



Saksbehandler: Beate Fagerli

Saksdokumenter:

CEC Press Release og Communiqué - 2nd Porvoo - Eastern Orthodox Consultation

Brev fra Church of Sweden ang. Porvoo Research Network

Rapport nr. 17/2008 **Stephanie Dietrich**

Rapport fra møte mellom representanter fra Porvoo kirkefellesskapet og ortodokse kirker i Europa under vertskapet av KEK, Commission on Churches in Dialogue, 27.-30. mars 2008, Sambata de Sus, Romania

Saker fra de økumeniske organisasjonene - Porvoo

Sammendrag

Porvoofellesskapet er et aktivt nettverk på flere områder, ikke minst gjelder dette konsultasjoner og konferanser. Kommuniké fra ortodoks-luthersk konsultasjon er vedlagt. I tillegg foreligger rapport fra Den norske kirkes delegasjonsreise til England og Skottland i februar. Saker og initiativ fra disse og tidligere konsultasjoner innbefatter både teologiske utfordringer og konkrete forslag til utveksling og program.

1. Teologiske og ekklesiologiske utfordringer

- Etter forrige møte i Porvoo Contact Group i oktober 2007, ble Stephanie Dietrich og Robert Paterson gitt i oppdrag å foreslå videre skritt for behandling av diakonatet i Porvoosammenheng. De jobber med et forslag til en oppfølgingskonsultasjon om diakonatet, og foreslår at Den norske kirke er vertskap for konsultasjonen. Tidspunkt skal ennå fastsettes, men 2009 er foreløpig foreslått.
- Den teologiske konsultasjonen i London i januar 2008 om Etikk og enhet (Ethics and Communion) brakte opp spørsmålet om hvordan man forholder seg til communitotanken når det er divergens i etiske enkeltspørsmål. Det er ikke enighet om hvilke ekklesiologiske konsekvenser uenighet i etiske spørsmål har, heller ikke innad i kirkene. For Den norske kirke innebærer det også et behov for en gjennomgang av i hvilken grad etiske spørsmål er kirkesplittende og hva dette betyr i forhold til tanken om kirkefellesskap med andre kirker.
- Svenska kyrkan har invitert til deltakelse i Porvoo Research Network, et initiativ som tar sikte på å involvere yngre teologer og forskere i økumenisk sammenheng, samt gjøre bruk av deres faglige arbeid.

- Dialogen mellom Porvoo kirkefelleskapet og de ortodokse kirkene i Europa byr på grunnleggende teologiske utfordringer, ikke minst knyttet til hvordan vi forstår oss selv som kirke. Målet for dialogen er å oppnå en gjensidig forståelse for hverandre, og hverandres tradisjon og identitet. Se for øvrig vedlagte rapport fra Stephanie Dietrich.

2. Forslag til utveksling

- Etter delegasjonsreise til Skottland foreligger et forslag om å invitere Church of Scotland og Scottish Episcopal Church til å sende felles delegasjon på besøk til Den norske kirke.
- Etter delegasjonsreise til England foreligger forslag om mer aktivt å promotere utveksling mellom menigheter og bispedømmer i England og Norge. Dette kan gjøres ved å lage en informasjonsbrosjyre om Porvoo som gjøres tilgjengelig for menigheter og bispedømmer. Forslaget bør også bringes til hele Porvoofellesskapet.
- Utveksling av prester bringer stadig opp spørsmål i forhold til lovgivning rundt ansettelse. For vikariater legges mulighetene til rette, men for fast eller lang tids ansettelser er det stadig spørsmål om anerkjennelse av annen kirkes utdanning til prestatjeneste. For Den norske kirke er dette styrt av Kirkedepartementet, og det vil i mange tilfelle medføre krav om tilleggsutdanning eller overgangsprøver for utenlandske prester. Spørsmålet for Den norske kirke er om dette har konsekvenser for anerkjennelse av andre Porvookirkers ordinasjon. I tillegg reises spørsmål rundt ansettelse til andre kirkelige tjenester som diakon og kateket, ettersom dette er tjenester av forskjellig art.

3. Porvoo Contact Group

En god del utskiftninger i kontaktpersoner til Porvoo Contact Group står for døren. Dette gjelder England, Irland, Wales, Finland og Sverige i tillegg til Norge. Dette betyr også at begge sekretærene (Finland og England) skiftes ut allerede i juni. I tillegg er det ventet at den lutherske Co-chair (leder), Biskop Ragnar Persenius fra Sverige, trekker seg etter Primates Meeting i oktober 2009. De to Co-chairs og sekretærene utgjør arbeidsgruppen i Porvoo Contact Group. Det er ventet at Den norske kirke tar på seg minst én av oppgavene i arbeidsgruppen. Da de baltiske medlemskirkene ikke nevnes, sannsynligvis p.g.a. manglende ressurser, vil alternativene islandsk Co-chair og norsk sekretær, eller norsk Co-chair og islandsk sekretær, være naturlig. Den evangelisk-lutherske kirke på Island og Bispemøtet er informert, og innspill vil foreligge før MKR-møtet.

Forslag til vedtak

1. Mellomkirkelig råd støtter forslaget om å avholde en oppfølgingskonsultasjon om diakonatet, og ber sekretariatet om å følge opp arbeidet i samarbeid med Stephanie Dietrich. Mellomkirkelig råd støtter opp om Porvoo Research Network, men ber om at formål og ansvarsfordeling klargjøres nærmere i Porvoo Contact Group.

2. Mellomkirkelig råd ber sekretariatet om å følge opp med innbydelse til felles gjensitt av Church of Scotland og Scottish Episcopal Church. Rådet ber sekretariatet om å videreføre idéen om en informasjonsbrosjyre om utvekslingsmuligheter innefor Porvoofellesskapet til bruk i menigheter og bispedømmer. Øvrig informasjon tas til orientering.
3. Mellomkirkelig råd støtter forslaget om at Den norske kirke tar på seg verv som leder eller sekretær av Porvoo Contact Group. Rådet foreslår at oppgavene fordeles i enighet med Den evangelisk-lutherske kirke på Island.

Økonomiske/administrative konsekvenser

Vedtatte saker følges opp med nødvendig budsjettering.

Orthodox, Anglicans and Nordic/Baltic Lutherans meet to discuss understanding of Church

The second theological consultation between the Eastern Orthodox Churches and the so called "Porvoo Churches" was held from 27-30 March 2008 at the Orthodox Brancoveanu Monastery, Sambata de Sus, Romania at the initiative of the Conference of European Churches. The "Porvoo Churches" are a group of Anglican and Nordic/Baltic Lutheran Churches which have entered into full communion after theological conversations held from 1989-1992.

Following the model established at the first consultation held from 1-4 December in Järvenpää, Finland, clerical and lay theologians were invited from churches which are signatories of the Porvoo Declaration, and from Eastern Orthodox Churches. The Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (Leuenberg Fellowship) again had observer status. Metropolitan Laurentius of Ardeal and Bishop Ioan of Harghita (Romanian Orthodox Church) were present for part of the consultation, welcomed us and warmly supported our work. Throughout the consultation, worship was held in the Anglican, Lutheran and Orthodox traditions.

After the presentation of several papers and discussion, participant agreed that "out of our different church traditions, we affirm that the true Church of Jesus Christ is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. It is manifested in the local eucharistic community, where the Word is preached and the sacraments administered, under the oversight of the bishop or his representative. Further, both Orthodox and Porvoo churches' participants join in affirming many elements of a common vision of the unity of the Church, including the central place of the eucharist in the worship and life of the Church, the Catholicity of the local congregation and of the whole Church, the role of bishops in focusing unity and fostering appropriate diversity, and that the laity has an essential place in our theological understanding of the Church. Furthermore, we can join in affirming that the Holy Trinity is both the source and the model of an appropriate diversity in unity, and of unity in diversity, in the life of the Church". Various questions were raised that need further discussion, such as the very use of the term "Church", the concept of unity, and what could constitute legitimate diversity in the life of the Church.

The final communiqué of the consultation (including the list of participants) is attached.

The Conference of European Churches (CEC) is a fellowship of some 120 Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican and Old Catholic Churches from all countries of Europe, plus 40 associated organisations. CEC was founded in 1959. It has offices in Geneva, Brussels and Strasbourg.

For more information:

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Conference of European Churches
Second Eastern Orthodox-Porvoo Consultation
Sambata de Sus, Romania, 27-30 March 2008

Communiqué

A second Porvoo-Eastern Orthodox consultation on the Porvoo Common Statement was held from 27th to 30th March at Brancoveanu monastery, Sambata de Sus in Romania at the initiative of the Conference of European Churches. Following the model established at the first consultation in 2005 in Järvenpää, Finland, clerical and lay theologians were invited from churches which are signatories of the Porvoo Declaration, and from Eastern Orthodox Churches. The Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (Leuenberg Fellowship) again had observer status. Metropolitan Laurentius of Ardeal and Bishop Ioan of Harghita were present for part of the second full day of the consultation, welcomed us and warmly supported our work. Throughout the consultation, worship was held in the Anglican, Lutheran and Orthodox traditions.

The Revd Prof. Dr. Viorel Ionita and the Revd Dr. Matti Repo introduced the consultation, recalling the shape and content of the consultation in Järvenpää. The first topic identified at Järvenpää as fruitful for further discussion – ‘The compatibility of the understanding of the Church in the Porvoo Common Statement and the Orthodox understanding of the Church’ - formed the basis of this consultation. Background information was provided by way of brief reports on the Lutheran-Orthodox dialogue (presented by Revd Dr. Stephanie Dietrich) and the Anglican-Orthodox dialogue (presented by Asst. Prof. Dr. Ionut Alexandru Tudorie).

Papers were then presented on the following topics: ‘The Nature of the Church in the Orthodox Ecclesiology’ (Metropolitan Prof. Dr. Gennadios of Sassima, who could not be present in person but whose paper was read by the Revd Prof. Dr. Viorel Ionita), ‘The true Church of Jesus Christ and the concept of the Church in the Common Statement understanding’ (the Revd Prof. Dr. Samuel Rubenson), ‘Can Christian Unity be attained? Reflections on Church unity from the Orthodox perspective’ (the Revd Prof. Dr. Vaclav Jezek), and ‘The concept of church unity in the Porvoo Common Statement. Unity and diversity’ (the Rt Revd Michael Jackson, Bishop of Clogher).

Discussion following these papers was intense and fruitful. Out of our different church traditions, we affirm that the true Church of Jesus Christ is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. It is manifested in the local eucharistic community, where the Word is preached and the sacraments administered, under the oversight of the bishop or his representative.

Further, both Orthodox and Porvoo churches' participants join in affirming many elements of a common vision of the unity of the Church, including the central place of the eucharist in the worship and life of the Church, the Catholicity of the local congregation and of the whole Church, the role of bishops in focusing unity and fostering appropriate diversity, and that the laity has an essential place in our theological understanding of the Church. Furthermore, we can join in affirming that the Holy Trinity is both the source and the model of an appropriate diversity in unity, and of unity in diversity, in the life of the Church.

Various questions were raised that need further discussion, including some which bear on differences between our church traditions. In respect of diversity, there was some disagreement about what would constitute legitimate diversity in the life of the Church, and points raised in discussion included the need to account for the roots of diversity and the need to develop or apply criteria for evaluating legitimate diversity. The unity of the Church, as expressed in outward, visible form, would need to be able to encompass considerable diversity, but how far and in what form this is so would need more exploration. Another area of disagreement concerned the Porvoo Common Statement's reference to the Church's need for repentance. A further area of discussion concerned the relationship between the inner, mystical reality of the Church and the particularity of historical churches. Relevant here would be the differing accounts of history, and of God's providence in history, offered by our church traditions.

A substantial discussion focused on the very use of the term 'church', which can be applied in ecumenical discussion in so many different ways and at so many different levels that misunderstanding can follow. There was agreement on the application of the word 'church' in relation both to the local eucharistic community and to the one true Church of Jesus Christ, and also common concern that the ecclesiological status of 'intermediate' notions such as 'national church' or 'denomination' had not as yet been adequately explored theologically. The Orthodox would see the autocephalous churches as full expressions of the one Church of Christ, and not as denominational divisions; but the Orthodox may also need to attend to overlapping jurisdictions in the Orthodox diaspora. The Porvoo churches perhaps need to consider further the nature of denominational identity in the light of situations in which the agreement itself has created overlapping or 'parallel' jurisdictions.

We discussed the concept of 'unity', and its relation to concepts of communion, catholicity, apostolicity, mutual accountability and love. We acknowledge that the Porvoo agreement establishes, not a complete model of unity, but rather a process towards closer unity. The Porvoo churches and the Orthodox Church share a common commitment to the full, visible unity of the Church. Both traditions could agree that full, visible unity would require at least: the total mutual recognition of ministries; a common theological basis; a corresponding, coherent liturgical and sacramental life; and full continuity with the living tradition of the

Church. From the Orthodox side, there would also be the need for the organization of the Church geographically according to canonical tradition.

The consultation was conducted in a spirit of mutual appreciation, trust and inquiry. It was held 'in between' Western and Eastern Easters, the Porvoo churches having already kept the Easter feast, while the Orthodox were still in Lent. The calendrical and liturgical difference helpfully reminded the participants of the necessity of continuing dialogue for the sake of Christ's followers in their ordinary discipleship.

We wish to thank the Conference of European Churches and the Brancoveanu monastery for making this consultation possible, and in particular the community of the monastery for their hospitality. Metropolitan Laurentius quoted a Romanian saying to the effect that the person sanctifies the place, but he added that the place may sanctify the person. We felt that our gathering, and our discussions, were indeed sanctified by this place. We hope to continue exploration of the topics outlined at Järvenpää in a further consultation, and recommend that the CEC strongly support that proposal. Participants are further invited to share their rich theological experience of the consultation with their colleagues and church members.

Participants:

Orthodox participants

Mrs. Elena Speranskaya, Russian Orthodox Church

Revd Prof. Dr. Daniel Benga, Romanian Orthodox Church

Mrs. Dr. Elenei Kasselouri and Mr. Georges Hatzivassiliadis, Church of Greece

Asst. Prof. Dr. Ionut Tudorie, Romanian Orthodox Church

Revd Prof. Dr. Vaclav Jezek, Orthodox Church in the Czeck Lands and Slovakia

Revd Prof. Rauno Pietarinen, Orthodox Church of Finland

Prof. Nathan Hoppe, Orthodox Church of Albania

Revd Prof. Dr. Viorel Ionita, staff

Porvoo participants:

Revd Canon Dr. Anders Bergquist, Church of England

Revd Dr. Stephanie Dietrich, Church of Norway

Prof. Dr. Samuel Rubenson, Church of Sweden

Ms Anne Burghardt, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Estonia

Bishop Michael Jackson, Church of Ireland

Revd Canon Prof. John Riches, Scottish Episcopal Church

Revd Dr. Jeremy Morris, Church of England

Revd Dr. Matti Repo, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland

Dr. Kaisamari Hintikka, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, Staff

Representative of the CPCE:

Prof. Dr. Stefan Tobler, Evangelical Church of the Confession of Augsburg, Romania

February 22, 2008

Dear all

As you will remember we have for some time been discussing the formation of a so called Porvoo Research Network. In a press release from 2005 we wrote:

“A new research network was established for the Porvoo Communion of Churches at an international seminar held in Tallinn, Estonia, February 24-26, 2005. The new network of researchers is called THE PORVOO RESEARCH NETWORK.

The aim of the Network is to strengthen theological research on the questions related to the Anglican – Lutheran Porvoo Common Statement which today unites 12 European churches in the Porvoo Communion of Churches.

The Porvoo Research Network will support and work in close cooperation with the Porvoo Communion Contact group, the International Anglican – Lutheran Society and the Anglo – Nordic – Baltic Theological and Pastoral Conferences. The Network will bring together researchers and scholars from different universities and research institutes to share their findings and research themes with each other. Special attention is paid to young scholars to give them opportunities for presenting their research.

The Network will inform about the ongoing research projects and funding possibilities. As a flexible organization the Network has no members but individual researchers and scholars who share common interests. A steering group of five scholars from three different countries will meet annually and organize special research events. The practical work of the Network will be coordinated by the Ecumenical Institute for the Nordic region.”

Since then things have moved, in particular since the network was given a most generous grant from the Thora Ohlson Foundation, Lund, Sweden – a grant that will allow us to organize a conference in the autumn of 2008 at a very low price indeed. We are hoping to be able to support the participants fully, except for their travel expenses.

Who do we invite

We would like to see young scholars (20-35), doctoral students etc from within our Churches – students who in their academic work focus either on Porvoo related matters, preferably in pastoral theology, systematic theology, ecclesiology.

What do we expect

We would like these people to come to the Diocesan centre Åkersberg, outside Lund October 16th – 18th, 2008 (within easy reach of both Malmö and Copenhagen airport). To be prepared to say a word or two about what they are dealing with, but otherwise mostly to take an active part in the programme as prepared by the planning group.

Costs

Church of Sweden

If the sending Churches/Institutions perhaps could pay for the airfare/train ticket (the train stops very near to the centre) the project would hope to be able to cover all other costs. Additional funding to cover travel expenses might also be available.

What next

Please spread the word and make sure your Church is represented by two/three delegates.

Please hurry

We would like to be able to tell our sponsors and speakers that this is happening as planned. **Please forward any name/names to Gunnel Borgegård (gunnel.borgegard@skr.org) before May 1st 2008**

With all good wishes

Johan Dalman
Department for Planning & Archbishop's Office
johan.dalman@svenskakyrkan.se

**Rapport fra møte mellom representanter fra Porvoo kirkefelleskapet og ortodokse kirker i Europa under vertskapet av KEK, Commission on Churches in Dialogue, 27.-30. mars 2008, Sambata de Sus, Romania
v/ Stephanie Dietrich**

Bakgrunn

Desember 2005 ble det arrangert et første møte mellom teologer fra Porvoosammenheng og ortodokse teologer fra KEK-sammenheng. KEKs studiesekretær, Viorel Ionita, tok initiativ til disse samtaler på bakgrunn av at det i en årrekke ble avholdt tilsvarende møter med GEKE-teologer. Ionita mente at det var større muligheter til å nærme seg hverandre når alle deltakende kirker verdsetter bispeembetet som en sentral del av sin ekklesiologiske selvforståelse, enn det er i GEKE-sammenheng. På møtet i Järvenpää i 2005 laget vi en Communiqué som listet opp en rekke med temaer man ønsket å arbeide videre med (se vedlegg).

Denne konsultasjonen fulgte opp møtet i Järvenpää og satte hovedfokus på forskjellige konsepsjoner for kirkelig enhet, spørsmålet om kompatibilitet mellom de kirkelige avtalene og kirkeforståelsen.

Noen momenter fra møtet:

- Vedlagte Communiqué skisserer i korte trekk hovedlinjene i samtalen.
- Det ble understreket gjentatte ganger at dette ikke dreide seg om en offisiell dialog, men en konsultasjon. For den ortodokse siden var det spesielt viktig å understreke det fordi alle deres biskoper meldte forfall til møtet, og man dermed ikke følte at man hadde tilstrekkelig med "ryggdekning". I og med at Porvoofelleskapet som sådan ikke er en "ny konfesjon" (hvilket noen av de ortodokse fortsatt trodde, og vi brukte en del tid på å forklare...), og kirkene ikke hadde delegert oss som deltakere i form av offisielle representanter, var det enighet om disse premisene også fra "Porvoosiden".
- Vi hadde en interessant drøfting av "protestantismebegrepet" i tilknytning til et foredrag skrevet av Metropolitan Gennadios, der verken den anglikanske eller den lutherske siden kjente seg igjen i beskrivelsen av "vår" tilsynelatende (tilskrevne) identitet. Spesielt interessant var samtalen rundt diversity/unity, der det fra ortodoks side ble forutsatt at grunnlaget for en protestantisk kirkeforståelse er at man vil leve med "diversity", og ikke på basis av "unity".
- Utgangspunkt for samtalen var en rapport fra de bilaterale luthersk-ortodokse og anglikansk-ortodokse dialogene. Jeg hadde en innledning om den luthersk-ortodokse dialogen, som ble vel mottatt (se vedlegg). I tilknytning til denne drøftet vi spesielt forholdet mellom enkelte områder innenfor ekklesiologien (dåpsforståelsen, nattverdsforståelsen, etc.), og forståelsen av "kirke" i sin helhet.
- Kriteriologi: Samtalen dreide seg også om teologisk metode. De ortodokse understreket at deres teologi langt på vei bare kan erfares, ikke forstås. Dette dannet utgangspunkt for en interessant metoddebatt. Mye av debatten dreide seg også om hermeneutiske spørsmål, historisk metode og eksegetiske spørsmål når det gjelder tolkningen av oldkirkelige tekster.
- Samtalen tok også opp forholdet mellom de autokefale ortodokse kirkene og Den ortodokse kirken på den ene siden, og forholdet mellom kirker innenfor Anglican Communion/LVF.

- I forbindelse med diskusjonen rundt ”communio”-forståelsen, understreket de ortodokse at det er vanskelig å forstå at man er i ”communion”, men ikke har fellesskap i forhold til en full gjensidig anerkjennelse av hverandres embete, spesielt når det gjelder kvinnelige prester/biskoper. Jeg redegjorde for Den norske kirkes holdning i denne saken, samt utviklingen i Porvoofellesskapet.

Avsluttende merknader:

- Fra ortodoks side ble det påpekt at GEKE-dialogen på mange måter er en mer enhetlig dialog fra GEKE-siden enn Porvoo-dialogen når det gjelder Porvoo-siden. Med andre ord var det også denne gangen en god del sprik når det gjaldt forståelsen av ekklesiologien i Porvoo-delegasjonen. Det ble spesielt tydelig i arbeidet med Communiquéen, der man i utgangspunkt fra ortodoks og anglikansk side sammen foreslo en tekst som sa at kirkelig enhet skulle konstitueres av enheten i sakramentene, forvaltet av prester som stedfortredere for biskopen. Jeg påpekte at det ut fra en luthersk synsvinkel må være ORD og sakrament, og at vi ikke har en ensidig forståelse av presteembetet som avledet og stedfortredende for lokal biskop. Mitt forslag ble, etter heftig debatt, en del av den endelige teksten.
- Arbeidet med sluttdokumentet førte også til en del interessante konflikter, når man fra ortodoks side ikke ønsket noen tekst som kunne oppfattes som en kritikk av den ortodokse tradisjonen, mens det hadde vært en del av samtalen tidligere, også fra ortodoks side. Det dreide seg spesielt om hvorvidt det var riktig at de ortodokse kirkene i diasporaen representeres av en rekke forskjellige etniske minoritetskirker. Mens noen gikk så langt som til å si at en slik splittelse er ”synd” mente andre - ikke minst den russisk ortodokse representanten - at dette ikke måtte kritiseres, men var en god ordning. Det ble både en del indreortodoks debatt, men også kritikk fra Porvoo-siden, fordi man plutselig så ut til å ende opp med en tekst som kun stilte kritiske spørsmål til Porvoo-siden. Vi fant en kompromissløsning til slutt.
- En av ulempene ved dette møtet var den manglende kontinuiteten fra ortodoks side. Det innebar at det også denne gangen var veldig lite kunnskap om Porvooavtalen og Porvoofellesskapets natur, og vi måtte starte forfra igjen. Ved en eventuell fortsettelse av disse samtalerne bør man tilstrebe større kontinuitet. Ellers må mye av samtalen tas om igjen hver gang man møtes.
- Samtalene fant sted på klosteret Sambata de Sus i Romania. Bortsett fra at dette innebar en lang reise for et forholdsvis kort møte, så var de monastiske rammene rundt møtet utmerket for samtalen. For Porvoo-delegasjonen kom møtet rett etter påske, mens de ortodokse (bortsett fra finnene...) var midt i fastetiden. Munkene ba 10-12 timer om dagen, og kunne derfor ikke møte oss (!). Mens morgen- og kveldsbønnene fra Porvoosidene bar preg av at man feiret oppstandelsen, bar de ortodokse liturgiene preg av faste og lidelsen. Kontrasten synliggjorde nok en gang for oss hvor viktig det er å fortsette samtalerne - om ikke annet, for å finne en felles dato for påskefeiringen.

Takk for at jeg fikk reise og representere Dnk.

Stephanie Dietrich

Vedlegg:

1. Foredrag Stephanie Dietrich fra Sambata (kortform)
2. Communiqué Sambata 2008
3. Communiqué Järvenpää 2005 (se spesielt listen over emner)

Report on the Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission

Sambata de Sus, Romania

Meeting between CEC/orthodox delegation and representatives for the Porvoo communion, March 2008

Revd. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Stephanie Dietrich, Church of Norway

Background for the dialogue

The International Joint Commission of the theological dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Lutheran World Federation celebrated its 25 years of International Dialogue in 2006.

The first meeting was held in 1981, and the first statement was achieved in 1985. Since then, the Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission has regularly produced Common Statements on topics of fundamental importance for the two traditions and their relationship.

Prior to the establishment of this international, multilateral dialogue, various regional dialogues had already been established, as well as formal contacts between the LWF and the Ecumenical Patriarchate, since the late 1950s. While the Lutheran participants are nominated from among the member churches of the LWF and appointed by the LWF Council, the Orthodox delegates represent all churches that are in communion with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, including the Moscow Patriarchate.

Work

From 1981 to 1993, the first phase of the dialogue dealt with the basic topics of revelation, scripture and tradition, and the significance of the seven ecumenical councils. Since 1994, the Joint Commission has been looking at soteriology and the sacraments. Thus, it has moved to a second phase in its work, namely discussions about the dogmatic content of faith.

I recommend the study of these texts.

(<http://www.helsinki.fi/~risaarin/lutortjointtext.html>)

The dialogue has progressed gradually from more general topics, such as Scripture and Tradition, Authority in and of the Church, and Salvation- Grace, Justification and Synergy- to the more specific topics of Baptism and Chrismation, and the Eucharist.

One might say that the results from **Sigtuna 1998** are some of the most important achievements of the commission's work: The meeting at Sigtuna focused on Justification and Synergy. The Sigtuna statement emphasizes human powerlessness, God's absolute initiative in salvation and grace as the gift of God. Both sides affirmed the reality of grace as participation in God. The text from Sigtuna shows that the orthodox doctrine of theosis and the Lutheran doctrine of justification do not exclude each other since also Lutheran theology includes a perspective of sanctification and Christ's presence in faith as a notion of participation in divine life. An important aspect of the Sigtuna text is the widespread use of biblical language and the underlining of the theology of the cross.

The tenth plenary meeting of the Joint Commission in **Damascus in 2000** discussed the topic “Word and Sacrament” under a new overall topic “The Mystery of the Church”. The Damascus statement confirms that the proclamation of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments by ordained ministers are essential for the life of the church. What became evident was that basic ecclesiological differences exist in the churches’ view of ordained ministry, not in the elaboration of word and sacrament as ecclesiological fundamentals as such.

The meeting in **Oslo in 2002** dealt with the theme “sacraments as means of salvation”; **Durau/Romania in 2004** with Christian initiation, i.e. baptism and chrismation. The Durau text understands the Christian initiation as a threefold reality, consisting of “death with Christ, resurrection with Christ and the sealing with the Holy Spirit”. The text concludes, saying that “the three components of Christian initiation are to a large extent included in each other’s rites.”

The last dialogue on **Bratislava in 2006** focused on the Holy Eucharist. Lutherans and Orthodox have no history of disagreement or mutual condemnation in their teaching on the Eucharist. Still, the two church families needed to discuss each other’s Eucharistic theology. In our dialogue, we found that Lutheran theologians are able to affirm the notion of Eucharistic sacrifice while remaining faithful to our own tradition. For both our traditions, the central insight that the sacrifice is performed by Christ- and not the priest- is crucial. The Eucharistic sacrifice is Christ’s self-sacrifice of atonement, offered once and for all. Considerable learning took place with respect to each tradition’s reflection on how the bread and wine become Christ’s body and blood. Orthodox and Lutherans confess together that the Eucharist remains a mystery that transcends human understanding, and that any explanation of that mystery must necessarily fall short. Important analogies were drawn between Christ’s “hypostatic” union- which conjoins two natures in to one person- and the sacramental union of bread and body, wine and blood.

At the last meeting in Bratislava, we have not yet touched the question of the understanding of ordained ministry and its impact on the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, nor the relation of the Holy Eucharist to the whole ecclesiology and the different concepts of Church unity.

This year’s meeting in the Commission in Cyprus will discuss the eschatological dimension of the Eucharist and its significance for the world, under the title “Preparation and Celebration of the Eucharist” as well as “Eucharist and Ecology (including Human Society).”

Personal reflections

I would like to conclude with some personal reflections on the work in the dialogue commission, pointing out some of the crucial aspects of the work which is done by the International Commission.

1. Connectedness between theology and liturgy- sharing of knowledge and spiritual experience in the life of the Church

One of the most important aspects of the work of the international commission seems to be the sharing of knowledge and spiritual experience in the life of the church. Theological discourse within the context of Orthodox-Lutheran relations necessarily

relates closely to our *experience* of faith within our ecclesial context. The dialogue shows and reminds us of the need of consistency between theological and doctrinal work and the spiritual experience in the life of our churches, especially in our worship life. The somehow sharper distinction between theology and liturgy within a Lutheran context is being challenged through our dialogue.

In addition, the effectiveness and success of the work of our dialogue relies to a large degree on the atmosphere and the culture of our dialogue and the understanding of the cultural framework for our theological work.

The orthodox emphasis on the liturgical life of the church and the experience of the believers of the life of the Church on the one side, and the Lutheran emphasis on theoretical and doctrinal theological discourse on the other side, poses methodological and hermeneutical questions to the compatibility of our approaches to our dialogue.

2. Ecclesiology- ecclesial authority and ecclesial consciousness

One theme which becomes actualized in our meetings, though not necessarily discussed very much, is the question of mutual recognition of each other's ecclesial identity and ecclesial consciousness. The LWF is a *communion* of churches.

According to its constitution, the doctrinal basis for the LWF is:

“The LWF confesses the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the only source and norm of its doctrine, life and service. It sees in the three Ecumenical Creeds and in the Confessions of the Lutheran Church, especially in the unaltered Augsburg Confession and the Small Catechism of Martin Luther, a pure exposition of the Word of God.

LWF member churches confess the triune God, agree in the proclamation of the Word of God, and are united in pulpit and altar fellowship. The LWF confesses one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church and is resolved to serve Christian unity throughout the world. It acts on behalf of its member churches in areas of common interest such as communication, ecumenical and interfaith relations, human rights, humanitarian assistance, theology, and the various aspects of mission and development.”

This means that the LWF is a communion of churches, with a clear ecclesial identity, but not a church in itself.

The orthodox partner on the other side claims to a large extent its unity as a church, though being represented by different autocephalous churches in communion with the Ecumenical Patriarchate. This means, that there is a certain degree of structural unlikeness present in our dialogue.

3. Interrelatedness of dialogues on a bilateral and multilateral level

Being involved in both bilateral and multilateral dialogue, it becomes clear that the work of the international commission is of great importance. It's somehow general and modest common statements can serve as a basis for bilateral dialogue on a more precise level between churches relating directly to each other in a national or regional context. Therefore, the results of this dialogue ought to be spread and communicated with member churches and churches involved in dialogue on the same themes.

4. Example: Impact on liturgical work in CoN- epiclesis and appropriate handling of the elements during and after consecration

One might ask whether this dialogue has any concrete relevance for the churches within the LWF.

I would like to share one concrete modest example from my own context, the Church of Norway. For the time being, my church is working on the revision of its liturgy. When we were discussing the revision of the Eucharistic service, there was put big emphasis on the need for a clear epiclesis-part in the liturgy. There is also put emphasis on the appropriate handling of the elements during and after consecration, *extra usum*.

Dialogues with other confessional families, such as the orthodox, make an important contribution to increase the liturgical awareness in our churches.

5. Goal for the dialogue? Mutual understanding of each other and each other's ecclesiastical tradition and identity, or searching for a concrete realization?

In the somehow very slow moving work within this commission, one might ask about its relevance and the goal for the dialogue. As an impatient person, this sometimes can be quite challenging. At the meeting in Durau, I was discussing this with one of the orthodox brothers. His answer was: We have been disagreeing on this item for about 1000 years. In this perspective, every little step which is taking us forward is a huge step.

Surely, the doctrinal dialogue pays an important contribution to confidence-building mutual understanding which is profound for all ecumenical work. As such, it is both necessary and important. But I would also say that our work on ecclesiological core issues only can be done in an adequate way if our basic motivation for the work is the search for unity. This is clearly an eschatological project.

6. The unsolved question of the theology of ministry

The question of the role and understanding of priesthood is an unsolved area. Even when achieving a far-reaching convergence with regard to baptism and Eucharist, the question of the understanding of ministry and ordained priesthood is still not touched. Neither is the question of episcopacy and its meaning for communion between churches. Concerning the understanding of ministry, one would also need to have a look at the ongoing inner-Lutheran dialogue on these issues, and its recent results.

In this regard, the theological discourse between the communion of Porvoo churches and the orthodox churches in Europe might be of special interest, since the understanding of ministry has been of special interest for the results of the dialogue leading forward to the Porvoo Common Statement.

Representing a Lutheran church which has signed the Porvoo Common Statement and the Leuenberg agreement, leading to alter- and pulpit fellowship with protestant churches in Europe, the theological discourse about these items is of great interest.

**Conference of European Churches
Second Eastern Orthodox-Porvoo Consultation
Sambata de Sus, Romania, 27-30 March 2008**

Communiqué

A second Porvoo-Eastern Orthodox consultation on the Porvoo Common Statement was held from 27th to 30th March at Brancoveanu monastery, Sambata de Sus in Romania at the initiative of the Conference of European Churches. Following the model established at the first consultation in 2005 in Järvenpää, Finland, clerical and lay theologians were invited from churches which are signatories of the Porvoo Declaration, and from Eastern Orthodox Churches. The Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (Leuenberg Fellowship) again had observer status. Metropolitan Laurentius of Ardeal and Bishop Ioan of Harghita were present for part of the second full day of the consultation, welcomed us and warmly supported our work. Throughout the consultation, worship was held in the Anglican, Lutheran and Orthodox traditions.

The Revd Prof. Dr. Viorel Ionita and the Revd Dr. Matti Repo introduced the consultation, recalling the shape and content of the consultation in Järvenpää. The first topic identified at Järvenpää as fruitful for further discussion – ‘The compatibility of the understanding of the Church in the Porvoo Common Statement and the Orthodox understanding of the Church’ - formed the basis of this consultation. Background information was provided by way of brief reports on the Lutheran-Orthodox dialogue (presented by Revd Dr. Stephanie Dietrich) and the Anglican-Orthodox dialogue (presented by Asst. Prof. Dr. Ionut Alexandru Tudorie).

Papers were then presented on the following topics: ‘The Nature of the Church in the Orthodox Ecclesiology’ (Metropolitan Prof. Dr. Gennadios of Sassima, who could not be present in person but whose paper was read by the Revd Prof. Dr. Viorel Ionita), ‘The true Church of Jesus Christ and the concept of the Church in the Common Statement understanding’ (the Revd Prof. Dr. Samuel Rubenson), ‘Can Christian Unity be attained? Reflections on Church unity from the Orthodox perspective’ (the Revd Prof. Dr. Vaclav Jezek), and ‘The concept of church unity in the Porvoo Common Statement. Unity and diversity’ (the Rt Revd Michael Jackson, Bishop of Clogher).

Discussion following these papers was intense and fruitful. Out of our different church traditions, we affirm that the true Church of Jesus Christ is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. It is manifested in the local eucharistic community, where the Word is preached and the sacraments administered, under the oversight of the bishop or his representative. Further, both Orthodox and Porvoo churches’ participants join in affirming many elements of a common vision of the unity of the Church, including the central place of the eucharist in the worship and life of the Church, the Catholicity of the local congregation and of the whole Church, the role of bishops in focusing unity and fostering appropriate diversity, and that the laity has an essential place in our theological

understanding of the Church. Furthermore, we can join in affirming that the Holy Trinity is both the source and the model of an appropriate diversity in unity, and of unity in diversity, in the life of the Church.

Various questions were raised that need further discussion, including some which bear on differences between our church traditions. In respect of diversity, there was some disagreement about what would constitute legitimate diversity in the life of the Church, and points raised in discussion included the need to account for the roots of diversity and the need to develop or apply criteria for evaluating legitimate diversity. The unity of the Church, as expressed in outward, visible form, would need to be able to encompass considerable diversity, but how far and in what form this is so would need more exploration. Another area of disagreement concerned the Porvoo Common Statement's reference to the Church's need for repentance. A further area of discussion concerned the relationship between the inner, mystical reality of the Church and the particularity of historical churches. Relevant here would be the differing accounts of history, and of God's providence in history, offered by our church traditions.

A substantial discussion focused on the very use of the term 'church', which can be applied in ecumenical discussion in so many different ways and at so many different levels that misunderstanding can follow. There was agreement on the application of the word 'church' in relation both to the local eucharistic community and to the one true Church of Jesus Christ, and also common concern that the ecclesiological status of 'intermediate' notions such as 'national church' or 'denomination' had not as yet been adequately explored theologically. The Orthodox would see the autocephalous churches as full expressions of the one Church of Christ, and not as denominational divisions; but the Orthodox may also need to attend to overlapping jurisdictions in the Orthodox diaspora. The Porvoo churches perhaps need to consider further the nature of denominational identity in the light of situations in which the agreement itself has created overlapping or 'parallel' jurisdictions.

We discussed the concept of 'unity', and its relation to concepts of communion, catholicity, apostolicity, mutual accountability and love. We acknowledge that the Porvoo agreement establishes, not a complete model of unity, but rather a process towards closer unity. The Porvoo churches and the Orthodox Church share a common commitment to the full, visible unity of the Church. Both traditions could agree that full, visible unity would require at least: the total mutual recognition of ministries; a common theological basis; a corresponding, coherent liturgical and sacramental life; and full continuity with the living tradition of the Church. From the Orthodox side, there would also be the need for the organization of the Church geographically according to canonical tradition.

The consultation was conducted in a spirit of mutual appreciation, trust and inquiry. It was held 'in between' Western and Eastern Easters, the Porvoo churches having already kept the Easter feast, while the Orthodox were still in Lent. The calendrical and liturgical difference helpfully reminded the participants of the necessity of continuing dialogue for the sake of Christ's followers in their ordinary discipleship.

We wish to thank the Conference of European Churches and the Brancoveanu monastery for making this consultation possible, and in particular the community of the monastery for their hospitality. Metropolitan Laurentius quoted a Romanian saying to the effect that the person sanctifies the place, but he added that the place may sanctify the person. We felt that our gathering, and our discussions, were indeed sanctified by this place. We hope to continue exploration of the topics outlined at Järvenpää in a further consultation, and recommend that the CEC strongly support that proposal. Participants are further invited to share their rich theological experience of the consultation with their colleagues and church members.

Participants:

Orthodox participants

Mrs. Elena Speranskaya, Russian Orthodox Church
Revd Prof. Dr. Daniel Benga, Romanian Orthodox Church
Mrs. Dr. Elenei Kasselouri and Mr. Georges Hatzivassiliadis, Church of Greece
Asst. Prof. Dr. Ionut Tudorie, Romanian Orthodox Church
Revd Prof. Dr. Vaclav Jezek, Orthodox Church in the Czeck Lands and Slovakia
Revd Prof. Rauno Pietarinen, Orthodox Church of Finland
Prof. Nathan Hoppe, Orthodox Church of Albania
Revd Prof. Dr. Viorel Ionita, staff

Porvoo participants:

Revd Canon Dr. Anders Bergquist, Church of England
Revd Dr. Stephanie Dietrich, Church of Norway
Prof. Dr. Samuel Rubenson, Church of Sweden
Ms Anne Burghardt, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Estonia
Bishop Michael Jackson, Church of Ireland
Revd Canon Prof. John Riches, Scottish Episcopal Church
Revd Dr. Jeremy Morris, Church of England
Revd Dr. Matti Repo, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
Dr. Kaisamari Hintikka, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, Staff

Representative of the CPCE:

Prof. Dr. Stefan Tobler, Evangelical Church of the Confession of Augsburg, Romania

**Conference of European Churches
Eastern Orthodox – Porvoo Consultation
Järvenpää, Finland, 1-4 December 2005
Communiqué**

A consultation on the Porvoo Common Statement was held from 1st to 4th December 2005 at *Kirkon koulutuskeskus*, Järvenpää in Finland at the initiative of the Conference of European Churches. This consultation involved theologians, clerical and lay, from churches which are signatories of the Porvoo Declaration, and from Eastern Orthodox Churches. The Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (Leuenberg Fellowship) had observer status, as had the Armenian Apostolic Church and the Church of Denmark. Another observer from the Anglican Chaplaincy in Helsinki shared with participants the experience of working pastorally and liturgically with the Porvoo Declaration as received by the Lutheran and Anglican churches in Northern Europe. Throughout the consultation, we joined in worship in the Anglican, Lutheran and Orthodox traditions, both in Järvenpää and Helsinki. Participants were welcomed by the Rt Revd Dr. Voitto Huotari. The Revd Prof. Dr. Viorel Ionita introduced the Porvoo Common Statement in the wider context of ecumenical relations in Europe.

Members of the consultation were encouraged to explore issues of common theological concern and the possibility of applying the methodology of Porvoo to other ecumenical relations.

Papers were presented on the following topics: Anglican-Orthodox dialogue (The Revd Prof. Dr. Ioan Mircea Ielciu, Romanian Orthodox Church); Lutheran-Orthodox dialogue (The Revd Prof. Dr. Viorel Ionita, CEC) and Lutheran-Anglican dialogue (The Revd Dr. Matti Repo, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland), along with a General Introduction on ways in which the Porvoo churches live out their communion (The Revd Dr. Stephanie Dietrich, Church of Norway). Further contributions concerned an assessment of the ecclesiology of the Porvoo Common Statement from an Anglican and an Orthodox point of view (The Rt Revd John Hind, Church of England and Ass. Prof. Ionut Tudorie, Romanian Orthodox Church respectively). The significance of meeting in Järvenpää derives from the fact that the text of the Porvoo Common Statement was finalized in this house of *Kirkon koulutuskeskus* in 1992.

Resulting from the presentation of the papers, there was a strong desire on the part of all the participants to explore in more detail areas of shared interest. Following extensive discussion, these broad topics were identified as being fruitful for deeper consideration of the theme of the consultation:

- 1) The compatibility of the understanding of the Church in the Porvoo Common Statement and the Orthodox understanding of the Church,
- 2) Ministry, apostolicity and mission, and
- 3) The Holy Spirit: creation and growth inside and outside the Church.

Under these three broad headings, the following range of issues were identified:

1. The compatibility of the understanding of the Church in the Porvoo Common Statement and the Orthodox understanding of the Church
 - a) The concept of unity in the Porvoo and Orthodox traditions
 - b) The true Church of Jesus Christ
 - c) The image of the Church from which we start in each of our traditions
 - d) Unity and diversity

2. Ministry, apostolicity and mission

- a) Apostolicity in the context of unity, catholicity and holiness
- b) Witnessing to the Gospel
- c) Doctrine, theology and growth in the understanding of dogma
- d) Issues of accountability in various dialogues

3. The Holy Spirit: creation and growth inside and outside the Church

- a) The spiritual life and entering into the mystery of the Trinity
- b) Growth and unity in the context of conflict
- c) The canonical and the charismatic in the Church
- d) Creation, Church and the whole world

From the group discussion, the following emerged:

1. Following Biblical teaching that there is “one body and one Spirit... one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all” (Eph 4:4-6), we have considered the Trinitarian basis of the Church, and the marks of the visible unity of the Church, insistent that the unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity must always be held together. We considered some of the fundamental aspects of communion as encountered in the Orthodox churches and the Porvoo Common Statement. We also examined ways in which the true Church is recognized along with the limits of diversity within the unity of the Church. We noted that further work on unity and diversity, and on the unity of the Church, is required in the light of the common challenges to Christian witness in contemporary Europe.

2. Witnessing to the Gospel is vested in the living tradition. Orthodox participants expressed the conviction that the guarantee of apostolicity lies in the episcopal succession and in the spiritual experience of the believers. Members of the Porvoo churches present also suggested that the guarantee of apostolicity lies in the Church as a whole, united in Word and Sacrament, embracing the historic episcopate as a “visible sign expressing and serving the Church’s unity and continuity in apostolic life, mission and ministry” (Porvoo § 58 a vi). Both affirmed the importance of theology in ongoing dialogue with the proviso that such dialogue occurs in particular contexts. There was a further recognition that it may impact upon other relationships.

3. The Church’s purpose is located within God’s redemption of the cosmos, and the Eucharist has an inescapably eschatological dimension. The Church is a divine reality which must be expressed in canonically defined forms, but cannot be wholly identified with them. The Holy Spirit is at work everywhere, even outside the boundaries of the Church. The doctrine of the Trinity implies both diversity and unity of the Church. Conflict can sometimes be understood positively, as a dynamic of growth. All these statements require much further exploration. The consultation was conducted in the spirit of the *Charta Oecumenica*, chapter 6: “We belong together in Christ and this is of fundamental significance in the face of our differing theological and ethical positions... In order to deepen ecumenical fellowship, endeavours to reach a consensus in faith must be continued at all cost. Only in this way can church communion be given a theological foundation. There is no alternative to dialogue.”

We wish to thank the Conference of European Churches and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland for facilitating this theological consultation. Our theological explorations were framed in prayer. Our hope is that we will continue the work begun in Finland in a subsequent consultation. We recommend the CEC to facilitate a further consultation as a matter of urgency in order to harness and develop the theological dynamic manifested in the Järvenpää consultation. Participants are further invited to share their rich theological experience of the consultation with their colleagues and church members.

Järvenpää, 3 December 2005

List of Participants

I. Anglican

1. The Rt Revd John Hind, Bishop of Chichester, Church of England
2. The Rt Revd Michael Jackson, Bishop of Clogher, Church of Ireland
3. The Revd Canon Dr Anders Bergquist, Church of England
4. The Revd Dr Jeremy Morris, Church of England

II. Lutheran

5. The Rt Revd Dr Voitto Huotari, Bishop of Mikkeli, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
6. The Revd Professor Dr Matti Kotiranta, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
7. The Revd Dr Stephanie Dietrich, Church of Norway

III. Orthodox

8. Dr Giorgios Kakkouras, Church of Cyprus
9. The Revd Andrei Eliseev, Russian Orthodox Church
10. Prof. Dr Anestis Keselopoulos, Church of Greece
11. Prof. Dr Dimitra Koukoura, Ecumenical Patriarchate
12. The Very Revd Archpriest Veikko Purmonen, Orthodox Church of Finland
13. Mr Andrzej Kuzma, Orthodox Church of Poland
14. The Revd Dr Conf. Ioan Mircea Ielciu, Romanian Orthodox Church
15. Mr Ionut Tudorie, Romanian Orthodox Church
16. Mr Dan Apostu, Orthodox Church in the Czech Lands and Slovakia

IV. Observers

17. Fr Datev Hakobian, Armenian Apostolic Church
18. Ass. Prof. Ph.D. Else Marie Wiberg Pedersen, Church of Denmark
19. The Revd Rupert Moreton, Anglican Chaplain in Helsinki
20. The Revd Prof. Dr OKR Michael Bünker, Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (Leuenberg Fellowship)

V. Staff

21. The Revd Prof. Dr Viorel Ionita, CEC
22. The Revd Canon Dr Charles Hill, Church of England
23. The Revd Dr Matti Repo, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
24. The Revd Dr Risto Cantell, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
25. Dr Kaisamari Hintikka, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
26. Mr Miika Ahola, Student of Theology, Steward