

Porvoo Communion Primates' Meeting
Copenhagen
12-13 October 2017

The Presence, Role and Mission of the Church in a Secular or Post-Secular Society

The Primates and Presiding Bishops of the Churches of the Porvoo Communion met in Copenhagen, Denmark, at the invitation of the Bishop of Copenhagen on 12 and 13 October 2017. The Porvoo Contact Group, made up of a representative of each of the churches of the Communion met at the same time, jointly chaired by the Rt Revd Peter Skov-Jakobsen, Bishop of Copenhagen and the Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson, Archbishop of Dublin. The meeting began with the Eucharist in Copenhagen Cathedral, followed by an opening dinner at which the guest of honour was Ms Mette Bock, Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs in the Government of Denmark. On the second evening the party attended a service of sung evensong at St Albans' Church, Copenhagen, a church of the Church of England's Diocese in Europe. As they walked back through the city centre the doors of all the churches were open for Copenhagen's 'Culture Night'. Thousands of people poured through the churches during that evening.

The churches of the Porvoo Communion exist principally in Europe and, therefore, in the increasingly secular societies of the European nations. Primates and Presiding Bishops shared the stories of the relationship between the sacred and the secular in their own particular settings and found common ground both in needing to face challenges to Christianity and the voice of the Church in the modern world and also in experiencing an awakening of spiritual yearning in an age often characterised as becoming less and less religious. A secular society need not be a threat to the thriving of the Church. Rather, the secular may provide hospitable space to religion, allow the religious voice to be heard and protect the freedom of religious faith and practice. As always there was a focus on the local context and papers were delivered outlining the particular challenges facing the Church of Denmark both in finding the right expression of the relationship of Church and State and in exercising its mission and ministry in local communities.

This meeting fell just before the commemoration of the five hundredth anniversary of the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. Bishop Helga Haugland Byfuglien of the Church of Norway delivered a paper on the contribution of Lutheranism in the modern world, highlighting the Lutheran notion of 'being liberated'. 'Being liberated' is a concept that speaks of being liberated from the boundaries of the world, as well as being liberated into service to the world.

The Churches of the Porvoo Communion exist within and outside the European Union. The question of 'Brexit' and the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union was a key point of discussion. The Archbishop of Canterbury made the clear point that whilst the United Kingdom was leaving the European Union it was not leaving Europe.

The next consultation for the churches of the Porvoo Communion will be in Estonia in October 2018 with the theme 'Minorities and Majorities: A Challenge to Church and Society.'



List of Participants

Primates and Presiding Bishops

- Rt Revd Peter Skov-Jakobsen, Bishop of Copenhagen, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark (Lutheran Co-Chair)
- Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson, Archbishop of Dublin, Church of Ireland (Anglican Co-Chair)
- Rt Revd Dr Martin Lind, bishop, Lutheran Church in Great Britain
- Most Revd Lauma Zusevics, Archbishop Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad
- Most Revd Mark Strange, Primus, Scottish Episcopal Church
- Most Revd and Rt Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, Church of England
- Most Revd Dr Kari Mäkinen, Archbishop of Turku, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
- Rt Revd Helga Haugland Byfuglien, Presiding bishop, Church of Norway
- Rt Revd Dr Jorge Pina Cabral, Diocesan Bishop, Lusitanian Church, Portugal
- Most Revd Dr Antje Jackelén, Archbishop, Church of Sweden
- Rt Revd Carlos López Lozano, bishop, Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church

Porvoo Contact Group members

- Revd Dr Tomi Karttunen, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland
- Revd Helene Steed, Church of Ireland
- Very Revd Dr Andris Abakuks, Dean, Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad
- Revd Dr Thorsten Rørbæk, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark
- Ms Miriam Weibye, Church Relations Officer, Scottish Episcopal Church
- Revd Dr Sigurdur Arni Thordarson, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Iceland
- Revd Jenny Sjögren, Church of Sweden
- Revd Tauno Teder, Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church
- Revd Ainārs Rendors, ecumenical secretary, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia
- Revd Tuomas Mäkipää, Chaplain, Chaplaincy of St. Nicolas, Helsinki, Diocese in Europe
- Revd Dr William Adam, Church of England (Anglican Co-Secretary)
- Ms Beate Fagerli, Church of Norway (Lutheran Co-Secretary)
- Revd Dr Maria Klasson Sundin, Church of Sweden (Lutheran Co-Secretary)

Apologies received from

- Most Revd Richard Clarke, Archbishop of Armagh, Church of Ireland
- Rt Revd Agnes M. Sigurðardóttir, bishop of Iceland
- Most Revd Janis Vanags, Archbishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia
- Most Reverend John D E Davies, Archbishop of Wales
- Most Revd Urmas Vilma, Archbishop, Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church

Guests and Presenters

- Ms Mette Bock, Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs and Member of the Parliament for Liberal Alliance Secretary to the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs Ms Anna Sophie Wiese
- Mr Christian Dons Christensen, Head of Department, Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs
- Ms Karen Klint Chairman of the ecclesiastical commission of the Danish Parliament and Member of the Parliament for Socialdemokratiet
- Dr jur Hans Gammeltoft-Hansen, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark
- Revd Rikke Juul, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark
- Rt Revd Marianne Christiansen, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark
- Dr Mogens S. Mogensen, chairman of the Council of International Relations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark
- Mr Birger Nygaard, general secretary of the Council of International Relations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark