic Ecumenical Council (email: info@nordiskaekumeniskaradet.org).

A quick survey of members of the Contact Group identified a clear split between the role of deacons in the Anglican Communion and their role in the Lutheran Church. In general it can be said that in the Lutheran churches a deacon has limited liturgical responsibilities and concentrates mostly on social work. In the Anglican Communion the diaconate is generally viewed as a transitional period between training and priesting.

The Church of England have just completed a major review of the diaconate called 'For such a time as this' A Renewed Diaconate in the Church of England which will be debated by their General Synod in November 2001.

The Contact Group was informed of the ‘Summit on Ministry’ planned by the Church of Ireland for September 2002 at which the diaconate will be discussed.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Church of Ireland’s suggestion in relation to gathering information on the emergence of common youth cultures in north European Christianity was discussed and it was agreed that this should be actively pursued. The Church of Sweden are planning a youth consultation in 2003 in the context of the ‘Reshaping Theology’ recommendations from the conference.

PLANNING FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The meetings schedule for the coming few years was agreed in outline.

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| 2002 | Church Leaders’ Consultation entitled ‘Church Leadership in a Changing World’, 7-12 March 2002, Tallinn, Estonia |
| 2003 | Youth Event, Sweden
Contact Group Meeting, Edinburgh, September/October |

Further meetings were pencilled in for 2004 (Theological Conference), 2005 (Primates’ Meeting) and 2006 (Church Leaders’ Meeting).

These meetings are organised and staffed by the Contact Group.

VISIT TO COPENHAGEN

The Church of Denmark had arranged for us to visit Copenhagen.

The Dean of Copenhagen Cathedral showed us around his most impressive church followed by a presentation of the work of the cathedral in their committee room which is situated up 167 steps into the eaves of the roof (and no lift!). The Dean introduced us to a novel project that the cathedral launched in 1999 – the Night Church (‘Natkirken’ www.natkirken.dk) which takes place in the cathedral. The following extracts which explain the project are taken from ‘Project Night Church – A Liturgical laboratory in the Cathedral of Copenhagen’:

The Night Church is open from 8pm to 12.30am every Friday and Sunday night. An evening’s staff includes a minister, a deacon and two/three volunteers. An evening in the Night Church begins with an hour of practical work. The staff brings out all the props – small tables where visitors can light candles and write prayers, writing desks with notebooks for comments and discussion, tables with bibles and leaflets and a new installation, ‘The Cross’, by the Swedish minister and artist Ingemar Thalín.

At 8.00pm the doors of the Cathedral are opened and the Night Church is ready to receive its first visitors. The attendance varies. Most attendees are between 20 and 40 years old and many of them are not regular churchgoers. Some pay only a short visit, others stay for several hours. Some are Christians who are looking for a space for personal devotion, others do not consider themselves Christians but are nevertheless attracted to the silence and the ‘holy ambience’ of the room. The visitors can walk around freely in the Cathedral. Some visitors prefer to stay in the

entrance hall for a cup of tea or coffee and a chat with one of the volunteers, others spend much time in the writing desk area. Some visitors prefer to walk around, others sit down on cushions on the floor. Many prefer to sit in the pews, some of them apparently in silent prayer and meditation, whereas others are engaged in conversation with an intimate friend.

At 10.00pm we have a 20 to 30 minute service where musical elements alternate with readings from the Bible, the reading of a poem, a short reflection on the readings, a prayer, five minutes of silence, 'The Lord's Prayer', a salutation to peace, and finally a blessing. After another hour it is time for a short midnight prayer service. Throughout the evening visitors have had the opportunity to write personal prayers – these are included in the service and read aloud by the deacon.

At 12.30am the last visitors are politely gently asked to leave and to come back another day, the church door is closed, and after another hour of practical activities the staff gathers for a glass of beer and an informal evaluation of the evening.

When the Night Church project started in 1999 the idea was to provide an open and quiet church punctuated by a short service. Today, however, we envisage the entire evening as an extended service. The long stretches of time when 'nothing happens' are part – and a most appreciated part – of the service. The Night Church thus becomes a refuge from everyday life with its career pressures and constant demands for personal achievement.

In our experience, the Night Church is a place where people rediscover the church as holy and spacious. A space into which an individual can enter and find his own place and position. A space that allows the visitors to do things that they may feel are too private to express during an ordinary service – like kneeling, crying, closing their eyes and calming down, or articulating cries for help or jubilant thanks to God.

The pastor of the Church of the Royal Navy (Holmens Kirke), Peter Skov-Jacobsen, showed us around his impressive church which was converted from an anchor forge into a church in 1619. The church has some unusual furnishings including a replica of a tall sailing ship hanging from the ceiling and a beautifully carved altarpiece and pulpit. The Contact Group was hosted to dinner in Peter's family home complete with the Scandinavian tradition of singing between each course – 'Molly Malone' was included on the song sheet and the singing improved as the evening wore on and the number of empty wine bottles increased!

POSTSCRIPT

The Churches in Copenhagen have produced a very impressive colour booklet for tourists called 'Churches in the City of Copenhagen' which describes and illustrates the main churches along with the address, phone number, hours of opening and service schedule of each church. The booklet also lists churches of other denominations with contact details. A map showing the locations of the churches is reproduced on the back.