

# RESEPTIO<sup>1</sup><sub>06</sub>

KIRKON ULKOASIAIN OSASTON TEOLOGISTEN ASIAIN TIEDOTUSLEHTI



## Porvoo Consultations

Eastern Orthodox – Porvoo Consultation  
Järvenpää 1-4 December 2005

Porvoo Consultation on the Diaconate  
London 25-27 January 2006

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## From the Editor

### Matti Repo

Questions of unity and diversity are of crucial nature in today's ecumenism. Should a certain amount of uniformity be required from churches of different tradition before they enter a fellowship? Or, does their unity consist merely of a common faith, regardless of differences in order and in structures for decision-making? Moreover, up to what measure can different churches remain separate bodies if they form a close communion with each other?

The *Porvoo Declaration*, signed ten years ago, has brought Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches into a communion with the British and Irish Anglican Churches. In the declaration, the churches have committed themselves to a process. The declaration itself does not make use of the phrase "full communion" although the implications of it could as well be characterised as full communion. Instead, *Porvoo* invites its signatories to work "towards closer unity".

The *Porvoo* Churches find themselves in a communion open for deepening by joint study and other efforts. In its es-

sence, however, the communion is given in the common faith in the Triune God. It is exemplified in the common spiritual life. Based upon the communion of the divine persons in the Trinity, it culminates in the joint celebration of the Eucharist. In the sacrament, the partakers of bread and wine become partakers of Christ and his life in communion with each other. The *Porvoo* Churches are committed to a deeper fellowship than openness for mutual hospitality or sheer peaceful co-existence. They are challenged to change into the image of Christ through the spiritual life they are invited to share.

The churches in the *Porvoo* Communion already find themselves in a close unity although they only are on the way towards it. On the one hand, they can consult with other churches as one body, even without joint structures for common decision-making. On the other hand, they are still in need of further study on issues of differing traditions. As they move forward, they remain Lutherans and Anglicans, but their common goal makes them tread the way to unity together.



## Communiqué

A consultation on the Porvoo Common Statement was held from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> 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 Tudoric, 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 was 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 Por-

voo 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



## Background and aims of the consultation

The Revd Prof. Dr Viorel Ionita

The 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of the *Charta Oecumenica* under the heading "Continuing in dialogue" states as follows: "We belong together in Christ, and this is of fundamental significance in the face of our differing theological and ethical positions. Rather than seeing our diversity as a gift which enriches us, however, we have allowed differences of opinion on doctrine, ethics and church law to lead to separations between churches, with special historical circumstances and different cultural backgrounds often playing a crucial role. 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".

Along these considerations the *Charta Oecumenica*, signed by the two presidents of CEC and CCEE at the Ecumenical European Encounter in Strasbourg, on 22 April 2001, stresses the following commitments:

"We commit ourselves

- to continue in conscientious, intensive dialogue at different levels between our churches, and to examine the question of how official church bodies can receive and implement the findings gained in dialogue;
- in the event of controversies, particularly when divisions threaten in questions of faith and ethics, to seek dialogue and discuss the issues together in the light of the Gospel".

In this spirit, the second recommendation of the Policy Reference Committee at the 12<sup>th</sup> CEC General Assembly in Trondheim, Norway (25 June – 2 July 2003) underlined,

"That theological cooperation between the various confessions within CEC be continued. Special consideration should be given to intensify the process of clarification between Orthodox and other

member churches, as well as the cooperation between CEC and CCEE."

The third recommendation of the same document stated that "The outcome of bilateral and multilateral dialogues should be communicated to the member churches, and in cooperation with other ecumenical bodies evaluated and focused. Particular emphasis should be placed on questions of Christian unity, Ecclesiology, ministry, and theological education."

Taking into account the first consultation between theologians representing the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (Leuenberg Fellowship, CPCE) and Orthodox theologians, which took place in Crete at the beginning of December 2002, the CEC Central Committee, at its first working meeting in December 2003, recommended that a second consultation on Ecclesiology between CPCE and Orthodox churches in Europe should be organised, to which also the churches of the Porvoo Agreement should be invited. The second consultation between CPCE and Orthodox theologians took place in June 2004, in Wittenberg and a third consultation in this respect is planned for April 2006.

In the final statement of the Wittenberg consultation was stated that "Within the course of the discussion the following was found as an expression of common positions: Ecclesiology can only be dealt with properly within the context of the doctrine of the trinity, the context of christology, pneumatology, soteriology and theological anthropology. Ignoring any one of these perspectives leads inevitably to reductions. The universal church is not compiled of incomplete part-churches, but exists as a community of equally valid local churches, without any overriding importance or subordination of any of these churches. The

local church is supplied with all the marks of the nature of the church, which enable the salvation of human beings. The idea of love, which binds together the persons of the Trinity and in which they interpenetrate each other (*perichoresis*), has come to be an important impulse for the understanding of the unity of the church."

At its first meeting in Aarhus, Denmark, the new established CEC Churches in Dialogue (CiD) commission was requested,

- "to reflect on new ways of improving dialogue between the Orthodox churches and the churches of the Reformation; the different ongoing dialogues in this perspective should be taken into consideration".

After discussing this recommendation the CiD made among others the proposal to arrange a consultation between Porvoo and orthodox theologians on the same basis as the consultation process between CPCE and Orthodox theologians.

The first consultation between theologians representing the Porvoo Church Fellowship and Orthodox theologians is now taking place at Järvenpää, Finland, from 1-4 December 2005. In order to promote the theological dialogue between the church families represented here, the proposal is to bring into a structured dialogue the two groups of theologians in order to identify possibilities of rapprochement between the different understanding of the church and her unity. In this respect it is for the first time that theologians of the two church fellowship are coming into a structured dialogue. Since one of the characteristics of the *Porvoo Agreement* is among others the bishop's ministry, the consultation may

like to focus its discussion on the bishop's ministry as element of the church unity. The findings of this discussion may be summarised in a final statement to be shared with all churches in Europe.

Since the participants in this consultation are invited at a personal basis, the consultation represent an unofficial dialogue between the two theological tradi-

tions. But unofficial theological discussions have often achieved more consensus as the official ones. This consultation process may at its turn prepare an official dialogue between the Orthodox Churches and the Porvoo Church Fellowship.

## Notes on the Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue

The Revd Dr Conf. Ioan Mircea Ielciu

### I. Introduction

Shortly after the Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Church of England focused its eyes towards the Eastern Orthodox Church, the possessor of the treasury of true Apostolic Faith, establishing contacts of rapprochement and mutual acquaintance.

The causes leading to co-operation between the two churches are manifold. Among these we mention: 1) the main tendency of the churches in the Anglican Communion to return to the sources of the primitive Church and 2) the desire for unity of the two churches.

It is expected that all relationships and contacts at all levels between the two churches should bear fruit: a) through unity Anglicans should find themselves in a Church of Apostolic origin; b) through co-operation and unity between Anglicanism and Orthodoxy the Christian Church in general would be strengthened and c) through the union of the two

"traditions" a complex religious moral living could be achieved and an important progress could be made in the field of theological study.

Within the framework of these contacts visible similarities have been discovered between the Church of England and the Orthodox Church. Among these, the following stand out: 1) The Episcopate; 2) the administrative organisation of the two churches; 3) the universalistic feature (the geographic character) of both Anglicanism and Orthodoxy; 4) mutual desire for unity, etc.

At the various meetings between Anglicans and Orthodox throughout the centuries varied issues concerning the Faith were addressed (i.e. Holy Scripture and Sacred Tradition, Revelation and Inspiration, Church, Holy Trinity, Sacraments, Ecumenical Councils, Creeds, Divine Worship, Veneration of Saints, Intercommunion, etc.) and certain doctrinal agreements were reached. In spite of these, there were also disagreements and other



issues remaining to be discussed even at the present time.

Although Anglican-Orthodox relations between the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries did not lead to the concrete results for both these churches, they did manage to clarify the doctrinal differences between these Christian communities and to anticipate a closer co-operation in the future having as result their unity.

At the beginning of the XX<sup>th</sup> century, and until the VII<sup>th</sup> decade, Anglican-Orthodox relations have been intensified and began to take shape in a series of official visits at the highest level, made by the Archbishop of Canterbury in Constantinople as well as in other capitals of Orthodox countries (like Athens, Moscow, Bucharest, Sophia s. o.) and also the visits of the Ecumenical Patriarch and other church leaders in Great Britain. These contacts gave a positive development to the relations between these churches and prepared the beginning of official dialogue between them. The foundation of the Inter-Orthodox Theological Committee for the dialogue with the Anglicans and the Inter-Anglican Analogues Committee was also a step forward made by these two churches in their attempt for unification.

The opinion of the Reverend Donald A. M. Allchin is that the aim of these Committees was "to attain a common statement of the inseparable Church' faith." Talking about the perspectives and the future of Anglican-Orthodox dialogue, he made a relevant statement: "On the one hand, I have to admit that there are a lot of difficulties. Our intellectual procedures, the theological mentality, the historical background are often different. All these give me the feeling that the dialogue would not be an easy one. (...) This is the reason for which I personally believe

that the reciprocal perseverance, the striving for agreement and first of all the power of the Holy Spirit would help us to materialise together an important thing for all Christian world, to find a way to form in today's living terms the permanent truth which the Orthodox Church through its confession of faith and cult, always kept, as no another occidental church did it."

These statements of the English theologians in connection with the Anglican-Orthodox dialogue represent a real guideline for the future approach of the problems and relations between the Orthodox churches and the Communion of the Anglican churches.

## II. The Anglican - Orthodox Theological Dialogue

After a long preparation, beginning in 1966, the first official meeting of the Anglican-Orthodox dialogue took place in Oxford between 6-13 July 1973, with representatives of the Anglican Communion as well as of all the Orthodox churches taking part.

At the end of the first session of the Anglican-Orthodox dialogue it was decided that the debates for "common doctrinal discussions" between the Orthodox Church and the Anglican Church should be continued in three sub-commissions, in 1974 and 1975, each commission having the obligation to discuss one of the three proposed subjects: 1. Inspiration and Revelation in Holy Scriptures; 2. The Synod's Authority; 3. The Church as Eucharistic Community.

The first sub-commission met in Gonia (Chania), Crete on 1-6 July 1974. At the of the discussions the following "axiomatic theses" were enunciated:

1. The Bible has a double character, being divine and human in the same time: it is God's word, exposed in human speech.
2. In its quality as God's word, the Bible is unique. Our approach to the Bible is through submission and obedience to the revelation of God Himself, given to us by Him through it.
3. We know, receive and interpret the Scripture through the Church and in the Church. The Church can not ignore the results of scientific researches concerning the Bible, no matter side it could come, but it tests them.
4. The books of the Scripture included in the Canon are authoritative because the Church recognises in them the authentic Revelation of God.
5. Any separation between Scripture and Tradition which would treat them as two isolated sources should be removed. Both are correlative. The Scripture is the criterion through which the Church examines the traditions to decide if they truly belong to The Holy Tradition or not. The Tradition completes The Scripture in the meaning that it ensures the true interpretation of the Bible.

The second sub-commission which discussed the subject: "The Ecumenical Synods' Authority", took place at Râmnicu-Valcea, Romania, (9-14 July 1974) and took the following common decisions:

1. In the Orthodox Tradition the first seven Ecumenical Synods form a historical, theological and spiritual unity which centres on the teaching of Trinitarian and Christological Faith of the Church, with basic implications for ecclesiology. But, in

Anglicanism it was believed that this wording was sufficiently expressed in the decisions of the first four Ecumenical Synods.

2. In the Orthodox Tradition, the 7<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Synod is considered as belonging to the synodical heritage, and its dogmatic content as deriving directly from the Synod's decisions that preceded it. The attitude of Anglican churches is concerning this Synod inclined to be negative, partly because of the confusions concerning the historical circumstances in which it took place.
3. The Orthodox Tradition understands the Synods entirely as being supreme expressions of Church infallibility. In the Anglican theology it was usually discussed about the Church as being indefectible, this difference resulting from the Anglicans insistence concerning the recognition of human imperfection in the Church history and it is connected to the Anglican thinking between the "essential" and "non-essential".

The third sub-commission discussed the subject: "The Church as Eucharistic Community" and met on 8-12 July 1974 at Garden City (New York). It was concluded that there were many points of reciprocity and understanding between the two churches concerning the teaching about the Holy Eucharist. Then, it was declared the identity of Jesus Christ both with his mystical Body (the Church) and in the Holy Eucharist which acts in the Church. All the believers who receive the Saviour's Body and Blood, become part of the unique Body of Jesus Christ (the Church) and a body with Him, they receive the forgiveness of their sins and they get everlasting life. The performer of the Holy Eucharist (the bishop or the priest) in his liturgical action has a double service: as Christ's icon and as the



representative of the community that works in the name of Jesus Christ for his believers.

The International Commission of the Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue continued its debates during the following years. The positive results of the Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue were set out in the *Moscow Agreed Statement* of 1976. This agreement can be summarised as it follows:

### 1. God's knowledge

God is immanent and transcendent at the same time. Through faith and obedience, the believers participate in divine life and are united with God in the Holy Trinity. The Orthodox Church makes a distinction between the divine essence *ousia* and the uncreated divine energies. While the divine essence remains beyond the human understanding and knowledge, transcendentally, through the uncreated divine energies God is present in immanent and the believer is always in communion with the Heavenly Father. The Anglicans don't use this distinction, but they try to explain that God cannot be understood and at the same time He is intelligible for people. If the Orthodox Church describes the plenitude of human holiness through the patristic expression *theosis kata charin* (the deification through grace), the Anglicans consider this speech as being "deceptive and dangerous". However, they don't reject the doctrine that this speech expresses; probably such knowledge could be found in their doctrine, too.

### 2. The inspiration and the authority of the Holy Scripture

The Holy Scripture constitutes a coherent whole, which includes the Divine Revelation, expressed in human speech. It is received and interpreted through and in the Church. Both the Anglican and Orthodox churches make a distinction between the canonical books of the Old Testament and the non-canonical books (good for reading); however, the utility of the last is recognised for the spiritual construction of the believers. Also, both the Anglicans and the Orthodox use them at different services.

### 3. Scripture and Tradition

The Scripture and Tradition are the two sources of the Divine Revelation, which complete each other, and the Church can never define new dogmas which don't have basis in the Holy Scripture and in Holy Tradition. From the Orthodox point of view, a truth of faith can not be dogmatised if it has its basis only in the Holy Tradition, it is absolutely necessary to have its basis in the Holy Scripture.

### 4. The Synod's Authority

Both churches agreed that the notions of Church and Scripture are inseparable, recognising the work of the Holy Spirit not only in the Scripture and in the Church, but also in the Synods. Although the Anglicans believe in a "hierarchy" of the Ecumenical Synods, emphasising the first four except the decrees of the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Synods. However, a detailed research is necessary, on the Anglicans behalf, of the problems concerning the last three ecumenical Syn-

ods and especially the 7<sup>th</sup> concerning the veneration of the icons; the deepening of the word "infallibility" on the Anglicans behalf it is also highlighted and that of "indefectibility" on the Orthodox behalf.

### 5. "Filioque" addition

Concerning this addition, there must be made a distinction between the problem of the Holy Spirit origin ("that it sets out from Father for ever" – John 15, 26) which is different from that of sending in time and that of the Holy Spirit mission in the world (John 14, 26 and 15, 26). Because of this and because the "Filioque" addition did not exist in the Niceo-Constantinopolitan Creed from the beginning and because it wasn't introduced through the authority of an Ecumenical Synod, the Anglicans agreed that it doesn't belong to the Creed.

### 6. The Church as Eucharistic Community

Concerning the Eucharist, it is declared again that between the two churches, there was a Common Agreement, achieved at Bucharest in 1935. This issue is further elaborated in the Common Declaration of the Anglican-Orthodox sub-commission which met at Garden City (New York) in 1974. In the Moscow Agreement (1976) it is indicated that in the future the issue of the relationship between the priest and his bishop, as well as of the bishops between themselves should be studied.

### 7. The invocation of the Holy Spirit at the Eucharist

The Holy Eucharist is the action of the Holy Trinity. The act of holiness of the Eucharistic elements includes the following: the content, the *anamnesis* and the *epiclesis*. Through the invocation and the descent of the Holy Spirit, as an answer to the Church's prayer, the bread and the wine transform in the Saviour's Body and Blood. The Anglicans consider that the culminating decisive moment of the sanctifying of Eucharistic elements can occur through the instituting words or through the *epiclesis*, while for the Orthodox it is only the *epiclesis*. "At Church's prayer, the Holy Spirit descends not only above the Eucharistic elements but also above the community and through the Eucharist the believers receive the forgiveness of their sins and they increase in obedience and holiness towards everlasting life.

The meetings in Moscow (July-August 1976) between the Anglicans and Orthodox lead to a better mutual knowledge of the two parts, bringing certain positive results in the doctrinal field in spite of the existence of some disagreements.

The agreements reached by the International Commission of the Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue in the second stage were set out in the Dublin Agreed Statement of 1984. In its present third phase, which began in 1989, the Commission has been examining ecclesiological issues in the light of our faith in the Holy Trinity, the Person of Christ and the Holy Spirit.

In 2001 at Volos, Greece, the Commission focused on the ordained ministry of the Church and approved an Interim Agreed Statement on Episcopé, Episcopos and Primacy. This was followed in



2002, at Abergavenny, Wales, by another Interim Agreed Statement, on Priesthood, Christ and the Church. There the Commission began to concentrate on an examination of the issues surrounding the ordination of women to the priesthood. The discussion of non-ordained ministry was also begun. Discussion on both issues continued in Addis-Ababa in 2003.

In "Priesthood, Christ and the Church", the Commission affirmed that there is only one priesthood in the Church and that is the priesthood of Christ. Since the Church is Christ himself extended into history, his priestly office is realised and extended throughout history in the life of the Church. The Commission has so cogently enunciated that the priesthood of Christ is the reflexion and the projection of the saving work of Christ. This priesthood of Christ is inextricably bound with Trinitarian theology. Only through the Spirit are we drawn into the economy of Son. It is through the Holy Spirit that the priestly work of Christ is present in the ecclesial life: "The priestly character of the Church is related in the Spirit to the priesthood of Christ".

It was also affirmed that through baptism, the human person enters in the priestly movement of Christ's self-offering and is configured within the ecclesial and thus Eucharistic Community to the priesthood of Christ. And so, the First Letter of Peter rightly understands the community of the baptised to be "a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ ... a chosen people (generation), a royal priesthood, a holy nation" (1 Peter 2, 5,9). The Church is faithful to her priestly calling in the ministry of reconciliation, participating in the priestly self-offering of the Son to the Father in Spirit. This "Eucha-

ristic life" of the Church includes sacrificial service to the world.

As the Commission has observed: "... from authors of the New Testament themselves, from their understanding and conception of Christ, we attest that Christian priesthood is directly related with Christ's ministry. If the Church is Christ Himself extended into history, equals Christian priesthood is Christ's priestly office realised and extended in every historic period of the life of the Church. It is, so to speak, the reflection and the projection of the saving work of Christ throughout the centuries."

It is also mentioned that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female (Gal. 3, 27). "National, racial, socio-economic and gender barriers are overcome in the peace made by the blood shed on the Cross at the heart of the universe." Pertinent to the question of women, men, and the priesthood, Anglicans and Orthodox agree that within the baptismal and Eucharistic Koinonia of the Church as a whole, women and men share equally in the priestly character of the Church which is fundamentally the priesthood of Christ.

In 2004, at Canterbury, the Commission received the first draft of an Agreed Statement on Lay Ministries in the Church and on the question of the ministries of women and men, including the question of ordination to the diaconate, presbyterate and episcopate. Consideration of this latter topic was postponed until further work could be completed on the presentations of Orthodox understanding of these matters.

Papers on Heresy and Schism were received from Professor William Green (on the Anglican side) and Basil of Sergievo (on the Orthodox side) and discussed

by the Commission. The Commission went on to receive and discuss papers on Reception from Professor John Riches (on the Anglican side) and Metropolitan John of Pergamon (on the Orthodox side).

In his paper, Metropolitan John Zizioulas approached the problem of reception from two angles: the reception of the faith and the reception of the ecclesial structure. These must also be mutually received by the churches if unity among them is to become a reality.

Thus the theologians involved in the Anglican - Orthodox Theological Dialogue seem to be pre-occupied with the question of whether the ordination of women to the priesthood and the episcopate is a "heresy" or not, and tend to forget that the problem has to do mainly with the Church's ministry. The question whether this kind of ordination is "heretical or not, whether it contradicts the dogmatic teaching remains open to discussion and to "an open process of reception." But the question whether such an ordination can be "received" in terms of recognition and "reception" of ministry affects the acceptance and communion of the ecclesial communities at the level of the actual life of the Church, including such matters as sacramental communion. One may disagree with someone on certain theological questions, and still be in Eucharistic communion with him (this is not unusual among the Orthodox who often accuse one another of "heresy".) Questions of faith can be discussed for a long time, but matters of "order" and ministry must be "practiced"; as they affect reception in an immediate way.

Looked at from this angle, the ordination of women to the presbyterate is not as problematic from the view point of

reception as the extension of this ordination to the episcopate would be.

All official theological dialogues, including the Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue, have as their ultimate goal the reception of our churches by each other in Faith as well as in ministry and church structure. This goal must be kept constantly in our minds in whatever we discuss, decide or do.

While we are content and glad that certain points of faith agreements have been reached between the Anglicans and the Orthodox, likewise we must be aware of the fact and see with clear eyes the obstacles hindering the union of the two churches. For this reason a joint effort is required both from the Anglicans and the Orthodox in order to break down all the obstacles that hinder the realisation of union between the Anglican Communion and the Orthodox Church.

In conclusion we can say that the Orthodox Church is in favour of sacramental Communion with the Anglican churches but only as a result of the restoration of full unity in the truth of faith between the two "families" of churches. Certainly, this seems to be extremely difficult at the present, even impossible, but there are hopes that on the one hand the Anglican wisdom and flexibility and on the other the Orthodox love and understanding will lead to the union of the Anglican and Orthodox churches. This will be an important step on the road to the unity of all Christians, desired by the Lord Jesus Christ (John 17,11 and 21).



## Short Presentation of the Orthodox-Lutheran Dialogues

The Revd Prof. Dr Viorel Ionita

1.1. The Orthodox Church sees itself as one of the founders of today's ecumenical movement. For the Orthodox, ecumenical commitment is not simply a challenge of our time, but is much more a duty in fulfilment of the command of Jesus Christ, who prayed "that they may all be one" (Jn 17.21). It is well known that the Ecumenical Patriarch Joachim III, after being installed as Patriarch of Constantinople in 1902, wrote to all Orthodox churches, raising the question as to whether the time had not come to prepare the way for the unity of all churches.<sup>1</sup> Some years later, in 1920, the Ecumenical Patriarch's famous encyclical to all churches of Christ in the world was published, inviting them to come closer together.<sup>2</sup>

Metropolitan Damaskinos Papandreou wrote, with regard to the Orthodox commitment to theological dialogue with other churches, that this was a pastoral necessity for the Orthodox churches, so that their members would be thoroughly informed about the other churches. The former Metropolitan of Switzerland urged that ecumenical dialogue be conducted very responsibly, so that no hasty judgements are made which might contradict the canonical (ecclesiastical law) criteria of the Orthodox Church in respect of dialogue with other churches.<sup>3</sup>

Of utmost importance for the theological dialogues of the Orthodox churches with the other world-wide churches were the decisions of the Pan-Orthodox Con-

ferences, which began in 1961, after thorough preparation, under the leadership of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The original purpose of these conferences was actually to prepare for an Orthodox Synod, which would take path-finding new decisions for the life of the Orthodox churches.

1.2 The first Pan-Orthodox Conference was held 24 September - 1 October 1961 on the island of Rhodes, Greece. All the autocephalous (independent) Orthodox churches were represented there except the Orthodox Churches of Finland and Georgia. The draft agenda for the conference, approved by the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, was in eight parts. Part Five dealt with the relations between the Orthodox churches and the other Christian churches. Part 5-D was especially about relations between Orthodoxy and Protestantism. It recommended that stronger relationships between the Orthodox churches and the churches of the Reformation be sought, not least through theological conversations.<sup>4</sup> The fourth Pan-Orthodox Conference, held 5-15 June 1968 in Chambésy, Switzerland, decided to found an Inter-Orthodox Commission on dialogue with the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). Thus the conditions for dialogue between the Orthodox churches and the churches of the Reformation were given, "continuing the many contacts and

conversations between Orthodoxy and Protestantism since the 16th century."<sup>5</sup>

The fourth Pan-Orthodox Conference had decided among other things that the theological dialogue with the Lutheran churches in particular should be prepared, in a first phase, by the autocephalous Orthodox churches in bilateral conversations with various Protestant churches. This decision was reaffirmed by the first Pan-Orthodox Pre-Conciliar Conference in 1976.<sup>6</sup> This laid down the pan-Orthodox basis for the bilateral theological conversations between the various Orthodox and Protestant churches.

2.1. The following bilateral theological dialogues are to be mentioned here:

1. Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church, since 1959, known as the Arnoldshain Conferences after the place where the first meeting was held. The most important topics in this dialogue have been: 1. salvation; 2. Word and sacrament; 3. eucharistic fellowship and 4. service and witness in the church.<sup>7</sup>

2. EKD and Ecumenical Patriarchate, since 1969, known also as the Constantinople Dialogue. Various aspects of ecclesiology have been discussed, such as 1. Eucharist, church and ministry or 2. The Holy Spirit in the life of the church.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Orthodox Church in the Ecumenical Movement, Documents and Statements 1902-1975*, ed. Constantine G. Patelos, WCC, Geneva 1978, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>3</sup> Damaskinos Papandreou, *Orthodoxie und Ökumene*, ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher, W. Kohlhammer Press 1986, p. 203.

<sup>4</sup> See *Irenikon*, XXXIV, 1961, Nr. 4, p. 401.

<sup>5</sup> Athanasios Basdekis, *Die Orthodoxe Kirche. Eine Handreichung für nicht-orthodoxe und orthodoxe Christen und Kirchen (The Orthodox Church. A handbook for non-Orthodox and Orthodox Christians and churches)*. Frankfurt am Main: Otto Lembeck Press, 2001, p. 24.

<sup>6</sup> See *Irenikon*, L, 1977, Nr. 1, pp. 99-100.

<sup>7</sup> See Risto Saarinen, *Faith and Holiness. Lutheran Orthodox Dialogues 1959-1994*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997, pp. 94-127.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 133-139.



3. EKD and Bulgarian Orthodox Church, since 1992. This dialogue began in 1978 as a bilateral dialogue between the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the Federation of Protestant Churches in the German Democratic Republic. Known as the Herrnhuter Conferences, this dialogue dealt with such topics as 1. proclamation of the Gospel; 2. the source of faith; 3. baptism and Eucharist; and 4. the ordained ministry.<sup>9</sup>

4. EKD and Romanian Orthodox Church, since 1979, known as the Goslar Conferences. Topics discussed have been: 1. Scripture and tradition; 2. different aspects of the sacraments; 3. justification, theosis and synergia. The issue of ecclesiology was also discussed. At the 10th meeting between the two churches in Cluj, Romania, 14-20 November 2002, the theme was "The Nature and the Unity of the Church of Christ - the Historical Difference between the Churches". The final press statement of this meeting described the relation between the two churches as follows: "Although our churches are still on the way, in this dialogue, towards full mutual recognition and therefore towards acceptance of eucharistic fellowship, neither wishes to deny that the other is, in principle, a church. So the Romanian Orthodox church can clearly recognise in the Protestant churches a way of being church. On the basis of our common faith in Jesus Christ, as authoritatively expressed in the Holy Scriptures and our common Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, and

especially on the basis of baptism, the Romanian Orthodox Church can also speak of a certain degree of fellowship with the Protestant churches from which it is still divided. And, for their part, the Protestant churches, despite the sometimes very different forms of expression of church life in the Orthodox churches, can see in these churches the realisation of essential elements of being church in accordance with the Gospel."<sup>10</sup>

5. The Russian Orthodox Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, since 1970. This dialogue, known as the Sinappi Conferences, has treated the following themes: 1. Eucharist; 2. salvation; 3. peace and social ethics.<sup>11</sup>

Besides these theological conversations between various Orthodox churches on one hand and churches of the Reformation on the other, it should be noted that there have also been national-level Orthodox-Protestant conversations, such as:

- the dialogue between the Orthodox Church and Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland;
- Lutheran, Reformed and Orthodox in Romania;
- Orthodox-Protestant in France;
- Orthodox-Protestant in Switzerland.

It should also be mentioned that theological conversations have taken place between Orthodox and Lutherans in the United States and in Australia.<sup>12</sup> The

most important bilateral theological dialogues with the Orthodox churches in Europe have been conducted with the EKD, and the texts produced by all these dialogues are available either as supplements to the ecumenical journal *Ökumenische Rundschau*, published in Frankfurt am Main, or as study booklets published by the Office for Foreign Relations of the EKD at the missions bookstore in Hermannsburg, Germany.

The issue of "ecclesiology" has been dealt with in various bilateral theological conversations between the Orthodox churches and the churches of the Reformation, but there has not yet been an open confrontation between the ecclesiological viewpoints of the two sides. It is clear that in these dialogues the theme of the nature of the church is being approached very cautiously, and this may be for good reasons. However, a deeper convergence between these churches will not be possible through bypassing the ecclesiological issue.

2.2 The theological dialogue between the Orthodox churches and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) began in 1981 in Espoo, Finland. The theme of the first meeting was "The Mystery of the Church"; thus the ecclesiological question was to be tackled right from the beginning. However, there was no clear methodology, so that the conversation in Espoo, as well as the next one in Limassol, Cyprus in 1983, did not lead to any concrete result.<sup>13</sup> The first joint declaration in this dialogue was adopted at the third meeting of the Lutheran-Or-

thodox Joint Commission in Allentown, PA, USA in 1985, on the theme of "Divine Revelation" as a common declaration without nuances between the two theological traditions. The second common statement was adopted at the fourth meeting of the Joint Commission in Crete in 1987, on "Scripture and Tradition". With this statement the two theological traditions in dialogue are more specifically underlined: "Regarding the relation of scripture and Tradition, for centuries there seemed to have been a deep difference between Orthodox and Lutheran teaching. Orthodox hear with satisfaction the affirmation of the Lutheran theologians that the formula 'sola scriptura' was always intended to point to God's revelation, God's saving act through Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, and therefore to the holy Tradition of the church, as expressed in this paper, against human traditions that darken the authentic teaching in the church".

In the third common statement adopted at the fifth meeting in Bad-Segeberg, Germany in 1989, on "The Canon and the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures,"<sup>14</sup> the specific emphasis of the two theological traditions in relation to the topic discussed was expressed as follows: "Authentic interpreters of the holy scripture are persons who have had the same experience of revelation and inspiration within the body of Christ as the biblical writers had. Therefore it is necessary for authentic understanding that anybody who reads or hears the Bible be inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Orthodox believe that such authentic interpretation is

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 160-165.

<sup>10</sup> See also Constantin Păuleanu, *Die Begegnung der rumänischen Orthodoxie mit dem Protestantismus (The Encounter of Romanian Orthodoxy with Protestantism)*, Dr. Kovac Press, 2000.

<sup>11</sup> See Saarinen, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-83.

<sup>12</sup> For all these dialogues, see the above-mentioned work by Risto Saarinen.

<sup>13</sup> See the bibliography in *Orthodoxie im Dialog*, ed. Thomas Bremer, Johannes Oeldemann and Dagmar Stoltmann, Paulinus Press, "Sophia" series, Vol. 32, 1999, p. 225.

<sup>14</sup> See Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue. Agreed Statements, 1985-1989, Geneva, 1992.



the service of the fathers of the church especially expressed in the decisions of the ecumenical councils. Lutherans agree in principle. Lutheran confessional writings affirm that no one can believe in Jesus Christ by one's own reason or abilities but that it is the Holy Spirit who calls, gathers and illuminates believers through the gospel even as he calls, gathers and enlightens the whole church on earth keeping it in union with Jesus Christ in the one true faith (Luther's Small Catechism).

After some initial difficulties, the dialogue between the Orthodox churches and the LWF moved into a second phase, in which "classic" themes for the encounter between two theological traditions were discussed, such as "Divine Revelation" or "Scripture and Tradition". On the conclusions arrived at with regard to these topics, the third Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference in 1986, in Chambésy, Switzerland, noted that "this dialogue has begun with favourable prospects, and (this body) hopes that both the academic and the ecclesiological elements will be equally emphasised and developed."<sup>15</sup>

For a third phase in this dialogue, the meeting in Moscow in 1990 proposed the theme "Authority in and of the Church". This was to be regarded as an overall theme and to be dealt with through various sub-themes. The sixth meeting of the Orthodox-Lutheran dialogue, in 1993 in Sandbjerg, Denmark, discussed "The Ecumenical Councils and Authority in and of the Church". In

relation to this topic the common statement underlines first of all that for both Lutherans and Orthodox the teachings of the ecumenical councils are authoritative, because "the ecumenical councils maintain the integrity of the teaching of the undivided Church concerning the saving, illuminating/justifying and glorifying acts of God and reject heresies which subvert the saving work of God in Christ". In spite of this common ground, "Orthodox and Lutherans, however, have different histories. Lutherans have received the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed with the addition of the filioque. The Seventh Ecumenical Council, the Second Council of Nicaea in 787, which rejected iconoclasm and restored the veneration of icons in the churches, was not part of the tradition received by the Reformation. Lutherans, however, rejected the iconoclasm of the 16th century, and affirmed the distinction between adoration due to the Triune God alone and all other forms of veneration (CA 21). Through historical research this council has become better known. Nevertheless it does not have the same significance for Lutherans as it does for the Orthodox".

Taking into account this historical background "Lutherans and Orthodox are in agreement that the Second Council of Nicaea confirms the christological teaching of the earlier councils and in setting forth the role of images (icons) in the lives of the faithful reaffirms the reality of the incarnation of the eternal Word of God, when it states: 'The more frequently, Christ, Mary, the mother of God, and

the saints are seen, the more are those who see them drawn to remember and long for those who serve as models, and to pay these icons the tribute of salutation and respectful veneration. Certainly this is not the full adoration in accordance with our faith, which is properly paid only to the divine nature, but it resembles that given to the figure of the honoured and life-giving cross, and also to the holy books of the gospels and to other sacred objects" (Definition of the Second Council of Nicaea). This is a valuable theological contribution for the Lutheran-Orthodox dialogue in general.

The seventh encounter of the Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission in 1995 in Limassol, Cyprus, discussed the theme of "Authority in and of the Church: Understanding of Salvation in the Light of the Ecumenical Councils." After some common reflections on this theme, the statement adopted in Cyprus concluded that "Lutherans and Orthodox still need to explore further their different concepts of salvation as purification, illumination, and glorification, with the use of synergy, which is the Orthodox teaching and tradition and as justification and sanctification, with the use of sola fide, which is the Lutheran teaching and tradition".

In the third phase of the Orthodox-Lutheran dialogue the topic of the nature of the church was dealt with only indirectly, through the issue of authority and from the perspective of salvation. However, this made it possible to reach a series of agreements, which can be very significant as the basis for the further development of dialogue, precisely with regard to the discussion of ecclesiology.

Finally, a fourth phase of the theological dialogue between the Orthodox churches and the LWF began with the eighth meeting in Sigtuna, Sweden in 1998,

when the joint Lutheran-Orthodox Commission chose the theme "The Mystery of the Church" for its further work. At its ninth meeting in Damascus, Syria in 2000, the Commission adopted a joint statement entitled "The Mystery of the Church: A. Word and Sacraments (*mysteria*) in the Life of the Church". At the tenth meeting in this dialogue, in 2002 in Oslo, Norway, the topic "The Sacraments (*mysteria*) as Means of Salvation" was discussed, as a further aspect of the overall theme "The Mystery of the Church". The final statement adopted in Oslo builds on the consensus established to that point, not only with regard to the theme "Word and Sacraments (*mysteria*) in the Life of the Church", but with regard also to the consensus established earlier in the dialogue, especially in the statement on "Authority in and of the Church in the Light of the Ecumenical Councils: Salvation, Grace, Justification and Synergy" from the year 1998.

The 12th Plenary of the International Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission, which is the last encounter in this dialogue so far, took place from 6 - 15 October 2004, in Durau, Romania, and dealt with the theme: "The Mystery of the Church. C. Baptism and Chrismation as Sacraments of initiation into the Church". In the joint statement there was underlined that Orthodox and Lutherans "found that the three components of Christian initiation are to a large extent included in each other's rites. These components find their fulfillment in the Christian's full participation in the life of Christ and his church through eating his body and drinking his blood in the holy Eucharist". The topic for the meeting of the 13th Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission in 2006 will be: "The Mystery of the Church: D. The Holy Eucharist in the Life of the Church".

<sup>15</sup> Grigorios Larentzakis, *Die Orthodoxe Kirche, ihr Leben und ihr Glaube* (The Orthodox Church: its life and faith). Graz: Styria Press, 2000, p. 201



The methodology employed in this dialogue can be understood from the following quotation from the final joint statement adopted in Oslo: "Orthodox and Lutherans, discussing the sacraments on a preliminary basis, agree to give emphasis to the sacraments of initiation of the ancient church, that is, Baptism, Chrismation, and the Eucharist. We also agree that baptism takes place with water, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It brings the forgiveness of sins, and is a participation in the death and resurrection of Christ which incorporates the believer into the body of Christ as a member of the church. For the Orthodox this incorporation is completed through Chrismation, in which the baptised receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. For Lutherans, anointing with the Holy Spirit takes place within the rite of baptism itself, and finds its expression in the laying on of hands after water baptism." In the publication, each of the joint declarations is followed by the specific accents given to it by each of the two traditions, even when these accents do not exclude one another in principle.

The Orthodox-Lutheran dialogue at the world-wide level has been dealing with various aspects of ecclesiology for a number of years, but still has not yet arrived at an open confrontation between the different ecclesiological approaches concerned. If it came to this point, the partners in the dialogue would probably find that even in discussing the nature of the church, they can speak of numerous areas of agreement as well as areas in which they differ.

The discussions around the Special Commission on the Participation of the Orthodox Churches in the World Council of Churches have shown once again the importance of the ecclesiological issue

for the further development of the one ecumenical movement. From the Orthodox viewpoint, the bilateral theological conversations between the churches cannot be separate from their cooperation within the national and international ecumenical organisations. Theological dialogues can make an important contribution to the further development of cooperation within the ecumenical organisations.

### 3. Concluding remarks

a) The Orthodox churches have carried on theological dialogues for a number of years, whether bilaterally between particular churches, or as a group with various churches of the Lutheran tradition and with the LWF. These dialogues have dealt with various themes and thereby arrived at considerable theological agreement. In addition, many issues have been left open, and some divergences have also been noted.

b) The issue of ecclesiology has been addressed in many of these dialogues, especially in connection with other theological topics such as the sacraments, ministry etc., which cannot be separated from the question of the nature of the church. Open confrontation between differing understandings of the church has scarcely occurred, however, so that the dialogue partners are not yet sure how far they will be able to go together.

c) The fact that the ecclesiological issue has not yet been discussed in detail, in many bilateral theological dialogues, and that its consequences have not been explored, may well have practical causes. We have seen that the official theological dialogue between the Orthodox Churches and the LWF did begin with the theme of the nature of the church, but soon found that it was not possible

to go straight to this question. In order to have a thorough discussion on ecclesiology, a whole series of Biblical, patristical, hermeneutical and historical issues needed to be clarified first. Thus in the Orthodox-Lutheran dialogue, issues like scripture and tradition, the inspiration and the canon of the Holy Scriptures, the ecumenical councils etc. were first taken up and became the basis on which to approach more central themes such as the nature of the church. On the other hand, these dialogues should not be drawn out for too long a time. When the prerequisites have been met, they should move on to the issues which divide the churches, in order to arrive at concrete results.

d) A final remark on the various theological dialogues concerns the reception of the conclusions which have been reached. On various occasions it has been observed that many churches have not published the results of dialogues in which they have been engaged, and this is the first requirement for the reception of the dialogues at all levels of church life. The conclusions which have been reached in these dialogues may be valuable in themselves and theologically relevant, but as long as they have not been integrated into the entire lives of the participating churches, they cannot have any ecumenical effect.



# Apostolic Faith and Episcopal Ministry: Lutheran-Anglican Dialogue from Pullach to Porvoo

The Revd Dr Matti Repo

## 1. Introduction

Lutherans and Anglicans have been involved in a dialogue for a long time and in various regions in the world. To give an exhaustive presentation on it in a limited time would be impossible. But it is fairly possible to make a brief survey with a specific focus. In the following, I try to highlight the developments up to the

Porvoo Common Statement.<sup>1</sup> It seems like a consequent story witnessing to theological determination in the quest for the unity of the church. The dialogue concentrated on the dividing factors and seriously sought to overcome them.<sup>2</sup> For anyone wishing to study the global Lutheran-Anglican dialogue in detail, the recent volume Anglican-Lutheran Agreements, a joint publication by the Luther-

<sup>1</sup> Conversations between the British and Irish Anglican Churches and the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches. The Porvoo Common Statement. Text agreed at the fourth plenary meeting held at Järvenpää, Finland, 9-13 October 1992. In: *Together in Mission and Ministry*. The Porvoo Common Statement with Essays on Church and Ministry in Northern Europe. London: Church House Publishing 1993, pp. 1-33.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. David Tustin, The Background and Genesis of the Porvoo Common Statement; Michael Root, Porvoo in the Context of Worldwide Anglican-Lutheran Dialogue. Both in: Ola Tjørhom (ed.), *Apostolicity and Unity*. Essays on the Porvoo Common Statement. Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company and Geneva: WCC Publications 2002, pp. 3-33.

an World Federation (LWF) and the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC), offers an unsurpassable resource.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Historical Background

Apart from early contacts between the Lutheran states of the Holy Roman Empire and England during the Reformation era, Lutherans and Anglicans did not come to a proper theological dialogue until late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The churches were closely related to the respective states in which they were living and only came into contact with each other when political interests were taking the lead. For the most part, the two traditions lived in isolation from one another. As each developed into worldwide communions over the course of centuries, they came into increased contact with each other in colonial and mission fields. Fortunately, Lutherans and Anglicans never made any condemnations on each other, as it happened between Lutherans and the Roman Catholic Church or Lutherans and the Reformed churches. Unlike those relations, churches in Lutheran and Anglican traditions are not troubled by a painful common history.

Anglicans and Lutherans entered the modern ecumenical movement, as Bishop David Tustin and Professor Michael Root eloquently put it in their introduction to the above-mentioned collection of dialogue documents, "somewhat like cousins who shared much family background, but had little contact over much of their lives". As churches of the Reformation, Anglicans and Lutherans were conservative, seeking to maintain as much as possible of the patristic and medieval tradition and only removing what was seen to be developments contrary to the gospel. A revised, but clearly recognizable Mass was preserved, the Creeds remained normative, and in England and the Nordic countries, the episcopal ordering of the church was preserved.<sup>4</sup>

## 3. Lutheran and Anglican Criteria for Church Unity

Despite the numerous similarities between Lutherans and Anglicans, certain doctrinal issues remained disputed. It might not surprise us to see that exactly those were matters of concern when it came to the criteria of unity. Each tradition found differing elements to be constitutive to the church as well as to its unity.

<sup>3</sup> Sven Oppegaard and Gregory Cameron (eds.), *Anglican-Lutheran Agreements*. Regional and International Agreements 1972-2002. LWF Documentation 49/2004. The Lutheran World Federation and the Anglican Consultative Council 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Anglican-Lutheran Agreements. A Brief Orientation by Bishop David Tustin (UK) and Professor Michael Root (USA). In: Oppegaard (& al.), *Anglican-Lutheran Agreements*, pp. 11-21 (here: 11).

For the Lutherans, the criteria of unity are expressed in Article VII of the *Augsburg Confession* (1530): "The church is the assembly of saints in which the Gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly. For the true unity of the church it is enough to agree concerning the teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments. It is not necessary that human traditions or rites and ceremonies, instituted by men, should be alike everywhere."<sup>5</sup>

It must be emphasised, however, that this article should never be quoted without a reference to the framework of the Holy Scriptures and the classical Trinitarian and Christological doctrine as expressed in the three ecumenical Creeds, upon which the Christian identity of the Lutherans relies. The Augsburg Confession assumes the tradition preserved by the church, not least its ministerial structures.

Although the *Augsburg Confession* was echoed in the *Thirty-Nine Articles of Faith* (1571),<sup>6</sup> the Anglicans did not include any similar criteria for unity in their doctrinal standards until the *Lambeth quadrilateral* (1888). According to the quadrilateral, the four prerequisites are, 1) the Holy Scriptures of the Old and

New Testament as the rule and ultimate standard of faith, 2) the Apostles' Creed as the Baptismal Symbol, and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian Faith, 3) the two Sacraments ordained by Christ himself, Baptism and Eucharist, ministered with unfailing use of Christ's Words of Institution and of the elements ordained by him, and, last but not least, 4) the Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of his Church.<sup>7</sup>

#### 4. Doctrine of Justification, Historic Episcopate and Real Presence

Comparing the Lutheran and Anglican requirements for unity one finds that on both sides the Scriptures, the Creeds and the two Sacraments occupy a central position. However, whereas the Lutherans emphasize the apostolic teaching on the doctrine of the Gospel, the Anglicans put more weight on the historic continuity in the ministry of oversight. Consequently, the Lutherans have tended to combine apostolicity with the doctrine

of justification, the Anglicans, on their part, with the unbroken chain of episcopal ordinations. These differing viewpoints on the succession needed to be reconciled with each other in the course of Lutheran-Anglican dialogue.

On top of that, the doctrine on the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the bread and wine of the Eucharist has been a major issue for the Lutherans, especially in their dialogue with the Reformed churches.<sup>8</sup> The theology of the Eucharist in the Anglican *Thirty-Nine Articles* is characterized by Calvinistic influence, distancing itself particularly from the concept of transubstantiation but also from reducing the Holy Communion to the level of a plain meal of remembrance or of mutual Christian love.<sup>9</sup> According to the *Articles*, Christ's body and blood are only received spiritually and by faith, but receiving is nevertheless to be understood as real partaking in them.

One must bear in mind that the *Articles* are not authoritative for the Anglicans on a similar confessional level as the *Augsburg Confession* is for the Lutherans. After the Reformation era, a deeper awareness of the Eucharistic mystery evolved in Anglicanism.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, any "receptionistic" interpretation of participating in the body and blood of Christ would be incompatible with the Lutheran understanding, since the *Book of Concord* emphasizes that even those not having faith receive Christ's body and blood (*manducatio impiorum*).<sup>11</sup> In the ecumenical dialogue the Lutherans have strongly insisted on an affirmation of the real presence from the Anglican partner.

<sup>5</sup> *The Augsburg Confession*. Translated from the Latin by Theodore G. Tappert. Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1959, CD-Rom edition 2000.

<sup>6</sup> "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same. As the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, have erred, so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of Ceremonies, but also in matters of Faith." *Thirty-Nine Articles of Faith*, XIX.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. eg. Stephen Sykes, John Booty and Jonathan King (eds.), *The Study of Anglicanism*. Revised Edition, SPCK / Fortress Press, London 1998, pp. 249-250; Paul Avis, *The Anglican Understanding of the Church*. An Introduction. 2nd impression, SPCK, London 2002, pp. 56-57; Paul Avis (ed.), *Paths to Unity. Explorations in Ecumenical Method by Members of the Faith and Order Advisory Group*. GS Misc 742. Church House Publishing, London 2004, p. 30.

<sup>8</sup> "Of the Supper of the Lord they teach that the Body and Blood of Christ are truly present, and are distributed to those who eat the Supper of the Lord; and they reject those that teach otherwise." *Augsburg Confession*, X.

<sup>9</sup> "The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but rather it is a Sacrament of our Redemption by Christ's death: insomuch that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith, receive the same, the Bread which we break is a partaking of the Body of Christ; and likewise the Cup of Blessing is a partaking of the Blood of Christ. Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions. The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper, is Faith. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped." *Thirty-Nine Articles of Faith*, XXVIII.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Stephen Sykes (& al.), *The Study of Anglicanism*, pp. 308-321; Kenneth Stevenson, *Covenant of Grace Renewed. A Vision of the Eucharist in the Seventeenth Century*. Cambridge 1994, pp. 171-176.

<sup>11</sup> *Formula Concordiae*, SD VII.



## 5. Nordic Lutheran Churches and the Historic Episcopate

In the 1920s, the Church of England started establishing closer links to the Lutheran Churches in the Nordic Countries. Unlike in Germany, the Lutheran Churches in the Nordic region had preserved the episcopal ordering over Reformation and throughout the centuries. Actually, of all churches involved in the Reformation, only the Churches of England and Sweden could claim having preserved an unbroken tradition of episcopal ordinations. In Germany, the bishops had not joined the Reformation and due to the emergency situation, ordinations were carried out by distinguished priests. In Sweden, the Reformation was intertwined with turmoil in the state and became a part of reshaping the whole political and economic structure in Scandinavian countries. It was favored by the King Gustavus Vasa, and the bishops maintained their position in the church, albeit without a link to Rome – were they not enemies of the King or opponents to his strivings to release Sweden from its union with Denmark.

Denmark was more closely tied to the development in Germany and could not hold on to episcopal ordinations. This applies also to Norway and Iceland, both of which in those days belonged to the realm of Denmark. But although the first "overseers" or superintendents in Denmark were consecrated by Johannes Bugenhagen, one of the German Reformers, the episcopal structuring was maintained. An intention to continue ordinations under laying on of hands and invocation to the Holy Spirit was recognized, and also the title "bishop" returned soon, replacing the interim title of "superintendent".

Finland was a part of the Swedish kingdom until 1809. Thus, the historic episcopate was also preserved in Finland. Unfortunately, in 1884 it happened that all four bishops in Finland passed away in the course of one year, and the new Archbishop was consecrated by a priest, a professor of dogmatics at the University of Helsinki. Later, in early 20<sup>th</sup> century, bishops from Sweden and Estonia took part in an episcopal consecration in Finland. One might consider this event as restoring the historic succession. However, when it was discussed with the Church of England in the 1930s, it was emphasised that this event should not be seen as an attempt to re-instruct the succession but to witness to the unity of the Church of Christ.

The Church of England established pulpit exchange and eucharistic fellowship with the Church of Sweden in the 1920s, with the Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Finland, Estonia and Latvia in the 1930s and with the Churches of Denmark, Norway and Iceland in the early 1950s. Mutual participation in episcopal consecrations between Sweden and England started in the 1920s, between Finland and England after WWII.

In conversations between Nordic Churches and the Church of England, agreement was quickly reached on all subjects but episcopacy. The Lutherans in Sweden and Finland valued its succession as a "blessing from the God of history" but did not consider it a *conditio sine qua non* for the validity of their ministry. Furthermore, most of the other Nordic Lutherans were unwilling to speak of a recovery of succession. However, the Anglican insistence on the subject helped the Nordic Lutherans to express their understanding of the episcopal ministry in a particular way that differs from the central European Lutheranism: while

not considering it to be established *jure divino* it is nevertheless acknowledged as a gift from God and certainly not an *adiaphoron*.<sup>12</sup>

## 6. Global Lutheran-Anglican Dialogue

### 6.1. Pullach 1972

The Nordic relations with the Church of England were influential in preparing the global Lutheran and Anglican communions for a substantial dialogue. An *ad hoc* Anglican-Lutheran Committee was appointed by the Lutheran World Federation and the Anglican Communion in 1967. Based on its recommendations, an Anglican-Lutheran International Commission (ALIC) met four times between 1970 and 1972. Its work resulted in what is known as the *Pullach report* (1972).<sup>13</sup> The report discussed a range of issues: Sources of Authority, Church, Word and Sacraments, Apostolic Ministry. On the question of real presence, the report sought to bring differing viewpoints together in one by downplaying the meaning of exact theological reasoning: "Both Communion affirm the real presence of Christ in this sacrament, but neither seeks to define precisely how this happens. In the eucharistic action (including consecrations) and reception, the bread and

wine, while remaining bread and wine, become the means whereby Christ is truly present and gives himself to the communicants." (§ 68)

*Pullach* noted extensive theological agreement but did not overcome differences in episcopacy. This is understandable, given the diversity of the Lutheran churches involved in the dialogue, in relation to their respective ordering of oversight. The question of common exercise of episcopal ministry remained problematic. The Anglicans stated they could "not foresee full integration of ministries (full communion) apart from the historic episcopate" (§ 87) whereas the Lutherans insisted that "the historic episcopate should not become a necessary condition for interchurch relations or church union" (§ 89). In an annex attached to the report, the Anglican chairperson commented on the discussion by emphasising that "as a fact of history", continuity in doctrine and sacraments "have been taken as marks of 'catholicity' rather than of 'apostolicity'". The adjective 'apostolic' happens to have been attached to the continuity of the *ministry*. "According to the Anglican chair, apostolicity 'can only be widened in its application by a conscious effort to merge apostolicity into catholicity, and vice versa'."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Cf. the essays on the "Episcopacy in our Churches" (Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Norway, Iceland) in the volume *Together in Mission and Ministry*, pp. 59-108; also, Lars Österlin, *Nordic Churches of Northern Europe in Profile. A thousand years of Anglo-Nordic relations*. Norwich: The Canterbury Press 1995, pp. 245-280.

<sup>13</sup> Report of the Anglican-Lutheran International Conversations 1970-1972. *Pullach 1972*. In: Oppegaard (& al.), *Anglican-Lutheran Agreements*, pp. 23-46.

<sup>14</sup> *Pullach*, Personal Note by the Anglican Chairman. In: Oppegaard (& al.), *Anglican-Lutheran Agreements*, p. 41.

Pullach attempted to form a common understanding of the apostolicity of the church, which would bring the Lutheran emphasis on continuity of the apostolic doctrine together with the historic succession of the episcopal ministry, but it did not succeed. However, the path was paved for seeing it in a wider framework of the church as a whole.

## 6.2. Helsinki 1984

Strong impulses for the dialogue were given by the Faith and Order—document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (BEM)* in 1982.<sup>15</sup> Among other things, *BEM* discussed episcopacy and threefold ministry in relation to the apostolic tradition. It explained apostolic tradition in a wider context of continuity in the church: "Apostolic tradition in the Church means continuity in the permanent characteristics of the Church of the apostles: witness to the apostolic faith, proclamation and fresh interpretation of the Gospel, celebration of baptism and the Eucharist, the transmission of ministerial responsibilities, communion in prayer, love, joy and suffering, service to the sick and the needy, unity among the local churches and sharing the gifts which the Lord has given to each." (M § 34) Thus, it was able to state: "The primary manifestation of apostolic succession is to be found in the apostolic tradition of the Church as a whole. The succession is an expression of the permanence and, therefore, of the continuity of Christ's own mission in which the Church participates." (M § 35)

These reflections from the Faith and Order Commission proved highly influential for the regional dialogues in Europe and in North America, which were initiated by the LWF and the ACC. The work of an Anglican-Lutheran European Regional Commission (ALERC) resulted in the so-called *Helsinki Report* (1982),<sup>16</sup> which managed to incorporate fresh insights emerging from *BEM* into the Anglican-Lutheran dialogue. *Helsinki* elaborated extensively on doctrinal issues like Justification and Eucharist. For our theme, three topics are of particular interest. First, *Helsinki* stated that the Anglicans and Lutherans "share a common understanding of God's justifying grace, i.e. that we are accounted righteous and made righteous before God only by grace through faith because of the merits of Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and not on account of our works or merits" (§ 20).

This sentence, which was later quoted in the *Porvoo Common Statement* (§ 32c), is not a minor notion in the history of ecumenical dialogue. By bringing christologically together the two dimensions of justification, accounting righteous and making righteous, the *Helsinki Report* coincidentally relates to the theological discussion in the Helsinki University of the early 1980s. The starting point for the debate had been the ecumenical dialogue between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church. In the dialogue in 1977, the Lutherans had suggested that the doctrine of justification

in Luther's writings might be paralleled with the Orthodox doctrine of deification. A bridge between the two had been identified in Luther's teaching of Christ's presence in the believer.<sup>17</sup> Later, this interpretation found its way into the Lutheran-Roman Catholic *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (1999),<sup>18</sup> which states:

"When persons come by faith to share in Christ, God no longer imputes to them their sin and through the Holy Spirit effects in them an active love. These two aspects of God's gracious action are not to be separated, for persons are by faith united with Christ, who in his person is our righteousness (1 Cor 1:30): both the forgiveness of sin and the saving presence of God himself." (JD § 22)

As a matter of fact, *Helsinki* did make reference to the Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue on justification: "Today we [...] note with gratitude an increasing agreement with Roman Catholic theologians in the understanding of this doctrine" (§ 18). In line of this, one could ask, whether the Anglicans could consider adopting the *Joint Declaration*,

too, since the World Methodist Council has also recently approved it. That would make one more bond in the communion we share in faith.

Second, *Helsinki* also succeeded in giving a stronger expression to the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist than *Pullach* had done: "In the Lord's Supper, Jesus Christ, true God and true man, crucified, risen and ascended, is truly present in his body and blood under the elements of bread and wine" (*Helsinki* § 28). No traces of a receptionistic understanding are any longer found in the report.

Third and most important, *Helsinki* attempted to expand the concept of apostolicity, as required by the Anglican chairperson of *Pullach* ten years earlier and as hinted by the *BEM*: "Anglicans and Lutherans participate in the growing ecumenical agreement that the apostolicity of the Church, and the apostolic succession, which serves this apostolicity, are expressed and maintained by a variety of elements and activities." (*Helsinki* § 38). Among the elements of apostolic-

<sup>15</sup> *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. Faith and Order Paper no. 111. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982.

<sup>16</sup> The Report of the Anglican-Lutheran European Regional Commission. Helsinki, August-September 1982. In: Oppegaard (& al.), *Anglican-Lutheran Agreements*, pp. 47-68.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Hannu T. Kamppari (ed.), *Dialogue between Neighbours*. The Theological Conversations between the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church 1970-1986. Communications and Theses. Publications of Luther-Agricola Society B 17. Helsinki 1986, pp. 73-76; Risto Saarinen, *Faith and Holiness*. Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue 1959-1994. Kirche und Konfession. Veröffentlichungen des Konfessionskundlichen Instituts des Evangelischen Bundes, Bd. 40. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1997, pp. 38-54; Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (eds.), *Union with Christ*. The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther. Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1998; Tuomo Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith*. Luther's View of Justification. Edited and introduced by Kirsij Stjerna. Minneapolis: Fortress Press 2005.

<sup>18</sup> *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. The Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church. Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 2000.



ity, besides the pastoral ministry of Word and Sacrament, the Scriptures, ecumenical Creeds, Sacraments and the liturgical life of the church were also highlighted. On top of that, continuing participation in the apostolic mission was regarded as an element of the apostolicity of the church.

This widened understanding of apostolicity was reflected in the concept of apostolic succession. It could no longer be sufficiently articulated in terms of historic episcopate. New expressions of "apostolic character and mission" were needed: "Apostolic succession is the way in which the continuity of the apostolic character and mission of the Church is served and maintained throughout all the changes of history. It cannot therefore be limited to the succession in episcopal consecrations and ordinations." (§ 39) The report concludes its elaborations on the Episcopacy by making reference to recent mutual development in both churches. Again, tribute to *BEM* is paid: "Lutheran theologians and Churches are increasingly prepared to appreciate episcopal succession, in the words of the Faith and Order text, 'as a sign of the apostolicity and of the life of the whole Church. Yet, at the same time, they cannot accept any suggestion that the ministry exercised in their own tradition should be invalid until the moment that it enters into an existing line of episcopal succession' (BEM, Ministry, para. 38). Anglican theologians and Churches on their part are more prepared than in the past to recognize, again in the words of the Faith and Order text, 'that a continu-

ity in apostolic faith, worship and mission has been preserved in churches which have not retained the form of historic episcopate' (BEM, Ministry, para. 37)." (Helsinki § 43)

The Commission concluded that there no longer exist any serious obstacles on the way towards establishing a full communion (§ 61). On the basis on the theological agreement that had been reached, the report recommended the churches to acknowledge each other as true Churches of Christ (§ 62). However, Helsinki was not able to overcome the remaining differences in the ministry of oversight, and further steps towards full communion were still to be taken (§ 64).

### 6.3. Cold Ash 1983

The regional dialogues in Europe and in the USA and Canada were reviewed by an Anglican-Lutheran Joint Working Group, appointed again by the LWF and the ACC. The Working Group met once at Cold Ash in England in late 1983 and produced a report, which, although not as extensive as Helsinki, proved just as influential.<sup>19</sup> It no longer addressed questions of common doctrine, but instead, focused on setting the goal for Anglican-Lutheran dialogue and elaborated on the concept of full communion.

By "full communion" was understood a relationship between two distinct churches. In such a relationship, "each maintains its own autonomy and recognizes the catholicity and apostolicity of the other, and each believes the other to hold

the essentials of the Christian faith" (§ 25). Full communion would involve 1) the possibility for members of one body to receive the sacraments of the other, 2) that the bishops of one church may by invitation take part in the consecration of the bishops of the other, 3) a bishop, priest or deacon of one ecclesial body may exercise liturgical functions in a congregation of the other body if invited to do so, and 4) recognized organs of regular consultation and communication, including episcopal collegiality need to be established.

According to *Cold Ash*, being in full communion means that the churches become "interdependent while remaining autonomous". One church would not be elevated to be the judge of the other nor could it remain insensitive to the other (§ 26). It must be emphasized, however, that the concept of full communion does not concentrate on common structures of oversight. In its essence, full communion consists of spiritual sharing in Christian life, which finds its deepest expression in the common celebration of the sacrament of the Eucharist, but does not limit itself to liturgical life: "Full communion carries implications which go beyond sharing the same eucharist. The eucharist is a common meal, and to share in it together has implications for a sharing of life and of common concerns for the mission of the Church. To be in full communion implies a community of life, an

exchange and a commitment to one another in respect to major decisions on questions of faith, order, and morals. It implies, where churches are in the same geographical area, common worship, study, witness, evangelism, and promotion of justice, peace and love." (§ 27)

The reflections from *Cold Ash* on full communion are of importance, especially when compared to the model of church fellowship applied in the ecumenical relations of several European Protestant churches. Full communion as a model of church unity is deeper than eucharistic hospitality, pulpit and altar fellowship, mutual recognition of ordinations or any other model of church fellowship where the churches involved remain separate yet open up positively towards each other to receive visitors or to prepare for common action. The key factor is the commitment to share in spiritual life.

### 6.4. Niagara 1987

The Cold Ash meeting called for an Anglican-Lutheran International Continuation Committee (ALICC), which met in October 1986 at Wimbledon, England, to evaluate the state of the dialogue. It suggested a consultation to discuss the relationship between Apostolic Succession, the Ministry of the whole people of God, Episcopacy and the historic episcopate. A year later, an international consultation on the *Episcopate* gathered at Niagara Falls, Canada.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Report of the Anglican-Lutheran Joint Working Group. Cold Ash, Berkshire, England, 28 November - 3 December 1983. In: Oppegaard (& al.), *Anglican-Lutheran Agreements*, pp. 69-85.

<sup>20</sup> The Niagara Report. Report of the Anglican-Lutheran Consultation on *Episcopate*. Niagara Falls, September 1987, by the Anglican-Lutheran International Continuation Committee. In: Oppegaard (& al.), *Anglican-Lutheran Agreements*, pp. 87-128.

The *Niagara Report* (1987) opens its reflections on the ministry of oversight by pointing to the "nature and mission of the church" (Section I). As a matter of fact, already in Wimbledon, the committee had determined for the consultation to focus on the theme of "Episcopate in relation to the Mission of the Church". According to *Niagara*, "every member of the church is an integral part of its witness and its mission, and every member has received a gift of the Holy Spirit so that the whole may flourish" (§ 17). The document combines the apostolicity of the church with the Trinitarian *missio dei*: "Mission indeed comes to special expression in the Church's apostolicity. For apostolicity means that the Church is sent by Jesus to be for the world, to participate in his mission and therefore in the mission of the One who sent Jesus, to participate in the mission of the Father and the Son through the dynamic of the Holy Spirit" (§ 21).

*Niagara* finds it "unthinkable to isolate ordination at the hands of someone in linear succession to the apostles as the sole criterion for apostolicity". True, the mission of the church requires some forms of supervision to serve the coherence of its witness, but no uniform structure of government seems to be inherited directly from the apostles. To "speak about 'apostolic succession' is to speak primarily of characteristics of the whole church; and to recognize a Church as being 'in the apostolic succession' is to use not one criterion of discernment, but many" (§ 20).

The document goes on to elaborate on what are the "requirements for the church's mission" (II). *Niagara* lists the praise of the community, its faithfulness and continuity, its disciplined life together, its activity of nurture and its sense of goal and direction. In each one of these,

symbolic acts and structures are needed (§ 41). After a brief historical survey in the development of the ministry of oversight, the document comes to the role of the bishop. The symbolic position of the bishop has two dimensions, the spatial and the temporal; it involves connections between the local and the universal, the present and the past (§ 52). According to *Niagara*, it is essential for the life and mission of the church to have an effective connection between the universal and the local. However, the "mere presence of a bishop will not guarantee the preservation of *koinonia* between local and universal; nor will the absence of such a bishop entail its destruction" (§ 53). The same applies also to the continuity of the church in the apostolic faith: although oversight is never to be viewed apart from the continuity of apostolic faith, the "fact of bishops does not by itself guarantee the continuity of apostolic faith" (§ 54).

*Niagara* makes reference to the complicated history of the Reformation in Europe and to the emergency situation which had resulted in priestly ordinations. It is "clearly noted that the Reformers believed themselves authorized to act in this manner in an emergency situation, appealing to Jerome's position on the original unity of the office of bishop and presbyter". Since the authority of a bishop's office is implicitly present in the pastors, the "succession of a presiding ministry is preserved, though in an unaccustomed form" (§ 57). It is reminded that there was no objection to the office of bishop as such; on the contrary, the *Augsburg Confession* clearly wished to maintain it.

After these core findings, the document harvests the extensive doctrinal convergence from previous dialogues in twenty paragraphs on "the truths we share"

(III) and then makes suggestions for an "application to Anglicans and Lutherans" (IV). The suggestions include four changes asked from the Lutheran churches (§ 88-92): 1) all persons who exercise an ordained ministry of *episcopate* should receive the title of bishop, 2) bishops should be elected and consecrated for life or until retirement or resignation, 3) in a consecration, at least three bishops should lay their hands on the new bishop, and one or more of them should be from an Anglican church, and 4) it should become an unfailing practice that only bishops preside at all ordinations of clergy. The Anglican churches, on their part, are asked to 1) make necessary canonical changes to acknowledge and recognize the full authenticity of the existing ministries of Lutheran churches, 2) establish and welcome structures for collegial and periodic review with the purpose of evaluating and improving the bishop's ministry, and 3) regularly invite Lutheran bishops to participate in the laying on of hands at the consecration of Anglican bishops (§ 93-96).

In its conclusions, *Niagara* differs from the preceding documents by showing the churches what "practical steps" they need to take in order to realize full communion (IV). Thus it put the churches to the test whether they were really willing to proceed on the way to the unity.

## 7. Excursus: Meissen 1988

At this point I attempt to highlight the goal of "full communion" by contrasting it with the model of "church fellowship" (German *Kirchengemeinschaft*). The former model of church unity was specified in the Lutheran-Anglican consultations in the 1980s whereas the latter had evolved earlier in Lutheran-Reformed relations and resulted in the *Leuenberg Agreement* in 1973. Since *Leuenberg* makes use of a different concept of unity and only accepts the common Reformation era criteria for church fellowship on a general level – i.e. agreement in the Gospel and the Sacraments – it is not helpful in a dialogue with churches that emphasize the historic episcopate. On the contrary, by attempting to make the criteria for church unity also a narrow basis for a fully-fledged ecclesiology it might contribute



to preventing churches from seeing the episcopal ministry as a sign of unity.<sup>21</sup> In the dialogue between the Church of England and the Evangelical Church of Germany (EKD) in 1987-88, previous documents like *BEM*, *Helsinki* and *Cold Ash* were deliberately made use of, but no sufficient attention was paid to *Niagara*. The report approved in 1988 in Meissen<sup>22</sup> does not follow the reasoning opened by the preceding dialogue on the relation of the episcopacy to the apostolicity of the church.

*Meissen* does not quote *Niagara*, neither does it elaborate on the question of full communion in relation to the episcopal ministry at all. On the contrary, the German party found emphasizing the historic episcopate a hindrance for promoting unity: "Lutheran, Reformed and Unit-

ed Churches, though being increasingly prepared to appreciate episcopal succession 'as a sign of the apostolicity of the life of the whole church', hold that this particular form of *episkope* should not become a necessary condition for 'full, visible unity'." (§ 26) This formulation repeats the position of *Pullach*. Although *Meissen* was able to proceed in other areas, it did not get beyond considering episcopal succession other than an unbroken historic chain of episcopal ordinations. Unfortunately, it is not clear whether the dialogue partners could have chosen to follow the logic of *Niagara* and resolved the differences, or whether the EKD delegates simply precluded episcopacy from their own concept of "full,

visible unity" and were thus unable to see it as a sign of apostolicity and unity.<sup>23</sup>

## 8. Niagara's Daughters

### 8.1. Concordat of Agreement 1991 – Called to Common Mission 2000

*Niagara's* elaborations and suggestions proved successful. It gave birth to three regional Lutheran-Anglican agreements, which all followed its line of argumentation.

The first regional application flowing from *Niagara* was made in the USA in 1991.<sup>24</sup> However, the *Concordat of Agreement* was not approved by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) although it was accepted by the Episcopal Church in the USA (ECUSA).

The debate was heavy since the Lutherans lacked the long tradition of bishops, and for many it seemed more appropriate to stay in closer connection to the Reformed Churches. A revised proposal, entitled *Called to Common Mission (CCM)* was adopted by the ELCA in 1999 and by the ECUSA in 2000.<sup>25</sup>

According to the *CCM*, the bishops of the ELCA will be gradually incorporated in the historic episcopate. The creation of a common and fully interchangeable ministry of bishops in full communion will occur with the incorporation of all active bishops in the historic episcopal succession and the continuing process of collegial consultation in matters of Christian faith (§ 14). The ELCA only elects and installs bishops for a period of six years, but the ECUSA has committed to regard its installations as ordinations, as far as a bishop from the Epis-

<sup>24</sup> As theological statements, Leuenberg and Porvoo might not be doctrinally contradictory to each other, cf. André Birmelé, *Leuenberg-Meissen-Porvoo*. On the Fellowship of the Anglican, Lutheran, Reformed and United Churches of Europe. In: Wilhelm Hüffmeier and Colin Podmore (eds.), *Leuenberg, Meissen and Porvoo*. Consultation between the Churches of the Leuenberg Church Fellowship and the Churches involved in the Meissen Agreement and the Porvoo Agreement. Liebfrauenberg, Elsaß 6.-10. September 1995. *Leuenberger Texte* 4. Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Otto Lembeck 1996, pp. 56-78; Risto Saarinen, *The Porvoo Common Statement and the Leuenberg Concord – Are they Compatible?* In: Tjørhom (ed.), *Apostolicity and Unity*, pp. 258-269. However, the concepts of church unity according to Leuenberg and Porvoo differ in the way they relate a local worshipping congregation to the church as a whole. Questions of authority, oversight and ministerial structures are peripheral to the unity according to Leuenberg, whereas Porvoo considers them essential for a particular as well as for the universal Church. Ecclesiological topics have subsequently been elaborated in the Leuenberg Fellowship study *The Church of Jesus Christ. The Contribution of the Reformation towards Ecumenical Dialogue on Church Unity*, by Order of the Executive Committee for the Leuenberg Fellowship, edited by Wilhelm Hüffmeier. *Leuenberger Texte* 1. Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Otto Lembeck, 1995. On this study cf. Matti Repo, *Die Kirche Jesu Christi: Ein Beitrag der Leuenberger Kirchengemeinschaft zur Diskussion über die reformatorische Ekklesiologie*. In: Arne Hiob, Urmas Nömmik und Arho Tuhkru (Hrsg.), *Zum vollen Maß der Fülle Christi*. FS für Jaan Kiivit zum 65. Geburtstag. Tallinn: Theologisches Institut der EELK 2005, 160-179.

<sup>25</sup> On the Way to Visible Unity. A Common Statement. Meissen, 18 March 1988. In: Oppegaard (& al.), *Anglican-Lutheran Agreements*, pp. 129-144.

<sup>23</sup> The EKD criticism has remained substantially the same: the historic episcopal office is deemed only a "certain shape" or a "particular form" of oversight and can't be considered a precondition for unity, since the function of oversight can be ordered also differently, cf. e.g. Ingolf Dalferth, *Ministry and the Office of Bishop according to Meissen and Porvoo: Protestant Remarks about Several Unclarified Questions*. In: *Visible Unity and the Ministry of Oversight*. The Second Theological Conference held under the Meissen Agreement between the Church of England and the Evangelical Church in Germany. West Wickham, March 1996. London: Church House Publishing 1997, pp. 9-48; Ingolf Dalferth, *Visible Unity and the Episcopal Office*. In: Ingolf U. Dalferth and Paul Oppenheim (eds.), *Einheit bezeugen / Witnessing to Unity*. Ten years after the Meissen Declaration. Beiträge zu den theologischen Konferenzen von Springe und Cheltenham zwischen der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland und der Kirche von England. Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Otto Lembeck 2003, pp. 207-215.

<sup>24</sup> *Concordat of Agreement Between the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. In: William A. Norgren and William G. Rusch (eds.), *Toward Full Communion and "Concordat of Agreement"*. Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue, Series III. Minneapolis: Augsburg, Cincinnati: Forward Movement Publications 1991, pp. 95-110.

<sup>25</sup> *Called to Common Mission: A Lutheran Proposal for a Revision of the Concordat of Agreement as adopted by the 1999 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the 2000 General Convention of the Episcopal Church*. In: Oppegaard (& al.), *Anglican-Lutheran Agreements*, pp. 231-242.

copal Church has taken part in the laying on of hands in the ELCA (§ 15, 18).

## 8.2. Waterloo 1997 – 2001

The Lutheran-Anglican agreement in Canada, *Called to Full Communion*, generally known as the *Waterloo Declaration*, was approved in 2001.<sup>26</sup> It's a result from a national dialogue and a six years' period of interim eucharistic sharing. It differs from the CCM on one interesting point: whereas in the USA the Episcopal Church will understand the Lutheran installations of bishops as ordinations of bishops, in Canada it is the opposite: the Lutherans needed to change their understanding of the installation of a bishop into an ordination. Notwithstanding the fact that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada continues to install bishops only for a limited term, its National Convention agreed already in 1997 that it was "prepared to take the constitutional steps necessary to understand the installation of bishops as ordination" (§ 9). This decision means that the ELCIC and the Anglican Church of Canada entered a full communion immediately after the agreement was signed, whereas the churches in the USA only enter it step by step.

## 8.3. Porvoo 1992 – 1996

After covering a long span of ecumenical history I finally reach *Porvoo*. The text of the *Porvoo Common Statement*<sup>27</sup>

was finalized here in Järvenpää in 1992. The closing worship was celebrated in the Cathedral of Porvoo where the name of the agreement stems from. The *Porvoo Declaration* was signed in three solemn celebrations in 1996 in Tallinn, Trondheim and London. After my long introduction, there does not remain much new to say on the contents of *Porvoo*. I only want to lift up five features, all of which emerge from the preceding dialogue.

First, *Porvoo* starts by pointing to the long history of relations between the Church of England and the Nordic Lutheran Churches. It wishes to continue on the way paved by the existing agreements from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but now finds new opportunities to strengthen the bonds vis-à-vis the new challenges we face as churches (section I).

Second, *Porvoo* makes ecclesiological elaborations on the nature and unity of the church (II). The mission of the church means partaking in the Trinitarian sending of God: the purpose of the church is to proclaim the gospel in word and deed (§ 15-16). The church is God's instrument in promulgating unity: we are called into a life of communion with God and with one another (§ 17-18). Thus, the apostolicity of the church points to its apostolic mission, and the apostolic ministry serves the communion with God and with one another (§ 20, 25). The unity

of the church is grounded on the Trinitarian communion of Father, Son and Holy Spirit (§ 21, 23). In its reflections on the nature of the unity, *Porvoo* does not make use of the concept "full communion", but it evidently relies on the reflections of *Cold Ash* (§ 28).

Third, *Porvoo* gives a brief account on the doctrinal agreement in Lutheran-Anglican dialogue (III). It summarizes the principal beliefs and practices we have in common (§ 32a-l). The doctrine of justification is highlighted with the help of the *Helsinki Report* and also with Lutheran-Roman Catholic and Anglican-Roman Catholic documents (§ 32c). The doctrine of real presence is emphasized strongly: "We believe that the body and blood of Christ are truly present, distributed and received under the forms of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper (Eucharist). In this way we receive the body and blood of Christ, crucified and risen, and in him the forgiveness of sins and all other benefits of his passion." (§ 32h)

Fourth, *Porvoo* locates the episcopal ministry in the service of the apostolicity of the church (IV). It does not make the apostolicity of the church dependant on the unbroken chain of episcopal ordinations, but emphasizes the apostolicity of the whole church: "the primary manifestation of apostolic succession is to be found in the apostolic tradition of the Church as a whole" (§ 39). Since the "Apostolic tradition means continuity in the permanent characteristics of the Church of the apostles" (§ 36), the "succession is an expression of the perma-

nence and of the continuity of Christ's own mission in which the Church participates" (§ 40). The historic episcopate is considered a "sign, not guarantee" (§ 51) of fidelity to the apostolic mission, which, on its part, is carried on by more than one means of continuity (§ 52). Consequently, a church without this sign is free to adopt it, to "make more visible the unity and continuity of the Church at all times and in all places" (§ 53).

Fifth, on the basis of their agreement, the *Porvoo* churches make far-reaching commitments to share their life in common faith and mission (V). Among others, they pledge to "pray for and with one another, and to share resources; to welcome one another's members to receive sacramental and other pastoral ministrations; to regard baptized members of all our churches as members of our own; to welcome persons episcopally ordained in any of our churches to the office of bishop, priest or deacon to serve, by invitation and in accordance with any regulations which may from time to time be in force, in that ministry in the receiving church without re-ordination;" and "to invite each other's bishops to participate in the laying on of hands as a visible sign of unity and continuity" (§ 58 b i-vi).

## 9. Conclusion

The Lutheran-Anglican relations continue developing. In accordance with the recommendations from an Anglican-Lutheran Working Group to the LWF and the AC,<sup>28</sup> a new International Commis-

<sup>26</sup> Called to Full Communion: The Waterloo Declaration as approved by the National Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada. In: Oppegaard (& al.), *Anglican-Lutheran Agreements*, pp. 243-248.

<sup>27</sup> Printed in *Together in Mission and Ministry*, pp. 1-33 and Oppegaard (& al.), *Anglican-Lutheran Agreements*, pp. 145-176.

<sup>28</sup> Growth in Communion. Report of the Anglican-Lutheran International Working Group 2000-2002. In: Oppegaard (& al.), *Anglican-Lutheran Agreements*, pp. 275-338, § 217 (p. 330).



sion (ALIC) has been established.<sup>29</sup> New regional agreements will probably be signed in the near future.<sup>30</sup> Rather than being an end in itself, *Porvoo* is more of a beginning and a means of common mission for Lutherans and Anglicans in Northern Europe. Similarly, the other regional agreements will continue to contribute primarily in local settings and on the national level. As such, they help the global communions of the LWF and the AC to move closer to one another. Presently, the future of the ecumenical move-

ment as a whole is under a debate; new forms of cooperation will probably emerge. In the process of "reconfiguring" the ecumenical movement, the Christian World Communions might have a vital role to play. The regional agreements will hopefully show the way from the local to the universal.

## A General Introduction to the Porvoo Communion of Churches

– Short comment from Norwegian, Lutheran point of view

The Revd Dr Stephanie Dietrich

### 1. Introduction

I was asked to give a comment on the life of the Porvoo Communion, or, as some rather would say, on the life of the communion of Porvoo churches.

This indicates the fact that there still is an ongoing discussion on the level of communion which is reached through the agreement. While some would say that we have reached "full communion", others would say that we have achieved a certain level of communion, but there are still "many steps to climb" towards fuller communion, while "full communion" actually still reflects the eschatological goal for all our ecumenical work. Therefore, it would be theologically right to say that we are in communion, but not that we are in full communion, in the sense of being "one church". The *Porvoo Agreement* is not a new confession-

al writing, nor is the Porvoo communion a communion which eludes our ecclesial identities as Lutheran and Anglican churches.

The Porvoo communion is a communion of churches which have committed themselves to work closely together, on the background of a far-reaching agreement. Church of Norway has experienced being part of this communion as an *enrichment*. We have been enabled to see ourselves and our mission as a part of a common vision for the churches in this part of Europe, standing *Together in Mission and Ministry*, according to the title of the Porvoo report. We realise an awareness of being a part of a communion, wider than the Lutheran Communion, on many levels in our church life. This awareness on the agreement becomes visible e.g. when significant ques-

<sup>29</sup> The 3<sup>rd</sup> ALIC had its first meeting in Moshi, Tanzania in 13-19 January 2006. It encouraged the Anglicans and Lutherans in Africa to consider practical steps towards visible unity, cf. the communiqué in <http://www.lutheranworld.org/News/LWI/EN/1820.EN.html>

<sup>30</sup> Reports from African and Australian dialogues from 2001 are printed in Oppegaard (& al.), *Anglican-Lutheran Agreements*, pp. 249-274; a dialogue in Brazil (1984-1991) is due to continue in 2006.

tions related to common concerns are debated within our church.

This lecture does not have the purpose to give an overview over the theology of the *Porvoo Agreement*, but should rather serve as a comment on the life and self-understanding of the communion today from my personal point of view.

When my church, the Church of Norway, had a process of discussion before the statement was approved by our Synod, many members of the church struggled in understanding the main points and the outstandingness of this agreement.

"This sounds nice", was said – "but why do we have to say so much about Bishops?", was asked, mainly from members of our church on a congregational level. What I want to underline is that this huge emphasis on episcopacy and the historic episcopate as a presupposition for the full acknowledgement of our ordained ministries is not necessarily very familiar to all parts of the Lutheran churches, while it certainly is a main aspect of the self-understanding of the Anglican churches which were involved in the dialogue leading towards the *Porvoo Common Statement*. At the same time, the *Porvoo* process helped us to come to a clearer understanding of our own ministerial structures, and the meaning of episcopacy for our church.

The *Porvoo Common Statement* is an ecumenical agreement which serves as the foundation for the so called *Porvoo* communion. The statement deals a lot with the understanding of ministry, episcopal succession and the ministry of oversight. Nevertheless it has to be emphasized already at this point that the life and vitality of the *Porvoo* communion, based on this fundamental agreement, embraces almost all the aspects of ec-

clesial life, not only the aspects related to questions of order. The uppermost foundation of our communion is the common understanding of the gospel, the Holy Scriptures and the Sacraments.

In other words: *Porvoo* is about the common understanding of ministry and episcopacy in so far as the agreement on these matters is necessary for the living together of our churches.

The member churches of the *Porvoo* communion feel a commitment to being a member of it. This commitment includes not at least an awareness of the extraordinary theological results of this statement, and an awareness that the *Porvoo* communion is a communion "of flesh and blood", which means that our unity in Christ must become visible through shared life and common efforts to stand together in mission and ministry. This includes also mutual accountability, respect for each other, and a spirit of common life as a family, based on our close relations both in theology and in the concrete mission of the church.

## 2. Structure of Communion, the *Porvoo Common Statement* and the *Porvoo Declaration*

The basis for the life of the communion is the *Joint Declaration* which is signed by the member churches of *Porvoo*. The declaration itself must be understood in the light of the whole statement which explains the theological argumentation which forms the basis of the declaration. For the Anglican churches, the basic ecumenical problem in negotiations with Nordic Lutherans was always the historical succession of bishops.

For Lutherans, however, matters of church order are usually understood as

secondary, whereas the content of theological confession, the unity in teaching the Word and administering the sacraments according to our confessions, mainly the *Confessio Augustana*, is seen as the primary ecumenical issue. This certain Lutheran interest in doctrinal paragraphs other than the understanding of ministry is not the most dominant theme in the *Porvoo* statement, but it is present in the paragraph 32, where the statement, based on other earlier dialogues, confirms that the churches share a common belief in the understanding of the Scriptures, the gospel, in "God's justifying grace", in the basic creeds of the Church of the early centuries. This paragraph also underlines that our churches confess and celebrate the apostolic faith in liturgical worship, and that the similar forms of worship are an important expression of our common faith. From a Lutheran view, the paragraphs 32 g. and h. on Baptism and Eucharist are some of the most important paragraphs in the statement, when it comes to the theological basis for our communion.

Also the *Porvoo Agreement* proceeds therefore in its understanding of church unity from the constitutive primacy of "faith" as the decisive core of communion. At the same time, it includes questions of order in its argumentation, not making them decisive for communion, but still necessary for full communion in an Anglican-Lutheran context.

Within our Lutheran tradition in the Northern European region, one might observe that there are differences in the approach to ecclesiological reflections on the relation between the basis for the church and for communion, and questions of order. While the western Lutheran churches usually put more emphasis on this constitutive primacy of questions of faith, the other churches often put a

somehow stronger emphasis on the interrelatedness of "faith" and "order". Nevertheless, these nuances do not threaten our community, neither in the Lutheran World Federation nor in the *Porvoo* communion.

Both in the LWF and in the *Porvoo* communion there is a broad agreement on the understanding of the teaching of the Word and the administering of the Sacraments, which is the basis for our being in communion.

## The *Porvoo Common Statement*

The *Porvoo Common Statement* is based on many other dialogues and agreements concerning its understanding of the nature of the church and the goal of visible unity, and concerning the agreement on substantial areas of belief and practice which Anglicans and Lutherans have in common. The report breaks new ground concerning the understanding of episcopal ministry and its relation to succession.

In the *Porvoo Common Statement*, there is spelled out a deeper understanding of apostolicity, of the episcopal office, and of historic succession as a sign.

It is especially this part of the report, giving a broad characterization of episcopé, which opens up for the communion between our churches, and in many ways represents a theological breakthrough for the relation between Lutheran and Anglican churches in the Northern-European context.

In p.57 *Porvoo* says: "In the light of all this we find that the time has come when all our churches can affirm together the value and use of the sign of the historic episcopal succession. This means that



those churches in which the sign has at some time not been used are free to recognize the value of the sign and should embrace it without denying their own apostolic continuity." For us as Lutherans, this means that we are committed to use the sign of episcopacy; we value it as a necessary part of our churches' lives'.

From a Norwegian point of view, we would add that we value it as a necessary part of our church's life and self-understanding, but we would not suppose that one concrete way of ordering episcopacy, the ministry of oversight, should be made the condition for altar and pulpit fellowship. This was one of the main reasons why Church of Norway found it theologically consistent to sign both the Leuenberg agreement and the *Porvoo Declaration*.

It is not my duty to go further in exploring the *Porvoo Statement and Declaration* theologically at this point – it will be done in a lecture later on. Here, I am asked to give an introduction into the main lines of the life of the communion. Most of the structure in the agreement is based on the decisions made in the *Porvoo Declaration*, which is the actual document, which was signed by the churches, not the statement in its whole.

### The *Porvoo Declaration*

In the *Porvoo Declaration*, the signatory churches make a number of fundamental acknowledgements and commitments. Most of the acknowledgements are similar to other ecumenical agreements between churches of the Anglican and Lutheran tradition, such as the *Meissen Agreement* and the *Reuilly Agreement*. The difference lies in (v), where it says: "We acknowledge that personal,

collegial and communal oversight (*episcopate*) is embodied and exercised in all our churches in a variety of forms, in continuity of apostolic life, mission and ministry; and (vi) we acknowledge that the episcopal office is valued and maintained in all our churches as a visible sign expressing and serving the Church's unity and continuity in apostolic life, mission and ministry."

This is certainly a big step, from the Anglican side, to acknowledge fully the ministry in our Lutheran churches. But it is also an important step for churches like my own, when explicitly giving such an emphasis to the role of the episcopal office. The commitment in the *Porvoo Declaration* gives an outline of the practical method for the implementation of the declaration on the life of our churches.

### 3. Historical background and member churches today – *Porvoo* – a global model of communion?

The *Porvoo Agreement* is, like many other ecumenical agreements, fruit of many decades of ecumenical work and negotiations all over the world. Both multilateral dialogues, such as the Lima document, bilateral global dialogues between Anglicans and Lutherans, and bilateral dialogues on a regional level give the background for the process leading towards this milestone of an ecumenical agreement. In addition to that, the strong historical bonds between our countries played an important role.

The *Porvoo Common Statement* is an ecumenical agreement between the Anglican Churches in Great Britain and Ireland on the one hand and Nordic and

Baltic Churches on the other. The Lutheran Churches of Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia and Lithuania are member churches, while the Lutheran churches of Denmark and Latvia participated in the negotiations, but have not finally signed the agreement. These churches participate in the work of the communion as observers.

The full membership in this communion is though created through both the participation in the negotiations and the signing of the *Porvoo Declaration*. Time by time, one of the questions discussed in the communion is, whether the communion can be opened up for other churches who wish to sign the declaration. Theologically, this poses many questions: Until now, the participation in the dialogue leading forward to the agreement was seen as decisive for the full participation in the communion. For the outcome of the negotiations leading towards the *Porvoo* communion, the historical and geographical vicinity was very important. This historical vicinity also includes the fact that all the *Porvoo* churches have episcopal sees and a historical tradition of episcopal structure.

The Lutheran reformation in the Nordic and Baltic countries is to a far extent understood as a church improvement and a process of purification than a radical breach. Therefore, historical episcopal sees continued as such. Still, there is a difference between the Lutheran churches of the *Porvoo* communion, which was important, mainly from the Anglican perspective: In Norway, Denmark and Iceland, the historical succession was interrupted, different from the situation in Sweden and Finland.

The *Porvoo Common Statement* deals with this historical fact by underlining (34):

"In some of the territories the historic succession of bishops was maintained by episcopal ordination, whereas elsewhere on a few occasions bishops or superintendents were consecrated by priests following what was believed to be the precedent of the early Church. One consequence of this was a lack of unity between the ministries of our churches and thus a hindrance to our common witness, service and mission. The interruption of the episcopal succession has, nevertheless, in these particular churches always been accompanied by the intention and by measures to secure the apostolic continuity of the Church as a Church of the gospel served by an episcopal ministry. The subsequent tradition of these churches demonstrates their faithfulness to the apostolicity of the Church. In the last one hundred years all our churches have felt a growing need to overcome this difficulty and to give common expression to their continuous participation in the life of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church."

At this point there has to be added that from the point of the Lutheran churches, we have never had any restrictions concerning the recognition of the Anglican ordained ministry.

### 4. Concrete Examples of Work within Communion

From 1993 until today, the member churches have been working on the implementation of the agreement on many levels: Many parish- and diocesan contacts have been established, there is an exchange of pastors, cooperation on study projects, mutual consultation on theological questions and not at least a great awareness of the importance of the *Porvoo* Communion in the mind of our

church leaders. There are regularly arranged Porvoo Theological Conferences, Church Leaders' Meetings, Primates Meetings, Porvoo Contact Group meetings, taking care of the usual ongoing business and coordinating of arrangements and contacts. Information on the process is regularly put on the Porvoo website ([www.porvoochurches.org](http://www.porvoochurches.org)). As the agreement puts a strong emphasis on "visible unity", Porvoo has been highly successful as a model for how a communion of different churches who are close through their geographical and theological heritage can develop means of common work and life on the basis of a foundational theological agreement.

## 5. Examples from Church of Norway – Implementation of the agreement

One might be interested how an agreement like the *Porvoo Agreement* works out in a context like the Norwegian one, where you can find a strong pietistic and revivalist heritage in many areas of the country, a far reaching scepticism against hierarchical structures of all kinds, and an understanding of episcopal ministry which to a large degree looks at it as a special form of pastor's service, not serving a local congregation, but a local diocese.

Still, there are many different opinions and interpretations of the agreement. But many people have seen the value of the agreement, opening up for a closer cooperation and exchange with our Anglican sister churches on all levels of church life. Here, there are still many opportunities to deepen our communion, both on a local and on a national level.

One concrete example of theological change in my church is that cathedral

deans no longer have the admission to ordain pastors under certain circumstances. It became obvious that this causes theological problems in our relationship to the Anglican churches, threatening the possibility of full interchangeability of ministry inside the communion.

At the same time, even having changed this practice, we will still understand our orders as fully valuable orders, also before we became members of the communion, and before bishops from the Anglican churches were invited to participate in the laying on of hands at the ordination of bishops "as a sign of unity and continuity of the Church" (b.vi).

## 6. Obstacles, challenges and open theological questions

One of the theological points of disagreement is the question of women in the episcopate.

All the Nordic churches, the Church of Ireland and the Scottish Episcopal Church have opened up for having women in the episcopate. Both Church of Norway and Church of Sweden already have several women bishops. It certainly causes problems when priests, both men and women, ordained by our women bishops cannot serve as ordained priests in all the Anglican churches.

What has to be mentioned in this context is that there is an ongoing dialogue on these questions both within and between the churches which are concerned about them. The process of common discernment is still going on, and the Porvoo communion is, due to my opinion, continuously improving in becoming a forum for mutual consultation, exchange on theological questions and, not

at least, mutual accountability on questions concerning the whole communion.

We do not want to sweep the problems under a carpet. If some of the churches will end up with a final decision not only to be in a process concerning this question, but to say that the service of our women bishops is not recognized as right orders, this would cause severe problems to the whole communion, threatening its fundamental idea of full interchangeability of ministry as a visible sign of unity.

There is still theological work to do on the understanding of confirmation, and the understanding of diaconal ministry. Here, there are still theological differences to be solved – and which we are working on in a spirit of mutual consultation and accountability within the communion.

## 7. Perspectives for the communion – personal reflections from a Norwegian point of view

In 2006, we will celebrate the ten years anniversary of the signing of the agreement. Compared to other ecumenical bodies and fellowships, the Porvoo communion is a young communion – and I would personally say that we are on the right way concerning the deepening of our communion, and the common life in witness and service.

One of the challenges is still to underline that the Porvoo communion is concerned about much more than questions of order, ministry and oversight. The broad commitment, which is outlined in the declaration, helps us to keep in mind many of the remaining challenges.

In addition to that, we have to keep in mind our ecumenical commitment, not only to the member churches in the Porvoo communion, but also in strengthening the links and deepening the relationship to other churches, ecumenical bodies and world communions. The Porvoo communion should not become a special northern European block, exclusive in its understanding of communion and ecumenical engagement.

The communion is not an end in itself, but it is a part of the pursuit of a wider unity. It hopefully can contribute and inspire other churches of different traditions to seek for new ways to overcome the remaining differences between them. The Porvoo Declaration shows that it is possible to achieve substantial unity in our faith in the triune God, even when this doesn't seem possible in the beginning.

I will end this introduction, with some of the words from the last paragraphs in the *Statement* on the wider ecumenical commitment:

"We rejoice in our agreement and the form of visible unity it makes possible. We see in it a step towards the visible unity which all churches committed to the ecumenical movement seek to manifest. We do not regard our move to closer communion as an end in itself, but as a part of the pursuit of a wider unity". (60)



## Some Anglican Reflections on the Ecclesiology of the *Porvoo Common Statement*

The Rt Revd John Hind

In this paper I shall not attempt to describe the ecclesiologies of the Porvoo churches, nor take account of developments during the process of the implementation of the agreement<sup>1</sup>. Rather, this is an introduction to the ecclesiology of the Porvoo agreement itself, from an Anglican perspective and with an eye to the Anglican Orthodox dialogue. I say this with some feeling as I am going straight from this meeting to the *Inter-Anglican Standing Committee on Ecumenical Relations*, whose task is to oversee the spread of dialogues and agreements to which Anglicans are party, with a view to ensuring consistency. Not, you will understand, a particularly easy task just now!

The *Porvoo Agreement* has been described by some enthusiasts as "an ecumenical breakthrough". Although I do not share that view, I do consider that it wit-

nesses authentically to a growing agreement about what is required for unity and gives an example of how risks may legitimately (economically) be taken.

The most load-bearing part of the agreement is the Declaration itself, paragraph 58 of *The Porvoo Common Statement*, because this was the section to which the signatory churches formally agreed. Nevertheless the Declaration refers explicitly to chapters II – IV as the basis on which the agreement is made. The Co-Chairmen's *Foreword* is also relevant.

To understand the ecclesiology of the agreement it is necessary to see it in the context of the development of Anglican – Nordic Lutheran relations over about a century.

One of the most important aspects of this, in common with the rest of the ec-

umenical movement, concerns the churches' understanding of the marks of visible unity, and indeed that full visible unity is the goal.

This has gone hand in hand with increasing sophistication in the language and methodology of ecumenical dialogue more generally.

At an earlier period, it was normal for each church to "test" dialogue partners against its own confessional formularies, which were, by definition, compiled in a spirit of confrontation. Only when the "other" passed the test could progress be made.<sup>2</sup> During the course of the twentieth century, however, churches began to revisit the scriptures and the ancient common traditions of the Church together, in order to discover whether they could re-receive and ultimately confess the apostolic faith in common.

The churches have also come to recognise that there are stages on the path to full visible unity. It is increasingly recognised that a real but imperfect communion already exists between the still divided disciples of Jesus Christ and even between the separated "churches" to which they belong.

The unity of the church is of course a gift of God which can ultimately admit of no degrees, because it is the communion with the Father and the Son (of which St John wrote in his first letter<sup>3</sup>). Nonetheless, during its earthly pilgrimage the unity of the Church, like its holiness, remains imperfect, as we are being changed from one degree of glory to another.

This being the case, it is surprising that the unity of the earthly Church must also be revealed by stages. Even those Christians and churches for whom this is, in

principle, an impossible concept, often behave practically as if it were so.

Taken together – increasing clarity about the marks of unity, a new ecumenical method and an acceptance of unity by stages as a way forward – are the context in which most ecumenical dialogue now takes place.

The *Porvoo Common Statement* honours these principles. It is important to stress the dynamic nature of the agreement. By contrast with earlier, more static agreements, Porvoo is based not just on mutual recognition of each other as we are now, but also on a vision of the future which we know will involve us all in changes. This is one of the reasons why any talk of being in "full communion" is carefully avoided and the agreement explicitly mentions preconditions for "closer communion".

The *Porvoo Declaration* itself is based on commitments as well as acknowledgements. In other words, what counts is not just where the churches are now, but where they pledge themselves to be. The first commitment is "to share a common life in mission and service, to pray for and with one another, and to share resources." There is no talk of "independence" here, but rather an openness to the implications of communion. It may be accounted a weakness that despite the encouragement of and some structures for mutual consultation there is no binding commitment to joint decision making even in matters of shared concern either for mission throughout the northern European region or over matters which touch the wider communion of Christ's disciples.

Nevertheless, the agreement does create a framework within which progress can be made towards the full visible unity of the Church.

Unlike some previous agreements, including those between Anglicans and some of their Nordic and Baltic Lutheran partners, the *Porvoo Agreement* not only asks, "What is necessary for Eucharistic fellowship?" but also, "What are the consequences of Eucharistic fellowship?"

St Paul wrote: "The bread which we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in the one bread."

Being a single body implies a complex network of relationships. This is best described as "interdependence". This relationship naturally includes essential preconditions for unity. For Anglicans these are summed up in the *Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral*<sup>1</sup>. The *Porvoo Statement* includes them.

They are not however enough. A marriage is a matter of the heart as well as of juridical, canonical and theological principles. That is why the Statement also paints a "portrait of a church living in the light of the gospel".

Not only the content, but also the method of this "portraiture", should be noted. Scholastic treatises *de Ecclesia* often run the risk of reducing the Church to a set of propositional definitions and thereby of missing its essential quality as mystery. In this context, it is important to remember that in the NT mystery does not mean the "mysterious" but the revealed secret, God's hidden plan, disclosed in Jesus Christ. It implies, moreover, that the truth about the Church, as an article of faith<sup>2</sup>, must always transcend human comprehension. For this reason alternative means of expression and ways of understanding are necessary. The "portrait" offered in the *Por-*

*voo Common Statement* is one such approach. Nonetheless "portraits", like metaphors, similes and analogies of every kind, must be subject to no less critical analysis than any other approach.

Let me now mention some features of *Porvoo*. Note first the commitment "to share a common life in mission and service, to pray for and with one another, and to share resources". The Churches promise also "to welcome diaspora congregations into the life of the indigenous churches to their mutual enrichment" and "to establish appropriate forms of collegial and conciliar consultation on significant matters of faith and order, life and work". Finally, the churches have established a contact group, "to nurture [their] growth in communion and to co-ordinate the implementation of [the] agreement."

These four elements, stressing common life and mission as they do, correspond to some gaps in earlier Anglo-Nordic agreements. Their absence may explain something of the inertia which seems from time to time to have prevented earlier progress.

Before I go any further, I must repeat again an important methodological principle of the *Porvoo* process. The Declaration does not only consist of acknowledgments, that is to say statements of the level of agreement already achieved, but also of commitments. These are not simply declarations of intent, but are themselves part of the basis upon which the agreement rests. They are, somewhat like marriage vows, a spelling out of the implications of the agreement. This is important for Anglicans, as it helps us locate some of the remaining untidinesses of the agreement within the concept of "temporary anomalies."<sup>3</sup> Although this phrase was only "canonized" for Angli-

cans at the 1998 Lambeth Conference, it had already been a factor in our ecumenical approaches for some time. It allows for a certain principle of economy in relations with separated churches when there is clear agreement about the goal of visible unity and a shared commitment to move towards it. It does not mean any change or concession in essential matters, but does enable some progress to be made on the path to full visible unity.

In this way the *Porvoo Agreement* endorses several principles of an increasingly shared ecumenical methodology. These were well summed up in a resolution of the 1988 Lambeth Conference: "This Conference recognises that the growth of Christian unity is a gradual and costly process in which agreement in faith, sharing in prayer, worship and pastoral care, and co-operation in mission all play their part and recommends to the Churches in their own particular situations that they progress from mere co-existence through to co-operation, mutual commitment or covenant and on to full visible unity with all their brothers and sisters in Christ."

This resolution declares that the goal is "full visible unity", that its growth is a process, that various earlier stages may be identified along the way (although these actual words are not used) such as coexistence, cooperation, mutual commitment (or covenant). This does however point to a problem. As I have already suggested, there is a theological and spiritual tension between the God-rooted and God-given reality of communion in Christ (of which there cannot be "more" or "less"), and the painful reality which all Christians must acknowledge that this communion is manifested in partial, fragmentary and sin-distorted manifestations in the terrestrial Christian com-

munity. Hence the many difficulties surrounding ecumenical discussion about the sinlessness of the Church.

I turn now to the specifically ecclesiological aspects of the *Porvoo Agreement*. The preamble to the Declaration indicates that the churches' ability to make the acknowledgments and commitments is based on their claim to share a "common understanding of the nature and purpose of the Church, fundamental agreement in faith and agreement on episcopacy in the service of the apostolicity of the Church." The language is nuanced: on ecclesiology there is "common understanding", in faith "fundamental agreement" and on episcopacy "agreement" in relation to its service of the apostolicity of the Church. This indicates that not only that the *Porvoo Agreement* is far-reaching, but also that it has limitations. This is realistic and should be acknowledged as a strength.

On the basis of this the signatory churches "acknowledge one another's churches as churches" belonging to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ and truly participating in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God.<sup>4</sup> It is characteristic of particular Anglican and Lutheran churches (and even more so of their world confessional families) that none claims to be the one true Church. The language varies. Elsewhere in the Common Statement each is described as "part" of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church. Here the expression is more felicitous: the churches all "[belong] to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ" and "truly [participate] in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God."

To evaluate this acknowledgement correctly it is important to recognize its con-



text, namely the fact that all the participating churches understand themselves as having a particular responsibility under God for the different societies which they serve. This is not a mutual recognition between denominations, but an acknowledgement that each sees the other in its own sphere of influence as it sees itself.<sup>11</sup> In language characteristic of Reformation churches, this is seen to include mutual acknowledgement that "in all our churches the Word of God is authentically preached, and the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist are duly administered." It is, however, not claimed that this is sufficient for the unity of the Church.<sup>12</sup>

Unity in faith is of course an essential element in communion. The interconnectedness of doctrine means however that it is not always easy to distinguish the faith from its formulations and to discern what in some traditions are known as "first and second order issues", in others "the hierarchy of truth" or "essentials and matters indifferent (or accessory)". Some such discernment is necessary and common faith must allow for some diversity of expression. Chapter III includes a summary<sup>13</sup> of "What we agree in faith". This is said to witness "to a high degree of unity in faith and doctrine. Whilst this does not require each tradition to accept every doctrinal formulation characteristic of our distinctive traditions, it does require us to face and overcome the remaining obstacles to still closer communion."<sup>14</sup> This interesting comment reveals not just the importance of unity in faith and diversity of expression, but also admits that "closer communion" requires the overcoming of some further obstacles. On the basis of existing agreement however the churches are able to acknowledge that "all our churches share in the common confes-

sion of the apostolic faith."<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that this expression is not exclusive; "the common confession of the apostolic faith" is not a description of doctrinal agreement between churches, but rather an acknowledgment that each sees in the other the one apostolic faith whose confession marks a community as Christian and whose confession together is a characteristic of ecclesial communion.

Questions concerning the ministry have been among the most intractable aspects of the dialogue between Anglicans and Lutherans especially during the twentieth century. Given the mutual acknowledgement by the Porvoo churches of each other's ecclesial reality, it is only consistent that there should be formal acceptance that "one another's ordained ministries are given by God as instruments of his grace and as possessing not only the inward call of the Spirit, but also Christ's commission through his Body, the Church." This sentence is important for what it does not say as well as what it positively affirms. While being unreserved in its mutual recognition both of the spiritual and ecclesial authenticity of ordained ministry, the Declaration falls short of interchangeability, which is from the perspective of some of the signatory churches no less a feature of full communion.

Such issues apply, *mutatis mutandis*, even more to the episcopate, whose expression has varied between the churches. The Porvoo agreement adopts the distinction sketched out *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* and developed in the *Niagara Report* between "episcopate" (translated as "oversight") and "episcopacy" (the "episcopate") as a particular form of it. The distinction between the abstract "episcopate" and the concrete "episcopacy" is evidently use-

ful for relations between episcopally and non-episcopally structured churches and indeed for churches within which a diversity of views are held about the theological significance of their own church order. Questions have been asked however about whether it may subordinate the reality of the Church (as an historical manifestation of the once-and-for-allness of God's reconciling work in Christ) to a theory about the Church. The sharpness of these questions is accentuated by the idea expressed in the *Porvoo Common Statement* that the historical episcopal succession may be a sign of but does not "by itself guarantee the fidelity of a church to every aspect of the apostolic faith, life and mission". This is a statement of the obvious. But what does it mean? I have written at length about this elsewhere<sup>16</sup>, but it does immediately arouse suspicions. As far as I can discern, nobody and no church claims that simply being episcopal and having bishops in the historical succession protects against all and every error; but then what "guarantee", even in secular, consumer, terms protects the purchaser against the failure of an appliance? Rather a "guarantee" offers a redress, an appeal. The ominous conclusion from the Porvoo statement is however that although the historic episcopate may be useful, perhaps even of the *bene esse* of the Church, is not necessary. This conclusion would exclude a significant tranche of Anglican thinking and would run counter to the judgment of the House of Bishops of the Church of England which, in its advice to the General Synod commending the *Porvoo Declaration*, stated directly that the historic episcopate is non-negotiable. While it was and would not be the intention of the Church of England to bind its sister churches either to its own formularies or to its own internal range

of interpretation its own, it would be unrealistic not to refer to this.

The commitments go some considerable way to remedy any deficiencies in the acknowledgements.

"We commit ourselves:

- (1) to share a common life in mission and service, to pray for and with one another, and to share resources;
- (2) to welcome one another's members to receive sacramental and other pastoral ministrations;
- (3) to regard baptized members of all our churches as members of our own;
- (4) to welcome diaspora congregations into the life of the indigenous churches, to their mutual enrichment;
- (5) to welcome persons episcopally ordained in any of our churches to the office of bishop, priest or deacon to serve, by invitation and in accordance with any regulations which may from time to time be in force, in that ministry in the receiving church without re-ordination;
- (6) to invite one another's bishops normally to participate in the laying on of hands at the ordination of bishops as a sign of the unity and continuity of the Church;
- (7) to work towards a common understanding of diaconal ministry;
- (8) to establish appropriate forms of collegial and conciliar consultation on significant matters of faith and order, life and work;
- (9) to encourage consultations of representatives of our churches, and to facilitate learning and exchange of ideas and information in theological and pastoral matters;

- (10) to establish a contact group to nurture our growth in communion and to co-ordinate the implementation of this agreement."

I have quoted these commitments in full because they seem to me to be more ecclesiological significant in the long run even than the acknowledgements. It is after all more morally demanding to promise something for the future than to acknowledge something at present to be a fact. The commitments are moreover potentially verifiable and can provide material for objective assessments of whether the partner churches are living up to their covenant or not.

In conclusion, the signatory churches make claims for themselves which are both high and modest. On the one hand, they see themselves as "rooted in the tradition of the apostolic Church in continuity with the Church of the patristic and medieval periods both directly and through the insights of the Reformation period, participating in the one apostolic mission of the whole people of God." (para 7). On the other, each sees itself as "part" (but only part) of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church".<sup>17</sup> They concluded "that there were no essential differences between [them] in the fields of faith, sacramental life or ministry (each church already being episcopal in structure) and became "convinced that the way was now open to regard one another's churches, each with its own distinctive character, as sister churches".

This reveals some basic ecclesiological presuppositions. There is a single mission, temporally rooted in the uniqueness of the apostolic tradition, historically mediated. Full partnership in this mission requires unity in faith, sacramental life and ministry. A shared episcopal structure

(sic) is seen as evidence rather than a requirement. Meeting around these characteristics has enabled mutual recognition as "sister churches". Although what that implies is not theologically spelt out, it clearly suggests that the one church is not so much a single organisation but an organism with interrelated members, communities as well as individuals.

They are encouraged in this perception by their agreement that the Church is "the body of Christ, the pilgrim people of God, fellowship (*koinonia*), and also [participates] through witness and service in God's mission to the world."<sup>18</sup>

Given their histories in the medieval, Reformation and post-Reformation periods, it is not surprising that the "Porvoo churches" lay great stress on their national rootedness and responsibility. Although the confidence with which they can claim historical or national identity varies, all have a sense of responsibility as churches for the nations within which they are set. This is both an opportunity and a burden. On the one hand they have, for the most part, a position which enables them to sense and respond to the needs of their societies; on the other hand they do not always find it easy to stand against the prevailing *mores* of those societies.

The shared Reformation history of the Anglican and Nordic Lutheran churches also colours their approach to a number of ecumenically sensitive ecclesiological questions, not least those touching the ordained ministry. In this neither Anglicans nor Lutherans have spoken consistently. In recent years Anglicans have become clearer and more insistent on the historic "apostolic" succession of bishops; they were not always so clear. Similarly, Lutherans have spoken with a number of different accents: sometimes

as if justification means no particular church order is required, sometimes as if it implies, favours or at least tolerates particular forms. The *Porvoo Agreement* suggests that potential tension over these issues is no longer an issue, although some caution may be justified over what different parties actually understand by this.

In this paper I have tried to indicate some of the key ecclesiological features of the *Porvoo Agreement*, and in doing so to point to its strengths from an ecclesiological and ecumenical point of view, without glossing over the challenges it

addresses both to its own signatory churches and to ecumenical partners. Given the inevitable untidiness of the ecumenical movement, I hope friends in other churches will be generous in their assessment of what we have tried and achieved, and that members of our own churches will be robust and direct in their questions. Only through generosity and robustness shall we make real and lasting progress towards the full visible unity which all the Porvoo churches believe is God's gift and our calling.

<sup>1</sup> Specifically, I shall not be discussing any of the tensions within the Porvoo family over such matters as lay presidency of the Eucharist, ordination by deans, the ordination of women and same sex relations. Other differences, which may not amount to causes of tension, include the minister of confirmation and the understanding and practice of the diaconate. Any comprehensive "Porvoo ecclesiology" would have to take these matters into account.

<sup>2</sup> This had led to some difficulties in Anglican - Roman Catholic relations. While ARCIC (The Anglican - Roman Catholic International Commission) sought to get behind the polarised language of the past, some evangelical Anglicans wanted assurances that agreed statements were in full conformity with historic Anglican formularies, especially the *XXXIX Articles of Religion*. From the Roman Catholic side, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, to which ARCIC responded with *Clarifications* (1994).

<sup>3</sup> I Jn 1.3

<sup>4</sup> This theme is further explored in *The Windsor Report* of the Lambeth Commission on Communion, e.g. paragraphs 75, 76

75. The word 'autonomy' represents within Anglican discourse a far more limited form of independent government than is popularly understood by many today. Literally, 'autonomous' means 'having one's own laws' (auto - self, nomos - law), and the autonomy of a body or institution means "[t]he right of self-government, of making its own laws and administering its own affairs".<sup>47</sup> In the secular world it is well settled that 'autonomic' laws are those created by a body or persons within the community on which has been conferred subordinate and restricted legislative power. Autonomy, therefore, is not the same thing as sovereignty or independence; it more closely resembles the orthodox polity of 'autocephaly', which denotes autonomy in communion.

76. A body is thus, in this sense, 'autonomous' only in relation to others: autonomy exists in a relation with a wider community or system of which the autonomous entity forms part. The word 'autonomous' in this sense actually implies not an isolated individualism,



but the idea of being free to determine one's own life within a wider obligation to others. The key idea is autonomy-in-communion, that is, freedom held within interdependence. The autonomy of each Anglican province therefore implies that the church lives in relation to, and exercises its autonomy most fully in the context of, the global Communion.

In its original (1880) version, this read

a. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as "containing all things necessary to salvation," and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith.

b. The Apostles' Creed, as the baptismal symbol; and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith.

c. The two sacraments ordained by Christ himself - Baptism and the Supper of the Lord - ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of institution, and of the elements ordained by him.

d. The historic episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of his Church.

This "portrait" is contained in para. 20 of the Common Statement:

The Scriptures offer a portrait of a Church living in the light of the Gospel:

it is a Church rooted and grounded in the love and grace of the Lord Christ;

it is a Church always joyful, praying continually and giving thanks even in the midst of suffering;

it is a pilgrim Church, a people of God with a new heavenly citizenship, a holy nation and a royal priesthood;

it is a Church which makes common confession of the apostolic faith in word and in life, the faith common to the whole Church everywhere and at all times;

it is a Church with a mission to all in every race and nation, preaching the gospel, proclaiming the forgiveness of sins, baptizing and celebrating the Eucharist;

it is a Church which is served by an ordained apostolic ministry, sent by God to gather and nourish the people of God in each place, uniting and linking them with the Church universal within the whole communion of saints;

it is a Church which manifests through its visible communion the healing and uniting power of God amidst the divisions of humankind;

it is a Church in which the bonds of communion are strong enough to enable it to bear effective witness in the world, to guard and interpret the apostolic faith, to take decisions, to teach authoritatively, and to share its goods with those in need;

it is a Church alive and responsive to the hope which God has set before it, to the wealth and glory of the share God has offered it in the heritage of his people, and to the vastness of the resources of God's power open to those who trust in him.

NB that in the Greek form of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed recited in our churches the preposition "in" prefixes belief in the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church (as it does belief in the Father, in the Son and in the Holy Spirit.)

Lambeth Conference 1998 *Resolution IV.1* (Commitment to full, visible unity)  
This Conference:

(a) reaffirms the Anglican commitment to the full, visible unity of the Church as the goal of the Ecumenical Movement;

(b) encourages the further explication of the characteristics which belong to the full, visible unity of the Church (described variously as the goal, the marks, or the portrait of visible unity); and

(c) recognises that the process of moving towards full, visible unity may entail temporary anomalies, and believes that some anomalies may be bearable when there is an agreed goal of visible unity, but that there should always be an impetus towards their *Resolution* and, thus, towards the removal of the principal anomaly of disunity.

*Resolution 17: "Steps towards unity".*

<sup>10</sup> This expression conceals a debate from the Reformation period about the nature of a "true church of the Gospel"; it has been resurrected in recent years by the CDF with its reference in *Dominus Iesus* (2000) to communities which are churches "proprie sensu". Note should also be taken of the difficulties for some Orthodox churches in joining bodies which are described as "councils of churches."

<sup>11</sup> This explains the emphasis laid in the text on "historic sees". This is not intended to be an antiquarian or legalistic claim, but a recognition that the Catholic Church is an historical as well as an eschatological phenomenon. *Mutatis mutandis* we may hear echoes of Irenaeus and the other early theologians of the "apostolic succession" here.

<sup>12</sup> cf. the famous *satis est* of Article VII of the *Confessio Augustana*

<sup>13</sup> paragraph 32:

a. We accept the canonical scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments to be the sufficient, inspired and authoritative record and witness, prophetic and apostolic, to God's revelation in Jesus Christ. We read the Scriptures as part of public worship in the language of the people, believing that in the Scriptures as the Word of God and testifying to the gospel eternal life is offered to all humanity, and that they contain everything necessary to salvation.

b. We believe that God's will and commandment are essential to Christian proclamation, faith and life. God's commandment commits us to love God and our neighbour, and to live and serve to his praise and glory. At the same time God's commandment reveals our sins and our constant need for his mercy.

c. We believe and proclaim the gospel, that in Jesus Christ God loves and redeems the world. We 'share a common understanding of God's justifying grace, i.e. that we are accounted righteous and are made righteous before God only by grace through faith because of the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and not on account of our works or merits. Both our traditions affirm that justification leads and must lead to "good works": authentic faith issues in love'. We receive the Holy Spirit who renews our hearts and equips us for and calls us to good works. As justification and sanctification are aspects of the same divine act, so also living faith and love are inseparable in the believer.

d. We accept the faith of the Church through the ages set forth in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan and Apostles' Creeds and confess the basic trinitarian and Christological dogmas to which these creeds testify. That is, we believe that Jesus of Nazareth is true God and true Man, and that God is one God in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This faith is explicitly confirmed both in the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, and in the Augsburg Confession.

e. We confess and celebrate the apostolic faith in liturgical worship. We acknowledge in the liturgy both a celebration of salvation through Christ and a significant factor in forming the consensus fidelium. We rejoice at the extent of our 'common tradition of spirituality, liturgy and sacramental life' which has given us similar forms of worship and common texts, hymns, canticles and prayers. We are influenced by a common liturgical renewal and by the variety of expression shown in different cultural settings.

f. We believe that the Church is constituted and sustained by the Triune God through God's saving action in word and sacraments. We believe that the Church is a sign, instrument and foretaste of the Kingdom of God. But we also recognize that it stands in constant need of reform and renewal.

g. We believe that through baptism with water in the name of the Trinity God unites the one baptized with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, initiates into the One Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, and confers the gracious gift of new life in the Spirit. Since we in our churches practise and value infant baptism we also take seriously our catechetical task for the nurture of baptized children to mature commitment to Christ. In all our traditions baptism is followed by a rite of confirmation. We recognise two practi-

ces in our churches, both of which have precedents in earlier centuries: in Anglican churches, confirmation administered by the bishop; in the Nordic and Baltic churches, confirmation usually administered by a local priest. In all our churches this includes invocation of the Triune God, renewal of the baptismal profession of faith and a prayer that through the renewal of the grace of baptism the candidate may be strengthened now and for ever. h. We believe that the body and blood of Christ are truly present, distributed and received under the forms of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper (Eucharist). In this way we receive the body and blood of Christ, crucified and risen, and in him the forgiveness of sins and all other benefits of his passion. The eucharistic memorial is no mere calling to mind of a past event or of its significance, but the Church's effectual proclamation of God's mighty acts. Although we are unable to offer to God a worthy sacrifice, Christ unites us with himself in his self-offering to the Father, the one, full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice which he has offered for us all. In the eucharist God himself acts, giving life to the body of Christ and renewing each member. Celebrating the eucharist, the church is reconstituted and nourished, strengthened in faith and hope, in witness and service in daily life. Here we already have a foretaste of the eternal joy of God's Kingdom.

i. We believe that all members of the church are called to participate in its apostolic mission. All the baptized are therefore given various gifts and ministries by the Holy Spirit. They are called to offer their being as 'a living sacrifice' and to intercede for the Church and the salvation of the world. This is the corporate priesthood of the whole people of God and the calling to ministry and service (1 Peter 2: 5).

j. We believe that within the community of the Church the ordained ministry exists to serve the ministry of the whole people of God. We hold the ordained ministry of word and sacrament to be an office of divine institution and as such a gift of God to his Church. Ordained ministers are related, as are all Christians, both to the priesthood of Christ and to the priesthood of the Church. This basic oneness of the ordained ministry is expressed in the service of word and sacrament. In the life of the Church, this unity has taken a differentiated form. The threefold ministry of bishop, priest and deacon became the general pattern in the Church of the early centuries and is still retained by many churches, though often in partial form. 'The threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter and deacon may serve today as an expression of the unity we seek and also as a means for achieving it'.

k. We believe that a ministry of pastoral oversight (episcopate), exercised in personal, collegial and communal ways, is necessary as witness to and safeguard of the unity and apostolicity of the Church. Further, we retain and employ the episcopal office as a sign of our intention, under God, to ensure the continuity of the Church in apostolic life and witness. For these reasons, all our churches have a personally exercised episcopal office.

l. We share a common hope in the final consummation of the Kingdom of God, and believe that in this eschatological perspective we are called to work now for the furtherance of justice, to seek peace and to care for the created world. The obligations of the Kingdom are to govern our life in the Church and our concern for the world. 'The Christian faith is that God has made peace through Jesus "by the blood of his cross" (Col. 1: 20), so establishing the one valid centre for the unity of the whole human family'.

III.33

V.A.58.a (iii)

cf. *Sign but Not Guarantee* in Ola Tjørholm (ed) *Apostolicity and Unity 2002*

<sup>17</sup> This language of "part" is ambiguous because it might suggest that the *Una Sancta* is made up of the addition of different parts. Many would now prefer to say that each sees itself as an authentic manifestation of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

<sup>18</sup> para. 5

## Porvoo Common Statement from an Orthodox Perspective

Assist. Prof. Ionut-Alexandru Tudorie

The Anglican-Lutheran theological conversations, initiated as far back as the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>1</sup> gained strength during the second half of the last century, mainly after 1967, when bilateral ecumenical relations were established at a worldwide level, through the positive results brought forward by the issues discussed: the sources of authority in both

churches, the sacraments, the episcopate and diaconate within the Church, etc.<sup>2</sup> Deeply rooted in the past doctrinal agreements, the last decades brought the decisive step in this direction: the completion of a series of regional agreements, surpassing the standardized stage of *Eucharistic hospitality*, up to full visible unity.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed perspective on the Anglican-Lutheran Conversations between 1888-1955, in Northern Europe, see: Christopher HILL, "Existing Agreements between our Churches", pp. 53-58 in vol. *Together in Mission and Ministry. The Porvoo Common Statement with Essays on Church and Ministry in Northern Europe*, London: Church House Publishing, 1993, 218 p.; Ionut-Alexandru TUDORIE, "Dialogical ecumenism anglicano-lutheran la nivel mondial, regional și local: excurs istorico-dogmatic", pp. 28-34, in *Journal for the Study of Religions & Ideologies*, no. 9 (Winter 2004), pp. 27-51 (<http://hiphi.ubbcluj.ro/JSRI/>).

<sup>2</sup> See the full texts of *Pullach Report* (1972), *Helsinki Report* (1982), *Niagara Report* (1987) and *Hanover Report* (1995), published in Sven OPPEGAARD & Gregory CAMERON (eds.), *Anglican-Lutheran Agreements: Regional and International Agreements (1972-2002)*, series: *LWF Documentation*, no. 49, December 2004, pp. 23-68; 87-128; 177-200.

<sup>3</sup> In the last years (1991-2001), in North America, Australia and Europe, have been ratified six regional agreements between different local Anglican and Lutheran Churches. See the full texts of *Called to Common Mission* (USA), *Called to Full Communion* (Canada), *Common Ground: Covenanting for Mutual Recognition and Reconciliation* (Australia), *The Meissen Common Statement*, *The Porvoo Common Statement* and *The Revilly Common Statement* (all of them in Europe) in Sven OPPEGAARD & Gregory CAMERON (eds.), *Anglican-Lutheran Agreements ...*, pp. 129-176, 201-268.



The only regional Anglican-Lutheran agreement clearly stating the implementation of the new concept (*full, visible unity*) is *The Porvoo Common Statement*, considered – from the very beginning – as a *breakthrough* in the path towards the recuperation of Church unity, and interesting both from the viewpoint of the number of churches involved (12), and, more important, because it moves significantly beyond a mere static *mutual recognition among churches*.<sup>4</sup> Together

with positive considerations<sup>5</sup> with regard to this text, belonging mostly, but not exclusively, to the Anglican and Lutheran theologians involved in the development and ratification within their own churches (Anglicans: David Tustin,<sup>6</sup> Mary Tanner,<sup>7</sup> John Arnold,<sup>8</sup> John Halliburton,<sup>9</sup> and Lutherans: Tore Furberg,<sup>10</sup> Ola Tjörhom,<sup>11</sup> John Vikström,<sup>12</sup> Michael Root<sup>13</sup>), also a series of less favorable comments were published concerning the

newly promoted ecclesiology (John Hunwicke,<sup>14</sup> Ingolf Dalferth,<sup>15</sup> Martien Parmentier<sup>16</sup>, Henrik Roelvink,<sup>17</sup> George Tavard,<sup>18</sup> Edward Yarnold,<sup>19</sup> Francis Sullivan,<sup>20</sup> Charles Morerod<sup>21</sup>). As much as one can research the latest developments of the Anglican-Lutheran theological dialogue, I don't have any knowledge of a relevant Orthodox approach, except for Georges Tssetsis<sup>22</sup> and Peter Bouteneff.<sup>23</sup> With these contradictory opinions in mind, we must praise the Conference of

European Churches' initiative to promote an unofficial dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Lutheran and Anglican theologians belonging to the Porvoo churches.

## 1. Preliminary contextual reflections

Before an Orthodox analysis of this text, it is necessary to point out a few issues

<sup>4</sup> Ola TJÖRHOM, "The Porvoo Statement. A possible ecumenical breakthrough?", in *The Ecumenical Review*, XLVI (1994), no. 1, p. 101. The membership's average of the involved Churches in *Porvoo Communion* is 45 million, which corresponds to 50% of the European Protestant Christians.

<sup>5</sup> See the majority of the articles published in Ola TJÖRHOM (ed.), *Apostolicity and Unity: Essays on the Porvoo Common Statement*, Michigan/Cambridge/Geneva: Eerdmans Publishing/WCC Publications, 2002, 271 p.

<sup>6</sup> David TUSTIN, "The Impact of the Porvoo Agreement on the Church of England", in *Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke*, 73. Årgang (2002), nr. 3, pp. 163-174.

<sup>7</sup> Mary TANNER, "La posizione anglicana riguardo alla continuità apostolica e alla successione apostolica nella Dichiarazione Comune di Porvoo", pp. 11-21, in Giacomo PUGLISI (a cura di), *Continuità Apostolica della Chiesa e Successione Apostolica*, coll. *Corso Breve di Ecumenismo*, vol. XI, Roma: Centro Pro Unione, 1996, 90 p.

<sup>8</sup> John ARNOLD, "The Porvoo Common Statement and Anglican-Lutheran Relationships in Northern Europe", in *Unity Digest*, no. 8 (November 1993), pp. 17-20.

<sup>9</sup> John HALLIBURTON, "Bishops Together in Mission and Ministry: The Understanding of Episcopacy in the Porvoo Common Statement", in *Theology*, vol. CI (1998), no. 802 (July/August), pp. 253-262.

<sup>10</sup> Tore FURBERG, "Kyrkogemenskap mellan de Anglikanska i Storbritannien och de Lutherska Folkkyrkorna i Norden och Baltikum", in *Tro och Tanke - Supplement*, no. 2, 1994 (*Svenska Kyrkan i det nya Europa*), pp. 21-37.

<sup>11</sup> Except the above-mentioned article (n. 4), see also: Ola TJÖRHOM, "The Porvoo Common Statement – An Introduction and Evaluation", in *Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, 90. Jahrgang (2000), Heft 1 (Januar-März), pp. 8-22; "Apostolicity and Apostolic Continuity in the Porvoo Common Statement – A possible ecumenical model?", pp. 183-187, in Johannes BROSEDER (hrsg.), *Verborgener Gott – verborgene Kirche? Die kenotische Theologie und ihre ekklesiologischen Implikationen*, coll. *Beiträge zur Dogmatik, Ethik und Ökumenischen Theologie*, Band 14, Stuttgart/Berlin/Köln: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 2001, 261 p.

<sup>12</sup> John VIKSTRÖM, "The Porvoo Common Statement from the Lutheran Point of View and the Statement's Significance for the Lutheran/Roman Catholic Dialogue", in *Unity Digest*, no. 12 (August 1995), pp. 18-22.

<sup>13</sup> Michael ROOT & William G. RUSCH, "Perspectives on the Porvoo Statement: Lutheran Reflections on the Porvoo Statement", in *Mid-Stream*, vol. 33 (1994), no. 3 (July), pp. 358-362.

<sup>14</sup> John HUNWICKE, "Letters: The Porvoo leap", in *The Tablet*, vol. 249, no. 8057 (7 January 1995), pp. 15-16; no. 8060 (28 January 1995), pp. 111; "Porvoo or not Porvoo?", in *New Directions*, vol. 1, no. 2 (July 1995), pp. 7-8.

<sup>15</sup> Ingolf DALFERTH, "Amt und Bischofsamt nach Meißen und Porvoo", in *Materialdienst des Konfessionskundlichen Instituts Bensheim*, 47. Jahrgang (1996), nr. 5 (September/Okttober), pp. 91-96; nr. 6 (November/Dezember), pp. 111-118.

<sup>16</sup> Martien PARMENTIER, "Die Altkatholische Ekklesiologie und das Porvoodokument", in *Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, 90. Jahrgang (2000), Heft 1 (Januar-März), pp. 30-49.

<sup>17</sup> Henrik ROELVINK, "The Apostolic Succession in the Porvoo Statement", in *One in Christ*, vol. XXX (1994), no. 4, pp. 344-354.

<sup>18</sup> George TAVARD, "Perspectives on the Porvoo Statement: A Catholic Reflection on the Porvoo Statement", in *Mid-Stream*, vol. 33 (1994), no. 3 (July), pp. 351-358.

<sup>19</sup> Edward YARNOLD, "In line with the Apostles", in *The Tablet*, vol. 248, no. 8031 (9 July 1994), pp. 878-879; "Letters: Porvoo principles", in *The Tablet*, vol. 248, no. 8035 (6 August 1994), pp. 983; "Flawed route to unity", in *The Tablet*, vol. 250, no. 8156 (30 November 1996), pp. 1598-1599.

<sup>20</sup> Francis SULLIVAN, "Comments of a Roman Catholic on *Called to Common Mission & The Porvoo Common Statement*", in *The Anglican*, vol. 33 (2004), nr. 2 (April), pp. 5-12.

<sup>21</sup> Charles MOREROD, "Reflections on Five Recent Agreements between Anglicans and Lutherans", in *Angelicum*, vol. 80 (2003), fasc. 1, pp. 87-125.

<sup>22</sup> Georges TSETISIS, "The Leuenberg, Meissen and Porvoo Agreements seen from an Orthodox Perspective", pp. 184 – 188, in Wilhelm Hüffmeier & Colin Podmore (eds.), *Leuenberg, Meissen and Porvoo: Consultation between the Churches of the Leuenberg Church Fellowship and the Churches involved in the Meissen Agreement and the Porvoo Agreement*, coll. *Leuenberger Texte*, no. 4, Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Otto Lembeck, 1996, 192 p.

<sup>23</sup> Peter BOUTENEFF, "The Porvoo Common Statement: An Orthodox Response", in Ola TJÖRHOM (ed.), *Apostolicity and Unity ...*, pp. 231-244. An Orthodox perspective on Porvoo Agreement has been delivered by Prof. Anastasios Kallis at The 35th International Old Catholic Theological Conference: *The Porvoo Document as a Stimulus to Old Catholic Self-Reflection*, held from 30th August to 4th September 1999 in Wislikofen – Switzerland, which has not been published, but mentioned in *Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, 90. Jahrgang (2000), Heft 1 (Januar-März), pp. 2-3.

of terminology and history. The main questions we are trying to answer in this essay are: a) *How come it was possible for a theological agreement to take place between local churches, representing two different confessions, which have episcopal structures, even though some are based on a presbyterian ordination and others were temporarily interrupted?* and b) *Which ecclesiological model allowed the proposed goal (full, visible unity) to be reached, at least at the theoretical level of the theological agreement?* – because the implementation in each of the signatory churches will prove whether this agreement is able to become a practical reality.

In the last centuries, the ecumenical policy at the worldwide level has been influenced by the well-known doctrinal document, Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry,<sup>24</sup> adopted at the Faith and Order Commissions' meeting in Lima-Peru (3-15 January 1982). The methodology promoted in this document with regard to divergent issues pointed out the giving up of doctrinal absolutism, while encouraging the attempts towards an acknowledgement of the other confessions' point of view. Faithful to this perspective – which was not accepted by the local Orthodox churches<sup>25</sup> – the Niagara Report,

taking on the main issue of the Episcopate (its necessity and importance within the Church), recommended to Anglicans and Lutherans: „formal recognition of each other's ministries" (§86).<sup>26</sup> Using the methodology and the recommendations of the Anglican-Lutheran International Continuation Committee within the Nordic-Baltic confessional area, it was possible for a theological agreement to emerge, which overestimated the positive intention of the Lutheran churches to safeguard Apostolic succession through any means.

It is also important that some Anglican churches entered in communion with some Lutheran churches, but not automatically with other Lutheran churches without episcopal structure, with which the churches from the Scandinavian-Baltic area were already in communion. Even though the intent to expand these ecclesial relationships is clearly stated, a certain degree of pragmatism is obvious in the method used, which on the road to achieve its goal (*full, visible unity*) sacrificed in part some of the permanent characteristics defining the unity of the Church.

As far as *visible unity*<sup>27</sup> is concerned, which the Porvoo Agreement uses, we

must say it is based on an acceptable terminology, but which is subjectively interpreted. The visible unity towards which all Christian confessions converge is not only experimented at a regional or official level, but it relates to a mission and a common visible sacramental experience, which implies the return to the Apostolic roots of the teaching and the ministry. Differing from this point of view, the ecclesiology comprised in the Porvoo Agreement starts out from supposition of the existence of a invisible unity of all those baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity, a unity which awaits only to be discovered through doctrinal adjustments. This ecclesiological perspective, stating the equalization of the theological dialogues' partners, pursued only the discovery of ingenious solutions through which doctrinal differences can be surpassed, as it is obvious in this ecumenical text.

The Orthodox approach regarding the *Porvoo Agreement* must impose evaluations of two distinct problems: on the one hand, the concept of the Church's unity, and on the other hand, the understanding of the Apostolic succession and the Episcopal ministry.

## 2. Unity of the Church in Porvoo Agreement

The first impression of an Orthodox theologian regarding the unity of the Church as it is expressed in Porvoo Common

Statement has two different nuances. Firstly, he will observe that *unitas Ecclesiae* is a Divine gift: "Because the unity of the Church is grounded in the mysterious relationship of the Persons of the Trinity, this unity belongs by necessity to its nature" (§21), an affirmation immediately developed: "Communion between Christians and churches should not be regarded as a product of human achievement. It is already given in Christ as a gift to be received" (§21). In the same time, in order to underline the Divine foundation of the unity of the Church it adds that: "disunity must be regarded as an anomalous situation" and "in this perspective, all existing denominational traditions are provisional" (§22). Also, the unity of the Church should not be regarded as a perfect uniformity: "Unity in Christ does not exist despite, and in opposition to, diversity, but is given with and in diversity" (§23), but nevertheless implies a superior level to today's confessional divisions: "Such a level of communion has a variety of interrelated aspects. It entails agreement in faith together with the common celebration of the Sacraments, supported by a united ministry and forms of collegial and conciliar consultation in matters of faith, life and witness. ... For the fullness of communion all these visible aspects of the life of the Church require to be permeated by a profound spiritual communion, a growing together in a common mind, mutual concern and a care for unity (Phil. 2. 2)" (§28).<sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, vol. *Faith and Order Paper*, no. 111, WCC, Geneva, 1982, 33 p.

<sup>25</sup> Gennadios LIMOURIS & Nomikos Michael VAPORIS (eds.), *Orthodox Perspectives on Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper, no. 128, Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1985, 168 p.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. *The Niagara Report. Report of the Anglican/Lutheran Consultation on Episcopate, Niagara Falls, September 1987 by the Anglican/Lutheran International Continuation Committee, published for The Anglican Consultative Council and The Lutheran World Federation*, London: Church House Publishing, 1988, p. 41.

<sup>27</sup> It is worth to underline that this syntagma (*visible unity*) has replaced, starting with *The Meissen Common Statement*, the well-known formula *full communion*; it was considered that the first expression describe an institutional unity and the second one is more appropriate to a degree of *reconciled diversity*. Cf. Martien PARMENTIER, *art. cit.*, pp. 41-43.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *The Porvoo Common Statement*, series: *Occasional Paper*, No. 3, London: Council for Christian Unity, 1993, pp. 13, 15.



All these assertions are generally acceptable for an Orthodox, taking into account the universal, and not the partial and local value of the Church's unity.

Secondly, an Orthodox theologian will observe the perfect symmetry between the local churches of two different confessions<sup>29</sup> at the ecclesial level: "We each understand our own church to be part of the One, Holy, Catholic Church of Jesus Christ and truly participating in the one apostolic mission of the whole people of God" (§7). Then, the first acknowledgement of the Declaration itself states: "We acknowledge one another's churches as churches belonging to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ and truly participating in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God" (§58, al).<sup>30</sup>

According to the Orthodox ecclesiology, the Church is One and only, because there is only One God, only One Jesus Christ, its Head and Founder, and only One Holy Spirit residing in it. Also, One

is the undivided Holy Trinity, the model of essential and necessary communion with God. The Church's unity is an extension of the Divine unity,<sup>31</sup> expressed by the unity in dogmas, worship, and threefold ministry. These elements are both the criteria and foundation of the One Church.

From the Orthodox point of view, the unity of the Church does not belong solely to the institutional level (exterior), nor does it reduce the relationship with Christ to a simple and subjective voluntary act (interior), but it is more a live unity, ontologically and spiritually in Christ and Holy Spirit. Between the two extreme positions, the Orthodoxy found a *via media* between the apparent antinomy of the transcendence and immanence of God, through the *theology of uncreated energies*, which assure the communion with the divine *ousia* in the Church, through the Sacraments.

With the utmost necessity, the unity of the Church must be expressed through dogmatic unity,<sup>32</sup> because this proves the ever-working presence of Christ in the Church. If dogmas express the experience of Christ's working within the Church, the refusal of such dogmas signifies the rejection of Christ's active presence, thus rejecting the integrity of His efficiency within the Church. The Church's unity must also be founded on worship, through which the Sacraments communicate the active presence of Christ, and in the threefold ministry, as providers of the sacraments and preachers of the unchanging faith in Christ's ever-working presence.<sup>33</sup>

The Orthodox ecclesiology cannot disregard the key-question raised by this exclusivist position: what do the multitudes of Christian confessions that do not confess an intimate and active relation with Christ represent? To a certain degree, the whole creation is objectively comprised in the rays of the preincarnational Logos, in the phase of the Church before Christ, called to be the Church of Christ. Thus, it is obvious that these confessions do know Christ, but only partially, but enough to inherit partially the attribute of Churches of Christ, being called to their fulfillment as the Church of Christ. In this way, it can be said that the Church comprises all the confessions

separated by it, as these could not fully break away from the tradition residing in it. Also, a certain church subsists outside of Christianity, as there are certain ontological relations of humanity with the Divine Logos. So, there is certainly a church in Christian families, due to their relation of faith with Christ, and because they partially share a common belief in Christ with the Universal Church.<sup>34</sup>

### 3. "Successio apostolica" and the episcopal ministry in the Porvoo Agreement

The most important obstacle encountered by the Anglican and Lutheran theologians in their way to the Porvoo Agreement was the finding of a reasonable solution with regard to the Episcopal ministry. A careful analysis of this ecumenical document reveals that the main problems regarding the apostolic succession and historic Episcopate are not different from the difficulties of establishing a formal agreement between Episcopal churches and churches without Episcopacy. More precisely, the particular difference to be overcome by the Porvoo churches is determined by the fact that the Anglican side, which kept the historic succession of Bishops, was now entering in communion not only with a Lutheran side which also rigorously kept it (Sweden),<sup>35</sup>

<sup>29</sup> The equalization between the Anglican and Lutheran Churches stand, firstly, in a branch-type ecclesiology (the Irish theologian William Palmer states: *is the theory that, though the Church may have fallen into schism within itself and its several provinces be out of communion with each other, each may yet be a branch of the one Church of Christ, provided that it continues to hold the faith of the original undivided Church, and to maintain the apostolic succession of its bishops. ... there being now three main branches, the Roman, the Eastern, and the Anglican Communions* - cf. F.L. CROSS & E.A. LIVINGSTONE, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd Edition, Oxford: University Press, 1997, p. 232), and secondly, in a subjective interpretation of the neutral term *koinonia*.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. *The Porvoo Common Statement* ... , pp. 7 - 8, 30.

<sup>31</sup> St. CYPRIAN CHARTAGIENSIENSIS (in *De Catholicae Ecclesiae Unitate*, V) states a classical definition on the Church's unity: *The Church is only One, extending by its development, embracing the multitude of believers. Similarly, the light rays are many, but the light is only one, the branches are many, but the power is one, residing in the root. From one spring flow many rivers, and though they may be many, their origin is one. Try and rip off a ray from Sun's light: you won't be able to, because its light is one.*

<sup>32</sup> The Orthodox theology do not distinguish between more and less important dogmas: see *Responsiones Orthodoxorum Orientalium ad propositiones ex Britannia missas de unione et concordia cum Orientali Ecclesia* - Anno Domini 1718, in J.B. MARTIN & R.P.L. PETIT, *Collectio Conciliorum recentiorum Ecclesiae Universae*, tomus I, Paris: H. Welter, 1905, cols. 395-454.

<sup>33</sup> Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru STILOAE, *Teologia Dogmatic Ortodoxă*, vol. 2, Edicia a II-a, București: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1997, pp. 173 - 175.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. *IBIDEM*, p. 176.

<sup>35</sup> See: Theodor van HAAG, "Die apostolische Sukzession in Schweden", in *Kyrkohistorisk Årsskrift*, 44 (1944), pp. 1-168.

but moreover with another Lutheran side which lost it during the Reformation period (Denmark, Norway, and Iceland)<sup>36</sup> or sometimes afterwards (Finland and Latvia).<sup>37</sup>

In order to solve this doctrinal problem the Anglican and Lutheran theologians representing the churches involved had two options. The first one was to stress the importance of historic Episcopacy and of the tactile apostolic succession, and, following this lead, to find ways of restoring the succession in those churches which lost it. The second was to support the various Lutheran theoretical and practical actions regarding the Episcopal ministry, but, this way, the precise character of the apostolic succession was relativized.

In the introductory paragraph of the 4<sup>th</sup> section, the preservation of Episcopal ministry is certified in all involved churches: "At the time of the Reformation all our churches ordained bishops (sometimes the term superintendent was used as a synonym for bishop) to the existing sees of the Catholic Church, indicating their intention to continue the life and ministry of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. In some of the territories the historic succession of bishops was maintained by Episcopal ordination, whereas elsewhere on a few occasions bishops or superintendents were conse-

crated by priests following what was believed to be the precedent of the early Church. ... The interruption of the Episcopal succession has, nevertheless, in these particular churches always been accompanied by the intention and by measures to secure the apostolic continuity of the Church as a Church of the Gospel served by an Episcopal ministry. The subsequent tradition of these churches demonstrates their faithfulness to the apostolicity of the Church" (§34 – my underlining).<sup>38</sup>

As we can see, in order to avoid the normative character of the succession, the intention to maintain the apostolic continuity of the Church is stressed, in relation mostly with those Lutheran Churches which lost historical Episcopal succession. Then a limit is set to the apostolic succession, as being integrated in the apostolic tradition: "thus the primary manifestation of apostolic succession is to be found in the apostolic tradition of the Church as a whole. ... Within the apostolicity of the whole Church is an apostolic succession of the ministry which serves and is a focus of the continuity of the Church in its life in Christ and its faithfulness to the words and acts of Jesus transmitted by the apostles. The ordained ministry has a particular responsibility for witnessing to this tradition and for proclaiming it afresh with authority in every generation" (§39-40).<sup>39</sup>

Regarding the structure of the ministry in the Church it is pointed out that "the threefold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons became the general pattern of ordained ministry in the early Church, though subsequently it underwent considerable change in its practical exercise and is still developing today" (§41).<sup>40</sup> This creates a fragile balance between the Lutheran theology of one ministry and the Anglican one, preserving the threefold ministry.

Later on, the necessity of the ministry of oversight is brought out because "the diversity of God's gifts requires their co-ordination so that they enrich the whole Church and its unity. This diversity and the multiplicity of tasks involved in serving it calls for a ministry of co-ordination. This is the ministry of oversight, episcopate ..." (§42). This special ministry "is exercised personally, collegially and communally. ... The personal, collegial and communal dimensions of oversight find expression at the local, regional and universal levels of the Church's life" (§44-45).<sup>41</sup>

With respect to the relation between apostolic succession and Episcopal ministry, opposite the Catholic pipeline theory, according to which the infallibility and apostolicity of the Church is guaranteed by the uninterrupted series of Bishops, since the times of the Apostles and up to the present time, creating the possibility for the divine grace to flow as through a spiritual channel along down the generations,<sup>42</sup> the Porvoo text states:

"the continuity of the ministry of oversight is to be understood within the continuity of the apostolic life and mission of the whole Church" (§46). This continuity "is signified in the ordination or consecration of a bishop. In this act the people of God gather to affirm the choice of and pray for the chosen candidate. At the laying on of hands by the ordaining bishop and other representatives with prayer, the whole Church calls upon God in confidence of His promise to pour out the Holy Spirit on his covenant people ..." (§47).<sup>43</sup> But a warning is issued: using the sign of Episcopal historic succession "does not by itself guarantee the fidelity of a church to every aspect of the apostolic faith, life and mission. There have been schisms in the history of churches using the sign of historic succession. Nor does the sign guarantee the personal faithfulness of the bishop. Nonetheless, the retention of the sign remains a permanent challenge to fidelity and to unity, a summons to witness on and a commission to realize more fully, the permanent characteristics of the Church of the Apostles" (§51).<sup>44</sup>

The relativization of the normative character of apostolic succession is eloquently stated in §52-53 of the document: "Faithfulness to the apostolic calling of the whole Church is carried by more than one means of continuity. Therefore, a church which has preserved the sign of historic Episcopal succession is free to acknowledge an authentic Episcopal ministry in a church which has preserved

<sup>36</sup> See: N.K. ANDERSEN, "The Reformation in Scandinavia and the Baltic", pp. 134-160, in G.R. ELTON (ed.), *The New Cambridge Modern History*, vol. II (*The Reformation 1520-1559*), Cambridge: University Press, 1958, 686 p.

<sup>37</sup> See the special articles of Frederic CLEVE (Finland) and Ringolds MUSIKS (Latvia) in vol. *Together in Mission ...*, pp. 71-84, 117-120.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. *The Porvoo Common Statement ...*, p. 22.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. *Idem*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. *Idem*, p. 24.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. *Idem*, p. 25.

<sup>42</sup> Martien PARMENTIER, art. cit., p. 37.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. *The Porvoo Common Statement ...*, p. 26.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. *Idem*, p. 27.



continuity in the Episcopal office by an occasional priestly/presbyteral ordination at the time of the Reformation. Similarly a church which has preserved continuity through such a succession is free to enter a relationship of mutual participation in Episcopal ordinations with a church which has retained the historical Episcopal succession and to embrace this sign, without denying its past apostolic continuity. The mutual acknowledgement of our churches and ministries is theologically prior to the use of the sign of the laying on of hands in the historic succession"<sup>45</sup> (my underlining).

The Orthodox ecclesiology, when relating to the apostolicity of the Church, stresses both the unaltered preservation of the revealed teachings and the apostolic succession. Thus, *Ecclesia veritatis* is that which did not change nor omit a part of the oral and written teachings passed on through the Apostles. The persistence in the integral and unaltered teachings of the Apostles is the „essential distinctive sign of the Church".<sup>46</sup> At the same time, apostolicity implies the apostolic succession of the hierarchy, according to which the gift of episcopacy flows uninterrupted from the Apostles down through the Bishops to our times. Thus in the Church there is both an external transmission of revealed

teachings and an internal transmission of the gift of hierarchy.

Consequently, in the Orthodox ecclesiology the apostolic succession is strictly linked to the historic succession of Bishops.<sup>47</sup> On the contrary, the Porvoo Agreement states that historic succession should not be perceived as a guarantee of the apostolicity of the Church, but as a sign or means of continuity between others. On the other hand, even if this definition should be accepted, the mere existence of multiple means of safeguarding the Apostolicity, does not imply ipso facto the loss of the absolute and indispensable character for any of these means.<sup>48</sup> As a result, this conception required the use of the formula of historical succession sign/means, with an obvious symbolical and phenomenological meaning, instead of the acceptable one: the guarantee – not absolutely interpreted – of the apostolicity of the Church is the historic succession of the Bishops and the Apostolic teachings. For any Orthodox, historic succession is much more than a sign through which "the Church communicates its care for continuity in the whole of its life and mission, and reinforces its determination to manifest the permanent characteristics of the Church of the Apostles"<sup>49</sup> (§50): this Episcopal succession is one of the main

and permanent characteristics of the Church.

The deviation from the Orthodox ecclesial principles – in my opinion – is closely linked with the ecclesial criteria contained in the *Confessio Augustana* (1530) and the *Lambeth Quadrilateral* (1888), established in the well-known historical atmosphere, which are much too limited to be used as a doctrinal ground base for an ecumenical document.

According to article VII (De Ecclesia) of the *Confessio Augustana*, the Church is „congregatio sanctorum, in qua Evangelium recte docetur et recte administrantur Sacramenta", these two criteria being the necessary and sufficient conditions for *esse et unitas Ecclesiae*.<sup>50</sup> More than ever, the real question which preoccupies the Lutherans in the context of ecumenical dialogue is whether the Episcopal structure pertains to *esse* or *bene esse* of the Church. According to the *Confessio Augustana*, the ecclesi-

astical hierarchy can pertain at most to *bene esse*, but there are numerous Lutheran theologians sustaining the necessity of the reintroduction of Episcopate, along with the two above-mentioned necessary conditions for *esse et unitas Ecclesiae*.<sup>51</sup>

On the other hand, the Anglican theology put forward, as a basis for theological dialogue, the acknowledgement of the four points from Lambeth: a) The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as containing all things necessary to salvation and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith; b) The Apostles' Creed as the Baptismal Symbol; and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian Faith; c) The two sacraments ordained by Christ Himself – Baptism and the Supper of the Lord – administered with unfailing use of Christ's Words of Institution, and of the elements ordained by Him; d) The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the var-

<sup>45</sup> Cf. *Idem*, p. 28.

<sup>46</sup> M.P. BRATSIOTIS, "Die Grundprinzipien und Hauptmerkmale der Orthodoxen Kirche", p. 118, in Prof. Hamilear S. ALIVISATOS (éd.), *Procès-verbaux du premier Congrès de Théologie Orthodoxe à Athènes, 29 nov.- 6 déc. 1936*, Athènes: Pysos, 1939, 540 p.

<sup>47</sup> In regard to the historical succession of the Lutheran bishops from the Nordic-Baltic area it was used also in the formula *successio sedis*, which came to replace *successio manus* when the last one did not take place according to the ecclesiastical ritual (cf. Mary TANNER, *art. cit.*, p. 19). From the Orthodox point of view, *successio sedis* does not transmit to the owner bishop *ipso facto* the authenticity of *successio apostolica*.

<sup>48</sup> Peter BOUTENEFF, *art. cit.*, p. 242.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. *The Porvoo Common Statement ...*, p. 27.

<sup>50</sup> See Hr. ANDRUBOS, *Simbolica*, Edicia a II-a, traducere de Patriarhul Iustin, Bucuresti: Editura Anastasia, 2003, pp. 139-154. The Greek theologian has noticed the ambivalent character of the *Confessio Augustana*'s definition of the Church: firstly, *the invisible Church* (congregatio sanctorum) is underlined, but then two very tactile conditions are established for *esse Ecclesiae* (Evangelium recte docetur et recte administrantur Sacramenta).

<sup>51</sup> Cf.: André BIRMELÉ, „La communion entre Églises issues de la Réforme: à propos de la visibilité de l'unité", in *Positions luthériennes*, 50e année (2002), no. 1 (Janvier-Mars), pp. 46-48; Martien PARMENTIER, *art. cit.*, pp. 44-46. See also: André BIRMELÉ, *La communion ecclésiale: progrès oecuméniques et enjeux méthodologiques*, col. *Cogitatio Fidei*, no. 218, Paris/Genève: Les Éditions du Cerf/Labor et Fides, 2000, pp. 275-317. On the other hand, it is hazardous to interpret the article VII (De Ecclesia) of the *Confessio Augustana*: not all the Lutheran Churches involved in *Porvoo Communion* understand in unison this article. Thus, for the local Churches which do not emphasize the necessity of the episcopal ministry, the two criterias from the article VII are sufficient for *esse Ecclesiae*, but for those Churches where the threefold ministry is a visible reality, a new criteria is added, mentioned in article XXVIII (De potestate ecclesiastica): namely the episcopal ministry. In this way we can explain the apparently contradictory opinions of the well-known Lutheran theologians on this specific issue.

ying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of His Church<sup>12</sup> (my underlining). All these items, with a limited doctrinal content, can be found in the *Porvoo Declaration*, in the first four acknowledgements.

#### 4. Conclusions

Welcoming the remarkable motivation provided by both Anglicans and Lutherans from the Nordic and Baltic regions in the search for Christian unity and the obvious focus on a common future, rather than a dissenting past, we must nevertheless point out that during the process of building this unity the doctrinal issues should not be superficially treated.

What actually allowed this theological agreement to be finalized – which for a conservative Anglican from the 19<sup>th</sup> century would have seemed hardly imaginable – besides the subjective interpretation of a neutral ecumenical terminology and the use of the syncretic method promoted by *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, was the overcoming, with its advantages, but also with obvious shortcomings, of that “ancestral neural spasm” characterizing the Anglican Communion: namely, the inflexibility with respect to the understanding of the role and necessity of the Episcopate within the Church.

The compromising or relativization of the Episcopate's absolute character with re-

spect to *successio apostolica* – may be due also to the papal negative response in *Apostolicae Curae* (1896), through which the Roman Catholic Church rejected the validity of the ordinations done by the Anglicans – pushed the signatory Anglican churches towards a more protestant theology. On the other hand, at least regarding the Lutheran churches with gaps in their historic episcopal succession, we can only express the joy that in following the commitments of the *Porvoo Declaration* (especially “to invite one another's bishop normally to participate in the laying on of hands at the ordination of bishops as a sign of the unity and continuity of the Church” - §58, bVI) they will reconsider once again the necessity of Episcopal ministry within the Church – firstly at a formal and exterior level, but then, we dare to hope, at a more deep and interior level.

In regard to the Orthodox Church, even if it is aware of being *Una Sancta*, in ecumenical dialogues we must avoid starting off from an *exclusivist* position, pointing out what is wrong in the doctrine and practice of the ecumenical partners. The right starting point in such an enterprise is a profound *inclusive* character, meaning the discovery of that which is right and true in the other confessions, and also the attempted straightening out of that which was perceived and adopted in a wrong manner.

<sup>12</sup> Text of The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral 1886/1888”, pp. VII-IX in J. Robert WRIGHT (ed.), *Quadrilateral at one hundred: Essays on the Centenary of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral 1886/88 – 1986/88*, Cincinnati/London/Oxford: Forward Movement Publications/Mowbray, 1988, 229 p. See also: Günther GASSMANN, „100 Jahre Lambeth-Quadrilateral: Die anglikanische Einheitscharta und ihre ökumenische Wirkung”, in *Ökumenische Rundschau*, 37. Jahrgang (1988), Heft 3 (Juli), pp. 301-311.

Porvoo Consultation on the Diaconate 25-27 January 2006 The Royal Foundation of Saint Katharine London

## The communion of the Porvoo churches consultation on the diaconate

25-27 January 2006 the Royal Foundation of Saint Katharine London

#### PARTICIPANTS

The Consultation took place under the chairmanship of The Rt Revd Dr Ragnar Persenius, (Church of Sweden) and The Rt Revd Martin Wharton, (Church of England), Co-Chairs of the Porvoo Contact Group

Other participants were

The Revd Prebendary Dr Paul Avis, (Church of England)  
The Revd Canon Rosalind Brown (Church of England)  
The Revd Dr Stephanie Dietrich (Church of Norway)  
The Revd Atis Grinbergs (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia)  
The Revd Peter Hayler (Church in Wales)  
The Revd Canon Dr Charles Hill, Anglican Co-Secretary, Porvoo Contact Group (Church of England)

Mr Leiv Sigmund Hope (Church of Norway)  
The Rt Revd Dr Michael Jackson (Church of Ireland)  
The Revd Knut Erling Johansen, (Church of Norway)  
The Revd Dr Tapio Luoma (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland)  
The Revd Øyvind Meling (Church of Norway)  
The Rt Revd Karsten Nissen (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark)  
The Revd Tiit Pädarm (Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church)  
The Revd Canon Robert Paterson (Church in Wales)  
The Rt Revd Stephen Platten, (Church of England)  
The Revd Dr Matti Repo, Lutheran Co-Secretary, Porvoo Contact Group (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland)  
Professor Turid Karlsen Seim (Church of Norway)  
Deacon Ninni Smedberg (Church of Sweden)



The Revd Dr Anne Tomlinson (Scottish Episcopal Church)  
The Revd Osmo Vatanen (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland)

#### Observers

The Revd Stephen Heard, Chairman of the London Deacons Group  
The Revd Sue Jackson, Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order

### INTRODUCTION

Representatives of the communion of the Porvoo Churches gathered for this Consultation in order to deepen their churches' understanding of and collaboration in the diaconate.

The Porvoo Declaration, the foundation document of the communion between the Porvoo Churches, commits its signatory churches "to work towards a common understanding of diaconal ministry."

The Consultation was encouraged to learn of developments which are taking place in the Porvoo Churches. Both traditions are moving towards one another in their understanding of diaconal ministry, one of the fruits of the growing together of the churches. In the Lutheran tradition, there is a growing awareness of the link between the deacon's ministry and the worship of the church, and in the Anglican tradition, there is a growing awareness of the importance of the deacon as a herald of the gospel in word and action.

Within the strong Lutheran tradition of caritative *diaconia*, steps are currently being taken in some of the Baltic and Nordic Porvoo Churches towards integrating this into the ordained ministry.

Discussion is continuing in each church, and on the practical level there has been some sharing of diaconal ministries. Within the Anglican tradition, there is a concern to take further the study and development of the distinctive diaconate which is flourishing in some dioceses. In both traditions, there is on-going work on the understanding of ministry, ordained and lay.

The framework of the Consultation was based on eight questions which had previously been considered and approved by the Porvoo Primates' Meeting held in Trondheim in October 2005. The questions were as follows:

#### For Anglicans

- What diaconate does the presbyterate have and exercise?
- What is the relationship between the ministry of the Anglican Reader (or lay preacher or catechist) and the ministries of the Deacon and Priest?
- What range of theory and practice can be identified across the Anglican Communion?

#### For Lutherans

- What is the relationship of the Deacon to the ordained Pastorate and to various full-time lay ministers?
- What is the relationship between the caritative and liturgical functions of the Deacon? What of the go-between ministry?
- If ordination to one order is ordination to the ministry, is a subsequent ordination to the priesthood a second ordination?

#### For Both

- What theological questions underlie the interchangeability of diaconal ministry?
- What do we mean by order?

The various papers given at the consultation are available on the Porvoo Churches website: [www.porvoochurches.org/last4years/index.htm](http://www.porvoochurches.org/last4years/index.htm)

### IDENTIFIED AREAS FOR JOINT STUDY AND ACTION

- How do we understand the relationship between the one-ness of the ministry [Porvoo Common Statement 32.j] and the differentiation of ministries? (There are terminological issues to face in this context.)
- How can we grow in a deeper understanding of a three-fold ministry which is non-hierarchical?
- In what ways do the challenges of modern society make us aware of the missiological dimension of this go-between ministry in discerning the needs, hopes and concerns of the times? [Hanover Report C.48]

- What means can be found to explore the breadth of expression found within our Churches of the charitable, liturgical and educational elements of diaconal ministry?
- What do we understand by the liturgical acts of ordination, consecration and commissioning? (There are terminological issues to face in this context.)
- What are the issues raised by direct or sequential ordination to the presbyterate?
- How do we in our various ways make the educational requirements meet the profile of the diaconate?
- What can we learn from one another in forms of education, training and formation for diverse expressions of diaconal ministry?
- What issues are raised by a broadening of the diaconate in some churches to include such callings as youth worker or cantor?