



Towards Closer Unity:

Communion of the Porvoo Churches

20 Years

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Porvoo Communion of Churches

2016

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Introduction

”If the gospel is to be allowed to define and shape the life of our communities, this requires us not only to be faithful to the tradition which we have inherited, but also to be responsive to new issues. A special challenge faces those who belong to national churches: to exercise a critical and prophetic role within the life of their own nation, and also to witness to a unity in Christ which transcends national loyalties and boundaries. We believe that the insights and proposals contained in this report offer a way to bring us closer together in answering that challenge, and in enabling our churches to bear effective Christian witness and service not only within their particular nations and cultures but also within a broader European setting.”

These were the wise and prophetic closing words in the foreword to the Porvoo Common Statement by the Rt Rev. David Tustin and the Rt Rev. Dr Ture Furberg. The statement and the Porvoo Declaration as its practical conclusion and application belongs to the major ecumenical achievements of the 1990’s and thereafter. It was a breakthrough prepared especially by the consensus and convergence harvested in the Lima document (BEM 1982) and in the Anglican-Lutheran, Lutheran-Roman Catholic and Anglican-Roman Catholic theological dialogue. After much work and prayer and hidden providence of the Spirit we could find an Anglican-Lutheran differentiating consensus especially in the question regarding episcopal ministry in historic succession serving the apostolicity of the whole church as a sign and as “a permanent challenge to fidelity and to unity” in the Church “in its life in Christ and its faithfulness to the words and acts of Jesus transmitted by the apostles”.

Important was also our joint historical heritage and similar contextual challenges: “We found that we had similar histories and faced similar challenges in contemporary society, and that there were no essential differences between us in the fields of faith, sacramental life or ministry (each church already being episcopal in structure). We became convinced that the way was now open to regard one another’s churches, each with its own distinctive character, as sister churches. The time was ripe to move close together and to implement a practical agreement which would be relevant to laity and clergy alike in carrying out our common mission.”

After 20 years, we can say that in many ways we have concretely experienced growth in unity and friendship. On the other hand, we have also experienced the challenges in living in communion. The mutual bonds in our common Christian faith, ministry and friendship within our communion have proved to be strong enough to deal with difficult questions, which have proven to be even church-dividing at times, not only between the churches, but also in the churches. To-

gether we can encounter the joint challenges more informed by our traditions and by our varying contexts.

During these years many Church Leaders' consultations have been organized as places of encounter and council. The Porvoo Primates meet biannually and the Porvoo Contact Group annually. Every fourth year theological conferences on a specific theme are organized. Theological, ethical and practical questions in the church life have been dealt with in the spirit of change of gifts and sharing of our joys and concerns in numerous consultations, which are planned and arranged by the Porvoo contact group together with the hosting church.

The contributions in this book are intended to harvest some of the theologically and ecumenically insightful perspectives, which the Porvoo Common Statement and our joint Christian and theological traditions today provides for the churches and for the world in Northern Europe and beyond. We are grateful for the commitment and wisdom of the authors. Our hope is that this anthology will make the work done more visible in various contexts from grass roots level to academic discussions and research. We have deliberately wanted to be open also for the global and wider ecumenical perspective in the consultations at the same time as we have aimed to learn more about our Anglican and Lutheran heritage which also provide the energy of difference and the elasticity of diversity.

There are good causes to be grateful for the gift of communion and for the accompaniment and enrichment so far. We have received even more than was originally dared to think about. The communion is not only a text, but a lived reality. Yet in order to be a more visible communion also in the everyday realities much prayer and work is still needed. In today's Europe new boundaries, polarities and enemy pictures are again arising. Also from this perspective our common theological, historical and contextual basis for the communion can be regarded as a gift and as a task for the Church in and for the world. As in all closer relationships, this means also earnest dialogue among equals, accountability and openness for mutual change, and learning so that we can continue to deepen our unity on the basis of the living apostolic heritage and warm friendship in order to serve trustworthily in mission and ministry of the one, apostolic, catholic and holy Church of Christ.

The Most Reverend *Michael Jackson*,
Archbishop of Dublin

The Right Reverend *Peter Skov-Jakobsen*
Bishop of Copenhagen

I THE PORVOO COMMON STATEMENT AS A CONTRIBUTION TO THE VISIBLE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

David Tustin

What Made 'Porvoo' Possible?

Introduction

To start at a tangent, let me ask a quite different question: what made possible that amazing fixed link across the gateway to the Baltic? To be able cross the Øresund (the Danish Sound) by tunnel to an artificial island and over a road-and-rail bridge 8 kms long is a staggering achievement. This link is of such huge symbolic and practical importance that it now seems obvious and necessary. What made it possible in the year 2000, but not earlier?

It does not take a genius to see that the creation of the Øresundforbindelsen could only happen because several factors combined together:

- a. separate countries recognised common interests and benefits;
- b. co-operation and mutual understanding grew, without any sense of threat;
- c. engineering skills made huge technical advances in; and (above all)
- d. the political will and commitment existed to fund and approve such a project.

You could say much the same for the Porvoo Agreement. It was achieved not by any single factor, but by several influences which came together providentially, enabling four Anglican and six Lutheran Churches to sign jointly in 1996. To understand these various contributory elements we need to view 'Porvoo' in a broad perspective. Though it took place in Northern Europe, it cannot be adequately explained in terms of this region alone. Its final phase was fairly swift, but it had been in gradual preparation for over 80 years. It is a bilateral agreement, but draws on insights from wider ecumenical dialogue. In some respects 'Porvoo' is a typical Faith & Order document, yet it hinges round a particular moment of

opportunity in European political history and moves beyond dialogue into the practical details of a changed relationship between churches.

As I see it, **five main elements** came together to make Porvoo possible:

1. the missionary motivation that has long underlain Anglican-Lutheran convergence;
2. the re-discovery of a shared understanding of church and ministry;
3. the patient process of dialogue, reception and decision-making, driven forward by the vision and commitment of some remarkable guiding personalities;
4. sweeping social and political changes in Europe that made the time ripe for Porvoo to come to fruition;
5. some theological 'building blocks' that formed a basis for this agreement.

Let us explore these in turn.

1. The motivation for convergence

Anglicans and Lutherans had been growing apart for over three centuries, but what began driving them together was the Church's mission outside Europe. They found themselves working side by side, whether in caring pastorally for émigré congregations in North America, or in evangelising the peoples of Africa or Asia. To cite just two examples, hundreds of Swedes who emigrated to the USA were looked after initially by the Episcopal Church. In South India the Swedish Missions Board raised concerns in 1906 about ordaining Indians as ministers, and it was this issue that prompted the 1908 Lambeth Conference to open formal dialogue with the Church of Sweden¹.

The impetus towards Anglican-Lutheran convergence followed similar lines to the ecumenical movement as a whole. World mission created the need for practical co-operation at ground level. This, in turn, raised questions of Faith & Order - not abstract theologising for its own sake, but grappling with principles that relate to mission. A significant feature of the Niagara Report², which produced such a breakthrough in our understanding of *episcopé*, was this same missionary dynamic. Old questions took on a new look when we approached them from the angle of mission.

Similarly, in the Porvoo Conversations we found that the Church in each of our respective countries was up against the same basic challenge to re-state the

1 See C. Lytkkens – *'The Growth of Swedish-Anglican Intercommunion 1833–1922'* (Gleerups 1970).

2 Report of the Anglican-Lutheran Consultation on Episcopé, Niagara Falls 1987 (ACC / LWF 1988).

Christian faith in response to a prevalent materialism and many people's yearning for spiritual values.³ We felt strongly that we could and should help each other by working more closely together in mission and ministry, and this is how it has turned out.

Shared ecclesiology

As Anglicans and Lutherans have increasingly engaged with one other, we have re-discovered our family likeness as churches. We are alike in believing ourselves to be truly part of God's one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. We are held together by the same main beliefs and liturgical practices.⁴ We agree that all ministry flows from the baptismal calling of the whole People of God, and recognise each other's churches as communities that have remained faithful to Scripture and the apostolic message through the upheavals of history. We respect the different ways in which continuity of pastoral leadership has been secured through times of emergency, and can all now say that we 'value and maintain the episcopal office' within the oneness of the ordained ministry of Word and Sacraments given by Christ.

At the same time our churches have an indigenous and national character that makes them distinct from one other. They are autonomous, yet inter-dependent within our world communions - an ecclesiology much akin to Orthodoxy. Because Anglicans and Lutherans are the same kind of church, we are natural partners, and share similar convictions about the importance of visible unity. This close affinity is a major factor that helped to make Porvoo achievable.

Process and personalities

It was a long road from the start of dialogue at Uppsala in 1909 to signing 'Porvoo' in 1996. There is not time to go through all that history now.⁵ I would simply point out the process of rapprochement had several strands, such as the inter-consecration of English and Swedish bishops from 1920, the Anglo-Scandinavian Theological Conferences from 1929, the friendships forged with Baltic communities living in exile after World War II, the Pastoral Conferences from 1977 and the involvement of many Anglican and Lutheran theologians and church leaders

3 Held in 1989-92. See *Together in Mission & Ministry* (CHP 1993), especially page 8.

4 Ibid, pages 18-21

5 See C.J. Hill - *Existing Agreements between our Churches* in TMM, pages 53-58; and M. Root & D. Tustin - *A Brief Orientation* in LWF Documentation 49/2004 on Anglican & Lutheran Agreements (regional and international) 1972-2002.

in the ecumenical movement as a whole. Through such means our two traditions came to know and appreciate one another better. Indeed, many gifted and inspiring personalities fostered this process.⁶

As regards the Porvoo Conversations I feel sure that my fellow co-chair, Tore Furberg, would agree that we were constantly amazed by the level of talent on which we could draw amongst the delegates, consultants and staff secretaries. Without mentioning names it is enough to say that, on the Anglican side, since their appointment to serve in that project, one was appointed archbishop, seven others became bishops and another is now a President of the World Council of Churches. It was similar on the Lutheran side. Having a whole team of such able ecumenical theologians was undoubtedly part of what made Porvoo possible.

A further contributory factor was the energy and expertise that went into translating the English text, producing study-guides, and engaging in synodical debate – each church in its own way. To secure the reception of Porvoo was not like simply ‘falling off a log’. The arguments had to be convincingly put and carried, and our church leaders played a significant role by the positive stance they took. What also helped was that these proposals posed no threat; they created no ‘losers’. Providentially this exercise occurred when financial resources and staff levels were less stretched than they are now.

Somewhere in the equation we should see the hand of God and the promptings of the Holy Spirit, hard though it is reckon with this factor in reaching an historical judgement. It certainly felt as if we were doing the right thing. Sometimes it was like rolling a stone up a long slope, but Somebody seemed to be helping us!

Social and political changes in Europe

The First and Second World Wars set back the advance of Anglican-Lutheran relations by many years, but from the late 1940's momentum gathered pace again. By the late 80's world leaders were talking of our “common European home”, and of Europe “breathing on two lungs again”. The Common Market re-invented itself as the European Union with twelve member nations from 1987. Subsequent enlargements added Finland and Sweden in 1995, and later the three Baltic States after their independence. Our nations were struggling towards a new form of mutual coherence, and transferred vast sums of money into regional development. At the same time immigration heightened the importance of inter-ethnic community relations. Add to this the ease of international travel, the increase of intermarriage, the multiplication of cultural and educational exchanges, the

⁶ E.g. on the Anglican side John Wordsworth, George Bell, Arthur Headlam, Herbert Waddams, Leslie Hunter, Michael Ramsey, Geoffrey Lampe, etc.. Lutherans must choose their own heroes!

advent of the internet and mobile telephones – and you begin to glimpse the changed social context that made Porvoo possible.

Whereas the Meissen Agreement had been facilitated partly by a wave of public concern for Anglo-German reconciliation, the impetus for Porvoo was different and broader. Huge new factors were the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe, and the vigorous quest of the three Baltic States to claim back their identity as sovereign states within Western Europe. This resurgence of nationalism temporarily enhanced the churches' role. It was a highly symbolic moment when two million people formed a chain of human hands stretching between Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius in August 1989, the 50th anniversary of the secret Nazi-Soviet pact.⁷ This appeal to end illegal occupation caught the imagination of Western world.

In such a climate it was only fitting that the next round of Anglican-Lutheran talks should include not only the five Nordic churches, but also the Baltic ones. I recall the exceptional welcome that I received when visiting Estonia and Latvia in June 1989 as the Church of England's first official delegate for 50 years to revive the ecumenical agreements of 1938. With the tiny Lutheran Church that survived in Lithuania we had had no previous relations, but it was unthinkable to leave out any part of the trio, and so from 1992 fresh links were forged with that growing church. It was equally natural that the Anglican provinces of Ireland, Scotland and Wales should also come in as full partners.

Thus the scene was set for twelve countries to be involved by the end of Porvoo Conversations. We said in the opening chapter of the Porvoo Common Statement that our nations and continent were “at a time of unparalleled opportunity, which may properly be called a *kairos*”.⁸ In other words, Porvoo became possible because the time was ripe - socially and politically, as well as ecclesiastically.

Theological building blocks

The seeds of 'Porvoo' were already present in the **Pullach Report** of 1972⁹, the first Anglican-Lutheran report at global level. One of its secretaries was Günther Gassmann, who is mainly remembered for his herculean labours with the Lima text on '*Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*'.¹⁰ That multilateral document, especially the section on Ministry, was another building-block that made Porvoo possible.

7 See A. Palmer – '*Northern Shores*' (Murray 2005), pages 394–396.

8 TMM, page 7, paragraph 6.

9 See LWF 49 / 2004, pages 23–46.

10 Faith & Order Paper no. 111, published WCC Geneva, 1982.

I have already mentioned the **Niagara Report** 1987, to which ‘Porvoo’ is but one of three parallel regional responses – the others being in the USA¹¹ and Canada¹².

Another vital building-block was the Anglo-German **Meissen Agreement**, hatched in 1988 and signed in 1991¹³. Without ‘Meissen’ we could not have taken the further step to ‘Porvoo’, not just because of its theological content but on account of its format, which had three components:

- a. a lengthy Common Statement, agreed by the delegates as a theological rationale, but not claiming confessional status or requiring synodical approval in detail;
- b. a brief Common Declaration listing specific “agreements, acknowledgements and commitments”; this was for synodical approval, without amendment, by those churches wishing to opt into the agreement;
- c. an implementation process, including some form of Contact Group charged with fostering practical progress, conducting periodic reviews and engaging its parent bodies on a continuing basis.

This was the threefold ‘package’ which ensured that ‘Meissen’ was not just a paper agreement, but could made things happen at all levels. It is hardly surprising that ‘Porvoo’ followed the same format since several of the same people were involved. Having proved its worth, this format has been used in at least four other schemes.

It was prudent, in my view, to let churches opt in without requiring that all should necessarily do so.¹⁴ It was also helpful to use the phrase “... *in accordance with any regulations which may from time to time be in force ...*”¹⁵, which saves having to re-write the agreement when churches modify their internal rules.

Conclusion

It seems to me that what made Porvoo possible was a providential combination of all the elements I have described. If in hindsight this agreement seems utterly obvious and necessary, let us bear in mind:

- a lot of building blocks had to be put in place before it could happen;
- a good deal of vision, energy and perseverance were required;

11 ‘Called to Common Mission’ (1999), see LWF 49 / 2004, pages 231–242.

12 ‘Called to Full Communion: the Waterloo Declaration’ (2001), see *ibid*, pages 243–248.

13 ‘On the Way to Visible Unity: the Meissen Common Statement’ (1988), see *ibid*, pages 129–144.

14 See TMM, page 5, paragraph 11.

15 See Porvoo Declaration, paragraph 58b (v).

- the time had to be ripe, and the wind of the Spirit had to fill our sails.

It happened!

The Concept of Unity in the Porvoo Common Statement: Visible Unity and Ecclesial Diversity

The Background

It helps to understand the concept of visible unity in the Porvoo Common Statement when something of the history of the participating churches, as well as the context of Europe in the beginning of the 1990, is remembered. All of the participating churches in the conversations were churches of the western catholic tradition which, from the Reformation period, were conscious of continuity with the apostolic church and of being part of the One, Holy, and Catholic Church of Jesus Christ. As the Porvoo Common Statement (PCS)¹ itself puts it:

The faith, worship and spirituality of all our churches are rooted in the tradition of the apostolic Church. We stand in continuity with the Church of the patristic and medieval periods both directly and through the insights of the Reformation period. 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)

There was thus a commonality of experience and ecclesial understanding as well as the shared pre-Reformation history. Moreover, the participating churches had been actively engaged in the twentieth-century search for the visible unity of the church, through participation in the multilateral work of the World Council of Churches, the international bilateral conversations, and regional and local councils of churches. Over the years close relations had been established between some of the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches and the Anglican churches of Britain and Ireland through agreements that had resulted in a greater visibility of communion. For example, from the 1920 eucharistic hospitality was practiced between the Church of England and the Church of Sweden; Swedish bishops took part in Anglican episcopal consecrations and vice versa. From the middle of the 1930 the same mutual relations became the accepted norm with the Church of

1 Published in *Together in Mission and Ministry* (Church House Publishing, 1993).

Finland, and by the late 1930 were extended to Latvia and Estonia. In the 1950 communicants from Norway, Denmark, and Iceland were welcomed to receive Holy Communion in the Church of England, though not to take part in episcopal consecrations. Although these agreements were between the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches and the Church of England, they were generally accepted by the other Anglican churches of Britain and Ireland, as well as by other parts of the Anglican Communion.² The implementation of these piecemeal agreements, together with the participation of Lutheran representative bishops from these churches at Lambeth Conferences, already by the 1990 demonstrated visibly the degree of communion that these churches shared in faith, sacramental life, and ministry. In addition to this experience of a degree of visibly shared life there were other things that contributed to the understanding of visible unity and ecclesial diversity that lies behind PCS. These Anglican and Lutheran national churches had, through membership in their own world communions, an experience and sense of what it means to be part of a worldwide communion and an understanding of how worldwide communion is made visible. Moreover, both the Anglican Communion and the Lutheran World Federation in the twentieth century had come to deepen their understanding of what it means to be a world communion and what is required to make that communion visible. For example, as Anglicans spread into the different regions of the world they had to discover what it is that holds them together in an Anglican Communion. The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, with its reference to scriptures, creeds, the two dominical sacraments, and ministry in the historic episcopal succession, came to describe not only the elements that were constitutive of Anglican unity, but also provided the clue to the sort of unity Anglicans were called to live with other Christians. At the Lambeth Conference of 1988 Archbishop Robert Runcie, in his opening address on the nature of the unity we seek, emphasized that the unity of the church also requires the service of councils or synods and the ministry of primacy, a personal focus of unity and affection. He asked sharply, could not all Christians come to reconsider the kind of primacy exercised within the Early Church, "a presiding in love for the sake of the unity of the Churches"?³ Archbishop Runcie's speech and the discussions at the 1988 Lambeth Conference show Anglicans seeking to understand and develop instruments of unity and communion to strengthen the interdependence of the provinces and make more visible and effective the unity

2 Christopher Hill, "Existing Agreements between our Churches," in *Together in Mission and Ministry*, pp. 53ff.

3 Robert Runcie, "Opening Address to the Lambeth Conference," in *The Truth Shall Set You Free: The Lambeth Conference, 1988* (Church House Publishing, 1988), pp. 21ff.

of the communion. It was usual for Anglicans to refer to the visible unity of the church, held together with these constitutive elements, as "organic union."

In a similar way the Lutheran World Federation in the second half of the twentieth century was reflecting upon its own experience and understanding of being a worldwide communion. Since 1947 Lutheran member churches had come to see themselves as a communion of churches enjoying pulpit and altar fellowship. Later on, some were beginning to ask whether the name Lutheran Communion was not a more appropriate name than Federation to describe the nature of their unity. Lutheran commitment to the visible unity of a wider Christian fellowship came to be described in terms of a commitment to "unity in reconciled diversity." This was put forward, in part, as a corrective to the notion of organic union that was regarded by some Lutherans as an organizational straight jacket with no possibility of ever being attained. Harding Meyer and Gunther Gassmann wrote of reconciled diversity:

The principle must be adhered to that at every level — local, regional, and universal — of the ecumenical quest for unity and its realisation room must be allowed, in principle at least, for confessionally determined convictions and structures of fellowship, including their indispensable, institutional and structural presuppositions.⁴

Commenting on this, Michael Root explains that what is foreseen is not simply the communion of highly diverse local churches or the ongoing institutional identifiability of confessional traditions, but parallel church structures. Here, he suggests, there seems to lie the specificity of unity in reconciled diversity.⁵

So, by the early 1990 both Anglicans and Lutherans, while committed to developing and deepening their own unity, were also thoroughly committed to seeking to manifest visibly the unity of all Christian people. For both communions, their own experience of unity and their understanding of what holds a world communion together provided clues about the sort of life they believed God was calling them to live together in a wider Christian fellowship.

There is little doubt that the developments taking place in both world communions were in their turn influenced by the reflections and statements of the international theological dialogues that blossomed after Vatican II. Both Anglicans

4 G. Gassmann and H. Meyer, "Requirements and Structures of Church Unity," in G. Gassmann and H. Meyer, eds., *The Unity of the Church: Requirements and Structure* (Lutheran World Federation Report, no. 15, 1983), p. 23.

5 Michael Root, "'Reconciled Diversity' and the Visible Unity of the Church," in *Community, Unity, Communion: Essays in Honour of Mary Tanner*, ed. C. Podmore (Church House Publishing, 1998).

and Lutherans were heavily involved in bilateral conversations. In the multilateral context, successive Assemblies of the World Council of Churches had produced statements on the goal of visible unity and gradually put content into the phrase "the visible unity of the Church." The New Delhi Assembly talked of unity made visible when "all in each place" are united to "the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages," when Christians were in one fully committed fellowship, "holding the one apostolic faith, preaching the one Gospel, breaking the one bread, joining in common prayer, and having a corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all." This fellowship would "act and speak together as occasion requires."⁶ Eight years later the Uppsala Assembly developed the notion of the fellowship as a "conciliar fellowship" and described the unity as "a sign of the coming unity of humankind."⁷ The Nairobi Assembly in 1975 clarified the notion of "conciliar fellowship" further as a fellowship of local churches that are themselves truly united. They are united by "the same apostolic faith . . . the same baptism . . . share in the same eucharist" and "recognise each other's members and ministries." "Relationships are sustained in conciliar gatherings called for the fulfilling of their common calling."⁸ The Vancouver Assembly in 1983 offered a threefold description of visible unity, bringing together the constitutive elements of visible unity with unity in service and mission in a world in need of healing and reconciliation.

First, the churches would share a common understanding of the apostolic faith, and be able to confess this Message together in ways understandable, reconciling and liberating to their contemporaries. Living this apostolic faith together, the churches help the world to realise God's design for creation.

Second, confessing the apostolic faith together, the churches would share a full mutual recognition of baptism, the Eucharist and ministry, and be able through their visible communion to let the healing and uniting power of these gifts become more evident amidst the divisions of humankind.

Third, the churches would agree on common ways of teaching authoritatively, and be able to demonstrate qualities of communion, participation and corporate responsibility that could shed light in a world of conflict.

6 *The New Delhi Report* (SCM Press Ltd., 1962), p. 116.

7 *The Uppsala 68 Report*, ed. N. Goodall (World Council of Churches, 1968), pp. 17ff.

8 *The Report of the Nairobi Assembly* (World Council of Churches, 1976), pp. Goff.

Such a unity — overcoming church division, building us together in the face of racism, sexism, injustice — would be a witnessing unity, a credible sign of the new creation.⁹

These are important statements describing the goal of the ecumenical movement as visible unity. However, in all of these Assembly statements there is some ambiguity. It is possible to interpret the reference to "churches" as applying to local churches, in which case the vision of visible unity tends toward a communion of local churches joined by the faith, the sacraments, and conciliar structures. On the other hand, some would maintain that "churches" in these statements refers to denominations. This gives a rather different perspective to the concept of visible unity, making it more akin to that of reconciled diversity. It is likely that these Assembly statements are read differently by those coming from different traditions, who espouse different models of unity. An Anglican might interpret these statements as describing a communion of local churches. Lutherans might think more readily of continuing denominational structures living in reconciled diversity. But in either case the constitutive elements of visible unity are the same — the faith, the sacraments, the ministry, and structured conciliar communion supporting a common life of praise, service, and mission.

The reflections of the international bilateral conversations on visible unity also provided an important resource for the Porvoo conversations. As references in the Porvoo statement show, Anglican and Lutheran conversations with the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches in particular helped to shape the understanding of the sort of visible unity God calls us to live together. Among the bilateral conversations the Anglican-Lutheran dialogue, understandably, was the one that had the most relevance for the Porvoo conversations. On the basis of substantial agreements reached in the international dialogue, including those on the church, sacraments, and apostolic ministry, the Anglican-Lutheran European regional conversations had gone on to explore whether it was now possible to move into closer visible fellowship.¹⁰ The European report suggests that the aim of the conversations was "organic union" (§43) or "full communion" (§62). What was not clear was whether the two terms were being used synonymously. Nor is it clear what the report sees as constituting either "organic unity" or "full communion." It was the task of the Anglican-Lutheran Joint Working Group,

9 D. Gill, ed., *Gathered for Life: Official Report of the VI Assembly of the World Council of Churches* (World Council of Churches, 1983), p. 45.

10 *Anglican-Lutheran International Conversations: The Pullach Report* (London: SPCK, 1973). *Anglican-Lutheran Dialogue: The Report of the European Commission* (London: SPCK, 1983).

meeting in 1983, to focus on the notion of "full communion."¹¹ In the Cold Ash Report, full communion is taken to imply a life in which members may receive the sacraments of the other; bishops of one church may take part in the consecration of bishops of the other; a bishop, pastor/priest, or deacon may exercise liturgical functions in a congregation of the other body if so invited; and there would be recognized organs of regular consultation and communion.

By full communion we here understand a relationship between two distinct churches or communions. 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.¹²

To this is added that to be in full communion means that churches become "interdependent while remaining autonomous."¹³ When the Church of England came to debate these various Anglican-Lutheran international and regional reports, the background paper for the General Synod asked, "Is the description of full communion in the Report of the Joint Working Group consonant with the present understanding of full communion within the Anglican Communion?" The Cold Ash Report, in spite of its emphasis on organs of consultation and communion, seems to support the view that each Communion should retain its own autonomy and thus not to envisage the creation of a single church in one locality under a single ministry.

It is clear that when the Porvoo conversations began, Lutherans and Anglicans shared a commitment to the gospel imperative for unity to be made visible, holding that unity in faith and sacraments belongs to a life of visible unity. It is also clear that both were world communions that in the second part of the twentieth century were developing an understanding of what it means to be a world communion. The understanding of their own identity in turn had an effect upon the sort of visible unity they were committed to seek with other Christians. This was not simply a matter of blind acceptance that the future must be "themselves writ large," for both were clear that the pilgrimage to unity entails conversion and re-formation. At the same time, there were, not surprisingly, differences of emphases in the way they understood themselves and what constituted their own unity, and this tended to influence their thinking about the sort of visible unity they believed God was calling them to manifest. There was also a lack of clarity

11 *Anglican-Lutheran Relations: Report of the Anglican-Lutheran European Commission* (London: SPCK, 1983).

12 *Anglican-Lutheran Relations*, paragraph 25.

13 *Anglican-Lutheran Relations*, paragraph 27.

in the ecumenical dialogues about the kind of visible unity that the churches were committed to seek. Churches, moreover, including Anglicans and Lutherans, tended to use different models to describe unity — reconciled diversity, united not absorbed, organic unity, full communion.

All of this formed the background to the Porvoo conversations. What was new and decisive in the early 1990 was a heightened sense of the necessity for a united Christian witness in the context of the sudden, dramatic changes taking place in Europe. Anglicans and Lutherans in Northern Europe recognized a moment, a *kairos* — a time of "unparalleled opportunity" (§6). The Porvoo conversations were driven by the conviction that visible unity is utterly required for credible and effective mission and more than ever urgent now for authentic mission in a Europe looking for its own unity and identity.

Visible Unity in the Porvoo Common Statement

In the Porvoo statement unity is not something humans can ever create by their own clever ecumenical endeavors. Unity is divine gift, the gift of being drawn into, and living in, the fellowship (*koinonia*) of the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Unity is given in Christ as a gift to be received, and like every good gift, unity also comes from the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. (§21)

Here the Porvoo statement is quoting the report *Ways to Community* (1980/81) of the Roman Catholic-Lutheran Joint Commission. In its view of what constitutes the unity of the church, the Porvoo statement is in line with an ecclesiology of *koinonia* so central in the understanding of Vatican II and foundational in so many bilateral dialogues since Vatican II. But while unity is divine gift, it is also human task. The church as communion has two dimensions that belong together, a vertical one, and a horizontal one. There is communion with the Father through participation in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. And there is communion with one another, a communion between members of the body of Christ. It is the vocation of the church to be seen in the world as the one body of Christ, a sign of the reconciliation and unity God desires for all, an effective instrument to help in bringing about God's purpose, and a foretaste of God's kingdom here and now. Christian disunity is anomalous and contradicts the gospel message. Denominational traditions are provisional and even the degree of visible unity already enjoyed by Anglicans and Lutherans in Northern Europe

at the beginning of the 1990 was not enough. What was required was a "fuller visible embodiment in structured form" (§22).

What then has Porvoo to offer in terms of its understanding of visible unity? One of the most striking things is the way the statement eschews the use of any particular model to describe visible unity. It uses neither the one-time preferred Anglican term of "organic union," nor the preferred Lutheran term "reconciled diversity." The document is also cautious about using the term "full communion." The phrase only occurs once in the Porvoo statement, in a quotation from the Lutheran World Federation Assembly in Curitiba (§31). By avoiding the use of "full communion" the statement might perhaps be thought to be distancing itself from the description set out in the Cold Ash Report. Whether this was the conscious intention of the drafters or not is not stated. What is more important is that the report does not identify itself with any one particular model of visible unity. Instead it offers what in two places it calls a "portrait" of the sort of life together Christians in Northern Europe believe they are called to live (§20).

The notion of portraiture is crucial for the Porvoo statement. For its portrait of visible unity it goes back to the Scriptures. It underlines nine aspects of the church living visibly in the light of the gospel. A church living in unity will be seen to be grounded in the love and grace of Christ; always joyful; a pilgrim people. It will confess the apostolic faith; celebrate baptism and Eucharist; be served by an apostolic ministry that unites the local with the church universal. It will manifest visible communion in a divided humanity; and have bonds of communion that enable it to make effective witness by taking decisions, teaching authoritatively, and sharing goods with those in need (§20).

This "thumbnail" portrait is attractive in summing up something of both the qualitiveness of a life of visible unity, as well as pointing to the elements that constitute unity — the faith, the sacraments, the ministry, and the bonds of structural communion, all working together in the witness to the love of Christ and empowering the church for mission. The portrait, as the statement admits, is by no means complete. It nevertheless contains within itself a challenge to Anglicans and Lutherans, reminding them of their need to repent and be renewed and re-formed together for unity in mission and service.

The biblical sketch of visible unity is repeated in several places in the statement. In paragraph 28, for example, it is stressed that the different elements, or aspects, of visible communion — the faith, the sacraments, the ministry, and the forms of collegial and conciliar consultation — are interrelated aspects. The Porvoo statement sees all these elements as part of an interlocking package of those things that properly belong to visible unity. They are not isolated elements but belong together, constituting and supporting a unity of life and mission (§28). These elements are not arid structure. They need 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).

The portrait of visible unity espoused in the Porvoo statement is then biblically based and also consonant with much Anglican and Lutheran ecclesiological reflection. By preferring the way of portraiture rather than the use of any model of unity like organic union, or reconciled diversity, or even full communion, the Porvoo statement opens the way for a more creative and imaginative description of visible unity that avoids past polemics. It thus avoids the accusation that organic union overemphasizes the structural, or that reconciled diversity seems to justify continuing separation. It also avoids the accusation that Anglicans seem in the past to have defined full communion in a number of different ways.

The portrait of visible unity in chapter II, with its skeletal frame of faith, sacraments, ministry, and conciliar structure, ought not to be separated from what follows in the rest of the Porvoo statement. Both the statements of agreement in faith and the commitments of the declaration that the churches were invited to make on the basis of those agreements serve to fill out what Porvoo understands as pertaining to a life of visible unity. So visible unity is demonstrated in confessing together the faith grounded in Scriptures and set forth in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan and Apostles' Creeds with the basic Trinitarian and Christological dogmas to which those creeds testify, and upholding together a belief in God's justifying grace. The common faith is celebrated in forms of common worship, spirituality, liturgy, and sacramental life with common texts, hymns, canticles, and prayers. The common life of faith issues in good works, in love of God, and in love of neighbor (§32).

Visible unity is manifested in a common sacramental life. Unity in a common baptism (followed by the reaffirmation of baptismal faith in confirmation) is seen in the way baptized members of all the participating churches are regarded as members one of another. Eucharistic communion with a shared faith that the body and blood of Christ are truly present, distributed and received under the form of bread and wine, is demonstrated in the welcome of each other's members to eucharistic celebrations in all the churches. Such eucharistic unity goes beyond the practice of eucharistic hospitality to individuals, which was hitherto the practice (§32).

Visible unity is demonstrated in a single ministry, ordered in the threefold pattern of bishop, priest, and deacon with a shared understanding of the relation of the priesthood of the ordained to the priest-hood of Christ and to the priesthood of the church (§32). Most significantly, unity is manifested in the ministry of bishops in the historic succession in communion with one another. The breakthrough on apostolicity and succession and the role of the historic episcopate made this episcopal unity possible. The participation of a group of

bishops sharing together in the laying on of hands at the consecration of a new bishop signifies the unity of the ministry as well as the unity of the communities represented by the participating bishops (§48). The consecration of bishops in the historic succession is another sign of unity and continuity (§50). Unity in ministry is made visible in the life of the churches by welcoming those episcopally ordained to the office of bishop, priest, or deacon to serve, by invitation, in any of the participating churches without reordination (§58).

Unity is further visibly demonstrated in gatherings of bishops and conciliar consultations on significant matters of faith and order, life and work. Such oversight, episkope, is necessary as a witness to, and safeguard of, the unity and apostolicity of the church. Unity is visible above all in a common life of mission and service, prayer for and with one another, in sharing of resources, and exchange of ideas on theological and practical matters (§58).

One of the most obvious signs of unity is precisely in places where in the past congregations of two traditions have lived side by side. Unity is visible in the welcoming of diaspora congregations into the life of indigenous churches, to their mutual enrichment (§58).

It is possible to fill out the portrait of visible unity in chapter II with what comes in the agreements in faith and the commitments in the declaration. All of this enables us to get some clearer picture of what is implied in the Porvoo understanding of a life in visible unity. Anglicans might well reflect that this picture is hardly different from the sort of unity enjoyed by Anglicans in the Anglican Communion. It is little surprise that the first meeting of the Contact Group, set up to monitor the new life in visible unity, agreed to call the new relationship "the Porvoo communion." There has been some criticism of this title but many would say that it precisely describes the communion they now enjoy in the new relationship.

Ecclesial Diversity

Living out the unity of the church visibly brings with it inevitably questions of diversity in relation to unity. Right from the outset the Porvoo statement is insistent that visible unity is not to be confused with uniformity. Quoting again from the report of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Joint Commission, *Ways to Community*, it stresses that "unity in Christ does not exist despite and in opposition to diversity, but is given with and in diversity." Diversity is seen not as negative but like unity itself as gift:

Because this diversity corresponds with the many gifts of the Holy Spirit to the Church, it is a concept of fundamental ecclesial importance, with

relevance to all aspects of the life of the Church, and is not a mere concession to theological pluralism. Both the unity and diversity of the Church are ultimately grounded in the communion of God the Holy Trinity. (§23)

The stress on unity with diversity is made again in a quotation from another report of the Roman Catholic-Lutheran Joint Commission, *Facing Unity: Models, Forms and Phases of Catholic-Lutheran Church Fellowship* (1985):

Unity needs a visible outward form which is able to encompass the element of inner differentiation and spiritual diversity as well as the element of historical change and development. This is the unity of a fellowship which covers all times and places and is summoned to witness and serve the world. (§26)

As with unity so with diversity. Diversity is upheld in chapter II as integral to a life of visible unity, and it is in the agreements and the commitments of the declaration that we get hints of what some of that diversity might be in practice. The section on agreements in faith ends with the statement that there is already a "high degree of unity in faith and doctrine" (§33). At the same time this unity in faith and doctrine "does not require each tradition to accept every doctrinal characteristic of our distinctive traditions." The common faith will have a variety of expressions in different cultural contexts. In initiation the practice of infant and adult baptism is practiced; confirmation, while common to all, may be administered by bishops or in some cases by the local priest. The diversity of gifts of ministries expresses a common priesthood of the whole people of God. While there is a basic oneness of the ordained ministry, that ministry is expressed in three orders. Oversight is exercised in a variety of different ways — personal, collegial, and communal. The ministry of oversight has a particular task of coordinating the diversity of gifts and the multiplicity of tasks: it is "a ministry of coordination" (§42). As Bishop John Hind put it, "We are quite used to speaking of bishops as ministers of unity. Porvoo helps us understand that bishops are also ministers of diversity."¹⁴

There is one further matter relating to diversity that is interesting to note. A single, fully interchangeable ministry is an important characteristic of visible unity. At the same time it is made clear that such interchangeability is subject to the canonical regulations in existence in the churches (§58). The co-chairmen in their Preface refer to one specific limitation to ministerial interchangeability that

14 John Hind, "Diversity in the Porvoo Communion," delivered at the First Theological Conference, Durham, 2000.

was there at the outset. The different positions in relation to women's ordination, both in the churches themselves and between the churches, especially the different positions in respect to the consecration of women as bishops, restricts the interchangeability. The same situation applies to those ordained by a Dean and who have, therefore, not been episcopally ordained. However, while the Porvoo communion is living with these differences, and thus with restricted interchangeability, it ought not to be implied that such differences are permanently acceptable, authentic diversity. How could they be when both place restrictions on visible unity?

The Porvoo statement nowhere says that diversity extends to the continuation of recognizably Lutheran and Anglican identities as part of a life in visible unity, though some of the language of the statement must be interpreted in that way. For example, the report refers in the commitments to welcoming "one another's members," "inviting one another's bishops" to participate in the laying on of hands, encouraging consultations of "representatives of our churches," etc. While such language may suggest the continuation of separate and recognizable Anglican and Lutheran regional churches, yet at the same time the report is clear that all denominational traditions are provisional. The assumption here is surely that the future demands such radical transformation of us all that there will be a unity and communion beyond what we presently know as Anglicanism, beyond what we presently know as Lutheranism. This is a familiar thought for Anglicans who have lived with the notion of the radical provisionality of the Anglican Communion. It may well be that we ought not to press for more definition, for it is only as Anglicans and Lutherans live into the Porvoo agreement that it will become clear whether Anglican and Lutheran identities will constitute legitimate diversity in the future. This is likely to be affected by the relationship that develops between the two traditions in other regions of the world and developments at the level of the two world communions. Already there are those who are suggesting that the next step is for an agreement at the world level that would bring together the different Anglican-Lutheran regional agreements that presently exist in North America, Australia, and Northern Europe.

So in Porvoo both unity and diversity are values to be cherished and promoted. The "bonds of communion" — common confession of the apostolic faith, one baptism, a united celebration of the Eucharist, a single ministry, and collegial and conciliar consultation — constitute the unity and also support the diversity of the Porvoo communion. But the report is equally aware that diversity has its limits. There is a diversity that serves unity, but there is also a diversity that contains destructive elements and goes beyond what is tolerable (§25). Thus criteria for maintaining the unity of the church are necessary to set the limits for legitimate diversity. "What is constructive in the Church for its *communio* is, at the same

time, the foundation and the limit for its unity."¹⁵ The statement is clear that there will be times when diversity is intolerable and threatens division. This was always so from the beginning of the church. The controversy over the radical decision to admit Gentiles without circumcision to baptism was ratified by the calling of the Jerusalem Council, recorded in Acts 15 (§25). So conciliar gatherings remain important today for guarding unity and sustaining legitimate diversity. The Porvoo statement suggests that oversight is to be exercised with personal, collegial, and communal aspects at the local, regional, and universal levels (§45).

The portrait of visible unity with rich diversity which the Porvoo statement sets as the goal of Anglican-Lutheran relations in Europe is not exclusive to these partners. Porvoo is not about establishing an exclusive Anglican-Lutheran bloc in Northern Europe. It was conceived of as one step towards the visible unity that needs to be expressed by all Christian people. Indeed the report ends with a strong encouragement for each participating church to pursue the same goal of visible unity at local, national, and international levels. (§§60, 61) It has to be pursued by the Anglican Communion and the Lutheran World Federation, and also with other world communions.

Living into Visible Unity and Ecclesial Diversity

Lesslie Newbigin was surely right in his insistence that we cannot simply be committed to unity in some vague unspecified sense. We have to be able to put some content into that commitment. The same point is made by Harding Meyer when he writes that a goal-oriented movement must articulate as clearly as possible the aims commonly agreed on by its adherents. Michael Root makes the same point about the need to make statements that can serve as "criteria and orientation points as we structure and implement the steps now possible." One of the strengths of the Porvoo Common Statement is that it does precisely this. It describes a portrait of visible unity with diversity that can act as "criteria and orientation points." The portrait shares many characteristics of the Anglican view of organic union with its unity in faith, sacraments, ministry in the historic succession, and structured communion. At the same time its emphasis on diversity shares something of the Lutheran insistence on reconciled diversity. But to identify Porvoo with either model, or with the model of full communion, would not do justice either to its own description or to its openness to discover more about visible unity as the churches live into the new relationship. The Porvoo statement is clear that as the churches share together more and more of their faith, life, and mission they will

15 John Vikstrom, "Setting the Scene: The Porvoo Agreement and Its Vision," un-published paper delivered at the First Theological Conference, Durham, 2000.

get hold at a deeper level of what visible unity and ecclesial diversity entail. That will surely explode all existing models of visible unity.

In the years since the signing of the Porvoo agreement, the churches have been learning to make their unity more visible. The sheer affection and sense of commonality between the Porvoo churches has been experienced and expressed on many, many occasions. Twinings at the levels of parishes and dioceses, the serving of ordained ministers from one Porvoo church in another, the participation in each other's consecrations, the presence of Nordic and Baltic bishops at the Lambeth Conference in 1998, the exchange of information, the gatherings of Primates and Presiding Bishops, the meetings of the theological conferences, new joint work on the diaconate, pastoral conferences, the ongoing work of the Porvoo Contact Group to oversee the growth of the relationship, and above all the communion in prayer maintained through the Porvoo prayer cycle *An Invitation to Prayer*, are all visible signs of a shared unity.

It is significant that the first Theological Conference of the new Porvoo communion, in Durham, England, in September 2000 had as its title, "Diversity in Communion." It recognized that in the early years of the life of the Porvoo communion issues had already arisen that raise the question of the limits of tolerable diversity. The conference named in particular those of the ordination of women and homo-sexuality. It recognized that there are "profound differences of conviction between and within the member churches." It was noted that differences comprised not merely diverging judgments but also varieties of approach, method, and understanding in theological issues. The report of the conference was clear that communion such as that now enjoyed in the Porvoo communion demands interaction and points of exchange. It requires sharing a common life and then reaching a common mind. Among its recommendations the conference included the need to provide an account of communion that supports diversity but is also aware of the need to identify limits. An important insight comes in the recognition of the need to develop stronger means of "mutual accountability" between the churches. The conference noted sharply that "where a signatory church of the Porvoo communion intends to take an action which is likely to affect the boundaries of diversity within the Communion that some structure of sharing information and concerns should be established." Put like this, this sounds like a mild requirement. But in a communion that aspires to maintain visible unity and legitimate diversity, surely some structures that can call for restraint, encourage continuing joint exploration, discern, make a common decision and then monitor the response to that decision, are what is needed to live out mutual accountability. Any communion of churches needs ways to protect and strengthen its own unity and sustain its proper diversity.

If the Porvoo communion is to live in visible unity with an ever richer, more authentic, and more confident diversity true to the portrait of its founding document, then attention will have to be paid to discovering the right persons, structures, and processes that will enable mutual accountability to take place. These are needed to discern what makes for unity and what is enriching tolerable diversity, and to call for restraint of decision when appropriate. The Porvoo statement was clear that visible unity requires oversight exercised in personal, collegial, and communal ways. Whether the Porvoo communion deepens its unity in a convincing way in the future will have much to do with whether, and how, it develops those personal, collegial, and communal ways of common decision making and teaching with authority that are integral to the Porvoo portrait of visible unity, and whether the members are willing to heed the advice and decisions of those structures. Without this it is hard to see how issues of diversity that threaten unity can be responded to in the communion, how mutual accountability can be the way of the communion.

We would not do justice to the vision of visible unity and ecclesial diversity in the Porvoo statement if we did not stress the relation of the church to eschatology. For the vision of visible unity with diversity is contained within one grand, overarching eschatological vision — a restored and renewed creation and a reunited humanity (§27). "God's ultimate purpose and mission in Christ is the restoration and renewal of all that he has made, the coming of the Kingdom in its fullness" (§14). To that kingdom, with its unity and diversity, the visible unity and diversity of the church here on earth is to point. The prize of the Porvoo communion is the way of fidelity to this calling.

The Porvoo Common Statement from the Lutheran Point of View, and the Statement's Significance for the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue

The Background of the Statement

The Porvoo Common Statement was drafted at a relatively brisk pace. This was possible because of the several earlier Anglican-Lutheran agreements and other Anglican-Lutheran ecumenical documents, which provided the basis for the construction of the Porvoo Common Statement. Among these documents are *the Pullach Report* of Conversations between the Lutheran World Federation and the Lambeth Conference, *the Helsinki Report* of the European Commission on the Anglican-Lutheran Dialogue, *the Cold Ash Report* of the Anglican-Lutheran Joint Working Group, *the Meissen Common Statement* between the Church of England and the Evangelical Church of Germany, *the Niagara Report* of the Anglican-Lutheran Consultation on Episcopate, and the document called *Toward Full Communion and Concordat of Agreement* (American Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue).

In addition to these Anglican-Lutheran agreements, the Faith and Order documents *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (BEM) and *Confessing the One Faith* have had an impact on the Porvoo Common Statement. To some extent, the same can be said of conversations between the Anglican and the Roman Catholic Church, as well as of discussions between Lutherans and Roman Catholics.

In addition, the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches have had previous agreements with the Church of England. As early as in the last century, the Church of Sweden had advanced furthest in these relations. In 1936, however, also the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland signed an agreement with the Church of England, and on the basis of this agreement these two churches have practised mutual admission to communion and participated reciprocally in episcopal consecrations.

The outcome of the negotiations - that is, the document which was accepted on 13th October 1992 - was named the Porvoo Common Statement, because the common celebration of the eucharist in connection with the process of acceptance of the Statement took place in Porvoo Cathedral, which dates back to the Middle Ages. The Porvoo Common Statement had been drafted and completed within an amazingly short period of time; namely, the negotiations only took

about three years. From the point of view of theological substance and ecumenical significance, however, the outcome of these negotiations is a document which certainly can compare with the results of many negotiations of longer duration.

The ecumenical method of the Porvoo Common Statement

In recent decades, ecumenical methodology has been a subject of lively debate and study. At the heart of the matter have not been the more or less technical questions of procedure, which, admittedly, are also important in ecumenical dialogue. Rather, what are referred to as 'ecumenical methods' are the various theological approaches which are applied in ecumenical dialogue. The questions related to ecumenical methodology can be made more concrete through the following questions: What are the historical and theological fundamentals of our ecumenical work? What kind of model of unity is our work based on? What are the doctrinal issues we must agree upon? In our communion, what kind of diversity is acceptable? What is the ultimate goal of our efforts, and what is the concrete aim of this particular document? What are the consequences of our agreement?

Nowhere in the Porvoo Common Statement is it said explicitly what the ecumenical method (methods) used in the document is (are). However, on the basis of the structure and content of the actual text of the Statement, it is possible to draw some conclusions concerning the ecumenical method used in it.

Firstly, the Porvoo Common Statement gives expression to the common understanding concerning the nature and unity of the Church (II A 14). This unity has already begun to make itself visible in the Church. However, it demands fuller visible embodiment in structured form. The unity given to us in Christ is a sign, instrument and foretaste of the Kingdom of God. On this basis, it is said in the document that all existing denominational traditions are provisional (II B 22). These kinds of expressions in the Porvoo Common Statement show that on the question of the understanding of the unity of the Church, the churches involved attempt to reach a consensus which is to gain visible form as well. This consensus is about the understanding of the Church and its ministry, which are discussed in chapters II and IV of the Statement. The document represents *koinonia* ecclesiology, the essential content of which is, firstly, the life of the Church in communion with the Holy Trinity, and, secondly, the communion between churches and Christians based on the above-mentioned communion (II A and B).

Secondly, in addition to the consensus which finds expression in chapters II and IV, the partners' agreement concerning the content of the Christian faith is expressed in chapter III. This chapter gives expression to the actual doctrinal consensus of the partners; this consensus is, in fact, a confession containing the partners' common doctrinal understanding. The central paragraph in chapter III,

namely, para. 32, contains sub-paragraphs which express this confessional character through phrases such as "we accept... we believe... we confess". What is presented in these sub-paragraphs is the fundamental, substantial agreement in faith. It is based on the confessional traditions of both partners, on one hand, and on the results of bi- and multilateral ecumenical work, on the other hand (III 29–30).

Thirdly, the Porvoo Common Statement repeatedly states that the consensus or agreement which has been reached must not be identified with uniformity. "Visible unity, however, should not be confused with uniformity. 'Unity in Christ does not exist despite and in opposition to diversity, but is given with and in diversity'" (II B 23). According to the Statement, not only the unity of the Church but also its diversity has its roots in the Holy Trinity: "Both the unity and the diversity of the Church are ultimately grounded in the communion of God the Holy Trinity" (II B 23). The maintenance of unity and the sustaining of diversity both belong to the life of the Church (II B 24). "Unity needs a visible outward form which is able to encompass the element of inner differentiation and spiritual diversity as well as the element of historical change and development" (II B 26).

It is apparent in the light of these and several other phrases referring to diversity that also the model of 'reconciled diversity' has been applied in the Porvoo Common Statement. This diversity between the two denominations will remain in the sense that the partners are not required to "accept every doctrinal formulation characteristic of our distinctive traditions"; on the other hand, however, the reconciliation of this diversity "does require us to face and overcome the remaining obstacles to still closer communion" (III 33).

Thus, what is involved here is not merely an agreement upon differences; diversity is to be *reconciled*, too. The model of reconciled diversity comes to the fore especially in connection with the question of episcopacy, in relation to which the section on doctrinal consensus mentions a ministry of pastoral oversight (episcopate), exercised in personal, collegial and communal ways (III 32.k). This consensus is explicated more thoroughly, in accordance with the model of reconciled diversity, in chapter IV, which is called "Episcopacy in the service of the apostolicity of the Church".

The Porvoo Common Statement makes use of a kind of "combined method", which seeks to take seriously both doctrinal consensus and reconciled diversity. Thus, the doctrinal consensus concerned is expressed in quite a full form - instead of first, briefly, introducing a kind of "basis" or "event", and then trying to give it later a more encompassing "embodiment" or "expression". In this sense, the Porvoo Common Statement differs from the method used in the Leuenberg Concordat.

The model of unity in the Porvoo Common Statement

The model of unity in the Porvoo Common Statement finds expression, firstly, in the concept of **visible unity**, which occurs repeatedly in the document (e.g., Foreword, para. 6/p. 2; para. 11/p. 5; II, para. 23/p. 13; para. 27/p. 15; III, para. 29/p. 16; IV, para. 54/p. 28; V, para. 60/p. 32).

Visible unity is defined and confined in the document in the following manner:

1. The point of origin of visible unity is the faith that the unity of the Church "belongs by necessity to its [the Church's] nature" (II, para. 21/p. 13), because "the unity of the Church is grounded in the mysterious relationship of the persons of the Trinity" (ibidem). Therefore, communion between Christians and churches is not a "product of human achievement" but is "already given in Christ as a gift to be received, and 'like every good gift, unity also comes from the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit'" (II, para. 21/p. 13). This formulation of the nature of the unity of the Church, which is a very classic one, is closely linked to the results achieved in the Roman Catholic/Lutheran Joint Commission, as indicated by footnotes 5, 6, and 7 in the Statement. According to the Porvoo Common Statement, the unity of the Church is **given**, and therefore the document also speaks of the "restoration" and "recovery" of unity. ("... this will be a very significant contribution towards restoring the visible unity of Christ's Church"; Foreword, para. 11/p. 5; "Churches ... are obliged by their faith to work and to pray for the recovery of their visible unity"; II, para. 27/p. 15)
2. As I have mentioned earlier in a preliminary fashion, visible unity must not be confused with **uniformity**. Unity and diversity do not stand in contradiction to each other, but unity "is given with and in diversity" (II, para. 23/p. 13). Thus, diversity is not the same thing as disunity (cf. II, para. 22/p. 13), which Christians "can never tolerate" (II, para. 27/p. 15). Unlike disunity, diversity "corresponds with the many gifts of the Holy Spirit to the Church" (II, para. 23/p. 13-14). Viewed in this light, diversity is not to be regarded as a "mere concession to theological pluralism" (II, para. 23/p.14). Therefore, not only unity but "both the unity and the diversity of the Church are ultimately grounded in the communion of God the Holy Trinity; II, para. 23/p. 14).
3. The Porvoo Common Statement distinguishes between the concepts of **visible unity** and **full communion**. In fact, the term 'full communion' is

not used in the document at all (the only exception being the quotation of a resolution of the Eighth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation in Curitiba in 1990; III, para. 31/p. 17). Both visible unity and full communion still lie ahead of us. They are goals towards which both partners believe to be going. Therefore, the following expressions are used in the document: **closer unity** (V, title/p.30), **closer visible unity** (IV, para. 54/p. 28), and **closer communion** (V, para. 60/p. 32). Visible unity is still the **goal** towards which the partners are going. The Porvoo Common Statement is an expression of new steps on the way to visible unity ("We are now called to a deepening of fellowship, to new steps on the way to visible unity..."; III, para. 29/p. 16). The consensus expressed in the document concerning the Church and its ministry, especially the laying on of hands and episcopal succession, means that the unity and continuity of the Church is made more visible "at all times and in all places" (IV, para. 53/p. 28). However, as these formulations indicate, even after the approval of the Porvoo Common Statement there will still remain - in the churches of both traditions - the kind of diversity which these churches must seek to overcome in the future (Foreword, para. 9/p. 4, referring to the Porvoo Declaration).

The elements of unity

The structure and the content of the Porvoo Common Statement reveal what kinds of things are considered as prerequisites for and elements of the emergence of closer unity. These are 1) a common understanding of the nature and unity of the Church (chapter II), 2) agreement concerning the content of faith (chapter III), and 3) a consensus concerning historical episcopacy and episcopal succession as a servant of the apostolicity of the Church and as a sign of the unity and continuity of the Church (chapter IV).

As for point 1), enough light has already been shed on it in the previous section. As regards the content of faith and episcopacy, however, it still remains to be asked what the significance of these questions, in addition to the model of unity, is within the entirety of the Statement.

Especially from the point of view of my church and its (Lutheran) confession, the content of the Statement's chapter III ("What we agree in faith") is of essential importance. Namely, this section actually gives expression to that which, from the point of view of **faith**, is necessary and sufficient for the unity of the Church (cf. The Augsburg Confession, article VII).

I am not sure whether the twelve sub-paragraphs in paragraph 32 in chapter III can be regarded as a "common Anglican-Lutheran 'Confession of Faith'", as

Georges Tsetis, the representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in its permanent delegation to the WCC, phrased it in his letter of 29th March 1994 to Eugene Brand, the Assistant General Secretary of the Ecumenical Affairs in the Lutheran World Federation. What paragraph 32 is about is the "substantial agreement in faith" (III, para. 30/p. 16), which is a summary (concentrating only on that which is most necessary) of the consensus of the both partners on the content of our faith. Neither the Lutheran nor the Anglican side has felt it necessary to say anything more, because these traditions have never condemned each other in matters of the content of faith. This applies particularly to the doctrine of justification, on which there is no separate section in the document. The concept of justification of the sinner by grace alone, for the sake of Christ alone, and by faith alone, which is inalienable to the Lutheran side, is given valid and sufficient expression in chapter III, para. 32 c./p. 18 (which is the sub-paragraph on the gospel) and, in fact, even earlier in chapter II, para. 15-16/p. 10-11.

The partners' agreement concerning faith has been expressed in the following *loci* which involve both doctrine and practice:

- a. The Scriptures as the sufficient source of doctrine.
- b. The question of God's will, commandment and grace. To express this in the language of Lutheran tradition, the issue involved here is the law and the gospel.
- c. The gospel, justification, faith and love.
- d. The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed and the Apostels' Creed; the Trinitarian and the Christological dogma.
- e. Liturgical worship.
- f. The Church.
- g. Baptism, infant baptism and confirmation.
- h. The Lord's Supper (Eucharist). The true presence of the body and blood of Christ. The eucharist and sacrifice. The meaning of the eucharist.
- i. The priesthood of all members of the Church, and their participation in the apostolic mission of the Church.
- j. The ordained ministry. The oneness of the ordained ministry and its threefold character.
- k. The ministry of pastoral oversight (episcopate), its different manifestations, and its function to safeguard the apostolicity of the Church. The episcopal office as a sign of the continuity of the Church.
- l. A common hope in the final consummation of the Kingdom of God, and work for justice, peace and integrity for creation.

Not everything that is included in our common faith is expressed in this presentation of the "substantial agreement in faith". So much of it, however, is articulated here that Lutheran confession challenges us to ask the following question: What else, in fact, is needed for the fulfilment of the **satis est** which the Augsburg Confession demands (CA VII)? From the Lutheran point of view, it is difficult to think, after this, of any remaining **theological** obstacles related to the content of faith which would hinder us from acknowledging that our churches have achieved unity. There may be other reasons, though - liturgical, historical, cultural, etc. - for which it is not appropriate to attempt to establish a uniform Anglican-Lutheran church, not even after the approval of the Porvoo Common Statement. Theologically speaking, however, the Porvoo Common Statement means emergence of such communion whose "fullness" is very near.

Episcopacy in the service of the apostolicity of the Church

From the Anglican point of view, the most important obstacle to the rapprochement between the Anglican and the Lutheran churches has been, up till now, certain deficiency in the episcopal office of most Lutheran churches. In accordance with the Lambeth Quadrilateral, the Anglican church has considered historical episcopacy and episcopal succession as being of such importance for the essence of the Church that this question has determined for a great deal the pace at which Anglicans have taken their new ecumenical steps. The Porvoo Common Statement brings to this problem a new model of solution.

In its solution to the problem of the ministry of oversight, the Statement does not simply "give way" to the so-called presbyteral ordination and succession. Instead, the Statement sets out to consider the ministry of oversight on the basis of something that is even wider and more fundamental, and belongs to the essence of the Church, namely, **apostolicity**. "The primary manifestation of apostolic succession is to be found in the apostolic tradition of the Church as a whole" (IV, 39/p. 23).

However, the manifestation of the apostolicity and continuity of the Church consists of several "threads". These are "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 needy, unity among the local churches and sharing the gifts which the Lord has given to each" (IV, 36/p. 23; this is a direct quotation from BEM, Ministry, para. 35). Of these "threads", the Statement brings to the fore especially the ministry of pastoral oversight (episcopate), which can be exercised "in personal, collegial and communal ways". According to the

Statement, this kind of ministry of oversight is "necessary" as a safeguard of the apostolicity and unity of the Church.

All these three manifestations of oversight are important. It is said in the Statement that nowadays communal oversight, in particular, takes synodical form in most of the churches concerned (IV, 44/p. 25). From the point of view of Lutheran churches, this remark is of special importance. We do not regard the communal oversight that takes place through ecclesiastical councils (in which the majority of the members are representatives of the laity) and through the synod (which guides the church as a whole) as an alternative to the episcopal office. Rather, these two belong together in the apostolicity of the Church, and complement each other.

Also the personal ministry of oversight, as well as its historical succession and continuity, are discussed in the Statement within the framework of this entirety. To ordain a bishop in historic succession through the laying on of hands is a **sign** of the apostolicity of the Church (IV, 50/p. 27). The fact that some of the churches concerned have not previously used this sign is not an obstacle to the establishment of fellowship. By their approval of the Porvoo Common Statement, the churches involved agree together to make use of this sign, which is understood as a means of making the unity and continuity of the Church more visible at all times and in all places (IV, 53/p. 28).

While stressing historical episcopacy and its continuity as a form of the personal ministry of oversight and as a sign of the apostolicity of the Church, the Porvoo Common Statement does not, however, raise episcopacy to the same position which belongs to the word and the sacraments, or make it a third "pillar"; such a thing would not be acceptable from the point of view of Lutheran confession. In interpreting episcopacy as a sign which serves the apostolicity of the Church - or even "safeguards" and "ensures" it (III, 32 k./p. 20-21), but does not "guarantee" it as such - the Porvoo Common Statement does not give rise to the above-mentioned problem, which, thus, is not an obstacle to the approval of the Statement.

The consequences of the Statement for the churches concerned

Indeed, the Porvoo Common Statement has consequences for the churches which have approved it; chapter V of the Statement, which contains the so-called **Porvoo Declaration**, shows what these consequences are. The Declaration, which is composed of two parts, consists of six "acknowledgements" and ten "commitments".

In these acknowledgements and commitments, the churches signing the Porvoo Declaration acknowledge one another's churches as belonging to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ. They acknowledge that preaching and the sacraments are valid in one another's churches, and they also

acknowledge one another's ordained ministries as given by God as instruments of his grace (NB: "instruments", not "means of grace"). Moreover, they acknowledge that one another's ministries of personal, collegial and communal oversight in their different forms are valid, and acknowledge one another's episcopal office as a sign serving the unity and continuity of the Church.

In addition to these acknowledgements, the Declaration of these churches contains ten commitments, the realization of which will, indeed, have many practical consequences for the life of the churches concerned. What these commitments mean is an almost complete reciprocity in the lives of the members of these churches, and in these churches' ministries. What remains for the churches to carry out after the signing of the Porvoo Common Statement is the challenging task of changing their laws and other ecclesiastical regulations, so as to make these correspond with the commitments in the Declaration. However, the true goal of the Porvoo Declaration is not be reached until its commitments change the lives of these churches, too.

The significance of the Declaration for the Lutheran - Roman Catholic relations

It is said in the Porvoo Common Statement with emphasis that the Statement seeks to be an ecumenically open document. It is not the intention of the Statement to create unity that would be exclusive in regard to these churches' other ecumenical relations. The Statement as a whole has as its conclusion a section called "Wider Ecumenical Commitment" (V, C/p. 32-33). In the light of this section, it is readily apparent that the churches signing the document do not aim at emergence of an Anglican-Lutheran "bloc" which would wish to isolate itself from others. At the same time it is obvious, however, that the Porvoo Common Statement and its content must be taken into account in the other ecumenical relations of the churches involved. This also applies to their relations to the Roman Catholic Church.

A natural point of comparison to the Porvoo Common Statement is provided by the third stage of the work of the Roman Catholic/Lutheran Joint Commission. It has been published as a document called *Church and Justification*. Even though these two documents are different in character, one can still examine their mutual compatibility. However, in this context it is not possible to carry out a detailed comparison of the documents; hence, what follows is merely a brief and general characterization.

1. As for the ecumenical "spirit" of the documents, the Porvoo Common Statement and "Church and Justification" are very much of the same

kind. Both seek to take substantial theological questions seriously. In these documents, minimization of doctrinal questions is not regarded as a way of creating inter-church fellowship.

2. Ecclesiology occupies a central place in both of these documents. Moreover, in them both the perspective from which ecclesiology is presented is that of communion ecclesiology.
3. It is only natural that in Lutheran - Roman Catholic relations the doctrine of justification occupies a more central place than is the case in the Porvoo Common Statement. Namely, in Lutheran-Anglican relations problems have not emerged in the domain of justification, whereas in Lutheran - Roman Catholic relations this very issue has been perhaps the most important subject of controversy.
4. Both documents also deal with the ministry of the Church. From the Lutheran point of view, this question has constituted an ecumenical problem in Lutherans' relations to both Anglicans and Roman Catholics. In the Porvoo Common Statement, the solution found to the problem of ministry, especially episcopacy, is such that this question will no longer divide these churches. We hope that this consensus might also promote the process in which solutions are sought to the problems related to the ministry of the Church also in Lutheran - Roman Catholic and Anglican - Roman Catholic relations.

II COMMUNION, DISCIPLESHIP, SACRAMENTS AND MISSION

Rowan Williams

The Fellowship of the Baptized¹

‘The fellowship of the baptized’ is a subject that prompts us straight away to ask some basic questions both about how we are defining baptism, and about the identity of a baptized person. I’ll begin by proposing a very short answer to such questions: the baptized identity is being where Jesus is. We speak in theological language of entering ‘into Christ’; so the bottom line when we’re reflecting on the definition of baptism is surely to say that it places us in the place of Jesus. The New Testament already makes it clear that one of the most important ways in which this is expressed is through the fact that we pray the prayer of Jesus as we stand in the place of Jesus: that is, in the Holy Spirit we say, ‘Abba, Father’.

But ‘where Jesus is’ is in itself quite a many-layered notion. Jesus is in the neighbourhood of God the Father and so when we stand where Jesus is we too are in that neighbourhood and we learn his language of his relation to God the Father. But the incarnate Jesus is also in the neighbourhood of the chaos and the suffering of the world – a world he has entered to transform. It’s a dimension of baptism vividly captured in the visual and verbal imagery of the Orthodox Church which sees the descent of Jesus into the baptismal water of Jordan as a descent into the chaos, into the unformed reality which swills around just below the surface of the ordinary world. To speak in those terms is really to paraphrase the epigram which I think originates with the great Irish Benedictine, Columba Marmion. He spoke about Christ being simultaneously in *sinu Patris* and in *sinu peccatoris*: in the bosom of the Father and in the bosom of the sinner. Christ is simultaneously in the neighbourhood of the Father and in the neighbourhood of the sinner, the formlessness, the shapelessness and dissolution, the dis-integrity of creation. He is in the heart of both realities, simultaneously. And that, of course,

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suggests that when we as baptized persons come to be in the neighbourhood of Jesus, that same dual proximity is what we have to get used to. We are in the neighbourhood of God the Father indeed, and pray the prayer that the Spirit enables: Abba, Father. But we are also in proximity to the world into which Jesus descended; in proximity to the chaos and the formlessness of fallen creation.

And it is of course that two-sided dimension of baptism which stops the baptismal identity simply being static or exclusive, 'religious' in all the worst possible senses. It means that we can only be confident of our proximity to God the Father in Jesus if we're also alert and awake to the proximity of chaos. Our baptismal solidarity with Jesus Christ means that we are in solidarity with all the fellow Christians we never chose to be in fellowship with (always one of the most difficult bits of Christian identity) but it also means that we're in solidarity with an unlimited variety of human experience that relates to the darkness and the chaos into which Jesus descends in his incarnation. We are in the neighbourhood of a darkness inside and outside the Church, inside and outside our own hearts. In *sinu peccatoris*: in the bosom—the heart—of what sin means.

So the identity of the baptized is not first and foremost a matter of some exclusive relationship to God that keeps us safe, as opposed to the rest of the vulnerable and unlucky world. It is at one and the same time living both in the neighbourhood of the Father and in the neighbourhood of darkness. That is why we speak of being baptized into the death and resurrection of Christ, not simply baptized as a mark of our affinity or alignment with Jesus in a general way, not baptized as an external sign that we more or less agree with what Jesus says. Our baptism is a stepping-into Jesus' place with all that that entails. And it means that Christian baptismal identity is—again at one and the same time—both a depth of human experience that brings us into at least the potential of intense, transfiguring love, the Trinitarian love in which Jesus himself lives, and a continuing experience of expectation, humility, penitence and hope. The experience of the baptized is not the experience of endings, but of repeated new beginnings. We don't simply acquire a relationship with God the Father which then requires us to do nothing more. On the contrary, to be baptized is to be constantly re-awakening our expectation, our penitence, our protest, our awareness that the chaos and darkness of the world is not what God wills; our awareness that we are colluding with that state of chaos which God does not will. So as baptized persons we look constantly into ourselves, rediscovering over and over again the hope that comes out of true repentance.

That, I suggest, is somewhere near the heart of what the identity of the baptized is. And lest you should think that's just a twenty-first-century perspective, I refer you to (among many other texts) what St Augustine had to say about baptism in some of his great treatises and letters on the subject. St Augustine,

confronted with people who seemed to be inclined to regard baptism as a badge of having 'arrived', would refer back to the fact that baptized people say the Lord's Prayer. That is in fact one of the most distinctive things that baptized people do, because they call God 'Father'. And in that baptismal prayer that Jesus gave us, we say, 'Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us'. Why do we bother to say this (says Augustine) if baptism is simply the badge of having arrived? When we meet a Christian who is inclined to treat baptism in that way, just remind them of the Lord's Prayer. In slightly different terms you can say baptism is the beginning of a 'baptismal narrative', a story of discovering and rediscovering through failure and restoration, just what it is to live in the place where Jesus lives.

If that is central to what baptism means, what are the implications for speaking of the 'fellowship of the baptized' both in the rather technical sense which we call the Church, and in the rather more personal dimension of what it means to be daily in communion, in fellowship with baptized people? I want to try and explore this a little further.

Obviously we're faced with one of those paradoxes that haunts Christian theology so much. The Church is unified in baptism. After all, to be in the place of Christ together is to be in one place – 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all', says the apostle. Surely, being in Christ through baptism guarantees that Christians are and know themselves to be in one place, unified.

And yet it doesn't always look like that. To be in the place of Christ—if it involves, as I've suggested, being truly vulnerable to the chaos and darkness of the world—means that Christians are people who live dangerously because they live in proximity to darkness and to sin, because they are naked and exposed to a great deal of what that means. And the strange and rather difficult thing is that Christians may find they are not less but more vulnerable at times to fragmentation, conflict and division, just because they are where they are, and haven't yet rooted themselves firmly enough in Jesus' relation to the Father. They divide and divide again, and divide again and again. The baptismal body is unified because it is where Christ is and it's also a body not only wounded but constantly wounding itself because of that dangerous proximity to the chaos Jesus comes to transfigure. A baptismal fellowship is not a fellowship of the sinless. It took the early Church a while to realize this. The high hopes and extravagant aspirations of the first Christian centuries really centred on the notion that once the baptismal relationship was in place, it would be impossible to betray it. But reality kept breaking in, and the Church had to go through a painful re-examination of what it meant by standing in the place of Christ, and to find ways of understanding that the baptismal identity is a narrative of discovery and re-discovery of the place occupied always being fragmented, drawn away by the proximity of

darkness. The baptismal body, the Body of Christ, is a wounded body and those wounds are so often self-inflicted. So the fellowship of the baptized is not only a fellowship of wounded persons on journeys of discovery, it is itself a wounded and divided fellowship, pulled apart in all kinds of ways.

And if we simply left it there we would still not have said enough. Because this is not only a self-wounded body, it is also a self-healing body. The Body of Christ is repeatedly scarred by our betrayals, our urge to run away from God and from each other, but because it is the Body of Christ it constantly renews itself, enables re-discovery; its wounds are always in process of being healed. Its fragmentation is always in process of being overtaken by that basic Trinitarian reality that's at work within it – by the Holy Spirit, because it's a body in which the reality of the unbreakable covenant between God and the world is coming alive day after day. What heals the wounds in the Body of Christ is the stubborn, unchanging reality of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has promised to be there, who has promised that he will not abandon his body. So the unconditional covenant he has made to be with us—Emmanuel, 'God with us'—heals and restores his Body time and again. Which is why the practice of the Eucharist is at the heart of the Church because in the Eucharist, in the total self-giving of Christ to his people embodied in the sharing of his body and blood, the unconditional covenant is affirmed. When we come to Holy Communion we rediscover not just a story about Jesus that happened a long time ago, we rediscover the unchanging reality of what some theological traditions call 'the covenant of grace' as renewed in the Eucharist.

So the fellowship of the baptized is both a broken fellowship and a fellowship repeatedly being renewed by and through the covenant of grace in eucharistic fellowship. And that of course is where some of the hardest and most painful issues arise for a group like this [Inter-Church Families]. But not exclusively for a group like this. For all kinds of reasons (good, bad and theological) we find ourselves distanced from one another. We are wounded by the words and the traditions that have brought life to some and, it seems, death to others. The wounds of the body are not superficial. They run right to that depth where we find ourselves unable to receive together the pledges of the covenant of grace, the holy gifts of the Eucharist.

What do we do then? The fact is that when such conditions arise, as they have arisen again and again in the Church, and as they have arisen in the Western Church especially in the last half-millennium, it seems that God in his mercy continues to raise up other sorts of pledges of his covenant. And it's in this context perhaps that the reality of inter-confessional marriage in a divided Church acquires its deepest theological significance. Here are people from different parts of the body, unable by the law and custom of their communities to share the Eucharist

together, nonetheless living out another sacramental reality, a sacramental reality that is in its essence about covenant and unconditionality. Here is a sign raised up by God, often against all probability and very often against all custom and encouragement, that allows us to speak even in a wounded and divided Church, of some shared witness, some shared exposure to the unconditional covenant of grace, because that is what the sacrament of marriage is about.

The married couple pledge themselves to be Christ to one another. That, surely, is at the heart of the sacramental theology of matrimony. They pledge themselves to be to one another a sign of unconditional, covenanted love, a place where prayer becomes possible as love deepens. And in pledging to be a sign to one another in that way, they pledge themselves likewise to be a sign in the whole Church of the covenant of grace. They pledge themselves, in other words, to something remotely but truly analogous to the Eucharist, to be a finite, physical, tangible embodiment of covenanted love.

That happens in and beyond all the experience of failure, frustration and division that we find in the divided Church. But it means that in this particular context, inter-confessional marriage has about it, an eschatological character. It is something that pushes us to the perspective of the end of things, to what it ought to be like, to what it needs to be, where it's all going. That, in a divided Church, becomes, like all sacramental signs, something transformative. And I would hope and pray that the experience represented in this particular fellowship, a fellowship of baptized Christians marrying across confessional boundaries, itself a 'sign of the end', becomes more and more powerful and transformative as time goes on. The inter-church family is a mark of the self-healing body over against the self-wounded body on earth.

And of course when we've said that, it's possible also to think of other kinds of inter-church family. Not so obviously sacramental in the strictest sense, not so obviously committed and lifelong, but I'm thinking here of those inter-church 'families' represented by the L'Arche communities, the World Community of Christian Meditation, and quite a number of other networks of that kind. These are the fruits of an extraordinary half-century or so in which the Holy Spirit has been creating fellowship among the baptized in very unexpected ways, bringing some very unexpected people into each other's neighbourhood. And I mention particularly the L'Arche communities because it seems to me particularly that in the vision of Jean Vanier we see once again that Christian identity draws you into the neighbourhood of people who you might not otherwise be able to stand with, transforming you in the process. The baptized identity is, therefore, always something both risky and difficult. And it renews itself through being where Christ is.

Providence is notoriously resourceful. (I think it was C. S. Lewis who once said that providence was 'positively unscrupulous'.) In a culture and an age where

the self-inflicted wounds of the Christian body sometimes seem to be getting deeper rather than otherwise, God persists in raising up such healing relationships. And this is not simply a matter of creating an environment in which individuals get on better together. It is something to do with raising up transforming signs, and making available in the life of the Church the covenant of grace renewed.

So my reason for choosing as a title for my remarks 'the Fellowship of the Baptized' was grounded in a conviction about the reality of the inter-church family. Something about baptism comes to light, something about the baptized identity comes more closely into focus, by thinking through what it would be to live a wholly committed and mutually generous life across the historic divisions of Christendom. That opens the door to seeing how the body heals itself. I believe very passionately that in the life of all the churches one of our most central and important and difficult tasks is not to produce an endless series of solutions to our Christian divisions and difficulties, but to press on under the guidance of the Spirit to a condition where we are free enough to receive the work of the Spirit and allow the Body of Christ on earth to heal itself.

Our historic divisions, and the divisions we continue to multiply these days (and yes, I am thinking of the Anglican Communion among other bodies), frequently arise from the desire to solve what seems to be an unbearable tension of disagreement and diversity of perspective. And because it's very understandable that we buckle under the weight of such pressure, we can get to a point where we are less free to experience and receive the self-healing and self-restoring power that is in the Body of Christ. Discovering that is a lifetime's work, not a five-year plan. But if we mean what we say about our baptismal identity – about what is entailed in being where Jesus Christ is – sooner or later we have to come to terms with the fact that his body can heal itself.

So I'm asking you to celebrate with me God's capacity to raise up in a self-wounded Church signs of a self-healing Church; to celebrate with me the way in which inter-Church families become in that sense a sacrament of the final purposes of God; to look through that prism at all sorts of other inter-confessional 'family' experiences and see them as reflecting in a small way the dogged persistence of the Lord in manifesting marks of healing in his Body. But perhaps above all we are being drawn back to that essential 'double-ness' in our baptismal life: in *sinu Patris*, in *sinu peccatoris*. To be a baptized person is to be identified with the one person, divine and human, in whom those things can fully and perfectly co-exist; to be identified with Jesus who, in the depths of hellish human experience, remains united to his Father. We cannot create that fusion of extremes for ourselves, but that's the world into which we step when we step into the baptismal waters. And it's a reminder that when we step into the baptismal waters (however exactly we understand that), we do it not for the sake of creating a religious experience that

can be ours and not theirs or yours; we do it for the sake of the whole world whose chaos and darkness and brokenness cannot finally be healed or resolved except by being where Christ is, by being brought again and again, in prayer and love and service, into the place of Jesus.

Understanding Discipleship as the Working-Out of Baptism¹

“All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the end of the age.”(Matt.28.18-20)

These familiar words are called “The Great Commission” or even “the words of institution of baptism” as they are repeated at every baptism. The risen Christ commands his church to make disciples, baptizing and teaching and trusting in his presence to the end of the age.

The 1982 Lima document of the World Council of Churches, “Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry,” refers to baptism as “a sign and seal of our common discipleship” (Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, Geneva: WCC, 1982).

The Porvoo Common Statement says: “...In baptism the Holy Spirit unites us with Christ in his death and resurrection (Rom. 6: 1-11; I Cor. 12: 13) ... Through these gifts God creates and maintains the Church and gives birth daily to faith, love and new life.”

These are excellent theological formulations, both classic and contemporary. In his Small Catechism Martin Luther asks: “*What does such baptizing with water signify?*” and answers: “It signifies that the old Adam in us should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts, and, again, a new man daily come forth and arise; who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever. Where is this written? St. Paul says Romans, chapter 6: We are buried with Christ by Baptism into death, that, like as He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

In these words Luther sets forth discipleship as working-out of baptism

Baptism is the sacrament through which one enters into the Church and is united to Jesus Christ in his body, the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13, 27) In baptism we are “grafted onto Him” as it was worded in the old Icelandic baptismal liturgy. We who are gathered here are presumably all baptised and share in this common experience, we are members of the same body, fellow sojourners on the journey of

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discipleship, learners, apprentices in the skills of faith. But all we need is already there, given in Baptism. Discipleship is working-out of that fact.

My very first childhood memory is most precious to me. I'm in my third year and my little brother is being baptized. It was in our home, as was most common in those days in Iceland.

Mother holds the baby in her arms. My dad is standing there in his black cassock and white ruff, and the family and friends gathered around them singing a hymn. The glass bowl that on Sundays is filled with rhubarbdesert or vanillapudding is now filled with clear water gleaming in the candlelights.

Holiness and inner joy permeate this memory, holy words, Holy Spirit, creation, redemption, glimpses of heaven on earth. These are theological terms I didn't know then but are closely connected to this mental picture of childhood memory. My mother carrying my baby brother, as she also had carried me. Before that she was herself a baby carried in the arms of her parents, as were they held in loving arms of others, and before that generation after generation in an unbroken chain of the carried and those who held, for thousand years in Iceland and before that for thousand years in Europe, ever since Philippi when Lydia was baptized with all her household – presumably even holding the youngest baby in her arm! (Acts 16.15) – obeying the Great Command of Christ, baptising, and teaching, nurturing, training in discipleship.

Another strand in this mental picture of my childhood is my mother's voice and gesture as she made the sign of the cross on me and my brothers and recited the evening prayers with us at night, leading us into sleep of night and guidance into a new day. A custom laying the foundation of faith, working-out of baptism, holy practices and a holy word mediating and nurturing faith in life and life in faith.

In my childhood baptisms usually took place in the homes. In the 1960's a concerted effort was made to move baptisms to the Sunday services. But I always found baptisms at home valuable as a pastoral opportunity, to bring to the home and family perhaps the only experience of the holy, holy word and holy practices into the everyday setting of life. To give this home and household the memory of the holy in their midst – the profane, everyday transfigured by the holy. A reminder of what Saint Catherine of Siena said: "All the way to heaven is heaven". Blessing of God at the beginning of life, embracing all of life, everything that takes place on the way – which is a way to heaven.

As the Danish theologian, Grundtvig, put it: We are first of all human, then Christian, "Menneske først. Kristen så." As humans we are all bound up in the life-forms of family, language, history, country, nation and in these life-forms the relationships are molded and sustained where the Gospel meets us and touches us.

In my early years as a parish priest in Reykjavik one of my duties was to serve as a chaplain for the University hospital. It included being called upon day and

night to baptize newborn babies that were in peril. I remember many dark nights in the neo-natal ward by the incubator where a prematurely born baby connected to all kinds of tubes and cords and meters was fighting for its life. The parents in shock and I, the priest, so small and ineffective as a comforter by this Red Sea of fear and death. And I knew that I had to repeat words and actions that in an unexplainable way embrace this human fear and grief and death. I was to bless it with the sign of the cross and a drop of water that places this struggling life into a new context of eternal Life, uniting it with Christ in his death and resurrection.

I stretch my hand with a drop of water into the incubator and the water falls on the tiny head in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. And I know and I trust that behind my shaky hand is the strong hand of the Lord and behind my weak voice was the Word that once upon a time parted the waters and opened a way through death and destruction to life. Jesus is that word, “suffered under Pontius Pilate, crucified, dead and buried, descended into hell, rose again from the dead.”

This has formed my theology of baptism and sustained my faith in the saving grace of God, that forms the community and context where faith is expressed regardless of time and place and the strength and abilities of the individual, the little baby and the learned priest are both weak and vulnerable creatures, born by the same grace, held in the arms of faith of others as expressed in the scriptures and prayers and act of baptism.

Where does the faith of the baby or the parents come into this? Was it faith that urged them to call the priest or was it just superstition? Or simply their desire to name the child before it died? Anyhow, wasn't it rather convention than conviction?

Traditionally the giving and registration of the name was connected to baptism. That's why in common speech you often hear people saying: “We christened our cat Daisy.” It is definitely an incorrect use of words and has irritated many theologians who wish to keep the wordings clear. But hasn't convention, even if somehow theologically flawed, often served the purpose of the one that holds, the arms that lift you up and hold you?

The name and baptism are indeed closely linked, we are personally named in the Name of the Holy Trinity. Your name is inseparably joined to the name that is above all names in heaven and on earth. This focal practice of baptism is basic to our identity. We are named, that is our identity, this is who we are, in the community of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who says: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.” (Isaiah 43.1)

Discipleship is working-out of that basic fact

In Iceland the sign of the cross has always had a strong place in everyday spirituality. In accordance with Luther's admonition in the Small Catechism one should on lying down to sleep and getting up in the morning make the sign of the cross, saying: "In the name of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen" Thus we are to receive the gift of baptism daily and live in ones baptism. To die to sin and death, and rise to life and love.

The sign of the cross was also made over the baby in the cot and the infirm in his bed, the dead on his deathbed, over the coffin, and over the grave. All this is a reminder of baptism. And when putting on a new shirt after a bath you should cross yourself as a reminder of baptism and the baptismal gown.

A nurse that was working in the local health centre in my parish told me some years ago that she had noticed that the young mothers did make the sign of the cross over the baby before dressing it after the inspection and injection. She remembered that this was what her mother did to her when she was young. So she was intrigued by this: Is this a custom that still lives on? So she set out to ask the mothers when she put the prescribed questions before them about breast-feeding and sleeping habits and so-on: Do you make the sign of the cross for the baby? And 9 out of 10 answered timidly: Yes.

Empty traditions? Superstitions? Or potent tools for discipleship and catecheses to connect with tradition and the memories of the holy ?

What was the theology of the woman sneaking up to Jesus to touch the hem of his garment? (Luke 8.43–48) What kind of faith was that timid approach? Wasn't it just primitive superstition? And yet the Lord said to her: "Your faith has saved you!"

I find the story of the paralyzed man (Mark.2.1–12) most instructive in this context: "When Jesus saw their faith...." That is the faith of those who carried the man, not the paralyzed himself, there is nothing about his faith, but when Jesus saw their faith – he says to the lame: "your sins are forgiven." This is the church, carrying the lame, the babies, the ones of little faith, the de-churched and even the un-churched - and confessing faith on their behalf. Discipleship is being held, carried, as well as carrying.

The faith of the parents holds the child, or if they may be lacking in faith, it is the faith of the community that in some way or another holds them in its arms. The community of the baptised, the Church, is called to be carriers, to hold others in the arms of prayer, love and care. Working-out of baptism is teaching and training in being held, carried, trusting in those arms, trusting in that faith that holds, even if I fail, trusting in the grace that was there before me.

A baby was going to be baptized and an elder sister watched the preparation with great interest. When the baby was dressed in the baptismal gown the girl exclaimed: "Oh, no! the dress doesn't fit, it is far too long!"

I am the sixth of eight brothers, so I seldom got new clothes when I was a child, I inherited my elder brothers' clothes and shoes, frequently they were too big but I was comforted with the fact that I would grow into them. This is what the long baptismal gown signifies, we are to grow into the baptismal faith, it is not made to size, and we'll not be fully grown until in eternity, in heaven.

The baby is carried to the baptism by others, without any effort on his or her part. Nowhere do we see a clearer sign of grace than in this fact! Something was done to us or for us before we knew anything or could do anything. The grace of God, rebirth by water and Holy Spirit, forgiveness of sin, life and salvation, before I had any idea of the meaning of this, and in fact grasping that idea takes a lifetime, at least. Discipleship as working-out of baptism is indeed a life-long learning process of receiving in grateful acceptance and humble receptivity God's grace and love and freedom which is already here and now, given to you! The forgiveness of sins, righteousness and purity of Christ that we can take on as a garment.

As Luther says in his Large Catechism: "...Baptism is not a work which we do but is a treasure which God gives us and faith grasps, just as the Lord Christ upon the cross is not a work but a treasure comprehended and offered to us in the Word and received by faith." And he adds: "In Baptism therefore, every Christian has enough to study and to practice all his life. He always has enough to do to believe firmly what Baptism promises and brings – victory over death and the devil, forgiveness of sin, God's grace, the entire Christ, and the Holy Spirit with his gifts...Therefore let everybody regard his Baptism as the daily garment which he is to wear all the time. Everyday he should be found in faith and amid its fruits, every day he should be suppressing the old man and growing up in the new. If we wish to be Christians, we must practise the work that makes us Christians..."(The Large Catechism of Martin Luther, tr. Robert H. Fischer, Fortress Press 1959 p. 85–86)

A "daily garment," Luther says. He is obviously thinking of Isaiah 61:10: "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."

One of the most important task of the church is to help us to grow in that grace, help us to live in the arms of God, carried by God, trusting in being loved unconditionally, daring to make mistakes and be disappointed. Knowing that forgiveness is a possibility. It is never too late to begin anew. We are loved, we are

forgiven. And the risen Lord is with us, guiding us and leading us in his church. My faith, my prayer is nothing but an answer, a response to that fact.

In our culture we are losing memory, when the home and family are no longer bearer of tradition, assisted by the public school and society's customs as used to be more or less the rule. It is imperative for the church to counteract that by consciously and methodically nurturing and schooling young and old in faith practices, language and symbols, involving the homes wherever possible. Every congregation, every parish should be a faith school for disciples, training in the skills of faith, working-out of baptism. We have been so busy developing programs of all kinds, and busy talking about faith and about society, even at times about God - but at the same time tend to ignore the importance of relationship of love and care, listening to God and the neighbour, and forgiveness of sin. Forgiveness of sin is all about relationships, the healing of relationships with God and neighbour.

Discipleship as working-out of Baptism involves also that the story of Jesus, his life, death and resurrection makes it possible for me to see and understand my lifestory in new light. That's why it is so important that the education of the Church should always have the Story of Jesus as its focus. The story that evolves around a creating and redeeming God that is constantly seeking new ways to forgive, raise up and carry me and you and all people and the whole wide world in his hands. And baptism is a reminder of the struggle of life and death, where life leads to death, and through death to life. The cross unmask the faces of violence and evil and the resurrection in the early hours of the first day of the week reveals the foundation of hope and faith and love in our world. The working-out of baptism is living in that light and trusting in that life. Faith. Faith, which is not an abstraction and it is not a thing. It is a gift and a skill, to be taught, trained, nurtured, lived. It is God's work, not mine. We cannot command God, we cannot manipulate the divine. As Peter Berger says: "It is not given to men to make God speak. It is only given to them to live and to think in such a way that, if God's thunder should come, they will not have stopped their ears." (Peter Berger: *The Heretical Imperative*)

Discipleship as working-out of baptism is being an apprentice of the master, in a growing – learning, listening relationship, not acquiring information about God or faith and morals, but skills in faith, listening skills to the word of God, trusting skills, trust in being carried, held by grace, through suffering and pain, through sin and guilt, through death to life. As beloved sons or daughters of God, brothers, sisters of Christ and one another, loved, forgiven.

I neither can nor need to be strong in faith and perfect in conduct. My faith or my mistakes will never be the last word. Forgiveness is bigger, grace is stronger, the gift I receive from God, my creator and redeemer. I can begin each day anew.

Discipleship as working-out of baptism is not about performance or achievement, it is all about grace, grace received and given. Grace is closely related with beauty and the good. These can never be known in abstraction, for they occur only in settings of life, in living, loving persons. They cannot be observed, only encountered and received. Thus the words and actions and signs of baptism do not describe, they reveal, they point – to Jesus Christ who says:”Come and follow me!”(Mark 1.17)”Be in me!” (John 15.4)

Discipleship as working-out of baptism is being an apprentice meant to grow and mature in trust in the grace of God that justifies, sanctifies, saves. But at the same time I know that when it comes to the transforming love and grace of God not even the Archbishop knows all that much more than the whimpering, little baby at the baptismal font. And we get no higher or further than to that stage of being carried, held by others, and ultimately by the crucified and risen Lord, who surely is with us “always, to the end of the age.”

Eucharist: Sacrament of Unity and Mission?¹

Recently, that is in the month of June this year (2012), I was invited to preside and speak at the opening Baptismal Liturgy of the International Eucharistic Congress in Dublin. This was the 50th such Congress. It fell at a very difficult time in the life of the Irish Roman Catholic Church. Worldwide, people know that the contemporary cross and passion of Irish Roman Catholicism is sexual abuse, particularly that of children. Its varied and sustained witness to the Gospel in education, social action, healthcare and mission has been shrouded in this cloud which keeps bursting and never seems sufficiently to clear. The stakes are high not only because of a very savvy media, many of whom were themselves educated within schools and colleges run by a variety of what might in other contexts be called Catholic theocracies, but also because of the strong – and rather late – tide of ideological European secularization sweeping through Ireland.

There is always the necessary recognition, however, that unspeakable wrongs were done to and by people, some of whom are still here and some of whom are not. This pushes into a completely new space all of the considerable experience which Ireland generally has had of reconciliation. This is an utterly different sort of world and differently agonizing. And I say this because of the combination of elements in this specific scandal: human beings; church power; sacramental and indeed Eucharistic space; exploitation and defilement of intimacy; the corrupted and corrupting secrecy of an old-fashioned dualism set in the context of a repressively hierarchical architecture. Mr Enda Kenny, an Taoiseach, expressed it well in a speech which he made at the end of the parliamentary term in 2011. I paraphrase: I speak as a practising Roman Catholic; there are villages in Ireland where a child, in later life, was forced to have her or his wedding conducted by the very same priest who carried out the sexual abuse, often in the church building where the original abuse had taken place.

I say all of this in order to offer a word of caution. Those of us who are Christian professionals can tend to idealize and theoretize any part of our wide-ranging and highly nuanced vocabulary. We can point up our experiences of ecumenical transfiguration as if they are normative for others. And in this paper itself, we have a broad range of such words: Eucharist, sacrament, unity, mission. For many of us, the tying of these together has become a deep instinctive expression

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of what is really genuine and genuinely real towards which we move by a sort of theological synchronized swimming. And the more convinced we become, the more it gets like Riverdance – rhythmic, noisy, unstoppable, joyful, infectious. And this is really and genuinely wonderful.

In terms of world-wide Christianity there are larger and wider tears and fractures and fissures than those for which often we have an appetite. The provisional role of the church and of the individual churches is an important mechanism for understanding both the possibilities and the frustrations inside and outside the church as a human institution responding to a divine presence in the world. Equally important is that wonderful sentiment voiced by Michael Ramsey in *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*: ‘When through the same Passion, the outward unity is restored, then the world itself shall know that the Father sent the Son. Meanwhile the broken Church is closer to the needs of men (*sic*) than men can ever know, for it is the Body of Christ, who died and rose again.’ (pages 223,224) Ramsey gives a further dimension in relation to a term which now is rather outmoded, that of reunion: ‘the unification of outer order can never move faster than the recovery of inward life.’ (page 222) The eschatological role of the sacraments is equally important. The third ingredient is that of confidence to be ecumenical in your own person when all around you are being un-ecumenical; it is equally important. Often it is within our own denomination or church family that we find this to be most alarmingly essential. It is here that we can correct the easy slide into denominationalism or even sectarianism, however antique and outmoded we might have hoped these concepts had become.

Before I leave the International Eucharistic Congress, I want to illustrate this principle. The theme which I was given was *Baptism and Communion*; it was not: Baptism and Eucharist. This real distinction I had to respect and grapple with theologically; and was delighted to do so. It is not a problem which we face as Members of the Porvoo Churches but many of us do in relation to other ecumenical partners with whom we, nonetheless, have fruitful ecumenical relations. It would have been pointless and churlish to have entered the lions’ den of intercommunion when it is not authorized between the Roman Catholic Church and ecumenical guests. This need not lead to utter disappointment nor does not mean that baptism is in any way a defective sacrament by virtue of the fact that it is a sacrament of initiation – either in relation to unity or mission. The context out of and in to which I offer this paper to you is, as are all contexts, relative to my situation. The material issued in preparation for the International Eucharistic Congress offered quite a useful definition of *koinonia*: *the relationship between persons resulting from their participation in one and the same reality*. My response to this was the following: ‘The challenge ecumenically for all of us who wish to do this is our need to hold fast to our relationship of communion in Christ when its

strength and energy come through the Eucharist, when our current requirement is to celebrate Eucharist separately. It is the Eucharist which feeds us eschatologically for the work of God's kingdom as disciples of Christ here on earth.'

I have presumed to quote the words which I myself used because they are real in the context in which I live as a devoted and loyal member of the Porvoo Communion and yet they are not words of pessimism and so I revert to the final sentence: 'It is the Eucharist which feeds us eschatologically for the work of God's kingdom as disciples of Christ here on earth.' The Catechism of the Church of Ireland is very strong on the open-ended aspect of the understanding of a sacrament. This may not seem obvious to those who see – and this is, of course, all there is, in one sense, to see – the naming of two not seven sacraments. The language and the content are circumscribed by a certain Reformation caution, as is so much in Ireland, because this is our historical inheritance in our context. The two sacraments are described as: *generally necessary to salvation*. I think this is fair enough as Holy Matrimony or Ordination, for example, could not be described as *generally necessary to salvation*. The sacrament is further described as: *an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof*. There is no sense other than that the sacrament tangibly and efficaciously connects us with the reality of God. The indissoluble connection is described in the answer to the question: *How many parts are there in a Sacrament?* which follows: *Two; the outward and visible sign, and the inward and spiritual grace*. If I proceed further and take up a subsequent question: *What is the inward part, or thing signified?* the answer is: *The body and blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful at the Lord's Supper*. The eschatological tension is held and resolved in the only ways in which it can be done – eschatologically – in the answer to two final questions about the manner in which the Body and Blood of Christ are taken: *Only after a heavenly and spiritual manner; and the mean whereby they are taken and received is Faith*; and about what are the benefits: *The strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the Body and Blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the Bread and Wine*.

I have outlined thus far two things from within my own tradition in the Church of Ireland. The first is the conviction that the Eucharist feeds us eschatologically for the work of God's kingdom as disciples of Christ here on earth. The second is that, in our Reformed teaching, the clear sense is present to the effect that the outward and the inward part of Eucharist connect and combine to ensure that the faithful verily and indeed receive the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper and do so only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. The outpouring of this is the strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the Body and Blood of Christ. There is a dynamic and a proactive feel to this. It is not expressed in

missional language but presupposes a life of service beyond the very receiving of the Eucharist itself. Such sustenance is not for ourselves alone or even for communities alone. It goes beyond individual and corporate Christianity. It is for a purpose of spiritual transformation and energetic action right across the world. The sacrament is not a tool of unity and mission; it is an expression of the dynamic presence of God. Therefore the sacramental action of God is what connects us through the Eucharist to both unity and mission. It is not, as such, in competition with Baptism; that would be to introduce an unwarranted dualism into the person of Christ and the work of God. And so the two requirements of persons to be baptized are – *Repentance, whereby they forsake sin; and Faith, whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God, made to them in that Sacrament.* This has a role which is vital in the incorporation of infant or adult in the Body of Christ which is, of course, also the locus of Eucharist. There is therefore a connection built in to the distinction and both are sacramental expressions of the person of Jesus Christ given us by grace in the church in its worldly life.

Modern liturgical scholarship is clear in pointing us to the totality of Eucharistic action as being the celebration and the consecration. Earlier scholarship concentrated this on the more specialized Prayer of Consecration. The wider scope rightly gives us a greater sense of the relationship of unity and mission to Eucharist, not least as it gives shape to ecclesia itself – the congregation of Israel which the early Christian communities, despite being banished from the synagogues, felt themselves to be; the Letter to the Ephesians is very clear that the new race of Israel constitutes ecclesia in the first instance rather than the local community. But, as Michael Ramsey argued in *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, the unity which is the primary gift in the Eucharist is Biblically-derived and linked essentially to the historic events which created the church. (page 48) I spoke of the Eucharist as not being a tool of either unity or mission. Ramsey is also very clear that behind ecclesia, and behind historical events, there is the divine unity through the Cross, a unity of love which transcends human utterance and human understanding. (page 49) All of this is very important because it points us to the exciting understanding of the church itself as a sacrament in unity. In his inestimable way, Ramsey argues for an understanding of the church itself as a sacrament, following the definition which I quoted earlier from the Catechism: ‘Thus the inward and the outward are inseparable, and the Church’s inward meaning is expressed in the Church’s outward shape and structure as the ecclesia wherein the parts depend upon the whole.’ (page 50)

Ramsey argues further that there are other types of unity in the Eucharist itself. One is in the new covenant which is created between God and humankind by the death of the Messiah who proclaims the Kingdom of God. The disciples therefore form a nation which is created by this death and are brought within

the death by eating the bread and drinking the cup. In this way the Body of Christ is in itself incorporated by the disciples. Therefore the Meal of The Kiddush (on the Eve of Passover) brings together a further unity which is that of creation and of redemption. This connection is something which Christian people are only in recent times discovering afresh as ecology and theology converse together. The importance of a strong and confident component of the Liturgy of the Word comes through in a further unity, that is the unity of the Eucharist with the whole incarnate life of Christ. Not only does this take forward the relationship of creation and redemption; it also pushes forward the argument of the Messianic Banquet as the eschatological context of the earthly Eucharist. St John chapter 6 combined Eucharist and the whole incarnate life of Christ; the argument, as Ramsey discerns, is powerfully put that the power to feed and to give life is derived from the Incarnation and behind the Incarnation is the eternal relation of Father and Son. The argument needs, of course, to be pushed beyond the temporal manifestation. St John chapter 6 shows us that, in the power of the ascended life and of the Holy Spirit, Christ will continue feed his followers with himself. In this way, therefore, words, works, sacraments are to be understood in light of the completed work and the ascended life. (page 106) The language of foretaste, therefore, takes on a fresh and deep resonance by virtue of this future-focused connection.

Although there are of course other Anglican trajectories on the Eucharist, the perspective of Ramsey provides a strategic backdrop for an understanding of the Eucharist in the Porvoo context. It respects the New Testament shape of the Eucharist and takes us far beyond any static and memorialist understanding of Holy Communion. Eucharist is firmly set in the context of the Incarnate and Ascended life of Christ – and it is set also in the ephapax (once for all-ness) of now. This perspective accommodates well the very resolute Porvoo perspective that the unity and the mission are those of Jesus Christ. The Liturgical Movement has lifted and broadened the understanding of the Eucharist. Porvoo, like many others, is a beneficiary of this even while we live in a world where there is very limited publicly authorized inter-communion as such. The full sweep of the Eucharist has been brought to the fore through The Liturgical Movement, with the paschal mystery, the passion, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ related to the corporate nature of the church and the role of the laity as well as the clergy in its celebration. This opens wide the doors not only for a Christ-focused understanding of Eucharist but also for the all-important missional and priestly task of reconciliation on the part of all who believe and practise, see Porvoo Common Statement 14: ‘God’s ultimate purpose and mission in Christ is the restoration and renewal of all that he has made, the coming of the Kingdom in its fullness.’ PCS 15 succinctly expresses the purpose of mission: ‘To bring us to

unity with himself, the Father sent his Son Jesus Christ into the world.’ PCS 27 in language which slides between unity and communion nonetheless states: ‘Set before the Church is the vision of unity as the goal of all creation (Eph. 1) when the whole world will be reconciled to God (2 Cor.5).’ PCS quotes with approval the Roman Catholic/Lutheran Joint Commission *Ways to Community* (Geneva 1981) paragraph 9: ‘like every good gift, unity also comes from the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit.’ PCS works with both the ideas of organic unity and reconciled diversity without falling into the trap of playing them off against one another. Again the origin of this is in the RC/LJC paragraph 34: ‘Unity in Christ does not exist despite and in opposition to diversity, but is given with and in diversity.’ and goes on to say: ‘Because this diversity corresponds with the many gifts of the Holy Spirit in the Church, it is a concept of fundamental ecclesial importance, with relevance to all aspects of the life of the Church, and is not a mere concession to theological pluralism. Both the unity and the diversity of the Church are ultimately grounded in the communion of God the Holy Trinity.’ PCS 23. Participation in the Eucharist, therefore, draws the member of the Porvoo Communion into the work of reconciliation of the world to God and of the unity on earth which is motivated and empowered by the unity in diversity. This type of unity is the essence of God the Trinity. It is into this fellowship (*koinonial* communion) of the Triune God which is God’s gift to the world that, through the church, the world is being drawn. Mary Tanner sets it out that for Lutherans and Anglicans together: ‘pilgrimage to unity’ (Apostolicity and Unity Mary Tanner’s essay: The Concept of Unity in the Porvoo Common Statement in this book).

The PCS is clear about the contexts of mission which shape and inform the theological content of the Common Statement. I rehearse them briefly in the order in which they be set out for us. To my mind they are expressed in two sets of three: the need of European nations to create interdependence, share mutual responsibility and rectify historical and inherited injustices; the need to enter into new opportunities for evangelism, (what is even more difficult) re-evangelism and pastoral work and the need to re-present spiritual values within an avowedly materialistic society; react creatively to the vacuum which arose from the collapse of an Eastern European monolithic political system. The second set takes us further: the peace, justice and human rights areas with the priority of protecting the rights and dignity of the poor and desolate; the ecological debate with a positive theology of creation and incarnation; dialogue and understanding with people of other races, cultures and religious traditions. This is summed up in a properly diaconal way as follows in PCS 13: ‘...arising from our common mission today, our churches are called together to proclaim a duty of service to the wider world and to the societies in which they are set...’

Mary Tanner's essay furthermore is clear about the church having in some sense a double communion. This takes the form, in a spatial picture, of vertical and horizontal dimensions of communion which belong together. The vertical is the divine gift of being drawn into the Trinity and the horizontal is the divine gift of being bound to the world of which we are part and to its peoples in a human and spatial unity derivative of the divine unity. Tanner helpfully offers a model of portraiture to describe the church. As Ramsey gave us a broadly sweeping picture of the Eucharist as a fully Biblical event which draws together history and mystery, so Tanner, from a different perspective, and one which pushes this unity into the life of mission, speaks of an interlocking package of elements of visible unity which again are entirely Biblical and offer an interlocking unity of life and mission. The visible unity in a common sacramental life – clustered around the two dominical sacraments and a Eucharistic unity which is beyond individual Eucharistic hospitality – provides the bedrock of a unity in mission. This is facilitated not only by the welcoming of those episcopally ordained in the life of the churches but also through the prominence now given to *diakonia* as the bedrock of ministry lay and ordained in the Lutheran tradition and now being owned explicitly in the Anglican tradition, through the ALIC Report.

As we all know, a number of words rises to the surface from time to time and regularly when we talk theologically and ecclesiastically. Ministry and mission form such a pair. The Trinitarian appreciation of what it is to be a Christian disciple is another such phrase. Important in the Porvoo theological and ecclesiastical vocabulary is the combination in a theologically creative way of mission and apostolicity. Both of them have to do with sending; in fact the former derives from the Latin, the latter the Greek word for such action. Apostolicity ties together Eucharist and mission in a very particular sense. Apostolicity voices the centrality of continuity as being at the heart of mission, having a connectedness of intention with the spirit of our Lord's intention. Apostolic succession therefore is a sign of the Lord's faithfulness and the faithfulness of the church to its Lord. Such succession, as expounded in the Niagra Report of 1987, binds episcopate to the heart of mission of the church and of the ministry of the whole people of God. Episcopate and a personal episcopate give shape to the living out of contemporary Eucharist. The sending out of God's People is a newly-emphasised significant section right at the end of the act of worship for which we have The Liturgical Movement to thank. It must not be rushed or fumbled! The sending is concrete, in both geography and time as Tore Furberg reminds us in the chapter The Sending and Mission of the Church in Apostolicity and Mission. (page 214)

The mission of the people of God is the proclamation by action of the duty of service to the wider world and to the now very fractured and highly disturbed societies which are contemporary Europe. The practicalities on the ground ur-

gently and instantly require the *diakonia* which is part of episcopacy and of personal episcopacy, as of every other ministry, but which has not always been seen to be such. Both must be related to the body which is the Body of Christ which is presented and formed afresh in each celebration of the Eucharist. Ramsey is clear about this. He argues that the church is apostolic because it is sent by the redeemer in the flesh and is catholic because it lives one universal life. (The Gospel and the Catholic Church page 44). Furberg voices it with considerable clarity: 'It was expressed in many ways during the negotiations and in PCS that the basis for and the subject of the mission is the fellowship in faith – the communion. Theologically this is grounded in the conviction that the mission of the church is Christ's mission and that only as fellow members of Christ's mission and that only as fellow members of Christ's body are we truly able to serve in the mission. (Apostolicity pages 209 and 210) And the unity and the mission are very much in line with the sending out of the people of God in the Eucharist: 'The unity is not aimed exclusively at the church. It is seen as "instrumental to God's ultimate purpose." The church is sent into the world "to serve, in obedience to the mission of Christ, the reconciliation of humankind and of all creation" (PSC.18). And this partaking in God's reconciliatory work binds the churches together and helps them penetrate even deeper in unity, not necessarily as a structure but as a spiritual *koinonia*.' (Apostolicity page 210)

The argument is strongly made that *koinonia* is the basis for the common mission of the church. This is the point at which my experience during the International Eucharistic Congress really hurts. The fullness of communion is partial and we strive to present afresh in each Eucharist the saving acts of God in Christ through the Spirit. The dynamic force is in the empowerment of the people of God for eschatological actions in the world of time and geography as those who have participated, within the discipline of the Catechism of each constituent church, in the Body and Blood of Christ. The key connecting factor is that the same Jesus Christ is the unity and the mission, the One sent by the Father and the One who is ontologically united with the Father and the Spirit. Rightly the argument moves on, not diminishing any earlier argument which was held in its day with integrity and with hope but, perhaps like a baggy sweater which we like wearing all of the time if we can get away with it, becoming something we know is and will always be there. The argument today is exciting in that, with inexhaustible genius, Porvoo is centring our theological thoughts on service through theological and practical exploration of *diakonia* as an expression of mission and unity fed by Eucharistic banqueting. Mission and unity feed our faith, our hope and our love.

The Lutheran Teaching of the Lord's Supper and Its Implications for Mission. A Finnish Perspective¹

The Lutheran "EST" and the Mission of the Church

"Body of Christ, given for you for the forgiveness of sins". These words, derived from the Biblical narratives of institution, crystallize the core of the Lutheran theology of the Eucharist: its Christological and Trinitarian basis. This provides the fundament also for the understanding of the real presence of Christ in faith for me (*pro me*) and for us (*pro nobis*) and in us (*in nobis*) - as a gift. Word and sacraments function as instruments of the Holy Spirit who brings Christ to be really present. Using these means of grace Christ unites himself with the believer and with the members of his body, the Church. Christ functions in us effectively so that the good fruit of faith may function in love for the benefit of the neighbor in everyday life. Thus the presence of Christ is the basis of unity, mission and service. The life of the Church in a local parish is manifest in the worship service, gathered together in order to receive God's good gifts, to give praise and thank and to be sent to the world to serve the Lord and the neighbor in our calling, sharing of all that we have received.

During the recent years, many Lutheran churches – at least in the Nordic context – have reintroduced the old tradition of weekly Lutheran mass on Sunday. It tells something about the strengthening of the Lutheran and Ecumenical identity, and about the impact of the Liturgical Movement and liturgical research in the churches.

So the Lutheran theology is not only theology of the word, but essentially and basically theology of both Word and Sacraments as media of grace. Lutheran theology is sacramental theology. This is evident especially in the realistic thought model of Martin Luther and a test case for this is the Lutheran understanding of the Eucharist: the real presence of Christ. The finite can include the infinite (*finitum est capax infiniti*) because of the incarnation and the ascension – accompanied with the understanding of the two natures of Christ from the point of view of the doctrine of *communicatio idiomatum*. Lutheran theology is not only functional. Rather, the basis is the Lutheran 'EST' – understood as the

¹ The paper was originally given at the Theological Conference of the Porvoo Churches in Copenhagen, Denmark October 8th to 11th 2012.

real presence of Christ and the Triune God in a way which wants to express the real presence of Christ in bread and wine independent of the consciousness of a knowing subject, but at the same time the gifts of the Eucharist are properly received through faith. In Luther's thought the philosophical concepts are to be "baptized" so that they could be used in theology. Accordingly, his arguments against the doctrine of transubstantiation are essentially critique of the speculative use of philosophy, not critique towards the real presence of Christ as such. The Act and the being of Christ are in a continuing dialectical relationship with each other like the Holy Spirit and Christ, or person and community.

Moreover, the impulses from e.g. the Anglican tradition and the Lima document (BEM) are obvious in the current understanding of Lutheran liturgical theology. However, the deep basis for this development is the revitalized Trinitarian theology and the understanding of the presence of God in word and sacraments and in the world. Accordingly, the liturgical development is accompanied with a strengthened diaconal understanding of the Mass as source of serving the neighbor. Spirituality and ethics belong together like faith and love. It could be suggested that Dietrich Bonhoeffer's formulation "only the one who speaks for the Jews is allowed to sing in a Gregorian way" in the context of the WWII has been prophetic in this sense. Christ is there for the others and all has been created to be there for the others, like Luther taught. Bonhoeffer's thought of "church for the others" includes both diaconal and missionary dimensions.² In the end it covers the mission of the Church as a whole - in its various dimension - sent into the world to take part in the *Missio Dei* in a holistic way, as underlined by the current ecumenical mission theology. The above outlined perspectives build the theological and practical background for my reflections on the Lutheran understanding of the Holy Supper and its implications for the mission.

The Trinitarian Basis of the Porvoo Common Statement and the Eucharistic Real Presence

Before going to the Lutheran position in more detail, I would like to refer to our common basis as Porvoo churches in these matters. It is explicit in the basic document of our ecumenical community, which is no doubt pointing a lot in the same direction as described above. The faith in the presence and actions of the Triune God in His Church is evident and constitutive for the Porvoo Common Statement (PCS).³

2 To Bonhoeffer's understanding of the "Church for others" see for example Karttunen 2010.

3 www.porvoocommunion.org.

The statement goes out from the central and vital position of word and sacraments through which the Triune God creates the Church:

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.

The One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church is called to be one. Yet we know well and painfully that the unity is not always and everywhere present in our European and global context – not even in a local parish. We need constant reform and renewal – not only changes but the renewing work of the Spirit. That is why Ecumenism is part of the Christian faith. The basis of the reform and renewal is the common, God-given faith and the membership in the Church which is constituted by the holy baptism. So the PCS formulates in the chapter III *What we agree in faith*:

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 practice and value infant baptism we also take seriously our catechetical task for the nurture of baptized children to mature commitment to Christ.

The life of a Christian is thus partaking in the resurrection life of Christ in the Holy Spirit. The faith in Him needs nourishment and initiation into the community of the Church as body of Christ, present in the visible reality in the church with all its gifts and human faults. This also implies that the baptism as incorporation into the Church is the basis of partaking in the Eucharist as nurturing the faith and participation in the life of the Trinity in Christ through the Holy Spirit. For instance in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, the right for independent admission is received only after the confirmation school. Since 1979 the children are admitted to the Holy Communion with a member of the family or a godparent who has taught to them the meaning of the Holy Communion. This can be seen as a vital part of the Christian education. The Lord's Table is open to the members of our church in the way described here and to the members of those churches with whom we have an ecumenical agreement. A case of emergency or an ecumenical marriage with a spouse whose church accepts our church's Eucharist can be seen as exceptions to this general rule. We don't actively invite members of other churches to communicate at our altars or encourage our members to do

so in a church with which we don't have an ecumenical agreement. However, an individual Christian is in the end responsible for oneself in this regard.

As we might well know there were some doubts in the past among the Lutherans regarding the Reformed influences of the Anglican Eucharistic theology. On the basis of mainly patristic and ecumenical theology this problem has been solved in the PCS. The help of the long work of the first Faith and Order convergence document, the Lima document or BEM (Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry), was helpful when articulating the common understanding of the Eucharist as Lord's Supper, meal of forgiveness, fellowship and unity. The document holds together the ontological and relational aspects by stating:

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 arisen, 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.

We may conclude that in the light of PCS the understanding of real presence of Christ, which unites the Anglican and Lutheran tradition to others, who understand the Church in a sacramental way as presence of Christ in the Church, is clearly articulated here and connected with the faith in the "forgiveness of sins and all other benefits" of Christ's passion. The doctrine of real presence intends to emphasize that the Eucharistic memorial is not mere "calling to mind" but "effectual proclamation of God's mighty acts". We are not alone but Christ is with us (Mt. 28:20). The presence of Christ in the Holy Supper does not depend on recipient's faith, but the benefits of the sacrament are received through faith in a salvific way.

In the Finnish Luther research a central key theme has been just the "real presence of Christ in faith" and the "union with Christ" on the basis of Christ's real presence in the believer through Word and sacraments. From this perspective the formulation "Christ unites us with himself" can be seen anchored into the incar-

national Christological understanding of Christ's real presence in the Eucharist and in the sacramental understanding of Word and sacraments.

Through that union with Christ, God bears in us good fruit, faith, hope and love. Accordingly, in the Eucharist "the church is reconstituted and nourished, strengthened in faith and in hope, in witness and service in daily life". The presence of Christ in the believer through faith and in the Church, using the word and sacraments as His vehicles, is the basis of unity and mission. Ultimately, it is partaking in the life of the Triune God and being sent by Him to the world.

The paragraph concerning the Eucharist in PCS is immediately followed by the paragraph stating our common mission, witness and service:

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 (I Peter 2: 5).

The basis of the "corporate priesthood" is incorporation into the body of Christ in the baptism and the strengthening of this incorporation in the holy Eucharist. Confirmation belongs to the process of initiation. In our Lutheran tradition this means teaching of the content of faith, partaking in the parish life, prayer and reading of the Apostolic blessing with laying on of hands.

An especially concrete and holistic way to strengthen the believer in his or her corporate priesthood is the nurture which is provided by the Holy Communion. The PCS paragraph regarding the Eucharist states, with implications to the life of the Church as a whole and to the Christian life of her single members: "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." The Eucharist is thus a constitutive element of the basic intention of the PCS: that the Church and the communion of the Porvoo churches would be an apostolic Church living faithfully in Christ - in unity and mission.⁴

Now, I will discuss in more detail some perspectives regarding the specific Lutheran features in the Eucharistic theology.

4 See Karttunen 2012, 193–202.

The Rediscovery of the Realistic Thought Model of Martin Luther

The real presence of Christ in the Eucharist forms a central belief in the Lutheran Porvoo churches. In the *Apologia* of the *Augsburg Confession*, the Lutheran understanding of the real presence of Christ in the Holy Supper is defended by referring to the Catholic tradition of the Church and the intention to join that tradition in the Lutheran reformation:

Article X: Of the Holy Supper.

54] The Tenth Article has been approved, in which we confess that we believe, that in the *Lord's Supper the body and blood of Christ are truly and substantially present, and are truly tendered, with those things which are seen, bread and wine, to those who receive the Sacrament.* This belief we constantly defend, as the subject has been carefully examined and considered. For since Paul says, 1 Cor. 10:16, *that the bread is the communion of the Lord's body,* etc., it would follow, if the Lord's body were not truly present, that the bread is not a communion of the body, but only of the spirit of Christ.

55] And we have ascertained that not only the Roman Church affirms the bodily presence of Christ, but the Greek Church also both now believes, and formerly believed, the same. ... We have cited these testimonies, ... in order that all who may read them may the more clearly perceive that we defend the doctrine received in the entire Church, that in the Lord's Supper the body and blood of Christ are truly and substantially present, and are truly tendered with those things which are seen, bread and wine. And we speak of the presence of the living Christ [living body]; *for we know that death hath no more dominion over Him,* Rom. 6:9.⁵

Yet this realistic way of thought has not always been self-evident in the Lutheran theology. Under the influence of the critique of the classical metaphysics, and especially in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant – who himself came from a Calvinistic tradition – it was stated that we can't know the “thing-in-itself” (*Ding-an-sich*) but only the “thing-for-us” (*Ding-für-uns*). Thus the subject and the transcendently defined limits of the knowledge were understood to build the basis of theological thought. This led to problems in the understanding of the contents of Christian faith and the Christianity was under the threat to be defined purely in the sphere of moral, or metaphysic feeling of dependence

5 <http://bookofconcord.org/augsburgconfession.php>.

(Schleiermacher), or experience of value (Ritschl) or philosophically understood idea of God as Trinity as in the philosophy of Hegel, who wanted to rehabilitate the doctrine of Trinity and also contributed to the revival of Trinitarian theology in the 20. century theologies by Karl Barth, Karl Rahner, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Robert Jenson or Jürgen Moltmann, to name a few.

Around the turn of the twentieth century, the so called liberal theology, stimulated by Friedrich Schleiermacher and promoted especially by theologians like Albrecht Ritschl and Adolf von Harnack, made it difficult for many Lutheran theologians at the time to understand the meaning of the sacraments for the Christian faith. It was suggested that the Lutheran Reformation would have carried out a de-sacramentalization programme (*Entsakramentalisierung*). In the background, there was also an anti-Catholic idea that the Reformation would have led the Christian faith away from Roman Catholic ‘materialistic-magical sacramentalism’ and made the religion inward and spiritual (*Verinnerlichung und Vergeistigung der Religion*). This position is strongly challenged already by the fact that if most of Luther’s writings dealt with the doctrine of justification, as a good second came the writings about the Holy Communion. However, this was explained away as a remnant of the past. Yet already the explicit content of the oldest and most used confessional writings of the Lutheran Reformation gives a totally different impression.⁶

The neo-Kantian, transcendental Luther-interpretation has been challenged in the research in a quite convincing way. Already Dietrich Bonhoeffer questioned the individualistic and transcendental-idealistic interpretation of Luther and underlined the theology of presence of Christ and the communal aspect of Luther’s theology with formulations like: “The Church is Christ present” and that God is not free from us but free for us and because of that really present in the Holy Supper.⁷ In a systematic way this critical analysis has been worked out especially in the Luther-research of the so called Finnish or Helsinki or Mannermaa School, stimulated by the works of especially Georg Kretschmar and Regin Prenter. It has showed the realistic character of Luther’s theology which can be said to combine theological realism with philosophical nominalism, but which is not totally without Aristotelian points of connection either. It has been argued that the transcendental interpretation made it hard to understand the in nobis –aspect in Luther’s thought. Thus the paradigmatic work of Tuomo Mannermaa is titled: *Christ present in Faith* (in Finnish 1979).⁸

6 Jolkkonen 2010, 108–109.

7 See more Karttunen 2004 and 2006.

8 Mannermaa 2005.

This Luther-research is based on a thorough analysis of history of theology, philosophy and history of ideas. Yet the basis has been the historical-systematical analysis of the works of the Reformer. The Large and Small Catechisms by Martin Luther (1529) and the Augsburg Confession by mostly Philipp Melanchthon (1530) reveal that the Lutheran Reformation considered the proper understanding and celebration of the Holy Supper to be very important. The Lutheran understanding was defended against both Reformed, or radically Reformed and spiritualistic, and the Roman Catholic understanding. Mostly the critique is aimed towards the Reformed understanding. After all, Luther joined the traditional sacramental realism, although he criticized the use of Aristotelian philosophy in explaining the mystery of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ. Bishop Jari Jolkkonen, who has written his doctoral thesis on Luther's theology and practice of the Holy Communion, writes about Luther's understanding of the sacramental realism:

“...by the power of the Word of God and his promise, Christ's body and blood are really present in the bread and the wine when the priest pronounces the words of consecration. In receiving Holy Communion the Christian is forgiven his or her sins, is united with Christ, and receives, for the strengthening of faith, a concrete sign of his participation in the communion of saints and eternal life. The real presence is a consistent outcome of the Incarnation. By the work of the Holy Spirit and by the power of the Word of God, Christ's presence continues in the sacraments.”⁹

God as Giver of Everything Good as the Basis of Luther's Theology of the Holy Communion

Luther's leading idea about God, especially manifest in the crystallizations of the Large Catechism, is that God is self-giving love (agape). In the Large Catechism he formulates in an explicitly Trinitarian way his basic lines of understanding regarding the Biblical message of God: “The Father bestows upon us the entire creation, Christ his completed work and the Holy Spirit all his gifts.”¹⁰ Another famous formulation is: “...it is God alone (as has been sufficiently said) from

9 Jolkkonen 2010, 109.

10 The translation of the Article Three 69 of the Apostles' Creed in English by Tomi Karttunen and Rupert Moreton brings the text closer to the German and Finnish version (“der Vater schenkt alle Kreaturen, Christus alle seine Werke, der Heilige Geist alle seine Gaben”) as the one in <http://bookofconcord.org/lc-4-creed.php>.

whom we receive all good, and by whom we are delivered from all evil.”¹¹ These fundamental thoughts are the basis of the close relationship between the doctrine of Trinity and the Eucharist in Luther’s thought.¹² They underline the presence of God in the world as Creator, who in Christ created all things, and who donates his good gifts to us through the work of the Holy Spirit in the word and sacraments. Luther underlines the value of the Creation and God’s good work in spite of the corruption caused by the Fall. God has not forsaken his world, but is still self-giving love, manifest especially in the incarnation of Christ. In the Eucharist, God’s self-giving love is shared with us in bread and wine as body and blood of Christ.

Although Luther doesn’t explicate in the Large Catechism the communal dimension of his understanding of the Holy Supper much because of the criticism against the spiritualistic interpretation of the Holy Communion as meal of friendship and fellowship, the communal dimension belongs to his line of thought. Because the Eucharist incorporates God’s self-giving love, it also unites the Christian with Christ and with fellow Christians together with the angels. Moreover, the Eucharist unites the communicant into a communion with others partaking concretely in the Holy Supper.¹³

Perhaps Luther’s most important text concerning his theology of the communion in the Eucharist is the sermon *The Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ and the Brotherhoods* (1519) which was important for instance for Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his dissertation *Sanctorum Communion* and which has no doubt built bridge for instance towards the Orthodox and Catholic understanding of the Church as Eucharistic community, formulating a Lutheran version of the Eucharistic ecclesiology Luther writes in this sermon:

“4. The significance or effect of this sacrament is fellowship of all the saints. From this it derives its common name *synaxis* [Greek] or *communio* [Latin], that is, fellowship. And the Latin *communicare* [commune or communicate], or as we say in German, *zum sacrament gehen* [go to the sacrament], means to take part in this fellowship. Hence it is that Christ and all saints are one spiritual body, just as the inhabitants of a city are one community and body, each citizen being a member of the other and of the entire city [...] 14. ... For just as the bread is made out of many grains ground and mixed together, and out of the bodies of many grains there

11 The Large Catechism, The Ten Commandments, The First Commandment, 24-25, <http://bookofconcord.org/lc-3-tencommandments.php>.

12 Jolkkonen 2010, 112.

13 Jolkkonen 2010, 112–113; Repo 2013, 350–353.

comes the body of one bread, in which each grain loses its form and body and takes upon itself the common body of the bread; and just as the drops of wine, in losing their own form, become the body of one common wine and drink so it is and should be with us, if we use this sacrament properly. Christ with all saints, by his love, takes upon himself our form [Phil. 2:7], fights with us against sin, death, and all evil. This enkindles in us such love that we take on his form, rely upon his righteousness, life, and blessedness. And through the interchange of his blessings and our misfortunes, we become one loaf, one bread, one body, one drink, and have all things in common. O this is a great sacrament, says St. Paul, that Christ and the church are one flesh and bone. [...] 22. ... In conclusion, the blessing of this sacrament is fellowship and love, by which we are strengthened against death and all evil. This fellowship is twofold: on the one hand we partake of Christ and all saints; on the other hand we permit all Christians to be partakers of us, in whatever way they and we are able. Thus by means of this sacrament, all self-seeking love is rooted out and gives place to that which seeks the common good of all; and through the change wrought by love there is one bread, one drink, one body, one community. This is the true unity of Christian brethren.”¹⁴

Eucharist and Mission from a Lutheran Perspective – Some Conclusions

In conclusion, the Lutheran understanding of the Holy Supper underlines that the holy Trinity, God as self-giving love who sends his Church, Christ’s disciples into the world to proclaim the Gospel in word and deed, in the unity of faith and love, carried by and proclaiming hope for the world is the basis of the mission of the Church. God is really present in the material reality, although in a hidden way, in word and the sacraments and Christ is present in his body, the Church as the first and last foundation of her holiness, unity, catholicity and apostolicity.

The value given to the presence of God in the material reality in the Lutheran theology and in its understanding of the relationship between God and the world makes it possible to understand the Incarnation as the basis of proclaiming the Gospel using also various forms of art and music. Without this Lutheran orientation and the idea of *finitum est capax infiniti* there wouldn’t be Johann Sebastian

14 The Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ, and the Brotherhoods, Martin Luther 1519, Translated by Jeremiah J. Schindel, Revised by E. Theodore Bachmann, <http://www.concordia.org/Supper/luthsup.htm>.

Bach's church music, Lutheran altar paintings, highly symbolic liturgical clothes in service of proclaiming the Gospel etc.

The Lutheran theology underlines the faith of the individual, but not in an arbitrary way: *fides qua* and *fides quae* belong together like individual and community. This is because the essence of the doctrine in the Lutheran faith is that Triune God, who revealed Himself especially in Christ as self-giving love, is really present in the word and the sacraments. God's is present everywhere, but bestows his salvific presence in the word and the sacraments. The Christian dogma expresses and guards the understanding of the Christianity as religion of grace and God as self-giving love in Christ, true God and fully human being. So, although Luther points out the gift of faith as the instrument of partaking in Christ, it means that being a partaker of Christ in faith is at the same time being a member of his body, the church, because baptism as sacrament of faith functions as the basis of church membership. Like Dietrich Bonhoeffer pointed out, being in Christ means being in the church, in its community.¹⁵ The baptism connects with the church and the Eucharist strengthens that connection. Mind can receive the word, but only through the sacraments also the body can partake of the salvific presence of Christ. The concept of being born again describes adequately this holistic character of the Christian faith. Because it is not mere intellectual or emotional thing also the children or the disabled can have a personal faith in Christ and partake in the communion of God's self-giving love.

The potential of Lutheran theology is to me in the understanding of the simultaneity of person and community and thus in the understanding of the dynamic dialectic between tradition and context. In this way, the basic intention of the Lutheran Theology is ecumenical, catholic and apostolic - rooted in the understanding of the Triune God as community of love in the unity of Trinity in the diversity of each person. That is why the classical main sacraments, Baptism and Eucharist, as visible and effective signs, media of grace, build unity in the Church and at the same time challenge to work towards the objective that as many people as possible could partake in this community of self-giving love of the Triune God in freedom, mutual love and service and thankfulness. The sacraments as images of the Triune God, and his love, also cry out for the whole-hearted ecumenical engagement in order to reach the unity of the Church more fully in the historical reality in the guidance of the Holy Spirit. That is why ecumenism is an indispensable part of the Christian faith.

15 DBW 2, 105: "Nehmen wir hinzu, daß die Wirklichkeit der Offenbarung das seiende Sein selbst ist, das das Sein (die Existenz) des Menschen ausmacht, dies Sein aber die dreieinige göttliche Person ist, so schließt sich das Bild, wenn dies als 'Sein in Christus', d.h. als 'Sein in der Kirche', verstanden wird."

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The Sacraments in the Mission of the Church

‘The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature since, according to the plan of the Father, it has its origin in the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit.’¹ In dawning recognition of the truth of this insight of the Second Vatican Council, namely that the Church is missionary by her very nature, many churches have been struggling to reshape themselves as missionary churches. A missionary church is one that is shaped, driven and organised for mission. The churches are beginning to see themselves as missional churches by their very nature – as churches that exist to serve the mission of God and for no other reason – least of all to serve their own institutional ends, detached from the mission that brings the Church into being and defines its very existence. If the existence of the Church depends on its role in the *missio dei*, everything that goes on in the life of the Church must be related to mission. Because the missionary Church constantly celebrates the sacraments, the role and function of the sacraments in mission is now a pressing question.

The Church of England’s manifesto for this missional reshaping of the Church, *Mission-Shaped Church* (2004), does not actually ignore the sacraments. It recognises that all churches are by definition eucharistic communities and that a local mission initiative – a ‘fresh expression’ or church plant – does not become a church until it celebrates the sacraments. But, strangely enough, this seminal Anglican report does not address the question of the function of the sacraments in mission. Certain published sequels to *Mission-Shaped Church* have begun tentatively to do so.² The question that I want to address here is, What is the theological connection between the sacraments and mission? I aim to make the case for

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- 1 *Ad Gentes 2*: W. M. Abbott (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican II* (London and Dublin: Geoffrey Chapman, 1966), p. 585. The theme is echoed in the Faith and Order document *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2013), §13: ‘As a divinely established communion, the Church belongs to God and does not exist for itself. It is by its very nature missionary, called and sent to witness in its own life to that communion God intends for all humanity and for all creation in the kingdom’; <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/faith-and-order/i-unity-the-church-and-its-mission/the-church-towards-a-common-vision>.
 - 2 *Mission-Shaped Church* (2004), p. 101; S. Croft (ed.), *Mission-Shaped Questions* (2008); S. Croft and I. Mobsby (eds), *Fresh Expressions in the Sacramental Tradition* (2009); *Fresh Expressions in the Mission of the Church: Report of an Anglican-Methodist Working Party* (2012), pp. 155–9: all published in London by Church House Publishing. In America there is the ‘Missional Church’ series; see especially Craig Van Gelder (ed.), *The Missional Church and Denominations: Helping Congregations Develop a Missional Identity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008). The role of the sacraments of Christian initiation is not very visible, if at all, in this series.

claiming that the mission of the Church is sacramental *by its very nature*. I put forward twelve succinct theses to explore the relationship between sacramentality and mission. The argument moves from what is hidden to what is open, beginning with the mystical identity of the Church as grounded in the life of the Holy Trinity, and proceeding through the idea of Christ as the sacrament of God, and the Church as the sacrament of Christ, to the public exposition of the gospel through the celebration of the sacraments. The essay draws on Reformation and Roman Catholic theology, as well as on Anglican sources, to suggest that a meaningful ecumenical convergence is now possible on the divisive question of the sacramentality of the Church.

1. The Church of Jesus Christ receives its essential identity from God

The identity of the Church of Jesus Christ, is received, not created or constructed. It can never be the result of human striving. The existence of the Church resides in the realm of grace, that is to say the realm of gift. The identity of the Church is received from the Triune God, not from society or the state or from some fashionable ideology. The Church comes to us from the hand of God. So the being of the Church is a state of continual reception. She is brought into existence and held in being by God. If God were to withdraw God's sustaining word or the Church were to cease to receive it, the Church would implode, crumble into dust. It might look just the same on the outside; it might appear that nothing had changed; the life of the institution might carry on regardless, but it would be an empty, lifeless shell, full of 'dead men (and women) walking'. As Karl Barth says: If Scripture were to be no longer the word of God for the Church, then God's revelation would become a distant memory and there would be 'no Church of Jesus Christ'. That is to say, no real, authentic Church, only a sham, a masquerade.³

When, as bishops, clergy or lay people, we are dealing with the Church as a working institution every day – with its structures, administration, personnel and finances – it is not easy to keep this vision of the Church alive and to see the Church as it comes down out of heaven from God, the holy city, the new Jerusalem, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, Jesus Christ (Revelation 21.2). Christ can be seen as the Church's spouse, head or very self (Ephesians 5.22–33). As Thomas F. Torrance puts it, Jesus Christ constitutes the essence of the Church; it is Christ who makes the Church the Church.⁴ That is not the same

3 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1936–), I/2, pp. 544–6.

4 Thomas F. Torrance, 'The Mission of the Church', *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 19.2 (1966), pp. 129–43 at pp. 140–1.

as saying that what Christ is, the Church is – even less, that what the Church is, Christ is – because that would be to divinise the Church and to fall into idolatry. There is always a human element, a ‘fallen’ human element, in the make up of the Church. In the Church there is an excess beyond Christ and it is this excess that is responsible for the failings, sins and crimes of the Church as an institution in this world. In Luther’s terms, the Church is *semper peccator, semper penitens, semper iustus*: always and at the same time sinful, penitent and justified in Christ. To affirm that the Church receives its essential identity from God in Christ is to preach the gospel, for it is a redeemed identity that it receives. So our theme here is not a *theologia gloriae* (theology of glory), but a *theologia crucis* (theology of the cross). It is Jesus Christ, incarnate, crucified and risen, who gives the Church its identity and meaning.

2. The Church of Jesus Christ receives its essential identity from God through word and sacrament

What the Church receives from God as a gift is not a blank space to fill up as the Church thinks fit, nor a blank cheque to fill in as the Church thinks best, but a mandate. The Church is given three tasks (*munera*): to teach, to sanctify and to govern. Slightly expanded, that means to proclaim the word of God by preaching and teaching; to sanctify the people through worship and the liturgy, principally the sacraments, in the power of the Holy Spirit; and to lead, guide and protect the faithful in their discipleship through the ministry of its pastors within a conciliar framework. ‘Go and *make disciples* of all nations, *baptising* them ... and *teaching* them ...’ (Matthew 28. 19).⁵

The Church is brought into being and held in existence by the creating and sustaining word, the word that goes forth from God and does not return to God empty (Isaiah 55.8–9). The word of God infuses the Church with life and calls new believers into her fellowship. This word of God is centred in Jesus Christ as he is attested in the Scriptures. Perhaps no one in the history of the Church has had a more overwhelming sense of the power of the word of God to effect the transformation of the Church than Martin Luther. He once said, with modest self-deprecation but essentially in truth, that while he and his colleagues Philip

5 Cf. Vatican II: *Christus Dominus* 11; *Lumen Gentium* 21, 25. For an account of how Vatican II received these insights from the Reformation tradition see Ormond Rush, ‘The Offices of Christ, *Lumen Gentium* and the People’s Sense of the Faith’, *Pacifica* 16 (2003), pp. 137–152: www.pacifica.org.au/volumes/volume16/issue02/the-offices.../pdf. For the theology of mission and ministry that underpins my argument here, see Paul Avis, *A Ministry Shaped by Mission* (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2005).

Melanchthon and Nicholas Amsdorf simply sat and drank beer, the word of God swept through the Church, reforming it.⁶

But in the Second Vatican Council, the Roman Catholic Church also discovered a new sense of the power of the word of God. According to the Council, Jesus Christ inaugurated the Church by preaching the Good News (gospel), the coming of the Kingdom of God.⁷ He commanded his apostles to preach the gospel – the gospel of which he was both the fulfilment and the first preacher.⁸ Such is the force and power of the Word of God, said the Council, that it can serve the Church as her support and strength.⁹ Furthermore, the “study of the sacred page” should be the very soul of sacred theology: the clergy should ‘immerse’ themselves in the Scriptures by diligent study and the laity are to be encouraged to read the Bible for themselves.¹⁰ Clearly, love of the Scriptures and scriptural preaching are not the exclusive preserve of reformed Christians: they belong to the whole Church.

Also included in the mandate that the Church receives is a commission – actually a command – to celebrate the sacraments. The Church’s celebration of the sacraments is a matter of obedience, but in that obedience she finds her fulfilment. ‘Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptising them ...’ (Matthew 28.19). ‘Do this in remembrance of me’ (1 Corinthians 11.24–25; Luke 22.19). We have a command to baptise and we have a command to break bread and drink wine. Here the Church finds its purpose and identity. That is why we should assiduously seek candidates for baptism and all that follows from it in Christian initiation and that is why we should celebrate the Eucharist joyfully and frequently.

Word and sacrament are what give substance to the Church as a reality in the world. Because between them they comprise and include all that the Church is called to do under the oversight of its pastors, they form the texture of the daily and weekly life of the community as it comes together; they are the channels and means whereby Christ imparts his life, grace and power. The *Barmen Theological Declaration* (1934) of the German Confessing Church says, ‘The Christian Church is the congregation of of the brethren in which Jesus Christ acts presently as the Lord in Word and sacrament through the Holy Spirit.’ The Barmen

6 ‘I simply taught, preached, and wrote God’s Word; otherwise I did nothing. And while I slept, or drank Wittenberg beer with my friends Philip and Amsdorf, the Word so greatly weakened the papacy that no prince or emperor ever inflicted such losses upon it. I did nothing; the Word did everything’ (LW [Luther’s Works, American Edition], vol. 51, p. 77).

7 *Lumen Gentium* 5.

8 *Dei Verbum* 7.

9 *Ibid.*, 21.

10 *Ibid.*, 24, 25.

Declaration immediately goes on to affirm that the Church witnesses to Christ not only through its message, its proclamation of the word, but also through its order, its polity, which includes the celebration of the sacraments and the way that their administration is regulated.¹¹

3. Word and sacrament are interdependent

Word and sacrament are not two separate, discrete functions of the Church, but are inextricably connected, two sides of a coin. They are interdependent and mutually constitutive. Vatican II puts it beautifully when it affirms that there is ‘one table of the Word of God and the Body of Christ’.¹² Word and sacrament are two facets of one reality. The word takes embodied form in the sacraments: they narrate and show forth the gospel message; they rehearse salvation history and incorporate us into it. On the other hand, the sacraments are ‘visible words’: they are not something other than the word. In sacramental theology the form (the word) is joined to the matter (the elements) to make the sacramental sign. (The intention of the Church is needed too: the intention ‘to do what the Church intends’ in obedience to Christ’s scriptural command.)

Emily Dickinson (1830–86), speaking of a day of spiritual revelation, compared it to a sacrament, as something that was not interrupted by mere words:

*The time was scarce profaned by speech;
The symbol of a word
Was needless, as at sacrament
The wardrobe of our lord.*¹³

Dickinson brings out the eloquence of the sign. But, theologically, there is no sacrament without the word, no matter without form. Karl Rahner claims that the word is the primary and dominant factor, constituting the essence of the sacrament. I would not agree with Rahner that you can have a sacrament without a visible sign – as he seems to suggest with regard to marriage and penance, two of the seven sacraments recognised by the Roman Catholic Church. If there is no sign, there is no sacrament. In marriage the joining of hands and the giving of the rings are surely the sacramental sign.¹⁴ If penance (sacramental confession) has

11 *Barmen Theological Declaration*, §3: http://www.ekd.de/english/barmen_theological_declaration.html.

12 *Ibid.*, 21.

13 Emily Dickinson, ‘There came day at summer’s full’, *Selected Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. James Reeves (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1959), p. 29.

14 Here I agree with Andrew Davison, *Why Sacraments?* (London: SPCK, 2013), p. 114.

no sign, perhaps it is not a sacrament, though penance was certainly recognised as a sacrament by Luther for some time, even though he rejected four of the traditional seven as sacraments. Davison suggests, appealing to Aquinas, that ‘The journey to the priest, and making a clean breast of one’s wrongdoings, is action enough to count as “matter”’.¹⁵ But penance still seems to lack a ‘sign’, unless the sign is to be looked for in acts of penitence, confession, reparation or restitution, as the Council of Florence proposed. However, Rahner’s essential point stands: sacraments are not a substitute for the word; they are manifestations of the word and that is precisely why they effect what they signify, for the word of God is powerful and effective.¹⁶

God has given us the sacraments to make God’s presence real. They are signs of the nearness of God. The Lord draws near to his people in the sacraments. In the sacraments God the Holy Trinity reaches out in grace to humankind. The sacraments unite us with the body of Christ. Baptism and Eucharist are *embodiments of his body*, if I can put it like that. In the sacraments, Jesus Christ, whose body we receive, remains the Logos, God’s essential word. As Bonhoeffer says, the sacrament ‘fully mediates the presence of the Word ... The sacrament is the Word of God, for it is the proclamation of the gospel ... an action consecrated and interpreted through the Word.’¹⁷ Word and sacrament are indivisible.

4. As God-given signs, the sacraments express the nature of the Christ’s Church

The liturgy is made up of signs. As well as words there are actions. Priest and people are the agents of words and acts. The celebration of the liturgy is a total social event, taking place in the realm of sign or symbol. Symbolic action, interpreted by speech, is its *modus operandi*. Its medium is the poetic. Liturgy is something performed, where those who enact it use words and visible signs. Among these signs the sacraments are pre-eminent. They are instituted by divine authority and have promises attached. Thus the sacraments are ‘signs’ of what God is doing and at the same time the vehicle of God’s action, so becoming effective, fruitful signs. For example, the Eucharist both proclaims the coming of God’s kingdom and carries it forward. So the sacraments are not merely like signposts that point the way to a destination that is located somewhere else, but have no other intrinsic connection to what they signify. They are signs that, as it were, contain their des-

15 Ibid, p. 141 and n. 16 (p. 170).

16 Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1976), vol. 14, pp. 137–139 (‘What is a Sacrament?’).

17 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Christology*, trans. John Bowden (London: Fontana, 1971), p. 53.

tion. ‘The sacraments are signs that [both] promise and point to salvation.’¹⁸ The sacraments embody the efficacious presence and power of Jesus Christ. The poet and artist David Jones said that in the Incarnation Christ ‘placed himself in the order of signs’: the Word of God entered into the contingent material world, the world of space-time, full of signification, a world that both reveals and conceals its Creator, that speaks eloquently of its divine origin, yet draws a veil over it.¹⁹

If the celebration of the sacraments were merely an instrumental function of the Church, in the sense that the Church is one thing and happens to administer sacraments that are another thing, the sacraments could be retailed by your local supermarket. The Church and the sacraments are one reality. They share the same incarnational character. The celebration of the sacraments is an ecclesial act and the Church is a sacramental reality. When the sacraments are celebrated ‘according to Christ’s institution’ (as the Reformers insisted), they reveal the truth about the Church as Christ intended it because they flow from her very nature. Word and sacrament express the Church’s essential life. The Church receives her identity from God when she does the work that God gives her to do: principally, though by no means exclusively, as she celebrates God’s sacraments. In truth, the celebration of the sacraments is what gives the Church substance in the world as the body of Christ. Jesus’ words at the Last Supper – the Words of Institution – are constitutive of the Church: ‘This is my body. Do this in *anamnesis* of me.’ A body that rarely or never did ‘do this’ could not be the Church; it would lack an ecclesial *raison d’être*. These ‘Words of Institution’ make Jesus Christ present in the mandated actions of the Church, which together comprise its mission.²⁰

5. The sacraments find their principal role in worship and evangelization

Much of the Church’s worship has the celebration of the sacraments as its content. We worship sacramentally. Worship is structured by the sacraments. The liturgy would be drastically evacuated of substance if the sacraments were removed. But in celebrating the sacraments we are engaging in worship *par excellence*. Humanity is created to worship God and therein to know God’s love and truth. So we become most fully ourselves when we lose ourselves in ‘wonder, love and praise’.

18 Davison, *Why Sacraments?*, p. 55.

19 Cited *ibid.*, p. 58. David Jones, ‘Art and Sacrament’, in *id.*, *Epoch and Artist: Selected Writings*, ed. Harman Grisewood (New York: Chilmark Press, 1959; London: Faber and Faber, 2011). Jones found this phrase in Maurice de la Taille, *The Mystery of Faith and Human Opinion Contrasted and Defined*, trans. J. Schimpf (London: Sheed and Ward, 1934), p. 212.

20 On this theme see Karl Rahner, *The Church and the Sacraments* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1963).

When we surrender ourselves in adoration, we are most affirmed as who we are – who we are in Christ – and we find our true selves given back to us. So it is with the Church: she is most affirmed when she devotes herself to worship in spirit and in truth. The Church's integrity is given back to her as a gift and she becomes transparent to God.

It is sometimes said that the Church is here for the sake of mission; that mission is its *raison d'être*. Brunner, Kraemer and others have asserted that 'The Church lives by mission as a fire lives by burning.'²¹ There is much to be said for that view, provided mission is not seen as something separate from worship.²² Mission includes worship, and evangelization as the outward thrust of mission arises from worship as it were spontaneously. Evangelization springs from worship, draws its energy from worship and cannot flourish apart from worship. What sort of outreach would it be that did not well up from the love of God, that was not infused with adoration and thanksgiving and intercession? 'Lift high the Cross, the love of Christ proclaim/Till all the world adore his sacred name!' So I would prefer to say that the Church exists to worship God and to turn that worship outwards into evangelization.

6. The Church has a sacramental life because Jesus Christ is the sacrament of God

It is because Jesus Christ is the sacrament of God and the Church is his body that the Church has a sacramental life and a sacramental mission in the world. In Schillebeeckx's words, 'Christ is the sacrament of encounter with God'.²³ Jesus Christ is the visible sign and personal embodiment of God's presence and action in the world. So human encounter with Jesus Christ through the proclamation of the gospel (*kerygma*), in the form of word and sacrament, becomes itself a sacrament of encounter with God. We encounter Jesus in the Scriptures, in the saints, in the love of others, in preaching and teaching, in prayer, praise and sacrament. Even the physical gathering of the faithful for worship is a sign of Christ's presence. As Martimort writes, 'The actual assembly of Christians renders visible the gathering of humankind that Christ has accomplished; the grace that effects this gathering is mysteriously at work in every liturgical celebration.'²⁴ In worship,

21 H. Emil Brunner, *The Word and the World* (London: SCM Press, 1931), p. 108. Cf. Hendrik Kraemer, *Religion and the Christian Faith* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press 1956), p. 29.

22 See further on this point, P. Avis, *The Vocation of Anglicanism* (Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), chapter 3, 'A Missional Vocation'.

23 Edward Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1963).

24 A. G. Martimort in id. et al., eds., *The Church at Prayer*, vol. 1, *Principles of the Liturgy*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Collegeville, Minnesota, 1987), p. 91.

especially in the Eucharist, the mystery of salvation becomes present and manifest. Eucharistic worship is one of the forms that the presence of Christ takes in the world under the dispensation of the gospel; it is, in a sense, the continuation or prolongation of his earthly mission. Leo the Great said, ‘What was visible in the Lord has passed over into the mysteries [i.e. sacraments].’²⁵ But Leo’s words are no more than a condensation of ‘Paul’s’ litany of salvation history, from the Incarnation to the *parousia*:

*Great is the mystery of our religion:
Who was manifested in flesh,
vindicated by the Spirit,
seen by angels,
proclaimed among the nations,
believed in throughout the world,
taken up in glory.*²⁶

All of these signs, that form the fabric of the Church’s being, are vehicles of the *kerygma*. The proclamation is made in word and deed, speech and symbol, saying and singing. As we engage with the Church – in its proclamation, liturgy and service – we find ourselves engaging with the presence and ministry of Christ and consequently being drawn to take a part in the work of his Kingdom. T. F. Torrance argues that the *kerygma* is ‘in the fullest sense the sacramental action of the Church through which the mystery of the Kingdom concerning Christ and his Church, hid from the foundation of the world, is now being revealed in history.’²⁷ The sacraments derive their reality from Jesus Christ as the sacrament of God, the living, powerful sign of God’s saving presence and action in the midst of the world. Christ gives himself, pours himself out sacramentally through the Spirit in baptism and Eucharist.

To consolidate our theme of Jesus Christ as the sacrament of God, I will briefly bring forward four witnesses, one early medieval (Paschasius Radbertus), one late medieval-Reformation (Martin Luther), one twentieth-century (Karl Barth) and one contemporary (Rowan Williams). Radbertus wrote in the ninth century: ‘The birth of Christ and the entire economy of salvation form a single great sacrament, for in this visible human being the divine Majesty invisibly and secretly accom-

25 Cited *ibid.*, p. 267, in an exposition of the thought of Dom Odo Casel, by I. H. Dalmais.

26 1 Timothy 3.16, NRSV, slightly adapted.

27 Thomas F. Torrance, ‘Eucharist and Eschatology’, *Conflict and Agreement in the Church* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1960), vol. 2: *The Ministry and the Sacraments of the Gospel*, pp. 158–9.

plished what would bring about our consecration and sanctification.’ He added: ‘This is why the Incarnation of God is rightly called a mystery or sacrament.’²⁸

Luther pointed out that, strictly speaking, there can be only one sacrament: Jesus Christ himself.²⁹ Although Luther was well aware that in the New Testament the Latin *sacramentum* translated the Greek *mysterion*, mystery, he pointed to the text cited above, 1 Timothy 3.16 in the Vulgate (*Et manifeste magnum est pietatis sacramentum*: ‘Beyond question, great is the mystery of our religion’) as a scriptural precedent for seeing Christ as the one sacrament, that is as the visible sign and personal embodiment of God. This made the sacraments of the Church ‘sacramental signs’ (*signa sacramentalia*) of Jesus Christ.³⁰

Karl Barth is writing in the same vein as Luther when he suggests that, in the medieval western Church, the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist were ‘placed alongside’ the one true great sacrament which is Jesus Christ and that the cultus of the sacraments came to eclipse Christ himself. Was it wise of the Church, he asks, ‘when it ceased to recognise in the incarnation, in the *nativitas Jesu Christi*, in the mystery of Christmas, the one and only sacrament, fulfilled once and for all, by whose actuality it lives as the one form of the one body of its Head, as the earthly-historical form of the existence of Jesus Christ in the time between His ascension and return?’³¹ The point for us here is not whether Barth’s critique of the medieval Church was right or wrong, but to note his affirmation that the incarnate Jesus Christ is the one definitive sacrament of God.

Rowan Williams writes as follows of Christ as the sacrament of God and humanity:

*Jesus, baptized, tempted, forgiving and healing, offering himself as the means of a new covenant, is himself ‘sacrament’: it is his identity that is set before us as a sign, the form of a new people of God. Just as the whole life of Israel is meant as a sign of God ... so the life (and death) of Jesus is a sign of God, showing how a human biography formed by God looks ... What leads us to say that Jesus’ life is sacramental in a uniquely exhaustive way is that this life not only points to God but is the medium of divine action for judgement and renewal.*³²

28 Cited from Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 120: 1275, by Dalmais in Martimort et al., eds, *The Church at Prayer*, vol. 1, p. 265.

29 ‘The Holy Scriptures contain one sacrament only, which is the Lord Jesus Christ himself’: Martin Luther, WA (Weimar Edition of Luther’s Works), vol. 57, pp. 114, 222; cf. vol. 6, pp. 86, 97.

30 LW, vol. 36, pp. 18, 93-94 (*The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, 1520).

31 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV/2, *The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1958), p. 55 [§67].

32 Rowan Williams, *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p. 204 (‘The Nature of a Sacrament’).

Rowan Williams puts it in a nutshell: Jesus not only points to God, as though to another, but is himself the site, the *locus* of God's presence and action. As his body, the Church also, for all its failings, becomes the site, the *locus* of God's presence and action, though not of course the only or the exclusive arena of divine action and presence. The sacraments celebrated by the Church bring us into intimate touch with Jesus Christ. Sacraments are bridges to God in Christ, bridges built from God's side. So Schillebeeckx affirms: 'To receive the sacraments of the Church in faith is therefore the same thing as to encounter Christ himself.'³³

7. The Church is the sacrament of salvation

Can we say, as Vatican II did (following Congar, de Lubac, Karl Rahner and others), that the Church is itself sacramental, that it is constituted by Christ as 'the universal sacrament of salvation'?³⁴ Does it make sense to say that the Church is what Rahner calls 'the fundamental] sacrament (*Ursakrament*)' or the 'basic sacrament' (*Grundsakrament*) from which all particular sacramental actions flow?³⁵

Christians in the Reformation tradition find it difficult, perhaps even impossible, in view of all that can and must be said about the imperfections, failings and even crimes of the Church, to see it as the sacrament of salvation in Christ. To some Reformed Christians the notion of the sacramentality of the Church seems almost to deify the Church, putting the Church on the same level as the Eucharist or Lord's Supper (to use the traditional Protestant term), which we regard with reverence and awe as 'showing forth' and communicating the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 11.26; 10.16). Karl Barth was cautious about this kind of language, though he typically and repeatedly affirmed that, because the Church is Christ's body, it is to be described as the earthly-historical form of his existence. Barth deplored the kind of rhetoric that we associate with Catholic ecclesiology

33 Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament*, p. 54.

34 *Lumen gentium* 48; *Gaudium et spes* 45. See the discussion in Walter Kasper, *Theology and Church*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 1989), chapter 6. Cf. de Lubac, *Catholicism*, trans. Lancelot C. Sheppard (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1950), p. 29; id., *Méditation sur L'Église*, 3rd edition (Paris: Aubier, 1954), pp. 185–189; Rahner, *The Church and the Sacraments*. The idea of the Church as the fundamental sacrament was also advocated in O. Semmelroth, *Die Kirche als Ursakrament* (Freiburg: Herder, 1963 [1953]).

35 Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 6 (Baltimore, MD: Helicon Press; London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1969 [article first published 1947]), p. 259; id., *The Church and the Sacraments*, pp. 18–19. Later, Rahner preferred to reserve *Ursakrament* for Christ and to use *Grundsakrament* of the Church: *Foundations of Christian Faith*, trans. William V. Dych (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1978), pp. 429–30.

and which was powerfully articulated in Anglican theology by Charles Gore, of the Church as the extension of the Incarnation.³⁶

However, one of the foremost Reformed theologians of the twentieth century, Thomas F. Torrance, was already speaking of the Church as a sacramental sign in the early 1950s: ‘Through its ministry of *kerygma* the Church is regarded in the New Testament as the great sacramental sign, for it is the visible counterpart of the resurrection body of Christ.’³⁷ Torrance’s language about the Church as sacrament is contemporary with that of Semmelroth and predates similar language in Rahner and the teaching of Vatican II. However, he is unusual among Reformed theologians in his robust Platonic realism with regard to the Church as the body of Christ.

However, the Reformed – Roman Catholic theological dialogue, that ran from 1984–1990 in its second phase, reached agreement on the sacramentality of the Church, on the basis of the instrumentality of the Church in the mission of God. It stated:

*As Christ’s mediation was carried out visibly in the mystery of his incarnation, life, death and resurrection, so the church [sic] has also been established as visible sign and sacrament of this unique mediation across time and space. The Church is an instrument in Christ’s hands because it carries out, through the preaching of the word, the administration of the sacraments and the oversight of communities, a ministry entirely dependent on the Lord, just like a tool in the hand of a worker.*³⁸

36 Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV/2, p. 55; Charles Gore (e.g.), *The Incarnation of the Son of God: The Bampton Lectures for the Year 1891* (2nd edn, London: John Murray, 1892), p. 219: ‘The Church exists to perpetuate in every age the life of Jesus, the union of manhood with Godhead’; id., *The Epistle to the Ephesians* (London: John Murray, 1907), pp. 55, 120; id., *The Reconstruction of Belief* [3 vols in one] (London: John Murray, 1926), p. 767: ‘The method of the Spirit in the Church and the sacraments is thus properly called an extension of the principle and fact of the Incarnation.’ See also the discussion in James Carpenter, Gore: *A Study in Liberal Catholicism* (London: The Faith Press, 1960), pp. 221–3.

37 Thomas F. Torrance, ‘Eucharist and Eschatology’, *Conflict and Agreement in the Church* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1960), vol. 2: *The Ministry and the Sacraments of the Gospel*, pp. 161–2. Torrance’s essay on the Eucharist was prepared for the World Conference on Faith and Order at Lund in 1952 and first published in D. M. Baillie and John Marsh (eds), *Intercommunion* (London: SCM Press, 1952), pp. 303–50. See also the discussion of the sacramentality of the Church from a Protestant point of view in Leo J. Koffeman, *In Order to Serve: An Ecumenical Introduction to Church Polity* (Zurich and Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2014), pp. 221–2.

38 Reformed – Roman Catholic Dialogue, Second Phase 1984–1990, ‘Toward a Common Understanding of the Church’ (§108), in G. Gros, FSC, H. Meyer and W. G. Rusch (eds), *Growth in Agreement II: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982–1998* (Geneva: World Council of Churches; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), p. 804. For a Reformed account in sympathy with this ecumenical statement, see Martien E. Brinkman, ‘The Church as Sacrament’, in E. Van der Borgh (ed.), *The Unity of the Church* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), chapter 24.

Long before even T. F. Torrance and the Roman Catholic theologians mentioned above spoke of Christ as the sacrament of God and the Church as the sacrament of salvation, the Church of England philosopher-theologian Oliver Quick affirmed in 1927 that ‘the life of Jesus Christ’ is ‘the perfect sacrament’.³⁹ Quick also asserted that ‘the Church as an organised society is sacramental’.⁴⁰ Just as Christ is set apart in holiness to represent all humanity and to include it in his saving work, so the Church is set apart in holiness to represent human society and to include it with a view to its redemption. Quick’s view of the sacramentality of Christ and the Church is based on their role in the saving purposes of God, more than on an ontological, incarnational approach, though that is present too. William Temple, an associate of Oliver Quick, affirmed the sacramental character of the Church in 1941. Since Temple’s vision was of a sacramental universe, and the Church is the climax of God’s creation, it could hardly be otherwise.⁴¹

The earliest claim for the sacramentality of the Church that I have come across, apart from Quick’s, is in Yves Congar’s paper, written in 1937, ‘The Church and its Unity’. Expounding Thomas Aquinas’ definition of the Church (*Ecclesia, id est fides et fidei sacramenta*; ‘The Church, that is faith and the sacraments of faith’: ST III, Q.64, 2 ad 3), Congar argues that there could be no sacraments unless the Church itself were sacramental: ‘the constitution of the mystical body at the deepest level of its being is the ground of sacramental action and of its causality’. Congar affirms, ‘The Church is, of its essence, sacramental.’⁴²

But are these claims for the Church going too far? By way of answer, perhaps we should re-frame the question. Suppose we ask: ‘Is the Church a *sign* of God’s saving action in the world?’ Surely we have to answer, ‘Yes’, or we make the Church completely meaningless. Again we may ask, ‘Is the Church also an *instrument* of God’s saving action in then world?’ Surely we have to say, ‘Yes’, again, or we make her actions, particularly those of her ministers, pointless. Or look at it another way: when and where is the Church, which sometimes – possibly often – serves to obscure Christ and the gospel, to any extent transparent to God, to God’s revealed nature and character? Certainly in her works of mercy and compassion, we may say. Perhaps also in her worship, when she glorifies Christ and his Cross. And again, no doubt, when she speaks clearly and simply the gospel story and the gospel message, testifying to him in her speech. In such

39 Oliver Chase Quick, *The Christian Sacraments* (London: Nisbet, 1927), p. 105.

40 Quick, *The Christian Sacraments*, p. 105.

41 William Temple, *Citizen and Churchman: The Archbishop of York’s Lent Book*, 1941 (London Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1941), p. 43.

42 Yves Congar, *The Mystery of the Church*, trans. A. V. Littledale (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1960), chapter 2, ‘The Church and its Unity’ [1939], pp. 76-78.

ways the Church becomes an 'outward, visible sign' of the grace of God at work in the world – in other words, a sacrament.

8. The Church is the sacrament of Christ because he works through his body

Henri de Lubac writes: 'If Christ is the sacrament of God, the Church is for us the sacrament of Christ.'⁴³ Do we agree with the logic of that statement – it is pivotal for our argument in this chapter? Can we embrace the first half (Christ is the sacrament of God), without accepting the second (the Church is the sacrament of Christ)? The link between the two halves is this: Christ works through the Church (though not only through her). The Church's saving grace is that Jesus Christ acts in her as his own body. All Christian traditions affirm this truth.

When the Church performs what it here to perform and carries out what it is mandated to do – in terms of word, sacrament and pastoral care – Christ is at work. In the Spirit Christ acts continually and invisibly – in a mystical way – in the Church as well as in the rest of the world. But in his sacraments – the sacraments of his gospel – he acts visibly, 'in such a way', Schillebeeckx says, 'that the sacraments are the personal saving acts of Christ realized as institutional acts in the Church.'⁴⁴ Although the sacraments are acts of God (as Christ), he does not deprive his Church of her part in them. The Church becomes a channel to make him present, a continuation of his ministry.⁴⁵ Sacraments are simultaneously actions of God and actions of the Church. As Schillebeeckx puts it, 'The sacraments are therefore acts of the whole mystical body, of Christ and of his Church ... in this sense they are acts of Christ in and through his Church.'⁴⁶

I suggest that this approach enables us to affirm the sacramentality of the Church from a Reformation point of view. Karl Barth seems an unlikely, counter-intuitive, sponsor for this doctrine. As we have noted, Barth attacks the doctrine of 'the sacramental character of the Church and its actions', insisting (in a similar

43 De Lubac, *Catholicism*, p. 29. De Lubac was also at the forefront of the renewed understanding of the Church as a sacrament: 'If Christ is the sacrament of God, the Church is for us the sacrament of Christ' (*Catholicism*, p. 76). He later described the Church as 'the total locus of the Christian sacraments', 'the great sacrament which contains and vitalizes all the others': *The Splendor of the Church*, trans. Michael Mason (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), p. 203; French title: *Méditation sur l'Église* (3rd edition, Paris: Aubier, 1953).

44 Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament*, p. 59.

45 De Lubac, *Catholicism*, p. 29.

46 Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament*, p. 66. Cf. Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum concilio* 7: the liturgy is 'an action of Christ the Priest and of his Body, which is the Church': Austin Flannery, *Vatican Council II: Volume I, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, New Revised Edition (Northport, NY: Costello; Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1992), p. 5.

way to Luther) that ‘the one and only sacrament’ consists in the incarnation, the coming into the world, of Jesus Christ. But, on the other hand, Barth continues, it is Christ as this one, all-embracing sacrament, that enables the Church to exist as ‘the earthly-historical form of the existence of Jesus Christ’. What is quite rightly unacceptable to Barth is when the sacramental character of the Church is placed alongside, as it were, this one redemptive sacrament, or is made a continuation of it, rather than derived continuously from it as its source.⁴⁷ For Barth the controlling condition of the Church’s existence is one of continual dependence of God’s mercy and power. It is the work of God to build up the Christian community, albeit through human means and human efforts, which are always infected with sin. What we affirm of the Church in the creed, that it is one, holy, catholic and apostolic, we affirm through faith in God’s working. Where this sense of continual dependence in faith is lost, we have merely the ‘semblance’ of a Church, the outward shell, not the inner reality.⁴⁸ But, paradoxically, it follows from Barth’s insistence on the Church’s absolute dependence on God that something of God is to be found in the Church, and if something of God is to be found in the Church, then the Church is revelatory of God and a channel of God’s grace – which is surely another way of speaking about its sacramental character.

The only understanding on which the contemporary Protestant theologian Eberhard Jüngel is prepared to accept the sacramentality of the Church is that of the Church as fundamentally receptive of the action of God and so simply the vehicle of the gospel. In the liturgical action, as Luther puts it, God speaks through word and sacrament and we respond in prayer and praise.⁴⁹ So the Church is necessarily the receptive ‘hearing Church’ before it can become the pro-active ‘speaking Church’. But there is an inevitable convergence and even identity between divine and human action when God speaks through human agency. On the basis of the continual reception of the word, the continual confession of its sins and the continual testimony to Jesus Christ, there can be (Jüngel affirms) a ‘self-representation of Jesus Christ’ in the acts of the Church.⁵⁰ Although at first blush Jüngel’s approach seems somewhat grudging, he ends with a strong affirmation of the sacramentality of the Church – provided always that this is seen as stemming from a divine initiative and not as the inherent property of the Church *per se*.

What Protestant theologians sometimes find difficult to accept is that the concept of the sacramental nature of the Church is not meant as a way of glorifying

47 Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV/2, p. 55.

48 Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV/2, pp. 616-8.

49 Luther, WA, vol. 49, p. 558.

50 Eberhard Jüngel, ‘The Church as Sacrament?’ (1983) in id., *Theological Essays*, trans. John Webster (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), pp. 189-213.

the Church over against Christ, or of idolising the Church in place of her Lord. It is precisely a way of holding the Church to her proper role. She is to point to him and to be a channel through which his grace can flow. She is to know her place. As Walter Kasper says, in language closely akin to Jüngel's way of putting it, 'The Church is the sign which points beyond itself to Jesus Christ, and it is an instrument in the hand of Jesus Christ, since he is the real author of all saving activity in the church.'⁵¹

9. The Church is an instrument of the mission of God

The expression 'the mission of the Church' is, of course, shorthand. As it stands, it is fundamentally misleading, indeed almost blasphemous. The Church has no mission of its own. The Church serves the mission of God (*missio dei*) as an instrument – not the unique instrument, but the privileged instrument – of God's salvific purpose in the world.⁵² The concept of *missio dei* was developed by George Vicedom, Karl Barth and others, to counter-act any domestication of mission by the Church and its agencies. If the Church has a mission, it is something lent to her, entrusted to her, for which she will have to give account. The Church and its faith and sacramental life is the way to salvation, but the Church does not own any of these things: it ministers them on behalf of another (which is the basic meaning of *diakonia*). *Missio dei* affirms the sovereignty of God in mission and the prevenient nature of the grace of God that is at work in mission. It expands our vision to take in God's loving and just purposes for the whole created order and reminds us that God is equally concerned for all God's children, whatever their colour or creed.

It follows from the concept of the *missio dei* that God is always ahead of us in mission. God is not dependent on the Church to the extent that God is helpless to act otherwise. We do not go out to any place where God is not already at work. The Holy Spirit touches every person at every time in every place. As Karl Rahner typically taught, there a call of God to every person at the deepest level of their being.

As we offer what God has entrusted to us to all who are willing to receive it, we find that the Holy Spirit has prepared certain persons to be receptive. So the

51 Kasper, *Theology and Church*, p. 116.

52 On *missio dei* see, e.g., David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, 20th Anniversary Edition (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2011), pp. 398-402; Paul S. Chung, *Reclaiming Mission as Constructive Theology* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012), chapter 4; S. B. Bevans and R. P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology for Mission Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2004); John G. Flett, *The Witness of God: The Trinity, Missio Dei, Karl Barth, and the Nature of Christian Community* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).

Church first receives and then shares with those who are also able to receive. The theology of divine sovereignty, prevenient grace and an all-pervasive Holy Spirit is the only theology that is capable of underwriting mission. The alternative is a desperate Pelagian kind of human striving, as though it all depended on us. And that leads to all sorts of suspect manipulation of potential converts to gain ‘our’ ends. In the Anglican poet W. H. Auden’s *For the Time Being*, the aged Simeon, at the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, speaks these words:

*And because of His visitation, we may no longer desire God as if He were lacking: our redemption is no longer a question of pursuit but of surrender to Him who is always and everywhere present. Therefore at every moment we pray that, following Him, we may depart from our anxiety into His peace.*⁵³

10. The sacraments have a key role in mission and evangelism

Worship is part of the mission of the Church. It is what the Church is sent to do; it is why the Church is here. Worship is not something other than mission, as though the Church gets on with worship and then decides what to do about mission. The Catechism in *The Book of Common Prayer (1979)* of The Episcopal Church (USA) defines mission like this: ‘The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ ... as it prays and worships, proclaims the Gospel, and promotes justice, peace, and love.’⁵⁴ Worship is a key component of the Church’s mission. But as the Church truly devotes itself to worship, prayer and the ministry of the word, it is inspired by the Holy Spirit to reach out in evangelisation (proclaiming the gospel) to those who are not yet part of that worshipping community (Acts 2.42). The Episcopal Church also has a helpful definition of evangelism: ‘The presentation of Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, in such ways that persons may be led to believe in him as Savior and follow him as Lord, within the fellowship of his Church.’⁵⁵ Evangelisation is a key aspect of the Church’s mission, indeed the cutting edge of mission. But as twin facets of the Church’s mission, worship and evangelisation must be related to each other – that is to say theologically connected.

Set within the overall context of worship, the sacraments stand out like great mountain peaks soaring above the foothills of day-to-day prayer, praise and thanksgiving – the worship that is offered in the daily offices of the Church. If worship

53 W. H. Auden, *Collected Longer Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968).

54 *The Book of Common Prayer* (1979), p. 855. I owe the reference to J. Robert Wright, ‘The Implications of Ecclesiology for Proselytism and Evangelism’, *The Anglican*, July AD 1996, pp. 19–22 at p. 19.

55 Cited Wright (see previous note), p. 19, from the proceedings of the General Convention of 1973.

is part of the mission of the Church, it follows that the celebration of the sacraments is also part of that mission. The sacraments are designed – designed, that is, by their divine author – to play a key role in the mission of the Church in the specific sense of evangelisation. To celebrate the sacraments is part of the *raison d'être* of the Church, not something separate from its mission. The reason is not far to seek: the sacraments preach the gospel; they show forth the good news of Jesus Christ, his incarnation, ministry, suffering, death, resurrection, ascension and the sending of the Holy Spirit – together with the promise and hope of the fulfilment of God's loving and just purposes for God's creation in the last days. As Michael Ramsey tersely put it in *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, 'The Liturgy declares the Gospel of God.'⁵⁶ I would add that, it not only declares it, but mediates it, making it possible for us to participate in it and to receive its benefits. The words and actions of the liturgy are filled with the gospel. Both baptism and the Eucharist narrate the gospel and do so in dramatic mode.

Baptism speaks of Christ's descent into the waters of the Jordan and of his rising up to receive the power of the Spirit. It tells also of his immersion in the deep waters of death and his rising again in the power of an indestructible life (Hebrews 7.16). And these two events, his immersion-anointing and his crucifixion-resurrection, at the beginning and at the end of his public ministry, are one reality in salvation history. Baptism enables us to share, by faith and sacrament, in this mystery. 'Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life' (Romans 6.4).

Let us think in terms of the journey of Christian initiation.⁵⁷ Where most of our baptism candidates are infants, we have a progression from preparation of the parents and godparents, through baptism itself, to Christian nurture in the fellowship of the Church, preparation for confirmation, confirmation itself with the personal affirmation of baptismal promises and strengthening by the Holy Spirit for discipleship, then first communion. That is admittedly an ideal scenario: we know that there are many pitfalls along the way. Where candidates have not been baptised in infancy and are 'able to answer for themselves', preparation of the candidate obviously precedes baptism; baptism, confirmation and first communion happen in the same service. Where children are admitted to Holy Communion after baptism but before confirmation, there is a further gift of grace to be received by them when they come to confirmation, the strengthening power

56 A. M. Ramsey, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1936), p. 108.

57 Paul Avis (ed.), *The Journey of Christian Initiation: Theological and Pastoral Perspectives* (London: Church House Publishing, 2011); Paul Avis, *A Church Drawing Near: Spirituality and Mission in a Post-Christian Culture* (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2003).

of the Holy Spirit. One advantage of seeing Christian initiation as a process is that the order of events can vary a little, though the essential ingredients remain constant: catechesis, baptism, a liturgical opportunity to profess the faith for oneself, strengthening by the Spirit through the laying on of hands with prayer, Holy Communion.

Baptism is what first unites us with Christ in his death and resurrection and incorporates us into his body (1 Corinthians 12.13). Holy Communion celebrates and renews that union (1 Corinthians 10.16-17). In the Eucharist the body of Christ is renewing itself; the Church is offering itself – or rather, being caught up in Christ’s self offering to the Father. So it makes excellent sacramental sense that baptism should normally precede Holy Communion. In my view, no unbaptised person should be encouraged to receive communion, except in an urgent pastoral situation, where we can acknowledge a baptism of desire. Unbaptised would-be communicants can be guided in a pastoral way to be prepared to receive the gift of baptism. God’s gifts are given in order: the one prepares us to receive the other. But it is not for us to be officious in trying to enforce the norm or preventing anomalies from occurring at the altar rail; not at all.

Like baptism, the Eucharist also tells of the mighty acts of God in history, culminating in the incarnation of the Word, and especially – in the bread and wine – it speaks of his death and resurrection. ‘For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes’ (1 Corinthians 11.26). The Eucharist is (in Geoffrey Wainwright’s phrase) ‘the dramatic embodiment of the kerygma’,⁵⁸ eloquent of the gospel in the sense of God’s invitation, of divine hospitality, of heavenly nourishment. As Wainwright puts it, ‘the eucharist has an inescapable missionary significance in so far as it is the sign of the great feast which God will offer in the final kingdom to express for ever the universal triumph of His saving will and purpose.’⁵⁹ He continues: ‘The sign of the eucharist is enacted among the nations so that many may grasp the promise in hope and already taste the feast of the kingdom which is being projected into the present in sacramental mode.’⁶⁰ But here it is essential that the Eucharist and Holy Communion are not seen as rewards for those who are good enough to deserve it, the privilege of a spiritual élite. There is no such entity in the Church of Christ. The sacrament needs to be presented as continuous with Jesus’ hospitality to sinners – he ate and drank with them and accepted their hospitality too; he was not ashamed to share their table – and with his feeding of the hungry poor.

58 Geoffrey Wainwright, *Eucharist and Eschatology* (London: Epworth Press, 1971), p. 144.

59 *Ibid.*, p. 128.

60 *Ibid.*

As Wainwright again puts it, ‘The universality of the invitation makes of every celebration of the eucharist a missionary event.’⁶¹

11. The sacraments demand public visibility

It is not only the *faith* of the Church that proclaims the gospel, but also its *order*. Faith and order are correlative and indivisible. Church order is the *intentional, structured activity* of the Church and includes various aspects of its polity: the ministry of bishops, priests and deacons in visible historical continuity; worship, liturgy and the celebration of the sacraments; and forms of authority, conciliarity and oversight. Within this spectrum the sacraments have special ‘martyrological’ significance – significance for public witness. Baptism and the Eucharist are ritualised narratives of salvation history, events in the world, in space-time. In fact, they are more than narratives: they are speech-acts, performances, enactments of what they forthtell. They are eloquent of the gospel; they preach Christ. In the Lord’s Supper, says St Paul, you are continuously proclaiming, announcing, publishing or showing forth (*kataggello*) the Lord’s death until he comes (1 Corinthians 11.26).⁶²

I suspect that we tend to think of worship as what the Church does when no one else is looking, as a time of withdrawal from the world with its stresses and challenges. It is customary, at least in England, to shut the church doors when worship is in progress, even in warm weather. We are not accustomed to think of *worship as public witness*. But, as Alexander Schmemmann writes, ‘worship – as the expression, creation and fulfilment of the Church – places the Church before the face of the world, manifests her purpose in the world, the purpose of the people of God, set in the world with a Gospel and a mission.’⁶³ Worship is, as Edward Foley puts it, an expression of public theology. It is not meant only for initiates, but also for seekers, enquirers and those who simply overhear what the Church says (and does) in worship.⁶⁴ We should ask ourselves: What would we do differently if we were guided by the principle of *worship as public witness*?

61 Ibid.

62 Anthony Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians (New International Greek Testament Commentary)*; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000), pp. 886–7: ‘to perform *a declarative speech-act openly*’ (italics original).

63 Alexander Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, trans. Asheleigh E. Moorhouse (London: Faith Press; Bangor, Maine: American Orthodox Press, 1966), p. 25.

64 Edward Foley, ‘Preaching to the Choir or Reaching Out to “the Unchurched”? Pope Francis, Worship, and Public Theology’, *Anaphora* 9.2 (2015), pp. 1–20. See also idem, ‘Liturgy as Public Theology’, *Studia Liturgica* 38.1 (2008), pp. 31–52.

The way that (to use Michael Ramsey's way of putting it) 'the Church's inward meaning is expressed in the Church's outward shape and structure',⁶⁵ that is to say in its ministry, oversight and sacraments, is an aspect of the sacramental nature of the Church. If it were not, these essential elements in the life of the Church would be merely functional and pragmatic; we would have no compelling reason to execute them one way rather than another. But, in reality, they are constitutive, structural or ontological and that is why they can be sacramental, conveying and communicating an essential meaning. The Eucharist makes the Church, and so does baptism and the threefold ministry. At the same time, the Church has the making of them.

But the tragedy is that, in the celebration of the sacraments, most of the time we are preaching to the converted. The sacraments are mostly celebrated by 'consenting adults' behind closed doors. The visibility of the Church is diminishing rapidly, especially in the progressively secularising Northern European nations. It is true that, at a baptism or confirmation service, nominal Christians and some non-Christians are likely to be present. A service of Christian initiation should be regarded as one of the main public services of the Church, a major opportunity for evangelism. J. M. Ritchie's words are to the point: '... every baptism service is intended to be in the eye of the world at large, and not simply for the benefit of the congregation and the candidate. It is the witness, not simply of the candidate ... but of the whole Church to the whole world.'⁶⁶ Baptisms conducted in the open air (though preferably not in the sea)⁶⁷ achieve this goal, celebrating the sacraments and therefore proclaiming the gospel, in the face of the world, *coram publico*. In England confirmation is still a significant opportunity to proclaim the Christian message to the normally unchurched through liturgy, especially an opportunity for the bishop.⁶⁸ In his study of confirmation in the eighteenth-century Church of England, Philip Tovey points out that confirmation was very much a public act at that time, openly prepared for by catechesis and courses of sermons, and advertised and reported on in the local press.⁶⁹ In the Nordic Lutheran Churches confirmation is still very much a public act and a popular one, while baptism is still sometimes administered privately in the home. Home baptisms are very rare in the Church of England. A form for Private Baptism is provided in the Book

65 A. M. Ramsey, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, p. 50.

66 J. M. Ritchie, 'The Missionary Significance of the Sacraments', *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 20.1 (1967), pp. 37–49 at p. 40.

67 See Davison, *Why Sacraments?*, p. 61–62.

68 See further, P. Avis, *Becoming a Bishop: A Theological Handbook of Episcopal Ministry* (Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), chapter 11: 'The Bishop and the Liturgy'.

69 Philip Tovey, *Anglican Confirmation 1662–1820* (Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 170–1.

of Common Prayer, 1662, and *Common Worship* includes a service of ‘Emergency Baptism’. The implication in both cases is that the infant is too weak or ill to be brought to church. Tovey argues that the restriction of sacramental acts to the private sphere, as though they were nobody’s business but ours, is a retreat from the public mission of the Church and that in this way the Church of England, for example, has contributed to its own decline.⁷⁰

With regard to the Eucharist, the early Church practised the principle of reserve (*disciplina arcani*), of holding back access to the mysteries for the unworthy: the catechumens would depart before the eucharistic celebration among the initiated. The principle of reserve, more broadly applied, appealed strongly to the high churchmen of the nineteenth-century Church of England, the Tractarians. To them it spoke of awe and reverence in the presence of the holy, whether of revealed truth and the Church’s teaching or of the administration of the sacraments. The crucial point for us here is that the principle of reserve was not one of concealment but of sensitivity.⁷¹ But perhaps there are other ways of securing that. What is important is that everything that speaks of the gospel should be allowed to proclaim it to all who have ears to hear and eyes to see. Wainwright correctly insists that ‘The Lord’s Supper should be celebrated *in public*, because it is a sign of the kingdom of God to which the whole world is being summoned.’⁷²

The sacramentality of the Church carries the implication that the *open exposition* of the sacraments is crucial to mission and evangelisation. The role of the sacraments in the mission of the Church is hampered by their lack of visibility in a culture where faith and worship are privatised – regarded as a personal and private matter. The challenge for mission is to overcome that pervasive cultural inhibition. To achieve this, some (including the Archbishop of York, John Sentamu) have administered baptism in a local river; others in the sea (not such a good idea). The popes have held huge open-air masses. Videos of church services can be put on the local church’s website (with the agreement of the individuals concerned). And, when the weather permits, keep the church doors open during worship.

70 Ibid.

71 Robin C. Selby, *The Principle of Reserve in the Writings of John Henry Cardinal Newman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 1. Selby does not deal explicitly with the principle of reserve in connection with the Eucharist, but points out that, for Newman, as for the Tractarians generally, all material things were types of unseen realities. According to the sacramental principle one should pierce through the veil of appearance by faith to perceive eternal truth (pp. 97–98). But for the application of the principle of reserve to the Eucharist see Alf Härdelin, *The Tractarian Understanding of the Eucharist* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1965), pp. 316–339. For the Tractarian doctrine of reserve see also [Isaac Williams], ‘On Reserve in Communicating Religious Knowledge’ (Tract 80, 1836), *Tracts for the Times by Members of the University of Oxford* (London: Rivington; Oxford: Parker, 1839), vol. 4; also Tracts 86 and 87 (both also by Williams). Cf. Henri Bremond, *The Mystery of Newman*, trans. H. C. Corrance; intro. George Tyrrell (London: Williams and Norgate, 1907), pp. 5–6.

72 Wainwright, *Eucharist and Eschatology*, p. 134.

Whether we think of baptism+confirmation, the Eucharist, ordination or marriage, they are attractive, awesome and have magnetic power according to Christ's promise and prophecy: 'I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself' (John 12.32). So I end this chapter with a question and an agenda for further thought and action: How can the celebration of the sacraments in our churches witness to Christ in a way that is more publicly visible? How can Christ be 'lifted up' in our culture? How can the celebration of the sacraments be placed in the public eye, without compromising their sacredness?

Episcopal Ministry and the Diversity of Charisms: The Pneumatological Dimension in Anglican-Lutheran Agreements¹

I

In September 2009, an episcopal consecration took place in the Lutheran Cathedral of Turku. The medieval sanctuary was loaned to the Catholic Diocese of Helsinki for the celebration in which her new bishop, Revd. Teemu Sippo was consecrated by Cardinal Karl Lehmann. A good number of Lutheran and Orthodox bishops were present but did not take part in the actual imposition of hands. Their presence in the worship, as well as that of a number of representatives from various other churches, nevertheless made the occasion an important ecumenical sign of unity. Sitting in the pew with the Catholic faithful they all prayed together for the gift of the Holy Spirit to the newly anointed. In a similar way I had experienced the presence of ecumenical representatives in my consecration a bit more than a year before in Tampere. The local Catholic priest and the Catholic bishop told me they had been praying “ferently” for me and my ministry.

The invocation of the Holy Spirit occupies a central place in any ordination or a consecration. Combined with the imposition of hands, the epicletic prayer to the Spirit is considered to form the core essence of the rite of setting a person apart for the ordained ministry. This has been repeatedly confirmed in theological study and ecumenical dialogue. But why does the Church pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit in the ordination or consecration? This question is related to the wider topic of how the various ministries relate to each other. What is their position in the mission of the Church, and what is the particular task of the bishop in it? In what follows, I attempt to highlight this question with the help of the Anglican-Lutheran agreements. My key argument is that the ecumenical development helps us to see the ministry of the bishop in a wider Pneumatological or charismatic context of the Church than we have traditionally done.² To offer a background,

1 A paper read at the Anglican-Lutheran Society Conference in Turku 11th–15th September 2009. Originally published in *Reseptio* 1/2010, pp. 84–95. Here, a revised version.

2 Cf. James F. Puglisi, *The Process of Admission to Ordained Ministry. A Comparative Study*, Vol. I–III. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press 1996; Jyrki Knuutila, The Ordination of Bishops and Pastors in the Rites of the Evangelical-Lutheran Churches in the five Nordic Countries. In: Hans Raun Iversen (ed.): *Rites of Ordination and Commitment in the Churches of the Nordic Countries*. Theology and Terminology. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press 2006, pp. 77–107.

a quick glance is first taken on the recent development in the Catholic theology of Holy Orders.

II

In the pre-reformation theology of Holy Orders, emphasis was laid on the power to consecrate the Holy Eucharist. According to the medieval tradition, a power was conferred on the priest in his ordination to act in the person of Christ. He was divinely given an inward grace in the ordination, a spiritual capacity to offer a bloodless sacrifice in the sacrament of Eucharist. In his great *Summa of Theology*, St Thomas of Aquinas defines all orders in their relation to the Holy Eucharist:

Consequently we must answer differently by saying that the sacrament of Order is directed to the sacrament of the Eucharist, which is the sacrament of sacraments, as Dionysius says (Eccl. Hier. iii). For just as temple, altar, vessels, and vestments need to be consecrated, so do the ministers who are ordained for the Eucharist; and this consecration is the sacrament of Order. Hence the distinction of Orders is derived from their relation to the Eucharist. For the power of Order is directed either to the consecration of the Eucharist itself, or to some ministry in connection with this sacrament of the Eucharist.³

As the orders of the bishop, priest and deacon were all defined in terms of the Eucharist, also the co-operation of the three, together with the minor orders of the subdeacon and the acolyte, were described by St Thomas in the context of sacramental celebration. St Thomas emphasized that all Christian cult, with the Eucharist at its centre, is derived from the unique priesthood of Christ. Christ is the true celebrant of the Eucharist, and man can join in his celebration only to the extent that Christ grants him the capacity to participate in his priesthood. The priestly ministry in the Eucharist means acting in the person of Christ. In the Counter-Reformation, the Council of Trent confirmed the cultic orientation of the Holy Orders. Not only did the council underline the sacrificial priesthood as established by Christ, it also consolidated the hierarchy of different ministries in their relation to the bishop and to the Holy Eucharist. According to Trent, the Holy Spirit has placed the bishops to rule the church as successors

3 S.Th. Supp. 3e q37a2. – *The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Second and Revised Edition, 1920. Literally translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Online Edition, Copyright © 2008 by Kevin Knight, <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/5037.htm> .

of the apostles. They have the power to administer sacramental services the other ministers cannot perform:

And whereas the ministry of so holy a priesthood is a divine thing; to the end that it might be exercised in a more worthy manner, and with greater veneration, it was suitable that, in the most well-ordered settlement of the church, there should be several and diverse orders of ministers, to minister to the priesthood, by virtue of their office; orders so distributed as that those already marked with the clerical tonsure should ascend through the lesser to the greater orders.

Wherefore, the holy Synod declares that, besides the other ecclesiastical degrees, bishops, who have succeeded to the place of the apostles, principally belong to this hierarchical order; that they are placed, as the same apostle says, by the Holy Ghost, to rule the Church of God; that they are superior to priests; administer the sacrament of Confirmation; ordain the ministers of the Church; and that they can perform very many other things; over which functions others of an inferior order have no power.⁴

The point of view from which the Council discusses the ordination is that of hierarchy: the validity of orders is derived from the apostles to the bishops, and from them further on to the priests and deacons. Both the Scholastic and the Tridentine definitions of the Orders and ordination are described in cultic terms. The orientation of the ministry is towards the altar, to the sacrificial liturgy.

III

Today, the Catholic theology of the Holy Orders represents a different point of departure. The Second Vatican Council made an important change in two respects: it preferred to start from the person and mission of Jesus Christ, and it broadened the scope beyond the liturgical to include teaching and pastoral leadership. The dogmatic constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* emphasizes the episcopal functions grounded on the mission of Christ in the Holy Spirit and not on papal delegation, as it was hinted in the First Vatican Council document *Pastor Aeternus* (1870). The *Lumen Gentium* (1964) locates both the ordained ministry and the ministry of all baptized in the Church as a whole people of God, carrying out

4 Cc. Trident. sess. XXIII, cap. II, IV. – *The canons and decrees of the sacred and oecumenical Council of Trent*, Ed. and trans. J. Waterworth (London: Dolman, 1848), 170–92. <http://history.hanover.edu/texts/trent/ct23.html> .

the mission given by Christ. The document combines the Christological with the Pneumatological dimension by pointing to the various charisms granted by the Spirit to the members in the body of Christ:

The Church, which the Spirit guides in way of all truth and which He unified in communion and in works of ministry, He both equips and directs with hierarchical and charismatic gifts and adorns with His fruits.

As all the members of the human body, though they are many, form one body, so also are the faithful in Christ. Also, in the building up of Christ's Body various members and functions have their part to play. There is only one Spirit who, according to His own richness and the needs of the ministries, gives His different gifts for the welfare of the Church. What has a special place among these gifts is the grace of the apostles to whose authority the Spirit Himself subjected even those who were endowed with charisms.

It is not only through the sacraments and the ministries of the Church that the Holy Spirit sanctifies and leads the people of God and enriches it with virtues, but, "allotting his gifts to everyone according as He wills, He distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts He makes them fit and ready to undertake the various tasks and offices which contribute toward the renewal and building up of the Church, according to the words of the Apostle: "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for profit".⁵

The charisms and the different ministries in the Church are linked together; the Holy orders are charisms themselves. The Episcopal ministry is in a key position in the mission of the Church, carried out by both all the ordained and all the baptized. It is striking how strongly the *Lumen Gentium* uses Pneumatological language in emphasizing the close co-operation of the bishop, priests and deacons together with all the faithful. The whole chapter III in the document represents a rich charismatic understanding of the Church and its ministries.⁶

The normative *Catechism of the Catholic Church* follows the pattern laid down by the *Lumen Gentium*. The Episcopal ordination makes the bishop partake in the Holy Spirit in the fullness of the sacrament of Holy orders. The priests are

5 Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. *Lumen Gentium*. Solemnly promulgated by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on November 21, 1964, para. 4, 7, 12. – http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html .

6 *Lumen Gentium*, para. 18–29.

ordained to be co-workers of the bishops, and the deacons to minister. All the ordained receive the grace of the Holy Spirit to minister Christ in configuration to Him as Priest, Teacher and Pastor.⁷ The *Catechism* also speaks about various charisms in the Church; however, it does not link them so closely with the Holy Orders as the *Lumen Gentium* did. The works of the Spirit in the Church through charisms and through the Orders are discussed in separate paragraphs.

The *Lumen Gentium* has had an enormous influence on the ecumenical theology of the Church and her ministries. Its influence can be seen in the Faith and Order -document Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (BEM) which, on its turn, made the present-day Anglican-Lutheran agreements possible.

IV

Ecumenical dialogues between the Lutherans and Anglicans took place on regional level already prior to the Vatican Council, although the global dialogue between the Lutheran World Federation and the Anglican Communion only was initiated after the Council. For example, the early dialogue between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Church of England consisted of sessions in London and Helsinki in 1933 and 1934 respectively. It is of particular interest for me that two bishops of Tampere, Jaakko Gummerus and Aleksii Lehtonen were influential in reaching a preliminary agreement on mutual admission to the Holy Communion in our Churches and on partaking in each other's Episcopal consecrations. The implementation of the agreement, however, was postponed because of the Second World War.

The dialogue raised two questions of interest in relation to our topic, namely that of consecration of a bishop (or installation, as bishop Gummerus expressed it) and that of confirmation by a bishop or a priest. Differences in practice and legislation were acknowledged, but no doctrinal obstacle for further steps on the way to "full and formal intercommunion" was recognized. It is noteworthy, however, that the reports from the dialogue seem to speak more in a language of Canon law, jurisdiction and formal rites, not so much theologically. The two topics would have granted an opportunity to discuss the meaning of the laying on of hands and the prayer to the Holy Spirit in both rites. However, the gesture and the epiclesis were not discussed as signs of the Church as the people of

7 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, para. 1585.

God, sent by Christ and equipped by the Holy Spirit. Attention was paid to the apostolic succession but not to the apostolic mission.⁸

The global Anglican-Lutheran dialogue was opened by a joint commission of the Lutheran World Federation and the Anglican Communion in Oxford 1970. After four meetings the commission published its report in Pullach in 1972. Several doctrinal topics had been discussed under the wide themes of Sources of Authority, The Church, Apostolic Ministry, and Worship. The concept of apostolicity was approached from the point of view of the apostolic witness. An influence of the *Lumen Gentium* is to be assumed in the paragraph that sets the consecration to the Episcopal ministry in the framework of the sending of the whole Church by Christ:

It is God who calls, ordains and sends the ministers of Word and Sacrament in the church. He does this through the whole people, acting by means of those who have been given authority so to act in the name of God and of the whole church. Ordination to the ministry gives authority to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments according to Christ's command and promise, for the purpose of the continuance of the apostolic life and mission of the church. Ordination includes the prayer of all the people and the laying on of hands of other ministers, especially of those who occupy the ministry of oversight and unity in the church.⁹

The *Pullach Report* discusses some aspects of the Episcopal ministry and its historical succession and makes recommendations for later study, but it does not elaborate further the close connection between the ordained ministry and the mission of the Church as people of God. The ordination is mentioned, albeit without reference to the epiclesis prayer and the spiritual gifts.

8 Documentation: *Report of the Committee Appointed to Confer with Representatives of the Church of Finland* in Accordance with Resolution 38 of the Lambeth Conference, 1930, <http://anglicanhistory.org/lutherania/finland1934.html> ; *Englannin ja Suomen kirkkojen välisten neuvottelujen pöytäkirja* vv. 1933–1934. Suomen kirkkohistoriallisen seuran vuosikirja 24, 1934. Helsinki 1936. Liite, I–LV; The Relations of the Church of England and the Church of Finland. The Resolutions of the Convocations of the Church of England in 1935 and the official reply of the Archbishop of Finland to the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1936. Turku 1948; *The Church of England and the Church of Finland*. A Summary of the Proceedings at the Conferences held at Lambeth Palace, London, on October 5th and 6th, 1933, and at Brändö, Helsingfors, on July 17th and 18th, 1934. In: Lambeth Occasional Reports 1931–8, pp. 115–187. London: SPCK 1948; Vilmos Vajta (ed.), *Church in Fellowship: Pulpit and Altar Fellowship Among Lutherans*. Minneapolis: Augsburg 1963, pp. 162, 197–206.

9 *Report of the Anglican-Lutheran International Conversations 1970–1972*. Pullach, 1972. In: Sven Oppgaard & Gregory Cameron (eds.), *Anglican-Lutheran Agreements*. Regional and International Agreements 1972–2002. LWF Documentation 49/2004. Geneva: Lutheran World Federation / Anglican Consultative Council 2004, pp. 23–46, para. 78.

V

The global Anglican-Lutheran dialogue was deepened in regional dialogues in Europe and North America. The report of the European Regional Commission from Helsinki in 1982 discusses under the title “Doctrinal Issues” the agreements and convergence reached so far in the topics of justification, baptism, eucharist, Spiritual life and liturgical worship, together with those of the ordained ministry and episcopacy, and of the nature of the Church. The *Helsinki Report* makes reference to the general priesthood of all baptized believers who receive spiritual gifts:

This priesthood has its foundation in the unique priesthood of Jesus Christ and is given through baptism. Its members are called and sent by Christ and are equipped with the gifts of the Holy Spirit to fulfil their priestly task in everyday life as well as within the Christian community. They do this by offering themselves, their love and commitment in witnessing to Christ and serving others.¹⁰

The relation of the priesthood of all believers to the ordained ministry is deepened in the report by reminding that not only do those who are in the ministry of oversight pray to the Holy Spirit in the act of ordination to the ministry of word and sacrament, but also the whole people of God takes part in conferring the authority in the power of the Spirit. The ordination or consecration is not discussed in terms of the hierarchy but instead, of the mission of God in and through the Church:

In our traditions we hold that in the act of ordination the Triune God, through the Church, calls, blesses and sends the ministers of Word and Sacraments. They receive a special authority and responsibility from God in Christ and at the same time and by the same act they receive authority to minister from the whole People of God. They enter a commitment for which they are accountable and are assured of God’s gracious assistance, especially in times of difficulty, through the Holy Spirit. Ordination is for life and cannot be repeated. It is administered with the prayer of all the people and the laying on of hands of other ministers, especially of those who occupy a ministry of oversight and unity in the Church (cf. ALIC, para. 78).¹¹

10 The Report of the Anglican-Lutheran European Regional Commission. Helsinki, August-September 1982. In: *Anglican-Lutheran agreements*, 47–68, para. 34.

11 The Helsinki Report 1982, para. 36.

Also in Helsinki, the main concern in the topic of Episcopacy was that of the succession. But it is evident that a deepened ecclesiological understanding of the ministry was already emerging. The apostolic succession was located in the apostolicity of the Church as a whole. The European group referred to the outcome of the American Anglican-Lutheran dialogue in stating that “abiding in apostolic fellowship is given expression through sharing in the Church’s common life of mutual edification and caring, served by an ecclesiastically called and recognized pastoral ministry of Word and Sacrament”. The continuing participation in the apostolic mission is an element of the apostolicity of the Church and involves being sent into the world as well as serving those who are in spiritual or material need. In its understanding of the apostolicity of the whole people of God the commission was also able to build upon the convergence reached in the global Roman Catholic-Lutheran dialogue.¹²

The more the Episcopal ministry was seen in the framework of Christ sending the whole people, the closer it appeared to relate to other ministries as well as to the priesthood of all believers. In Helsinki, Anglicans and Lutherans were prepared to agree that the service of “episcopate, i.e. the function of pastoral leadership, co-ordination and oversight, is essential to the ordained ministry and is necessary for the life, unity and mission of the Church”. Quoting the Faith and Order paper BEM (1982), the commission stated that the bishops “have the responsibility for leadership in the Church’s mission”, and that they, “in communion with the presbyters and deacons and the whole community, are responsible for the orderly transfer of ministerial authority in the Church”.¹³

Although considerable emphasis was put on the mission of the Triune God through the Church, the gifts of the Holy Spirit conferred to the believers in Christ were not elaborated in Helsinki. The ministry of the bishop, however, had received a character: the notion of a co-ordinator in the leadership and oversight of the people of God was lifted up.

The global Anglican-Lutheran dialogue was continued by a joint working group which met once in Cold Ash, England in 1983. The working group, however, did not study the doctrinal divergence or convergence in detail, neither did it tackle questions related to the ministry and mission, but instead, sought to clarify the notion of “full communion” and the way of Lutheran and Anglican Churches in different regions towards it. It was understood that the goal of dialogue is beyond

12 The Helsinki Report 1982, para. 38–39.

13 The Helsinki Report 1982, para. 42. Cf. BEM, Ministry, para. 29.

Eucharistic sharing: to share in the sacramental meal “has implications to a sharing of life and of common concerns for the mission of the Church”.¹⁴

VI

The breakthrough for Anglican-Lutheran relations in a joint understanding of the Episcopal ministry in its relation to the apostolicity was made at Niagara Falls in 1987. The international committee, continuing the work of previous committee established by the Lutheran World Federation and the Anglican Communion, set out to clarify the issue of episcopate, the chief remaining obstacle to full communion between Anglicans and Lutherans.

The report of the consultation opens by a joint study of the nature of the Church and its mission. One can probably hear the distant echo of *Lumen Gentium* in the paragraph which states the joint conviction of the Anglicans and Lutherans on the role of the Church in the unity of all mankind:

The Christian Church is first of all overwhelmingly conscious of the splendor of God’s gifts – in Christ we have been chosen to be dedicated and full of love, to be accepted as heirs of God, to be forgiven, to be part of a plan that the whole universe be brought into a unity, and to receive the seal of the Holy Spirit as a pledge that we shall indeed enter into that inheritance.¹⁵

According to *Niagara*, it is the whole Church which has been sent on its mission and been given the necessary gifts. God’s plan is the unification of all things in Christ, and the whole Church witnesses to that promise and takes part in realizing that goal. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are granted to all members of the body of Christ. Every member is an integral part of the witness and mission of the Church.¹⁶

After an extensive study in the requirements for the Church’s mission, the report goes on to explicate the truths the Anglicans and the Lutherans share, emerging from the convergence reached in the preceding dialogue. Particular attention is paid on the sacraments and on the ministry of oversight. After that, the commission states together:

14 Report of the Anglican-Lutheran Joint Working Group, Cold Ash, Berkshire, England, 28 November – 3 December 1983. In: *Anglican-Lutheran agreements*, 69–86, para. 27.

15 The Niagara Report. Report of the Anglican-Lutheran Consultation on Episcopate. Niagara Falls, September 1987, by the Anglican-Lutheran International Continuation Committee. In: *Anglican-Lutheran agreements*, 87–128, para. 11.

16 The Niagara Report, para. 15, 17.

We acknowledge in each other's ministries of *episcopo* the fruits of the presence of Jesus Christ and the activity of the Holy Spirit, in the offering of sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, in the reflection of the faithful love of God towards the world, in care for the nurture and growth of all the faithful, and in commitment to the establishment of the kingdom of God in justice and peace for the whole earth.¹⁷

The mission of the Church is a reflection of God's love. The participation of every member in the God's mission, as well as that of the ministers of oversight, has a Christological and Pneumatological foundation, which is made visible in the joint sacramental liturgy.

VII

At Niagara Falls, the international committee elaborated on the Episcopal ministry in the context of spiritual gifts granted to the Church. It made recommendations for the local Churches in each respective tradition and posed critical questions for the Anglicans and Lutherans to ask themselves. The *Niagara Report* gave rise to three regional agreements, one in Northern Europe and two in Northern America. The three agreements all applied the same logic in relating the episcopacy to the apostolicity of the Church as a whole. But before any of them were adopted, representatives from the Church of England and the Evangelical Church in Germany and the Federation of Evangelical Churches in the German Democratic Republic finalized the text of another type of an agreement in Meissen in 1988. The *Niagara Report* did probably have no time to influence on it since the two committees met less than half a year from each other. The *Meissen Agreement* was approved by the respective decision-making bodies and finally signed in 1991.

The *Meissen Agreement* opens with a rich elaboration on the Church and its mission. The Church is a sign, instrument and foretaste of the Kingdom God – the phrase originates in the *Lumen Gentium* – and its all members are granted spiritual gifts and are called to participate in its apostolic mission.¹⁸ For the mission of the Church, its members are “given various ministries by the Holy Spirit”. The ordained ministry, on its part, “exists to serve the ministry of the whole people of God”. According to *Meissen*, a ministry of pastoral oversight (*episcopo*), exercised

17 The Niagara Report, para. 75.

18 On the Way to Visible Unity. A Common Statement. Meissen, 18 March 1988. In: *Anglican-Lutheran agreements*, 129–144, para. 2–4.

in personal, collegial and communal ways, is necessary to witness to and safeguard the unity and apostolicity of the Church".¹⁹

Meissen, however, did not overcome the obstacle of differing understandings on the Episcopal ministry. Convergence was acknowledged in the ministry of oversight as a *function* of different ecclesial structures, but no agreement was reached on whether the oversight should be on the responsibility of a certain ministry into which persons are set apart with imposition of hands and prayer to the Holy Spirit.

VIII

The *Porvoo Common Statement*, the first agreement following the path shown in the *Niagara Report* was finalized in Järvenpää in 1992 and signed in three solemn celebrations in Tallinn, Trondheim and London in 1996. *Porvoo* makes use of the long Anglican-Lutheran dialogue as well as of several other important ecumenical documents. The printed version containing the text of the statement and the signed declaration together with informative material as well as essays on Church and ministry in Northern Europe, carries the title *Together in Mission and Ministry*. The title expresses in a subtle way the whole spirit of the dialogue: Anglicans and Lutherans have sought mutual communion for the sake of mission of the Church they share in Christ.²⁰

The *Porvoo Statement* describes the Church in a similar way as the documents discussed above, particularly the *Meissen Agreement*. The Church is an instrument for God's ultimate purpose, the reconciliation of humankind and of all creation in Christ. In the power of the Holy Spirit the Church participates in the mission of the Triune God. For this purpose, all members of the Church receive spiritual gifts:

The Holy Spirit bestows on the community diverse and complementary gifts. These are for the common good of the whole people and are manifested in acts of service within the community and to the world. All members are called to discover, with the help of the community, the gifts they have received and to use them for the building up of the Church and for the service of the world to which the Church is sent.²¹

19 The Meissen Agreement, para. 15, viii–ix.

20 *Together in Mission and Ministry*. The Porvoo Common Statement with Essays on Church and Ministry in Northern Europe. Conversations between the British and Irish Anglican Churches and the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches. London: Church House Publishing 1993, reprint 1996.

21 The Porvoo Common Statement. In: Anglican-Lutheran agreements, pp. 145–176, para. 18. http://www.porvoocommunion.org/porvoo_communion/statement/

The deepened understanding of the mission of the whole Church is expressed in the way all the members of the body of Christ are assigned various tasks for realizing the ultimate purpose of God through the Church. The members are not objects for the priest or bishop to proclaim the gospel or to administer the sacraments to, but active agents in the communication of the Gospel themselves. This divine vocation is granted them by the Holy Spirit, together with various gifts for their empowerment. Both the lay and the ordained are partakers in the mission of the Church in the power of the Holy Spirit, all according to the charisms the Spirit bestows upon them:

God the Holy Spirit pours out his gifts upon the whole Church (Eph. 4: 11–13, I Cor. 12: 4–11), and raises up men and women, both lay and ordained, to contribute to the nurture of the community. Thus the whole Church, and every member, participates in and contributes to the communication of the gospel, by their faithful expression and embodiment of the permanent characteristics of the Church of the apostles in a given time and place. Essential to its testimony are not merely its words, but the love of its members for one another, the quality of its service of those in need, its use of financial and other resources, the justice and effectiveness of its life and its means of discipline, its distribution and exercise of power, and its assemblies for worship. All these are means of communication which must be focused upon Christ, the true Word of God, and spring from life in the Holy Spirit.²²

For our topic, it is important to note that in *Porvoo*, the Episcopal ministry is described as a ministry of co-ordination: it is not defined in hierarchical terms, neither in terms with a liturgical scope. It has a wider responsibility of bringing all different tasks and gifts together for the benefit of the whole. The ministry of oversight is needed for the continuity in the mission given by Christ to the Church:

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, a caring for the life of a whole community, a pastoring of the pastors and a true feeding of Christ's flock, in accordance with Christ's command across the ages and in unity with Christians in other places. Episcopate (oversight) is a requirement of the whole Church

²² The Porvoo Common Statement, para. 38.

and its faithful exercise in the light of the Gospel is of fundamental importance to its life.²³

Since the Holy Spirit gives various gifts to the Church, diversity is inherent to the very nature and being of the Church. But exactly because of the diversity, a ministry of co-ordination is a requirement. Such a ministry of oversight is not to be described in terms of governance in the first hand, but instead, in terms of participation in the servant ministry of Christ. The Church as a whole participates in the mission of Christ, being the Body of Christ herself, she witnesses to Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

IX

The ministry of the bishop cannot be detached from the Church as a whole; that is, it always needs to be discussed in the context of the mission of the People of God. The bishop has a particular task in the mission, but the ministry of oversight is always related to other charisms in the Church.

Oversight of the Church and its mission is the particular responsibility of the bishop. The bishop's office is one of service and communication within the community of believers and, together with the whole community, to the world. Bishops preach the word, preside at the sacraments, and administer discipline in such a way as to be representative pastoral ministers of oversight, continuity and unity in the Church. They have pastoral oversight of the area to which they are called. They serve the apostolicity, catholicity and unity of the Church's teaching, worship and sacramental life. They have responsibility for leadership in the Church's mission. None of these tasks should be carried out in isolation from the whole Church.²⁴

The agreement between the British and Irish Anglican Churches and the French Lutheran and Reformed Churches, named *Called to Witness and Service* but generally known as *Reuilly Common Statement* (2001)²⁵, reminds of the three elements in the ministry of oversight, the personal, collegial and communal (synodical) but admits that churches give varying degrees of importance to them. From a

23 The Porvoo Common Statement, para. 42.

24 The Porvoo Common Statement, para. 43.

25 Conversations between The British and Irish Anglican Churches and The French Lutheran and Reformed Churches. *Called to Witness and Service: The Reuilly Common Statement*. In: *Anglican-Lutheran agreements*, 201–230.

Reformed point of view, *Reuilly* explicitly warns of putting too much emphasis on the personal dimension:

All our churches are churches in change: all are in the process of considering the particular balance between these dimensions. Anglicans, for example are presently concerned to find the right balance between synodical government and episcopal oversight. The Reformed, because of their experience in history, are concerned that the personal dimension may become so dominant that it is isolated from the community and no longer exercised in relation to the responsibility of the synod.²⁶

The personal, collegial and communal dimensions of oversight are bound to each other in the sacramental liturgy more naturally than in synodical decision-making. What would synodical oversight be without the Spiritual element that is most adequately lived out in common worship, presided by those who have been given the task to serve the Church in Word and Sacrament?

The agreement between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and The Episcopal Church, *Called to Common Mission* (1999), expresses this in an eloquent way, managing to bring together both the consecration of a bishop, the three dimensions of oversight as well as apostolic continuity and catholic unity in the common mission of the Church:

With the laying-on-of-hands by other bishops, such ordinations/installations will involve prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Both churches value and maintain a ministry of episkope as one of the ways, in the context of ordained ministries and of the whole people of God, in which the apostolic succession of the church is visibly expressed and personally symbolized in fidelity to the gospel through the ages. By such a liturgical statement the churches recognize that the bishop serves the diocese or synod through ties of collegiality and consultation that strengthen its links with the universal church. It is also a liturgical expression of the full communion initiated by this Concordat, calling for mutual planning and common mission in each place.²⁷

Inasmuch as oversight is considered to mean participation in the servant ministry of Christ, exercised in connection with the whole body of Christ and co-ordinating

²⁶ The Reuilly Common Statement, para. 35.

²⁷ Called to Common Mission: A Lutheran Proposal for a Revision of the Concordat of Agreement. In: *Anglican-Lutheran agreements*, 231–242, para. 12.

the various gifts of the Spirit, it can't be understood in other than Christological and Pneumatological terms.

The ordination or consecration of a bishop brings the Christological and Pneumatological dimensions together. The bishop is called to act on behalf of Christ, to mirror his image and to preach authoritatively the Gospel of Christ crucified. In the imposition of hands the Church prays for the gift of the Holy Spirit, but not only because of the bishop in person but because of the Church of Christ in mission.

Doctrine, Ethics, and Practice in Luther and Lutheran Theology

Introduction

In this paper I will discuss the relationship between doctrine, ethics, and practice in Luther's theology. I have two principal motivations in doing this. First, there is no clear consensus in the Lutheran churches concerning this topic. It is therefore impossible to present a clearly defined view of the Lutheran church. It is, of course, typical and natural for Lutheran theology to construct a view on the basis of the Lutheran Confessions. In doing so its intention is to base its argument on Luther's theological understanding of the Bible. It is, then, inevitable that the Lutheran theologian will attempt to grasp Luther's view. This does not mean that Luther and Lutheran theology exclude other theological traditions. Indeed, Luther's understanding of the relationship between doctrine, ethics, and practice can, or better should, be understood as an interpretation of the nature of the classical doctrines of the Trinitarian God and the unity of the two natures of Christ. For example, Luther elaborates this interpretation in his Large Catechism, which is included in the Lutheran Confessions.

The second reason for discussing Luther's theology is closely connected with the first. Although Luther is in no sense a systematic writer, his texts seem to contain a developed and at the same time multifaceted understanding of the relationship between doctrine, ethics, and practice.

1. The question of the nature of doctrine in the Lutheran churches

If we are to understand the relationship between doctrine, ethics, and practice, we need to know what we are speaking about. The concepts "doctrine", "ethics", and "practice" have many different meanings. In the theological context "doctrine" most often refers to the content of the Christian faith. However, it is not always clear which beliefs belong to the sphere of doctrine. For example, where the issues of the church's ordained office and the understanding of same-sex relations are concerned, the Lutheran churches clearly have different views on the content of doctrine. These issues are also often divisive within other denominations.

A second problem is the relationship between scripture and the concrete doctrines of the church. According to Luther the *doctrina definita* is given in scripture. Defined doctrine does not refer to doctrine in its entirety, but to a certain essential element of it. This central element is the person and work of Christ: the unity of the two natures in one person, the incarnation, his suffering and death on the cross and the resurrection, his sitting at the right hand of the Father, and his second coming. Christ is the content of defined doctrine precisely because God has revealed and incarnated himself in Christ. For this reason, Christ is not the exclusive content of doctrine, but the Triune God is the subject of Christian doctrine.¹

While Lutheran theology stresses the authority of scripture in matters of faith, it does not suggest that everything in the Bible is at the same doctrinal level. In Luther's view Christian doctrine is contained in scripture, but one has to be able to draw certain distinctions within doctrine if one is to understand biblical doctrine. Perhaps the most important distinctions made are between law and gospel and between faith and love. As Luther says and all Lutheran theologians know, these distinctions are not always easy to understand. It is typical for Lutheran theology to draw a distinction between the unchangeable sphere of faith and the changing sphere of love. Sometimes the distinction between law and gospel is understood similarly: the gospel is unchangeable but the concrete demand of the law may change. The main issue in this paper is an attempt to clarify how these distinctions are understood in Luther's theology.

Since the publication of George Lindbeck's "The Nature of Doctrine" there has been a lively discussion about the nature of doctrinal statements. Lindbeck makes some useful distinctions which help us to understand what we mean when we use doctrinal statements.² He distinguishes between three ways of understanding the nature of doctrine:

1. Doctrinal statements are propositions³ concerning the divine reality.
2. Doctrinal statements are expressions of human religious experience in the Christian context.
3. Doctrines are grammatical rules which regulate the primary religious way of speaking.

1 Martikainen 1992, 60–61.

2 Lindbeck 1984, 91.

3 McGrath (1990 16–18) has critiqued Lindbeck's narrow understanding of the propositional view of doctrine. Saarinen (2012, 5–6) has made an important distinction between propositions as mental concepts and statements as lingual entities. He maintains that propositions are inevitable in doctrinal issues.

Lindbeck argues for a regulative model in understanding the nature of doctrinal statements.

However, Luther's understanding contains something which Lindbeck does not take into account. This aspect of doctrine is expressed, for example, in Luther's explanation of the Creed in the Large Catechism. Luther writes: "But this, namely the doctrine of faith, entails pure grace and this makes us righteous and pleasing to God."⁴ For Luther the gospel and doctrinal statements about Christ are similar by their nature. They donate and actualise the reality about which they are speaking.⁵ In Luther's language we can therefore posit a fourth model as follows:

4. Doctrinal statements are the sacramental word.

A parallel philosophical view to the fourth model is the idea of certain lingual expressions as "performatives". According to the speech act theory statements are not only either propositions or expressions of human experience. There are also statements which cause something or get something done. This observation concerning lingual statements has been seen as helpful for understanding religious language.⁶ Luther, however, goes even further by stressing the donating nature of the gospel and Christian doctrine.⁷

2. The nature of ethical statements as a problem in Lutheran theology

In Christian theological contexts "ethics" is mostly understood in its normative sense. It refers to certain biblical rules or commandments and prohibitions which Christians should follow. In Lutheran theological language these precepts are

4 BSELK 661: "Haec vero, nempe fidei doctrina meram gratiam secum appoerat et haec justos Deoque nos acceptos facit."

5 Concerning the sacramental nature of the gospel WA 9, 339, 31–440, 5: "A Christo vero non modo exemplum petes, sed simul virtutem ipsam, hoc est Christus non solum speciem imitande virtutis exhibet, sed ipsam quoque virtutem transfundit in homines. Et christi humilitas fit nostra iam in pectoribus nostris humilitas. Atque hoc est, quod dico sacramentaliter, hoc est, omnia verba, omnes historie Euangelice sunt sacramenta quedam, hoc est sacra signa, per que in credentibus deus efficit, quicquid ille historie designant."

Martikainen (1992) has studied the relationship between the gospel and Christian doctrine. See, for example, WA 37, 190, 12–16: "Ist derhalben ein gros ding das Evangelium et Christiana doctrina, Est enim verbum dei aliud quam hominum, Wenn ein mensch etwas redet oder behilfet, da mus rennen und lauffen, reiten und reisen, und ist dennoch, das mans aufrichte. Sed verbum dei confestim efficit omnia, remissionem peccatorum, vitam"; WA 34 I, 515, 4–7: "Das bereit sein i.e. in doctrina Euangelii ist alls begriffen, quicquid aliis doctrinis et operibus gesucht, die thuns nicht. Euangelium dat geschenckt, omnes aliae doctrine docent de operibus et quod wir sollen geben."

6 Saarinen 2012, 1.

7 According to Bielfeldt (2008, 87–89,98–99) Luther represents a semantic realism which presupposes that theological statements refer to the divine reality. This is one side of Luther's view, but it does not include the self-giving and donating nature of God and the divine reality.

called “law”. However, it is important to note that for Luther the law has two senses: the strictly moral and the theological.⁸ The difference between these two senses does not concern the concrete deeds demanded by the law; in this respect the law is one. The difference is not in the law itself, but in how it is heard and understood. The different understandings of law concern the presuppositions of right action. In the moral sense law demands that a person has both the correct understanding of a good deed and the will to perform it. In the theological sense law demands faith. Faith means both its content or doctrine (*fides quae*) and an attitude or state of mind (*fides qua*) which firmly believes that content. A person must believe that God is the source of all goodness and the author of all good deeds and she has to be willing to fulfil God’s will. This is the case when faith is present, because faith is both right reason and good will in the theological sense.⁹ In other words, faith includes the correct content and the will which trusts and obeys it. Luther takes the same approach when he stresses that Christ is present in faith.¹⁰ In and with him are present his person and work, that is, the *doctrina definita* and his Spirit, good will.

Moreover, faith refers here to active, incarnated faith, which includes love and does good works. Everything that a Christian does has to be done in such faith. This can be expressed in a way that means that even faith is the subject of good deeds. Faith in the absolute or abstract sense is a creative work of God. But in analogy with divinity, which in Christ is united with humanity, faith unites with the human being and penetrates everything in her. So faith becomes incarnated and is the divinity and goodness of all the believer’s deeds.¹¹

Luther does not divide faith and law or faith and works in a way that results in doctrine being concerned only with the content of faith. He speaks about law, i.e. the Commandment of Love and the Ten Commandments, as doctrine. Then he refers to law in the theological sense.¹² Christian doctrine thus contains both law and gospel. The law demands incarnated faith and the gospel donates the faith which incarnates in good works.

However, many Lutherans share the view that doctrinal and ethical statements are different in regard to their status. For the sake of brevity, we can summarise the main opinions in three models. There is also a fourth model, which I will mention but not expand on further here.

8 WA 40 I, 426, 28–29.

9 WA 40 I, 410, 12–412, 24.

10 WA 40 I, 228, 29–34; 219, 15.

11 WA 40 I, 414, 24–416, 17; 417, 10–418, 12; 418, 29–33.

12 Martikainen 1992, 47.

1. Both doctrinal beliefs and ethical commandments based on the Bible are normative and unchangeable doctrines of the Christian church.
2. Only the content of the gospel is the unchangeable doctrine of the church in the strict sense. Ethical rules are also unchangeable as such, but they do not have any specific normative content. Their purpose is to describe an ethical attitude: the unselfish service of one's neighbour. These rules, like the Commandment of Love, should be applied always anew in different situations by asking what love demands in each circumstance.
3. Doctrinal beliefs belong to the sphere of the unchangeable content of faith. Ethical precepts are not doctrines in the same sense, yet some of them, like the Ten Commandments, are unchangeable and normative by their nature. However, all precepts and prohibitions contained in scripture are not always valid as such. This is because they belong to the sphere of love, which is changeable and looks always for the good of the neighbour.
4. The fourth possibility is the definitively liberal model, according to which there is no unchangeable doctrine, but doctrine should be formulated anew according to the standards of human reason and experience. In this model some understanding of ethics is often, but not inevitably, the criterion for doctrinal commitments. This kind of thinking may be quite prevalent in Western Christianity, but to my knowledge the churches have not accepted it and for this reason I shall not discuss it here.

How would Luther solve the question of the relationship between faith and ethics? As we have already seen, ethics can be understood both in the moral or philosophical and in the theological sense. The former means that morality as such is not dependent on faith. However, the Christian community speaks of law and ethics primarily in the theological sense.

Luther writes in his Large Catechism: "Now you see that the Creed is a very different teaching from the Ten Commandments. The latter teach us what we ought to do; the Creed tells what God does for us and gives to us." For Luther the Creed, which is a summary of Christian doctrine, speaks of God's work of giving. Human wisdom cannot comprehend the content of the Creed. Only the Holy Spirit makes it understandable. Moreover, the Creed not only tells us something about God, it also makes people Christian because it brings with it the grace which

makes them upright and pleasing to God.¹³ This short statement contains at least three important elements. First, the Creed entails grace. “Grace” primarily refers to the favour and acceptance of God. The favour of God is presupposed when Luther says that the Creed makes people pleasing to God. Luther understands grace and the making of people pleasing to God christologically: Christ himself is the grace of God and he is the only human being who pleases God. Thus, human beings are pleasing to God because of Christ, who is present in faith.

Doctrine and the gospel make human beings participants in the life of the Triune God and in Christ’s person, life, and works. They both connect the human being with Christ and form him or her in the likeness of Christ.¹⁴ One strength of the participatory concept of doctrine is that it includes not only its conceptual and intellectual aspects but also connects it with spiritual life or with conformity to Christ.¹⁵ Thus, doctrine is immediately connected with experiential faith.

The participatory concept of doctrine also emphasises the narrative nature of doctrine.¹⁶ The Creed summarises Christ’s life from the beginning to his present place at the right hand of the Father and to the coming judgement. Through doctrine the believer participates in Christ’s whole life, and what happens to Christ also happens to him or her. Luther writes much about the believer’s participation in Christ in this narrative sense. This is precisely the foundation of one’s becoming Christ-like or Christ-formed.

The second element is that the grace that the Creed brings makes human beings “upright” or “righteous”. Thus, “making someone upright” refers to the sinful human being’s justification. Luther is therefore speaking about the two aspects of justification: the forensic and the effective; the favour of God and the gift of God.

It is important, but to my knowledge only seldom noted, that in the Large Catechism Luther does not reduce Christian doctrine to justification but, on the contrary, includes justification in every single doctrine. In the law it is included as the demand of faith and in the articles of faith it is included as God’s gift. The content of the Creed is for Luther “that God gives himself completely to us, with all his gifts and his power, to help us keep the Ten Commandments: the Father gives us all creation, Christ all his works, the Holy Spirit all his gifts.”¹⁷ Making people righteous includes the self-giving of the Triune God as Father, Son, and

13 BSELK, 661.

14 See Mannermaa 2001.

15 For example, in the recent systematic-theological discussion Eeva Martikainen, Reinhard Hütter, and Bruce Marshall represent this approach. For his part, Saarinen exhorts us to carefulness in combining doctrine and Christiformity because of the openness of doctrinal formulations’ truth-value. Hütter 2000; Marshall 2000; Saarinen 2012, 6.)

16 More exactly, Raunio 2014.

17 BSELK, 661–662.

Holy Spirit and all his work and gifts. This Trinitarian way of thinking implies that neither creation nor sanctification can be separated from justification. However, Lutheran theology has often dealt with creation, justification, and sanctification as if they were separate and autonomous areas of theology. This separation has had far-reaching consequences for the relationship between doctrine, ethics, and practice. Perhaps we could describe one customary Lutheran way of thinking as follows: creation is the sphere of natural reason and ethics, doctrine deals mostly with the justification of the sinner and has little to do with ethics, and sanctification is the realm of the practical spiritual life which follows justification, but which has to be clearly separated from it. Sanctification and ethics are quite different areas of life. Of course, there is also the other view that justification through faith is the basis of ethical action. But this concept neglects the doctrine of creation.

However, as we have seen, Luther's understanding of doctrine as a means of God's self-giving is closely connected with ethics and sanctification. God gives himself with his power and gifts to help human beings keep the Ten Commandments. Thus, Christian doctrine has both an ethical and a practical aim: living in accordance with God's law or divine will. What happens to the Commandments when they are heard and experienced with the doctrine of God's self-giving? They change from demands to gifts. It is Luther's view that in the context of justification laws and precepts become exhortations and callings. The exhortations follow the gospel. They invite those who have already been made righteous and given mercy to be active with the fruits of the righteousness and the Spirit received to exercise love in good works, and to bear the cross and other anguishes of this world.¹⁸ Luther calls biblical exhortations "forms" (*formae*). This means that Christians should be formed according to these words.¹⁹ Thus, exhortations are not laws that only place demands on and guidelines for what one should do. Instead, they belong to the gospel, because they give what they promise, namely the power to "bring fruit" and to use the divine gifts in the human being's active life.

3. Doctrine and different practices

The word "practice" in the religious context means above all different religious acts, services, and spirituality. According to the Augsburg Confession's well-known statement the unity of the church requires consensus concerning the doctrine of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments. However, human traditions and the rites and ceremonies instituted by human beings do not need to be simi-

18 StA 3, 260, 29–32.

19 StA 3, 301, 34–26.

lar everywhere.²⁰ Practices may be instituted either by God or by human beings. Many practices have both aspects: God may institute them, but their actualisation involves decisions made by human beings. The Augsburg Confession allows for diversity in human practice.

The understanding of Christian marriage presents a real problem concerning the relationship between doctrine, ethics, and practice. This is not the place to discuss the entire theology of marriage as such, but the question is how communion may be maintained between churches and Christians who draw different conclusions in their application of Christian theology.

It is especially in some of his sermons that Luther explains the nature of Christian communion. Communion is created and maintained through word and sacraments. The word of God and the Eucharist unite a Christian with Christ and with other Christians. The elements of the Holy Communion afford a description of Christian communion.²¹ Like the many grains that are ground to make one loaf and the many grapes that are distinct yet pressed into a common form, so Christians should become a single common and true spiritual body. In this body they have one head, Christ, and they are each other's members. Luther stresses that in this communion everyone shares the same faith, doctrine, and sacraments.²² He may also say that Christians share the same mind. Luther stresses that being of the same mind must be understood in the Christian or theological sense, not philosophically. This means that one does not seek one's own good but the good of others. The "mind" or affect that unites all Christians is the most intimate movement of the heart towards the neighbour. When people are of a different mind their intimate movement is directed against the neighbour. This unanimity comes from God and thus everyone is affected, moved, and bound by the same reality, the love that seeks the best for the neighbour. Luther very concisely describes the theological sense of being of the same mind: all are moved by the same reality, which means, for example, that the weak understand the same as the strong and the strong have the same difficulties as the weak, which impels them to treat the weak as they themselves would like to be treated. For Luther this spiritual affect is the strength (*nervus*) of the Christian religion, without which it could not stand.²³

20 BSELK, 61.

21 WA 30 I, 26, 22–24: "Sicut baptismus aliquid significant, sic hoc quoque Sacramentum aliquid significant. Significatio eius est, quod in Christianitate sit unitas, lieb und gemeinschaft."

22 WA 30 I, 26,

23 WA 7, 484, 6–21.

Being of the same mind involves a shared understanding of faith and weakness, foolishness, infirmity, and poverty. For example, if one is naked or hungry, so too is the other. This means that one member of the communion will not rest before the other is clothed or fed. Since the members of the communion have one spirit and one body, everything – both physical and spiritual goods and evils – is common and no one allows another to suffer from any want.²⁴ The essence of the church is therefore the selfless love that does not seek its own benefit. In the church temporal and spiritual wants, as well as gifts, become common through love.²⁵

Communion becomes reality when the Lord's Supper is received.²⁶ In eating the sacrament, believers enjoy Christ and unite themselves with him as he unites himself with them. Sinners come to Christ and give him all their sin and they receive from him faith, righteousness, eternal life, and the willingness to live according to God's will. Then the Christian allows others to "eat and drink" him or her, and thus this reciprocal eating and drinking actualises the exhortation to "bear each other's burdens". A Christian says to his or her neighbour: if you are poor, give your poverty to me; here you have bread and clothes. For Luther taking care of the neighbour in his or her need means that the neighbour is served both spiritually and materially: she or he may hear the gospel and receive consolation and the things she or he needs for their material life.²⁷ In the Christian community people do this reciprocally for each other. There is no division between "the givers" and "the receivers", but all belong to both categories.

In Luther's understanding of Christian communion faith and love are deeply intertwined. Love unites Christians with Christ and each other so that they share a common faith and doctrine as well as all evil and goodness. This means on the one hand that the church and its members are obliged to take care of the common faith; on the other, it implies that not all errors or mistakes in the content of doctrine present reasons to break communion. In Luther's view there is no church without weakness, sin, and even heresies. God has hidden and covered it all under the cross. The same holds true for Christians. Thus, even when one might regard another's view concerning some question as a heresy, this is not inevitably a reason for breaking communion. The decisive point is that one believes and trusts in Christ in the struggle against the flesh.²⁸ Trusting in Christ is indicative of the *doctrina definita*, and the struggle against the flesh refers to the activity of incarnated faith.

24 WA 30 I, 26, 25–27, 4.

25 WA 6, 131, 2–6.

26 WA 30 I, 27, 16–18.

27 WA 30 I, 27, 6–16; 19–21.

28 WA 40 II, 105, 23–106, 23.

When taking care of the common content of faith we cannot simply separate doctrine, ethics, and practice. Nevertheless, we have to distinguish between what is unchangeable and what may be changed in the content of doctrine, ethics, and practice. The unchangeable aspect in all Christian doctrinal and ethical beliefs is the divine gift in connection with justification by grace. In Christian practices, which are also in close relationship with the doctrine of justification, the unchangeable aspect is their divine institution.

If we take the problem of same-sex relationships and marriage as an example, we can identify a permanent and changeable element. According to the Bible and common Christian understanding God has instituted and blessed marriage as a union between a man and a woman in which children are born and nurtured. This divine institution is the unchangeable element of marriage which Christ has confirmed. Luther and the Lutheran Confessions combine this task of marriage with the attainment of eternal life, and thus with faith and justification.²⁹ It follows that same-sex relationships do not constitute marriages in the theological sense – unless the church's synods find good theological reasons to decide otherwise.

However, if same-sex relationships are not regarded as marriages, this does not solve the question concerning the church's blessing of such partnerships. It only implies that they cannot be blessed as marriages. The Christian tradition allows for the blessing of human beings who need and ask for it. Such blessing creates or deepens unity with Christ and other Christians. Thus, if the question is whether the church welcomes homosexual human beings into the community, such blessings should have their place. From the theological point of view this is, however, something different from the blessing of a marriage or even of a same-sex relationship. Nevertheless, the Christian community may allow variation in practice in this matter as long as the difference between divine and human institution remains clear.

The other problem concerning same-sex relationships is the church's attitude to its employees living in such relationships. It is likely that the churches will make different decisions and adopt divergent practices concerning this issue. For example, in Finland the Lutheran Church can no longer deny ordination to a candidate living in a same-sex partnership, for to do so would entail the loss of its status as a public community. It would constitute illegal discrimination. It is another question whether the denial of this right is required to be faithful to the Christian faith. Here, opinion is divided in the Christian community, although the majority represents the traditional view which denies the actualising of homosexual inclination. Both sides may regard the other's view as erroneous or false but – if

29 23 BSELK, 339-340, 603-605, 612.

we follow Luther's view – the doctrinal aspect of the issue cannot be reduced to this propositional disagreement. Practical decisions should be made in connection with being formed by Christ's person, life, and works. This includes the mutual bearing of each other's errors, weaknesses, and sins. To become one in faith and to have one mind do not presuppose unanimity on all issues in the propositional sense, but a search for the best for all members of the community. Is it possible to develop practices which allow different propositional conceptions concerning same-sex relationships or even marriage? The criteria for such practices are at least the following: first, the community's members bear each other's burdens as if they are their own; second, same-sex couples who want to live in the Christian community have varying expectations and needs of it. Therefore, according to the principle of love not everyone seeks the same liturgical ceremonies: some wish to get married in church; some want some kind of blessing from the church; and some are content with prayer for their lives. There may even be some who do not want any liturgical ceremony. Members of the community have differing views concerning the status of same-sex couples. As long as they behave respectfully and correctly, no one needs to be coerced into the adoption of similar ideas and actions. If the church decides that marriage in such cases should be possible, it should be possible but not obligatory to marry same-sex couples. If the church does not accept same-sex marriage, it should be possible but not obligatory to bless people who live in same-sex relationships or legally recognised marriages.

4. Conclusion

The question of same-sex marriage is perhaps the most difficult current problem concerning the relationship between doctrine, ethics, and practice. The differences already arise in deciding the extent to which this question belongs to the sphere of doctrine, or if it is an exclusively ethical question, or perhaps only a practical issue. I have argued that in Lutheran theology one cannot separate these elements. This does not make things easy, but more often than is the case today it should lead to a discussion about which kind of practices are best for all members of the Christian community. Both doctrine and ethics provide certain criteria for the quest for the common good.

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III TOWARDS A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF THE DIACONAL MINISTRY

Ragnar Persenius

One Ministry - Three Commissions¹

The subject is “One ministry or two?” The focus lies on ordination and the question if it is necessary to ordain a person a second time when he or she is changing office within the one ordained ministry. In order to come to an answer we have to examine the relation between the ordained ministry as one ministry and a specific calling and task within that ministry. The theme I have chosen for my introduction, which is “One ministry – three commissions”, says something fundamental about this relation. In 1990, the Church of Sweden Bishops’ Conference published a letter concerning the ministry of the Church with the title “Bishop, priest and deacon in the Church of Sweden”. It gives an interpretation of the Ordinal, approved in 1987. Theologically, the letter from the bishops gave a foundation for the regulation of the ordained ministry in the 1999 Church Order for the disestablished Church of Sweden.

In the bishops’ letter the ordained ministry is described from the perspective of the calling of the whole people of God. The Church lives in the relation between God and world. The Church is a serving Church in which all the baptized have received the commission to serve and witness. The use of the word “commission” is important. The Church and every commissioned person within the Church are not just doing something functional. Being commissioned means first of all that the task is given by someone – there is an authorization. Secondly, this is given in order that something will be done. The persons commissioned in the Church stand and perform their authorized task within the relation between God and world. Therefore it is important to clarify that there is a close connection between the calling of the whole Church and the ordained ministry. I quote from the Bishops’ letter:

¹ Consultation on the Diaconate, Royal Foundation of St Katherine, London, January 25, 2006. Introduction by Rt Revd Dr Ragnar Persenius, Bishop of Uppsala.

“The intention is to refer to two conditions which apply to the ordained servants of the Church. First, as with all other members of the Church, they share the common call to service through baptism. Second, they have a special divine commission which requires a special induction; they are ordained into a service in the Church which is essential for the basic mission of God’s people in the world – to administer the gospel.”

Later during the 1990’s, the relation between the calling of the whole people of God and the ordained ministry has been elaborated with the use of the concept of “sign”. What the ordained minister does is a sign of the calling of the whole Church and of each parish. The ministry of the deacon is described as “a sign of mercy” to the parish and to society

In ecumenical dialogue the oneness of the ministry of the Church and of the ordained ministry has been strongly emphasized. But there are different elements in this ministry. It is a ministry of preaching and administering the sacraments, of oversight and unity, and of diaconal responsibility. There are different functions within the ministry, and the Church can choose to keep them together or divide them within the ministry. In the Lutheran tradition there has been a strong emphasis on the identity of the ministry as a proclamation of the gospel. This proclamation has been identified with sermons and teaching. It has to do with spoken words. Due not least to the challenges of the modern world the acts of the Church as witnessing to the gospel have become more and more important due not least to the increasing difficulties for society in caring for people in need. And in addition, we meet new forms of need in modern society. We are reminded that the gospel must be proclaimed both in word and deed. In doing so, we are developing our view on ministry in continuity with the Lutheran understanding of ministry.

In the Lutheran Reformation the preaching ministry covered the whole ministry of the Church, with the task of proclaiming and elucidating the gospel in word and sacraments. Martin Luther did not accept that the deacon mainly served by reading the texts in the mass instead of serving the poor. The reformers, against this background and the social order of their time, found it expedient to integrate the diaconal task within the responsibility of the ministry of the priest.

After the 18th Century during which the liturgical diaconate disappeared, the Church of Sweden had a twofold ordained ministry of priest and bishop. In Sweden the diaconal dimension of the ordained ministry was included into the office of the priest. One of the vows of the ordination of priests had a caritative content until 1987 when it was inserted into the order for ordination of deacons.

The principal point is that there are different elements which must be performed within the one ministry. This is not optional. But whether the ministry

is to be divided into one, two or three tasks is mainly a functional question, although from an ecumenical point of view the threefold ministry has an advantage with its historical roots.

When the Church of Sweden has developed its thinking concerning the ordained ministry the following points have been especially important:

1. It is a threefold, not a tripartite ministry. The ministry is one and the different functions are related to and partly cover one another.
2. The functions within the ministry are regarded as commissions, a terminology underlining that they are permanent, necessary and performed on the basis of an authorization by the laying on of hands under prayer of the Holy Spirit.
3. There is no theological hierarchy between the three commissions. Of course, there is a hierarchy of authority due to the fact that the bishop has the responsibility to exercise overall oversight. The Church of Sweden has resisted attempts to regard the bishop as the minister covering all commissions, or a more protestant approach saying that the priest is the minister while other commissions are to be regarded as functional aspects of the ministry of the priest. The ordained ministry and its commissions are instead interpreted from the perspective of oneness and wholeness within the ordained ministry and in relation to the ministry of all the baptized.
4. In the 1987 Ordinal there are three exactly parallel rites for ordination of deacons, priests and bishops. Some of the liturgical texts are the same, while those explaining the specific character of a commission are exchanged. The terminology is ordination, because we have only one word in Swedish. When we speak English we talk about the consecration of a bishop. But we have definitively avoided talking as the Germans do about installing a bishop (Einführung). There are three parallel functions of the one ordained ministry.
5. The commissions must be defined from their task within the Church and not from a qualitative perspective of what a bishop can do which nobody else can do, and of what a priest can do which nobody else can do. Then the deacon and the ordinary baptized church member will have problems with their identity. Fifteen years ago a committee suggested that the deacons should have the right to perform funeral services. Then they too

would have a task of their own! The commissions must be defined from a holistic perspective both of each commission and of the one mission.

From this principal viewpoint the Church Order of 1999 has regulated the one ordained ministry and the three commissions within this ministry. The diaconate has got a clear caritative identity, the General Synod did not accept what was called “half-priests” and therefore refused to define specific liturgical functions for the deacons. On the other hand all candidates for the diaconate are called, examined and ordained in the dioceses by the bishops in a system parallel to candidates for priesthood. And they are ordained dressed in albs and receive stoles. After ordination they distribute the sacramental gifts in the continuing service in the Cathedral. And in ordinary church life most deacons are serving liturgically together with priests and lay people in different services in the parishes.

It really was difficult to find solutions to questions of how to regulate ordinations in cases when someone leaves one commission within the ordained ministry and enters into another commission, and also what should happen when a minister loses the right to serve as bishop, priest or deacon. Will they lose not only their right to serve in a specific commission but also within the ordained ministry as a whole?

First of all, I note that we only ordain once to a specific commission within the ordained ministry. If someone has lost his or her ministerial rights and after a period of time is accepted to return to ministerial commission and office they are obliged to renew their ordination vows before the bishop. Secondly, we must put stronger emphasis on the content of the vows since they express the interpretation of the Church of the identity of the commission entered into by ordination. The vows must differ dependent on whether the ordained ministry is one-, two- or threefold. The conclusion from my point of view is that you are ordained to a commission within the ministry defined by the vows.

I will conclude by giving you some examples of how ordinations are interpreted in the Church of Sweden. A baptized Christian member of the Church of Sweden can be elected bishop. If this happens he or she has to be ordained priest because the church regards the ministerial acts of a priest to be fundamental for the ministry of a bishop. If a bishop violates the ordination vows and it is decided that he or she has to relinquish their commission as bishop, they will lose all rights connected with the ordained ministry. The bishop cannot remain as a priest in the Church. On the other hand, if he or she after a period of time were accepted again it is possible in theory to enter into either or both of the commissions of priest and bishop. The ordination vows are decisive in that case. They have to be renewed.

The doctrinal committee of the General Synod - consisting of all the bishops and eight theological experts and members of the Synod - has also recently made it clear that a priest cannot serve as a deacon without ordination to that commission. The same applies for a former bishop wanting to serve as a deacon. When a deacon is accepted as candidate to the priesthood, he or she has to be ordained. So the Church of Sweden has tried to make it evident that there is a threefold ministry, ordered in a non-hierarchical way with parallel commissions, which are overlapping one another in the sense that there are elements significant for one of the commissions being relevant also for the other commissions and for the whole Church and the ministry of all baptized. The commissions are expressions of three main perspectives within the one ministry.

In conclusion, a person is ordained to a commission within the one ordained ministry. The identity of the person being ordained is determined by the ordination vows in combination with the laying on of hands and prayer for the assistance of the Holy Spirit in the specific commission. The ordained priest, deacon and bishop share the calling of the one mission.

I also want to add that life-long sending and responsibility together with the vows and the ordination determines the identity of the ecclesiastical order.

What Do We Mean by “Order”? A Lutheran Perspective¹

1. Theology and Terminology

What do we mean by “order”? For the Lutherans, this is not just a theological question concerning our understanding of the ordained ministry, but also a very practical one, especially when we try to discuss it in an ecumenical and international setting. Substantial questions emerge in the very opening of such a discussion. First, a historical question: do the Lutherans have a unanimous theology and understanding of the ministry of the Church at all? Second, a question of terminology: which words should we choose to translate our understanding into other languages in another theological framework? Third, a question of self-criticism: have we clarified the matter to ourselves, before claiming to have a position in a discussion? Indeed, what *do* mean by “order”?

The word “order” is seldom used in Lutheranism. In the eyes of many, the concept of “Holy Orders” might seem too elevated. Instead, the Lutheran vocabulary has made use of more secular terms. The most important ones of them are *office* (German *Amt*, Swedish *ämbete*) and *ministry* (German *Dienst*, Swedish *tjänst*).² These words have their own background, and their Latin counterparts in the theological writings of the Reformation era are not wholly consequent. Whereas *Amt* / *ämbete* has its roots in the mediaeval Latin and German *ambactus*, depicting a vassal, it is also used to translate the Latin *ministerium*, service and ministry.

As a result of the ecumenical proceedings in the 1990s, of which the Porvoo Common Statement is by all means not the least important, a process to clarify the terminology and theology of ordination was initiated in 1997 by the Nordic Ecumenical Council. The outcome of this ecumenical study project has just been released by a Danish publishing house.³ The authors of the volume have made a survey in the rites of ordination and commitment in the Lutheran, Catholic, Orthodox and Free Churches of the five Nordic countries.

1 Porvoo Consultation on the Diaconate London, 25–27 January 2006, published earlier in *Rescriptio 2006*

2 I choose Swedish to exemplify the Scandinavian terminology since Swedish is an official language in Finland. The same terms are spelled a bit differently in Danish, Norwegian and Icelandic. Finnish does not belong to the family of Germanic/Scandinavian languages and it only has one word to express both office and ministry (*virka*).

3 Iversen 2006.

A close reading of the rites grants some insight for discerning what we mean by “order”. The concept is very closely linked with “ordination”, at least when it comes to the question concerning which ministries belong to the “ordained ministry”. The Lutheran folk churches don’t exactly seem to know whether their deacons are ordained, consecrated or commissioned. On the other hand, the question is not purely liturgical, but it also seems to involve hidden tensions and problems of authority. To make the issue even more complicated and blurred, several non-theological factors also have their say in it, especially in the form of different expectations towards the church as an employer. The spiritual empowerment granted by the liturgical ordination is not always considered vital for the professional profile of an educated and skilled employee. Attention is too easily paid to the ordering of the diaconal ministry in spite of ordaining into it.

2. Is there a “Priestly Order” in the New Testament?

The fact that we have a hard time finding the term “order” in Lutheranism should not worry us very much. As a matter of fact, it is not easy to find in the Holy Scriptures, either. In the Old Testament, it was ordered that the Aronic priests were to be set liturgically apart for sacrificial duties: “You shall consecrate him, since he offers the bread of your God; he shall be holy to you; for I the Lord, who sanctify you, am holy.” (Lev 21:8). But early Christianity did not adopt a priestly office as such from Judaism. In the New Testament, no other individuals besides Christ are called priests; this word is used collectively, depicting the Christians as a priestly people. As a matter of fact, the New Testament describes Christ a high priest in another sense than the Aronic priesthood ever had been: in the letter to Hebrews we meet the word “order” to emphasize it. Christ is said to be the “high priest after the order of Melchizedek” (Hebr 6:20).

The Latin version of this phrase reads *secundum ordinem Melchisedech*, the Greek original *kata ten taxin Melchisedek*. The Latin *ordo* is equivalent to the Greek *taxis*. Both words depict a rank, a certain group or class of people, like a military unit, but more than that, an arrangement, a due order, a fixed succession; also, a row of seats in a theatre etc. The word is only used in two other places in the New Testament and both of them speak about good order in the Church (1Cor 14:40, Col 2:5).

When Christ is characterized as the “high priest after the order of Melchizedek”, the focus is not to speak of him as having been set into a certain priestly rank and attached to a priestly order, but on the contrary, as having become an extraordinary priest in comparison to the Aronic priests. His office has only been prefigured in the priesthood of Melchizedek: Christ is a high priest who has received his office directly from God and shall remain a priest eternally.

The concept of “order” is the basis for understanding “ordination”. In a certain ecclesiastical sense, ordination has come to mean attaching a person to an estate or a rank of people, into “an order”. It has traditionally been used for incorporating a person into a certain group and, respectively, for setting them apart from others. Notwithstanding that, there are good reasons to interpret it as following a pattern, as acting according to a prescribed order: to ordain is to set someone apart into an office in an ordered manner.

3. Ordination in the New Testament

The New Testament gives us five examples of ordination in the early church. They include the narratives of selecting seven men to take care of the Greek-speaking widows in Jerusalem (Acts 6:1-6) and of setting apart and sending the apostles Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:3). In the Pastoral letters we read advice to young Timothy, ascribed to St Paul, on how to exercise oversight in the church (1Tim 4:14, 5:22, 2Tim 1:6). None of these passages makes use of the word “order” (*taxis*). Nevertheless, in all of them, the gesture described remains the same: apostolic imposition of hands combined with prayer. The Holy Spirit’s activity is also mentioned in them. The Greek phrase used for imposition of hands is *epitithemias kheiras*. From it is derived the concept of *kheirothesia*, which is applied in the Orthodox churches for consecration into the lower degrees of clergy, whereas the word used for ordination is *kheirotonia*. Literally, the latter does not mean imposition of hands but electing somebody by raising a hand and pointing to him (cf. Is 58:9 LXX, Plato *Laws* 659b). But the word also carries a notion of setting apart into a ministry of the church, which is evident already in the New Testament. The phrase is used for choosing and installing elders in the congregations which the Apostles Paul and Barnabas visited (Acts 14:23).

The imposition of hands, combined with a prayer to the Holy Spirit, is the key factor of ordination. In some places, it is described in a context of charismatic manifestations. The laying on of hands transmitted ministerial authority and the spiritual empowerment. This is prefigured also in the Old Testament narrative of Moses and Joshua (Numbers 27:15-23) and is apparent especially in the Pastoral letters. It seems that the ministry of the early church was charismatic: the ministry is a spiritual gift granted by God to someone for an office in the church. The ordination confers the Holy Spirit’s presence. In what sense is this spiritual gift to be discerned from the spiritual gift received in baptism? This question is an ecumenical problem, but it is particularly a challenge to the Lutheran theology of ministry.

4. Luther on the Priesthood of All Believers and the Ordered Ministry

The Lutherans have strongly emphasised the priesthood of all believers. Sometimes it has been confused with the ordained ministry itself by maintaining that the latter would only be a matter of order – i.e., that the ministry of the church would be an arrangement of the baptized for themselves. Luther himself can partly be blamed as being guilty of this misinterpretation. In the decisive years of Reformation he wrote several treatises in which he questioned the spiritual meaning and necessity of ordination in accordance to the church's tradition. I quote his writing *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation* (1520):

“It is pure invention that pope, bishop, priests, and monks are called the spiritual estate while princes, lords, artisans, and farmers are called the temporal estate. This is indeed a piece of deceit and hypocrisy. Yet no one need be intimidated by it, and for this reason: all Christians are truly of the spiritual estate, and there is no difference among them except that of office. Paul says in 1. Corinthians 12 that we are all one body, yet every member has its own work by which it serves the others. This is because we all have one baptism, one gospel, one faith, and are all Christians alike; for baptism, gospel, and faith alone make us spiritual and a Christian people. The pope or bishop anoints, shaves heads, ordains, consecrates, and prescribes garb different from that of the laity, but he can never make a man into a Christian or into a spiritual man by so doing. He might well make a man into a hypocrite or a humbug and blockhead, but never a Christian or a spiritual man. As far as that goes, we are all consecrated priests through baptism, as St. Peter says in 1. Peter 2, ‘You are a royal priesthood and a priestly realm.’ The Apocalypse says, ‘Thou hast made us to be priests and kings by thy blood’. The consecration by pope or bishop would never make a priest, and if we had no higher consecration than that which pope or bishop gives, no one could say mass or preach a sermon or give absolution.”⁴

As much as Luther was convinced of the equal priesthood of all believers, he nevertheless vehemently opposed any individual wishes to simply take the priestly rights by someone to himself. The reason is not only that such an attempt would be contrary to the tradition and order of the church, but it also would obscure the communal nature of the faith. Thus, Luther on the one hand seems to diminish

4 LW 44, 127.

the meaning of ordination, but on the other hand, assigns it a place in the community. He writes in *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520):

“Let everyone, therefore, who knows himself to be a Christian, be assured of this, that we are all equally priests, that is to say, we have the same power in respect to the Word and the sacraments. However, no one may make use of this power except by the consent of the community or by the call of a superior. (For what is the common property of all, no individual may arrogate to himself, unless he is called.) And therefore this ‘sacrament’ of ordination, if it is anything at all, is nothing else than a certain rite whereby one is called to the ministry of the church.”⁵

According to Luther, the ordination is neither for the individual himself nor for the local community to decide on; is it a calling in the name of the church as a whole. Luther’s expression of the “certain rite” only points to the existing structures the organized church uses for calling and setting apart its ministers. This is also implied in the reference to the “call of a superior”. Until the Diet in Augsburg in 1530, the Lutherans were open for maintaining the episcopal order in the church.

In the reformative writings of the year 1520, Luther time and again emphasized the value of the priesthood of all believers. Together with it, he stressed the true meaning of the ecclesial ministry: it is not established for purposes other than proclaiming the Word of God. In the treatise on the *Freedom of a Christian*, written originally in Latin and sent as a letter to Pope Leo X, Luther makes use of the concept of *ordo clericorum* but claims the ultimate purpose of the order to be a ministry of the word: “The apostolic, episcopal order and the entire clerical order, has been called and instituted only for the ministry of the word.”⁶

According to the *Freedom of a Christian*, words used for clerical order have been improperly limited to describe a distinct “spiritual estate” and not to highlight the general priesthood. In addition, those in the orders should only be called ministers and servants:

“You will ask, ‘If all who are in the church are priests, how do these whom we now call priests differ from laymen?’ I answer: Injustice is done those words ‘priest,’ ‘cleric,’ ‘spiritual,’ ‘ecclesiastic,’ when they are transferred from all Christians to those few who are now by a mischievous usage called ‘ecclesiastics.’ Holy Scripture makes no distinction between them, although

5 LW 36, 116.

6 StA 2, 268, 6–8. The German version translates into English a bit differently: “all the apostles, bishops and priests, and the entire spiritual estate”, StA 2, 269, 6–7.

it gives the name ‘ministers,’ ‘servants,’ ‘stewards’ to those who are now proudly called popes, bishops, and lords and who should according to the ministry of the Word serve others and teach them the faith of Christ and the freedom of believers. Although we are all equally priests, we cannot all publicly minister and teach. We ought not do so even if we could.”⁷

As a matter of fact, Luther does speak about “holy orders” in a rather broad sense. On the one hand, the orders include the ministries instituted by God for the proclamation of Gospel, and on the other hand, secular governing bodies and other basic social units can also be considered holy orders that are established by God. Since the latter are also an ordinance of God, they belong to the “holy orders”. Luther counts the diaconal office into the holy orders, at least in this broad sense, since those who supervise the common chest, from which the needy were supported, are also in an order that “pleases God”. In his larger *Confession concerning Christ’s Supper* (1528) Luther writes:

“But the holy orders and true religious institutions established by God are these three: the office of priest, the estate of marriage, the civil government. All who are engaged in the clerical office or ministry of the Word are in a holy, proper, good, and God-pleasing order and -estate, such as those who preach, administer sacraments, supervise the common chest, sextons and messengers or servants who serve such persons. These are engaged in works which are altogether holy in God’s sight.”⁸

It seems that Luther does not derive his understanding of ordination from a theology of “holy orders”, a rank of set-apart individuals, but from God’s ordering. Ordination, respectively, is not to be understood as attaching somebody to an order, but as acting according to what God has ordered. When bishops, priests and deacons are ordained, certain individuals are set apart to minister in the church according to an apostolic order.

5. Ministry and Ordination in the Lutheran Confessions

The Lutherans have generally avoided speaking of a distinction between the ordained and other baptized Christians using ontological categories. Nevertheless, a substantial theological question can’t be bypassed. It is clear that any comparisons

7 LW 31, 356.

8 LW 37, 364.

hinting at a different “value” or to a “higher esteem” among the baptized on the basis of ordination are to be resisted. But on the other hand, the difference between clergy and lay may be defined by pointing to a different charisma. In that sense, the concept of “Holy Orders” could be credited for highlighting the spiritual substance of ordination, inasmuch as the holiness is based on the gift of the Holy Spirit.

At a first look, the Lutheran Confessions simply criticise the prevailing mediæval catholic theology of ordination. The Reformers did not regard ordination as a sacrament. It lacked a dominical institution and did not confer forgiveness of sins on the person. But at a second look, in the *Apology for the Augsburg Confession*, Philipp Melancthon admits that the imposition of hands could be called a sacrament, since it sets someone apart for the ministry of Word and Sacrament:

“If ordination is understood in this way, neither will we refuse to call the imposition of hands a sacrament. For the Church has the command to appoint ministers, which should be most pleasing to us, because we know that God approves this ministry, and is present in the ministry.”⁹

This is coherent with what was written in the fifth article of the Augsburg Confession itself on the divine institution of the ministry of Word and Sacrament. According to it, the *ministerium ecclesiasticum* is established by God to administer the means of grace, in order for us to be able to receive the Holy Spirit and the gift of faith through them. The understanding of the ministry in the Augsburg Confession is bound with the doctrine of justification. The few ecclesiological sentences of the Confession are sketched from a soteriological viewpoint:

“That we may obtain this faith, the Ministry of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith; where and when it pleases God, in them that hear the Gospel, to wit, that God, not for our own merits, but for Christ’s sake, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ’s sake. [...]”¹⁰

“[...] The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered. [...]”¹¹

9 Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Art. XIII, 12.

10 Augsburg Confession, Art. V.

11 Augsburg Confession, Art. VII.

Since the Confession combines the ministry with the doctrine of justification, it only treats the ministry in connection with the Word and Sacraments. This also applies to the episcopal ministry, which is responsible for the purity of the Gospel proclaimed and the due administration of the Sacraments.¹² Further dimensions of the ministry of oversight fall from the picture. The same also applies to the ministry of the deacon: since it is not directly connected with the proclamation, it is not sufficiently noticed in the whole corpus of the Lutheran Confessions, although the presence of deacons in the church is taken for granted.¹³

However, this is not to imply that either of those two ministries would be superfluous or arbitrary for the being of the church in comparison with the priestly ministry. On the contrary, the Confessions take them for granted: since the congregations of the Reformation wish to remain true to the catholic faith and order of the church, they also approve to the Church's ministerial structures:

“It is our greatest wish to maintain church-polity and the grades in the Church, even though they have been made by human authority. For we know that church discipline was instituted by the Fathers, in the manner laid down in the ancient canons, with a good and useful intention.”¹⁴

Lutherans were willing to maintain the ministerial ordering on a renewed theological basis. No more should the ministry be seen in a sacrificial context but in the service of the Gospel. The congregations of the Reformation wished to hold on to the tradition, according to which there were three major degrees or “grades” in the divinely instituted *ministerium ecclesiasticum*. The grades themselves are not regarded as established by God, but on the contrary, as instituted by “human authority” by the Fathers in a “good and useful intention”. It is naturally hard to discern in the history of the church what exactly has come to being out of divine guidance and what is based on a purely human decision-making. The reformers nevertheless wished to point to the scriptural evidence of certain elements in the Church of Christ: the proclamation of the Gospel and the Sacraments. The apostles were sent by Christ to administer these; thus, their ministry is Christ's ordinance.

As a divine institution, ministry is one of the external characteristics by which the true church can be infallibly recognized. Luther mentions it among other signs in his late writing *On the Councils and the Church* (1539):

12 Augsburg Confession, Art. XXVIII.

13 According to the German text of the Apology in Art. XIII, 12 (cited above), the Church has a “command to appoint *Prediger und Diakonos*“, whereas the Latin text only mentions *ministris*.

14 Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Art. XIV, 1, 5.

“Fifth, the church is recognized externally by the fact that it consecrates or calls ministers, or has offices that it is to administer. There must be bishops, pastors, or preachers who publicly and privately give, administer, and use the aforementioned four things or holy possessions on behalf of and in the name of the church, or rather by reason of their institution by Christ.”¹⁵

Not only the ministry itself, but also the ordination into it is mentioned as a sign from which the church can be infallibly recognized. No other community but the Church calls, blesses and sends people in the name of Christ. The *Augsburg Confession* emphasizes the duly calling to give the Priesthood of all believers a proper framework: “no one should publicly teach in the Church or administer the Sacraments unless he be regularly called”.¹⁶ The words “regularly called” read in Latin *rite vocatus*, i.e. “called according to the rite”. The church uses a certain *ritus* for calling, blessing and sending its ministers.

Some Lutheran theologians have claimed that the Articles V and XIV do not speak about the ministry in the same sense. According to a so-called functionalistic interpretation, Article V only speaks about the ministry as a principle: that there *is proclamation* of the Word and administration of the Sacraments, is instituted by God, but the practical arranging of it remains to the church to decide, and this is taken up first in the Article XIV. The divinely instituted ministry only exists as functions, not as individual ministers. This functionalistic approach differs from an ontological approach, according to which God has not only established preaching of the Gospel but also set apart preachers for it and given them his Holy Spirit. A functionalistic approach might be found useful when a particular church wishes to bring its ministry theologically closer to the priesthood of all believers.¹⁷ However, it has been disputed whether such a reading of the Confession can be historically and theologically justified at all.¹⁸

6. Which Ministries Belong to the “Order”?

Since the Lutheran Confessions focus on the doctrine of justification, the ministry of the church is described foremost in the presbyteral setting: the ministry is for preaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments. For historical reasons,

15 LW 41, 154.

16 Augsburg Confession, Art. XIV.

17 This distinction is made eg. in the report from the Bishops’ Conference of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD) on the “universal priesthood, ordination and commissioning according to protestant understanding”, cf. Allgemeines Priestertum, Ordination und Beauftragung, p. 7, footnote 7.

18 Cf. Lieberg 1962, 271–279, 314–315, 333–334; Wenz 1998, 321–329.

some Lutheran churches do not consider the episcopal ministry as inevitable for the being of the church as the Porvoo churches do. Nevertheless, there should be no doubt among Lutherans on the position of the episcopal ministry as being part of the ordained ministry. What the Lutherans have denied is the secular power of the bishops, not their authority as preachers of the Gospel.¹⁹ The episcopal ministry does not rest on another divine institution than the presbyteral ministry. The bishops are basically pastors, set apart for certain proprietary functions in the church. Their ministry is distinct from that of the priests, but not by divine order.²⁰ According to the reformers, the ministry is one: the pastor and the bishop are both in the same ministry of Word and Sacrament, in *unum et idem ministerium* (Melanchthon).²¹ Thus, it has been easy for Lutherans to adopt Porvoo *Common Statement* phrases like “the basic oneness of the ordained ministry” or “unity [of the ministry] in differentiated form” (Porvoo § 32 j).

Despite the theological unity and oneness of the ministry, it has not been easy for some Lutherans to also count the ministry of the deacon into the ordained ministry. However, following the same logic as in the episcopal ministry, one could reason that the deacon’s ministry rests on the divine institution in the ministry of Word and sacrament, but is set apart from it for some other proprietary tasks, according to human order as decided by the church.

It is possible for a Lutheran church to strengthen its diaconal ministry by integrating it more closely into the ministry of Word and sacrament. This would mean taking steps towards a three-fold understanding of the one ministry and providing an expression for its episcopal, presbyteral and diaconal dimensions. As a part of the same development, the diaconal ministry would be more clearly exercised in the framework of the liturgical and sacramental life of the church. However, there remains some doubt about the three-fold ordering, since it is usually structured hierarchically. The churches with a traditional three-fold ministry and practicing sequential, cumulative ordinations are not fully satisfied with their present, transitive diaconate.

According to recent research in the history of liturgy, the Lutherans basically follow a catholic tradition in their ordination formulas.²² This applies at least to the Nordic ordination / consecration rites for priests and bishops.²³ But there is some doubt as to whether all Nordic churches do ordain deacons, although

19 Augsburg Confession, Art. XXVIII, 5-11, 21-22; Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Art. XXVIII, 12-14; Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, 60-61.

20 Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, 63-65.

21 Lieberg 1962, 119-121.

22 Puglisi 1998, 4-69.

23 Knuutila 2006, 99-102.

they do consecrate or commission them in some way. The doubt arises from the discrepancy between the wording of the ordination rite and its structure: the deacons are not called, blessed or sent as properly and clearly as the priests are in their ordination.²⁴

7. Conclusion

It remains a challenge for our churches to work towards a common understanding of the diaconal ministry. The special challenge to the Lutherans is to bring their diaconal ministries into closer unity with the other ordained ministries. This was also recommended by a global consultation on the diaconal ministry, gathered by the Lutheran World Federation in November 2005. The consultation sent a message to all LWF member churches.²⁵ According to my opinion, the churches need to consider the three-fold ministry in their context, but be aware of not letting their diaconate develop into a transitional one. The special calling for us in Lutheran and Anglican churches is to move towards one another. That will most inevitably mean also moving towards the centre of the Church: the Eucharistic celebration, in which we become members of Christ and of each other.

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²⁴ Olsen 2006, 196.

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Diaconal Ministry as a Proclamation of the Gospel¹

I shall start my presentation by referring to a press release from LWI (the information service of the Lutheran World Federation) dated 21 March 2013, reporting from the enthronement of the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, an event also attended by the LWF General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge.

According to the press release, the archbishop in his sermon referred to the diaconal work of the church, stating: “We are asked to step out of the comfort zones and heed the call of Christ to be clear in our declaration of Christ, committed to the prayer in Christ and we will see a world transformed”. In his greeting Rev. Junge called attention to the work of the Anglican-Lutheran International Committee, and to the last report from this group (ALIC III) titled: *To love and serve the Lord. Diakonia in the Life of the Church*.

The Preface of this document reports “a new phase in the maturity of relations between our Anglican and Lutheran churches” in the sense that the issue no longer is confront issues that need to be church-dividing, instead the work of the commission has been “focused on diakonia and the fullness of its expression in the spirit of the prophets and the gospel of Jesus the Son of God”.

These expressions, formulated within the framework of bilateral dialogues between the Anglican Communion and the Lutheran Communion at global level largely correspond to the findings when we as Porvoo churches have been discussing the understanding of the diaconal ministry.

Allow me to indicate a few points that evidence such convergence. The first is a deep felt understanding that our dialogue does not aim at overcoming confessional differences, but of discovering together new perspectives of being church, as a mutual learning process in which our different traditions enrich our sharing of views, concerns and challenges. The second is acknowledging a change of focus in the discussion on the diaconal ministry, from ministry as order to ministry as ecclesiological expression, and further from ecclesiology to missiology as framework for interpreting the distinctiveness of this ministry. There may be many reasons for this change. A discussion on the diaconate as order may appear as a matter of limited interest, and in many instances as a problem to be solved: What do we do with the deacons? If they were not around, we would not have to wrestle with this issue.

1 Paper given at the Porvoo Consultation on diaconal ministry in Dublin 2013

When the church, her nature and mission in today's world has become the entry point for discussing this matter, quite another level of urgency is felt. This is expressed in the Oslo report from 2009 with emphasis "on *diakonia* as an essential aspect of the ministry of the whole church, participating in God's mission and to his world. Whist deacons exemplify and represent *diakonia*, it is not sufficient to understand the concept of diakonia narrowly in relation to a single category of ministers."

This view is also emphasised in the mentioned ALIC-report, with reference to the Oslo meeting, understanding "*diakonia* as the ministry of all the baptized, with the ordered ministries of the church as supporting them" (p. 5).

When elaborating on the ecclesiological dimension of diakonia, ALIC III sees "diakonia as an expression of *koinonia*, communion with and in Christ", in a manner in which *koinonia* and *diakonia* reinforce each other mutually.

This position deserves further reflection, as I am convinced that both Anglicans and Lutherans traditionally have not focused on this relation between *koinonia* and *diakonia*, and especially on its mutuality. For many Lutherans, *diakonia* does not belong to essence of being church, Word and Sacraments properly constitute the church, they would claim referring to *Confessio Augustana* article 7. From this perspective diakonia is a possible response in gratitude for what we, through God's grace, receive in Word and Sacrament. The view would then be that *diakonia* does not belong to what constitute the Church, but should rather be regarded a consequence of being church, of what we now are empowered to realize when sent as servants into the world.

Saying that *diakonia* is an expression of *koinonia* breaks with this scheme that establishes two separated steps in the process of becoming church, the first marked by *favor Dei*, the second as *donum Dei*, oriented by the concern of avoiding any understanding of synergy in conceptualizing the Church's being. Stating that *koinonia* and *diakonia* reinforce each other mutually implies moving beyond this position, but in a manner by which *diakonia* is no longer viewed as human action as may have been the tendency in the past, but in the first place as divine intervention with the purpose of transforming, reconciling and empowering people for participation in God's mission for the healing of the world.

For Lutherans who often understand diakonia as professional health or social work, with the risk of reducing diaconal work to activities at the margin of the ecclesial space, this view implies on the one hand recognizing the ecclesiological and missiological dimension when performing diakonia, also in arenas that seemingly have no ecclesial significance. On the other hand it requires a readiness to include *diakonia* as vital dimension in all expressions of being church, being it liturgical life, proclamation, and missionary outreach.

For Anglicans, the main difficulty lies in the fact that the very term *diakonia* largely remains unknown and does not belong to the ecclesial vernacular. I register, however, with interest a new openness in this regard, for instance in some of the papers that we have received in preparing for this consultation. In a statement from the Scottish Episcopal Church I read: “It might be said, we do not talk the talk of *diakonia* but we do walk the walk”. Without any doubt, when it comes to *diakonia* the walk is more important than the talk. It may however be, as the referred document affirms, important also to develop the talk, especially if the terminology may help us to clarify the relation between what we *are* and what we *do* as churches.

I also notice an interesting change of terminology in the report from the Anglican partners when referring to the deacon’s ministry, now talking about *distinct* deacons instead of *permanent* deacons as often was the case before. I assume that this new term acknowledges the necessity of a reflection on the distinctiveness of this ministry and thereby also on the distinct diaconal nature of the church and her mission in the world, and how *koinonia* and *diakonia* mutually reinforce each other.

So far some of the elements that constitute the context in which we this week are to share reflections on the diaconal ministry as proclamation of the gospel. Do we see a similar mutual relationship between proclamation and *diakonia* in the sense that they mutually reinforce each other?

From the Lutheran tradition that I represent, this is a very touchy question, especially from the perspective of diaconal actors that do not consider preaching a part of their professional activity, and even fear that proclamation would be misinterpreted as a from above promotion of Christian opinions. For some preaching too often lead to moralistic or religious judgement with the result that people that already struggle with their self-esteem experience being invaded or reduced to being objects of church-centred agendas.

The question is however: What do we understand by proclamation? And how do we understand diaconal work? To me it is clear that both concepts would gain from being critically related to each other. In the process of producing what sometimes is referred to as the “LWF handbook on Diakonia”, *Diakonia in Context*, this was presented as one of the greatest challenges. In 2008 a global consultation was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, as part of this process, and in the message from this event the participants “*acknowledge difficulties in clearly defining the interrelationship between proclamation and diakonia. Both are expressions of the Gospel and both are core elements of the mission of the church*”.

It was clearly noted that especially the Africans defended a stronger link between *diakonia* and proclamation. They question the way in which many Western faith-based agencies were implementing relief or development projects without

linking this work to local churches, and also without affirming its distinct Christian identity. Can diakonia be performed without proclaiming what moves its engagement and without testifying to the Christian message? The representatives from Africa, and also many from Asia and Eastern Europe, would strongly question the departmentalization between diakonia and proclamation, as also did the LWF Mission document from 1988, *Together in God's Mission*, stating:

*“The wholeness of mission needs to be manifested by the unity of word and deed in all of the church’s outreach. Both are vehicles of the unconditional love of God who accepts persons while they are yet sinners and without any regard to their social, racial or cultural background. Word without deed falsifies the very word itself as it makes the gospel abstract and denies God’s transforming power in creation and in incarnation. The failure to accompany witness through word, by witness through life may close the door to the gospel. On the other hand, the deed without the word is in danger of degenerating into sheer humanitarianism and conformity with the context and of failing to convey the fullness of salvation as God’s gift. The credibility of the witness is ultimately grounded not in deeds, which are bound to remain imperfect, but in the gospel itself.”*²

The European participants, and mainly those representing diaconal institutions or agencies, feared that this understanding could lead to a position where diaconal action was being reduced to an instrument for another purpose than what it basically is: service to the neighbor in need. That concern is strongly affirmed in *Diakonia in Context*:

*“Diakonia cannot be an instrument which serves the needs of the one helping, nor can it become an instrument for evangelizing people. Diaconal action would then wrongly become a strategy, in a conscious effort to combine human-care activities and proclamation so that people can be converted. A result may even be that the diaconal activities would be chosen according to whether they would be effective in recruiting new church members.”*³

But the document also affirms that diakonia can never be silent and should not pretend to be so. Diaconal action, as integral part of the Church’s mission cannot pretend that proclamation is not a part of this mission to the world. Word and deed cannot be separated; nevertheless, they should not be mixed in a manner

2 Together in God’s Mission: *An LWF Contribution to the Understanding of Mission*. LWF Documentation, No. 27, 1988, ch. 4.1.4.

3 *Diakonia in Context*, p. 84.

in which one of them is reduced to being an instrument of the other. And as it largely will depend on the context how to interrelate diakonia and proclamation, it is not possible to prescribe what exactly to do when holding these dimensions of the Church's mission together. Instead some general and guiding principles have been formulated:

1. "Diaconal action is meaningful in itself. It does not need to be justified by other reasons; it should never be reduced to be an instrument for other purposes.
2. Diaconal action must be unconditional. It cannot allow conditions to be a prerequisite for receiving help, as for instance participating in religious activities.
3. Diaconal action must respect the integrity of each person and their freedom to express their faith according to their own convictions and traditions.
4. Diaconal action must ensure that persons in vulnerable situations are not influenced or pressured toward religious practices and choices.
5. Diaconal action must acknowledge the spiritual dimension of human life, and especially of human suffering, and therefore be ready to assist people that ask for assistance, including counseling when this is asked for.
6. Diaconal action must be able to interpret reality and processes of social change in a holistic manner.
7. Diaconal action must be ready to account for its faith-based identity.
8. Diaconal action must take responsibility for the witness it is giving to the message of the Church."⁴

As you will understand, these principles have been worked out with a special reference to international diakonia that is diaconal action across geographic, ethnic, social and also religious borders. But even so, these principles are also relevant in our context, also at the level of local congregations involved in diaconal activities.

This brings me to the Church of Norway's Plan for Diakonia and its' definition of diakonia as the gospel in action:

"Diakonia is the caring ministry of the Church. It is the Gospel in action and is expressed through loving your neighbour, creating inclusive communities, caring for creation and struggling for justice".

⁴ *Diakonia in Context*, p. 87.

The first observation to be made here is that the plan does not explicitly state how diakonia relates to proclamation, although it contains several passages that refer to proclamation with the concern that it must include a diaconal dimension. The view is rather the gospel in a holistic sense, encompassing word and deed, and that the diaconal mandate in the first place relates to the gospel as action.

It is evident that gospel here is not understood as preaching in a narrow sense, a message owned or administered by the Church. The gospel is in the first place a story, “*how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him*” (Acts 10:38).

As reads the Hanover-document: “As the incarnate Word sent by the Father, Jesus is the basis for the church’s *diakonia*, the freedom to announce and act out God’s eschatological salvation (Rom 15:8)”.

ALIC III affirms this understanding, saying that “*diakonia takes its concrete model from the life of God made visible in the incarnate Christ*” (p.12) and introduces the concept of *Diakonia Dei* as parallel to *Missio Dei*. It is the “*life of the Trinity*” that “*gives both real and ideal shape to diaconal ministry which nurtures in communities a spirit of mutual trust and love, of interdependent, empowering relationships like those we see among Father, Son and Holy Spirit*” (p.11).

The Trinitarian perspective thus adds insight to the ecclesiological dimension of *diakonia*. It allows us to see *diakonia* as an expression of God’s salvific project of sending his Son into the world, thus emphasizing its missiological and Christological foundation. On that foundation is based the understanding of *diakonia* as the Gospel in action. It sees diaconal action in continuity with the *diakonia* of Jesus, in line with the commission given in John 20:21: “*As the Father sent me, so also I send you*”, in other words, sending in the sense of being incarnated in human reality. And it means sending as holistic mission encompassing proclamation, care for people in need, and advocacy through actions of promoting human dignity and justice.

This holistic perspective questions the kind of departmentalization that sometimes has characterized diaconal work, giving it an impression that it can be performed without links to its faith base, for instance as social or health work following the same rules of professionalism as would the case for public service deliverance. In one way or another, diaconal action will always affirm its ecclesiological and holistic nature when being performed.

How this is done, however, depends on the kind of action and on its context, as we have seen, this was also the backdrop for the working out of the guiding principles in *Diakonia in Context*. It remains a main concern to emphasize that diaconal action is meaningful in itself, it cannot be reduced to being a tactic tool for other agendas; no matter how praiseworthy these may appear, as for instance

promoting the Christian message or attracting people to become active Church members. Acknowledging diaconal ministry as a proclamation of the gospel affirms, yes, the ecclesial and the holistic dimension of diaconal action, but this does not mean subordinating *diakonia* in relation to ecclesiocentric strategies.

Diakonia – as sending and action incarnated in the world – is not for the sake of the church, but for the sake of the needy, for their cause. As such diaconal action proclaims God's care and good will for all creation, and especially for those who suffer, it denounces injustice, it seeks to unmask inhuman structures and practices, and to give voice to marginalized people and those that for different reasons have been silenced. So in no way diaconal action should be conceived as silent or humble service. Within the ecumenical movement the prophetic dimension of *diakonia* is often emphasized, as courageous proclamation of God's compassion and justice.

The relation between *diakonia* and proclamation should therefore be interpreted as a process of mutual orientation and reinforcement. Through its action *diakonia* lifts up visible sign that witness to what the Church is called to proclaim in words. Without such signs the words may sound irrelevant in today's world. On the other hand *diakonia* is motivated and oriented by the Gospel and its promise of God's liberating grace in Jesus Christ as hope and life in the world. In a time of globalization, the gospel proclaims – in word and deed – God's lordship as transformation, as future with hope. In a time of neoliberal ideology and consumerism, it announces Christ's liberating grace as reconciliation and newness of life. In a time of individualist pursuit of success in which so many find themselves as losers, it announces the Spirit's energizing and empowering presence promoting dignity and fullness of life.

Towards a Common Understanding of Diaconal Ministry?¹ Recent Developments in the Diaconate among the Porvoo Churches²

Abstract

This article explores the latest developments of the deacon's ministry in the churches of the Porvoo communion, based on the Anglican-Lutheran regional agreement of 1996, the Porvoo Declaration and the Porvoo Common Statement. In the Porvoo Declaration the signatory churches agreed on a common commitment to work towards a common understanding of diaconal ministry. The article analyses the understanding of the deacon's ministry in the Porvoo churches as expressed in their liturgical acts of admission to this ministry and their educational requirements for deacons. Special attention is paid to the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Denmark and its contribution to the common understanding of deacon's ministry in the Porvoo communion, as that church has recently signed the agreement.

The "portrait" of the Porvoo Churches and Denmark

After several years of work and negotiations, in 1996 ten Anglican and Lutheran churches accepted the Porvoo Common Statement (PCS) and signed the regional ecumenical agreement, the Porvoo Declaration

(PD).³ These ten were four Anglican churches in the British Isles: the Church of England, the Church of Ireland, the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Church in Wales, and six Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches: the Estonian Evangelical-Lutheran Church, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland, the Church of Iceland, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Lithuania, the Church of Norway and the Church of Sweden. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark and the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Latvia participated in the negotiations

1 Paper given at the Porvoo Consultation on diaconal ministry in Dublin 2013

2 'Porvoo Declaration 1993', para 58 b (vii): 'to work towards a common understanding of diaconal ministry'.

3 'The Porvoo Declaration' was part of the the Porvoo Common Statement' (PCS) which was included in the wider ecumenical report which the churches had drawn up between 1989 and 1992: *Together in Mission and Ministry: The Porvoo Common Statement with Essays on Church and Ministry in Northern Europe* (London: Church House Publishing, 1993).

but decided not to sign the Declaration. (In addition, the Lusitanian Church of Portugal and the Spanish Episcopal Reformed Church did not participate in the negotiations but joined the communion of churches later.) The aim of this agreement was to create a deeper regional communion, on the basis of a shared faith and ministry (grounded in the historic episcopate), with interchangeable members and ministers, and so to bring the participating churches closer in sharing a common mission and service in Northern Europe.

The quotation referred to in the title is one of the agreed commitments of the signatory churches. More than fifteen years has passed since then and there have been interesting developments within the signatory churches. In order to move towards a common understanding, to handle the differences and to face together today's challenges of mission and ministry the Porvoo churches have organised two theological consultations on the diaconate.⁴ During the first consultation the areas for joint study and action were identified. The issues included the understanding of the liturgical acts of ordination to the diaconate, consecration and commissioning, as well as how the challenges of modern society make the churches aware of the missiological dimension of the diaconate. The second consultation moved the focus from the diaconate to diaconal ministry and worked with the Christian ministry's dimension of diakonia as one of the essential aspects of the deacon's ministry in the framework of the mission of the whole Church.

The consultations revealed a variety of understandings among the Porvoo churches, not only between Anglicans and Lutherans, but significantly also among the Lutheran churches themselves. However, a study of the ordination practices of the churches that signed the Porvoo Declaration in 1996 suggests that there exists a differentiated consensus in understanding the diaconate and also in its practical liturgical shape.⁵ The churches today are facing various challenges. One of these, identified during the consultations, is to create a balance between the Church's expressions of faith on a local level and in the wider communion of churches.

In 2010 the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Denmark also signed the Porvoo Declaration and thus joined the Porvoo communion. It means that the Danish Church accepted the 'portrait of the church' as sketched in the Porvoo Common Statement (PCS).⁶ The aim of this paper is to investigate the position and role of deaconesses and deacons in the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Denmark (ELCD)

4 The first consultation took place at the Royal Foundation of Saint Katharine, London 25–27 January 2006. The second consultation on diaconal ministry was held in Oslo 27–30 April 2009.

5 Cf. Pädam, Tiit, *Ordination of Deacons in the Churches of the Porvoo Communion. A Comparative Investigation in Ecclesiology* (Tallinn: Kirjastus TP, 2011).

6 'Porvoo Common Statement', para 20. Cf. Sykes, Stephen, W, 'The Doctrine of the Church in the Porvoo Common Statement' in Ola Tjørhom (ed.), *Apostolicity and Unity: Essays on the Porvoo Common Statement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002).

in the perspective of other Porvoo churches and to find out whether the ministry of Danish deacons and deaconesses is compatible with the diaconal ministry and deacons in the other churches of the Porvoo communion.

Diaconate or diaconal ministry?

The term ‘diaconal ministry’, used by the churches that signed the PCS, is ambiguous in English and may be used to refer either to ‘the deacon’s ministry’ or to a general kind of lay ministry of a diaconal type. During the Porvoo negotiations the partners worked with textual material in English, and it was agreed that the English version would remain the master text. There were also discussions on how the participants should translate ‘diaconal ministry’ into their own languages. It was agreed that the term be used to mean ‘the deacon’s ministry’, i.e. the ministry of the deacon in the framework of the pattern: bishop, priest and deacon. The translations of the Porvoo Declaration follow this interpretation.⁷ The present article uses the term in the same sense: when the PCS’ term the ‘diaconal ministry’ is used, it means the deacon’s ministry.⁸ ‘Diaconate’, a term commonly used to designate ordained deacons, is also used in this article. In 2010, when the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Denmark signed the Porvoo Declaration, the church addressed in its signatory declaration the question of the church’s ministry; however, deacons or deaconesses were not mentioned in the declaration.⁹

A comparison of educational requirements for deacons in the Porvoo churches

The churches of the Porvoo Communion are working in various social contexts with different social and ecclesial structures. The educational requirements that candidates for the ministry as deacons have to meet vary between the churches. In general, the profile of the required training is orientated to theology, social

7 For example Finnish: *diakonin virka* but also *diakonian virka* (the ministry of *diakonia*) is used; Estonian: diakoniamet, Norwegian: diakontjenesten all mean ‘the deacon’s ministry’. In the Danish the words diakonia and diakonos are translated as ‘tjeneste’ and ‘tjener’

8 The limiting of ‘diaconal ministry’ to the ordained diaconate follows the logic and usage of the ecumenical documents, for example Baptism, *Eucharist and Ministry* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), and is used also in one of the most prominent studies of the ministry of deacons in the Nordic and Anglican context: *The Ministry of the Deacon, Anglican – Lutheran Perspectives* Vol. 1, ed. Gunnel Borgegård & Christine Hall (Uppsala: Nordic Ecumenical Council, 1999) and *The Ministry of the Deacon. Ecclesiological Explorations* Vol. 2, ed. Gunnel Borgegård, Olav Fanuelson & Christine Hall (Uppsala: Nordic Ecumenical Council, 2000).

9 The Danish Church expressed its position in *Signaturforklaring fra Den danske Folkekirke af Porvoo Erklæringen*, 2010.

care, church music or education. The Anglican churches (Church of England, Church in Wales, Scottish Episcopal Church and Church of Ireland) and the Baltic Lutheran churches (Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania) clearly emphasize a profile in which a theological education is a prerequisite for ordination to the diaconate. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Church of Sweden require education in social, or healthcare studies. The Church of Norway requires education either in theological, social, healthcare or pedagogical disciplines. The Evangelical-Lutheran

Church of Iceland accepts a theological education as foundational for ordination to the diaconate, but also pedagogical or nursing training.

In Denmark, there have been two main ways to become a deaconess or a deacon: either through the institutions of deaconesses or through the schools for deacons. The former is related to the deaconess-houses where accepted deaconesses are blessed by the pastor or chairman of the institution before beginning their work.¹⁰ The deaconesses serve mainly inside their own diaconal institutions, mostly as nurses. *Den danske Diakonissestiftelse* is the organisation that runs several schools and carries out education with a professional caring profile, *Sygeplejeskole, Social- and Sundhedsskole*, and organises a special education in the framework of the *Kirkefaglige Uddannelser*.

The alternative offers training in one of the diaconal colleges that receive both male and female students. Today there are two main institutions that prepare or educate candidates for the ministry of deacons: *Institut for Diakoni og Sjælesorg* (the Institute for Diaconal Service and Pastoral Care) and *Diakonhøjskole i Århus* (the Diaconal College in Århus). Common to their diaconal education is a clearly caritative profile. The work that the graduates are expected to carry out is on Christian basis, because of Jesus' call to Christians to love their neighbour. Their work is either carried out through the parishes or largely independently of the parishes of the ELCD. The diaconal work in parishes has at the same time been carried out by a large number of voluntary workers and various organisations of the ELCD.

Thus, according to their general profile, the Porvoo churches might be described as profiling their deacon's education with either theological or care-orientated qualifications or both. This means that there is no contradiction in principle be-

10 Historically, as in other Nordic and Baltic countries, the German pattern from Kaiserswerth's house of deaconesses from the nineteenth century influenced the development of *diakonia* in Denmark and several houses for deaconesses and schools of deacons were established. Due to the impact of the private diaconal institutions, there are two main lines along which the Danish *diakonia* has developed: first, the congregational, parish- *diakonia*, sc. *sognediakonie* which is connected to the local parish with the orientation to the work in the local church. Secondly, the institutional *diakonia* sc. *institutionsdiakonien* which is carried out by the private social institutions and which serves wider community in society.

tween the educational requirements among Porvoo churches from 1996 and the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Denmark.

Rites of admission to the diaconal ministry as resource for the investigation

The faith of the Church is manifested in several ways. One of its concrete expressions is rites. Rites, in general, express the churches' faith and thus provide motivation for studying rites of admission to the ministry as a characteristic resource of the Church's self-understanding. The current article takes rites of admission to the ministry as essential for the whole being of the Church and therefore these rites are used as an authentic resource in order to study the deacon's ministry in the Porvoo Churches.

In all the Porvoo churches the term 'ordination' is used in the same sense as in the PCS: 'The setting aside of a person to a lifelong ordained office by prayer, invocation of the Holy Spirit and the laying-on of hands' which 'reminds the Church that it receives its mission from Christ himself and expresses the Church's firm intention to live in fidelity to and gratitude for that commission and gift [...] the act of ordination is a sign of God's faithfulness to his Church'.¹¹ Thus, ordination in the PCS denotes a rite which involves admission to the ordained ministry in one of the following orders: bishop, priest or deacon; and which is, because of its validity for the whole life of the ordinand, carried out only once. Through ordination the diaconate becomes a structural part of the Church's ministry. The deacon's ministry, as established in the concrete church, is a result of local contextual formation as well as of the impact of the churches' understanding of themselves as part of the universal Church.

In the ELCD the Danish word that describes the liturgical act of admission to the ministry with prayer and laying-on of hands of deaconesses and deacons, *indvielse*, has been translated into English in different ways by different authors: dedication,¹² blessing,¹³ consecration,¹⁴ commissioning.¹⁵ The same word, *indvielse*, is used also for the consecration of a new church or cemetery. In order to describe the liturgical act of admission of priests to church ministry, the term *vielse* is used,

11 'Porvoo Common Statement', paras 41, 50.

12 *Diakoni – en integreret dimension i folkekirkens liv*. (Valby: Forlaget Aros, 2001), p. 264.

13 Malmgart, Liselotte, 'The Historical Development of Diaconal Consecration Rites in Denmark' in *Rites of Ordination and Commitment in the Churches of the Nordic Countries: Theology and Terminology*, ed. Hans Raun Iversen (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2006), pp. 199–212 and p. 206 for this reference.

14 *The Diaconate in Porvoo*, p. 1.

15 PCS (Essays on Church and Ministry), p. 178.

which has been commonly translated as *ordination*.¹⁶ However, the same term, *vielse*, is also used for the act of church marriage. The word *ordination* was used in the first Danish rite after the Reformation but the term *vielse* has been used since the 1685 when the current rite was authorised. Thus, the Danish Church makes a clear distinction between these terms *indvielse* and *vielse* which linguistically stem from the same root. The word *ordination* is never applied to the act of deaconesses-deacons' blessing.

The Porvoo churches and the Danish rite of dedication of deaconesses

The bishops of the Danish church suggested in 2002 that the common rite, worked out by the committee of the bishops of the ELCD together with the National Association of Parish Councillors in Denmark, should be used in all the diaconal institutions which bless and commission the deaconesses and deacons.¹⁷ The diaconal institutions accepted the proposal from the bishops to use the common rite and have used it without any significant changes or amendments since then. In order to analyse the proposed rite of dedication of the deaconesses-deacons the threefold pattern, proposed by Joachim Heubach, is used. It helps to identify the specific features and wordings in the Danish rite of blessing, and to compare it with the rites in the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran and the Anglican Porvoo churches. Heubach proposed a pattern of three interrelated notions in order to describe the admission to the ministry of the church: *vocatio – benedictio – missio*.¹⁸ According to the pattern, the rite is divided into three intrinsically different but inseparable parts: the central part is the blessing with the laying-on of hands and prayer. It is preceded by the liturgical elements and followed by the elements of the rite.

In order to discern the specific features of the Danish rite of blessing, the main parts of the rite are compared with the ordination rites to the deacon's ministry in other Porvoo churches. The more general discussion and analysis follow the

16 Cf. Max Thurian (ed.), *Churches Respond to BEM*, vol. 3, Faith and Order Paper 135 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1987), pp. 106–115 and p. 113 for this reference (Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Denmark, official response to the *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* text).

17 The rite is presented in 'Beteenkning fra biskoppernes diakoniudvalg 2001' in *Diakoni – en integreret dimension i folkekirkens liv*. (Valby: Forlaget Aros, 2001), pp. 228–253 and exactly on pp. 249–251.

18 Heubach, Joachim, *Die Ordination zum Amt der Kirche: Arbeiten zur Geschichte und Theologie des Luthertums* (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlaghaus, 1956), p. 76. Cf. James Puglisi who recommends either *electio–ordinatio–missio* or *electio–ordinatio–jurisdictio* in Puglisi, James F., *The Process of Admission to Ordained Ministry: Epistemological Principles and Roman Catholic Rites*, vol. 1 (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1996), p. 184; and Puglisi, James F., *The Process of Admission to Ordained Ministry: A Comparative Study: The First Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican and Wesleyan Rites*, vol. 2 (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998), p. 200.

presentation of the rite, including theologically characteristic aspects, as well as its liturgical performance.

1. Vocatio

Presentation

According to the bishops' proposal the rite of blessing begins with words of introduction, said by the leading liturgist: 'the rite is carried out in the apostolic manner with laying on of hands and prayer.' The deaconesses/deacons to be blessed are all called by their names. Similar formulations are used in most of the Porvoo churches.

In the introductory prayer

The prayer refers to baptism as the basis for becoming a member in God's Church as one body, but without connecting it directly to the ministry or serving task and call of baptised people. The majority of the Porvoo churches also refer to baptism, but give it as ground for the ministry of all Christians.

The deaconesses' and deacons' ministry is described in the rite as a ministry of care: 'We thank you for calling us to service/serve for you in caring for our neighbour and each other in the congregation'.¹⁹ The use of the word 'congregation' is significant, because the majority of the Porvoo churches use in this connection the term 'church' or 'Church'.

This part includes several other ecclesiological significant formulations:

- the deaconesses and deacons believe in Jesus Christ and are his followers in the service of others²⁰
- the deaconess/deacon is called by God, follow Christ's calling and are a sign of his love among us²¹
- the leading liturgist of the rite prays God "to send them with Jesus Christ to deacon's work in the congregation"
- it confirms that God has called the deaconess/deacon to ministry of the congregation on earth.

19 *Diakoni – en integreret dimension*, p. 249.

20 *Diakoni – en integreret dimension*, p. 249.

21 *Diakoni – en integreret dimension*, p. 249.

In the introductory part of the rite, there are several common features with ordination rites to the diaconate in other Porvoo churches. Characteristic is God's calling to the ministry, the description of deacons/deaconesses through their discipleship of Christ, the christological pattern of the ministry and the service of the wider congregation on earth, not only the local parish.

Apostolic blessing

Hymn

Speech of dedication²²

In the instructions of the liturgical service it is stated that the speech is given by the *ordinator* while the *ordinand/ordinands* stand at the altar.²³

Readings from the Bible

The suggested readings are Matthew 20:25–28 (the greatest is the one who serves, and Christ giving his life as a ransom for many); Matthew 25:31–40; Acts 6:1–6; Romans 12: 4–12 (different gifts of grace). In the proposed rite several alternative readings are also given. Many of the readings in the Danish rite are common to all the Porvoo churches, like Mark 10: 42–45 and Romans 12: 4–12. All the chosen readings express clearly the biblical basis of *diakonia* and emphasise the Christological character of the deaconesses-deacon's ministry.

After the readings the liturgist says: 'The Lord has, as we have heard now, ordered us to undertake this ministry of service and through his apostles transferred it to his congregation.' The proposed wording suggests that all Christians present are involved and together they convey the continuity of the ministry of apostles through the blessing of the deaconesses-deacons. The understanding of the rite as transferring the apostolic ministry is understood also in the other Porvoo churches. The difference is that in all the Porvoo churches, except the Danish church, the ordination implies admission to the ministry of the church and

22 In Danish: *Ivdielsetale*.

23 The use of the term ordination is significant in Danish: 'Indvielsetale ved ordinator over et selvvalgt skrifsted foran alteret. Ordinanden(erne) står i kirkens kor'. *Diakoni – en integreret dimension*, p. 250.

the ordinands will work in the church, while the blessing in the Danish church marks engagement and work for a Christian diaconal institution.

Declaration/question and the answer

The leader of the liturgy asks the candidate: ‘Is it your sincere intention and wish to serve as a deacon in the Christian Church?’ As an alternative to ‘Christian Church’ the place of service of the commissioned deacon/deaconess may be used. The positive answer is confirmed by a handshake – similarly to some other Nordic churches.

With the current formulation of the question the personal commitment of the deaconess-deacon as a servant in the church is emphasised. In addition, the question expresses an intention to recognize publicly and confirm the deaconesses-deacon’s *personal vocation* – while the vocation from the church (*vocatio externa*) does not receive similar attention – as it does in the ordination of pastors/priests in the Danish church.

In addition, it is significant that the whole rite of blessing of deacons is part of the graduation ceremony of the deacon’s school. It is not dependent on the church’s calling (*vocatio externa*) to the specific tasks of the deacon’s ministry in the Church – as is the case in several Porvoo churches.

2. Benedictio

The prayer and laying-on of hands

The prayer during the laying-on of hands of deaconesses-deacons addresses God, the heavenly Father and begins with the words: ‘Give them whom you have called to carry out diakonia²⁴ in your congregation on earth, NN..., your Holy Spirit that they may remain always in faith, be preserved in hope and live in love to become instruments of your blessing.’ The prayer continues that ‘the deacon/deaconess will receive strength and honesty to carry out the deacon’s work for the benefit of his/her neighbour and for the advancement of your (God’s) church and your (God’s) Kingdom.’²⁵ The congregation confirms the prayer by saying: Amen.

The proposal from the committee which the bishops sent to the diaconal schools suggested several changes in the blessing ritual for deaconesses and deacons,

24 In Danish: gøre tjeneste.

25 In Danish: øve en diakons gerning til næstens gavn og til din kirkes og dit riges fremme.

compared with the existing five rites in the diaconal institutions. One of them was to replace the commissioning during prayer and laying-on of hands with the invocation of the Holy Spirit. This feature in the Danish rite of blessing is characteristic also of the ordination rites to the diaconate in all other Porvoo churches.

3. Missio

According to the Danish rite of blessing, the leading liturgist sends the deacons and deaconesses out to their ministry with the following words: 'I send you to practise the ministry of care in your daily work as deacons/deaconesses.' The rite of blessing ends with the invitation to the deacons-deaconesses and the whole congregation to pray together the Lord's Prayer.

After the blessing a hymn is sung and the service continues with the Holy Communion, during which, according to the instructions of the rite, the deaconesses-deacons may serve bread to the communicants. A similar suggestion, to participate in sharing the gifts during the communion, is given in the majority of the Porvoo ordination rites to the diaconate.

Significant similarities and differences between rites in the Porvoo churches and the Danish rite

It is obvious that there are several similarities in the rite of blessing of deaconesses/deacons in Denmark and the liturgical acts of admission to the deacon's ministry in the other churches of the Porvoo communion.

However, despite several significant resemblances, the background, essential differences in content and in performance express a different understanding of the deaconesses' and deacons' ministry in Denmark, when compared with the rites and order of deacons in other Porvoo churches.

Intention

Why it is important for the churches to bless someone during a public rite and what is expected to take place? Which are the differences between before and after the rite? These questions will help to identify the character of the rites and the church intentions behind the rite.

One of the characteristic intentions expressed in the Danish rite is to gather the congregation and to pray for the gifts of the Holy Spirit to be given to the individual graduates and in this way to promote their work as social workers in society. Although the apostolic tradition is mentioned, the person's connection to the church is neither presupposed nor required. This independence concerns

requirements for the rite of blessing as well as the candidate's future ministry. When compared with the rest of the Porvoo churches, the blessed deacons are expected to be equipped with the gifts of the Spirit and carry out their ministry, although not as part of the one ministry of the Church, as are the deacons of the other Porvoo churches, but as individual servants whose service is based on the shared responsibility of all Christians for their neighbours.

The intention of the ministry of deaconesses and deacons is to serve. But the aim in the Danish rite is not the admission of the deacons/deaconesses into the ministry of the church, but to help individuals who through prayer and the laying-on of hands are to be equipped with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

One essential difference between the rites concerns the ministers' relationship to the local church and to the entire Christian Church. The Danish rite of the diaconal institutions mentions that the ministers will serve in the Christian church,²⁶ but it does not give any concrete reference to the local, Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Denmark. Instead the name of the town may be added as a reference to the place of future service. In the majority of the Porvoo churches the liturgical act of admission to the deacon's ministry gives witness that the ordination is a liturgical act in a specific local church, but which also has a further purpose and meaning. Geoffrey Wainwright has formulated the intention, which according to the ordination rites to the diaconate is shared by the rest of the Anglican and Lutheran churches of the communion: 'In intention, ordination has given a person a permanent place and function within the structures of the universal Church as constituted by baptism.'²⁷

Performance

The blessing of deaconesses and deacons in the institutions, as well as the ordination in the rest of the Porvoo churches is understood as an act of the Triune God which takes place in the presence and in the fellowship of the congregation. In all the churches of the Porvoo communion, including the ELCD, the admission to the deacon's ministry is carried out within eucharistic worship. The centre of the liturgical act of admission is the prayer of invocation of the Holy Spirit during laying-on of hands, during which God equips the deacons or deaconesses with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, needed for their ministry.

26 'som diakon i den kristne kirke'.

27 Wainwright, Geoffrey, 'Some Theological Aspects of Ordination' in *Studia Liturgica* 13 (1979), Nr. 2–3, pp. 125–152 and p. 136 for this reference.

Personal qualifications

The way that the Porvoo churches describe the meaning and role of the deacons indicates that the deacons are expected not only to accomplish certain specific serving tasks, but first of all to give a personal witness to their calling by God. Therefore the rites speak of several personal qualifications as fruits of the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Porvoo churches, including the Church of Denmark, declare faithfulness in service, steadfastness in faith, strength and honesty to carry out the ministry as gifts of the God's Spirit which are thus pneumatological resources of the ministry.

Tasks

The Danish rite mentions that deaconesses-deacons are followers of Jesus Christ in the service of others. In the blessing with laying-on of hands there is a reference to the fact that the deacons/deaconesses 'work for the benefit of his/her neighbour and for the advancement of your [God's] church and God's Kingdom'. The wording is significant in several senses. Together with the pneumatological intention the wording stresses the Trinitarian pattern of the deacons-deaconesses ministry. But also that the rite does not limit the meaning of serving with the aims and work in the world – it rather gives the ministry of deacons, similarly to Christ's own ministry, an eschatological meaning – it advances God's kingdom.

The description of the Christological character of the deaconesses- /deacons service resembles the Christological and eschatological character of the deacon's ministry in the rites of the Porvoo churches: to serve, following the pattern of Christ, advancing the coming of God's kingdom.

Being a servant is the main characteristic of the ministry in the rite of blessing of deaconesses and deacons in Denmark. The serving task is similarly important in all the rites of admission to the deacon's ministry in the Porvoo churches. However, there is a clear difference of emphasis. In the majority of the Porvoo churches the deacons are characterised as *stewards, or as ambassadors of God*. These terms are used in several rites in the Nordic-Baltic Lutheran and Anglican churches. The deacons are God's ambassadors to build up the Church and her faith – so that the Church can give witness to the Gospel and to the saving act of God in Jesus Christ. The ministry of deacons is seen as a gift from God, which places the deacons at the service of God's kingdom through the ministry of the Word and Sacraments. They become part of the ministry of proclamation, which is carried out through service in the name of Christ and on behalf of the Church. In the ministry of the word and sacraments the deacon's task is to serve. Therefore the majority of Porvoo churches declare first, that deacons are to proclaim the gospel

in word and deed as agents of God's purposes of love, and in this context speak of the task: to serve those in need or to serve Christ in our neighbours. Therefore, in addition to the caritative tasks which are declared in the Danish rite as well as in all the Porvoo rites, the other Porvoo churches also mention liturgical, pastoral and educational responsibilities – in order to give witness and instruction in faith.

The basic character of the liturgical act of blessing

Although the rite of blessing of deacons/deaconesses in Denmark is not characterised as an ordination, it is helpful to use a distinction made by Sven-Erik Brodd when analysing the basic character of the rites of admission to the deaconesses/deacon's ministry in the Porvoo churches. Brodd claims that 'ordination rites differ mainly in the fundamental matter of whether they are considered instrumental or expressive. The instrumental view of ordination holds that appropriate gifts of the Holy Spirit are conferred on the ordination by prayer and the imposition of hands and that thereby the ordained person himself or herself becomes a gift to the Church for the life. The expressive meaning of ordination implies that the ordination itself does not convey any specific and lifelong gifts from God: it is recognition by the church and the church's prayer for the person, without itself adding anything to baptism and the preceding personal calling'.²⁸ Although the meanings partly overlap, it is possible to discern the inclination of the churches' intention towards one or the other interpretation.

The Danish rite refers clearly to the apostolic basis and character of both the act of blessing and the ministry of deaconesses and deacons. This is similar to the rites of the other Porvoo churches.²⁹ However, the meaning of the apostolic basis and continuity of the ministry has a different implication in the other Porvoo churches.

First, the PCS declares that the main responsibility of the apostolic ministry is 'to assemble and build up of the body of Christ by proclaiming and teaching the Word of God, by celebrating the sacraments and by guiding the life of the community in worship, its mission and its caring ministry'.³⁰ The deacon's role in this responsibility, shared by all the Porvoo churches who ordain deacons, is well formulated in the wording of BEM M 31, which defines the deacon's min-

28 Brodd, Sven-Erik, 'A Close Reading of the Rites of Admission to Public Ministry in the Swedish Mission Covenant Church Service Book 1983', in *Rites of Ordination and Commitment in the Churches of the Nordic Countries. Theology and Terminology*, ed. Hans Raun Iversen (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2006), pp. 291–326, and p. 323 for this reference.

29 Pädam, *Ordination of Deacons*, pp. 345ff.

30 'Porvoo Common Statement', para 41.

istry: 'Deacons represent to the Church its calling as servant in the world. By struggling in Christ's name with the myriad needs of societies and persons, deacons exemplify the interdependence of worship and service in the Church's life.' They exercise responsibility in the worship of the congregation and they exercise a ministry of love within the community. This interdependence of worship and service in Church life is characteristic of all the other Porvoo churches and indicates the understanding that the deacon's ministry has an instrumental role in God's mission to the world.

Secondly, the ordering of the ministry and carrying out the task to build up the Church for her mission in the world, is not a responsibility of individual ministers acting alone, but rather working in a community of God's ministers. Malmgart claims, after having described the content of the Danish rites of blessing, that the rites have often been interpreted as a personal blessing for the future work of the diaconal workers, and their significance has been related to the individual deaconess or deacon on personal level.³¹ This kind of accentuation of the personal qualities in order to carry out certain functions points to the expressive interpretation of the rite. Although the calling from God comes personally to the candidate of ministry, the majority of the Porvoo churches ordain deacons to the ministry of the Church and interpret the invocation of the gifts of the Spirit as primarily not for the ordinand's personal development and ministry, but rather as gifts which serve the local Church according to its needs and mission. Although the personal qualifications are important they are not the sole aim of the ordination.

Thirdly, the text of the rite of blessing the deaconesses and deacons does not indicate whether the blessing of deaconesses and deacons is for a life-long service or for the time of their service in connection to the institution.³² The Danish rite's difference from the rest of the Porvoo churches is that while by the liturgical act of ordination the deacons are set apart for lifelong service in the church, the blessing for caring service outside the ordained ministry of the church does not presuppose a permanent character of this ministry. The Danish church has declared that 'ordination is in principle ordination for the whole of life and to the whole church.'³³

One can also notice that the Danish rite uses several expressions, both linguistic as well as performative, which are traditionally used and characteristic to the ordination of the apostolic ministry of the church. The rite underlines that the rite

31 Malmgart, 'The Historical Development', p. 211.

32 In the response to BEM, concerning ordination, the Danish church stated that 'ordination is in principle ordination for the whole of life and to the whole church': *Churches Respond to BEM*, p. 115.

33 *Churches Respond to BEM*, p. 115.

of blessing follows the apostolic tradition. It also declares that the act of blessing is carried out in the apostolic manner, in the presence of the congregation, with prayer of invocation of the Holy Spirit and laying-on of hands. Additionally the rite describes the ministers as signs of God's love. With these special features the Danish rite is close to the other churches in the Porvoo communion. At the same time, the instrumental understanding of the ministry requires the ministry to be part of the apostolic ministry and mission of the church. The missing connection of the deacons/deaconesses ministry to the church reveals a marked distinction between the Danish church and the rest of the churches in the Porvoo communion.

According to both the rite of ordination of deacons in the other Porvoo churches and the Danish ritual of blessing of deaconesses and deacons, the rite is immediately followed by the celebration of the Holy Communion. The newly commissioned deaconesses and deacons in the Danish as well as in other Porvoo churches are to serve at the altar and assist the celebrant by dividing bread to the communicants. This suggestion on the bishops' pro-posal is especially significant because according to the Service Book of the ELCD the ordination of bishops, which takes place in the normal Sunday service, is carried out without the Holy Communion – i.e. without the liturgical act in which the eschatological character of the church and its ministry becomes visible most clearly and in which the celebration of the local church becomes part of the worldwide Church. This feature signals the instrumental background of the understanding of the ministry although it contradicts several other characteristic expressions of the Danish rites.

When using Brodd's distinction for the Danish rite, one can recognise some elements characteristic to the instrumental but also elements which clearly belong to the expressive way of understanding the rite. There is a mixture of the two kinds of elements. The border between them is not always clear and depends a great deal on the context of interpretation. However, the general tendency suggests clearly that the expressive intention of the rite of blessing of deacons and deaconesses is dominant in Denmark.

Admission to the deacon's ministry in the Porvoo churches and the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Denmark

When compared with the rest of the Porvoo churches, the Danish church has several rather specific features which characterise its relationship to the ministry of deaconesses and deacons. There are several thousands of deaconesses and deacons working in various institutions in Denmark.

In addition, several hundred parishes have employed parish assistants as special diaconal workers. Many of the latter have also been blessed to their duties by the local pastors. Nevertheless, when taking into consideration the reasoning

above, there are good arguments to consider, whether the joining of the Danish church to Porvoo means also that churches are 'work[ing] towards a common understanding of diaconal ministry'.³⁴ The answer depends partly on how the ordained ministry and diaconate are understood.³⁵

Ordination in all the Porvoo churches, except the ELCD, takes place with the laying-on of hands and prayer in the middle of the worshipping congregation. The Church prays for gifts for the ordained and believes, according to the rites, that God ordains the deacon, using the bishop and the local congregation. At the ordination God, through the Holy Spirit, delivers special gifts for the ministry. Ordination in the rites could thus be described as a sacramental act and sign³⁶ that has an impact on the whole Church as well as on the congregations at local level. By describing ordination as a sacramental act and sign its specific character is underlined. It is not just an installation or introduction of a person to new tasks, but an entry into lifelong apostolic ministry that has been founded by God. The diaconal ordinand is called by God and is ordained by him in fellowship with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. It means that the act is God's initiative, to which the Church responds. The prayer and the laying-on of hands is thus an expressive, instrumental response from the Church which takes the form of a petition to God for the Holy Spirit – to equip the ordained with the gifts for the benefit of a congregation and through this, the gifts are a benefit for the whole Christian Church.

The ordination as a sacramental sign reveals important realities of the church's apostolic faith. The laying-on of hands and the epicletic prayer by a bishop are central for the ordination in all the ordination rites of the Porvoo churches. The churches believe, according to their ordinals, that the laying-on of hands, followed by prayer, is a visible gesture that gives expression to the invisible action where God bestows on the ordinand the necessary gifts for ministry. By ordaining deacons in the apostolic manner the Church gives witness to its trust in God's promise to be present among his people and to equip them with the necessary means for mission. At the same time the Church expresses its intention to follow its call to mission. The sacramental character of ordination points to the link between the tasks of the deacons and the new life in the service of Jesus Christ.

34 'Porvoo Declaration', para 58 b (vii).

35 PCS, para 41,50. Cf. BEM Ministry: 'Today, there is a strong tendency in many churches to restore the diaconate as an ordained ministry with its own dignity and meant to be exercised for life. As the churches move closer together there may be united in this office ministries now existing in a variety of forms and under a variety of names. Differences in ordering the diaconal ministry should not be regarded as a hindrance for the mutual recognition of the ordained ministries' (Commentary 31).

36 Cf. Pädam, *Ordination of Deacons*, pp. 80ff, especially 'sign' in the PCS.

The diaconate in the ecclesiological context of ordination is thus a sign which reveals the true nature of the Church. It does not express only the serving character of the ordained ministry in the Church, but points behind its tasks – receiving its meaning, authority and power from God’s calling of the deacon to the ministry of Jesus Christ. At the same time the diaconate is a sign from the Church to the world because its mission is not limited to the Christian community. As part of the one ordained ministry of the Church, the diaconate has a special call to bring the needs of the people in the local community to the altar of the serving Church. The deacons create thus a link between the *diakonia* of the Church and the needs that they could recognise in society.

The PCS defines the diaconate ecclesologically through its relationship to other orders of ordained ministry, as part of the ‘threefold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons’.³⁷ This leads to another question about the relationship between the deacons-deaconesses ministry and the Church of Denmark. The deaconesses’ and deacons’ ministry in Denmark has preserved its traditionally organised forms and is in many ways very different in comparison with the practices and understandings of other Porvoo churches. While the admission to the deacon’s ministry in all the Porvoo churches is authorised by the church and takes place in the context of church worship, the rite of dedication of deaconesses-deacons in Denmark takes place at the graduation of deacon’s college or by the decision of the house of deaconesses, and is not dependent on a calling to a specific ministry of the Danish church.

When using the interpretation from the Porvoo churches the diaconate denotes ordained deacons as part of the ordained ministerial order of the church, i.e. the ministry of the deacon in the framework of the general pattern: bishop, priest and deacon. It is obvious that the ELCD does not have this kind of ministry of deacons. The difference is in the deaconesses- deacons’ connection to the Danish church and to the other ministers of the church. While the development in the Nordic and Baltic churches has been towards ordained deacons as part of the ordained ministry of the church, the Danish practice of blessing the deacons and deaconesses witness to a ministry independent of the church although its performances are often related to the church.

It is significant that in all the Porvoo churches, except the Church of Denmark, the bishops officiate at the deacons’ admission rite to the ministry. This practice is not proposed to be changed in the Danish bishops’ recommendation in 2002. The Danish bishops recommended continuing the existing practice of dedicating the deaconesses and deacons by the pastors or directors of the diaconal institu-

37 ‘Porvoo Common Statement’, para 41.

tions. Thus it has been the bishops' conscious choice not to be involved in the admission rite of deacons which historically would mean full recognition from the church.³⁸ Due to this special background, the pastors or the chairpersons of the diaconal institutions continue to bless those who become deaconesses-deacons at the graduation, when the candidates were found suitable for the caring ministry. Thereafter most deacons work as social ministers and servants in different social institutions or organisations of society. However, some of them are employed by the parishes as parish assistants, because 'since 1989 it has been possible for Danish parishes to employ parish assistants as diaconal workers (*'sognemedhjælper'*) and a number of deacons fill these posts, but the majority of parish assistants are not deacons.'³⁹

In 1987 the ELCD explained its understanding of ordination in the response to BEM and in it a specific feature was underlined: 'We find the emphasis on *ordination* as an action of the *whole congregation* and not just of the ordaining person extremely valuable (§41). We too ordain ministers to their particular office "in the manner of the apostles" with prayer and the laying on of hands by an already ordained person given authority for this task (the bishop or the bishop's representative).'⁴⁰ In light of this reference it is significant to note that there is no authorised ordination rite for deacons or deaconesses in *Den danske folkekirkes ritualbog* (1992), the Service Book of the church. These rites were authorised on 6 March 1987 and the revised versions of them were published in the 1992 *Den danske folkekirkes ritualbog*. However, already in the *Proveritualbogen*⁴¹ from 1963 the liturgical commission proposed to include the rite of ordination of deaconesses and deacons to the Service Book but the proposal was never accepted nor was their proposed rite authorised.⁴² Thus, in all the Porvoo churches, except the ELCD, the admission to the ministry of deacons is carried out according to the churches' ordinals. All the current ordinals of the Porvoo churches include the rite of ordination of deacons. The difference of the ELCD is that the ordinal contains only the rites of ordination for priests and bishops.

The rite of dedication of the deacons and deaconesses, which the Danish bishops suggested to the diaconal institutions, has a special character: 'it is a recommended blessing for ministry as deacon. It is not considered an ordination

38 Malmgart, Liselotte, 'Indvielse af diakonisser og diakoner i folkekirken' in *Diakoni – en integreret dimension I folkekirkens liv* (Valby: Forlaget Aros, 2001), pp. 138–147 and p. 141 for this reference.

39 Malmgart, 'The Historical Development', p. 199.

40 *Churches Respond to BEM*, pp. 114.

41 In English: '*Proposed Service Book*'.

42 Cf. Iversen, Hans Raun, 'Rites for the Ordination of Pastors and Bishops in the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Denmark: A Communicative Perspective', in *Rites of Ordination and Commitment in the Churches of the Nordic Countries. Theology and Terminology*, pp. 451–471 and p. 451 for this reference.

rite, and it is not authorised part of any service book.⁴³ Despite this, the bishop Karsten Nissen, on behalf of all the bishops of the ELCD, approached the diaconal institutions and suggested the use of the rite which all the bishops of the church had approved for the future dedications. According to L. Malmgart, ‘all the institutions appear to have complied with this recommendation.’⁴⁴ Still, the rite of dedication is a suggestion from the Danish bishops and has no binding status for the diaconal houses and the institutions are free to use the proposal, make personal amendments or ignore it. The dedication of the deacons and deaconesses is thus a private religious ritual without any official status in the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Denmark. The debates which were earlier carried out on the ordination rites of pastors did not influence the formation and changes of the dedication rites for deaconesses and deacons. They continued to remain independent from the Danish church. Olsen adds aspects which characterise the rite of dedication in the Danish diaconal institutions, compared to the other ordination rites of deacons in the Porvoo churches: ‘It is the only one of the five rites that does not take place in the cathedral and the bishop is not the officiant.’⁴⁵ And she points out that it clearly differs from the rest of the Porvoo churches: ‘Danish deacons are not under the authority of bishops.’⁴⁶ Neither the report of the diaconal ministry from 2001 nor the bishops’ recommendation to the diaconal institutions suggested instituting a diaconate in the Church of Denmark.

In the Signatory declaration of the ELCD regarding the Porvoo Declaration, the Danish church describes the oneness of the church’s ministry (*ministerium ecclesiasticum*) to which the ministry of priests and bishops belong. It does not include deacons.⁴⁷ This shows that the Danish bishops regard an order of unified and uniform rite of blessing of deacons/deaconesses as even more significant. The natural question is: why propose a common rite, or rather: what is unsatisfactory when all the institutions bless their approved people according to their own traditions and understanding? And why are the bishops who never carry out the rite of blessing themselves involved in the liturgical performance of these, from the church independent institutions? The proposed rite gives no answers. Rather, it complicates the picture.

43 Olsen Ghita, ‘Rites of Admission to the Diaconal Ministry in the Nordic Evangelical-Lutheran Churches’ in *Rites of Ordination and Commitment in the Churches of the Nordic Countries. Theology and Terminology*, pp. 177–197 and p. 195 for this reference.

44 Malmgart, ‘The Historical Development’, p. 211.

45 Olsen, ‘Rites of Admission’, p. 195.

46 Olsen, ‘Rites of Admission’, p. 195.

47 *Signaturforklaring fra Den danske Folkekirke ved underskrivelse af Porvoo Erklæringen*, (in paragraph 2).

When comparing the rite of dedication in Danish diaconal institutions with rites in ordinals in other Porvoo churches, the Danish blessing of deacons and deaconesses has some similarities to the rites of commissioning lay people to various tasks in the parishes. But there is no diaconate in the ELCD according to the terminology of the Porvoo churches. Thus, in view of the rest of the Porvoo churches, the Danish rite of blessing could be described more properly as an admission of lay ministers into the service with special diaconal tasks. This conclusion is in no way an evaluation of or judgement on the work or position of the deacons and deaconesses who through centuries have carried out an unselfish work and responsibility for those in need. And they have always done it because of their Christian calling, faith and commitment. This is an ecclesiological conclusion about the ministerial structures of the church. The way the deaconesses and deacons are received and related to the ELCD and to the other ministers of the church is simply different from the rest of the Porvoo churches. And this difference is a real challenge for the whole Porvoo communion.

When all these aspects above are considered together with the context of the proposed rite of blessing of deaconesses and deacons, the rite proposed by the bishops indicates a clear discrepancy between the rite of dedication of deacons and deaconesses and the ELCD official understanding of the church ministry. The proposed rite expresses an ecclesiology which is not expressed by the other constitutive documents of the ELCD. From one side there are intentions to make the rite of blessing 'churchly', even to 'sacramentalise' the deaconesses' and deacons' ministry. On the other hand, it is proposed to take place outside the apostolic ministerial structures of the Danish church because the understanding of ministry in the ELCD does not include the order of deacons/deaconesses. They are part of the lay ministry and have a calling similar to all the baptised members of the church. The ELCD has left a significant part of its missionary task to be carried out by the diaconal institutions which only in a limited way are related to the church. The proposed rite of blessing signals a clear ecclesiological change of understanding. One can wonder, whether by proposing a rite which challenges the whole understanding of the ministry of the Danish church, the bishops expected to initiate changes concerning the role, meaning and order of ministry of the Danish church.

Concluding remarks

The initial question in the title of this paper was about the commitment ‘to work towards a common understanding of diaconal ministry’.⁴⁸ This question has remained unanswered during Porvoo negotiations. Neither did it receive its interpretation when the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark joined the Porvoo communion in 2010. The Porvoo churches, compared with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark, have moved in another direction and have established deacons’ ministry inside the ordained ministry of the church. However, according to the PCS, the signatory churches ‘acknowledge that one another’s ordained ministers 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’.⁴⁹

The question in the light of the described differences concerns the implementation of the commonly reached decisions in a way which satisfies all the partners and paves the way to deeper communion, i.e. reception. Best has written that: “reception” means that a church not only adopts a text but takes that text into its own life, studying and absorbing it and, in the most complete expression of reception, allowing it to shape the church’s own self-understanding and practice’.⁵⁰ For the Porvoo churches who are sharing the apostolic mission, consciously committing themselves to communion, and who have reached agreement in certain ecclesiological questions, communion means not only the implementation of commonly made decisions, but first of all decision-making in a context of wider communion. The intention of the PCS was to give shape to the Porvoo *koinonia*. The problematic aspect, which this article has brought out, is that *koinonia*, which has a significant role to play among Porvoo churches, denotes unity where different churches are integrated into a common confession, life and witness. In order to overcome contextual differences and enable the implementation of the common understanding of the deacon’s ministry in the Porvoo churches, there is need for space for common decision-making and teaching. It means that the Porvoo churches are challenged to reconsider and re-evaluate the meaning of unity, as already declared and agreed in the PCS: ‘[unity] demands fuller visible embodiment in structured form’.⁵¹

48 ‘Porvoo Declaration’, para 58 b (vii).

49 ‘Porvoo Declaration’, para 58 a (iv).

50 Best, Thomas. F. ‘Ecclesiology and Ecumenism’, in *The Routledge Companion to the Christian Church*, ed. Gerard Mannion and Lewis S. Mudge (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 402–420 and p. 405 for this reference.

51 ‘Porvoo Common Statement’, para 22.

IV RESPONDING TO CONFLICT, MARRIAGE AND ECONOMICS AND ETHICS

Responding to Conflict

Porvoo Consultation on Churches Responding to Conflict Working Towards a Framework

Introduction

On the recommendation of the Church Leaders Consultation in March 2010, the Porvoo Contact Group held a consultation on the theme *Churches Responding to Conflict* from 20th–23rd February 2011 in Tallinn, Estonia. The organisers are grateful to the host church, the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, for the invitation to hold such a consultation in Tallinn. The churches met in the context of a widening conflict across the Arab world and upheld its peoples in prayer.

Keeping the goal of the common good of Christ's church in mind, the consultation was a way to deepen knowledge, strengthen sharing, learn from one another and generate greater understanding. Furthermore, it was to make suggestions to the Porvoo Contact Group for further work on an appropriate framework for responding to situations of conflict within the Porvoo Communion of Churches. Serious tensions have arisen over issues of sexuality which have threatened communion.

The conference opened with a Eucharist in the Cathedral at which The Rt Revd Karl Sigurbjörnsson of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Iceland presided and The Rt Revd Trevor Williams preached. The consultation closed with the Eucharist in the Holy Spirit Chapel, presided over by Archbishop Andreas Pöder of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church and at which Bishop Michael Jackson was the preacher. Daily prayer accompanied the sessions.

The Bible Studies held by The Rt Revd Duleep de Chickera of the Church of Ceylon formed a cornerstone to the deliberations. As a representative from the Global South he shared valuable theological insights gained from the context of conflict in his country of Sri Lanka and within the Anglican Communion.

Thematic inputs were given by Rt Revd Trevor Williams, Church of Ireland, Bishop of Limerick and Killaloe (Churches Responding to Political and Reli-

gious Conflict), Rt Revd Michael Jackson, Church of Ireland, Diocese of Clogher (Churches Responding to Conflict – a Diaconal Perspective), Revd Prof Paul Avis (Authority, Conflict and Leadership) and Revd Prof Dr Tõnu Lehtsaar, Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church (Churches Responding to Conflict in Times of Societal Change – An Estonian Perspective).

In group meetings and workshops, participants explored their perceptions and ideas. The so called Keynote Listeners provided the plenary sessions with information from group meetings and workshops. The daily Public Conversations provided the reflecting process in which the keynote listeners were asked questions in an interview format to invite their reflections. The resource persons also acted as consultants for the consultation.

The consultation provided the Porvoo Contact Group with a range of important building blocks for further progress on a framework for the responding to Conflict.

Summary

Impetus for further PCG Work on Responding to Conflict

At the outset there was general recognition that Churches in the Porvoo Communion have been enriched on their journey together. Their common faith, worship and spirituality, rooted in the tradition of the apostolic church stand in continuity with the Church of the patristic and medieval periods both directly and through the insights of the Reformation period (see Porvoo Common Statement, p.7). Furthermore, the churches have come a long way in achieving the commitments listed in the Porvoo Declaration.

Building on the above common ground as the body of Christ and committed to communion, this consultation looked at options which brought it closer to Jesus' teaching on response to conflict. The following points have been drawn together from the consultation:

- The Porvoo Churches listen to God's invitation to be fashioned by God into a new ecumenical reality
- The delegates agreed that the Churches in the Porvoo Communion were responding to a number of challenges emerging from a new European reality.

- It continues to be of importance for churches to understand each other's histories, experiences, pastoral contexts and contacts
- Churches do not always move at the same pace
- To stay together and address issues of concern was more valuable than hasty separation
- Issues of faith remain the essential components of communion and keep us rooted in the apostolic witness. This received full agreement
- Some moral issues over human sexuality proved difficult and received less agreement
- Consensus on a specific issue in a particular church challenges other member churches which hold different opinions to exercise restraint in their responses. Any wider consensus requires time and patience, prayer and engagement.
- As a starting point the importance of church relationships were seen as a higher priority than platforms or positions.
- Mutual recognition of the sincerity and good faith of the other was an important factor in responding to conflict
- Where churches disagree, there is more reason to be together in the challenge to embrace diversity in the body of Christ.
- Consultations and dialogue remain key instruments in holding the churches together. Using a third party in conflict mediation has its classic example in Jesus Christ.
- Jesus Christ, the mediator between God and creation, is always a contributor in conflict mediation. It is by an act of God that we remain in communion. This resource the churches already have in Christ.
- Recognising that churches do not live in a vacuum, the consultation affirmed the importance of justice and human rights in the societies to which they and others belong.

- The Porvoo understanding of the blessing given by the stranger enables the Churches to be united in responding to issues, such as, the diaspora, interfaith and migration.
- The approach to one's partner church requires humility and a sense of self-critique.
- The key in responding to conflict is to address the positive one sees in the other. (Never start with the negative.) With time a way will emerge to address the negative. It is important to be alert to the hidden blessing and stay together until that blessing manifests itself.
- Conflict can sometimes be a catalyst and therefore is not always a focus of failure.
- The Porvoo Communion is a place where members of church families can meet with honesty of interchange and hopefulness of aspiration which is not possible in other contexts
- It is liberating to reflect that the 'Other' has been maintained by God in a grace which one may have lost but which is life-giving to us.

Leslie Nathaniel

Responding to Conflict on the Path to Peace

There is no path to peace along the road to security. For peace has to be risked; it is the one great risk, and can never be secured. Peace is the opposite of security.
Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Preface

This article draws on the collective wisdom from a number of consultations and conferences going back to my work in the South Asia Youth Conference followed by my engagement for Anglican and Lutheran relations in the European context. I gratefully acknowledge in particular the contributions of Bishop Duleep de Chickera, the former Bishop of Colombo who has devoted his creative theological thinking and writing to the themes of conflict resolution and reconciliation. I have developed his biblical insights and come to own a biblical approach to bring us closest to the teachings of Christ and closest to the manner in which Jesus lived, moved and had his being among us. As Bishop of Colombo, he not only hosted but gave incisive leadership to the first South Asian Youth Conference in Wattala, Sri Lanka on the theme “Called for Peace”. This was in the year 2002 when the prospect of peace in his war-torn country seemed a dream not to be grasped. Since then Sri Lanka has seen the end to the brutal hostilities. In the meantime Bishop Duleep de Chickera has contributed major inputs into the European context, for instance at the Porvoo Communion of Churches consultations. This contribution seeks to help deepen the knowledge we have, to strengthen sharing, to generate greater understanding, to sharpen our focus and to enable us to respond to the complex challenges of our troubled and fast changing world, both within churches and in society.

Introduction to the Theme

Responding to conflict is an elusive concept; and if we narrow our focus to Christian and to churches responding to conflict, it becomes even more complex. More specifically in terms of responding to conflict in our fast developing cyber age, we are dealing on the one hand with a vast sphere of revolutionary, positive achievements, such as, remote controlled medical treatment and surgery, instant sharing of knowledge and information, just to touch on a couple of areas. But we

are also looking at instant communication which can be prone to false, irresponsible communication, lack of consultation and hasty decisions in an increasingly complex, secular and pluralistic world.

Conflict is inevitable. Hardly has one situation of conflict been dealt when another emerges. There is a saying in Asia that conflict is like the clouds in the sky, which are almost always there and developing; it is very rare to have a clear blue sky for long. In his paper titled *A Spirituality for Peacemakers under Diverse Regimes*, Bishop Duleep de Chickera articulates how conflict is an integral part of life¹. Conflict will most likely only end when all creation is brought to the feet of God. Until then we will need to find ways of dealing with conflict. It was in Asia that I first came across the shift in thinking from resolution or management of conflict to responding to conflict.

At the first gathering of young people in Asia, noted earlier, there was an awareness that the opposite of peace is not conflict, but injustice. The greater and longer the peace, the lesser will injustice be in evidence, and vice versa. Conflict is the 'disturbing and painful signal of injustice' (Duleep de Chickera). The call is particularly on the Church, that is, on individual churches in given situations to creatively and appropriately respond to conflict by standing up and standing in for justice and by upholding peace. In the situation of the early Church in Corinth, Paul, despite disagreement and conflict, still appeals to the members as 'saints'; and in the New Testament the only reference which justifies breaking communion was the rejection of the incarnation of Christ (1. John 4).

Biblical and Theological Insights

1. Acts 6:1–8: Here we have a situation where a good intention creates conflict. The intention is to respond to the needs of vulnerable widows. This, however, led to a feeling of discrimination, i.e. injustice.

Intentions themselves need, therefore, to cultivate thoughtful and sensitive approaches with an eye for possible repercussions. As for complaints, these can sometimes be genuine, but are sometimes also imagined. How are we able to tell the difference? This requires keeping an ear to the ground and paying attention to the murmurings around an issue. This does not mean giving ear to gossip, but adopting an impartial participatory approach as the Apostles did. We need to be wary of hierarchical, authoritarian, controlling, scheming and heavy-handed responses to conflict. But as the people of God we expect to be part of any so-

1 Eds. Leslie Nathaniel and Adrian Watkins, *Called for Peace* (CMS/ISPCK: 2003), 1–6.

lution, keeping in tune with the divine authority. Being out of tune with God's authority aggravates the conflict.

This incident recorded in Acts became an instrument of transformation and growth for the whole community of faithful. It points to a participatory approach with some criteria worth noting. For instance, a second level of leadership was identified. Trust between the leaders and the people had been established, and the community stayed together. The unity of the community and its witness mattered; one was not sacrificed for the other, and there was growth. Verse 7 notes: 'The word of God continued to spread; the number of disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith'.

2. Christian responses to conflict should be a manifestation of our obedience to Christ, and be creative in order to transform the situation of conflict. Conflict is a clash of interests and expectations, which may or may not be acceptable. In responding to conflict Christians will need to gather experiences on the way and seek to learn from each conflict. Sensitivity to the trends of history, to the feelings of people, and to grievances even before they manifest themselves is a key response. Frequently conflict is with the 'Other' who is different, unfamiliar or even unknown. The 'Otherness' may be in terms of ethnicity, gender, ideology, religion etc. Such difference can provoke feelings of danger, threat, or of inferiority and superiority, however, as Christians we are called not to submit to these. A positive approach is called for. John Paul Lederack in "The Moral Imagination" speaks of the need to reach out to those we fear. The challenging task is to be able to touch the heartbeat of all that is complex, with an imagination going beyond what is seen or apparently seen, and to risk vulnerability and defencelessness, taking one step at a time². Instant communication needs to be handled with care and maturity.

Jesus' attitude to difference and 'Otherness' can be found in: Matthew 15:28 – the Canaanite woman, whose faith is abundant; Luke 11:17-18 – the Samaritan returns to give thanks; Matthew 8:10 – the Centurion, whose faith is greater than any in Israel. Jesus' attitude is never condescending, but takes the opportunity to have encounters which led to affirmation and healing. The values of the kingdom apply beyond the closed Jewish family, which in our Christian terms today means reaching out beyond the family of Christ's followers.

What does it really mean when one speaks of the Samaritan as the hero of the parable of the Good Samaritan? Could it be that the stranger, the enemy is the one who keeps the law and demonstrates who the true neighbour is? Could

2 Quoted by Bishop Trevor Williams during a Porvoo Communion of Churches consultation

it be that the enemy, the 'Other' is the one to have grasped what is needed for eternal life? At the very least the despised one lived the spirituality that we thought only we had and he shared something life-giving that we have lost. Therefore, the injunction to do likewise, that Jesus gives, is to cross boundaries with something to offer that will give hope and life.

Jesus builds on the theology of the First Testament about three attributes of God:

- Eternal – God cannot be contained within history;
- Omnipresent – beyond space;
- Dynamic – actively life-giving, life-promoting.

The divine always, everywhere, offers life to all, to all histories, to all cultures, all religions. Jesus makes sense of God beyond the Chosen, in a celebration of the 'Other'. The 'Other' completes us because that is the way God has made it. All ideologies call for us to discern them for any blessings they may hold.

Of course some ideologies are life negating and conflicting at the core with kingdom values. This could be said, for example of Nazism and Fascism. It could be claimed, in fact, that all ideologies and religions, including our own,- as history has shown-, can be severely distorted by expressions which give rise to hugely destructive and tenacious conflicts. Such ideologies, even religions may have positive values at the heart, but it is the interpretation and practice of those professing and advocating that ideology or religion, for whatever motives, which instrumentalise them for evil.

In responding to conflict we will need to deal with our own negatives and then bring the positives to the table. Negatives will emerge and can do so constructively only within a group that can acknowledge them together. Our liability is corporate: it is we who are responsible for the chaos and troubles in our world, therefore together we have to try to put it right, rather than putting the blame on, say, one country or another person. We are called to look for the hidden blessing in each and to stay together until that blessing emerges.

3. The above biblical reflections have been on the manner in which conflict can be constructively handled after it occurs. This must, however, include redressing the causes:

- There is need to promote with confidence all that is honest, true and just. Prophetic voices are not comfortable and are often decried in our world today. Nevertheless, as Christians we are called to speak out.

- There is need to empower and nurture people and society in the values and ideas of peace. The experience of many in the South Asia Christian Youth Network has been against any affirmation of war as a means to achieve peace. This has sometimes been termed as ‘deficit thinking’.
- There is need to motivate people to desire an ethos of life that reduces the possibilities of conflict.
- There is need to build systems and institutions of peace that overlap with civil institutions of democracy. These include human rights, good governance, and respect for the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary and of the media as well as respecting the sovereignty of the people.
- There is need to build in people a sense of vigilance so that they can sense when something irregular is occurring.

It is important to keep in mind that the term “Shalom” has two aspects:

- The absence of negatives, such as, poverty, want, deprivation, greed, oppression, discrimination;
- The presence of abundance, such as, contentment, sharing, harmony and the right relationships in all of creation.

So how does peace come about? Peace is a paradox in the Bible. In John 14:27 peace is a gift from God. In Matthew 5:9 peace-makers are the blessed. Bishop Duleep de Chickera notes that peace is like underground water: it is a gift, it is there, but one has to work to access it. There is no rest for peace-makers. As noted earlier, the opposite of peace is not war, and the ending of a war does not necessarily bring peace. The opposite of peace is injustice. Christians are therefore called to build on the prophetic tradition and be a voice for the voiceless and to accompany the vulnerable. Any Christian community can do this. In many quarters there is a tension between reconciliation and peace. When one presses for justice one hardens the oppressor even more and lessens the chance for softer change. But Christians are called to pursue reconciliation together with the pursuit of justice. Otherwise they would be betraying the victims. Christians are called to deal with the past in such a way that they are set free to live the future in relationships of integrity. When atrocities occur, Christians are called not to forget, but remember to be inspired that such atrocities should never be repeated.

Forgiveness plays a freeing role, freeing both the victim and the oppressor. It is the best mechanism to break the cycle of revenge.

Yet, not all conflicts require forgiveness; some require respect and dialogue as a means of transformation. In this it is useful to distinguish between change and conflict. Change is sometimes resisted because it is perceived as an area which would give rise to conflict. One also needs to discern between the kind of change that is needed and what is enduring and should not be changed. In Mark 8:31–38 Jesus prepares his disciples for the radical change that his suffering, death and resurrection will bring about, and for the conflicts these events will give rise to. It is like preparing a child for the birth of a sibling. Peace is not a given – it has to be built. The passage in John 12:24–27 reminds us that the grain of wheat needs to fall to the earth and die in order to bear fruit. Stooping, mingling and being part of the surrounding soil leads to new life. In protracted conflicts the parable of the Prodigal Son/Grieving Father is helpful. Firstly, the doors are kept open; secondly, during this process the dignity and personality of the persons involved are not diminished; and thirdly, with reconciliation the way is opened for each family member to get on with life.

Case Studies

Every conflict has a history. Therefore, in responding to conflict it is important to acknowledge the history. An uninformed position will foster a confrontational approach and should not be an option. It is crucial to understand the perspective and the context of the respective ‘Other’ in order to come closer together. Separation also cannot be an option and is furthermore a deficit concept. Peoples and communities, as are churches, are defined by the stories they tell. Once the “Them” and “Us” situation has been defused, a new story is free to emerge.

1. India and Pakistan

The South Asian Youth Conference of 2002 gathered under the theme ‘Called for Peace’ in the context of a protracted civil war in Sri Lanka, an existential context which informed the conference. Precisely at the same time the armed forces of India and Pakistan had built up on either side of the border in response to yet further provocations in a long history of hostilities between these two nations. Speaking into this scenario of conflict, young Pakistani and Indian Christians pledged that no political tensions between their two countries would be allowed to break the bonds of peace, friendship and love between them. The rhetoric of violence and war was replaced by a simple symbolic act. These young people defused a “Them” and “Us” situation which could easily have arisen even in that

far removed setting in Sri Lanka. Some time later they followed this gesture up by a pilgrimage from both India and Pakistan to the border between their countries, where in public view they prayed for peace. Young Christians across the sub-continent are today called to develop a new narrative for the challenges in an increasingly changing context both within their churches and in society. The networks they have developed need further strengthening, with minds constantly alert, bold and focused. This is a task where they need encouragement and support from the church leadership.

2. *Two Irish Examples*

1. During the consultation *Churches Responding to Conflict* within the Porvoo Communion of Churches (a communion between Anglican Churches on the British Isles and Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches), the then Bishop of Limerick and Killaloe, Trevor Williams of the Church of Ireland, presented to the consultation the strife-torn period in Irish history that has come to be known as *The Troubles*, namely, the ethno-political conflict in Northern Ireland, which had spilled over at various times into England, the Republic of Ireland and even mainland Europe.

Bishop Trevor noted that the duration of the *Troubles* is traditionally dated from the late 1960s and considered by many to have ended with the Belfast Good Friday Agreement of 1998.

The primary issues at stake in the *Troubles* were the constitutional status of Northern Ireland and the relationship between the mainly-Protestant Unionist and mainly-Catholic Nationalist communities in Northern Ireland. The *Troubles* had political, military and paramilitary dimensions. Its participants included Republican (Catholic) and Loyalist (Protestant) Paramilitaries, the security forces of the United Kingdom and of the Republic of Ireland, and politicians and political activists on both sides.

This was a conflict of two traditions, a contest seen as between 'Them' and 'Us'. Two histories were involved, two sets of attitudes and prejudices, two loyalties, two cultures and two sets of tradition. The common factor was a deep-rooted fear of 'The Other'. Religious and cultural symbols become badges of identity of 'who belongs to us and who belongs to the enemy' and were markers for threat, fear and intimidation. The search for security amidst the threat of violence led to increasing segregation.

Was there an appropriate response in this intractable situation? The transformation of conflict had to be painfully and painstakingly learnt over time in a three step process. Firstly, the people had to acknowledge their conflict; secondly they had to reach out to their enemies to draw them closer; and finally they had

to acknowledge that this was a response in love to bring about long term peace and reconciliation.

2. In the second example Bishop Trevor introduced the work of the *Corrymeela* community founded by the Revd Ray Davey.

Corrymeela is an ecumenical Christian Community committed to reconciliation in Northern Ireland and throughout the world after witnessing the British bombing of Dresden, Germany at the end of the WW II. Its members are committed to the healing of social, religious and political divisions. Corrymeela provides a safe place where people can share their story, and in this listening process be changed as new relationships are formed.

The processes developed do not aim at agreement on the controversial issues. However, some understanding as to what makes a particular person or party function or act, how they are, who they are, may emerge. In the emerging story that is created, a new way of holding together differences can be found, not as swords to wound but as pruning hooks to promote growth.

Insight: Nations and peoples are largely formed by the stories they feed themselves. If they tell themselves stories that are lies, they will suffer the future consequences of those lies. If they tell themselves stories that face their own truths, they will free their histories for future flowerings³.

Areas of Conflict within Churches: Authority and Leadership

Professor Paul Avis in his presentation on *Authority, Conflict and Leadership* at a Porvoo Communion of Churches consultation observes that our scriptural perspectives, our traditions, confessions, our analysis, interpretation and conscience - all could become areas of conflict in churches.

Furthermore we are often confronted by structures in our churches, which along with the complex dynamics of interests and power easily lead to divisions and conflict. Churches therefore frequently fail to focus on the common good, and present instead to the world a distorted face of Christ. Authority, leadership and conflict, although bound together relationally, are prone to be affected by power, which is capable of compelling others to do ones will. However, Prof. Avis also notes that there is the possibility of 'positive authority', which can facilitate agreement without pressure or compulsion. Such good authority is not something that can be claimed forcibly, but is rewarded for reception and acceptance. In terms of leadership, a key factor is the example set by those in leadership positions.

3 Ben Okri, *A way of being Free* (ISBN 0753801418), p.112.

This will require an acknowledgement that a good example begins with seeing the tasks and goals in a team spirit, seeing and acknowledging the potential and wisdom in the other, and providing inspiration and motivation.

Paul Avis presents three ideals as a response: “liberating authority, therapeutic leadership and constructive conflict.” Bishop Sam Amirtham from the Church of South India spoke of the need for ‘loyal rebels’ in the church for enabling this to happen.

Conclusion

Today, we are challenged more than ever before to understand each other’s histories and experiences in order to address the conflicts of our time and to facilitate transformation. However, the parties involved do not all always move at the same pace in addressing issues of concern. This needs to be taken into account with appropriate sensitivity.

Once we recognise that we need each other, enormous opportunities lie before us to initiate change and to encourage healing. This acknowledgment of needing each other will be significant, if we are to become a prophetic voice in the church and in the public square. The call to do what is honest, true and just, is an important guideline. Disagreements should not lead to divisions. In the Church of Corinth despite disagreement and conflict Paul still holds the members together, reminding them, that they are called as saints.

Honest conversations remain key instruments in holding the churches and people together. Using a third party in conflict mediation has its supreme example in Jesus Christ as Mediator between God and man. It is by the act of God incarnating as man, emptying himself of power and glory (Philippians 2) that we have the divine prototype of selfless and reconciling love.

*Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.
Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus. Phil. 2.4,5.*

An approach of humility and a sense of self-critique will go a long way in responding to conflict and it is important not to start with the negative. Key in responding to conflict is to address the positive one sees in the other and with time a way will emerge to address the negative. And let us be alert to the hidden blessing in one another until that blessing manifests itself. Mutual recognition of the sincerity and good faith of the other is an important factor in responding to conflict.

The understanding of the blessing given by the stranger enables the Churches and its people to be united in responding to specific issues in a given context.

Let us set our course on doing that which brings us closest to what Christ taught and how he acted. All of us have been maintained by God in a grace, which we may lose sight of from time to time, but which we need to reclaim for ourselves and for the “Other” as it is mutually life giving to us as we move on in our pilgrimage together.

Marriage

Christopher Hill

A Pastoral Paper on Issues of Human Sexuality in their Legal Context – an Anglican Bishop’s View

This paper was written as a series of ‘notes’ concentrating on legal and pastoral issues rather than the Church of England’s doctrine of marriage; the latter was set out by Dr. Martin Davie drawing on for example, the *Book of Common Prayer* and material such as *Marriage: a teaching document from the House of Bishops of the Church of England*. This paper does not set aside this doctrine of Christian marriage but it does note that in contemporary European culture there are pastoral and legal considerations which are not easily resolved exclusively by recourse to historical doctrine and in which *ad hoc* pastoral responses sometimes have to be made. The paper was commissioned by the Porvoo Contact Group for the Porvoo Consultation on Marriage, 2011. In March 2012, to considerable surprise in England the British Government announced proposals for a consultation on ‘equal civil marriage’. Same-sex marriage was eventually legalised in England, Wales and Scotland in 2013. I have therefore added a further section to bring this paper up to date (September 2016).

1. Contraception

From the 1930 Lambeth Conference onwards it has been accepted by Anglicans that artificial contraception is legitimate in marriage for Christian couples where there is an agreed need to limit (but not exclude) family. A significant corollary to this is that the sexual act in marriage is thus not understood to be exclusively for the procreation of children but also for the effecting of deepened human relationships. This marks a distinction from official Roman Catholic teaching in which the sexual act must not artificially exclude the procreation of children. (Lambeth Conference 1930 should not however be used as if it were, anachronistically, an approval of either active homosexual or promiscuous heterosexual relationships).

2. Co-habitation

Today's cultural setting for marriage in Europe – certainly in England – is one in which couples have typically co-habited for a number of years. Clergy preparing couples for marriage are very aware of this and are usually non-condemnatory. Exceptionally, however, a more rigorous – usually conservative evangelical – minister has been known to consider refusing baptism to the children of co-habiting couples unless they marry. On canonical appeal to the bishop, bishops would almost certainly *uphold* the appeal and order the baptism to proceed. This would not necessarily imply the blessing of all contemporary life-styles, but it would recognise the pastoral context of *faithful* co-habitation, while also affirming that infant baptism is about the good of the child, not a judgement upon the parents. In the past permanent co-habitation itself was often regarded culturally and legally as a 'common-law' marriage – up until the reform of marriage laws in England in the mid 18th century. This, legal acceptance was by the *Church* courts, as until the mid 19th century all marriage legalities were conducted through the bishop's courts.

3. Re-marriage after Divorce

The Church of England took many years to resolve the problem of marriage after divorce. The Church of England (officially) did not countenance 'second-marriages' until 2002 and the Marriage Act, still, allows a parish priest the option of *not* re-marrying or allowing his or her church to be used for a second marriage by reason of conscience. The abdication of Edward VIII in 1936 was because the King as Supreme Governor of the Church of England could not marry a *divorced* person (Mrs Simpson). More recently in 2005, the Prince of Wales married the Duchess of Cornwall in a civil ceremony by reason of his previous marriage. Today, after scrutiny by the parish priest in accordance with the Bishops' Guidelines and consultation as necessary with the bishop, re-marriage is permitted, though not as a norm and depending on the circumstances of the demise of the previous marriage. Earlier, an informal 'blessing' of couples married in a (civil) Registry Office was provided by some but not all clergy. Today there is an official Service of Prayer and Dedication for such circumstances. All this is relatively recent. When I was ordained in 1969 it was still official policy to exclude divorcees who re-married from Holy Communion for a time – even if this 'excommunication' was honoured more in the breach than in the observance.

4. Civil Partnerships

The above is the pastoral, legal and cultural context for the problem of how the Christian Church discerns whether to approve or disapprove faithful and committed homosexual partnerships. Obviously the Church of England (without exception) condemns transient, casual sexual relationships, whether heterosexual or homosexual. In 2005 the Civil Partnerships Act became law in the United Kingdom. It *duplicated* Marriage law provision in almost all aspects, except one important area: it was not predicated on an intention to engage in a *sexual relationship*. Thus there are *no* grounds for annulment or the dissolution of a Civil Partnership on grounds of non-consummation or adultery as there *are* in English Marriage law. Since then the break down of a Civil Partnership has been recognised *de facto* in homosexual 'adultery' but the legal route has been 'unreasonable behaviour'.

5. Lay People in same-sex relationships

The Church of England House of Bishops completed a Pastoral Statement in May 2005 which reiterated the General Synod's position with regard to 'homosexual genital acts' as falling short of the Christian ideal and to be responded to 'with a call to repentance *and* (my emphasis) the exercise of compassion'. It stated that heterosexuality and homosexuality were not *equally* congruent with the observed order of creation and the biblical revelation. Nevertheless, the bishops *also* stated their respect for the conscientious decision of lay people who enter into committed same-sex relationships and *did not* bar them from Holy Communion, or wish to exclude them from the fellowship of the Church. At the same time they *denied* the clergy this liberty because of the ordained ministry's status as *official* guardians of the Church's teaching. The Bishops finally reiterated the Lambeth Conference 1998 Resolution which drew a clear distinction between homosexual orientation and practice and declined to recommend the authorization or blessing of same-sex unions.

6. Clergy in same-sex partnerships

As to *clergy* entering a Civil Partnership in England the Bishops saw nothing incompatible between Holy Orders and entering a Civil Partnership where the person offers assurance to their bishop that their relationship is consistent with the Church's teaching as expressed above. In other words a *celibate* relationship within a Civil Partnership would be acceptable. The bishops did not wish to collude with our present culture that all close relationships necessarily include a

sexual relationship. Nevertheless, they recognised that the majority of Civil Partnerships in our contemporary society would be between sexually active couples. (For lay people the Bishops required no such assurances of sexual continence for baptism, confirmation and communion.)

7. Civil Partnerships and Church Buildings

Since the passing of the Civil Partnerships Act, Parliament has since authorised Civil Partnerships to be undertaken in religious venues. (The 2005 Act expressly *prohibited any* religious context or ceremony.) This will not be applied to the Church of England. It has been applied to the Unitarians, the Quakers (and the Liberal and Reformed Jewish Synagogues). It would be up to a Church or *national* religious body to seek permission for Civil Partnerships to be celebrated in a religious venue *not* an individual parish or congregation. Some Anglicans welcome the possibility of some Christian ‘blessing’ through the United Reformed Church.

8. Equal Civil Marriage

Taking the Churches and wider community by surprise the Government followed up the Civil Partnerships Act of 2005 with a further act for same-sex marriage in 2012. Not only Church observers were puzzled by what equal civil marriage would add to the legally binding Civil Partnerships Act. The Same-Sex Marriage Act, like the Civil Partnerships Act, almost exactly mirrors the existing Marriage Act; it also exempts the presumption of sexual union and thus creates a problem in the legal definition of the consummation of marriage and the declaration of annulment on grounds of non-consummation. I was a member of the House of Lords during the long debates in relation to the passing of the Act. The Church caution about the Act, which concerned civil marriage and not ecclesiastical marriage, centred largely on the legal re-definition of marriage by the State. But it is the case that public opinion since the passing of the Civil Partnerships Act had in effect treated Civil Partnerships as ‘gay-marriage’, whatever the technicalities. Society had moved on remarkably and this is the pastoral context clergy minister in. The Act was not designed as a threat to the Churches however: the Churches were specifically exempted from legalising same-sex marriages unless their national body decided otherwise – as similarly for Civil Partnerships. The Church of England (and the Anglican Church of Wales) because of their special place in the English (and Welsh) Marriage Act were legally *prevented* from same-sex marriage. The anomaly is that in a single (revised) Marriage Act for England and Wales (there is separate legislation for Scotland) two distinctly different concepts of marriage are both now legally enshrined: one the traditional Judaeo-Christian,

heterosexual concept of marriage, the other the newer concept of same-sex marriage. The latter can be seen to embody some but not all the 'goods' of the other concept, specifically the exclusion of the procreation of children.

9. Church Blessing or Prayer for Civil Partnerships and Same-sex Marriage

The Bishops have made clear that the use of the Marriage Rite or key parts thereof *unofficially* by clergy would be illegal as purporting to solemnize marriage. This would be in serious breach of civil as well as ecclesiastical law. Similarly, to use the Service of Prayer and Dedication of a Civil Marriage after Divorce as a service of Blessing for Civil Partnership or Same-sex Marriage would be an abuse of that service and probably an ecclesiastical offence. Nevertheless, the Bishops *have* encouraged clergy who consider a couple in a Civil Partnership or Same-sex Marriage to be in an authentic Christian relationship to pray with and for that couple. Prayer in a Church is possible, though that might be construed as a public service rather than private prayer and be open to disciplinary challenge as arguably in conflict with the church's teaching. Nevertheless, domestic, informal prayer with the couple is encouraged. The bishops do not *authorise* forms of prayer but they do advise clergy. In my experience clergy who do opt to offer pastoral prayer are wise and avoid, whether in Church or home, using material from the marriage service but treat the partners as being in an acceptable but different relationship from traditional Christian marriage. There has been only one, but high profile, case of a priest using 'Prayer Book' marriage language. He has publicly apologized to his Bishop, who publicly denounced the ceremony, and thereby managed to *avoid* either a formal disciplinary proceedings or a formal doctrinal complaint!

10. Church of England unlikely to change in the immediate future

The present position with regard to Civil Partnership or Civil Same-Sex Marriage (the legal consequences are effectively identical) and the Church is unlikely to change very soon. Some radical clergy are campaigning for Church same-sex marriage, especially where there are two clergy partners. One priest in such a position has had his licence to minister withdrawn. Nevertheless there is a large evangelical constituency in the Church of England, supported also by more traditional parishes and clergy of other traditions which would oppose any church recognition of same-sex marriage as identical with traditional marriage. A theological and anthropological discussion of some maturity, complexity and patience needs to take place before this can be resolved. In the meantime clergy appear to be content to follow the bishops' guidelines which answer the unresolved legal and

theological tensions *pastorally*. That is to say some form of prayer, welcome and acceptance to those who have contracted such partnerships/marriages. A pastoral approach to situations where theology and law conflict with human experience is quite consistent with Anglican classical pastoral theology, though the actual situation is new.

11. Gender Reassignment

Further pastoral ambiguity can arise in relation to transsexuals. Following a judgement in the European Court of Human Rights in 2002, British law was subsequently amended to grant transgendered people legal rights, including the right to marry. Many in the Church, including some bishops, were not convinced that the medical and ethical arguments in such cases were determinative enough for a change in law to be necessary. The law was however so changed. One side effect of this is that an Anglican priest may be requested to marry a couple one or both of whom have legally registered a change of gender and who by residence in the parish or otherwise have a legal right to marry in their Parish Church. It is therefore possible that clergy may have to exceptionally marry persons, one, or both, of whom have had their gender legally reassigned but whose 'biological' gender is the *same* as their partner. In this ambiguous situation a Church of England priest (and a Church of Wales priest) may legally decline to marry the couple, but may have to agree to another priest solemnizing the legal marriage. (Such a couple would *not* be legally eligible, as British law stands, for a Civil Partnership which is limited to those of the same legal gender) though paradoxically they are eligible for Civil Marriage!) Though rare gender-reassignment marriage questions have arisen, and there is a significant increase in the number of reassignment. Such cases are usually treated with great pastoral sensitivity and confidentiality by clergy and bishops alike.

Development in the Doctrines of Creation and Marriage

I want to step back from the harassing context of this colloquium to recall what the church is and does. It teaches and it serves. There is a doctrinal, and there is a pastoral level to its work, the doctrinal is concerned with God and his works, but also with the conditions of the pastoral. So we have theology, ethics and pastoral initiative, three levels dependent on one another as conjoined and coherent, but also to be distinguished, if the theological logic is to be preserved. What I have to say concerns the two levels of doctrine: specifically, the ethical doctrine of marriage and the *theological* doctrine of creation. What is it that we have to tell the world about the work of the creator and about the life we have been given to live in this sphere?

Newman's contention that the church's doctrine develops has, in the course of the twentieth century, come to be accepted almost as a truism. Not always equally noticed is the corollary that there is both true and false development. The Book of Ecclesiasticus (*alias* ben Sirach) distinguishes them nicely: "If a man of knowledge hear a wise word, he will commend it and add unto it; the dissolute man heareth it, and it displeaseth him, and he putteth it away behind his back" (21:15). Doctrine is not a mere historical record of what Christian churches have happened to think and say at various points; it is *what we are given to say*, the commission with which we are entrusted.

With consistency to the teaching of the past, integrity within the teaching of the present, faithfulness to the words of Jesus Christ and the teachings of his apostles, to be able to explore the implications, applications and qualifications which each new phase of experience requires of our teaching, to engage it in discourse in active discrimination of concepts and ideas that arise: this is the task of doctrinal thinking, which develops not by the decision of any person or group that it should develop, but as the product of long critical and intellectual activity. These are the terms of all intellectual life, and the church is not exempt from them. The test of any new thought is its capacity to be integrated into a wider understanding of the whole, and the history of ideas reports many more that fail this test than that pass it. Thought is susceptible to fashion, but is capable in the long term of discarding superficial fashions to leave a slowly formed deposit of understandings that have lasted the course. It is a slow and organic matter, the development of thought, and in the field of doctrine, it belongs inalienably to the church as a body, not to its bishops or teachers, to say what it has learned.

The churches' ministers cannot presume to second-guess developments in order to solve their immediate problems. The proof of good development in the end is that the faithful are possessed of a richer understanding of their lives before God, more equipped in thought to meet challenges which their leaders and teachers have not been able to envisage or foresee.

What, then, might be the hallmarks of a good development of the doctrine of creation, if one is to emerge from the maelstrom of debate in which we are currently whirled? It will discern the working of God as *maker of heaven and earth*, that is to say, in *what there* is. It ought to have much to say to art and science, for it is concerned with the intelligibility and the beauty that we find framing our existence in the world. And as the doctrine of creation always has, it will be concerned with the framing of our existence *as good*. That is why this doctrine is inseparable from Ethics – since the concept of the good is not one that can be formed by a mere moralistic sentiment apart from experience of the given world. It is concerned to see God's work as in some sense *complete* and *finished*, and thus, as the creation narrative tells us, "very good", not meaning by that that God is now inactive, but that there is order in his activity, so that what is accomplished, to which he stands as a craftsman to his handiwork, is the presupposition of what is *being* and is *yet to be* accomplished, to which he stands as preserver, redeemer and perfecter. Only so can we speak of God's faithfulness to his creation with any depth of meaning.

Such a doctrine of creation may certainly develop; much development has, indeed, already happened in response to natural science. Professor Bråkenhielm's reflections on the dynamic and preservative elements of history, however, are not such a development. Though quite uncontroversial if read as a prolegomenon to a doctrine of divine providence in history, as a sketch for reconceiving the doctrine of creation they have the grave drawback that they fail to address the realities that belong under that doctrine. They have nothing to say to science and art. They have no interpretation to offer of God's work as "maker" or "artificer". "Heaven and earth" figure not at all. This looks to me like the development of doctrine which, rather than adding to the wise word, "puts it away behind the back".

As for locating humanity within a developing doctrine of creation, it is plain that light must fall upon the mutual coinherence of the human community and the material world. A eucharistic prayer that first appeared in the 1976 Prayer Book of the Episcopal Church of America became famous for its bold attempt to incorporate this element of cosmic ecological context. "At your command," it said, "all things came to be: the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses, and this fragile earth, our island home". Something of that kind of attention to heaven and earth must surely accompany any theological word about the human race! It did not go far enough, however; humanity

not only *inhabits* this vast expanse; it is *part and parcel* of it. We, too, are “fragile earth”. Not only are we in the material world; it is in us. It is what we are – not exhaustively, but indispensably.

A doctrine of humanity, then, can no more turn its back upon the material conditions of human existence than it can overlook the shaping of human existence by the apparently unique gift of speech. Our “nature” as material beings is a very specific one: we exist in a distinct form of embodiment, the dimorphic sexual differentiation that serves animals in the service of reproduction, and in a distinct form of co-embodiment, which is that of *social* animals, depending on one another to perform differentiated tasks and role. A doctrine of marriage will succeed only if it can reflect the relation between that nature and covenantal freedom, the Janus-like character of our form of life that looks one way to instinctual animal needs and the other way to the freedom and faithfulness that belongs to speech and covenant-making.

There is a semantic point that must be made in passing about the terms “order” and “orders”, in order to avoid the kind of linguistic misunderstanding that too easily complicates doctrinal discussion. In English the noun “order” has both an abstract and a concrete sense. The former is expressed in the singular and without the use of the definite article (“order”, not “the order” or “orders”). German-speaking theologians in the twentieth century experimented with describing the structure of the created world in terms of its elementary *Ordnungen*, the plural used to suggest distinct and concrete structures of law. Professor Bräkenhielm has referred to Emil Brunner’s well known book, *Das Gebot und die Ordnungen*, [and believes he has detected his influence on a statement from the English bishops, which I doubt.] This idiom is foreign to the Anglican tradition, where references to a “creation-order” echo the use of the Greek noun *τάξις* in the Church fathers, with aesthetic and rational overtones, as a category of beauty and intelligence, as in art and science.

That God has given this form of life to us, consistent both with our mortality and our calling to eternity, is something we do not have to bring about, and could not. We can analyse the various strands that go to comprise it, the satisfaction of sexual desire in youth, the companionship and cooperation, the venture of parenthood, the reinforcing of memory in old age, and so on. It is not remarkable that we can imagine these elements as separated from one another, strewn, as it were, like the parts of a car over the garage floor. What is remarkable is the way they cohere to make a whole that is more than the sum of its parts. The church’s role in relation to this gift is to draw attention to it and to expound its source and purpose. An important emphasis of the Reformers was to reject the interpretation of marriage as a church ordinance, which they believed, in their context, that they heard implied by the doctrine of marriage as a sacrament. Of

course, that implication need not be drawn from that doctrine, but insofar as they understood as they heard it, they needed to criticise it. The Book of Common Prayer speaks of a gift of God in creation, which Christ by his presence at the wedding in Cana blessed and sanctified. The church did not make marriages, nor unmake them. It “solemnised” marriage, incorporating it into the life of faith within the sacramental community.

The fact that the church’s role in marriage is simply to recognise, not to make or to perform, does not mean that it is other than centrally important. Distortions and corruptions can beset the pattern of creaturely life. No more, perhaps, in this sphere than in others, (if I had to pick on an abiding feature of human life that pointed to the fallenness and sinfulness of human nature it would not be to any failure of relation between the sexes, but it would probably be to the sheer difficulty we all find in telling the truth). The experience of marriage can, indeed, sometimes afford a taste of what it might mean to be redeemed from sin, a moment rare enough in general experience where duty and delight coincide. Yet misapprehensions do prevail, for this is an area typically beset by fears and desires of a very paralysing kind. Patterns of misunderstanding can become engrained in different cultures and prevail, sometimes for long periods; we may think of the old Chinese practice of maiming women’s feet in order to enhance their sexual attractiveness. The church’s *practice* in marriage, then, has to be a window of reminder and corrective interpretation upon an abiding good for humankind.

Because marriage is a created form of life, the doctrine of marriage has to speak of a typical or paradigm form, of the way things are for human life in general, of the pattern which reasserts itself on the broad front when pressures distorting it are taken off. But the Reformers also understood that the typical pattern does not meet all the practical demands. Special conditions intervene to distort the typical pattern, and do so in the socially complex, interrelated way that the pressures of a fallen world are always felt, making it impossible, often enough, not only subjectively but also objectively, to do the good that we would. In opting for a divorce provision (in this option the Anglican churches stood aloof for a long time), they judged it right to adopt a constructive pastoral approach to those whose position in relation to marriage was in some way hurt or damaged, and who could therefore only approximate to the typical form. And with such a development came, of course, a recognition of the role of the secular magistrate in the whole business of regulation. But the secular authorities can no more than the church invent, create or define where God has given, but only recognise the gift and bear witness to it. It is possible for the state, too, to misrecognise and misinterpret. For some years, now, the Western states have taken the view that a child in the womb is not a human person. That does not mean that the child in the womb is not *in fact* a human person, which is a matter for science and

philosophy to resolve. When the state makes errors of this kind, the church's duty to the state is, out of loyalty to the service which the state has been given to perform, to speak and think differently.

The dialectic between a practice which proclaims the Gospel of creation and models a Gospel ethic, on the one hand, and the accommodations necessary on the other, defines the intersection between the doctrinal and the pastoral tasks of the church. The two, when well reflected on and understood aright, serve one another. A well-designed accommodation bears witness, in its own form and manner, to the original gift of God that it derives from. A badly-designed accommodation denies it. Those churches that first proposed and experimented with a form of prayer to accompany the beginning of a same-sex union – we have been reminded that the Swedish church was to the fore with such proposals in the 1970's – understood the matter as one of pastoral accommodation. The Church of England has yet not found itself able to take that pastoral step – for reasons which have been mainly circumstantial. Before the crisis in the Anglican Communion broke in 1998, I myself favoured discussing it, at least, as a possible way forward, and were the ecumenical circumstances to change, I could favour it again. At any rate, whether well or badly advised, a church which acted in that manner has approached a new problem in line with the way that pastoral accommodation has been approached in the past, its handling of divorce, for example, or, in the case of some African churches, polygamy.

There is a wide difference of principle between such steps and the proposal to redefine marriage by removing the condition of one man and one woman. (Or, as it might be, removing the condition of an intention of lifelong fidelity, or the restriction to two people, or the prohibited degrees of consanguinity. These parallels are not drawn merely to scare: pressure for the legalisation of incest in Britain has a longer history than pressure for same-sex marriage.) Practices are inevitably flexible to circumstance, but development of doctrine can only come with new understanding. The new proposal also has its historical context, which is more political than pastoral. It has to do with the rapid evolution of liberal democracy, which in the course of a generation has altered in ways that have yet to be fully charted or understood. The church does not understand its situation properly unless it relates these pressures to pretensions and claims made on the part of civil order which a generation or so ago would have been thought quite incompatible with the liberal tradition.

From a traditional liberal point of view, indeed, there would be something almost comic in the idea of the state launching out with its own distinctive doctrine of what marriage is. The state has to form definitions that correspond to realities. In our English proverbial tradition there is treasured the story of an early medieval king, called Canute, who was said to have attempted to define by act

of state the high-water mark on the East coast of Britain – and to have learned the painful way what the limits of government were. In the case of the church, however, the matter would not be comic. If the Church's message about marriage were severed from anthropology or a doctrine of non-human nature, it would be a serious compromise to the credibility of its proclamation. There is worse is to be said: by imagining itself to have the power to engage in constructive redefinitions of reality, it would indicate that it acknowledged no controls arising from the givenness of human nature in the world. That would then raise the question irresistibly whether the repetition of the first article of the Creed was more than a nostalgic habit veiling a substantive withdrawal of faith.

I fear it is all too obvious that if the difficult problem of pastoral accommodation of same-sex partnerships is allowed to evolve into division over the doctrines of marriage and creation, the ecumenical repercussions would no longer be controllable. Indeed, the whole shape of the worldwide Christian church, as we have received it, could hardly survive.

Marriage in England, Past and Present

The theology and practice of marriage draws threads of history, culture, law, theology, liturgy, psychology and social anthropology together in a unique way. This short personal essay tries to place our present debates in the Church of England against a wider background, and a deeper historical perspective. It seeks to understand how it is that we are having the debates that we are now having. It is tentative and provisional, and it needs much correcting and improving in the light of further study.

Some pre-modern history

At the heart of the idea of marriage, from at least the Roman world onwards, lies the idea of the free consent of the couple. This was expressed in the *dextrarum iunctio*, the joining of right hands, which continues to be a feature of marriage ceremonies to this day. Whatever the economic, social, or political pressures that constrained a person's choice – choice of marriage, and choice of partner – the free mutual consent of the couple is constitutive of a marriage. Mediaeval theologians identified marriage as a “natural sacrament”, which the couple ministered to each other, and to whose celebration a priest was not intrinsic. The mutual exchange of promises, followed (or preceded!) by a sexual union, made a marriage, and, once the idea of the indissolubility had taken hold in western Christian thinking (it never did in the east), it constituted the indissoluble bond. From early Christian times, the church and its leaders found themselves seeking to bless, to discipline, and to understand an institution which was not fundamentally under its control. Distinctively Christian marriage liturgies are late entrants into liturgical history. Early Christian bishops started by adding a blessing to the ritual journey of a couple who had already gone through a marriage ceremony in the law and idiom of their own particular late antique setting. Marriage rites tend to be culturally conservative, and the Christian bishops of Rome or Carthage in the fourth century were also anxious to restrain some of the classical pagan imagery that might surround the marriages of members of the congregation (think of the pagan imagery of the *Projecta* casket in the British Museum, a wedding present for a well-born Christian bride). The system is not wholly unlike that of present-day France: the marriage ceremony is performed outside church in a culturally prescribed way, and then the couple are expected to come before the bishop for a blessing. Christian families might also have sought the bishop's help in match-

making, or in the drawing up of the marriage contracts. And a modern observer of such marriages would be more than surprised by the disparity of ages: in an aristocratic Christian context like Projecta's, the groom might well be 30 years old or so, and his bride 14 or 15.

The mediaeval church notoriously sought to extend its reach, through canon law, into the domestic lives of people. It strongly propagated the doctrine of indissolubility, on the basis of NT texts, and it restricted the choice of partner through a highly developed system of prohibited degrees of kinship and affinity. Since the virtual kinship created by god-parenting was added to the affinal relationships created by marriage and the biological relationships given by kinship, these restrictions amounted to a set of strongly exogamous rules: good for the mixing of the gene pool, but hard to apply in small or isolated communities if people were to marry at all. But for all this, the principle remained that all that was really necessary for a marriage was the free mutual consent of the couple, whether the church was involved or not. It expected to be involved, in a series of staged rites ranging from hand-fasting and betrothal through to marriage – the focus was less exclusively on the marriage ceremony as definitive – and it might impose discipline on those who did not make their vows in church, but mediaeval canon law recognised their (irregular) marriages as real.

Lord Hardwicke and his Marriage Act

This underlying understanding of marriage was amazingly persistent in English law. Well into the modern period, there is a high degree of what historians conventionally call “clandestine marriage”.¹ The term is misleading, because many of these unions were not necessarily clandestine at all. People lived in more-or-less public unions not contracted in church, even if marriage in church was regarded as normative. Provided vows had been exchanged in front of witnesses, and even more if some form of rite had been presided over by a clergyman, a court might well be persuaded that a marriage was a legal fact for the purposes of inheritance, or the disposal of a woman's income (which, in early modern England, passed to her husband on marriage). In London in the first half of the eighteenth century, a remarkable proportion of the capital's marriage ceremonies were conducted in debtors' prisons, by clergy who used the fees they received to help pay off the debt for which they had been imprisoned: it is estimated that there were a little over 6600 such marriages in the Fleet Prison alone in 1740. Roman Catholics found practical relief in the system. They might not wish to marry in their Anglican

1 For what follows, the essential study is by R. B. Outhwaite, *Clandestine Marriage in England 1500–1850* (London, 1995)

parish churches, the only formal route open to them, but they could make legally recognisable promises in front of one of their own clergy in a private residence or chapel.

Lord Hardwicke's celebrated Marriage Act of 1753, which is a milestone in the English law of marriage, did away with clandestine marriages, but at the same time it did away with the traditional idea that the free mutual consent of the couple was enough by itself to constitute a marriage. No marriage could now be recognised unless it was preceded by one of the preliminaries still familiar to us today (banns or licences), and was solemnised publicly in the Church of England. The elements of Hardwicke's system were old, but they were now systematically required in a new way. Parallel arrangements were added by and by to allow non-Anglicans to have their marriages solemnised by their own faith leaders in their own places of worship, starting with Jews and Quakers as early as 1753, though Roman Catholics still had to marry in their Anglican parish churches until 1836. It can be argued that Hardwicke was revolutionary in laying down for the first time that the free consent of a couple, expressed in mutual vows and sexual union, was not enough to make legally demonstrable marriage, as in the tradition of canon law, and that the legality of marriage was a matter to be determined by statute. As it happened, Parliament exercised its power to give the Church of England a near-monopoly of the solemnisation of marriages, but the principle was established that it was for Parliament to decide where and how marriages took place. Most historians agree that a part (at least) of Hardwicke's motive was to protect the interests of the landed aristocracy, the integrity of whose estates could be undermined by the seducers of their daughters.² Hardwicke's law, much amended, forms the basis still of our inherited understanding of a "traditional Church of England wedding".

Some more recent developments

In the nineteenth, and still more the twentieth, centuries, a number of changes and trends can be identified which helped to shape the practice and understanding of marriage in new ways.

1. The institution of civil marriage in 1836 provided for the first time an alternative to marriage in church (or synagogue). It was part of a wider package of changes, which also allowed Roman Catholics to marry for

2 Seducers and daughters now had to run away to Scotland, typically to Gretna Green, where the old tradition continued: cf. Lydia Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*. [Lydia Bennet did not, in fact, run 59 away to Gretna Green – Ed]

the first time in their own churches. It is worth noting that marriage in an Anglican church remains the legally normative way of being married in England. Awareness of this principle has been eroded over time, even among clergy, who have been known to describe themselves as “able to act as registrars,” when it is more properly registrars who have been allowed to carry out some of the functions of clergy. The growth in the popularity of civil marriages, especially in the last couple of decades when they have been allowed to take place in a variety of historic and beautiful secular venues, has obliged the church to be more energetic and imaginative in defending its “market share”. This is one of the motivations for the excellent Weddings Project, now ongoing.

2. Legal dissolution of a marriage has always been possible by an individual Act of Parliament (before the nineteenth century, no clear distinction is made between dissolution and annulment). Divorce in its present form was not widely available in England before the 1936 Divorce Act (the “Herbert Act”, after its prime mover A. P Herbert). This Act was considerably ahead of contemporary social attitudes towards marriage breakdown, and it raised issues of marriage discipline that perplexed the Church of England deeply until the very end of the twentieth century. The Convocations passed a Resolution (first in 1937) that forbade the use of the Marriage Service for a further marriage. But no resolution of Convocation, or any other church body, could deprive an incumbent of his right in English common law to solemnise the marriage after banns of any parishioner not otherwise disqualified from marrying on grounds of age or prohibited relationship. So clergy had the legal freedom to solemnise further marriages whatever the authorities said, and some did, in the teeth of episcopal censure. The successors to the original Convocation resolution have recently been repealed, so that further marriage is officially allowed by decision of General Synod, but it remains in the discretion of the incumbent (after consulting the Parochial Church Council on the issue of principle) to decide whether he or she is willing to allow a particular couple to contract a further marriage. Guidelines drawn up by the House of Bishops to assist clergy in making such decisions seem to enjoy general assent. This is one aspect of the Church of England’s wrestling, over some seventy years, with the theological and practical issues raised by divorce and further marriage, as they have become more widespread in English society and have increasingly lost their stigma. The question of the ordination of deacons, priests, and (most recently) bishops who are in further marriages is another aspect of the same question.

3. Notwithstanding the rising divorce rate, the average duration of marriage rose steadily throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. The effect of an increasing divorce rate has been more than offset by increases in life expectancy generally, and improved perinatal mortality for mothers in particular. The proportion of couples marrying today who will celebrate their Golden Wedding anniversary is very much greater than in any previous generation of human history. To put it boldly, one might say that the present generation is attempting a feat of long-term matrimony which has never been attempted before.

4. The general availability and improved effectiveness of contraception, especially since the 1960s, have changed both the shape and the understanding of marriage. Two centuries ago and less, a couple who were fertile could expect a child to be born within a year of marriage: now they may delay having the first child by some years, and live for a considerable time simply as a couple. Again, in an earlier generation the probability was that one or other of the couple would die before the last of their children had grown up: now the “empty nest” is a normal expectation for a couple who have children. The children may have grown up, and half of the duration of the marriage may still be in the future. This places the weight of the marriage much more upon the relationship of the couple. Even more profoundly, contraception has made possible the deliberate choice of a marriage without children. This is, in historical perspective, a radical departure from previous understandings of marriage. When the Prayer Book gives “the increase of mankind” as the first of the reasons why marriage was ordained, it was following a widespread tradition. Peter Brown has noted how the renunciation of marriage by early Christian ascetics was not simply a self-chosen abstinence from sexual satisfaction, but a deliberate opting out from the process of continuing the human race.³ Most Christian theologies of marriage have seen its openness to the possibility of the gift of new life and relationship beyond the couple as a defining feature; Barth even links it to his theology of the Trinity. Only in the twentieth century did it become possible to think of marriage as an institution in which the raising of children was not an intrinsic part. New reproductive technology has also made it possible for female same-sex couples to conceive and bear children that are biologically the offspring of one of the partners.

3 The Body and Society, esp. Chapter 4.

5. Although marriage may be constituted by the free consent of a couple, those choices have tended to be contained, and in most societies and times women's choices have been more constrained than men's. Sometimes, as in dynastic marriages, the only freedom of the bride or groom has been an Augustinian freedom to choose what has already been willed. Economic security has been a prevalent force: readers of *Pride and Prejudice* will recall Charlotte Lucas' moving reply when Lizzie Bennet reproaches her with having married an absurd clergyman – in effect, “what other option did I have?” In one way, it could be argued that the economic emancipation of women in the developed world has allowed the fundamental character of marriage as the free mutual consent of a couple to emerge more clearly. It can also be argued that it has led to an increasing emphasis on the affective component of marriage as the only one that fundamentally matters. Taken together with the other developments that have been noted – possibility of marriage without children, greatly increased time as a couple before and after children – the economic independence that a couple has highlights the importance of their affective relationship. When that is expressed in what can only be called the sentimental popular culture of England in the twenty-first century, marriage becomes the celebration of a couple's feelings for one another. The extreme example of this is seen in the flourishing weddings-abroad industry, which promises to take you away from your family and friends – that is, from your ordinary social and public context – so that you can celebrate your love by contracting a marriage in some exotic (and romantic) location. The understanding of marriage as primarily the celebration of an affective relationship between a couple who are committed to each other in love helps to explain the emergence of our present debate about the possibility of same-sex marriage.
6. Also significant in that debate is the emergence of the concept of the “gay person”, that is, of the closely interconnected ideas that a person's sexual orientation is fundamental to their identity, and that sexual orientation is primarily determined by genetic or biological factors. The emergence of this fascinating, and in contemporary debates highly influential concept, needs much fuller discussion than is possible here. I would hazard a guess that it starts to emerge clearly in the 1980s, but can be traced back earlier. It also seems likely that upbringing, social environment, and surrounding culture are co-determinant of sexual orientation in a much more interesting relationship than is sometimes allowed, and that the concepts of “straight”, “gay” or “bisexual” are not nearly as straightforward as they might seem. The closest thing to an articulated understanding of homosexuality in

another culture is perhaps that of the ancient Greeks, who understand its place in a person's sexual history very differently; that difference is itself as a clue to the significance of culture in framing concepts of sexual identity.⁴ Clearly, the combination of a concept of the "gay person" whose identity is determined by nature with an understanding of marriage as primarily a celebration of an affective relationship two people who are committed to each other in love, will lead to the suggestion that it should be possible for same-sex couples to be married. And if sexual orientation is indeed genetically determined, it then comes to seem a straightforward matter of justice that it should be possible.

Epilogue

So we see the Christian church, throughout its history, engaging with a changing reality of marriage which it at no stage controls: the centre of gravity of the institution lies in that surrounding society which the church in every generation is in, but not wholly of, which it tries both to serve and to criticise in the name of the Gospel. The church tries to impose discipline on marriage, to frame an explicitly Christian understanding of a natural sacrament, and to celebrate the union of hearts and minds. If it sometimes seems now that the church is struggling to keep up with trends in wider society, a fuller historical analysis would show that it has been so in every generation, and that truth has also been witnessed to in the criticism as well as the adoption of the understandings of marriage current in wider society. In its insight that that the faithful mutual belonging of a couple can say something about the mutual belonging of Christ and his church, of God and his people, and something about steadfast loving-kindness and reconciliation, the church brings specifically and deeply Christian meanings to the understanding of marriage. And these changes find a liturgical expression in the changing words of the Marriage Service itself: as often in an Anglican context, the theology (or anthropology) is in the rite. The 1662 Prayer Book, following 1549, presents three reasons for marriage: (1) for the increase of mankind; (2) to provide a civilised location for sex; and (3) "for the mutual help, society, and comfort that the one ought to have of the other." The order is presumably deliberate, and reflects the reality of what mattered most. The ASB retained the same three reasons, but gave them in the opposite order (and expressed them in a different kind of language). Common Worship is less precisely articulated, though elements of the three re-

⁴ The heterosexual (and married) Kenneth Dover was amused by the number of readers of his Greek Homosexuality who assumed that he must be homosexual himself, because he had written a major book on this subject.

cur. Interestingly, mention of possible children is much reduced in CW, even in comparison with ASB: they are quite marginal to the rite. And sex is no longer something you just have, as in the Prayer Book (even in its cleaned-up 1928 version). It is now something you have to strengthen your affective relationship. So the emphases change, as they will continue to do in ways that will surprise us, as much as Tudor Anglicans would be surprised by a marriage rite in which the expectation of children did not have a primary place.

The Communal Purpose of Marriage in the Church of England and in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland¹

Marriage has become an increasingly personal affair between two individuals. Feelings and experiences have become more significant than before. The impact of individualism on marriage has been interpreted as particularly threatening when it causes marriage to form at the expense of a community.² On the other hand, the continental European theology of the 1970's considered this change in society to be an expression of God's continuing creation and, as such, as a positive development, initiated by God.³ I consider such an opinion to be developmental optimism. It does not necessarily take into consideration forces in society that may affect the idea of marriage negatively, but does interpret the development as a work of God in a continuously changing society. The interpretation of a German theologian, Herman Ringeling, among others, seems "to accept an existing trend without any historically lasting, theological grounds." It rejects the Bible as "a ground for the permanent idea of marriage and substitutes the concept of continuing creation as a theological premise." Marriage thus undergoes constant change in society, in which it always receives a different form.⁴ Christian marriage will then appear as a product of each time.

Aatto Kuusniemi's study of German marriage types does not indicate how the Christian idea of marriage differs from the general idea of marriage of its own time. Marriage as a personal relationship between one man and one woman is

1 Paper published earlier in *Together in Mission and Ministry* 2007, p- 77–91

2 This is the case, for example, according to Huovinen 2002, 1.

3 Kuusniemi 1972, 53. Aatto Kuusniemi's study on marriage types from the year 1972 has long been the only study in Finland to clarify the theology of marriage. Its original purpose was to offer a background study for solving the questions concerning remarriage of the divorced. Kuusniemi interprets the views of German theologians on different marriage types as examples. "The starting point of Herman Ringeling's idea, as well as that of the Lohff, is the historical interpretation of the Bible and tradition. Ringeling describes the world as the orbit of God. A human being's experience of God's activity increases as time goes by. The determination of theology is also based on this idea of theonomical anthropology, science from a human being in the effect history of God." (Kuusniemi 1972, 53.) The idea of a human being's experience of God growing like this seems too optimistic. The otherness of the kingdom of God in relation to this world, or the status *corruptionis* of the human being as interpreted by Luther, cannot be reconciled with this interpretation. "In the development process of marriage, Ringeling separates two main directions. The first one is the personifying process of marriage, according to which individuality and the individual freedom to make decisions has increased. The roots of the appreciation of these personal features are in the history of the announcement. In the love shown by Jesus, the personal relation of marriage also achieved its final and true measure." (Translated into English by AY-O)

4 Kuusniemi 1972, 53.

thus not connected to theological concepts, and it cannot be seen how human love is part of the love of God. The study quoted here was intended to examine the grounds for marriage and remarriage of the divorced. The lack of a specifically theological understanding of marriage is here evident, and it seems to have its consequences in the documents of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland.

In Finland, the Lutheran theology of marriage seems to be, first of all, contractual. It has been set under the general principle of continuing creation. There is a striving to avoid setting up the law as the permanent foundation of life. The connection between marriage and tradition, or ecclesiology, is not indicated, neither is its significance for the community.⁵ The result is that the theology of love loses its significance as a starting point for marriage, although there is a deep understanding of the theology of love in Lutheran theology otherwise.

Luther's understanding of cultural change seems to have been less optimistic in its dualism. Luther saw two forces of history, good and evil, as a constant battle between God and Satan.⁶ Here the difference between certain interpretations of the Lutheran churches and Luther himself is obvious.

When love between a man and a woman receives its basis in society merely from erotic love, and when personal fulfilment becomes more and more the goal, the communal task and dimension of marriage will weaken.⁷ However, in a statement given by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland to the government,⁸ the argument is connected to the whole of society, and especially to the communal significance of marriage. This is one illuminating example of *the doctrine of the two kingdoms*, which grounds the theological statements. According to this doctrine, the church is a part of society when concerned with earthly matters like marriage. "The communal overall interest" is an argument that is used by the church to justify the exalted status of marriage in society. The communal purpose of marriage is here connected to society in general. In the official statement of the church, the continuity of society, balanced development and nurture of children and the role of marriage as a channel for sexuality are mentioned as the grounds

5 Community is here a concept to indicate both society as a whole and a local community, a congregation.

6 Creation is the foundation of marriage for Luther. The creation of a man and a woman is a given fact, which the human being cannot change or avoid. Christian belief cannot change it either. God joined a man and a woman internally through Creation so that the one cannot command himself any more, but belongs to another. Sexual attraction was intended for procreation and it cannot be prevented by force. Marriage refers to a wider social connection: *oeconomiae et politiae et seminarium Ecclesiae*. The constant creation of God is a *terminus technicus* here. In Luther the constant creation of God is the first basic view of the world and man. The other is this: God is not the only actor. The evil and hostile power opposes the reality and will of God in an active struggle. Satan is against God. See Sundby 1959, 12–16

7 Individual and communal interpretations of marriage have been estimated by Eero Huovinen, among others. See Huovinen, 2002, 1–2.

8 L 99 = statement of the church government to the Ministry of Justice from proposal of the team "The Law and same sex relationships".

of marriage.⁹ As a matter of fact, all these are somehow related to the communal purpose of marriage. The ecumenical document, *Life in Christ*, shares exactly the same opinion. Both Roman Catholics and Anglicans consider marriage to be “a source of community”.¹⁰

The roots of the individualising development lie, in the history of ideas, in the Enlightenment. In England, they can be discerned in the works of John Milton, among others.¹¹ Attention has been paid to the significance of individualism in the several attitudes taken by the Church of England. The communal and public nature of marriage is the most significant grounds of marriage expressed in the Church of England.¹² The communal interpretation of marriage also has a connection to the theology of love. A relationship of love between a man and a woman is seen to be part of the love of God, the character of which includes being directed outwards as serving love.¹³ The nature of marital love is said to serve the community.

In Lutheran Finland, marriage is seen first of all as a matter for society. This kind of theological solution reflects a doctrine of the two kingdoms according to which marriage is understood to belong to the earthly kingdom. During the last 40 years, the communal dimension of marriage has been connected mostly to society as a whole, and connections to the church or to the local congregation have not been expressed. The church offers a place for prayer and celebration when beginning a life together. Marital love is understood mostly as a personal affair between the spouses.

In the Church of England the theology of marriage is based on the sacramental character of marital love. That is why marriage is there understood more

9 L 99, 6–7.

10 LC 94, §59.

11 “Evidently, in Milton’s mind the early Reformation notion of inner assurance of election had become identified with personal happiness and contentment, and personal experience thus became the measure of right and wrong. In our own day Milton’s vision has triumphed. We see the results not only in no-fault divorce, but in an entire society which measures moral norms by subjective longings. Out of the Reformation concepts of salvation by faith alone and private judgment, Milton devised one of the central principles of the modern, secular world: We are saved not by faith in God, but by faithfulness to our own restless desires, to our own vaguely idealized inner self.” Young 2001, 296.

12 “We need to guard, however, against the idea that marriage is a purely private, inward looking arrangement - ‘selfishness for two’ or, where there are children, for three or four or whatever the number may be.... A married couple are not simply to serve each other but to stand side by side in service to the world; and it is the strength of their many-dimensioned partnership which will make them more effective means of grace together than they could have been apart. Just as a wedding is a public ceremony, so a marriage is a public fact.” IHS 91, 21 This also serves as the ground against the acceptance of common-law marriage. See 3.2., a common-law marriage.

13 “What needs to be recovered is a more profound understanding of the nature of love. The love that a man and a woman express toward each other in sexual intercourse is not for each other alone, nor does it come from each other alone. Rather, since God is love, human love comes from God and is one of the ways in which humans worship God.” SC 1995, 86.

in theological concepts than in Finland. Marriage is seen to happen both in the community of faith and in society as a whole. Marital love is described as serving the community in both senses.

In 2007 the Lutheran World Federation had its conference in Lund, Sweden. The Declaration given emphasizes the significance of personal fulfilment and welfare as tasks of marriage.¹⁴ An important aim for marriage is said to be the provision of a framework for personal fulfilment and flourishing (including sexual and spiritual).¹⁵ I would ask what is meant by the spiritual dimension, since the sexual one is obvious, being a favourite topic of discussion in our time. In Finland, there are very few Lutheran statements concerning the spiritual dimension of marriage. It seems that the spiritual dimension is said to exist, and it must exist, but there are no expressions of what is actually meant by it. This suggests that the communal interpretation of marriage is located in society and that its theological significance for the community of the church is diminishing.

In the Church of England the background is different from that in Finland. Marriage is understood as sacramental, and thus its connections to the church and to the local congregation are more naturally described. At the personal level, personal growth is a common feature of the Anglican and Lutheran understandings of marriage. Also, in the theology of marriage of the Roman Catholic Church, after the Second Vatican Council, a move in a more personal direction can be perceived.¹⁶ In that context, the fact has nevertheless been stressed that the purpose and task of marriage have not changed.¹⁷

There are several critical statements in the Church of England against marriage becoming more and more individualized.¹⁸ The article collection, *Issues in Human*

14 It has been estimated that Protestantism affected social change so that marriage became an individual matter, no longer an institution. "Although it is difficult to assess accurately Protestantism's role in this development, the Reformation coincides with a widespread growth in the perception that marriage was a more personal affair than a social institution." Young 2001, 270–271.

15 "The Task Force is agreed in holding procreation as an important aim, but not a necessary aim for marriage. Furthermore, we think that an important aim for a marriage is the provision of a framework for personal fulfilment and flourishing (including sexual and spiritual), as well as security for personhood and mutual interdependence." Agenda, exhibit 10.

16 "When Pope Paul VI issued his encyclical on the moral regulations of births in 1968, just three years after the close of the Council, he no longer used traditional scholastic language to describe the institution of marriage. He notes the changes that have taken place in the societal understanding of marriage. 'A change', he writes in *Humanae vitae*, is ... seen in the manner of considering the person of woman and her place in society, and in the value to be attributed to conjugal love in marriage, and also in the appreciation to be made of the meaning of conjugal acts in relation to love." Haas 2001, 345–6.

17 "Chapter one of the Second Part of *Gaudium et spes*, 47 through 51, is a presentation of the Church's teaching on marriage and the family which incorporates the personalist developments in Catholic thought even while it does not forsake any of the essential insights of the more ancient traditions." Haas 2001, 345.

18 See, for example, the contention of the Bishop of London: MPL 03, 2.

Sexuality, which was published in 1991, expresses communality as an inalienable basic feature of marriage: life in marriage is directed toward the community, because the couple exists as more than two isolated individuals. Therefore, the couple has much more to give to the community.¹⁹ In Finnish theology, this kind of idea has not been expressed. Instead, it is indicated that the spouses establish together a new community of two.²⁰ Family is an emphasis in Lutheran theology that sometimes diminishes the separate significance of marriage.

According to English sources, the purpose of marriage is not exhausted by its personal and individual significance, but gets its value from its communal meaning. The meanings of marriage for the community have been indicated in several different ways. The communal dimension of marriage contains an opportunity for the growth of the whole community. “The hallowing and right direction” of human sexuality is said to help forward the redemption and sanctification of society. This can result in the establishment of better standards of conduct.²¹ The purpose of marriage that emerges here was already articulated by the church fathers and in the reformation, as a medicine against sin (*remedium*). The communal interpretation of marriage has been connected here with *remedium*. In the Finnish sources the corresponding connection has not been articulated.

Another difference between these two churches is seen in the terminology that is used to describe the communal dimension. In England theological terms such as the love of God, redemption and sanctification are used, even when they are used to refer to the whole society. However, there are also terms similar to the Finnish use of general language: procreation, the nurturing of children and marriage as a channel for sexuality. In Finland, the terms used are mostly general, and there are few examples of theological terms that describe the communal dimension of marriage.

There are several expressions in the documents of the Church of England that emphasize the unchangeability of the Christian doctrine concerning marriage. This unchangeability has been bound especially to the ideal of the life-long nature of

19 “We need to guard, however, against the idea that marriage is a purely private, inward looking arrangement - ‘selfishness for two’ or, where there are children, for three or four or whatever the number may be.... A married couple are not simply to serve each other but to stand side by side in service to the world; and it is the strength of their many-dimensioned partnership which will make them more effective means of grace together than they could have been apart. Just as a wedding is a public ceremony, so a marriage is a public fact.” IHS 91, 21.

20 Ky 84, 25.

21 “The hallowing and right direction of human sexuality also helps forward the redemption and sanctification of society. The way of chastity, whether in the married or unmarried state, followed as an offering in love to God and neighbour, is of great spiritual influence in changing values, lifting everyone’s vision of what is both possible and of true worth, setting better standards of conduct, and healing the general sexual disorder and selfishness of the human race.” IHS 91, 29.

marriage.²² The ecumenical references to marriage as the foundation of human nature and of society also require the permanence of the institution of marriage. The upshot of such an emphasis is that marriage is not the invention of human beings, but is appointed in God's creation as an order of human life.²³

Churches have been forced to refine their views on marriage, for example, when discussing marriage of the divorced. According to the bishop of London, further marriage of divorced persons does not mean a change in the doctrine. A new situation since 2003 in the Church of England is still, according to the bishop, in line with the churches of Western Europe. I would say that this might be ecumenically too optimistic a view, though this practical change in the marriage of the divorced has been interpreted as a question of pastoral care in England. Thus it would not mean a change in the theology of marriage.²⁴

The unchanged nature of marriage is also connected to the basis of the gospel. Lifelong marriage reflects the basic character of the gospel as an unchanged message in a changing world. There is a steady will to retain marriage as a basic structure in the Church of England.²⁵

The support that is needed by children is a motivation for the communal interpretation of marriage both in the Church of England and in Finland. Children and family are also grounds for an unchanging, communal interpretation of marriage.²⁶ Marriage defends the welfare of a whole community, when trying to offer the strongest possible foundation for a family in a lifelong union. According to this argument, children will have the best chance to grow into adults in a family with a father and a mother who live in a life-long union. Then children can build the life of a community by their own action in a responsible way. The significance of permanent marriage for the development and growth of children

22 M 99, 1; MPL 03,3.

23 LC 94, §:s 59, 60.

24 MPL 03, 3. The Roman Catholic reactions to the change which has taken place do not contain a similar picture of the uniform doctrine of marriage.

25 "It has always been the Church's mission to proclaim the unchanging gospel to the changing world. Lifelong marriage itself represents an unchanging ideal, and one which is the bedrock of a rapidly changing society." M 99, 1. See also MPL 03, 2 in which the task of the church for marriage is understood to be countercultural.

26 Ky 84, 8.

is justified with the argument that children who are more balanced will have a better chance to serve their community.²⁷

Unchangeability in the doctrine is also connected to anthropology. Marriage is not seen as a matter of Christian doctrine alone, but as an external basic structure that is independent of the reality of Christian faith and all religion. It applies to all communities.²⁸ Creation order justifies marriage.

According to the document, *Marriage* 1999, the mortality of human beings is related to the unchangeable character of marriage. Human beings need safety, partnership and continuity because of their mortality.²⁹

Openness is also an essential element of a community. The public nature of marriage has been considered necessary both in civil legislation and in the Church of England. The character of marital love justifies the public nature of marriage. Love requires a commitment to and a desire for a lifelong relationship because it must necessarily grow from the selfish *eros* to unearned *agape*. A community is significant for marriage as a support, because it carries public obligations and promises. This dimension is especially important in our time of individualism.³⁰

Marital love comes not only from the desire for comfort but from lifelong responsibility in - and with - a community. A promise that is given before God furthers confidence in the help of God in trying to keep the bond.³¹ The emphasis of divine love, *agape*, signifies the lifelong and communal interpretation of marriage in this context. It makes a lifelong commitment the basis for mutual responsibility. The special character of church weddings has one of its expressions

27 "In stressing the virtues of heterosexual monogamy, the Christian tradition is therefore not simply concerned how individuals relate to each other, important though this is. It is also seeking to defend the well-being of society as a whole, and in particular the well-being of children, on the basis of a belief that it is when a man and a woman are committed to each other in a lifelong union that is both symbolised and strengthened by an exclusive sexual relationship that the family will be at its strongest and any children they have will have the best chance of growing into responsible, well-adjusted and fulfilled adults who can, in time, make a constructive contribution to the life of the community." Sihs 03, 99.

28 "Marriage is a gift of God in creation; and marriage of unbelievers is as real, and often as enduring, as marriage of believers. The words 'till death us do part' are not a special religious ideal; they describe the form of relationship that God has given to human beings as a natural endowment." M 99, 3.

29 "Knowing that they must both one day die, the partners offer each other a security and continuity in life, that will help them to approach death with humility and a good conscience." M 99, 3.

30 M 99, 2.

31 "If love is to grow, it needs an explicit commitment of the couple to stay with each other through changing circumstances, through personal development and growth, and through the process of growing older and approaching death. Making promises 'before God and in the face of this congregation' declares our conscious willingness to view love not merely as a comfort, but as a lifelong responsibility. But the promises are also liberating. Through them we focus our intentions, and offer one another a shared future in a way that we could hardly dare to do otherwise. By making our promises in public, we call on a community of well-wishers to support us in our resolve to be a couple, an important assistance in a culture that is generally unsupportive of any kind of commitment. And by making our promises before God in a setting of prayer, and listening to his promises to us, we can be assured of his faithful love to sustain our own weak resolve to be faithful." M 99, 3.

here: the couple in front of a church confesses that they need the help of God to grow into people who are able to love in action.

The ecumenical document, *Life in Christ*, which is a result of consultations between Anglicans and the Roman Catholic Church, describes three dimensions that are essential for marriage. These dimensions are life-long, mutual love between a man and a woman, procreation and the raising of children. According to the document, these together form the basis of marriage. In turn, to give them up is to trigger the collapse of marriage. The keeping of these dimensions is also connected to the concept of *calling (vocation)*. God calls people to marriage and supports them in marriage with his love.³² The independent, unchanged basic character of marriage is presumed here, regardless of changes in Christian faith or society. This basic character, in particular, has a communal dimension. The purpose of marriage appears in its communal significance for the whole society, not only for Christians. A married couple together is more than two individuals and thus they and their family can make a contribution to society.³³

Marriage needs the support of a community, as is stated in another ecumenical document. Without the necessary living space, the support and maintenance of marriage has proved vulnerable.³⁴ The relation of marriage and community is reciprocal. On the one hand, marriage signifies directedness toward a community and the carrying out of love in the family and in the wider community. On the other hand, marriage cannot endure without the support and actions of a community.

The ecumenical document *Life in Christ* also considers community to be the context of sexuality and personal flourishing. The communal dimension is not seen as an alternative to personal growth and flourishing, but rather as their best possible context. According to the document, the best preconditions for the physical expression of sexuality are in the union of a close relation. Spouses share the

32 LC 94, §60.

33 "Together the couple can extend love to other people: to their own children, in the first instance, who belong naturally within their domestic circle; and not only to them, but to many others who interact with them in a variety of ways. Their love enables them to make a strong contribution to society so that the weakening of marriage has serious implications for the mutual belonging and care that is exercised within the community at large." M 99, 1,2.

34 "Marriage proves to be vulnerable and sensitive not only to limitation of and interference with its living space ("Lebensraum"), but even to shortcomings in the public support and sustenance it needs." MM 77, 12.

life-donating generosity of God in the begetting and raising of children.³⁵ The context of marriage exists both in civil society and in a local church as community. Both these dimensions are essential for the preservation of marriage. An internal, bilateral community of a couple and a family exists also in a larger community.³⁶

Church and society seldom exist as separate communities of marriage in the documents that I have analysed here. In the marriage theology of the Church of England, a church receives significance as a community for growth. Growth and the possibility for marriage to serve a community are based on an intimate relationship with God and with a church. Serving love is learned from the love of God, which supports growth of a personal relationship in the community of a local church.³⁷ A church wedding is, then, a conscious participation in the community of Christ's church. A married couple expect that they will come to share in the effect of divine love and mercy, which enriches and deepens their mutual relation.³⁸ These words express a sacramental concept of marriage in the Church of England. Love is also connected to a communal context: a church wedding is to share in the love of God.

The breadth of the communal significance of marriage has been brought out in Finland as well. The fulfilment of humanity and the social order are considered essential in this context. However, marriage is combined with church as community in only one suggested sermon topic in the marriage service of 1984. A call is made to the married couple to live in community with the local congregation.

35 "58. Human beings, male and female, flourish as persons in community. Personal relationships have a social as well as a private dimension. Sexual relationships are no exception. They are bound up with issues of poverty and justice, the equality and dignity of women and men, and the protection of children. Both our traditions treat of human sexuality in the context of the common good, and regard marriage and family life as institutions divinely appointed for human well-being and happiness. It is in the covenanted relationship between husband and wife that the physical expression of sexuality finds its true fulfilment (cf. Gen 2:18–25), and in the procreation and nurturing of children that the two persons together share in the life-giving generosity of God (cf. Gen 1:27–29)." LC 94, § 58.

36 MM 77, 11.

37 M 99, app.1. Cf. Jeremy Taylor's opinion: "Central to Taylor's thought here is the belief that each person must be guided by the church to an appropriate way of life. Freedom is granted to each Christian to discern the correct way for himself or herself, provided that it does not conflict with the laws of Christ. Thus, in the *Doctor Dubitantium* or *The Rule of Conscience* in all her General Measures, Taylor criticizes the Roman Catholic insistence on priestly celibacy as 'an evil law ... never admitted in the east, it was fought against and declaimed and railed at in the west, and at last is laid aside in the churches (especially) of the north.'" Newey 2002, 22.

The Church of England contributed the significance of local congregation in the document that issued the rules of choosing a place for matrimonial service: Draft 2007, 5,8.

38 "Where people consciously make their vows before God and set their married life within the context of the life and community of the Christ's Church, we may confidently hope and expect that they will draw upon the many means of the divine love and mercy in deepening and strengthening their own relationship." MCT 78, 61.

The wording refers to participation in the mass.³⁹ There is nothing that refers to mutual responsibilities between a married couple and a local church community.

The communal significance of marriage appears mainly at the level of the family in Finland.⁴⁰ The marriage service of 1984 is an exception to the rule, as it describes the family as part of the family of God.⁴¹ The possibility of growth in love, or of participation in the love of God has not been mentioned either.

A church wedding has the character of a divine service. However, the sources of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland bring out the significance of a local parish as a community for marriage only weakly. The main purpose of the community is to be present when there is a public transition in the church to a life order created by God. 'Support of friends and relatives' is one of the examples that are given as possible sermon topics, but the content of such support is not indicated.⁴² The wedding services of 1984 were, in the manual, still "an act which is directed at the people", whereas the structure and the basic character of the wedding service of 2003 is more like "a divine service in a gathered community".⁴³ However, the emphasis on a communal structure and the character of a divine service are not embodied in the content of the wedding service. The change in the theology of church services has not meant a change in the theology of marriage, although it was intended to.

According to one Finnish interpretation, the communal purpose of marriage appears in the form of a new community, which a couple forms.⁴⁴ A newly married couple has its significance as a basic unit of society.⁴⁵ Marriage is also connected to a whole society in divorce, but the connection to a church community is not mentioned in that case either.⁴⁶

The significance of a church as a community for married couples differs significantly between the Church of England and Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. Marriage is more like a basic cell of society in Finland, whereas, in England, marriage is as much a unit in the church as in society.

39 Ktk 84, 57.

40 Ky 84, 8.

41 Ktk 84, 56.

42 Ky 84, 30 Ktk 03, 145.

43 Hytönen 2005, 15, 22.

44 Ky 84, 25.

45 According to Luther, marital ethics is based on the advantage of the whole community. The communal advantage was crucial when he made new interpretations in different situations. An individual, right choice was not as important as the interest of a whole community. Consequences to a community provided the key to decisions. See Laulaja 1981, 116–117. This kind of approach would result in new measures before and after a divorce, for example.

46 Ky 84, 10.

In 2003, more than previously in Finland, the character of a divine service was a basis for reform of the marriage service. The suggested subjects of the wedding sermon, which are listed in the marriage service, contain references to community in two different instances: “family as basic cell of society” and “the support of relatives and friends.” The meaning of marriage is not connected to the church community.⁴⁷ Already in an earlier manual (1984), it was stated that the particular theology of the individual service does not really emerge, but the reforms were carried out by emphasizing the common character of divine services.⁴⁸ This has meant that the special characteristics, which arise from the services themselves, have not received expression in the final results of the reform.

If, according to the tradition of Lutheran theology, faith and love are closely connected, the question of the community as a purpose of marriage also receives an ecclesiological dimension. If a congregation is a community of faith and love, in which faith is expressed as love, the connection of marital love to the community of faith – to a church – is a logical conclusion. Even though the connection of Lutheran ecclesiology both to faith and love⁴⁹ is indicated in the research, this basic Lutheran concept has not been developed in the theology of marriage.

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47 Ktk 03, 145.

48 Hytönen 2005, 165.

49 Mannermaa 1988, 5: ”Uskon ja rakkauden ajatus leimaa nyt alkuperäistä luterilaista kirkkokäsitystä. Kirkko ei ole vain uskon vaan nimenomaan uskon ja rakkauden yhteisö. Jumalan sana ei pysy vain jossakin seurakunnan ”yläpuolella”, jonne kukin seurakuntalainen olisi yksilönä suhteessa. Kirkko ei ole vain uudestaan ja uudestaan sanaa kuuntelevien erillisten yksilöiden joukko. Sen sijaan sana tulee uskossa lihaksi ja kristityistä tulee toinen toisensa Kristuksia.”

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Gender and Genetics¹

The paper aims to offer a *basic* explanation of how gender is determined; explore what the terms 'male' and 'female' mean; how gender is assessed in human beings and to ask the question "Are we really dimorphic beings?" It may seem strange for an ordained pastor to discuss such matters, but I also have BSc(Hons) in Human Biochemistry from 30 years ago, and the content of this paper has been checked and approved by a recent Human Genetics graduate. It aims to be theologically and scientifically neutral, and is not about sexuality, or how genetics might or might not determine an individual's sexual orientation.

Genetics – what it does and doesn't do

The science of genetics, properly understood, simply describes the way our genes work. Although treated with some suspicion by some Christians, mainly those who hold strongly Creationist views, genetics is not inherently an un-Christian discipline. Although some geneticists are virulently anti-Christian (for instance, professor Steve Jones from University College London, geneticist and media presence), others are people of faith (such as Dr Francis Collins, first Director of the Human Genome Project, and now a member of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences).

Aims of the presentation

- a. Describe how gender is defined
- b. Describe how gender is determined within any individual
- c. Describe 'male' and 'female'
- d. Describe some of the other possibilities that exist and are compatible with life

¹ This paper is an edited document version of a Powerpoint presentation made at the Marriage Consultation 2011 in Turku.

What are genes?

A gene is a unit of heredity composed of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), occupying a fixed position on a chromosome. Genes carry the material that determines much (but not all) of what makes us 'us', while chromosomes are present in the nuclei of all our cells. Genes determine such characteristics as:

- Whether we are black or white
- Whether we have blue, brown or green eyes
- Our blood types (A,B,O and so on)

Gene expression

In essence, this is the 'Nature vs nurture' debate. Exactly how much of our human physical, psychological and emotional makeup is determined directly by our genetic makeup is not always easy to assess precisely. Some genes require environmental triggers for them to be expressed, so some conditions are caused by complex varieties of genes and interactions with other factors (schizophrenia being a classic example). This is not always easy to disentangle, and twin studies can be useful in determining how two individuals with essentially identical genes differ.

Medical implications

There are many inherited diseases and traits (Thalassaemia, Huntingdon's chorea, Marfan's syndrome, Cystic Fibrosis to name but a few). Understanding how they are transmitted from one generation to another has led to the development of the discipline of genetic counselling – an ethical discussion in itself. Understanding how blood groups work has enabled safe blood transfusion; and understanding how Rhesus blood groups are transmitted genetically has made a huge difference to survival rates for babies born to Rhesus negative mothers. Perhaps the most famous genetically transmitted disease in Europe is haemophilia, where a genetic (X-linked) mutation occurring in Queen Victoria was passed, via three of her children, to half the royal families in Europe.

How do chromosomes work?

There are 23 pairs in all human cells, except germ cells (eggs and sperm). Half of them come from our mother, and half from our father; 22 pairs are non-sex linked, while one pair (XX or XY) determines our gender. When an egg is fertilised, the genetic material from the mother (the single set in the egg) and the genetic

material from the father (the single set in the sperm cell) fuse into one cell. If the father's sperm cell is carrying a Y chromosome, the newly-formed embryo will have an X and a Y, and be a boy; if the sperm is carrying an X, it will be a girl. If only the Tudor kings had known this! The egg from the mother can only give an X: the Y has to come from the father. It was Henry VIII's 'fault' that he produced more girls than boys. Interestingly men who drink a lot, smokers, jet pilots, butchers etc. also produce more girls.

When it goes wrong

In at least 5% of pregnancies (according to the World Health Organisation, where most of the statistical information for this paper comes from²) there is some failure of this fusion of genetic material, so there are either more or less chromosomes than the norm of 23 pairs (46 in total). Some of these 'aneuploidies' are well known, and quite common; for instance

- Down Syndrome is 'Trisomy 21', in other words three copies of chromosome 21; it occurs at the rate of 1 in 733 live births (about 750 born in the UK each year)
- Edwards Syndrome is 'Trisomy 18'; it occurs in about 1 in 3 000 live births, but usually implies a very short life span

The National Human Genome Research Institute website lists around 50 genetic disorders, but notes that the list is by no means exhaustive.³

One possibility is that one of the sex chromosomes is lost in the process.

If the X chromosome is lost, the embryo will fail to survive (OY is not compatible with life). XO, where there is only an X and the second sex chromosome has been lost, also happens: about 1:2000 live female births has Turner's Syndrome.

XO – Turner Syndrome. People with Turner Syndrome are women, but are usually short, lack very obvious female characteristics, and are sometimes developmentally impaired. They are sterile – unable to bear children themselves, but despite a long list of potential symptoms, many Turner Syndrome women live normal lives. For more information, see the Turner Syndrome Support Society website⁴.

2 <http://www.who.int/genomics/gender/en/index1.html>, accessed 16 June 2013

3 <http://www.genome.gov/10001204>

4 <http://www.tss.org.uk/>

XXX About 1:1000 women have an extra X chromosome – XXX, or Triple X Syndrome. According to the US National Institutes of Health Genetics Home Reference website, five to ten girls with XXX are born each day in the USA.⁵ There are usually no obvious physical ill-effects; the women are often tall and slender, and may have some learning disabilities. They are able to bear children.

XYY is a surprisingly common condition, known as Klinefelter's Syndrome, affecting approximately 1:600 males. The incidence in UK is about 50 000 individuals. Men with this genetic make-up are almost always infertile; they are tall, often somewhat overweight,

with underdeveloped male characteristics and some breast development. Men with this condition lack the male hormone, testosterone, and therefore treatment with regular testosterone injections can help make them look more masculine, which is important for social acceptance, and improve sexual function. However, it does not make them fertile.

XYY The addition of a Y chromosome is also possible. XYY occurs in about 1:1000 male births, so also quite common. It is often unknown; XYY males are fertile (but do not pass on 2nd Y). Back in the 1960's and 1970's the 'Supermale' controversy centred around the hypothesis that XYY males are more aggressive and liable to behave violently. However, although it is now believed that they may be more prone to aggression and have greater difficulty in interpersonal relationships, there is no demonstrable link to aggressive behaviour, and that they are not more prevalent in prison populations.⁶

Beyond X & Y

There are a number of other conditions in which it is difficult to assign a clear male/female identity, for instance

- Hermaphrodites or intersex
- Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia
- Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome

5 <http://ghr.nlm.nih.gov/condition/triple-x-syndrome>

6 <http://www.scienceclarified.com/dispute/Vol-1/Are-XYY-males-more-prone-to-aggressive-behavior-than-XY-males.html>

Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia

CAH occurs (as a genetically determined condition) in approx 1:10 000 people; those affected by it have decreased blood cortisol levels caused by a defect in one of the enzymes in the adrenal glands, which in turn lead to increased male (androgenic) hormones. In newborn girls, while they are genetically XX, they will usually have ambiguous external genitalia and male secondary characteristics, together with female internal organs. Often surgery is needed to ‘correct’ this. Boys born with this condition undergo very early puberty, if it is undetected (sometimes at 2–3 years old). In both cases, life-long treatment with hydrocortisone (or another steroid) is needed, otherwise the prognosis is poor for various reasons. Boys with CAH are fertile, but girls have reduced fertility. For more information, see the excellent Living with CAH website.⁷

Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome

AIS occurs in individuals who are genetically male (XY), in about 5–10 live male births per 100,000. An insensitivity to male hormones means that they do not develop male sexual characteristics and are often brought up as girls, including their birth certificate. It is only when they fail to go through puberty that the problem is noted. AIS can also be partial, where external genitalia are very ambiguous, and it can be very difficult to assign sexual identity definitively. Some athletes competing as women, but whose gender has been questioned, are thought to be affected by AIS. Gender assignment, as well as treatment, can be very complex. It needs to be handled very sensitively and tailored carefully for each individual.

Mosaic

One last condition to mention is Mosaicism. In this condition, either a fertilised egg divides in such a way as to provide 2 kinds of cells with different chromosomes within a single embryo, or two different fertilised eggs join together to form a single embryo. Either way, an individual is born with some cells that are XX, and others that are XY.

⁷ <http://www.livingwithcah.com/>

Hermaphrodites or Intersex?

The categories mentioned above form an area of gender identity that has sometimes been called 'hermaphrodite', and now is often referred to as 'intersex', defined by WHO as a congenital anomaly of the reproductive and sexual system⁸. Just to emphasise again – this is nothing to do with sexuality, but of a confusion of gender identity, which is not a new phenomenon. Huguccio or Hugh of Pisa, a 12th-13th century Canon lawyer⁹, wrote this:

"As to a hermaphrodite, if he has a beard and always wants to engage in manly activities and not in those of women, and if he always seeks the company of men and not of women, it is a sign that the masculine sex predominates in him and then he can be a witness where a woman is not allowed, namely with regard to a last will and testament, and he also can be ordained a priest. If he however lacks a beard and always wants to be with women and be involved in feminine works, the judgment is that the feminine sex predominates in him and then he should not be admitted to giving any witness wherever women are not admitted, namely at a last will and testament, neither can he be ordained then because a woman cannot receive holy orders. " On Causa 27, quaestio 1, chapter 23, ad v.

More recently, Ethical, Legal and Social Implications (ELSI) have developed into a whole field of research and into the whole field of gender assignment, particularly, for instance, about the perceived need to assign individuals to one gender or the other, about legal definitions (especially in view of the debate about same-sex marriage) and correction of incorrectly issued birth certificates

Conclusions

"So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them, Male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:27): sometimes this seems to be very literally true, in that some individuals are created both male and female. Genesis was written at a time when nothing was known about genetics, and it is not a scientific treatise about gender. For some people, which gender they live as is a matter of choice.

8 <http://www.who.int/genomics/gender/en/index1.html#Gender%20Assignment%20of%20Intersex%20Infants%20and%20Children>

9 <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07527a.htm>

What implications does this have for statements like ‘Marriage is between a man and a woman?’ Whom, then, should someone with an intersex condition be marrying? This is a question with practical and theological implications, given that 1:2000 children may be born with an intersex condition.¹⁰ In the United Kingdom, that would mean over 350 such births each year (based on approximately 700 000 births per year¹¹).

If a birth certificate defines a person as male or female, that has implications on who they may marry lawfully (in many places). How does that work for someone with AIS, whose birth certificate may show that they are female, but actually they are genetically male?

If marriage is viewed as for the purpose of procreation, how does this work for people who are congenitally infertile?

If all individuals are created in the image of God, how does that apply to intersex individuals?

Is this an example of the ‘fallenness’ of creation?

If indeed the full image of God is shown forth in the union of a man and a woman, are intersex individuals automatically excluded from that?

10 <http://www.intersexinitiative.org/articles/intersex-faq.html>

11 <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcn%3A77-230095>

Economics and Ethics

27-30 November 2014, Bad Boll, Germany Porvoo Consultation Perspectives on Economics and Ethics Behaviour Under Scrutiny

My Neighbour Near and Far

A Contemporary Framework for Christ Centred Witness¹

Background

1. This was a consultation asked for by the Porvoo Primates, who reflecting on the overall context of the Churches in the Porvoo Communion, were keen to have a theological and sociological perspective on human and humane values through a gathering of a wide international range and diversity of voices from multiple contexts. It therefore gives expression to a range of different voices within a diverse gathering of Christians seeking to articulate vital elements related to our economic and ethical life as global citizens.
2. It is not intended that this report substitutes any work member churches may have already done in the area of ethics and economics. Rather, it is to be considered as an additional resource for churches to reflect upon and use where appropriate.
3. Pope Francis' Apostolic Letter *Evangelii Gaudium* together with the suggestions of the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Busan for a seven years Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace for a new Economy of Life, have shaped some of the thinking in this report. Both the Pope's and the WCC's initiatives could also become additional useful resources in addressing issues of ethics and economics when discussed, debated and embraced in an Anglican-Lutheran context.

¹ LN/BF/09.03.2015 and updated 04 August 2015 on receipt of additional comments from participants

Scriptural and Economical Theological Introduction

4. The Bible is clear that the abundant and generous creation which we take for granted is God's free gift to all living things, both human and in nature. God has ensured that these resources of creation are enough and continue to be enough for all to live abundant lives. There is more than enough for all if only each takes what is necessary and does not deprive others of what they need. This happens best when God's providential economy is shared with mutual care and dignity, when economic systems are able to also focus on the needs of the poor, the suffering, the downtrodden and the marginalised, when just and equal relationships can flourish and goodwill and harmony prevail in our habitat. It is the will of God that injustice of any kind is overcome and that all creation share in God's bounty.
5. When on the other hand we humans plunder the earth's resources and exploit each other out of greed, and when certain economic systems promote the idolisation of money and human oppression, we violate God's economy and threaten to destroy all life. In such circumstances the task ahead of us becomes extremely complex and difficult and diminishing of the other.
6. Our world continues to need movements and instruments of liberation, care and hope for all who are abused and afflicted, including our environment. We need to move towards building new societies in which injustice, discrimination, corruption and violence have no place, and in which voices are raised in solidarity with and alongside all victims of violence, especially the poor and the homeless, the stranger-migrant, abused children and women, victims of war, refugees and those who suffer discrimination because of ethnicity, religion, class or sexuality.
7. The Gospel offers hope to God's whole created world. The engagement with scripture from a local and global perspective that focuses on economical and ethical issues will provide fresh insights and grounding to our thinking. Jesus invites us to discern the Reign of God and do justice by our neighbour and nature. Human beings are part of God's total creation. We are to follow Him to reconciled and integrated return to a joyful sharing of life, values and resources with all living things.
8. What the Torah in the Old Testament calls for in the name of God, the liberator of slaves, is "no exploitation of human labour" and "no ac-

cumulation of wealth for greed". This is evident from the weight of the framing of the Decalogue. "I am Yahweh, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:2; Deuteronomy 5:6). "Neither shall you greedily desire your neighbour's house or field . . . or anything that belongs to your neighbour" (Deuteronomy 5:21).

9. In situations in which an economy turns itself into one based on money and property accumulation without consideration for those in poverty and those marginalised and oppressed, the call of the prophets is for justice. The prophet Amos expresses this in the powerful call: "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever flowing stream" (5:24). What Jesus called for in addressing the temptation to honour other Gods in the Roman Empire is: "make a decision between God and mammon!" What does this call mean for Christian Churches in situations where in many parts of the world those suffering feel that financial markets, without due consideration for large sections of the poor and needy, are increasingly controlling not only the economy but also democratic politics and the hearts and minds of people?
10. The call of Jesus to choose between God and mammon, points to saying a clear no to systems that splits people into rich and poor, producing hunger and death and increasingly destroying the conditions for future life on this earth given to us by God. In all ages there have been those who have responded to Jesus's call by putting God before mammon and sharing their goods with those in need, as was the case with the Good Samaritan. On the other hand an often assumed imperative of capital growing without limits, can also result in a concentration of power in the hands of a few and can cause enormous challenges to the environment, and also cause financial crisis and hardship.
11. Churches at all levels can participate in nurturing an economy and a culture of life in the following ways:
 - Through prayer and providing theological resources for our congregations in mission.
 - By Cooperating in local/regional alternative economies like, for example, *Local Exchange and Trading Systems* (LETS); cooperative banking; self-reliant production and consumption of alternative energy at

community level; local production, marketing and consumption of ecologically grown food.

- By building alliances to intervene, where necessary, in political and economic structures, and questioning the benefits of privatisation of basic goods so essential to struggling communities and suffering people, such as water for the profit of a third party, which does not guarantee any local social benefit.
- By engaging in creative conversations with systems and concepts with an intent to transform, in order that systems are inclusive, looking at the whole picture and not excluding the poor and marginalised.
- Through advocacy measures with an intent to transform.
- Through developing initiatives to overcome modern slavery.

SECTION 1

Engaging with Human rights

12. A focus on human rights offers an extraordinary vision of human dignity and justice which churches can celebrate tempered always by the most inclusive understanding of the Body of Christ. Churches have a significant contribution to make to the on-going conversation in our society about what human dignity requires built on our understanding that every human being is created in the image of God. Our acknowledgement of God as the centre of human life and our affirmation of the liberating presence of God in our midst empowers us also to proclaim the public meaning of the Gospel. In doing so our theology has to be one of refreshed participation and engagement to shape change, dignity and understanding.
13. The God given dignity of humanity is threatened by economic or other systems that devalue human beings as a means to the end. The economy of God provides enough for all but our world is one where injustice is able to undermine human dignity. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and legislative structures derived from it provide a way to address injustice and restore dignity to all. However, this will only happen

in a civic context when individual states have robust legislation to protect human rights, when companies act with social responsibility and when civil society is able to seek redress.

14. We have freedom, but also responsibilities towards our creation as individuals, as communities and as nation states. Standing for the universality of human rights at all times is a crucial call for all of us as citizens of our respective states. A vision of a Europe which embraces human rights will need to remain a permanent objective if we dare to hope for a just, democratic and plural society.
15. The 2008 financial crisis and current conflicts in different regions in our world, have led to a massive enforced movement and migration of people, seeking security and protection. Our Churches are called to find pragmatic solutions for the everyday life of such uprooted people regardless of colour, race, gender, religion, belief or age. It has also become increasingly necessary that churches offer informed advice and assist such persons to seek redress through human rights commissions, equality bodies, ombudspersons, and so on. In all this the emphatic voice of Churches will make a difference. Churches are also called to take a stand for the promotion and protection of human dignity of persons with disabilities, prisoners, abused women and those in need of shelter.
16. In many countries job losses are on the rise. Women and migrants as well as children and persons with disabilities are primarily affected and enjoy less protection. Many seasonal workers do not have proper contracts. There is also an urgent need to address issues of human trafficking and statelessness that affects around ten million persons across the world.
17. Therefore it is of vital importance to remind all European Christians and citizens that they do have rights and voices in society. Article 1 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union declares that 'human dignity is inviolable. It must be respected and protected'.
18. Churches are encouraged to give human rights issues an important place in their political pressure groups, calling on their communities to strengthen human rights locally and globally by urging the state to provide clear legal frameworks and appropriate principles.

19. The recent economic and financial crisis contributed towards a further weakening of the promotion and protection of human rights in many countries. European states need to open their hearts and minds and deliver on the protection and promotion of human rights with greater purpose in their engagement with International and regional organisations such as the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation (OSCE) and the European Union.

Engaging with the Economic System

20. Some insight for engaging with the economic system is given below:
 - Since economic systems are created by human beings, it is important to be aware that it is possible to transform them into becoming more inclusive systems seeking the good of all. Many human beings suffer under the present conditions created by human beings. As Christians and Churches, we do have biblical perspectives that help address current economic and ethical challenges.
 - Discovering a voice for the present context is important; together, churches have a stronger voice and could work against any collaboration or colluding with injustice, since such collaboration is painful to God. As a reflection of the incarnation, we need to stoop together from where we are to enter and understand the harsh realities of the world so that we may rise together (Philippians 2.6-11). This is an unconditional ethic for all our churches. Churches that stoop with Christ will rise with Christ to a world that glorifies God. But without stooping there is no rising. This is a genuine interpretation of Kenosis as a paradigm of discipleship and imitation of Christ.
 - There is a sense in many churches of a crisis in our Christian discipleship as well as a lack of Christian confidence in addressing issues from a biblical perspective in our increasingly secular and pluralistic world. This is an area for concern and greater church involvement.
 - Many parts of Europe still consider Europe to have a social market economy. Theoretically this may be true, but the reality is frequently different. Questions have been raised in different sections of Europe as to whether the Lisbon treaty reflects a social market economy in the original sense, since the European treaties had established the princi-

ple of an open market economy with free competition and maximum growth. While it was clear that growth was necessary and an important element in contributing to flourishing economies, questions were also raised during the consultation as to whether this should be maximum growth and maximum profit or whether sensibly steered growth in appropriate areas and shared profit was an alternative. The question was also raised as to whether an economy built on the goal of maximum growth and greatest return, was an enduring model, since, if the goal is maximum growth, capital and the economy would need to grow without limits. Participants expressed concern that on a planet with limits, however, any system that relies on continuing growth of capital and the economy without any limits, checks and balances, is unlikely to be sustainable in our world of provisionality.

Possible Action Points

21. The Porvoo Consultation invites its constituency, but also other Christian churches in EU member states to explore the possibility of:
 - Strengthening Christian discipleship and Christian Confidence.
 - Devoting time for a completely fresh look into the systemic difficulties in the current economic and ecological order.
 - Promoting the right to housing, access to health care and the right to employment for all.
 - Resourcing Christians to engage in questions relating to economics, ethics and the common good and to be advocates for human rights.
 - Encouraging an interfaith understanding and collaboration on issues of economic justice and human rights.
 - Engaging with governments in a proofing exercise or audit of ethical and humanitarian criteria in the ways in which it affects everyday life.

SECTION 2

22. Our Faith

We trust in God, who is Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer and we believe in working with God towards God's purposes in God's world.

23. Our Hope

Our hope is in Christ and the reign of God, which brings justice, reconciliation and peace to all who believe in him, and through them to all whom God has created. The presence of ecumenical groups and movements, that work to liberate both humans and nature are a sign of this hope. We humbly trust that the Porvoo Communion will have a share in this vision and this work and that our unity will improve the quality of human life and relationships and offer protection and care for the environment.

24. Our Love

The Gospel of love is both the chief characteristic and dynamic in the reign of God, who loves humanity without limits or conditions. We are to love our neighbour who is known to us as well as the unknown stranger and migrant at our doorstep and beyond. Love must also convert relationships of suspicion, fear and hostility into mutually trusting and beneficial friendships and partnerships. Since we love because He loved us first, our love for others must be an intrinsic part of the energy generated by God and expressed through the Porvoo Communion.

25. Our World

The reality today is that many areas of our day to day life are locally and internationally interconnected. For example, local markets and local farmers are connected with the Global South through trade. Many northern countries depend on other countries for the supply of vegetables, fruit, coffee, tea etc. The question to be addressed is how one should respond to the reality of both the local and the global. The following are suggested considerations:

- Through prayer relating to action in and for the world; the need to be contemplative before acting is key; hastily put together solutions do tend to go wrong. An important aspect of the Eucharist is that it liturgically expresses what we want done in the world and is an intrinsically Christian understanding of life and mutual responsibility in Christ.

- There is need for a deeper understanding and care for creation. This understanding is intrinsically linked to our understanding of the world as God's creation.
- The need for a deeper Christian understanding of the global economy.

26. Our Jubilee

Our economic principles should be ethically based. The Jubilee imperative points us to this. It is easy to note what ethical behaviour is, since in many ways such behaviour is a common sense approach. Our Lord's teaching and behaviour points us in the right direction. For example, the parable of the unforgiving servant (Matt.18:23-33) poses some challenges to current economic systems with regard to debt and forgiveness. Forgiveness in Matthew is relational and reciprocal. The point of this parable is clear. Forgiveness lies at the heart of our faith. We have received forgiveness from God first and God expects us to do likewise. Since the Kingdom of heaven in our parable is driven by forgiveness, our practice on earth will need to be likewise driven.

27. Waiting for the next crisis to change course, is not helpful. Constantly learning from crises is key for bringing about change and transformation.
28. To some extent we may have replaced or lost sight of the sense of regular common sense accountability to one another as churches. It is important to consider how the Jubilee periodic review can be more effectively integrated in our liturgies, our ecumenical partnerships and our planning and budgeting. This is an urgent priority.
29. The Jubilee is also practical. It is important to consider the role of the Sabbath in the context of the periodic review. Churches are encouraged to provide a sabbatical rhythm in the life of Judaeo-Christians (ie ourselves) as something connecting us with one of the significant roots of our faith and we can let this flow into our self-care and care for others who may work with and for us and for whom we too work.
30. A regular and thoughtful practice of fasting, as a time for reflection on our reliance on God's bountiful gifts of grace, also links us to the Sabbath. Furthermore, the spirituality of grace before meals is a reminder of the Hand as well as the hands that provide us with the blessing of food.

31. Our Neighbour - Part of our Lives

Who is our neighbour? Our neighbour is part of our life. This realisation will help provide a new way of thinking and an articulation of a theological imperative.

32. In each person we are called to recognise the image of God and the wideness of God's mercy. Love for our neighbour has no limits.
33. Our limited understanding does not give us the full knowledge of everything. We therefore need also to understand the experiences of our neighbour for a wider vision of God. Through such encounters we not only learn more of the distinctiveness of our own Christian faith but can be further strengthened to be confident and compassionate Christians in a pluralistic world.
34. It is liberating to reflect that our neighbour is also sustained by the grace of God, which is our life-giving source. The Porvoo understanding of the blessing given by the stranger enables the Churches to be united in responding to issues, such as, the diaspora, interfaith and migration and healing relationships. See also Porvoo resources on churches responding to conflict. <http://www.porvoocommunion.org/resources/general-resources/>

35. Our Relationships

The Porvoo Churches listen to God's invitation to be fashioned by God into a new ecumenical reality. They recognise that they do not live in a vacuum. Relationships are God's gift, so that there is life. Trusting relationships can transform thinking, work for the right of an appropriate livelihood, the right of good behaviour in society and the right of mindfulness for the common good.

36. We are part of a global common humanity. We share life with its happiness and worries, joys and struggles with people of different faiths, and no religion. See also Porvoo Keys for Interfaith Engagement <http://www.porvoocommunion.org/resources/general-resources/> We are sent by God to share and serve in a common society, as fellow citizens. We need to co-exist and speak and co-contribute to global problems locally.
37. In our church to church relationships it continues to be of importance for churches to understand each other's histories, experiences, pastoral

contexts and contacts. Mutual recognition of the integrity, sincerity and good faith of the other is an important factor in responding to situations of conflict in relationships.

38. Consultations and dialogue remain key instruments in holding the churches together.
39. Using a third party in conflict mediation has its classic example in Jesus Christ. It is by an act of God that we remain in communion. This rootedness in and the example of Christ is a resource the churches already have. See also Porvoo resources on churches responding to conflict. <http://www.porvoo communion.org/resources/general-resources/>

40. Our Money

Money should be seen in the light of the Gospel. It is an instrument of public good as well as for personal wellbeing, but not for promoting greed and oppression. As an instrument of public good, money can work appropriately in a diversity of areas, such as, medical research, cooperative cultural achievements, but this does not mean exploitation of each other out of greed and for systems to promote the idolisation of money, since this violates God's economy and does not enhance the whole.

41. Some Action Points for the Local Context

- Pray together
- Encourage Christians to devote some of their time (about 10%) to visit each other and share in taking care of each other's needs.
- Share good practice
- Re-connect with local communities; strengthen fair trade; buy as far as possible what is locally produced; speak out where necessary and re-claim ones voice.
- There is recognition that food banks are making a significant contribution, but at the same time this cannot become the norm, since those in need are in danger of becoming permanently dependent on such a system, unable to contribute with their potential to society and with

human dignity. Furthermore, with the rapid spread of food banks those governing may not give the issue of overcoming poverty, unemployment and homelessness the needed priority.

- Finland has developed a model of joining in an exchange of gifts – *time banks* for exchanging favours or caritative skills. It is an exchange of profit without money (local exchange and trading system LETS = time banks). One needs to be careful that the system is not abused.
- Explore how church land can be used for community development and the common good.
- Christians are challenged as consumers, since they are aware of the kind of consumer a Christian is called to be. Christians in the world of business and commerce are called to be agents of positive social transformation.
- Develop Advocacy Groups at different levels and also work for the freedom of people from debt.

Contributions:

Ethics and Economics: What has the Church got to do with it? *Prof Dr Ulrich Duchrow*, Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Heidelberg (Specialism: Ecumenical and Economic Theology);

An Analysis of Biblical and Current responses to Ethical Challenges in Europe: *The Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson*, Archbishop of Dublin, Church of Ireland;

The Ethical Challenge of Economic Investments and the Role of the Churches: *Dr Signe Jaubainen*, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, and Economist Pellervon Economic Research;

Social Responsibility, Christianity, Policy and the Danish Theologian
K.E.Løgstrup: *Prof Dr Niels Kærgård*, Professor in agricultural economics and policy, University of Copenhagen;

Human Rights and the Economic Crisis in Europe: *Mag. Elisabeta Kitanovic*, Executive Officer Human Rights, Conference of European Churches (CEC);

Economy of Life – The Possibility of a Public Theology in Europe: *The Revd Dr Stephen Plant*, Church of England, and Dean and Runcie Fellow at Trinity Hall, University of Cambridge & Affiliated Lecturer in Theology & Ethics Cambridge University;

Bible Studies: *Bishop Emeritus Dr Duleep de Chickera*, Anglican Church of Sri Lanka;

Panel Discussion Participants: *Mag. Elisabeta Kitanovic* (CEC); *The Revd Dr Stephen Plant* (Church of England); *The Revd Dr John Plant* (Church of England, and Church Relations Manager at Christian Aid);

Dr Donald Bruce of the Scottish Episcopal Church, and Managing Director of the Ethics Consultancy Edinethics Ltd and former Director, Society, Religion and Technology Project, delivered the sermon at the opening Eucharist and *The Rt Revd Martin Lind*, former bishop in the Church of Sweden and currently bishop of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain, delivered the sermon at the closing Eucharist.

The Consultation Hosts: the consultation was hosted by *Archbishop Dr Elmars Ernsts Rozitis*, The Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad. The Co-Chairs of the Porvoo Communion of Churches have expressed their thanks for the friendship and welcome given to all participants.

The Co-Chairs of the Porvoo Communion of Churches: *The Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson*, the Archbishop of Dublin, Church of Ireland and *The Rt Revd Dr Peter Skov-Jakobsen*, the Bishop of Copenhagen, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark.

An analysis of Biblical and Current Responses to Ethical Challenges in Europe Towards an Economics of Honour and an Integrity of Relationship Within and Without¹

Introduction

The backdrop of Biblical understanding and interpretation is essential in analysing all motivation and action from a Christian perspective. There is, however, a difficulty in looking at issues exclusively from the New Testament perspective, as is often the route taken. The: *What would Jesus do?* question has both a profundity and a superficiality about it all at the same time and we need to be aware of both. Our tradition is a complex and a composite tradition, incorporating as it does the Jewish and the Christian, standing as they do in some sort of continuum of derivation the one from the other but with a radical set of departures on the part of Christianity in terms of the doctrine of God. And God is and remains at the core of divine revelation and human motivation in the theological paradigm. We also live in a world which feeds our needs at every level and for which we have a responsibility in partnership with those of no known or disclosed faith. Therefore every economic question is potentially a theological question also. The West has seen the rise of what can only be called anti-faith. Historically the market has survived on trust and on relationship. Today there is no relationship between the producer and the seller. A parallel development is that trust is now greater in the things that you touch and see than in the things and the people you do not see. Hence a virulent secular literalism has replaced the inquisitive hopefulness of Romans 8, a part of the Epistle that teaches us that hope is in the things not seen.

Christianity in the West incorporates also, as it has developed in history and in time, the Greek philosophical understanding of reason and abstraction as tools of interpretation along with the incarnation and humanity inherited from the earliest formulation of the tradition when it was a radical stepping out and away from Judaism. Throw into this also the imperial metropolitan understanding of power and of place, as the Constantinian settlement takes shape, and cities become the only places which mater. Somewhere along the line, the ideas of both of these monotheisms, Judaism and Christianity, influence the creation of Islam

1 Paper given at the Porvoo consultation on economy and ethics in Bad Boll 2014

as another radically different religion within the same broad family. Somehow, we Christians find ourselves ditching the antipathy that both other Abrahamic Faiths have towards usury; we seem happy to service both debts and mortgages without questioning the economic morality of this practice. We live on money that is not ours and never will be. Ironically, our picture of fiscal Judaism is that extremist image left to us of Shylock the Venetian moneylender, through the lens of William Shakespeare, writing at a time when anti-Semitism was both rife and normative. Questions of theology are never far from conversation. Events in the world around us together with the economic implications of such events are not either excluded or immune from theological exploration. Supply and demand are not trading equally in the market of today. Contrary to the received wisdom that, if you leave it to the markets, the financial system itself will force the markets to get it right, the cyclical error has been to lend long and to borrow short from the Inter Banking Market, as Archbishop Justin Welby has pointed out.

Economics and ecology

Economics and ecology, therefore, can also engage readily with the primary arguments common to all religious systems, if we, as Christians for example, care to make the case for them:

- the dignity of the human person, whether able or disabled;
- the relationship of the person with the person's neighbour;
- the relationship of the person and the person's neighbour with God, as understood by either party and by both parties as the lifeblood of community and values within the flow of the relationships of responsibility which we are called to nurture and to serve. Survival itself brings together the interests of the self and The Other.

It is considerations such as this that catapulted me to look first at the seeming absence of a theology of suffering and martyrdom in the West and which now catapult me to ask about the presence or absence of a readily-understood theology of economics in Europe and the West. This further prompts me to look briefly at the range of questions that this reality raises for us as we begin to probe such a quest against some of the most obvious of texts within Judaeo-Christianity. I am, in many ways, more interested in the scope for a popular appreciation of this understanding among people who buy and sell than in anything more conceptual. Secondly, I am interested to see if we in The Porvoo Communion might one day formulate a range of questions and answers around ethical economics. These could be taken up and used by the members of our respective churches to challenge the

systems that might well suit many of us but need regularly to be assessed against a much wider framework of values. This is because economics has become the shop-window of ethical questions. Our lives every day are tied up with buying and selling. This makes economics, at its most basic level, the symptom and the carrier of wider questions about the integrity and the integration of human living.

A wider framework of reference

I was recently part of a gathering that was exploring martyrdom in the context of the life of Christians in the Middle East, or what is left of such life there. The speaker suggested forcefully that the almost inevitable use of Western theological texts and studies in the theological formation of clergy and people in the Middle East had left both those who are suffering and those, like us, who want to stand in solidarity with them, equipped with no real theology either of suffering or of martyrdom. It is not so much that we do not know what we are talking about; it is the more dangerous situation that would be talking about what we do not know. And we are not listening, precisely because there is too little reflective and analytical theology coming out of the region for two main reasons: the first and historic reality is that they had no capacity to develop it once they bought our version of it; the second is that direct and tangible experience inevitably has priority over reflection at a time of intense brutality, suffering and death.

The speaker suggested three components of a theology of martyrdom:

- *Obedience* to the Lord, the physical rather than the metaphorical taking up of the cross of Christ in every day life;
- *Hope* to the effect that the world should see the hope that is in us and wonder at what the source of it might be and conclude that it must question us more in order to find out about Jesus Christ;
- *Blessing* in adversity, a double-edged sword: what suffering itself teaches about being blessed in the suffering and what it teaches about being a blessing to others because of, in and through the suffering.

Obedience, hope and blessing. I just wonder if we can hold these before our eyes as we reflect on the conundrum of a theology of honour in our economic dealings with one another at home, in Europe and worldwide. We are bound by structures of power, of buying and of selling, of information and of knowledge to such people; how we act and react will affect their lives even before it affects our lives. My hope is to paint a wider context and to raise the issue of whether we, in fact, have a more coherent theology of money than we have of martyrdom. This

instance and this example are, of course, radically different; but we cannot claim that we do not know the context. After all, this time, we have created that context.

Context

The context of economics is the context of ecology. Often we ourselves access this context in terms of *convenience and choice* both of which are enhanced and maximized for the few. Those whose business it is to make the market work for as many people as can pay for it, access it in terms of *production and distribution* of what will sell, in a highly sophisticated world of product tracking of consumer preferences. All of us must proof this market in terms of *dignity and justice*, mindful that neglect of The Other is an action performed knowingly to the detriment of The Other and unknowingly to the detriment of ourselves. This is because of the destructive selfishness that is already and always inherent in the conflictual paradigm of The Self and The Other and because of the improper aggression that is always there in today's market forces. So, there is need to add to the above description of how the world works something rather different, the doctrine of *attentive altruism*, putting oneself in the place of The Other and thinking beyond rather than inside ourselves. It involves doing this in a listening and caring way for others, hence my use of the term: *attentive altruism*.

None of the things that I have said in this paragraph to date has anything specific or exclusive to do with religion. It is a long time since the prediction was made that, by 2020, 50% of the world's population will live in cities. This was not a comfortable or anodyne prediction of a settled suburban domesticity which many of us enjoy but one of more and more people pushing into the denuded and dangerous centres and into the underprovided and underserviced outskirts of cities, as we know them, for the reasons that we know all too well: displacement, enforced emigration, warfare, slavery, human trafficking, endemic exploitation as well as the other more predictable motivations of work, education, personal opportunity, family and children. Even the poorest of people hope for choice, whether it be the hope of enhanced choice for themselves or, more likely, their children. This draws them magnetically to the cities of the world. This hope also draws them ineluctably into the market-driven economy that very quickly frames the choice and the craving of a child, for example, who wants a mobile phone or of an adult who wants trainers – or indeed the other way round. Advertizing binds rich and poor in a spiral of exploitation as well as of opportunity. Urbanization concentrates the funnel effect of the market. The internet age has dispersed this urban mentality right across the world so that as well as talking about the global village we need to talk also about the global city.

We need go no further than contemporary Europe to see how rampant individualism along with the ever-shifting understanding of community and nationalism have opened up, once again in our own time, a new form of explosive politics. The concentration of wealth and dominance in cities has funnelled and exacerbated the problematic aspects of comparative inequality because, in a very concentrated space, people see both what others have and what others do not have. And the common space is not commonly agreed space or commonly functioning space. The inequalities are therefore very pressurised, often to the point of toxicity; and that brings us back to ecology.

The emergence of narrow nationalisms, as manifested in the United Kingdom in the Referendum on Scottish Independence, is an interesting case in point. I suggest that had the vote gone the other way, there might have been a cascade of other burgeoning nationalisms within the UK: Northern Ireland, Wales and strategic parts of England – has the money held out when people did their calculations. Northern Ireland and Scotland, for example, remain very heavily dependent on subsidies from Westminster in order to tick on, so even in this context devolution and dreams of independence are relative. Meanwhile, another facet of this is that the free movement of peoples across Europe is being called into question in the new politics being played out again in the UK between the Conservative party and UKIP ahead of the forthcoming General Election. These are also projected into arguments about Britain's continuing membership of Europe. A further factor in the shift of understanding of nations in the West is the vulnerability of younger members of the diaspora who may have been born abroad but are readily convinced of the need to fight the values of the West from within the borders of the East. The recruitment of jihadists for IS over the past months from the Islamic diaspora across Europe and the ready market for women and children trafficked from the Middle East in Europe and elsewhere is the most flagrant manifestation of this trend which is fast spiralling out of both comprehension and control.

The other – we need the other and the others needs us

We always need to be careful not to demonize The Other because The Other is also our neighbour; at the same time we owe it to ourselves and to others to be aware of dangers and threats to the best of civilization as we have custodianship of it in our time. The global market, therefore, is not in any sense confined to the colourful selection of Kenyan beans or Ethiopian coffee or Sicilian flowers on sale in Tesco or anywhere else; it has its dark and dirty side and it is extremely sophisticated and seductive as well as being extremely destructive of dignity and justice. The mantra, like the international arms trade itself is: Where there is a willing seller, there is a willing buyer. We see that the global market both connects us

with The Other and disconnects us from The Other. The argument from personal convenience, not from personal need, is to all intents and purposes impossible to challenge where the buyer has no knowledge of or relationship to the seller or the producer. The trust to the self-regulation and the self-restoration of The Market has lying at its heart the fallacy of a set of relationships which do not and cannot exist. We live in a world in which private unaccountable entities have an objective wealth larger than many nation states and are objectively accountable to nobody.

Our own context

The criticism that was flung back and rightly at those of us who were Westerners in the discussion of martyrdom is that we have no longer a clear understanding of the contexts out of which Judaeo-Christian thought grew as we write our theologies. I wonder what we know about the contexts in which today we live our own Christian discipleships and vocations – in the Europe that is our homeland. If I look at my own country, Ireland, a country renowned for religious observance world-wide, the value systems that are bought to bear on economic recovery themselves bear little relation to any agreed doctrine of the common good or sustained care of the vulnerable and needy. In a time of economic collapse, the poor are the first to become poorer. Throughout the time of collapse and recovery they become cumulatively poorer and fall further and further behind what is sustainable as a life with dignity. A number of circumstances has resulted in the *de facto* disintegration of respect for three categories of public authority in Irish society: the police, the banks and the churches. I do not want to suggest that these are automatic sources of personal and civic values but that they have, for a long time, been expected to carry and to secure a climate and a context for such values. Each of them, for different reasons, has been subjected to ‘discreditation,’ if I may use that word. This means that citizens are largely ‘on their own’ in survival and in reconstruction of a society which very quickly transformed itself in a highly consumerized way and changed out of all recognition for a small island economy because money gave it choice. The issues remain: What decisions were made on the back of such choice and, like the Dream of Joseph, what have they left us to feed on in the lean years, what energy can we muster to do things differently?

Some biblical ideas

The framework of all Christian thinking and acting is eschatological. We have long ago forgotten to be excited by The End and we have largely sold out to the scaremongering of Late Night Television and faltering Millenarianism. 2000 has been and gone; we are older but many, and I suggest most, of us are still here. To

my mind, and it is indeed timely that we consider these things as we approach the Season of Advent, The End is intended to be a point of energy rather than a point of destruction for Christian people, whatever the background in Second Temple Judaism. The Four Last Things: Judgement, Death, Heaven and Hell have the purpose of fulfilling the urgency of preparation and anticipation of The Second Coming of Jesus Christ as we make ready, in however hasty and consumerized a way, for The First Coming at Christmas of the child of Bethlehem and of the child of Mary. Christianity has to grapple both with the historicity of events relating to the earthly life of Jesus and the on-going application of these in our lives as Christian disciples. I speak of both because both are pivotal and integral to our understanding of The End – which, of course, is also the framework of our understanding of The Beginning.

As we learn from the Gospel witnesses, The Beginning is far from simple – and for a sophisticated and consumerized society this is actually a good thing because it forces those of us who take it for granted to be ready to explain it. Taken all together, the Gospel witness ties together human life with divine creativity: the child of Bethlehem is the Word who was in the beginning. The outcome of divine and human creativity and co-existence is within the Trinity of the dynamic creation of the world. Therefore, through the divine gift of re-creation – by repentance, forgiveness, redemption and restoration – Jesus in particular is the person and point of reference that interprets and informs The End. Finality ought to be seen as the end *towards which* all expressions of goodness, under divine providence, in this life on earth tend, rather than the end *at which* being made in the image and likeness of God is destroyed. Both the Protestant and the Roman Catholic traditions in contemporary Europe grapple with this dilemma as part of our inheritance of interpretation of the Scriptures, through their attempts in history to explain and expound this often tormented truth. Sadly both of them are remembered, by those who feel disenfranchised from God by religion itself, most for their instincts to suppress the best intentions of the vulnerable and un-theological in the humanly-generated battle of judgementalism between earth and heaven and heaven and hell. We need always to be careful of the souls of the *attentively altruistic* in whatever Faith tradition, as we understand faith, and in the yardsticks of achievement which we apply at any given time.

And then there is Mary. Let us never underestimate the courage and danger of Mary in hailing the conception of Jesus as Godly. We tend to take this for granted in a story-book version of Christianity, but the pulse of restorative justice and creative anarchy that runs through the hymn *Magnificat* ought not to be underestimated. It is an exuberance and a compassion that, as St Luke informs us with all of the sensitivity of a good artist and a good doctor, will pierce her heart in the fullness of time and in the experience both of her and of her Son.

A window in one of the churches in my diocese depicts the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem with Mary leading the king and the donkey into the city. In this one image I saw the combined purpose of the Mother of God and the Son of God. It is, as my Middle Eastern interlocutor of two weeks ago so wincingly reminded us, through suffering that blessing is disclosed. It has been well argued that the only hermeneutic of Gospel is a community living it out. We see this in operation in the Acts of the Apostles where there is a sharing of goods in common and the basis of diaconal care of the poor and the needy. The Epistle of James likewise urges care for the poor and sees them as special in the eyes of God. The Sermon on the Mount in St Matthew 5-7 also addresses aspects of economy and economic justice, not only in its radical Beatitudes in chapter 5 but in the very strong parallel drawn between the Jewish and the Christian requirements of prayer, almsgiving and fasting in ways that are seen only to God but which are also tangible responses to the needs of others when lived out in a contemporary context. The Old Testament prohibitions on usury and the provision for Jubilee and the cancellation of all debt in the fiftieth year are also important as is the recognition at the heart of the story of Jezebel's covetous desire for Naboth's Vineyard in Kings to the effect that what belongs to the poor actually does belong to the poor, whoever you are and however much you happen to want it. There is a rich tapestry of Biblical justice and responsibility in both Testaments around the issues with which we are dealing and it has been there for a very long time.

Wealth and poverty

As we work our way through the Biblical material, we find very rapidly that it will not, can not, never could answer our questions for us. The stories of the Patriarchs in Genesis offer approval of wealth and with this goes the sanction given by those in all ages who have emphasized that the existing order is divinely ordained. Already we can see that Bible and theology and institution become rapidly intermingled. 1 Kings 3:13 argues that wealth is a gift and a blessing, particularly when it is not sought and yet there is instantly a dilemma in that religious thought tends towards the teaching that true wealth is spiritual. It is from this conviction that there emerges a parallel consistent strain to the tradition that the love of money is a destructive force in dealing with the goodness of God's creation as manifested through money and through created things.

It is at this point that we need to introduce the principle articulated by St Paul in The Letter to the Romans Chapter 1:18-25, the idolatry which is inherent in substituting the creature for the Creator. Time and again St Augustine returns to this text to point up the reality of sin. Sadly a post-Freudian world has over-concentrated on the next two verses around issues to do with human sexuality.

The Pauline argument about idolatry as taken up by Augustine points to the wilful incapacity of men and women to trust to the self-disclosure of God in the creation which is his gift in love and in pain to those whom he has created. This is the ethical gift and the response to it is seen as moral cynicism. It is the assumption to take to oneself the capacity to make an exclusive and final judgement in relation to God's gift of God's self in creation and in incarnation by limiting it to one's own in a way that is private and excludes others from their share in it. *Their conduct, therefore, is indefensible; knowing God, they have refused to honour him as God, or to render him thanks. Hence all their thinking has ended in futility, and their misguided minds are plunged in darkness.* (Romans 1:20, 21) Setting to one side the rhetorical hyperbole of St Paul, there are nonetheless shafts of light in this passage on what sin actually is. Sin is alienation from God and sin, in the context of an economic theology, is a composite alienation from God, from neighbour and from The Other who becomes a non-person through this wilful and gleeful alienation. All of this has a modern manifestation in that the focus of Western trust today is in goods. This gives the ancient text from Romans a fresh and piquant resonance.

To my mind, all of this is very important as we seek to construct an ethical economics. I know that the passage from Romans 1 has nothing specific to say about money. But it points to the temptation to enshrine as reality on earth the very opposite of the eschatological upside-down theology of the Son of God in entering Jerusalem as King and on a donkey. The substitution of the self as creature for God as Creator is surely understandable to us in the banking crisis, the construction crisis, and all of those domino effect scenarios whereby bankers used the savings of the trusting pensioner in the casino of globalized finance. Time itself no longer matters in the world of economics; moving money around the spinning globe and bringing it in and out of real and tangible existence and non-existence is what matters; it is pressed into the service of making the creature a bigger creature than it already is, for profit and self-interest. Surely the vaguely remembered Nick Gleeson is the Patron Saint of such Profligacy. The terrifying thing is that the economic boom fed into the greed of each one of us, as we imagined we could make money by serving ourselves alone and the secular Gnosticism of our own financial acumen. And the governmental institutions of the day did everything they could to encourage us in this direction. I draw us back to my early articulation of the phrase *attentive altruism*. The ecology of economics draws us into an appropriate and respectful accommodation to and with the other parts of God's creation.

Economic energy

Another insight of St Augustine is that the most basic of energies is out and about whether we do anything good or bad with it. It simply is energy itself. Illustrating this to a congregation of faithful dockworkers in the basilica at Hippo Regis, he speaks to them of the sewage of which they have to dispose – only as an illustration. He says that in tight and close neighbourhoods people have the choice to throw their waste into the street below and, as it were, forget about it; by doing this they pollute the environment and the ecology cumulatively for everyone. The alternative is to dig a channel and divert this excess so as to use it for the nurturing of a kitchen garden and thereby for the growing of one's own vegetables. It is a matter of appropriately informed choice. Interestingly, this type of choice is a mixture of self-interest and the interest of another, one's neighbour and it is for the greater good. Perhaps St Augustine, so strong an influence on Martin Luther whose 500th Anniversary comes up soon, deserves to be lifted out of the irrelevance to which a modern world has consigned him even for such an insight as this alone.

The principle behind this, of course, is the *bene uti malo* principle: the good use of what is bad. There are, of course, serious caveats and limitations in applying this to the use of money because I am not arguing that money is intrinsically and of itself bad. In the Judaeo-Christian tradition, nonetheless, it has what we might call a bad smell. Prophets such as Micah (chapter 6.10 following) point to the capacity of wealth to attract fraud, injustice and oppression. To this list Liberation Theology would insist that we add alienation, exclusion and indignity. The Letter of James 5:4 in particular takes up this strain in the New Testament not least because the theological thrust of James seems to be the urgent need to assert that deeds do matter, when faced with the heady triumph of *faith alone* as the inheritance of Resurrection. The institutionalization of the church combined with the clustering of episcopal authority and secular power around major cites of the Empire in the Constantinian era did nothing to ease anxiety about God and money. In many ways the rise of the monastic movements in the fourth and the fifth centuries in the desert areas outside the security of militarism and economics points to the spiritual rebellion against worldly regimes. They always must run hand in hand with spiritual obedience to the divine regime and in this way be accountable in a way in which they are not. We must add to this the insight of Leo the First of Rome who described the poor as The Gospel; this is an instinct alive and well in his contemporary successor Francis bishop of Rome.

Poverty

The Western and Northern Hemisphere paradigm of good stewardship has to do with the reflation of the capitalist ideal rather than with the Biblical notion in Genesis of care for the earth and all its creatures. We are told all the time that we dare not fail and so we have created the euphemism of quantitative easing to carry us through. We also have the strange notion that we can globally spend our way out of recession. As production and as markets move further and further East to India and to China, we are faced with the conundrum as articulated by George W Bush: 'Why is it that 'imports' always have to come from abroad?' It is a question which defies logic as it is expressed but it speaks from within an economics of closed borders and emanates from a country's self-understanding as being big enough to be able to supply its own needs independent of anyone outside, namely the USA.

Export from the Northern Hemisphere is very quickly tied up with ethical arguments around the arms trade and drones. Those on the ground would argue that arms supplied by Western powers to prop up previous regimes have found themselves in the ebb and flow of the politics which is the child of war and sooner or later is in the hands of today's insurrectionists. These weapons were, after all, built to last. Anyone visiting Africa will see that China and Arabia march hand in hand; the Chinese engineers build the roads and the Arabic traders move in to the markets with the imitation Western goods; and so the streets of Kaduna in Nigeria, for example, are festooned with people wearing polyester Manchester United, Liverpool and Chelsea football jerseys in the sweltering dry heat. I wonder what Amos might have made of that priestly category of quantitative easing! There is no reason to be starry-eyed about the European Union either. It began life as the European Economic Area and regularly I hear arguments that the Euro Crisis of today can be blamed on the premature admission of Greece to the Euro-zone. It is always hard to know if the Euro will stand the test of time or whether it will fall victim to the narrow nationalisms that have not gone away from a rather discontented Europe. Again, we are told that it cannot and must not fail.

Individual poverty when lived in squalor and disadvantage is never a positive choice. It is a bye-product of structural and societal failure along with being the result of a number of choices either made by or enforced upon individuals by personal circumstances and weaknesses, seductive advertising, or all of the negatives forced on people in the considerations which I outlined earlier around warfare, displacement and exploitation. A global market brings the rush for off-loading what is produced somewhere elsewhere. And so, from time to time perhaps we like George W Bush we ourselves wonder why imports always seem to have to come in from abroad! From the psalms we see a very clear connection

between poverty on the part of The Other as the direct product and outcome of the oppressor (psalm 72:4) and of those who feel they have a righteous claim on God (psalm 86:1-2 and 14). In The Law there is also the provision for leaving gleanings for the poor, for example in Leviticus 19:15, and this is at the root of the beautiful story of Ruth, the immigrant and refugee who is woven into the lineage of Jesus the Child of Bethlehem. But again we should not be starry eyed: the Year of Jubilee was never enacted as a practical reality in the life of Judaism; it has remained a theological concept and an humanitarian ideal. The Gospel approach to poverty as such is heavily overlarded by eschatology and the reversal of fortune on spiritual principles in the Kingdom of God, partially disclosed and partially withheld until the End Time. And so we are faced with language such as foretaste, and the danger with such words when taken out of the context of spiritual and religious expression is that for millions of people they begin to sound like fantasy. There are various different expectations set out in the New Testament. The generalized picture of Jesus's preaching of the Kingdom is that it brings a reversal of fortunes, rather in the idiom of the Song of Mary in St Luke chapter 1 and in the idiom of The Sermon on the Mount in St Matthew chapters 5-7 and again in those very complex parables of The End which come in the latter chapters of St Matthew and St Luke ahead of the narratives of Crucifixion and Resurrection. In such a reversal, those for whom hunger and exclusion have become the societal norm will replace those for whom the state of being rich has become the default setting of neglect and not even noticing The Other, see for example the parable of Dives and Lazarus. We need, however, always to be aware that a parable itself is a theological tool rather than a divine policy document or a daily newspaper. It is a literary device designed to give warning and encourage a change of heart, often violently. The direct challenge which Jesus is reported to have presented to the Rich Young Ruler is somewhat different; it leads Jesus to conclude for all who hear him that it is so difficult for those who have to set aside what they have for the sake of this intangible Kingdom of God.

Some aspects of the contemporary dilemma

We are surely left with the frustration that so much of this material does not suit our purpose. We seek refuge in the parallel generalization that it was crafted in a world very different from our world that did not envisage the sort of economic sub-structure and super-structure with which we are forced to deal as daily realities. The questions from ecology, however, are not new nor indeed are the questions from justice, nor I suggest is consumerism new either. The range and speed of distribution and the instant sparkle of acquisitiveness are new in their range and ready availability on line and everywhere. Choice such as this points up gross

inequality. But I would nonetheless have thought that the range of trade under successive Empires, and brought to the height of precision and sophistication under the Roman Empire which was contemporaneous with at least the New Testament and which facilitated the 'going viral' of Christianity primarily through existing Jewish communities in strategic Mediterranean cities, ought not to be underestimated. Neither primitivism nor chic is a modern invention. The global visual and audial communications reality, however, is new and presents its own ethical issues, as well we know, and it is not going away. It simply will become easier and easier to access more and more information and goods - for those who can afford it.

The ethical relationship in turning a want into a need and in turning such a manufactured and contrived need into a price-range for a particular product is a genuine problem. So also is the contrivance of obsolescence for something that, because of quality controls, is built to last. Much of the embarrassment of the Irish economic collapse was posited on the competitiveness around new homes with all of the sophistications of high construction specifications and the attendant home improvements which went along with this – but either these homes are in the wrong places or people have lost the jobs which facilitated their income stream, so people have, by bitter experience, become much more cautious of the laws of supply and demand and in effect driving the next property bubble by the greed and fear which, to whatever degree, drive all markets.

The ethical relationship between conditions of growth and production in the natural world – agriculture and fisheries – and the convenience of purchase of such food for some while the food itself literally travels past millions of hungry and starving individuals and communities across the world in its journey towards high-end consumerism is another pulsating dilemma. The ethical question at the heart of this dilemma has to do with the parting company of any coherent relationship between cost and value and value and worth. The earth and the sea are perhaps referred to in the Scriptures in what seem to many to be romantic terms but they have a life of their own and their life is a gift to us and they respond generously and unpredictably to our setting of our needs. The exhaustion of natural resources is in part a spin-off of greater population of the earth itself. But it is more than that, namely the pre-meditated sourcing 'whatever it takes' of something material somewhere on earth for the gratification of someone whom the producer will never see. This very anonymity in the process of trading I would argue introduces The Other and the actual invisibility of The Other into the equation of economics as a contemporary exercise. The difficulty is that it suits too many of the people who make the decisions which affect for good and for ill the lives of others who very quickly become The Other.

Prospect

Ethical challenges in Europe and indeed anywhere else are global and are interconnected. Not only can we no longer claim not to know anything about what is happening; we can almost inevitably see it as it happens on our 'phone. The orange jump suits of Guantanamo Bay are now the uniform of death of those being beheaded by IS on YouTube. The arms trade and the oil trade certainly played their part in stirring the now systemic hatred of the Northern Hemisphere in the Middle East; and the rather ignominious crawling away of troops both British and American from Afghanistan shows us that super-powers are no longer what they thought they were and that war is bankrupting of democracies as well as being individually destructive of individual lives. Economics and ecology need to be held more closely together not only because of climate change but because of the human ecology which is vulnerable at every point in the spectrum to the sophistication and the cynicism which go into sales and marketing. Perhaps even prosperity revolts, however. We hear of people like Bill Gates setting up Foundations in order to do something *attentively altruistic* with their money; we see Madonna physically and tangibly supporting children in need; we hear Bono recording afresh to meet The Ebola Crisis music written thirty years ago to raise money to meet The Famine in Ethiopia. And all of this is catching: people with significant wealth are, in an increasing trickle of numbers, not leaving it to their children but forcing them to make their own way in the world and, in their own lifetimes, are relinquishing their own wealth out of principle or out of boredom or out of panic – who knows? We are, however, still, as a friend of mine expresses it: only tipping the iceberg ...

The Possibility of a Public Theology in Europe¹

Before I can offer a constructive answer to the question of whether a public theology in Europe is possible or desirable, I will need to clear two questions from my throat: ‘Whose public theology’ and ‘Which Europe?’² Clearing one’s throat is something that is difficult to do elegantly and in the first part of this paper, I am going to have to make things messier before I can hope to make things more clear. I will need to identify several challenges that stand between Christians and the possibility of clear thinking about a ‘public theology in Europe’. Beyond these challenges, I think it is possible, however, to be cautiously hopeful, and at least clear, about the role that European Christians may play a role in the democratic life of the European Union, in other European institutions, as well as in European nation states.

Whose public theology?

The term ‘public theology’ has two possible meanings: the first particular and the second general. We may call these two meanings ‘public theology A’ and ‘public theology B’. The term ‘public theology’ first appeared in an analysis of the work of the American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr (1892–1971) by the sociologist Martin Marty in 1974³ in a study of ‘two kinds of civil religion’. On the one hand, Marty maintained, there was a civil religion in which many American denominations and religions held in common the ‘religious aspect’ of ‘Americanism’. In contrast to this Marty used the term ‘public theology’ to speak of those who drew on overtly biblical and doctrinal sources to: speak to public issues, presuming that at least some of the terms used in these sources were both publicly accessible whether one was a believer or not and indispensable to the shaping of the common life.⁴

Understood in this way ‘public theology A’ developed as a conscious alternative on the one hand to the public assertion by a particular faith tradition of the purported universal implications of its truth claims. On the other hand, ‘public

1 Porvoo Consultation Bad Boll, Germany, 28/11/14

2 The form of these questions is intended as a wry reference to Alasdair MacIntyre’s *Whose justice? Which rationality?* (London: 1988).

3 The description that follows of ‘public theology A’ is indebted to Max L. Stackhouse, *God and Globalization Vol. 4: Globalization and Grace*, (New York/London: 2007), chapter 2: ‘The Approach’, pp. 77–116.

4 Stackhouse, pp. 87–8.

theology A' intended to contradict accounts of public debate that denied all possibility of transcendence, and held that religious reasoning had no place in public life. Marty's term, public theology, took off, especially in the United States, where it flourished first under Niebuhr's reputational patronage, and then in the glow of Martin Luther King Junior's exemplary exercise of it. Public theology A is premised on the Niebuhrian conviction⁵ that political parties are of superficial interest to the Church, which is, rather, to work at the level of the religious, social, cultural and familial traditions that exist prior to states and to which government ought to be accountable.

An important critique of public theology A has emerged that has proved surprisingly (to me at least) appealing and durable in English-speaking moral philosophy and theology, but which has had little impact in continental Europe. In this critique, which has two distinctive strands, Public theology A is taken to represent the capitulation of the Christian tradition to the liberal state. In one strand, associated with Alasdair MacIntyre, the error was made at the Reformation when the Aristotelian virtue theory that had underpinned Christendom was irrevocably harmed by the advent of Protestant individualism. In another strand, associated most strongly with Stanley Hauerwas under the oddly paired influence of MacIntyre and the Anabaptist John Howard Yoder, the fault lies with the Constantinian settlement that followed the edict of Milan in 313. For MacIntyre, public theology A is a form of moral barbarism; it is relativist and ultimately incoherent. For Hauerwas, whose biggest book, *With the Grain of the Universe*, is a point by point rebuttal of Niebuhr, public theology A is anti-Christian, nourished at the teat of an ill-defined liberalism which it is the job of Christians of moral character to confront and resist. In the Hauerwasian critique the Church is the one true *res publica*, the true public thing, in straight competition with the liberal state, which seeks to domesticate the strange Word of the Gospel by coopting it into civil society, a role the Churches are only too grateful to accept. But a public theology that colludes with such a state has made a Faustian pact that must inevitably result in its interior secularization and dissolution. It is a line ably advocated by at least one leading moral theologian of the Church of England, Sam Wells.

5 Reinhold Niebuhr remains something of a mystery for European theologians, few of whom read him. But at one time he was far the best-known theologian in the United States. He was a second-generation German immigrant and remained in touch with European theology at a time when American theology was rather parochial. His most important 'idea' is captured in the title of *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (London: 1963), which advocated a 'Christian realism' that acknowledged the melancholy social fact that groups always seek their own interest and that only individuals can behave morally. This helps explain why Niebuhr declined Luther King's request to support the Civil Rights Movement.

A second type of public theology A has had greater purchase in European moral theology and though it is distinct from the Niebuhrian form of public theology, it shares some features with it. Like the first kind of public theology A, Catholic Social Thought (CST)⁶ proceeds on the basis that what the Bible teaches has value for all people. But CST also entails, in its understanding of the natural law, a further foundation for the conviction that Church's teaching is for all, and not just for Christians. Later scholastic interpretations of Thomas Aquinas gave natural law a more prominent place than Thomas himself gave it, and it was this Neo-Scholastic version of Thomas that came to provide the basic scaffolding on which CST has been built. After 1870, when the Papacy lost the last territories where it had held temporal power, CST emerged surprisingly quickly as an alternative mode of ecclesial action in the public square. One only has to look at the flag of the European Union to grasp the impact of that influence: it is little appreciated that the circle of stars on the blue background were intentionally there to evoke the diadem that adorns the Virgin, who is associated with the colour blue in Catholic iconography. Four elements of CST were essentially incorporated into the principles of the early European Economic Community, principles summed up in the Catholic Church's own summary of CST:

The permanent principles of the Church's social doctrine constitute the very heart of Catholic social teaching. These are the principles of: the dignity of the human person... which is the foundation of all the other principles and content of the Church's social doctrine; the common good; subsidiarity; and solidarity. These principles, the expression of the whole truth about man known by reason and faith, are born of "the encounter of the Gospel message and of its demands summarized in the supreme commandment of love of God and neighbour in justice with the problems emanating from the life of society".⁷

One of the unsung architects of a Europe indebted to CST is the German Jesuit theologian Alfred Delp. Delp, a competent sociologist, became a colleague of Helmuth James von Moltke in the Kreisau Circle, with whom he was executed in January 1945. The Kreisau group aimed to incorporate in their planning for post-war Germany representatives of all churches, together with representatives from the academy, law, the trades Unions, socialists and others. But it was Delp who introduced elements such as the four core principles from CST into their plans for a Federal Germany and a European Economic Union of states that would so integrate the European Market that it war between them would be-

6 See Michael P. Hornsby-Smith, *An Introduction to Catholic Social Thought* (Cambridge:2006) and Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (London: 2004).

7 *Compendium*, op.cit., p. 81: the citation refers to Paul VI's *Iustitiam et Pacem* (1976).

come unthinkable.⁸ The Kreisau circle's collective political philosophy, a kind of ecumenical Christian humanism, was in this way, strongly inflected by CST, which came to shape, through members of the group who became influential in German and European post-war political reconstruction.

Public theology B, in contrast, we may define as a term used relatively loosely as a synonym for political theology or any theology addressed to the 'public square'. The looseness of this use of the term makes it correspondingly useless as a descriptor. If public theology is simply any theology spoken into the public square we have no means of knowing whether it is possible or desirable, what kind of theology is being undertaken, what its ecclesial origins are, or what features characterize it. Unless we want to claim that all public engagements, all public statements of a theological nature are equally good, regardless of what they say or who says them, we need to be specific.

Which Europe?

The second question that needs to be cleared from the throat is the question 'which Europe?' Norman Davies, the British historian, tells a story of two 17th century European travellers, one French, the other Russian, who set out to travel to the other end of their continent. They met in Warsaw, where the Russian thought he had arrived in the West but which the Frenchman believed to be Europe's Eastern-most edge. Europe is more than a geographical expression for the peninsula that obtrudes beyond the East Asian steppes: it is an idea, an ideological construct, whose shape and content is disputed. Europe is multiply split by invisible cultural boundaries. It is religiously divided, East and West, into Orthodox and Catholic, the Catholic world being split again North and South into Protestant and Catholic. Europe's linguistic boundaries by and large coincide with religious ones; but with exceptions of immense importance, not least ecumenically – Romania and Greece being key examples. Its South-Western corner is culturally separated by the legacy, visible in coffee drinking habits and much else, of Ottoman suzerainty. Its North Western corner was shaped by early industrialization. The line of viticulture generally coincides with Roman occupation and is a further important cultural dividing line running West to East.

The cultural boundaries that divide Europe often coincide in ways that commentators are blithely inattentive to with political boundaries, for example between Orthodox and Catholic areas of the Ukraine. For the most part, however, what we mean by Europe is the largest political territory of them all, the outward fac-

8 See Stephen J. Plant, *Taking Stock of Bonhoeffer*, (London: 2014), pp. 3-19.

ing border of the European Union, the Europe for which Timothy Garton Ash, a particularly acute British observer of Europe, has coined the term EEurope. For European countries beyond its outer edge EEurope is an exclusive club that simultaneously attracts and repels. There are, of course, other Europes – including the Council of Europe (not to be confused with the European Council) of which a vanishingly small number of Europeans are meaningfully aware.

Finally, which version of EEurope – of the European Union - are we considering as the receptacle for a public theology? Do we mean the German EEurope, which goes to great lengths to disperse power and authority, which is economically vibrant and fiscally cautious and which is punctilious about the rule of law, but which is receptive to Christian humanism? Do we mean the British EEurope whose legal systems (there are three and they differ significantly in Scotland England and Ireland) struggle to comport with European legal systems, whose press are the least regulated in the Union, whose multi-national political and multi-religious mix is frequently misunderstood and whose essentially consensual political culture is also undergoing a transformation – it is too soon to speculate about how important – to one based on protest and anger directed at EEurope? Or do we mean the highly regulated, highly centralized, highly bureaucratic and above all aggressively secularizing French EEurope, whose historically neutered parliament has recently started to flex its wasted muscles?

On the possibility of a public theology in Europe

With my throat cleared, perhaps I can now make my voice heard. Europe is a contested ideological construct shaped for better and worse by Christian religion. The first kind of Public theology A may have had some influence on the mode of the Church's political engagement, but it has not been typical in Europe. The 'Niebuhrian' form of Public theology A is an export from another political jurisdiction and another political culture and an easy target for theological criticism from several quarters. On the other hand, public theology B is as substantial as morning mist on windy day; any way in which Christians are to engage with politics at a European level is going to be more clearly defined by its attachment to a particular ecclesial tradition – as is the case with CST – or by its attachment to a moral theory such as virtue ethics – before we can know what it is we're discussing.

In the final part of my paper I want to suggest how Lutheran and Anglican political engagement may draw on a shared Augustinian political tradition that provide Christians of the Porvoo churches with grounds for a cautious confidence in the exercise of their political responsibilities.

Public theology A, like Japanese Knotweed, owes its vigour in European soil to the fact that it is a transplant from another world. In their critiques of public theology A both MacIntyre and Hauerwas score telling blows. Public theology A has no understanding of public role of the Church; it floats impossibly free from any particular faith tradition that could nourish its theological contribution; it is unable clearly to define either state or church and is therefore at sea in plotting the proper relations that should pertain between them. But – somewhat differently in each case – MacIntyre and Hauerwas prove to be unproductive alternatives. In the case of MacIntyre, he fails to understand that liberalism too is a tradition of the kind he advocates⁹. Hauerwas cannot escape the Anabaptist implications of the theological tropes he takes from Yoder: he fails to recognize that states too have their authority from God and are accountable to God for the just exercise of their duties. He fails to apprehend that if it is true – as I think it is – that God sometimes calls churches to challenge the State, then God may also call on the State to challenge the Church. In short Hauerwas struggles to see God at work outside the Church.

Because of their shared Augustinian inheritance, Lutheran and Anglican churches are well-placed to realize that the Church can neither seek nor expect always to have its own way in a plural society, even if Christians could agree on what its own way is. But the Church can make a contribution and can reasonably expect that its theological reasoning will be taken seriously by the State, or in this case by whatever we name the European polity. The State, as Luther understood from Augustine, is not God; but it can serve the purposes of God. The purposes of the earthly city differ from those of the heavenly; they are respectively Mammon and God, and one may not ultimately be loyal to both. But penultimately, the State provides non-Christians and Christians alike with peace, security and prosperity, which are genuine if penultimate goods, which Christians may make use of and be grateful for without enjoying them as ultimate ends.

In the Anglican tradition this Augustinian legacy was also inherited, especially through the providential offices of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. In the work of Richard Hooker in the 17th century, these Augustinian foundations were overlain, but never entirely obscured, by a pragmatic reception of an Aristotelian theory of the common good, which was modulated by an impressively independent reading of Thomas Aquinas as its source. Hooker was alert to the basic political differences between Aquinas and Augustine with respect to political theology: Augustine believing states to be necessary after the Fall to moderate the effects of sin; Thomas believing that there was a political relation between Adam and Eve even before

⁹ This point – and an irenic but telling critique of Hauerwas too – are spelled out fully in Jeffrey Stout, *Democracy and Tradition*, (Princeton NJ: 2004), chapters 5-7.

the serpent did his work and that politics is natural and pre-Lapsarian. Hooker was pragmatic in his resolution of this tension holding with Thomas that State and Church are partners in the pursuit of a common good but also recognizing that the State is a very human institution whose foibles the Christian should be patient towards and even respectful, but never idolize.¹⁰ Hooker also embraced a natural theology, distilling thereby an Anglican theology consciously blended from Aristotelian and Lutheran sources in ways that Luther would himself have deplored.¹¹ Hooker thereby made of Anglican theology a *tertium quid* that was neither Scholastic nor Lutheran. Hooker's Anglican political theology was a hybrid with a hybrid's vigour but unable to bear fruit. Porvoo provides my Anglican tradition with the means and opportunity to reconsider its Lutheran political inheritance.

At the conclusion, I want to mention one twentieth century exemplar of a profoundly Lutheran theology that has given a clear answer to the question of the possibility of a theology with public implications whose insight may be transposed into a consideration of 'the possibility of a public theology in Europe'. At some point between August and December 1942 Dietrich Bonhoeffer made lapidary notes 'On the possibility of the Church's message to the World'.¹² Bonhoeffer had learned, partly through disillusionment with the lack of concrete outcomes from ecumenical conversations such as this, that there are moments when what is needed is not doctrinal correctness but 'a concrete directive in the concrete situation'. Before that is possible, however, one must accept that Christians should not expect that 'Christianity has an answer to *all* social and political questions of the world'.¹³ Bonhoeffer, who had been Reinhold Niebuhr's student in New York, recognized in the strand of American Christianity I have called public theology A, a desire to make itself socially useful through crusade-like campaigning. His thinking is only half formed here, but it was plain to Bonhoeffer that it was characteristic of Jesus to be evasive when he was asked to address 'worldly problems': 'The kind of thinking', he continues – plainly with public theology A very much in view – that starts with human problems, and then looks for solutions from...[a Christian] ... vantage point, has to be overcome – it is unbiblical'.¹⁴ The reason for this is perfectly straightforward and simply expressed: God's word

10 On this see my paper to the 2014 Meissen theological conversation, 'Ecclesial Communion, ecclesiastical polity and reconciled diversity in Richard Hooker's Theology' at: <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2039275/meissen%20theological%20conf%20papers%20feb%202014.pdf>

11 See e.g., Luther's 1517 'Disputation against scholastic theology'.

12 Dietrich Bonhoeffer Ethics Vol. 6, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works English [DBWE], (Augsburg: 2006) pp. 352-362); Ethik, Bd. 6 Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke, (München: 2005) pp. 354-364.

13 DBWE 6: 353.

14 DBWE 6: 356.

to the world is not a word about worldly problems. Rather: 'the message of the church to the world can be none other than the word of God to the world', i.e., a word about Christ's incarnation, his judgment, a call to repent and the promise of redemption.¹⁵ This word to the world puts the church in a relationship of responsibility to the world. Expressly to rebut public theology A and also CST Bonhoeffer adds here that 'this refutes the view that the church could speak to the world on the basis of some kind of shared insights, derived from a rational or natural law, that is, by temporarily disregarding the gospel. The church of the Reformation, unlike the Roman Catholic Church, *cannot* do that'¹⁶.

Now comes the 'but'! The corollary is that, for Bonhoeffer, it is not the case that there is therefore one law and gospel for the Church and another law and gospel for the world: but only one law and gospel, one ethics, that applies equally to all people. And that one law and gospel – as indeed Luther maintained – are equally present in both Decalogue and Sermon on the Mount: one word of God that demands obedience of all people. The church will know that any word it speaks *as* the church must remain a human word bearing witness to God's word, as it were, preparing the way for it. The church, or even 'a' church is in no position to claim God's absolute authority for any of its constructive counsel to particular national or multinational polity; but it may and must be able to say quite clearly in certain circumstances 'no' with complete authority to systems and policies that hinder faith in God.

15 DBWE 6: 356

16 DBWE 6:357

V THE PORVOO ECUMENICAL ENCOUNTERS

James F. Puglisi

The Porvoo Common Statement from a Catholic Perspective¹

Introduction

As we near the tenth anniversary of the process that terminated in the signing of the Porvoo Common Statement (PCS),² it is good to pause and reflect on where this process has led the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches and the British and Irish Anglican churches. I do this however from a Catholic perspective, as one even outside of the European church experience but as one who has followed closely the developments associated with this historic event.

The Catholic Church has been engaged in conversations with both of these ecclesial traditions for well over thirty years. Our conversations with them have been both bilateral and multilateral, especially in Faith and Order's Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (BEM) project as well as in the joint efforts of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the Council of Catholic Bishops' Conferences in Europe (CCEE). It is precisely from this vantage point that a more fruitful "evaluation" of what has happened in Northern Europe can be framed.

Ecumenical Relations

Both with the Anglican Communion and the Lutheran World Federation, the Catholic Church has elaborated substantial agreed statements on such issues as Eucharist, ministry and ordination, authority in the church, ethical living, ecclesiology and church structures, and most recently, on the meaning of the doctrine

1 Published originally in *Apostolicity and Unity* 2002, p. 219–230

2 We will refer to the Porvoo Common Statement as it is found with supporting essays and documentation in the volume entitled *Together in Mission and Ministry: The Porvoo Common Statement with Essays on Church and Ministry in Northern Europe* (London: Church House Publishing, 1993). The reference to pages and paragraphs will be numbered according to this edition of the statement and essays.

of justification — which has led to a major breakthrough in relation to Lutheran churches. It is important to note that the Catholic Church's relation to these two churches has been different in the past and in the dialogue process. One must likewise take note of the fact that the ecclesial relationships that have been carried out over the past fifty years with both of these churches runs the gamut from informal to formal and official status. This is one of the reasons why the Catholic Church follows with great interest the developments between these two church communions in Northern Europe. Another reason is that within both these traditions are the so-called "high church" and "low church" traditions, those that have a more "catholic" content and those with a more "evangelical" tendency. These categories are of course only a sociological "ideal-type" way of describing differing church traditions and cannot be rigidly held to.

The Porvoo Process

It should be noted that the real impulse that moved all of the churches engaged in what might be called the "Porvoo process" is the gospel. The very title of the collection of essays that was published together with the statement is *Together in Mission and Ministry*. Mission, namely the mission of spreading the good news of salvation, is the first focus of the Porvoo Common Statement. The second is ministry or service to the very gospel project. The realization of these two goals comes from a further observation on these communions' collaborative relationship in serving the gospel elsewhere in the world. However, their situation is more homogeneous in Northern Europe; hence the churches there were moved to take a courageous step together in witnessing to the world out of a common ground. The current secularization, especially in Western Europe, and the situation of the churches emerging from the grip of communism in Eastern Europe dictated that something further must be done to serve the gospel and answer the questions now being laid at the churches' feet. Another phenomenon was also confronting the churches: emigration. This is part of the new Europe that is coming to birth, with a new mix of religions and cultures and a whole new set of challenges in witnessing to the gospel. All of these factors prompted these two ecclesial traditions to take seriously their call to respond to new exigencies in a new context. They have boldly taken up this challenge in the Porvoo Common Statement.

How might one begin to evaluate this process designed to lead to a greater unity among baptized Christians? Is it enough to evaluate the achieved results of collaboration, sharing, and co-ministering, or is there another criterion that needs to be taken into account? Have all of the churches involved really agreed to this process and have they fully participated in the realization of this program? It might be possible to answer all of these questions from within the Porvoo expe-

rience. Clearly though, this author cannot do so, as the Catholic Church is not part of the agreement or the experience. This does not mean, of course, that we are uninterested. Quite the contrary! We are very much involved with both traditions, especially in a dialogue that has borne much fruit in terms of theological convergence, pastoral practice, and mission. What happens between these two traditions interests us very much as it will also impact our relationship with both of these communions.

Several dimensions of this agreement interest us: the doctrinal position of the churches that enables them to arrive at the solution proposed by PCS; the concrete experience of ministering together in each other's tradition; and the results, difficulties, and challenges that presented themselves on the road. Obviously it is not possible to treat all of these dimensions here and from my vantage point; I will leave this to those within the Porvoo experience. Instead, I will attempt here to look at the doctrinal results of this agreement, especially as they touch on the ministry and apostolicity of the church.

Doctrinal Results

First, the Porvoo Common Statement speaks of the nature of communion that is desired by Jesus for his disciples. This communion is one that is identified as being joyful and rooted in the mysterious relationship of the Trinity (§21). There is furthermore the correct understanding that this is not a human-made product but rather a gift that comes from God. The proper stance from which to begin, it seems to me, is a full realization that the communion of the church is not something we ourselves can bring about, but rather is something we receive. This has ramifications, however, for what we must do in receiving this gift and putting it into practice. It is interesting that when the document speaks about this dimension of the communion of the church it cites the work of the Catholic-Lutheran dialogue.³ It is precisely in this dialogue that there is an awareness, in the relationship of our two churches, of appropriating the gift in stages and finding ways for implementing it. This seems to be exactly what Anglicans and Lutherans have tried to do through the Porvoo process.

There is a full realization that the visible unity the gospel requires is not that of uniformity. Here the scriptural images of unity and diversity come into play in the understanding of how this gift of God through the Spirit is to be received in the life of the churches. Both unity and diversity are seen as rooted in the Trinity itself. This is fine on a spiritual level, but we all know that the pinch comes

³ See *Ways to Community* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 1981) and *Facing Unity: Models, Forms and Phases of Catholic-Lutheran Church Fellowship* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 1985).

in realizing it on the human level. For some reason we have trouble seeing the same, identical reality expressed in different forms, with different words and expressions. We prefer to see the identical expression — which obviously leads to uniformity and the suppression of diversity. It is important to be able to identify this tendency on the human level and to combat it, since ultimately this will destroy communion. From the Catholic experience we already have an interesting precedent or model, from our bilateral dialogues with the Ancient Church of the East and the Christological declarations signed between the Oriental Orthodox churches (the pre-Chalcedonian churches) and the Catholic Church. It is sufficient to note that in the former case we have already established eucharistic hospitality between our two churches even though we do not have the same canon of Scripture or the same sacramental system. This shows that there can be communion even though there is diversity of expression and form, as long as the same apostolic faith is recognized. In the case just cited full communion between the two churches has not been realized, but there is a mutual recognition of each other as church. This is the beginning of the road that leads to full ecclesiastical and canonical communion. What is required is a new way of thinking and acting toward one another that is dictated by the Scriptures themselves. This is the position the Porvoo Common Statement takes in stating its understanding of unity and communion (§§26–28).

It is clearly stated that the basis of communion and unity is first a relation with God and with fellow believers, manifested in baptism, in the response to apostolic preaching, in the common confession of the apostolic faith, in the united celebration of the Eucharist, and in a single ministry (§24). All of these demand therefore a new way of acting toward the other and of being together in the world. This section of the document thus concludes that "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). In short, it is the putting on the mind of Christ that will enable the churches to render visible the reality of a spiritual communion. Another (unofficial) dialogue, the Groupe des Dombes, has spoken about this same process in a document published several years ago, *For the Conversion of the Churches*.⁴ In a certain way, then, we are witnessing this process of conversion in the Porvoo agreement. It is a matter of conversion on several levels: the level of Christian identity, of confessional identity, and of ecclesial identity. One factor in the Porvoo process that renders this more easily realizable is that in the history of the relationships between the two churches

⁴ Groupe des Dombes, *Pour la conversion des Eglises* (Paris: Centurion, 1991); English translation *For the Conversion of the Churches* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1993).

there has been no serious animosity between them and therefore no need for the healing of memories because of past wounds inflicted by the other. In fact, the history of Anglican-Lutheran conversations has helped facilitate the possibility of moving in the direction that the Northern European churches have gone. We need to look, then, at the doctrinal basis that has enabled these conversations to become a reality in fact.

At the heart of the declaration are chapters three and four, treating what is the common faith of the churches and dealing with the question of episcopacy, a central issue that is at the core of most ecumenical discussions concerning the structuring of the church.

From a Catholic perspective these two traditions came into existence for two different reasons. The Lutheran tradition was born out of a strong desire to reform the church because of abuses in the life of the church and what were considered doctrinal errors, while the Anglican tradition rose out of a more historical-political situation that was less concerned with the doctrinal reform of the church than with who is ultimate head of the church and who had the ultimate say over what happens in the church. In both cases, however, an Erastian solution seems to have been arrived at: in both cases state churches quickly evolved.⁵ In many aspects the Reformation in the Nordic countries was also less radical than was that of the Continental Reformation. What some might find surprising in both of these regional contexts is that the doctrinal basis of what has traditionally been represented as the Lutheran teaching or the Anglican teaching is far less radical. This becomes clear from PCS's summary of the principal beliefs held in common by the two traditions (§32).

In this list of twelve sub-paragraphs we find expressed a sort of consensus of faith, which is further substantiated in the appendix by both the proper canonical and /or confessional writings of each of the churches. It is reflected too in the agreed statements produced by the various dialogues held not only between these two traditions but from Faith and Order's BEM document, and from each tradition's dialogues with the Catholic Church.⁶ This doctrinal summary contains elements ranging from the symbols of faith accepted in each tradition to the question of the practice of the celebration of the sacraments of initiation, in particular the question of the different ways of doing and understanding confirmation. The chapter realistically considers the lack of uniformity in the practice of these two traditions, but recognizes unity in the way that both traditions express the

5 I have dealt with this in another setting that is pertinent for our discussion here. See my *The Process of Admission to Ordained Ministry: A Comparative Study*, Vol. 2, *The First Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican and Wesleyan Rites* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1998).

6 See *Together in Mission . . .*, pp. 195–218.

same faith through their different practices. What can still be bothersome from a Catholic perspective is the verification of what is professed together here and what is practiced in fact. It is sufficient to recall a problem in Catholic-Anglican understanding by the fact of the affirmation in a joint statement by the Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), that the liturgical president of the eucharistic celebration is always an ordained minister — in contrast to the recent proposal of an Anglican province (Sydney, Australia) that it could have "lay presidency." The question arises as to the veracity of the statements of the agreed documents and what the churches actually do.

The same difficulties could arise in the context of the Porvoo Common Statement and what the churches actually practice. What will be interesting to observe is whether the practice will change and confirm the statement, or whether the practice is the actual belief of a particular "province" of the church. This fact likewise points up a crucial question within each church as to the "tolerance of deviation" from the norm. How much deviation is allowed for a church to remain part of the communion, and what mechanism will ultimately have authority to confirm the existence of a church-dividing abuse or deviation from the "orthodox faith," and to deal with and correct it? We may already see some shift in the way each tradition deals with difficulties such as the case cited above, or even in the context of the recently signed Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification between the Catholic and Lutheran churches. One of the ways of reading the conflict arose in this process on the Lutheran side: Who, it was asked, could authorize the signing of this declaration when a certain number of Lutheran theologians were raising objections to its contents? It might be possible to see here a conflict in magisterial authority. Who had the authority to say that this was in conformity with authentic Lutheran teaching on justification — the traditional teaching magisterium of university theologians, or the bishops together with their synods? From my perspective it seems that the principle of episcopal supervision and leadership as well as the pastoral care for the right teaching of the church — as exercised in synodically taken decisions —represents a return to a more orthodox understanding of how *episkope* should function in the church, according to a model that is at the same time personal, collegial, and communal. For Catholics this instance should also be a challenge to our way of dealing with important issues in the church that far too frequently are resolved in a far less participatory way. It is interesting that John Paul II called for all local churches to hold synods in preparation of the new millennium. In this we might be able to see how a synodical understanding is being added to Vatican II's collegial understanding of the exercise of authority in the church. We can likewise make reference to the most recent ARCIC statement, *The Gift of Authority* (1999), which points in the same direction. It should be noted that most of what is affirmed in

chapter three of the Porvoo Common Statement would not surprise Catholics except maybe to dispel some misconceptions commonly held about the beliefs of our Lutheran and Anglican brethren, for example, concerning the presence of the Lord in the Eucharist or the necessity of the ordained ministry.

Ministry and Apostolicity

It is concerning the last question, namely the ministry, that I would like to make some observations, since obviously the concern of the mutual recognition of each other's ministry is an essential element on the road to full, visible unity. PCS's paragraph 32j takes up the issue of the ordained ministry only after considering the ministeriality of the whole people of God. This approach should not be unfamiliar to Catholics, since *Lumen Gentium* treats the question in similar fashion, as does BEM and several bilateral statements on ministry. There is agreement on the question of the divine institution of the ordained ministry at the service of the ministry of the whole people of God, and in locating it among the charisms God gives to the church for its mission of preaching the gospel in the world. Missing is a clear statement of the necessity of the threefold ministry at the service of the church, and of its divine institution. We can say that the discussion at Vatican II like-wise talks about a historical evolution of the tripartite forms of ministry (*ab antiquo*) while maintaining the classical position of the divine institution of the ministry itself and affirming the necessity of the episcopacy for the church's mission of safeguarding the deposit of faith. Even though it seems that there is a difference of position regarding both the necessity of the episcopal office and its mode of functioning in each tradition, there is nevertheless an important statement made in §32k: "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." This statement is not expanded or explained any further in this context, but is treated later in the next chapter on "Episcopacy in the service of the apostolicity of the church" (§§34–57).

It is important to understand the relationship between the apostolic continuity of the church and apostolic succession in ministry. It appears that the Porvoo Common Statement has adopted BEM's understanding of the issue as common ground rather than the position of one or the other of the churches. It further appears to me that PCS has adopted a more historical, linear approach that conceives apostolicity as rooted in the understanding of "apostle" as one who is sent

as a missionary,⁷ rather than seeing the body of the Twelve as an eschatological reality that gathers the dispersed people of God. This later position is to be seen in the meaning attributed to the substitution of Matthias for Judas — a substitution that bears witness to and establishes the apostolic succession. The principle it points to is not so much that of the *historical continuity* of witnesses succeeding the Twelve, but rather the *eschatological mission* of the Twelve, the unique and lasting event that assumes decisive importance for the history of salvation. The reality of the Twelve indicates the beginning of the realization of the promise: in eschatological times all of Israel will once again be reunited. This eschatological link could have been made very easily if the eschatological realization of the kingdom was seen as being realized in the permanent characteristics of the church of the apostles that are listed in §36 ("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 needy, unity among the local churches and sharing the gifts which the Lord has given to each"⁸).

This eschatological dimension is very important in that it helps avoid an overly materialistic sense of succession but sees first the qualities of each eucharistic community in continuity with the communities of the apostles in relationship to their fulfillment in the kingdom. It is correctly observed that each community needs to be seen in the continuity of the mission that Christ entrusted to the church. On again the Porvoo Common Statement follows very closely the work of BEM when it speaks about the relationship of the succession in ministry to the apostolic continuity of the church. The tendency here is to understand the englobing reality first (apostolic continuity of the church) and then to see the relation of the particular in the service of the wider reality (succession in ministry).

A Catholic concern would be to see clearly the fact that the office of bishop is truly a pastoral ministry and not merely a function of coordination.⁹ Since at least the second century and probably even earlier, the church was considered realized in her fullness whenever and wherever the faithful of a certain place, following their bishop as Christ himself, were united under his presidency in one eucharistic

7 See PCS: "Apostolicity means that the Church is sent by Jesus . . ." in §37, citing in note the reference taken from the Niagara Report from the Anglican-Lutheran Inter-national Consultation on Episcopate, 1987.

8 All these points are taken from the Lima document's section on Ministry, §34.

9 I have tried to show in another context how the recovery of a truly pastoral office of leadership of the bishop for Lutheranism was one of the factors that helped save German Lutheranism from being manipulated by a national socialist interpretation. See J. Puglisi, "50th Anniversary of the Barmen Synod," *Ecumenical Trends* 13, no. 8 (1984): 120–22.

community.¹⁰ The role of the bishop was considered to be fundamental; in the ecclesiology of Ignatius of Antioch there is a Christological role attributed to the bishop, though not in relation to a particular apostle, as the college of the apostles was represented by the college of presbyters. For him it is a succession of communities and not of individuals. If the bishop is crucial in this kind of succession it is because he is head of a community imaging the eschatological gathering of the church around Christ, and not because he has received apostolic authority as an individual. This role is clearly seen both in the role of the neighboring bishops at the ordination of a bishop and the action of the community concerned in the election of their bishop. In both cases their involvement signifies theologically the activity of the Holy Spirit. This pneumatological dimension to ordination is rooted in the concept of witnessing, thereby demonstrating the confessional dimension of the process of access to the ordained ministry of bishop.¹¹

While the Porvoo Common Statement takes into account much of the progress that has been expressed by the BEM document and the real progress this document has led to in the theological reflection of many churches, there still seems to be a hesitation in expressing the necessity of the episcopal ministry — for reasons that go beyond the practical level of "coordination." There seems to be much concern about establishing the "historical" continuity and not enough about the Christological and pneumatological dimensions of the episcopal ministry. In a symposium held at the Centro Pro Unione in Rome, Metropolitan John of Pergamon provided a very extensive analysis of different theological approaches to the question of apostolicity. Particularly interesting was his comparison of all the Patristic sources — Latin, Greek, and Syriac — to the question at hand.¹² It seems to me that a reflection by all the churches (not just those engaged in the Porvoo process) would be helpful in avoiding what has traditionally been an overly historical and material understanding of the question of apostolic continuity and apostolic succession in ministry. The Metropolitan's approach takes much more into consideration the continuity of eucharistic communities. If this were taken more seriously into consideration, the question of in or out of succession might be more easily resolved; the question would not end up by trying to trace the unbroken chain of imposition of hands with a search for a valid pedigree. Apostolicity depends on other elements that have to do with the community's

10 J. Zizioulas, *L'eucharistie, l'Evêque et l'église durant les trois premiers siècles* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1994).

11 These ideas have been developed in more detail in my *The Process of Admission to Ordained Ministry: A Comparative Study*, vol. 1, *Epistemological Principles and Roman Catholic Rites* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1996), pp. 27ff.

12 John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, *Apostolic Continuity of the Church and Apostolic Succession in the First Five Centuries*, *Louvain Studies* 21, no. 2 (Louvain: University of Louvain, 1996), pp. 153–68.

faith and practice and not just that of the holder of an office, even though the latter is important.

Conclusion

Taking a look at the Porvoo Common Statement from a distance of ten years is an important move. Looking at Porvoo as an outsider can be dangerous but sometimes helpful. I have tried to offer reflections more on the text and the process as I have come to understand it, not as one from within — something that really needs to be done by one those who have lived the experience for ten years. I believe the experience has proven helpful for all, even those outside the process. All have been challenged to reconsider their paradigms and to begin to think through, with a fresh interpretation, important issues such as apostolicity. However, this does not mean abandoning one's theological positions but rather looking at them again with a different ecclesiology based on rediscoveries from the past that do not always fit our old schemas. We can only hope that the experience of Porvoo will indeed serve the purpose of ecumenism in the future and the mission and ministry of the church in this new millennium.

A Brief Review on the Eastern Orthodox – Porvoo Dialogue 2005–2008¹

Preliminary Remarks

The CEC Eastern Orthodox Churches and the CPCE Protestant Churches opened a series of theological consultations in 2002. A year later, the Policy and Reference committee of the CEC General Assembly in Trondheim underlined the importance of theological dialogue between the CEC member churches, particularly between the Orthodox and other member churches. Special emphasis should be laid on questions of Christian unity, Ecclesiology, ministry and theological education. As the new CEC Central Committee gathered in December 2003, it recommended that the consultations between the Orthodox and the CPCE Churches should be continued and the Porvoo Churches be invited to take part in them. Accordingly, a representative from the Church of England was sent as an observer to the second Orthodox-CPCE consultation in Wittenberg in 2004. In the same year, the recently established new CEC Commission on Churches in Dialogue (CiD) recommended a similar, but separate series of consultations between the Orthodox churches and the churches in the Porvoo Communion to be initiated. So far, two meetings have been held, one in Järvenpää, Finland in December 2005² and another one in Sambata de Sus, Romania, in March 2008³. The reorganizing of CEC in 2013 caused a discontinuation of CiD and a third consultation is still pending.

As a matter of fact, both of the two series of consultations between the Orthodox churches and the churches of the Reformation should not be regarded as official dialogues. They have not been agreed upon by respective decision-making bodies in the churches, and the delegates have not been authorized to make bind-

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- 1 A paper read at the CEC Commission on Churches in Dialogue (CiD) Consultation on the Evaluation of the Orthodox Dialogues, Pullach 23-27 June 2008. Originally published in *Reseptio* 1/2009, pp. 138–147; here, an updated version.
 - 2 Documentation: Communiqué. Conference of European Churches. Eastern Orthodox – Porvoo Consultation. Järvenpää, Finland, 1–4 December 2005. All papers published in *Reseptio* 1/2006, pp. 4 – 72.
 - 3 Documentation: Communiqué. Conference of European Churches. Second Eastern Orthodox – Porvoo Consultation. Sambata de Sus, Romania, 27–30 March 2008. Papers given in the consultation remain not published.

ing agreements but to merely represent the theological tradition of their own church. Such consultations between persons of different theological schools or confessional families may nevertheless prove very fruitful in promoting mutual understanding and convergence. A binding character does not only emerge from authorized decision-making but also from the reception of the results of a dialogue in the churches. In the end, ecumenical development might very well be more dependent on the reception in the everyday teaching of the churches than on the frontline dialogue of specialists. However, both the CPCE and the Porvoo churches, as well as the Orthodox churches, have sent highly skilled theologians and academic trained clergy and church leaders to the consultations to make the discussion as advanced and relevant as possible.

It is not possible to evaluate the Orthodox-Porvoo consultation process fully at this initial stage. The two meetings have only been able to cover a small part of topics identified to be in need of clarification. At this point, only a preliminary review with a superficial analysis can be offered. However, even such an effort might point to relevant questions and assist the churches in their further strivings for the Christian unity.

“Protestant Churches” or “Churches of Reformation”?

In a dialogue where more than one family of Reformation Churches are discussing with the Orthodox or the Catholic Church, certain limits of language are very soon met. It is not always easy for the Orthodox or Catholic representatives to find an appropriate name for the counterpart. Attempts to use categories like “Protestant” or “Evangelical” or “Reformation Churches” are used in order to cover a whole group. Sometimes these categorizations are accurate; sometimes they only manage to articulate an unhelpful prejudice on the dialogue partner. If one possesses a vague idea of “Protestantism”, this idea can be stretched and applied to all other churches than the Orthodox or the Catholic Church. Consequently, the dialogue partner might feel rather uneasy if characterizations emerging from encounters with Pentecostal or Charismatic groups are used to describe a Lutheran church, merely because they all are “Protestant” churches by some measure, no matter how radically they might differ in their doctrine, tradition and constituency.

From the point of view of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, there is no such a general group as “the Protestant Churches”; there are churches of different confessional families who all have their roots in the undivided apostolic and catholic Church but who have received the apostolic and catholic tradition through the Reformation. According to some theologians, the whole of Christianity can be categorized in just a few “megablocks” (eg. the Catholic, the Orthodox, the Protestant and the Charismatic), but these generalizations might as well

harm any serious theological dialogue by blurring the picture and preventing the churches from learning from each other. The dialogue partners need to be aware of more exact differentiations in order to understand each other. Far too often, such requirements are not met before the consultation, and getting to know the partner only starts in the actual dialogue itself and sharing basic information occupies most of the time needed for theological conversation.

Coming from a Nordic family of Lutheran Churches with a particular history and an emphasis on the continuity of the Church over the Reformation, I don't consider my church a "Protestant Church"; definitely not in any "general protestant" sense without differentiation. On the other hand, the consultations between the Orthodox and the CPCE Churches deliberately seem to be based on an assumption that the churches of Reformation are theologically so close to each other that it is appropriate to call them all "Protestant Churches". However, the theologians involved in the CPCE nevertheless do argue on the basis of their own respective church tradition, which, in turn, is either Lutheran, Reformed or belongs to some other particular Reformation tradition although the community itself considers all member churches "protestant" in a general sense.

The same cannot be said about the Porvoo Churches. The churches in the Porvoo Communion are either Lutheran or Anglican. None of them is "Protestant" in a general sense, rather, they all confess the Apostolic and Catholic faith in its Lutheran or Anglican form, and they all have preserved the episcopal order and the sacramental worship of the Church. This is very important to note, and I find it more appropriate to call these churches either Anglican or Lutheran or "Porvoo Churches" for the sake of convenience, but not simply "Protestant Churches".

Another important difference to the consultations with the CPCE Churches is that the Porvoo Communion is not an organization but a family of churches. It is not an ecumenical agency; it doesn't have any decision-making body, no general assembly nor central committee; no office, staff nor membership fee. It only exists as churches in communion, who have committed themselves to common life, to joint sacramental worship, mission and ministry, in order to serve and to witness. The Porvoo Churches only act together for common aims in joint projects if the contact persons arrange any activities together, and if the church leaders or the presiding bishops agree on them.

Overall Topic for Dialogue: Ecclesiology

In connection with the simplified characterization of "Protestantism", another assumption is easily made, namely that of denominationalism. It is sometimes assumed in the dialogue that the churches of Reformation are believed to be intrinsically denominationalist, i.e. that they are content with the ecclesial diversity

and consider it natural and legitimate. Up to a certain point this is true of the Porvoo churches, too, but only in relation to their historically developed contextual, cultural and ethnic differences, not to the apostolic doctrine they share. Both the Lutherans and the Anglicans can refer to their historical confessional writings from Reformation era, according to which it is “enough to agree on concerning the teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments” whereas it is considered “not necessary that human traditions or rites and ceremonies, instituted by men, should be alike everywhere”.⁴

It has to be reminded that the above quoted seventh article of the *Augsburg Confession* was originally not intended to articulate a full ecclesiology of any present-day protestant church but only attempted to frame a *modus vivendi* for the congregations of Reformation inside the Catholic Church. What was a minimum for maintaining unity in the Catholic church of the 16th century cannot be turned into a basis of ecclesiology and then be refined in this minimal form into a sole criterion for reclaiming the lost unity in the 21st century. A good number of basic assumptions that were still normative during the Augsburg Diet will fall out of picture; among them, the continuity in the episcopal ministry.

Both the Lutherans and the Anglicans in the Porvoo Communion agree that the episcopal ministry occupies a vital position in ecclesiology. While not being directly part of the apostolic doctrine or of the Gospel itself, episcopacy is closely related to keeping the true faith and passing it on to new generations. The episcopal ministry or the oversight of the bishops exercised personally, collegially and communally is elementary to the being of the Church. It is the service of the apostolic mission of the Church. The Porvoo Churches agree on the historic episcopate and value the laying on of hands in historical succession as a “sign, not guarantee” of unity and continuity and as a sign of the Church’s trust in God’s faithfulness to his people as well as the Church’s intention to be faithful to God’s initiative and gift.⁵

When opening the consultation between the Eastern Orthodox and the Porvoo Churches in 2005, Prof. Dr. Viorel Ionita referred in his introduction to this particular characteristic of the Porvoo Churches. He supposed that the first consultation, which carried the overall topic of “Ecclesiology in the Porvoo Common Statement”, might like to focus its discussion on the bishop’s ministry as element of the Church unity.⁶ It was assumed that at this particular theme the Orthodox and the Porvoo Churches might find common understanding that could carry

4 Augsburg Confession (1530), VII. Cf. Thirty-Nine Articles of Faith (1571), XIX.

5 Porvoo Common Statement, paras. 43–48.

6 Viorel Ionita, Background and aims of the consultation. – *Rescriptio* 1/2006, pp. 8–10.

them further in ecumenical convergence than the consultations between the Orthodox and the CPCE Churches had been able to do. While being a relevant suggestion, based on the concept of unity in the Porvoo Common Statement, the consultations in 2005 and 2008 nevertheless did not focus on the bishops, but remained on a more general level of ecclesiology.

The Global Lutheran, Anglican and Orthodox Dialogues

The two consultations have each followed the same scheme. They have both been opened with an update on the dialogues between the Orthodox and the Anglican and between the Orthodox and the Lutheran churches. This update has provided the participants with an opportunity to locate the present consultation in a wider network of theological discussion. However, not much use has been made of the framework of global dialogue. The outcome of the dialogues of the Orthodox Churches with the Anglican Communion or with the Lutheran World Federation has unfortunately not had any noticeable impact on the consultations between the CEC Orthodox and the Porvoo Churches.

An introduction into the Anglican-Lutheran dialogue that had led up to Porvoo was given in the first consultation, but not much of its content did flow into the discussion. This was rather lamentable, since many of the ecclesiological questions at stake had already been discussed in the global dialogues. It has to be asked, why these introductions played such a minor role in the discussion that followed them, although they were intended to assist the consultation. Perhaps it only is due to the fact that so few of the participants were sufficiently aware of other dialogues and their methodology.

Another feature of the consultations is that representatives from the Porvoo Churches did not only operate on purely theological level but also attempted to explain what it means for them as churches of different tradition to live out their recently established communion. This proved rather challenging, since on one hand, it was not fully clear to the Orthodox party that Anglicans and Lutherans are distinct traditions and not simply “Protestants”, and yet on the other hand, they have nevertheless been able to reconcile their differences through theological dialogue. In the consultations the theologians of the Porvoo Churches in any case took their arguments from their own theological tradition, not only from their joint agreement.

The Porvoo Churches have reached mutual understanding in their crucial questions of faith and order and entered into a communion in mission and ministry, in sacramental worship and in episcopal imposition of hands in each other's consecration of bishops. They have become, to put it in the words of a previous stage in the Anglican-Lutheran dialogue, *interdependent*, yet remaining

autonomous. The mutual sharing of resources, clergy exchange, consultation in vital questions of pastoral challenges, and other areas of common life, have all been raised as examples of living in communion, not as an end to theological debate nor as explications of the agreement signed by the Churches. Ecclesiology has not remained on the level of theological debate but it has been discussed as the theological framework in which the churches fulfill their common mission in everyday life together.

Do the Porvoo Churches Have a Common Ecclesiology?

Taken the differences in the Lutheran and Anglican traditions, one has to ask, whether any joint “Porvoo ecclesiology” really exists. It is not clear in what sense this concept was used in the consultations. Do the Porvoo Churches represent a common ecclesiology? To make things easier, let it be assumed that the Common Statement presents a unified Porvoo ecclesiology. But even under this precondition it has to be asked, exactly where in the Statement such a common understanding is to be read out? Is it in the paragraphs that attempt to articulate the common faith in doctrinal sentences, or in those paragraphs in which the churches commit themselves to live in communion? Is the concept of “Porvoo ecclesiology” a description or a declaration by nature?

In the first consultation in Järvenpää 2005, two papers were given to analyze the ecclesiology in the Porvoo Common Statement, those by Bishop John Hind and Assisting Professor Ionut Alexander Tudorie.⁷ The two papers represented two different interpretations on the meaning of the Statement. The first of these attempted to highlight the substance of the Statement from an Anglican point of view, by referring mainly to the long paragraph 58 in the Declaration and by putting special emphasis on the commitments instead of the mutual acknowledgements. Bishop Hind quoted only briefly the Statement’s description of the Church, a “portrait of a church living in the light of the gospel”, derived from the Scriptures (para. 20) and lifted “not only the content but also the method of this ‘portraiture’” up. The paper by Asst. Prof. Tudorie sought to point to the problems and weaknesses of the Statement’s theological methodology that make it a vague basis for unity by his estimation. Tudorie came to a conclusion that the Porvoo Agreement is not agreeable from an Orthodox point of view. Hind surpassed the doctrinal definitions of ecclesiology in the Statement since “scholastic treatises de Ecclesia often run the risk of reducing the Church to a set of

7 John Hind, *Some Anglican Reflections on the Ecclesiology of the Porvoo Common Statement*. – *Reseptio* 1/2006, pp. 50-60; Ionut-Alexandru Tudorie, *Porvoo Common Statement from an Orthodox Perspective*. – *Reseptio* 1/2006, pp. 61-72.

propositional definitions and thereby of missing its essential quality as *mysterion*”, whereas Tudorie warned that “during the process of building unity the doctrinal issues should not be superficially treated”.

For Bishop Hind, the commitment nr. one in the Porvoo Declaration, to “share a common life in mission and service, to pray for and with one another, and to share resources”, indicated that there is “a single mission, temporarily rooted in the uniqueness of the apostolic tradition, historically mediated”; and that “full partnership in this mission requires unity in faith, sacramental life and ministry”. For Asst. Prof. Tudorie, the Porvoo Agreement only was possible because of the “subjective interpretation of a neutral ecumenical terminology” and of the “use of the syncretic method” promoted by the BEM and of the “compromising or relativization of the Episcopate’s absolute character”. – I seems that the two evaluators unfortunately spoke past each other. They could have found more in common if they both had worked on a more focused topic. The arguments in both papers emphasized unity in doctrine and in the episcopal ministry; the parties nevertheless aimed them against each other. Surprisingly enough, it was the Porvoo theologian who emphasized the Church as a *mysterion* unfolding in the liturgical life, and the Orthodox theologian who sketched his ecclesiology primarily by means of unchangeable doctrine and strict historic episcopate.

Outcome of the First Consultation in Järvenpää 2005

The consultation in Järvenpää was nevertheless very productive in identifying areas of common interest for a closer look. One reason for this was the group work which was carried out in two parts. First, the participants named three large areas for further study:

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.

Each of these broad areas covered four subthemes that were further discussed in another group session. A joint text with three sections was drafted on the basis of the second group discussion. The first section concentrated on the Trinitarian basis of Ecclesiology, on the concept of visible unity, on the limits of diversity, and on the four marks of the Church. The second section pointed to the common witness of the Church and to the “apostolic life, mission and ministry” whereas

the third section discussed the Church's role in the renewal of the whole creation as well as the work of the Holy Spirit "outside the boundaries of the Church".⁸

These results expressed a theological richness in very short and dense sentences. It was thus decided that the upcoming second consultation will take the first part under closer scrutiny whereas the two other sections will be postponed. In due time, they shall serve as a starting point for the third and fourth consultations.

Second Consultation in Sambata de Sus 2008

The second consultation gathered in Sambata de Sus, Romania in March 2008. Again, after short updates on the global dialogues, four papers on the two main topics were presented: "The true Church of Jesus Christ" and the "Concept of unity". First, a paper written by Metropolitan Prof. Gennadios of Sassima on the "Nature of the Church in the Orthodox Ecclesiology" was presented by Prof. Viorel Ionita. The paper lifted up the notion of the Church as one and many at the same time: "Orthodox ecclesiology operates with a plurality in unity and a unity in plurality." According to the Metropolitan, it is impossible for Roman Catholic and "Protestant ecclesiologies" to speak of "the Church and the Churches", which is theologically and canonically correct for the Orthodox ecclesiology but cannot be grasped by the Catholic claim to universal jurisdiction and the Protestant notion of denominationalism.

Also the second paper, given by Professor Samuel Rubenson, discussed the ambiguity of the Church and the churches, taking into account that the Church is a divine reality but also sent to the world, in which she "shares the brokenness of human community in its ambiguity and frailty". Prof. Rubenson elaborated on the Lutheran concept of the Church as a *congregatio sanctorum* which is a concrete worshipping community, gathered around the word and sacraments but the true nature of which is hidden and only apparent to faith. The Church cannot be identified with what is seen; neither with the people gathered to worship nor with the proclamation of the Gospel and administration of the sacraments. The Church "consists of those who are already partakers of divine nature, although this is not fully revealed". Prof. Rubenson made reference to Martin Luther's lectures on the Psalms and on his concept of the *verborgene Kirche* ("the Hidden Church"). Prof. Rubenson reminded that also the Greek fathers had avoided giving an all too narrow dogmatic definition on the Church in their polemical writings but instead, used biblical images to describe what takes place in the Church. For example, in the hymns of Romanos the Melodist, the Church is identified with

8 Communiqué. – *Rescriptio* 1/2006, pp. 4-7.

God's saving acts. The liturgy of the Church is anamnesis, an actualization in remembrance of what has happened. In and through the anamnesis, the biblical story becomes an interpretation of what is happening now.

The two other papers by Dr. Václav Ježek and Bishop Michael Jackson highlighted further the concept of unity in both Orthodox and Anglican traditions. Dr. Ježek wanted to distinguish the Christian unity and secular ideals of political unity by pointing to the faith in the one God as the theological basis for ecclesial unity. The unity of the Church is lived out in the holy liturgy and in love; it goes hand in hand with the spiritual life of an individual but also with that of a corporate body. Unity cannot be restored plainly on the grounds of a theological dialogue; rather, it results from "love and life in Christ".

Bishop Jackson distinguished between the traditional Anglican and Lutheran understandings of unity. Roughly speaking, Anglicans tend to think in terms of organic unity and Lutherans in terms of reconciled diversity. In the Porvoo Statement, however, the two concepts are recognized as distinct but not incompatible. The Porvoo agreement does not over-prescribe the structural shape of unity. Instead, the Churches have committed themselves to common mission and ministry in a diversity which corresponds to the many gifts given by the Holy Spirit to the Church. Consequently, the role of the bishops in the Porvoo Churches is to maintain unity, but also to minister in diversity.

The Outcome of the Sambata Consultation

Despite of the well-prepared papers and presentations, the discussion in Sambata had difficulties in rising over certain obstacles and misunderstandings. A fundamental difficulty was faced in clarifying the distinction and interconnection between the one Church of Christ as a divine reality and as manifested in her present cultural and theological diversity. It was pointed out that the Porvoo representatives could join in most of the theological statements on the Church presented in the paper of Metropolitan Gennadios; but it was asked, whether that was an image of the Church as manifested in her present reality in history or an image of the Church in her eschatological fulfillment.

As was the case in Järvenpää two years earlier, the theological concepts of the Church and unity on one hand and the practical diversity and divisions between local and national Churches on the other seemed surprisingly difficult to reconcile. The Orthodox representatives asked, how can the Porvoo Churches remain separate if they are in communion as they say; the Porvoo representatives, on their part, responded by a similar question on how can the Orthodox claim they are only one Church and yet we know there are five different Orthodox ethnic Churches in Dublin, or fourteen in whole Sweden, even with five bishops. It

was reminded in the discussion that there is no Orthodox Church in its Irish or Swedish expression.

The Communiqué from Sambata nevertheless lifted up several points of mutual understanding in ecclesiology. Together it was affirmed, that “the true Church of Jesus Christ is One, Holy, Apostolic. It is manifested in the local Eucharistic community, where the Word is preached and the sacraments administered, under the oversight of the bishop or his representative.” ... “Furthermore, we can join in affirming that the Holy Trinity is both the source and the model of an appropriate diversity in unity, and of unity in diversity, in the life of the Church.” However, this model based on the Trinity was not elaborated deeper, but only identified as an area for further study, as also was the “relationship between the inner, mystical reality of the Church and the particularity of historical churches”.

Certain key elements in a common understanding of unity were nevertheless noted. Both traditions could agree that “full, visible unity would require at least the total mutual recognition of ministries; a common theological basis; a corresponding, coherent liturgical and sacramental life; and full continuity with the living tradition of the Church”.

Concluding Remarks

It seems that the Orthodox and the Porvoo Churches can affirm a lot of fundamental ecclesiological convictions together. However, these truths have not been too easy to reveal and recognize. A lot of energy has been needed in the dialogue to overcome some basic, often false assumptions. The two consultations have only started to show the way to mutual convergence. For various reasons, the Porvoo Statement has not yet been able to provide with material for common understanding with the Orthodox Churches, nor has it acted as a model or an impulse for the other dialogues of Lutherans or Anglicans with the Orthodox. It has to be reminded that the Porvoo Declaration carries the title of “Towards closer unity”; it does not speak about a “full communion” but instead, it shows the way to joint mission and ministry. As such, it has become as a basis for unity between Lutheran and Anglican national Churches. Attempts have been made to compare their unity to the one existing between the different autocephalous Orthodox Churches.

Somewhat different from them, however, the Porvoo Lutherans and Anglicans are growing into only one Church on the local and national level, as various immigrant groups from different countries and languages integrate in their new country of residence. The Orthodox immigrant churches, on their part, seem to remain distinct from each other in their new context, all according to their different national and jurisdictional background. In my Diocese in Tampere, there

is an Anglican congregation ministered in English by Lutheran clergy under my oversight, although the congregation jurisdictionally is part of the Church of England Diocese in Europe and falls under the oversight of the Bishop of Gibraltar. This kind of “dual oversight”, however, has to be considered only a temporary solution on the way towards closer unity under the one Lord Jesus Christ.

The Porvoo Common Statement from an Orthodox Perspective¹

The Anglican-Lutheran theological conversations, dating as far back as the end of the 19th century,² gained impetus during the second half of the last century, mainly after 1967, when bilateral ecumenical relations were established at world level, through the positive results brought forward by the issues discussed: the sources of authority in both churches, the sacraments, the episcopate and deaconate within the Church, etc.³ 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, starting from the standardized stage of *Eucharistic hospitality*, up to *full visible unity*.⁴

The only regional Anglican-Lutheran agreement clearly stipulating the implementation of the new concept (*full, visible unity*) is *The Porvoo Common Statement*, considered – from the very beginning – as a *breakthrough* along the way to the recuperation of Church unity, and interesting both due to the number of churches involved (12), and, more important, because it moves significantly beyond a mere static *mutual recognition among churches*.⁵ Together with positive

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- 1 This is a revisited and updated version of the article originally published in *Reseptio*, no. 1, 2006, p. 61–72.
 - 2 For a detailed perspective on the Anglican-Lutheran Conversations in Northern Europe in 1888–1955, see: Christopher HILL, “Existing Agreements between our Churches”, 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. 53–58; Ionuț-Alexandru TUDORIE, *De la Reformă la unitatea vizibilă deplină: dialogul teologic dintre anglicani și luterani*, coll. *Studia Oecumenica* 6, Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2012, pp. 42–50.
 - 3 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.
 - 4 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 Reuilly Common Statement* (all of them in Europe) in: Sven OPPEGAARD & Gregory CAMERON (eds.), *Anglican-Lutheran Agreements...*, pp. 129–176, 201–268.
 - 5 Ola TJJØRHOM, “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.

considerations⁶ 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,⁷ Mary Tanner,⁸ John Arnold,⁹ Martin Reardon,¹⁰ John Hind,¹¹ Colin Podmore,¹² Christopher Hill,¹³

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- 6 See the majority of the articles published in: Ola Tjørhom (ed.), *Apostolicity and Unity: Essays on the Porvoo Common Statement*, Michigan/Cambridge/Geneva: Eerdmans Publishing/WCC Publications, 2002, 271 p.
 - 7 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 [republished in: *One in Christ*, vol. 38 (2003), no. 2 (April), pp. 58–68]; David TUSTIN, “What Made Porvoo Possible?”, in: *Together in Mission and Ministry. Papers presented in October 2008 in Åkersberg, Sweden. Porvoo Research Network*, edited by Jaakko Rusama, coll. *Nordisk Ekumenisk Skrifiserie* 35, s.l.: s.n., s.a., pp. 8–14.
 - 8 Mary TANNER, “La posizione anglicana riguardo alla continuità apostolica e alla successione apostolica nella Dichiarazione Comune di Porvoo”, 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, pp. 11–21 [the English version of this text was published in: *Louvain Studies*, vol. 21 (1996), no. 2 (Summer), pp. 114–125; *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. 108–119]; Mary TANNER, “Mission: Strategies and Prospects in the Context of the Anglican-Lutheran Porvoo Agreement”, in *Ecumenical Trends*, vol. 25 (1996), no. 11 (December), pp. 9–14 [republished in: *Unity Digest*, no. 18 (April 1998), pp. 22–28]; Mary TANNER, “Les accords de Meissen et de Porvoo: un modèle pour accéder à l’unité chrétienne?”, in: *Nouveaux apprentissages pour l’Église. Mélanges offerts à Hervé Legrand*, Études réunies par Gilles ROUTHIER et Laurent VILLEMEN, Préface par le cardinal Carlo Maria MARTINI, Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2006, pp. 115–122.
 - 9 John ARNOLD, “The Porvoo Common Statement and Anglican-Lutheran Relationships in Northern Europe”, in *Unity Digest*, no. 8 (November 1993), pp. 17–20; John ARNOLD, “From Meissen to Porvoo and beyond”, in *Rescriptio*, no. 1, 2003, pp. 77–87 [republished in: *Anglican and Episcopal History*, vol. 73 (2004), no. 4, pp. 466–482].
 - 10 Martin REARDON, “L’Intercommunion et les Accords de Meissen et de Porvoo”, in *Irenikon*, tome LXXII (1999), no. 3–4, pp. 502–524 [republished in: *One in Christ*, vol. 37 (2002), no. 1 (January), pp. 57–72].
 - 11 John HIND, “The Porvoo Common Statement: Process and Contents and the Hopes of the Anglican Churches”, 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 (Liebfrauenberg-Elsaß, 6. bis 10. September 1995)*, coll. *Leuenberger Texte*, Heft 4, Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Otto Lembeck, 1996, pp. 147–155.
 - 12 Colin PODMORE, “Current Streams in Ecumenism – A Church of England Perspective”, in *Nordisk Ekumenisk Orientering* (NEO), nr. 3 (November), 1995, pp. 15–22; Colin PODMORE, “Essential Agreement”, in *New Directions*, vol. III (1997), no. 22 (March), pp. 4–6.
 - 13 Christopher HILL, “The Episcopal Office in the Nordic Lutheran Churches seen from the Anglican perspective”, in: *Biskopsämbetet i de nordiska folkekyrkorna ur ett ekumeniskt perspektiv*, coll. *Nordisk ekumenisk skrifiserie* 23, Uppsala: Nordiska Ekumeniska Rådet, 1994, pp. 21–33; Christopher HILL, “The Nordic and Baltic Churches”, in *Ecclesiastical Law Journal*, vol. 3, no. 17 (July 1995), pp. 420–423.

John Halliburton,¹⁴ Paul Avis,¹⁵ Jeremy Morris,¹⁶ John Gibaut,¹⁷ and Lutherans: Tore Furberg,¹⁸ Ola Tjørhom,¹⁹ John Vikström,²⁰ Andreas Aarfloot,²¹ Tord Harlin,²² Lars Österlin,²³ Olav Fykse Tveit,²⁴ Carl Henrik Martling,²⁵ Michael

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- 14 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.
- 15 Paul AVIS, “Porvoo and the Path to Unity”, in: *Together in Mission and Ministry. Papers presented in October 2008 in Åkersberg...*, pp. 25–34.
- 16 Jeremy MORRIS, “Porvoo: the longue durée – Setting the Scene from the Anglican Side”, in: *Together in Mission and Ministry. Papers presented in October 2008 in Åkersberg...*, pp. 35–48.
- 17 John GIBAUT, “Porvoo”, in: *Together in Mission and Ministry. Papers presented in October 2008 in Åkersberg...*, pp. 15–24.
- 18 Tore FURBERG, “Kyrkogemenskap mellan de Anglikanska i Storbritannien och de Lutherska Folkkyrkorna i Norden och Balticum”, in *Tro och Tanke - Supplement*, no. 2, 1994 (*Svenska Kyrkan i det nya Europa*), pp. 21–37.
- 19 Except the above-mentioned article (footnote no. 5), see also: Ola TJØRHOM, “Porvoo-rapporten – et mulig økumenisk gjennombrudd?”, in *Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke*, 64. Årgang (1993), Hefte 3, pp. 173–188 [this article has been translated into English and published in a abridged version in: *One in Christ*, vol. XXIX (1993), nr. 4, pp. 302–309; *Pro Ecclesia*, vol. III (1994), no. 1 (Winter), pp. 11–17; *The Ecumenical Review*, vol. 46 (1994), nr. 1 (January), pp. 97–102]; Ola TJØRHOM, “Apostolisk kontinuitet og apostolisk suksisjon i Porvoo-rapporten”, in *Nordisk Ekumenisk Orientering* (NEO), nr. 4 (December), 1995, pp. 9–15 [this article has been translated into English and Italian and published in: *Louvain Studies*, vol. 21 (1996), no. 2 (Summer), pp. 126–137; Giacomo PUGLISI (a cura di), *Continuità Apostolica della Chiesa...*, pp. 22–32]; Ola TJØRHOM, “The Porvoo Agreement – what has it led to so far?”, in *Nordisk Ekumenisk Orientering* (NEO), nr. 4 (December), 1997, pp. 4–8; Ola TJØRHOM, “The Porvoo Common Statement – An Introduction and Evaluation”, in *Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, 90. Jahrgang (2000), Heft 1 (Januar-März), pp. 8–22; Ola TJØRHOM, “The Church and its Apostolicity: The Porvoo Common Statement as a Challenge to Lutheran Ecclesiology and the Nordic Lutheran Churches”, in *The Ecumenical Review*, vol. 52 (2000), nr. 2 (April), pp. 195–203; Ola TJØRHOM, “Apostolicity and Apostolic Continuity in the Porvoo Common Statement – A possible ecumenical model?”, 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, pp. 183–187.
- 20 John VIKSTRÖM, „Porvoo yhteinen julkilausuma luterilaisesta näkökulmasta ja sen merkitys luterilais-roomalaiskatoliselle dialogille”, in *Reseptio*, no. 1, 1995, pp. 3–10 [translated into English and republished in: *Bulletin / Centro Pro Unione*, no. 47 (Spring 1995), pp. 3–7; *Unity Digest*, no. 12 (August 1995), pp. 18–22; *Reseptio*, no. 2, 2011, pp. 66–75].
- 21 Andreas AARFLOT, “Porvoo-Avtalen – en vitamininnsprøytning for Den norske kirke”, in *Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke*, 73. Årgang (2002), Hefte 3, pp. 175–184.
- 22 Tord HARLIN, “Anglikaner och lutheraner i förpliktande økumenik”, in *Nordisk Ekumenisk Orientering* (NEO), nr. 1 (April), 1994, pp. 3–9.
- 23 Lars ÖSTERLIN, *Churches of Northern Europe in Profile: A thousand years of Anglo-Nordic relations*, Norwich: Canterbury Press, 1995, pp. 281–304 [for the Swedish original see: Lars ÖSTERLIN, *Svenska Kyrkan I profil: Ur engelskt och nordiskt perspektiv*, Stockholm: Verbum Förlag, 1994].
- 24 Olav Fykse TVEIT, “Den offisielle handsaminga av Porvoo-dokumentet i Den norske kyrkja”, in *Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke*, 66. Årgang (1995), Hefte 2, pp. 129–146.
- 25 Carl Henrik MARTLING, *De Nordiska National-Kyrkorna. Från Kalmarunionen till Borgådeklarationen*, Stockholm: Verbum Förlag, 1997, pp. 207–213.

Root,²⁶ Günther Gassmann,²⁷ Minna Hietamäki,²⁸ also a series of less favorable comments were published concerning the newly promoted ecclesiology (John Hunwicke,²⁹ Tom Hardt,³⁰ Kjell Olav Sannes,³¹ Ingolf Dalferth).³² Also, theologians representing other Churches with whom Anglicans and Lutherans were engaged in official dialogue expressed their opinions regarding the methodology and ecclesiology of this document (Roman-Catholics: Edward Yarnold,³³ Henrik Roelvink,³⁴ Herman Seiler,³⁵ George Tavard,³⁶ Francis Sullivan,³⁷ Charles Morerod,³⁸ Pierluigi

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- 26 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; Michael ROOT, "Consistency and Difference in Anglican-Lutheran Relations: *Porvoo, Waterloo and Called to Common Mission*", in: Marsha L. DUTTON & Patrick Terrell GRAY (eds), *One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism: Studies in Christian Ecclesiality and Ecumenism in Honor of J. Robert Wright*, Grand Rapids/Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006, pp. 296–315.
- 27 Günther GASSMANN, "Das Porvoo-Dokument als Grundlage anglikanisch-lutherischer Kirchengemeinschaft im nördlichen Europa", in *Ökumenische Rundschau*, 44. Jahrgang (1995), Heft 2 (April), pp. 172–183; Günther GASSMANN, "Anglican-Lutheran Convergence and the Anticipation of Full Communion", in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, vol. 34 (1997), no. 1 (Winter), pp. 1–12.
- 28 Minna HIETAMÄKI, *Agreeable Agreement. An Examination of the Quest for Consensus in Ecumenical Dialogue. Ecclesiological Investigations*, London/New York: T&T Clark, 2010, pp. 156–164.
- 29 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. I, no. 2 (July 1995), pp. 7–8.
- 30 Tom G.A. HARDT, "The Borgå (Porvoo) *Common Statement*", in *Logia*, vol. VII (1998), no. 3 (Holy Trinity), pp. 45–52.
- 31 Kjell Olav SANNES, "Karakteristikk og vurdering av *Porvoo-erklæringen* som økumenisk dokument", in *Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke*, 68. Årgang (1997), Hefte 2, pp. 83–96.
- 32 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 [republished in: *Visible Unity and the Ministry of Oversight...*, pp. 231–273 (along with an English translation, pp. 9–48)].
- 33 Edward YARNOLD, "In line with the Apostles", in *The Tablet*, vol. 248, no. 8031 (9 July 1994), pp. 878–879; Edward YARNOLD, "Letters: Porvoo principles", in *The Tablet*, vol. 248, no. 8035 (6 August 1994), pp. 983; Edward YARNOLD, "Flawed route to unity", in *The Tablet*, vol. 250, no. 8156 (30 November 1996), pp. 1598–1599; Edward YARNOLD, "A word in due season", in *The Tablet*, vol. 252, no. 8240 (18 July 1998), pp. 935–936.
- 34 Henrik ROELVINK, "Borgå-överenskommelsen sedd med katolska ögon", in *Nordisk Ekumenisk Orientering* (NEO), nr. 1 (April), 1994, pp. 11–13; Henrik ROELVINK, "The Apostolic Succession in the Porvoo Statement", in *One in Christ*, vol. XXX (1994), no. 4, pp. 344–354; Henrik ROELVINK, "The Borgå/Porvoo Agreement: Possibilities and Difficulties", in *St. Ansgar's Bulletin*, no. 92 (March 1996), pp. 11–13.
- 35 Herman SEILER, "Ekumenik i norra Europa", in *Signum (Katolsk Orientering om Kyrka, Kultur och Sambälle)*, nr. 2, 1994, pp. 39–40.
- 36 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.
- 37 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 [republished in: *Lutheran Forum*, vol. 40 (2006), no. 1 (Spring), pp. 14–21].
- 38 Charles MOREROD, "Reflections on Five Recent Agreements between Anglicans and Lutherans", in *Angelicum*, vol. 80 (2003), fasc. 1, pp. 87–125.

Cipriani,³⁹ Lorelei Fuchs,⁴⁰ Franck Lemaître,⁴¹ and Old-Catholics: Martien Parmentier⁴², Günther Esser).⁴³ 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 Tsetsis⁴⁴ and Peter Bouteneff.⁴⁵

1. Preliminary contextual reflections

Before undertaking an Orthodox analysis of this text, it is necessary to point out a few issues of terminology and history. The main questions we are trying to answer in this article are: a) *How was it 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?* – since 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 world level has been influenced by the well-known doctrinal document, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*,⁴⁶ adopted at the *Faith and Order Commissions'* meeting in Lima-Peru (3–15 January 1982).

39 Pierluigi CIPRIANI, *Defectus Ordinis: La Sacramentalità dell'ordine nelle chiese della Riforma* (tesi di dottorato in Teologia Dogmatica Cristologica), Pontificia Facoltà Teologica dell'Italia Meridionale, Sez. S. Tommaso d'Aquino, Napoli, anno accademico 2000/2001, pp. 426–440.

40 Lorelei F. FUCHS, *Koinonia and the Quest for an Ecumenical Ecclesiology: From Foundations through Dialogue to Symbolic Competence for Communionality*, Grand Rapids/Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008, pp. 295–308.

41 Franck LEMAÎTRE, *Anglicans et Luthériens en Europe. Enjeux théologiques d'un rapprochement ecclésial*, coll. *Studia Oecumenica Friburgensia* 55, Fribourg/Tübingen: Institut d'études oecuméniques de l'Université de Fribourg/Les Éditions du Cerf, 2011, pp. 141–151, 159–163, 217–222, 300–305.

42 Martien PARMENTIER (editor), *The Ecumenical Consistency of the Porvoo Document: Papers read at a symposium held by the Anglican-Old Catholic Society of St. Willibrord, at Amersfoort, Netherlands, on 15 October 1997*, coll. *Publicatieserie Stichting Oud-Katholiek Seminarie* 35, Amersfoort: Stichting Centraal Oud-Katholiek Boekhuis, 1999; Martien PARMENTIER, "Die Altkatholische Ekklesiologie und das Porvoodokument", in *Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, 90. Jahrgang (2000), Heft 1 (Januar-März), pp. 30–49.

43 Günther ESSER, "Ein Blick auf Porvoo aus alt-katholischer Sicht", in *Materialdienst des Konfessionskundlichen Instituts Bensheim* (MD), 51. Jahrgang (2000), nr. 1 (Januar/Februar), pp. 8–10.

44 Georges TSETSIS, "The Leuenberg, Meissen and Porvoo Agreements seen from an Orthodox Perspective", in: Wilhelm Hüffmeier & Colin Podmore (eds.), *Leuenberg, Meissen and Porvoo...*, pp. 184–188.

45 Peter BOUTENEFF, "The Porvoo Common Statement: An Orthodox Response", in: Ola TJØRHOM (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 in Wislikofen – Switzerland (August 30th – September 4th, 1999), which has not been published, but mentioned in: *Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, 90. Jahrgang (2000), Heft 1 (Januar-März), pp. 2–3.

46 *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, coll. *Faith and Order Paper*, no. 111, WCC, Geneva, 1982, 33 p.

The methodology promoted in this document with regard to divergent issues revealed the giving up of doctrinal absolutism, while encouraging the attempts towards an acknowledgement of the other confessions' point of view. In keeping with this perspective – which was not accepted by the local Orthodox churches⁴⁷ – 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).⁴⁸ 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 communion with some Lutheran churches, but not automatically with other Lutheran churches without episcopal structure, with which the churches in the Scandinavian-Baltic area were already in communion. Thus, the Anglican Churches are facing an important ecumenical dilemma: what would be their attitude towards those Lutheran Churches who are in ecclesiastical communion with the Lutheran Churches who just signed this theological agreement. In other words: what is the right answer to the *dictum: les amis de mes amis sont mes amis (friends of my friends are my friends)*?⁴⁹ 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*⁵⁰ 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 ex-

47 Gennadios LIMOURIS & Nomikos Michael VAPORIS (eds.), *Orthodox Perspectives on Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*, coll. *Faith and Order Paper*, no. 128, Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1985, 168 p.; Thomas HOPKO, “The Lima Statement and the Orthodox”, in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, vol. 21 (1984), no. 1 (Winter), pp. 55–63; Peter A. BAKTIS, “Ministry and Ecclesiology in the Orthodox Responses to BEM”, in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, vol. 33 (1996), no. 2 (Spring), pp. 173–186; Lucian TURCESCU, “Eastern Orthodox Reactions to the Ministry Section of the Lima Document”, in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, vol. 33 (1996), no. 3 (Summer), pp. 330–343.

48 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.

49 See: Oliver SCHUEGRAF, “Ist der Freund meines Freundes auch *mein* Freund? Strukturelle Probleme ökumenischer Dreiecksverhältnisse”, in *Ökumenische Rundschau*, 48. Jahrgang (1999), Heft 3 (Juli), pp. 347–360.

50 It is worth to underline that this expression (*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.

perimented 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 the postulate 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 overcome, as it is obvious in this ecumenical text.

As a consequence, the Orthodox critique underlines the value of any bilateral theological dialogue in the perspective of a world-wide interconfessional conversation. Also, the positive approach related to an ecumenical dialogue is totally acceptable to the Orthodox principles, and this method is not meant to hide doctrinal discrepancies, but to reveal where different theological interpretations have occurred, which we together are asked to correct. Thus, the Orthodox theology does not make any difference between more and less important dogmas, "for, in matters of holy Doctrines there is no room for condescension or dispensation, they being perpetual, and reverently observ'd by all the Orthodox as immoveable".⁵¹ Finally, the Eucharistic community is a pursuit of the convergence in dogmas and worship between two ecumenical partners and not the other way around.⁵²

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 the 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. First, the document notes that *unitas Ecclesiae* is a Divine gift: "Because the unity of the

51 George WILLIAMS, *The Orthodox Church of the East in the Eighteenth Century, being the Correspondence between the Eastern Patriarchs and the Nonjuring Bishops, with an Introduction on Various Projects of Reunion between the Eastern Church and the Anglican Communion*, London / Oxford / Cambridge: Rivingtons, 1868, p. 50 (*The Orthodox Patriarchs' Answers to the Nonjurors Proposals*, April 1718). For a detailed analysis of this interesting dialogue between Nonjuror Anglicans and Orthodox Churches via Moscow/Saint Petersburg see: Ionuț-Alexandru TUDORIE, *Cu frică s-au temut acolo unde nu era frică... Istoria dialogului teologic dintre anglicanii nonjurori și Biserica Răsăriteană (1716–1725)*, coll. *Studia Oecumenica* 8, Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2012; Ionuț-Alexandru TUDORIE, "There Were They in Great Fear, Where no Fear Was. The Theological Dialogue between Nonjuror Anglicans and the Eastern Church (1716–1725)", in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 79 (2013), fasc. I, pp. 429–512.

52 See: G.A. GALITIS, "Le problème de l'intercommunion sacramentelle avec les non-Orthodoxes d'un point de vue Orthodoxe", in *Istina*, 14 (1969), no. 2 (Avril-Juin), pp. 197–219.

Church is grounded in the mysterious relationship of the Persons of the Trinity, this unity belongs by necessity to its nature” (§21), a point immediately belaboured: “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). At 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 perfect uniformity: “Unity in Christ does not exist despite, and in opposition to, diversity, but is given with and in diversity” (§23), but nevertheless it 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).⁵³ 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, the same theologian will observe the perfect symmetry between the local churches of two different confessions 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, aI).⁵⁴ In order to reach this equalization between the two Christian traditions, the *Porvoo Common Statement* introduces the distinction between *the faith* and the *expressions of faith*. Thus, the unity in faith can exist despite the obvious differences regarding the expressions of faith and theological dogmas. In this case the focus is clearly on what the Churches share instead on what differentiates them.

The equalization between the Anglican and Lutheran Churches stands on a branch-type ecclesiology (the Irish theologian William Palmer stated in the 19th century: *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*

53 Cf. *The Porvoo Common Statement*, series: *Occasional Paper*, No. 3, London: Council for Christian Unity, 1993, pp. 13, 15.

54 Cf. *The Porvoo Common Statement...*, pp. 7–8, 30.

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 Communion),⁵⁵ and secondly, on a subjective interpretation of the term *koinonia*, which was introduced in the ecumenical vocabulary by the Orthodox theology but having a neutral and not a confessional meaning.

This vision is totally alien to the Orthodox ecclesiology, for whom the Church is One and only⁵⁶, 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,⁵⁷ 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 rather a live unity, ontologically and spiritually in Christ and the 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 ensures *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*, 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

55 F.L. CROSS & E.A. LIVINGSTONE (eds.), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd Edition, Oxford: University Press, 1997, p. 232. For an Orthodox perspective on this issue see: John BRECK, "An Orthodox Perspective on *Full Communion* among Protestant Churches", in *Lutheran Forum*, vol. 32 (1998), no. 3 (Fall), pp. 8–14.

56 Again, for an Orthodox perspective regarding this ecclesiological issue see: George FLOROVSKY, "The Limits of the Church", in *The Church Quarterly Review*, vol. CXVII (October 1933 – January 1934), no. CCXXXIII (October), pp. 117–131 [republished later under a different title: George FLOROVSKY, "The Doctrine of the Church and the Ecumenical Problem", in *The Ecumenical Review*, vol. II (1950), no. 2 (Winter), pp. 152–161].

57 St. CYPRIANI CHARTAGENIENSIS (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.*

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.⁵⁸

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 pre-incarnational 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, however enough to inherit partially the attribute of *Churches of Christ*, being called to their fulfilment 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.⁵⁹

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

The most important obstacle encountered by the Anglican and Lutheran theologians on 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 historical 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 historical succession of bishops, was now entering communion not only with a Lutheran side which also rigorously kept it (Sweden),⁶⁰ but moreover with another Lutheran side which

58 Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, vol. 2, Ediția a II-a, București: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1997, pp. 173–175.

59 Cf. *IBIDEM*, p. 176.

60 For the first Anglican theological evaluation of the *Apostolic succession in the Church of Sweden* see: Aldwell NICHOLSON, *Apostolical Succession in the Church of Sweden*, London/Oxford/Cambridge: Rivingtons, 1880, 60 p.; Aldwell NICHOLSON, *Vindiciae Arosienses: Apostolical Succession in the Church of Sweden*, part II, London: Griffith, Farran, Okeden & Welsh, 1887, 30 p. Also, see: Theodor van HAAG, "Die apostolische Sukzession in Schweden", in *Kyrkohistorisk Årsskrift*, 44 (1944), pp. 1–168.

had lost it during the Reformation period (Denmark, Norway, and Iceland)⁶¹ or sometimes afterwards (Finland, Estonia and Latvia).⁶²

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 historical Episcopacy and of the tactile apostolic succession, and, following this lead, to find ways of restoring the succession in those churches which had 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 4th 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 consecrated 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 – emphasis mine).⁶³ 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 their historical Episcopal succession. Then a certain limitation⁶⁴ 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

61 For more details see: N.K. ANDERSEN, “The Reformation in Scandinavia and the Baltic”, in: G.R. ELTON (ed.), *The New Cambridge Modern History*, vol. II (*The Reformation 1520–1559*), Cambridge: University Press, 1958, pp. 134–160; Carl-Gustaf ANDRÉN, “The Reformation in the Scandinavian Countries”, in: Vilmos VAJTA (editor), *The Lutheran Church: Past and Present*, Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1977, pp. 52–56; E.H. DUNKLEY, *The Reformation in Denmark*, London: SPCK, 1948, 188 p.; “The Loss of the Succession in Denmark”, in *The Church Quarterly Review*, vol. XXXII (April–July 1891), no. LXIII (April), pp. 149–187; Regin PRENTER, “The Anniversary of the Danish Reformation (1536–1936)”, in *Theology*, vol. XXXIII (1936), no. 198 (December), pp. 349–357.

62 See the special articles of Frederic CLEVE (Finland), Tiit Pädam (Estonia) and Ringolds MUSIKS (Latvia) in vol. *Together in Mission...*, pp. 71–84, 109–15, 117–120. Also see: Riho ALTNURME, “The Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Soviet Union after the Second World War”, in *Kyrkohistorisk Årsskrift*, 104 (2004), pp. 95–103.

63 Cf. *The Porvoo Common Statement...*, p. 22.

64 Martien PARMENTIER, *art. cit.*, p. 35.

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).⁶⁵

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).⁶⁶ 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, *episcopo* [...]” (§42). This special ministry “is exercised personally, collegially and communally. It is personal because the presence of Christ among his people can most effectively be pointed to by the person ordained to proclaim the gospel and call the community to serve the Lord in unity of life and witness. It is collegial, first because the bishop gathers together those who are ordained to share in the tasks of ministry and to represent the concerns of the community; secondly, because through the collegiality of bishops the Christian community in local areas is related to the wider Church, and the universal Church to that community. It is communal, because the exercise of ordained ministry is rooted in the life of the community and requires the community’s effective participation in the discovery of God’s will and the guidance of the Spirit. The personal, collegial and communal dimensions of oversight find expression at the local, regional and universal levels of the Church’s life” (§44–45).⁶⁷

With respect to the relation between apostolic succession and Episcopal ministry, opposite the Roman-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,⁶⁸ the Porvoo text states: “the continuity of the ministry

65 Cf. *Idem*, pp. 23–24.

66 Cf. *Idem*, p. 24.

67 Cf. *Idem*, p. 25.

68 Martien PARMENTIER, *art. cit.*, p. 37.

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).⁶⁹ 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).⁷⁰

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 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”⁷¹ (emphasis mine).

The Orthodox ecclesiology, when relating to the apostolicity of the Church, stresses both the unaltered preservation of the revealed teachings and the apostolic succession.⁷² 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 “essen-

69 Cf. *The Porvoo Common Statement...*, p. 26.

70 Cf. *Idem*, p. 27.

71 Cf. *Idem*, p. 28.

72 See: J.D. ZIZIOULAS, “La continuité avec les origines apostoliques dans la conscience théologique des Églises orthodoxes”, in *Istina*, 19 (1974), no. 1 (Janvier-Mars), pp. 65-94 [the English version of this text was published in: John ZIZIOULAS, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*, New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1985, pp. 171–208].

tial distinctive sign of the Church".⁷³ 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.⁷⁴ On the contrary, the Porvoo Agreement states that historical succession should not be perceived as a guarantee of the apostolicity of the Church, but as a *sign* or *means of continuity between others*. The distinction between the succession in the Apostolic ministry, which has been preserved by all the Churches involved in this dialogue, and the sign of succession in episcopal ministry, which was preserved only few of these Churches, directed to the development in the Porvoo document of a theology of *the sign of episcopal succession*. It is this distinction that allowed the Anglicans to recognize the apostolicity of the Lutheran Churches, in which *de facto* succession in the episcopal office was discontinued at some point in history. To express this concept, Mary Tanner compared the Apostolicity of the Church with a rope, which has multiple threads. Thus, even if one of them is missing the rope can fulfill its mission.⁷⁵ However, this *signum* among other *signs* is of special importance since exactly the ministers ordained in apostolic succession have the special responsibility to preserve and express the apostolicity of the Church.⁷⁶

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.⁷⁷ 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

73 M.P. BRATSIOTIS, "Die Grundprinzipen und Hauptmerkmale der Orthodoxen Kirche", p. 118, in Prof. Hamilcar S. ALIVISATOS (éd.), *Procès-verbaux du premier Congrès de Théologie Orthodoxe à Athènes, 29 nov.– 6 déc. 1936*, Athènes: Pyrsos, 1939, 540 p.

74 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 manuum* when the last one did not take place according to the ecclesiastical ritual (cf. Mary TANNER, "La posizione anglicana...", p. 19). From the Orthodox point of view, *successio sedis* does not transmit to the owner bishop *ipso facto* the authenticity of *successio apostolica*.

75 Mary TANNER, "The Anglican Position...", p. 123. Also, Ola Tjørhom made a comparison between the Gnostic principles and the nowadays situation of the Protestant theology. Thus, as in the first Christian centuries' docetism the humanity of Christ was rejected, in few Protestant circles the Apostolicity and Unity of the Church is perceived only in a spiritual way, without any visible and concrete signs. See: Ola TJØRHOM, „Apostolic Continuity and Apostolic Succession in the Porvoo Common Statement: A Challenge to the Nordic Lutheran Churches", in *Louvain Studies*, vol. 21 (1996), no. 2 (Summer), p. 128.

76 Minna HIETAMÄKI, *Agreeable Agreement...*, pp. 159–161.

77 Peter BOUTENEFF, *art. cit.*, p. 242.

a more straightforward one: *the guarantee of the apostolicity of the Church is the historic succession of the bishops and the Apostolic teachings*. More than that, in the argument regarding the efficacy of the *sign of succession in episcopal ministry* is easy to detect a Scholastic Sacramental theology which emphasizes the need of meeting the three external criteria (*materia, forma* and *intentio*) for a Sacrament of the Church to be valid.

For any Orthodox theologian, historical 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” (§50):⁷⁸ this Episcopal succession is one of the main and permanent characteristics of the Church.

The deviation from the Orthodox ecclesial principles is closely linked with the ecclesial *criteria* included in the *Confessio Augustana* (1530) and the *Lambeth Quadrilateral* (1888), both texts being written 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*.⁷⁹ More than ever, the real question which should be tackled by the Lutherans in the context of ecumenical dialogue is whether the Episcopal structure pertains to *esse Ecclesiae* or to *bene esse Ecclesiae*. According to the *Confessio Augustana*, the ecclesiastical hierarchy can pertain at most to *bene esse*, but there are numerous Lutheran theologians underlining the necessity of the reintroduction of Episcopate, along with the two above-mentioned necessary conditions for *esse et unitas Ecclesiae*.⁸⁰

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*

78 Cf. *The Porvoo Common Statement...*, p. 27.

79 See: Hr. ANDRUȚOS, *Simbolica*, Ediția a II-a, București: Editura Anastasia, 2003, pp. 139–154. The Greek theologian has noticed the ambivalent character of the *Confessio Augustana's* definition of the Church: first, *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)*.

80 Lars ÖSTERLIN, *Churches of Northern Europe in Profile...*, p. 296. On the other hand, not all the Lutheran Churches involved in Porvoo Communion understand in unison this article VII of *Confessio Augustana*. Thus, for the local Churches which do not emphasize the necessity of the episcopal ministry the two conditions 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 Lutheran theologians on this specific issue. See: André BIRMELE, *La communion ecclésiale: progrès œcuméniques et enjeux méthodologiques*, coll. *Cogitatio Fidei*, no. 218, Paris/Genève: Les Éditions du Cerf/Labor et Fides, 2000, pp. 275–317.

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 Lord's Supper – administered with unfailing use of Christ's Words of Institution, and of the elements ordained by Him*; d) *The Historical 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*⁸¹ (emphasis mine). All these items, with a limited doctrinal content, can be found in the *Porvoo Declaration*, in the first four *acknowledgements*.

The assessment of this document would still be incomplete unless a brief analysis of the practical relevance of the theological agreement expressed in the *Porvoo Declaration*, beyond official reports, is included. Thus, some of those actively involved in the process of reception and implementation are more than enthusiastic about the opportunities that arise for the signatory Churches (bishop David Tustin and dr. Colin Podmore are two of the Anglicans who always tried to push forward this process). However, there is as well a feeling of disappointment regarding the lack of involvement at the practical level of all these Churches (prof. Ola Tjørhom always expresses his dissatisfaction at what should have been *the Porvoo model*). Still these local Churches continues to live their separate ecclesial lives and do not operate as a single body, the communion between them reaching a very modest level. This parallel life leads to unilateralism in the process of decision making, without consulting the other Churches in communion. Finally, the involvement of common believers in this process is almost absent. All these problems came amid a lack of visibility of the joint governance structures, which are absolutely necessary for a *visible communion*. Also, a problem still unsolved is the parallel episcopal jurisdiction. If we take for example the status of Anglican chaplain in Helsinki, although he/she could and should be included in the Lutheran diocese of the capital of Finland, however, he/she still depends canonically on the Anglican bishop in Europe.

However, beyond this negative note regarding the practical relevance of this document several positive prospects can be formulated. Thus, as a direct result of joining this ecclesial communion, the Lutheran Churches which lost their historical episcopal succession (Norwegian and Icelandic Lutherans) managed to recover it, at least from the technical point of view, through the Swedish and

81 "Text of The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral 1886/1888", 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, pp. VII-IX. 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.

Finnish bishops who participated in every single episcopal ordination after the official inauguration of this communion. It is very likely that over the next few decades the full Norwegian and Icelandic clergy will recover this important sign of apostolic succession. *De facto*, this outcome of recovering the sign of historic episcopal succession by those Lutheran churches that had lost it, was the decisive point for the Anglican churches to sign the Joint Declaration.

Also, in response to one of the commitments from the *Porvoo Common Statement*, Church of Norway has amended its canonical legislation and no longer allows the deans of the cathedrals to replace the bishops and do ordinations on their behalf. It is easy to predict that in the similar case of the Church of Denmark, which recently signed the Joint Declaration, this process will be much more difficult.

Finally, the partnerships between Anglican and Lutheran dioceses that arose out of this ecclesial communion are a strong testimony that even the language barriers, which typically prevent especially Anglican clergy to experience of serving in a Lutheran parish from the Northern Europe, can be overcome.

4. Conclusions

Welcoming the remarkable motivation provided by both Anglicans and Lutherans in 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 concluded – which for a conservative Anglican from the 19th 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 relativization of the Episcopate’s absolute character with respect to *successio apostolica* – may be due also to the papal negative response in *Apostolicae Curae* (1896),⁸² through which the Roman Catholic Church rejected the validity of the ordinations performed by the Anglicans – pushed the signatory Anglican

82 See: R. Williams FRANKLIN (editor), *Anglican Orders. Essays on the Centenary of Apostolicae Curae (1896–1996) with a English translation of the Document and the Anglican Response*, London: Mowbray Publishing, 1996, 149 p.

churches towards a more protestant theology. On the other hand, at least regarding the Lutheran churches with gaps in their historical 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)⁸³ 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.

83 Cf. *The Porvoo Common Statement...*, p. 31.

The Apostolic Church Living Faithfully in Christ. The Lima Document (BEM) as a Resource for the Porvoo Common Statement¹

In 2012 two major ecumenical anniversaries were celebrated: the Lima Document, or BEM, the Faith and Order Commission's most important first convergence document, was published in 1982; the Porvoo Common Statement, which established close communion between most of the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches and the Anglican Churches of Britain and Ireland, was finalised in October 1992.

Concerning the wider impact of *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, the question of the extent to which it served as a midwife at the birth of the Porvoo Common Statement (PCS) arises. After all, questions of ministry, and especially episcopacy, have and had been the biggest obstacle to the creation of closer formal relationships and communion between Lutherans and Anglicans.

The Porvoo Common Statement is the most far-reaching Anglican-Lutheran agreement,² and one which, because of its interpretation of the meaning of the historic episcopacy and ministry in the life of the church, might be seen as having the potential to serve as a bridge between the so-called historic churches and those churches of a more Protestant orientation. BEM alone cannot explain how the Porvoo Common Statement was achieved within a particular geographical area. The moderate character of the Reformation in the Nordic countries, and especially in Sweden and Finland, provides an obvious historical explanation, but space does not allow a more comprehensive description here.³

The foreword to the PCS by the Co-Chairs, the Rt Revd David Tustin and the Rt Revd Tore Furberg, states that its major influences are: 1) "the series of Theological Conversations which took place between Anglicans and Lutherans in the Nordic and Baltic region during 1909-1951"; 2) joint events such as the

1 Published originally in German: Apostolische Kirche lebt den Glauben an Christus. Die Lima-Erklärung als Quelle für die Porvoorer Gemeinsame Feststellung – *Una Sancta* 3/2012, s. 193–202.

2 In North America the agreement *Called to Common Mission* (1999) between the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America may be seen as analogous with the PCS, along with the Canadian *Waterloo Agreement* (2001).

3 See, for instance, the Roman Catholic – Lutheran dialogue report *Justification in the Life of the Church* (2010), chapter three; and, for more detail, Österlin 1995. See also Hill 1993, 53–58 and, concerning the situation of the Baltic Churches, Pädam 1993, 111–114; Muziks 1993, 117, and Putze 1993, 123 in *Together in Mission and Ministry*.

series of Anglo-Scandinavian (now Anglo-Nordic-Baltic) theological conferences that have been held since 1929 and the pastoral conferences held since 1978; 3) bilateral and multilateral ecumenical dialogues such as Pullach 1973, Lima (BEM) 1983, Helsinki 1982, Cold Ash 1983, and Niagara 1988. The importance of the Niagara Report is especially underlined.⁴ It mentions the Lutheran-Episcopal agreement in the United States in 1982 and the Meissen Agreement between the Evangelical Churches in Western and Eastern Germany and the Church of England in 1988 as impulses.⁵ BEM is the only multilateral resource document mentioned here, which is an indication of its importance to the entire ecumenical movement. BEM is an important link and resource, but its precise role and systematic place in the Porvoo process needs uncovering.

The present article seeks to do this through a systematic analysis of the argumentation. It focuses on the function of those parts of BEM explicitly quoted in the PCS. I also discuss the previous research, especially the collection *Apostolicity and Unity. Essays on the Porvoo Common Statement* (2002). Finally, I offer some comments concerning the positive challenge BEM and the PCS together pose for the ecumenical movement and the practical realities of the church today.

1. Together in Mission and Ministry – BEM in the Porvoo Common Statement

1.1. Background and Genesis

The superseding of the interim agreements and the achievement of communion between Nordic and Baltic Lutherans and British and Irish Anglicans were preceded by discussions in August 1989, which sought to apply the Meissen Agreement as a model and the Lima Document and Niagara Report as an impetus. David

4 *Together in Mission and Ministry*, 1. However, earlier work is also mentioned as a forerunner of these ideas. *The Ministry in the Church* (1981 http://www.prounione.urbe.it/dia-int/l-rc/doc/e_l-rc_ministry.html) refers in this context to the formulations already accomplished in the first global Lutheran Roman Catholic dialogue paper, *The Malta Report* (1972 http://www.prounione.urbe.it/dia-int/l-rc/doc/e_l-rc_malta.html). Busch Nielsen 2002, 186-7 sees the origin of the emphasis on the importance of the apostolicity of the whole Church as early as the WCC Assembly in Uppsala in 1968, and sees BEM as elaborating and refining the idea “that apostolicity attaches to the church as such”. We may assume that it is likely that this understanding has much to do with the discovery of the concept of “*koinonia*” and communion or Eucharistic ecclesiology, and the renaissance of Trinitarian theology, especially after the Second World War. The Lutheran philosopher G.W.F. Hegel had already underlined the importance of community in his social ontology and Trinitarian logic in his transcendental theology, which were also formulated as a critique of the epistemologically oriented subject-philosophy of Immanuel Kant.

5 *Together in Mission and Ministry*, 2.

Tustin formulates this in his article *The Background and Genesis of the Porvoo Common Statement* as follows:

At an early stage we decided to take the Meissen Common Statement as a model framework, and to base our summary of the beliefs and practices in common on chapter three of the Niagara Report. However, we expressed the intention to go beyond “Meissen” by incorporating insights from the Lima text on “Ministry” and from the Niagara Report as a whole.⁶

The Porvoo Common Statement is divided into four chapters: I Setting the Scene; II The Nature and Unity of the Church; III What We Agree in Faith; IV Episcopacy in the Service of the Apostolicity of the Church; and V Towards Closer Unity. The last chapter includes the Porvoo Declaration, with its suggested commitments for member churches. Reference is made to the Lima Document in all the principal chapters (II-IV), which build the basis for the Declaration.

In part I, Setting the Scene (PCS I), the understanding of the church as fellowship (*koinonia*) and, in the context of this understanding, the ministry of oversight are seen as fundamental.⁷ PCS III 30, in dealing with areas of agreement and the steps required for progress, sees BEM as key to the deepening of fellowship and to taking “new steps on the way to visible unity”. The Porvoo Common Statement explicitly states that the Lima Faith and Order convergence text made the most important contribution to the achievement of agreement: “30. To this end, we set out the substantial agreement in faith that exists between us. Here we draw upon Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (the Lima text) and the official responses of our churches to that text.”

The especially important role the Lima Document’s chapter about ministry plays as a catalyst for the progressive contribution of the PCS is evident in the explicit references made to it in the Porvoo Common Statement. The PCS refers directly, as its footnotes indicate, to paragraphs 5, 13, 17, 22, 26, 29, 34, and 35 of this chapter in the Lima Document, and also to paragraph 2 on the eucharist. The PCS refers twice to paragraphs 17, 26, 29, 34, and 35. The quotations are from the following subchapters of the Lima Document’s chapter on ministry: II THE CHURCH AND THE ORDAINED MINISTRY, C. *Ordained Ministry and Priesthood* (§ 17); III THE FORMS OF THE ORDAINED MINISTRY B.

6 Tustin 2002, 9.

7 PCS I A 5: “...Of particular importance is the understanding of the mystery of the Church as the body of Christ, as the pilgrim people of God, as fellowship (*koinonia*), and also as participation through witness and service in God’s mission to the world. This provides a proper setting for a new approach to the question of the ordained ministry and of oversight (*episcopate*).”

Guiding Principles for the Exercise of the Ordained Ministry in the Church (§ 26); III C *Functions of Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons* (§ 29 Bishops); IV SUCCESSION IN THE APOSTOLIC TRADITION A. *Apostolic Tradition in the Church* (§ 34); IV B. *Succession of the Apostolic Ministry* (§ 35). Especially important among these is subchapter IV, which deals with the distinction between succession in the life of the church as a whole and the succession of the apostolic ministry.

1.2. The influence of the Lima Document's ministry section on the Porvoo Common Statement

1.2.1. ALL MEMBERS ARE CALLED TO BUILD THE CHURCH

The first direct reference to the Lima Document in the footnotes of the PCS comes in section II A 19, which underlines that

The Holy Spirit bestows on the community diverse and complementary gifts. These are for the common good of the whole people and are manifested in acts of service within the community and to the world. All members are called to discover, with the help of the community, the gifts they have received and to use them for the building up of the Church and for the service of the world to which the Church is sent.

All of BEM Ministry, paragraph 5 is quoted here – only the examples of the various gifts are omitted. The paragraph expresses the understanding that the church in its entirety and in its life is apostolic and that its members, with their various “diverse and complementary gifts”, are called to and partakers of apostolicity and apostolic witness in their life and vocation. This general understanding of apostolicity then forms the general basis for an understanding of the special gifts of the ordained ministries – including the special gift of the bishop.

Part II B of the PCS, *The Nature of Communion and the Goal of Unity*, makes no reference to BEM, but refers to the reports of the Roman Catholic/Lutheran Joint Commission, *Ways to Community* (Geneva 1981) and *Facing Unity. Models, Forms and Phases of Catholic-Lutheran Church Fellowship* (1985).

1.2.2. WHAT WE AGREE IN FAITH IN THE PCS

Section III of the PCS, *What We Agree in Faith*, is based mainly on the results of the Anglican-Lutheran international conversations outlined by the Pullach Report (1973), the Helsinki Report (1982), the Cold Ash Report (1983), *Lutheran-Episcopal Implications of the Gospel* (1988), the *Meissen Common Statement* (1988), and the Niagara Report (1988).

However, where the paragraph on the eucharist is concerned, reference is made to paragraph 2 of the Lima Document. It is widely known that historically there has been some tension between the Reformed influence on the Anglican understanding of the eucharist and the Lutheran Doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ. However, the PCS resolves this on the basis of the Pullach Report and the Final Report of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (1981, ARCIC I). The reference to BEM again includes the understanding of the church as a communion whose members receive the gifts of God through word and sacraments: "In the eucharist God himself acts, giving life to the body of Christ and renewing each member." (PCS III 32 h.)

Thus, according to PCS III 33, there is already "a high degree of unity in faith and doctrine" on the basis of the earlier documents. The remaining obstacles to be overcome are dealt with in Chapter IV of the PCS, *Episcopacy in the Service of the Apostolicity of the Church*.

1.2.3. THE APOSTOLIC MINISTRY AS PERMANENT CALL TO BE AN APOSTOLIC CHURCH

Chapter IV of the PCS begins with a crystallisation of the dilemma itself: "34. There is a long-standing problem about episcopal ministry and its relation to succession." This has caused "a lack of unity between the ministries", and is seen as a hindrance for "common witness, service and mission". The document seeks a solution on the basis of "A. *The Apostolicity of the Whole Church*" and its relationship with apostolic ministry and succession:

"35. Because of this difficulty we now set out at greater length an understanding of the apostolicity of the whole Church and within that the apostolic ministry, succession in the episcopal office and the historic succession as a sign. All of these are interrelated."

Paragraph 34 of the BEM chapter on ministry is cited as a source for a broader ecumenical convergence regarding the understanding of the church both as the

body of Christ and as fellowship. This suggests that the formulation in BEM is also seen as the key to an understanding of the problem in Anglican-Lutheran relations concerning the respective Porvoo Churches and even beyond them, as is the intention of the term “apostolic church”:

36 In the Creed, the Church confesses itself to be apostolic. The Church lives in continuity with the apostles and their proclamation. The same Lord who sent the apostles continues to be present in the Church. The Spirit keeps the Church in the apostolic tradition until the fulfilment of history in the Kingdom of God. 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 needy, unity among the local churches and sharing the gifts which the Lord has given to each.

Apostolicity is therefore understood as continuity with the apostles and their proclamation. Ultimately, continuity is based on the presence of the same Lord in the church then and now, and on the guidance of the Spirit who “keeps the Church in the apostolic tradition”. Apostolic tradition is “continuity in the permanent characteristics of the Church of the apostles”. It includes the proclamation of the gospel, baptism, eucharist, continuity in ministry, communion in prayer, and service and unity.

In paragraph 37 of the PCS a summary is provided: “The Church receives its mission and the power to fulfil this mission as a gift of the risen Christ. The Church is thus apostolic as a whole.” The Trinitarian basis of the church and its mission and service is expounded, quoting paragraph 21 of the Niagara Report: “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.”

Paragraph 39 of the PCS draws out the consequences of this basic approach to the understanding of succession as continuity with the apostles and their proclamation on the basis of the presence of Christ in the church, and quotes two sentences from BEM Ministry IV B. 35: “Thus 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.”

There follows an explication of the important section summarising the life of the whole church and the ministry's place and function within the apostolic life in Christ, supported by the commentary in BEM Ministry IV A. 34 and 35:

40 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.

On the basis of this understanding of the apostolicity of the whole church as a general framework within which an apostolic succession of ministry may be distinguished, the PCS continues with a closer examination of the apostolic ministry itself.⁸ Section B of Chapter 4, *Apostolic Ministry*, contains more references to BEM than any other section of the PCS.

Paragraph 41 of the PCS describes the responsibilities and functions of the ordained ministry with reference to paragraph 13 of BEM's section on ministry. However, the PCS, underlining that the apostolic ministry is instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ with divine authority (*ius divinum*), adds the following: "41. To nourish the Church, God has given the apostolic ministry, instituted by our Lord and transmitted through the apostles." The footnotes contain references to the paragraphs we quote here (BEM Ministry 13 and 22).

Given that the church as the body of Christ has many gifts and enshrines a living apostolic and catholic tradition within it, when the new challenge of pluralism is faced special attention needs to be paid to the building-up and enrichment of the church as a whole. According to PCS IV 43, this function of oversight, episcopate, is "the particular responsibility of the bishop". "[Bishops] ... serve the apostolicity, catholicity and unity of the Church's teaching, worship and sacramental life. They have responsibility for leadership in the Church's mission."

8 According to Busch Nielsen 2002, 190, the questions "For what is apostolic succession? And what is apostolic succession in relation to apostolic tradition?" "...are left hanging in the air". She also regards (2002, 193) the notion of the ministry of bishop as a "sign" linking *succession doctrinalis* and *succession in ministry* as insufficiently clear. In her argumentation she refers to the comments of Ingolf Dalferth 1999, 32. Her own suggestion is based on the distinction Dietrich Bonhoeffer makes between the ultimate (*Letzte*) and penultimate (*Vorletzte*), because apostolicity and succession belong together, but should not be confused. This is expressed in the classical Christological formulations of Chalcedon. From the perspective of conceptual, systematic analysis it may well be true that the relationship should be expounded in more detail. However, it can be argued that the distinction is made carefully enough for the purposes of ecumenism – after all, the document has led to outstanding ecumenical achievements. On the other hand, more careful analysis of this might promote an even wider common understanding between an increasing number of churches, if both the concerns of historic and more Protestant-oriented churches could be met. I believe Dietrich Bonhoeffer's theology is one of the best sources for such an inspiration.

The dimension of the whole church and the need not to be isolated from it is emphasised. A large part of this paragraph is a direct quotation from paragraph 29 of BEM Ministry .

The forms of oversight are analysed and described in language typical of the Lima Document (Ministry 26, 29), modified, however, in accordance with the context. In PCS IV 44 the expressions “should be exercised in a personal, collegial and communal way” and “It should be personal” become: “The ministry of oversight is exercised personally, collegially and communally. It is personal because the presence of Christ among his people can most effectively be pointed to by the person ordained to proclaim the gospel and call the community to serve the Lord in unity of life and witness.”

However, this personal ministry of oversight, although it is said to be the most effective way to incorporate the presence of Christ by personal ordination to proclamation of the gospel in “unity of life and witness”, should not be understood as a theology of glory. PCS IV 51 highlights the limitations and benefits of the sign. Footnote 50 refers to PCS IV 36, which uses BEM Ministry 34 as its support:

51. The use of the sign of the historic episcopal succession does not by itself guarantee the fidelity of a church to every aspect of the apostolic life, faith and mission. ...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 to, and a commission to realize more fully, the permanent characteristics of the Church of the apostles.

The importance of the lives of the respective churches and their ministries as a whole for the historic succession is also emphasised in PCS IV 53 and 54. The episcopal succession as sign is not understood as exclusive, but “...rather [as] a means of making more visible the unity and continuity of the Church at all times and in all places” (IV 53). It thus aims to make visible and strengthen the essence of the church in Nicene terms as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. Above all, the aim is to strengthen the gospel of Christ: “By the sharing of our life and ministries in closer visible unity, we shall be strengthened for the continuation of Christ’s mission in the world.” (IV 54)

Building on Chapters II-IV, the Statement continues in IV E, “...each church has maintained an orderly succession of episcopal ministry within the continuity of its pastoral life, focused in the consecrations of bishops and in the experience and witness of the historic sees (IV C)”. In light of this “...all our churches can affirm together the value and use of the sign of the historic episcopal succession (IV D)”.

2. Conclusions

With good reason the Lima Document is described as a summary of fifty years of Faith and Order work. It has also been important for that work that the Roman Catholic Church is a member of the Faith and Order Commission. BEM underlines the apostolicity of the whole church as the presence of Christ and his gospel today, but also challenges all the churches to study the positive contribution the threefold office and its common understanding can make to common witness, unity, and service. It also understands the episcopal office as “a sign, though not a guarantee”. However, it does not offer a concrete way to take steps towards unity. The PCS uses the possibilities BEM opens to identify the inherent connection between the apostolicity of the church and the apostolic ministry, and the positive ways in which the office of personal oversight may serve as a sign. Moreover, it represents a concrete agreement concerning the importance of the episcopal office as a sign in the service of the unity of the apostolic faith in the mission of the whole church, and suggests how practical conclusions may be drawn for the churches’ communal life.⁹ There has been good progress in implementation, but there is still work to do.

The Porvoo Common Statement and the Lima Document still, and perhaps especially now, challenge us to take forward work on the mutual recognition of ministries, and thus take steps towards visible unity with the other historic churches. As an agreement between churches representing the Western tradition that at the same time bears the tradition of the undivided church, the PCS can also help, and has helped, ecumenical discussions with the Roman Catholic Church about ministry and the episcopal office. A good example of this is the Finnish-Swedish Roman Catholic-Lutheran dialogue report *Justification in the Life of the Church* (2010).¹⁰ In his speech on St Henry’s Day, 19th January 2012, at a private audience for the annual Finnish ecumenical delegation, Pope Benedict XVI described this as a “doctrinal rapprochement”, although he referred to the need for further theological work on anthropology and ethical issues.

The Meissen Agreement between the Church of England and the Evangelical Church in Germany was a major step forward. However, the relationship of

9 Also, for instance, Tjørhom 2002, 168 sees “its constructive efforts to identify an intermediate position” between an emphasis on the apostolicity of historic episcopacy and an emphasis on the apostolicity of the church as one of the most important achievements of the PCS: “a broad and dynamic ecclesiological approach is applied – an approach which makes it clear that apostolicity must be grounded in the reality of the church in its totality.” However, Tjørhom 2002, 170 states that BEM did not express “...in more positive terms, what the historic episcopate had to offer in the churches’ life”. He also observes that BEM fails to show “...how concrete communion in the episcopal office of unity could be achieved”.

10 www.svenskakyrkan.se/default.aspx?id=586259

the German Lutherans with the Porvoo Common Statement remains challenging. Wolfhart Pannenberg considers that German Lutherans have felt themselves hindered by the Leuenberg Concord between the Lutheran and Reformed traditions in Germany “[from acknowledging] the importance of the office of bishop for the being of the church”.¹¹ Pannenberg considers it vital for the development of Lutheran-Roman Catholic ecumenical relations that German Lutherans join others in taking this step, because it would open the way for a “similarly based agreement” with the Roman Catholics. According to Pannenberg, “this would remove the main obstacle for the Roman Catholic Church standing in the way of Eucharistic communion between Lutherans and Roman Catholics...”.¹²

Pannenberg is probably right that this would mean positive progress in Lutheran-Roman Catholic ecumenical relations. However, the question of women’s ordination and their functioning in the episcopal office and anthropological and ethical questions currently present a major challenge for ecumenical and internal church relations. A binding interpretation of the Leuenberg Agreement and its method to enable a closer relationship between the ground (*Grund*) and the historical shape (*Gestalt*) in its ecclesiological understanding also remains a challenge.

However, Ola Tjørhom’s words about the PCS as a possible inspiration for a wider ecumenical common understanding of apostolic continuity ring true even today: “...the Porvoo Common Statement can be seen as a feasible ‘model’ or even as a possible ecumenical breakthrough in our continued efforts to achieve visible unity in the episcopal office and to enter into a mutual sharing of our signs of apostolicity.”¹³

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12 Pannenberg 2006, 170. For instance, Prof. Viorel Ionita, the former leader of CEC’s Churches in Dialogue Commission, has stressed the importance of PCS as an agreement that deals more widely with the question of ministry and apostolicity – compared with the Leuenberg Agreement, for example. For the differences between the PCS, which “transcends the traditional ‘models’ of unit”, and the LA, and for a critique of the LA, see, for instance, Tjørhom 2002, 178. Two dialogue meetings have been held concerning the possibilities the PCS presents for Anglican-Lutheran-Orthodox relations. Bishop Matti Repo reviews these conferences in *Reseptio* 1/2009, pp 138-147 ([http://sakasti.evl.fi/sakasti.nsf/0/10FE7C6FC73BEDC2C22576F2004102B3/\\$FILE/Reseptio1_2009.pdf](http://sakasti.evl.fi/sakasti.nsf/0/10FE7C6FC73BEDC2C22576F2004102B3/$FILE/Reseptio1_2009.pdf)). The Norwegian, Swedish, and Finnish Nordic Lutheran Churches’ agreement on altar and pulpit fellowship with the local episcopally ordered United Methodist Church might also function as a bridge in Anglican-Methodist relationships. However, the situation is different with non-episcopal churches

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VI REFORMATION CONTRIBUTION

Rowan Williams

The Reformation's Legacy

1. What exactly is it to celebrate today the heritage of the sixteenth century Reformation? Many commentators in recent decades have expressed their sense that we have lost or are losing any clear idea of what it is to be a European Protestant in the 'classical' mode; in Britain, several observers have noted that if there is any residue of popular religion now, it is of what most would see as a distinctively 'Catholic' stripe, preoccupied with rituals and holy places and the numinous quality of the beloved dead (the reaction to Princess Diana's death being the most dramatic illustration). A popular British Christian identity grounded in the Bible, family-based devotion and anti-papalism (together with a certain sense of the providential role of the nation) has conclusively disappeared. And something comparable is reported elsewhere in Europe. While secular commentators will refer to 'Catholic Social Teaching' as a coherent and identifiable presence in general debates about social well-being and political justice, there is relatively little recognition, in the wider culture, of a distinctive Protestant voice in social ethics, despite the extensive and sophisticated contributions made by so many in church and academy. It is not surprising if there are signs of uncertainty about the Protestant – and specifically the Reformed – identity in Europe and more widely. 'Protestant' identity is often conflated with a distinctively American brand of biblical literalism and social conservatism, itself understood as opposed to an equally distinctive 'liberal Protestantism', which is unconcerned with doctrine and committed to broadly progressive causes. Such a framework is no help at all in making sense of most of the Reformation itself, let alone of what Reformed theology has meant in the last hundred years or so. Students are often bewildered as to where they should locate Karl Barth on a theological map defined by the simple oppositions of left and right, conservative and liberal.

2. In these brief observations, I want to attempt a very broad analysis of what the contributions of a recognizably 'Protestant' theology have been to Christian culture overall; to suggest what might be some of the lastingly constructive elements have been, as well as noting those things that have had more ambivalent

effects. I write as an Anglican – that is, as someone whose ecclesiastical identity is shaped by a reluctance to see the Protestant/Catholic divide as a simple binary opposition, but who is bound to be conscious of the essential role of Reformed theology in the self-definition of the Church of England. My personal formation was in the ‘catholic’ wing of the Anglican family, but marked also by a childhood in the Welsh Presbyterian Church and a continuing interest in and enthusiasm for various strands in the Reformed tradition represented by writers like Richard Baxter, Thomas Torrance and, of course, Barth himself. It is against that personal background that I venture to identify three themes in Reformed theology and practice which I believe to be of lasting and crucial significance for the theological health of the Christian community; and also to reflect on another three themes that have been less obviously fruitful and which indeed bear some responsibility for aspects of our current cultural desolation and confusion. My tentative conclusion is that these latter themes can only be countered by a better theological understanding of the former ones – so that we may after all be able to identify a positive, distinctive and creative role for the legacy of the Reformation today.

3. Very briefly, the three themes that seem to be positive are these. First, the Reformation affirmed the absolute difference of created and infinite action; its consistent emphasis on the sovereignty of God is a way of underlining the truth that God’s action and ours can never be in *either* competition *or* collaboration. Second, the Reformation established the principle that scripture was not only a source for true teaching and for illustrative clarification of that teaching but also a *critical* presence in the Church, in some sense ‘intervening’ in the Church’s life, never simply the Church’s instrument. Third, the Reformation, in questioning any suggestion that the means of grace could be ‘managed’ by human intermediaries, affirmed that the Church was first and foremost the assembly of a people, not of rulers and subjects.

4. The ambivalent legacy of the Reformation might be summarised in these ways. First, the emphasis on the sovereign dignity of God’s Word allied itself with a developing rationalism to produce a one-dimensional picture of human knowing, in which the non-verbal was regarded as inferior. Second, the suspicion of hierarchy encouraged a half-hearted theology of the Church and a privileging of individual piety and individual exploration at the expense of understanding corporate identity in Christ and the Spirit, and of intelligent appropriation of the Christian past. Third, the stress on divine sovereignty came to suggest (in a way directly contrary to its proper theological meaning) an opposition between human and divine to be resolved by simple submission on the part of the created

will – so that human emancipation was thought to require the abandonment of theological discourse.

5. Taking the first three in order: the focus of the Reformation protest against the popular theology and practice of the late Middle Ages was a pattern of language and habit which seemed to presuppose that the reconciled or grace-filled life was something that could be ‘negotiated’ with God. This world of piety was seen (not always fairly) as a way in which human beings could use specific created means whose effects were guaranteed by God in order to obtain rewards promised by God; and, although the prior agency of God is acknowledged in such a framework, the *immediate* impression is of a sort of spiritual technology in which God is bound to honour the conditions he has himself laid down. The created agent knows what God is ‘bound’ to do. And this is where the difficulty arises. God’s action is seen as removed from the present situation, it becomes an abstract frame within which human action plans and seeks to control human destiny (not least, of course, by the very particular kinds of control associated with the ordained ministry which controls the administration of the means of grace). The result is either a complacent reduction of the life of discipleship to compliance with a new ‘law’ – or, as Luther discovered, a corrosive despair of encountering the grace of God as a direct and living reality, a state in which there is a dissonance between what is authoritatively declared to be the case by the authorities of the Church and the personal sense of guilt or abandonment.

6. Luther reinstates divine sovereignty by appealing to a God who is systematically hidden; a God who cannot be negotiated with, whose presence is always to be found in the heart of his own apparent absence, not in the places where he can be *predicted* to be present according to some systematic map of his workings. And such a theology makes full sense only when there is a serious recovery of what had always been a fundamental principle of Catholic theology but had been regularly overlaid – the principle that God’s action and finite action are not two instances of the same thing: they cannot compete, they cannot be thought of as fighting over a single contested territory. It is this principle that in fact pervades Aquinas’s theological world (it can be seen at work in very interesting ways in his Christology especially). But the Reformation protest insists that this has to be worked through at every level of theology and practice. Any theological idiom or devotional habit that seems to imagine God as responding to human initiative is to be excluded from genuinely theological discourse, because God’s action is not in any sense conditioned by human action. The contested, even shocking theology of predestination advanced by Calvin is essentially about this fundamental non-commensurability of created and uncreated act: temporal succession, logical

consequence, moral appropriateness – all these are fatally mistaken frameworks for thinking about the relation of God to creation. And the rather paradoxical implication – not as alien to Calvinistic thought as some would think – is that the dignity of the human can never be threatened by the majesty of God any more than that majesty can be threatened by the affirmation of concrete human liberties, because there is no competition between the finite and the infinite. The Reformation principle of God's unconditional sovereignty *ought* to deliver us from both anxiety and resentment in regard to God, and to allow a robust theology of human calling and freedom in the social/political sphere.

7. This is not unconnected with the second positive point. If Scripture is 'the Word of God written', it is a vehicle for that same unconditional divine action. It is not a passive instrument for human discovery, expressing truths that can be distilled into a neat conceptual schema (which is why fundamentalism is in an important sense antithetical to a fully Reformed theology); it is alive and active, a field of records and songs and maxims in which human discourse may at any moment become tangibly the vehicle of an authoritative communication and summons to discipleship. And this means that Scripture is always a critical presence in the Church. Although there were and are some Reformed theologians who interpret this as meaning that Scripture provides a detailed constitution for the Church, so that anything not prescribed there is implicitly forbidden (a view expressed by some English Calvinists in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), this is not quite how most mainstream Reformed thinkers have developed the point. The principle that everything in the life of the Church needs to be tested by how well it serves the proclamation of the gospel of God's free election and grace is not the same as saying that Scripture is a comprehensive law book for the Church. But it does mean that Scripture can never be regarded as simply as a tool for the Church's purposes or a source of material to illustrate the Church's teaching. It is something that has to be heard as a question from outside the Church's life, even though Scripture is itself bound in with the Church's life and does not exist in a vacuum. It is always a book read by the Church; but it is read by the Church *so that* the Church is able to hear what it would not otherwise hear.

8. Thus the Church's life – including and especially the Church's worshipping life – is one in which we are brought into question. We are to be led into attentive silence as well as praise and affirmation; and the reading and hearing of Scripture is a primary embodiment of this dimension. It is not that as we listen we automatically hear the precise expression of God's will; as we have already seen, we cannot treat the agency of God as automatically predictable in any way. But we listen in the expectation of being changed into a more Christlike way of

being. Sometimes, this is in ways we can see and grasp, most often it will be in ways we do not immediately perceive. But the discipline of listening expectantly means that we are bound always to ask what we should be discovering about our discipleship that we did not previously know. This is not a matter of working out new interpretations of familiar texts or producing radically new doctrines: there is a given framework of teaching and practice, the shared identity of those baptized into Christ, which gives meaning to all our actions in worship; without it we could make no sense of what we were doing. But within this we constantly ask to be instructed and enlarged in our reading, and so in our service and witness. The characteristic shape of worship can be seen as this attitude of expectant listening combined with the unceasing expression of gratitude for what has been heard and given.

9. The much-misunderstood Reformation principle of the open Bible, the accessibility of Scripture to all, was in its context a protest against authority that was not accountable to either the community as a whole or to the prior reality of God's communication in Scripture. It was not meant to be a charter for unlimited individual interpretation, but a way of opening up the life of the Church to a shared process of reading and discerning, in which all baptised people had a voice. The grace of Christ was not passed on to the body of the faithful by a priestly caste; ordained ministry in the Church was a solemn and lifelong charge, and the assurance of its continuity was a serious matter, but it was not an induction into a governing elite. The classical Calvinist distinction between ruling and teaching elders was an attempt to reflect the concerns at work here. Although it did not take long for the teaching ministry to become, in many contexts, as much of an authoritarian system as what it had replaced, the ideal of a 'conversational' process of studying the text to who all were equally accountable was a deeply theologically motivated effort to embody the principle of the dignity of all the baptized. An 'open' Bible is what gives to the community a common language in which all have the right to speak, and it is no longer acceptable to limit access to this shared world so as to reinforce the power of a governing class. There is a solid element of classical republicanism in this (a feature which ironically echoes some aspects of Aquinas's political thought). It is no surprise to see it worked out in various national histories. But this does not mean either an anarchy of love or a democracy as we understand the word. It could involve aspirations to real theocracy as much as ideals of participatory, perhaps syndicalist, debate and decision. The significant point is that making universally available a shared authoritative cultural resource in the form of Scripture meant the creation in principle of a theological conversation in which all could be held to account, and there was no exclusion in advance of any voices. The challenge which the Reform did not

always succeed in handling was to do with discovering the kinds of consensus that would have and hold authority.

10. In the light of this discussion, the positive legacy of the Reformation is very much bound up with the idea of a society (secular and ecclesiastical) capable of self-questioning, confident in the prior affirmation of God's action in a way that undercuts anxiety and rivalry, united by a common conversation around the narrative of Scripture and wakefully alert to the possibility of new insight or new challenge in this context. It is not simply identical with what we have come to think of as 'modern' society, let alone 'enlightened' society, though these latter would not exist without it. The main differences are to do with the particular way modernity privileges autonomy, so that God's sovereignty is seen (despite the all-important Reformation clarifications) as a menace to human dignity and the individual's liberty is likewise seen as threatened by the language of accountability. The Reformed picture of human flourishing involves obedience – and thus understands the deepest liberties to have something to do with submission to being questioned by a reality, a truth, beyond our individual agendas.

11. Modernity, in fact, appears in this light as a systematic misreading of the Reformed picture. What I earlier called the ambivalent features of the Reformed legacy are all in their ways inversions of the basic theological principles of the sixteenth century Reform, reinstating much of what the movement sought to overthrow. The way in which a certain model of rationality came to be seen as all-important and normative reflected a deep suspicion of claims to knowledge that could not be defended by the kind of argument proper to reasoning and adult persons. Against mystification and manipulation, Reformed thinkers insisted that God communicated in ways that were accessible to all. When symbols were used, they had to be understood as essentially illustrations of things that could be put more clearly – even if less vividly – in other ways. Despite Luther's sophisticated theology of the dialectic between hiddenness and manifestation in the actions of God with us, Protestant thought moved increasingly towards the assumption that truthful knowledge was necessarily a matter of clear verbal communication. It was hard to include in this an understanding of what more recent thinkers have called 'tacit' knowledge, or of the material dimensions of knowing (the capacity to recognize a face, to play an instrument, ride a horse, interpret the sky so as to foresee the weather) – let alone the codes in gesture, sign and indeed visual image which convey what cannot effectively or satisfactorily be codified in speech. Words *ought* to be enough for everything, which is why – as Torrance and others note – the Reformation so stressed hearing over seeing as the paradigm for knowledge.

12. The result was eventually to polarize different accounts of human knowing. Either we know because we hear/read in Scripture the simple propositions of divine truth or we read off from the natural world around us all we need to know and ignore all claims to knowledge that do not conform to particular processes of gathering evidence. We are on the road to the futile and unintelligent stand-off between 'science' and 'religion' that still dominates the thoughts of so many in our culture. And to recover a more integral view of knowing, we need – as I have already suggested – to turn the best insights of the Reformation against its distortions.

13. Luther's revolution in theological thinking implied that no state of affairs in the world carried an obvious meaning that could be grasped and deployed as an instrument of human power. To understand the hiddenness of God in the crucified Christ required us to be silenced, brought to nothing, faced with a potential abyss of meaninglessness, so that we were at last free to receive God's gift without the presumptions of our own agenda, our individual needs and ambitions. The clarity of words alone will not alter this need for being dispossessed; and the more we let go of a view of language that assumes we can produce a comprehensive picture of the world that fits into a single system of consistent explanation, the more we see that our learning as human beings is bound up with our capacity to respond to a variety of signs and signals, consciously or not. Our reasoning must follow the appropriate method for its subject; it has to be moulded by that subject and to come to 'share' something of that subject's life. And in this, without trying to reinstate a late mediaeval obsession with symbolic readings of texts and world, we do recover a sensitivity to communications that are not simply verbal – or if verbal, then working with irony and indirection (a point very clear in the Protestant poetics of Fulke Greville or George Herbert in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries).

14. The weakness in thinking about the Church which I have suggested as another ambivalent legacy rises from a complex distortion of the notion of the 'invisible' Church. Once again, a point originally developed as a way of underlining the hiddenness of God's act and thus its absolute freedom and transcendence became a fixed position of scepticism in popular Protestantism towards any doctrine of the necessity of the Christian community as shaping Christian identity. The obscurity of the Church's limits, the truth expressed by the early Calvin as perceiving 'churches half-buried', the resistance to making institutional adherence a vehicle of almost automatic grace – all these things encouraged in many a vague sense that Christian identity need have nothing visibly corporate about it. Again, it is the Reformation's own principles that will help us escape such a distortion, above all

the emphasis on the open Bible as the field of *common* language. The individual taking refuge in private piety (in ways that would have shocked Calvin as much as Luther) has not yet grasped that an inner realm beyond any shared discerning and testing of God's will is precisely the kind of inward-curving of the human spirit that consolidates the reign of sin. And while the stress on how the fullness of grace in the Eucharist depends on the communicant's faith is an understandable reaction to what was thought to be a mechanical and thus graceless approach in which God's presence was automatically assured, popular piety readily took this to mean that the outward form was a purely practical way of reinforcing a mental lesson – rather than a corporate and objective act of pleading with God to bear witness to himself and his work in Christ through the effective operation of the Spirit. Believing in the absolute sovereignty of grace does not mean that we are bound to see grace at work in the private experience of individuals rather than anywhere else; quite the opposite. Such a belief relativizes private experience no less authoritatively than it relativizes shared experience. And our common worship directs us to the abiding realities of Scripture and sacrament as objective testimonies to God's act, independent of our subjective state or aspirations.

15. And just as a properly understood Reformed theology dissolves the polarity between corporate and individual by insisting that God's act is free in regard to both of them, so it dissolves the haunting and persistent sense of rivalry between God and creation, that rivalry which, as I noted earlier, makes so many assume that for humanity to be free, God must be dethroned. God's sovereignty is not a vastly inflated variety of human power. And once we have grasped this, we can begin to see the radical implications of God's creation of human beings in the divine image and God's purpose of endowing them through Jesus with a share in the divine life. As Calvin well understood, this is disturbing for a Reformed theology only if God is capable of being threatened by human dignity or flourishing – which is, *ex hypothesi*, unthinkable. An uncompromising stress on the absolute difference of God's power ought to result in an enhanced theological affirmation of human dignity: there is no reverence given to actual finite humanity that in itself takes anything away from what is due to God. Idolatry is ascribing to what is created what belongs only to God – that is, treating creatures as more than creatures. The true Christian challenge is to love and revere humanity for what it is – mortal and vulnerable, yet immeasurably glorious because made by God as the site of divine manifestation and agency. And – to connect this with themes touched on earlier – our capacity for radical self-questioning as individuals and as a society is made possible by this basic conviction that our mortal and fallible human state is affirmed in its fragility by God who undertakes to absolve and transform it, never to abolish it. Or in other terms, we can question everything

about our humanity, its precise capacities, its habitual behaviour, we can live with an almost corrosive pessimism about what fallen nature is actually like, yet we cannot question the dignity unconditionally bestowed by the God who has no jealousy of our state, since the divine life does not share the same space as ours.

16. It is the ability of Reformed theology to affirm this that gives it a role in our current cultural struggles. To proclaim Christian hope is in no sense to advance an optimistic view of human capacity or character; a theological perspective allows us to assume the worst (in just the way associated with Augustinian and Calvinist thought in the popular mind), but it does not allow us to think less of our humanity than its maker does. And by proposing to us the language and world of Scripture as the house we inhabit together and the dialect we speak, it tells us that we may find direction and indeed transformation as we make our own the story of God's dealings with a people with whom he makes covenant. To speak of Christian hope is to speak of divine fidelity; our social vision is grounded in the belief in a God who freely promises to be the God of those who have not 'earned' or been obliged to compel his love. The radical otherness of divine love and commitment, and the consequent irreducible mysterious extent of God's election entails a systematic reverence for human persons whatever their status or achievement or ethical performance. All are potentially part of a story of unpredictable divine faithfulness, part of the Scriptural story in which we may find common ground.

17. This is a legacy which challenges a number of negative forces. Its emphasis on growing into a maturity that can handle self-questioning is a challenge to a public/media culture preoccupied with the management of personal images. It suggests that genuine and honest exchange in personal and public debate is essential and that for this to work there must be a basic willingness to silence one's dreams of invulnerable rightness. In the face of a vague spirituality that can easily turn into consoling and sentimental 'inwardness', it stresses the need in spiritual practice, public and personal, for listening with care and attention, ready for what will not be welcome to the lazy ego – listening in 'the fear of God', to use the old-fashioned vocabulary. In contrast to a general unwillingness to think in terms of shared narratives that are more than local or communal, it proposes a universal narrative of divine grace and election, crystallized uniquely in Scripture, focused on the events in which the true image of humanity is restored in the crucified and risen Christ. It is worth underlining that Calvin himself repudiates the idea that our salvation is only a formal or external and mechanical relation with a Christ who has declared us righteous but makes no 'real' change in us:

‘He imparts to us his life and all the blessings which he has received from the Father’(Comm. Jn 17.21).

18. Against anxious and fundamentalist religion, this Reformed tradition affirms a God who cannot and *need* not be persuaded by our efforts or our success: the language of our faith, especially our prayer, is characteristically shaped by gratitude for unearned and uncaused love and forgiveness, gratitude for God being God. Against a rebellious or resentful atheism, suspicious of alien and coercive power, it presents a God who can have no interest in diminishing his creatures and whose absolute sovereign freedom is such that he need not bully or coerce those creatures; God’s free will is a will for forgiveness and healing and for the extension of the divine love and bliss to creation.

19. Out of all this emerges the outline of a theology that imposes a demanding spiritual discipline, a sober and thoughtful style of worship, a freedom constantly and without panic to have one’s own integrity under scrutiny and to do the same for the community as a whole and its institutions, a Christ-centred understanding of human history and a radical political vision, challenging inequalities and arbitrary domination of all kinds. In brief, the governing themes of authentic Reformed theology do not only represent a recovery of many of the most radical ideas of patristic thought, but offer as robust and profound a resource for addressing contemporary social crises as the tradition of Catholic social teaching – not that these are rivals, but complementary understandings, with the Reformed tradition contributing above all its emphasis on the incomparable sovereignty of God which liberates us from moralistic assessments of merit and invites us to reflect in our own actions and relations the same ‘causeless’ fidelity to the promise of love that belongs to God.

20. The greatest theologians of the Reform were not zealots seeking to expunge history and symbol from the Christian mind, or individualists committed to the autonomy of private conscience, or theocrats determined to impose on all human society an unreconstructed version of the Mosaic law, or rationalists obsessed with words at the expense of both silence and sign, or biblical literalists with a mechanical model of inspiration. The accidents of history have associated Reformed Christianity with all of these in various contexts, and there are of course elements in Luther, Calvin, Melancthon or Zwingli that might foster and encourage such ideas. The popular picture of Protestant Christianity in the West is still largely dominated by one or all of these stereotypes. But if we are now seeking to articulate for our own day what is distinctive and valuable about the legacy of the Reformation, it becomes necessary to disentangle them from

the fundamental insights and questions of the Reformers. In this very modest contribution to such a task, I have tried to indicate where I believe the emphasis should fall. I have been helped and encouraged by that strand in recent writing about Calvin which sees him as a humanist scholar retrieving insights from the early Christian centuries, offering a fresh way of focusing on the Eucharistic transformation of the believer and the community – not a logician determined to establish the omnipotent liberty of God at the expense of both reason and human dignity. There is in him, undoubtedly, a ‘tragic’ element which is most visible in his stress on the comprehensive corruption of fallen humanity and the (consequent) arbitrariness of predestination; Calvin – and much of the tradition that stems from him – is no more successful in handling this than Augustine. But this is an outgrowth from the main stem of his thought, and needs to be kept in perspective. What is most significant is the way in which Calvin explores so comprehensively the leading themes of a renewed theology which gives such space to human maturity – political and psychological – while at the same time keeping human capacity within a relentlessly realistic framework. A Christian faith that does not require any kind of infantilisation on the part of the faithful – that is, perhaps, the greatest aspiration of the Sixteenth century Reform, and an aspiration that today is more than ever an imperative if Christian belief is to persuade and attract and convert.

VII INTERFAITH

Keys to Interfaith Engagement

The Churches in the Porvoo Communion produced *Guidelines for Interfaith Encounter* at a conference in Oslo in November-December 2003. These guidelines were further developed at a major Interfaith Engagement Consultation in Gothenburg in March 2011.

The following Reflection Sheets are based on the original guidelines from 2003 as well as the Interfaith Engagement Consultation in 2011. It would be useful to read both the 2003 and 2011 documents which can be found at www.porvoo communion.org (then look under 'Resources' and 'General Resources').

As Interfaith work is a crucial area in the fields of 'mission and service' the purpose of the Reflection Sheets is to enable people to consider the situation where they live and engage locally with their neighbours from different faith/belief communities to support and develop Interfaith engagement locally.

The topics to be considered are highlighted on four separate sheets with a fifth sheet being a theological conclusion.

How to use these Reflection Sheets:

- can be read by an individual
- can be read by a group
- can be used with young people
- can be used ecumenically
- can be used as a study course
- can be used during an Interfaith Week with people of other faiths/beliefs

The Porvoo Communion of Churches believes that as Christians they have a calling to engage with Interfaith work because:

- We are part of a common humanity. We share life with its happiness and worries, joys and struggles with people of different faiths, and no religion. We are sent by God to share and serve in a common society, as fellow citizens.

- In each person we are called to recognise the image of God. Love for our neighbour has no limits - *There is wideness in God's mercy.*
- Our limited understanding does not give us the full knowledge of God. We therefore need to also understand the experiences of our neighbour for a wider vision of God. Through such encounters we not only learn more of the distinctiveness of our own Christian faith but can be further strengthened to be confident Christians in a pluralistic world.

Reflection Sheet 1

Engaging with International, European, National and Local Issues

We know that it is impossible to separate interfaith relations in our own countries from the effect of situations in other countries. International issues may have a very serious impact on minority faith groups, and at times of crisis in particular we should be ready to show solidarity with communities who may be feeling under threat. The situation of vulnerable minorities in other countries will often form a significant theme of dialogue, and our Churches will feel particular bonds of prayer and affection with Christian communities experiencing persecution. We need to make it clear, though, that it is unfair to hold faith communities in our countries to account for the actions of their co-religionists in other parts of the world (Guideline 10.2003).

1. Clarify the make up (demography) of faith and cultural communities, including new religious movements

- In the parish and local area
- In the town, city, rural area
- In local schools
- In local and national media and advertisements
- In church/churches/diocese
- In political bodies, councils
- In any other key sectors, such as police, health workers, teachers
- etc.
- In the local landscape- mosques, temples etc
- Note any recent critical happenings
- Note any new waves of immigration

2. Establish what the national demography is and the faith Communities present there. Establish whether and from where they are growing

- New groups entering our country and which faiths
- New restrictions or rule changes
- New political movements, such as the Far Right. Do the Far Right use 'Christian' or 'national church' rhetoric to further their cause?

- Growth of Islamophobia, anti-Semitism (examples)
- New atheism

3. In the light of the above is Christian identity and confidence threatened? How?

The Christian commitment to love our neighbours and to seek justice for all leads us to affirm the importance of religious freedom in every society. Within our own countries, this is safeguarded by the European Convention on Human Rights: 'Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others, and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.' (1950). We have a particular concern for the rights of minority communities in our own societies. We recognise the importance of the principle of equal legal protection for all our citizens; it is important that religious authority should not be abused to control or repress vulnerable individuals (Guideline 11.2003).

4. Do you feel 'European' as you consider these questions?

5. Share with the group examples of how international events have affected your local or national context and note the reactions

Examples include:

- 9/11 and London bombings (7/7)
- Gaza and the Holy Land, Danish Cartoons, Iraq, Libya, the 'Arab spring', Afghanistan, Pakistan, death of Osama Bin Laden
- Sri Lankan civil war
- Increasing violent attacks on Christian minorities (Guideline 11.2003 above)

6. The stance of the government or local council (hostile, neutral or positive)

- To engaging with faith communities, and issues involving faith and religion?
- Are faith communities seen as enabling community cohesion or not (clear examples)?

- Are faith schools (religious schools) hostile, neutral or positive influences towards cohesion?
- Have there been local or national examples of trying to ban religious symbols and practices, for example, the turban, the Niqab, minarets, crosses? What do you feel about these?

7. Put together any examples of common action in response to natural Disasters and conflict caused by humans and local situations

- Are there any examples of interaction between local and national interfaith dialogue groups or structures?

8. Discuss the consequences of new communications on faith Communities

- Facebook, satellite channels and the internet

9. 'A Common Word' is an initiative of 138 Muslim scholars and leaders through a letter addressed to the Pope and Church leaders in 2007

- Look up the web site dedicated to this (www.acommonword.com) and also read the responses of church leaders, especially those from the Porvoo Churches.
- Consider also: Generous Love- an Anglican Theology of Interfaith Relations (<http://nifcon.anglicancommunion.org/resources/documents>)
- The Interfaith Encounter by The Committee For Relations With People Of Other Faiths & The Doctrine Committee Of The Scottish Episcopal Church. ISBN 0905573714 June 2006 www.scotland.anglican.org

Reflection Sheet 2

Changing Patterns of living

1. Discuss the key changes in gender roles (male/female) in your society in recent decades and especially in the new Millennium

We recognise that in many interfaith situations there is a need to strengthen the presence and active involvement of women (though in some contexts it may be men who are under-represented). Together with people in other faith communities, we should strive to ensure that participation in inter-religious events has a fair gender balance, and to set a positive lead by insisting on this in the case of Christian representation. At the same time, we need to recognise the strength of the cultural and religious factors which may inhibit the participation of women alongside men in inter faith activities. In interfaith dialogue we should be ready to raise issues of women's rights as human rights (Guideline 9.2003).

2. Key changes in patterns of relationships

While we rejoice in the new vitality that religious and cultural diversity has brought to many parts of our societies, we are also aware of the confusion and pain that can be felt by long-established communities who find their neighbourhoods transformed. We emphasise the importance of maintaining a vigorous and engaged Christian presence at local level in multi-faith areas. We recognise also the need to be aware of the ethnic and religious discrimination in our societies which affect other faith groups (Guideline 5.2003)

- Discussions on the effect on the Christian community
- Discussions on the effect on other faith communities
- How do we fulfil the legal requirements of living in a secular society, where equal rights are a given, with the various stances of our churches, and faith communities (see also guideline 9.2003 above)?

3. Mixed marriages and upbringing of mixed faith families

We need to be sensitive to the hopes and needs of those who are thinking of embarking on marriages across the boundaries of faith. Clergy and others with a ministry of pastoral care should be equipped to provide appropriate advice and

support for such couples and for their families. They also need to have access to suitable resources for the nurture and education of children of interfaith couples, and to develop patterns of support for the families of those who have converted to or from other faiths. We sense that there is growing need to share good practice in the pastoral care of those who experience bereavement in interfaith relations (Guideline 7.2003).

- Is there adequate support for mixed faith marriages?
- How is the support base for bringing up of children in mixed faith families?
- Do you know examples, and what are the main issues?
- Discuss ways of providing help and support

4. Additional Questions

- How do issues concerning cohabitation, civil partnerships and same sex Marriages impact on interreligious dialogue?
- What is your local context?

Reflection Sheet 3

Building Long Term Trust

Our faith speaks of the centrality of permanent commitment to one another as the way to build stable and trustful relationships. In interfaith encounter, there can be no substitute for the patient, painstaking and time-consuming process of getting to know our neighbours of other faiths, earning their respect, and becoming their friends. We have found that it is within relationships of this kind, built up over many years, that dialogue acquires authenticity, the quest for truth can be honestly pursued, and difficult issues can be addressed (Guideline 1.2003).

1. Stereotypes are a major hindrance to building up long term trust

- What are your stereotypes of Muslims and Islam? What are those of society around?
- What are your stereotypes of Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jews?
- How do members of other faiths see Christians, Christianity and the church?
- What other hindrances can one name?
- What can one do to counter these difficulties?
- Do you have examples of long term friendships? Describe one such friendship and what you have learnt from each other.
- Do you know of any long term dialogue groups (bilateral or multi-lateral)?
- Do you have a local Council of Faiths, Interfaith Council or Faith Leaders' Meeting? Are they successful? What can be done to improve it/them?

2. What can promote honesty and openness without destroying trust?

Do you have any examples of 'telling the truth in love' and 'hearing the truth in love?'

Speaking truthfully requires us to avoid simplistic or homogenising language. Rather, we need to recognise the complexity and diversity of all faith communities, our own included. When we speak of the beliefs and practices of others, we must first seek good information and rely on authoritative sources to build up our knowledge, and we must talk about our neighbours in language that will

enable them to recognise themselves in our descriptions. This will involve us in an imaginative and sympathetic effort to think ourselves into their situation. It is unfair to compare the ideals in our own religion with the practice of another, or *vice versa*. Christians and members of other communities need to acknowledge that we all face challenges in living by faith in our societies. Even in situations where we strongly disagree with others, we must make an effort to understand their beliefs and practices, to respect the faith which informs them, and to love them as our neighbours. If we feel there are times when we must be critical of others' positions, we cannot avoid the challenge of self-criticism (Guideline 2.2003).

- How do we affirm the principles of human rights, balancing apparent emphases on human autonomy and divine authorisation?

3. Praying and worshipping together or alongside

We acknowledge that there may be times when Christians would like to come together with people of other faiths in an attitude of prayer and worship before God. This may happen, for example, in the pastoral context of a marriage or funeral, as part of the ongoing life of a group or organisation, or at times of crisis, remembrance or thanksgiving, locally or nationally. As Christians, some of us will welcome occasions like this, while others will find them very difficult; a range of attitudes will also be found among people of other faiths. In whatever way inter faith gatherings for prayer or worship are organised, we think that it is important to be clear about the purposes of the event, to consider carefully what is an appropriate venue, and to ensure that all present can take part in what is planned with integrity and without confusion. Sharing silence can provide a valuable way of expressing our presence together before God, and we are also learning from the experience of being present as honoured guests at one another's times of prayer and worship (Guideline 4.2003).

- Provide examples from your local context.
- Do these increase trust or cause problems?

4. Are there examples of practical interfaith projects to assist those in need on the margins of society at the local or national level, which help to build up trust through acting together?

We seek co-operation with people in other faith groups on practical projects where this is appropriate and possible. We believe that our Churches have a particular

role to play in encouraging our national governments and local authorities to explore and to understand the complexities of faith community organisations. We recognise that people of all faiths have a concern for the whole of society, while at the same time we all need to be honest about the real differences we can experience when we try to interpret in practical terms values which may sound the same when expressed as generalities. We believe that the Churches are called to work with people of other faiths in seeking the welfare of asylum seekers and refugees (Guideline 8.2003).

- Have you been involved?
- Could you be involved and make such a plan?

Reflection Sheet 4

Sharing our faith

1. What is the Gospel 'the good news' you would like to share with a Muslim, a Hindu or a Buddhist?

We are called to share our faith with others in ways that are confident but sensitive. As we do so, we are ready to listen and to learn as well as to speak. We recognise that the intentions of those engaged in dialogue may differ, and it is easy to suspect one another of hidden agendas. We cannot force our beliefs on others, but we should always be ready to witness to our faith by deeds as well as by words. We must never exploit the situation of vulnerable individuals and groups, nor make our service of others conditional on their accepting Christian faith. Within our churches, we recognise that Christians differ among themselves about the relations between interfaith dialogue and evangelism. We think it is important that these differences should be discussed openly and respectfully in the light of our theology and experience (Guideline 3.2003).

- Share Biblical stories or Parables with your neighbour of another faith in a way that could communicate the heart of Christian Faith
- In what way can our brothers and sisters of other faiths be a strength for us in witnessing in a secular society?

2. Should we encourage people of other faith to become Christians? If yes, then why? If no - why not?

Where the Spirit is at work, we rejoice that conversions of people to the way of Christ may happen. They must always be the free result of God's interaction with others, not of our own planning or persuasion. We recognise that interfaith encounter is powerful and unpredictable in the transforming effect it can have on people's lives. It may lead to people changing their religious commitment away from as well as towards Christianity. People of different faiths may also feel that interfaith encounter brings them closer to God within the framework of their own religious commitment. As Christians we need to be aware of the difficulties that can be faced by new believers, and our Churches need to be prepared to

change themselves in order to welcome new members. Some converts can find the whole concept of inter faith dialogue difficult, especially if it involves them in encounter with their previous religion. Other converts may have a valuable personal contribution to make to interfaith understanding, and we think that their place in dialogue should be affirmed.

- If someone is to convert to Christianity, what are the difficulties they may face?
- If a young Christian becomes a Muslim, a Buddhist or a follower of a Hindu movement, what do we feel about that?
- What have you learned from your neighbour of another faith?

3. How far does your church contribute to teaching about the beliefs and practices of other faiths, and how to relate to them (children, young people and adults)?

In situations where our Churches are involved in education, we can ensure that children and young people are adequately equipped for life as citizens of religiously plural societies. As part of this, we may need to insist that Christianity is taught with an awareness of its international reach and its cultural diversity within the local situation. Within the church community, teaching needs to be shaped in such a way as to help Christians explore the interfaith implications of their faith. Experiences of educational opportunities can help to give us a proper confidence in our own faith and a generous openness to others.

Reflection Sheet 5

Our Theological Foundations

The guidelines include this faith statement: When we encounter people of other faiths we do so with the strength of God whom we know as Trinity.

God is no less generous in salvation than in creation

The God whom we meet in creation is generous in grace and rejoices in diversity 'O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all!' (Ps 104.24). This creator God is the same saving God who wishes to lead all to perfection.

Jesus Christ shows us God's face and opens the way to God

In Jesus we have seen 'the radiance of God's glory' (Heb 1.3), he shows us the way to the Father and we wish to share this way with others. Our witness to this way needs to be made in such way that it is heard as god news by all; it is not for us to proclaim limits to God's saving mercy.

The Spirit's presence is known through the Spirit's fruits

'The tree is known by its fruits', and 'the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self control' (Mat 12.33; Gal 5.22f)

Through the birth of Jesus Christ, it is evident that God is for ever bound up with human life in its ever changing and diverse contexts. As Christians we share this journey in history, and in today's world. God's Mission is for us to work alongside and with people of other faiths in enabling signs of what Christians call the Kingdom of God. At the same time we rejoice in telling the stories of love and hope offered in the Gospel.

Background Information

The Porvoo Communion of Churches and Interfaith Engagement

The Porvoo Communion of Churches consists of Anglican Churches (Church of England, Church of Ireland, Scottish Episcopal Church, Church in Wales, Lusitanian Church in Portugal, Spanish Episcopal Reformed Church), five Nordic Lutheran Churches (Church of Sweden, Church of Norway, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark) and two of the Baltic Lutheran churches (Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania).

The Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church and Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad reunited in November 2010. This reunification has brought in Diaspora congregations into the Porvoo Communion of Churches.

Currently there are also three Churches with observer status in the Porvoo Communion of Churches (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia, the Lutheran Church in Great Britain and the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad)

The Churches in the Porvoo Communion share some common historical associations since the Reformation. They also share the history of having been national Churches and are constantly responding to new situations.

The Common Statement of these participating churches has been hailed as 'the single most important ecumenical proposal' to be discussed in many years.

These churches also understand themselves as having a special responsibility for all people regardless of religion. They believe that their current interfaith engagement and their future work in this field to be a significant resource bringing together their respective strengths for the common good. They see interfaith work as a key in the field of 'mission and service'.

VIII COMMUNIQUES

I Growing in Communion: The Porvoo Church Leaders' Consultations

Turku, Finland, 12-17 March 1998

Church leaders of the Anglican and Lutheran churches in Northern Europe met this weekend to deepen their fellowship in the Porvoo Communion. Coming from different backgrounds, and with a rich variety of experiences, they affirmed their commitment to address together some of the challenges facing people in Europe today. These challenges include the erosion of traditional values, often accompanied by an inarticulated search for spirituality. There was a strong conviction that the churches, as part of that society, can work in partnership, to meet some of the major issues people are facing. There was also a review of changing patterns of the relationships between Church and State in the countries concerned.

Fifty million Christians in Northern Europe were represented at this gathering of their church leaders at The Christian Institute, Turku, Finland from 12-17 March 1998. This was the first such meeting of Anglican and Lutheran church leaders from Britain and Ireland, and from the Nordic and Baltic countries following the signing in Autumn 1996 of the Porvoo Agreement.

In 1992, the Cathedral city of Porvoo, Finland gave its name to this declaration which would set up a new relationship of communion between the ten signatory churches. As a result, members of each church are now regarded as belonging to the others. The agreement is already making possible a new partnership of ideas, experience and resources to respond jointly to the challenges and opportunities in today's Europe.

The participants from the churches – lay, clergy and bishops – were welcomed by the Archbishop of Turku and Finland, the Most Reverend John Vikström. Also present were ecumenical observers from other churches: Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Old Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed.

A highlight which symbolised the growing together within this new family of churches was the celebration of the Eucharist with the people of the city of Turku in their Cathedral on Sunday 15th March. The preacher was the Archbishop of York, the Most Reverend David Hope, and clergy from several countries administered the Holy Communion.

The Primates of the churches will meet next year. A theological consultation is planned for in two years time and a further Church Leaders' Consultation will be in four years. In the mean time the work will be carried forward by a contact group. Its new co-chairmen are The Right Reverend Erik Vikström, Bishop of Porvoo, and the Right Reverend John Neill, Bishop of Cashel and Ossory, Ireland.

Tallinn, Estonia, 7-12 March 2002

Church leaders from the Anglican and Lutheran Churches of Northern Europe met in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, from 7th to 12th March 2002.

Since 1996, the Churches of Britain and Ireland and most of the Nordic and Baltic countries have been involved in close partnership through the Porvoo Agreement. There has been regular and lively ex-change between the churches at every level, and further contacts are planned, for theologians, mission and youth workers, and church leaders.

The focus of this meeting was "Church Leadership in a Changing World", and there was wide ranging discussion of what leadership meant within the Church and also whether it is realistic to talk about the Church exercising "leadership" in society. There is a conviction that this leadership in society is still vital – but that it should never again be a means of dominance or control. The Gospel must challenge the impatient and over-simplified debates of public and political life.

We are conscious of the very different tasks that face our Churches. Some have close historic links with the state. Others such as the Baltic Churches are finding a new role and new challenges in the reconstruction of civil society after the Soviet period. We were privileged to see some of the ways this is developing in the city of Tallinn. We visited various medical and social projects working with the destitute, especially orphans, street children and the terminally ill, under the auspices of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church. As we discussed Christian service in the community, we had some vivid examples before us. On the Sunday we shared in the Eucharist celebrated in Tallinn Cathedral by the Archbishop of Estonia, Archbishop Jaan Kiivit. A sermon from Bishop Bruce Cameron, Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, reminded us how all European Christians now shared something of the "exile" experience within a secular world, and have much to learn from the Churches of the Baltic nations.

This meeting marks a major new step in integrating the vision of the Porvoo Churches in mission and evangelism as well as ministry. We are actively exploring new forms of collaboration in training and pastoral work, in witness and theology, and we look forward with enthusiasm to learning more from each other, and sharing our testimony to the God who has called us, in the fast changing Europe of the new century.

We are deeply grateful to the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church for making us so much at home during these days and we commend to God the demanding work done by the Church for all the Estonian people.

The Co-Chairmen of the Porvoo Contact Group:

The Rt Revd John Neill

The Rt Revd Ragnar Persenius

Tallinn, 12th March 2002

Cardiff, Wales, 6-11 March 2006

Lay involvement, involvement of youth and young people in our churches, issues in ordained ministry, especially on women bishops and diaconate were among the priorities set by the Porvoo Church Leaders' Meeting for the next years.

At a meeting in Cardiff, Wales, 16.-21. March 2006, around 50 leaders from the churches of the Porvoo Communion evaluated the work since the signing of the Porvoo Declaration 10 years ago and identified issues and guidelines for the next years.

The meeting was designed to ensure an active participation of everyone, giving much time for group work and interaction. The delegates also visited a prison, initiatives for the homeless, the Welsh Assembly, an Inter Faith Forum and a mosque in Cardiff.

The seven areas of work identified were:

- Lay involvement
- Involvement of youth and young people
- Issues in ordained ministry
- Issues in human sexuality
- Living in Communion
- The effect of European and national legislation on the churches.
- Interfaith Issues

The Porvoo Contact group will be asked to work further with these recommendations according to the discussions during the meeting.

The theme of the meeting was "Come, follow me!". Bible studies during the meeting were given by the Revd Canon Robert Paterson from the Church in Wales and focused on discipleship.

On Sunday there was a special service in Llandaff Cathedral to celebrate 10 years of the signing of the Porvoo Agreement. The Archbishop of Wales, the Most

Revd Barry Morgan officiated and the Archbishop of Sweden, the Most Revd KG Hammar preached.

Parallel to this meeting a conference of communicators from the Porvoo churches was held in Cardiff. The participants recommended that a Porvoo church communicators' network should be established and a pattern of regular meetings put in place.

The Porvoo Communion is a family of churches encompassing the four Anglican Churches of Wales, Scotland, Ireland and England, and eight Nordic and Baltic Churches, namely Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia and Lithuania, as well as the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church and the Lusitanian Church (Portugal). The Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Denmark and Latvia have an observer status in the communion. The purpose of the Porvoo communion is to draw the churches involved into a new and closer relationship for the sake of greater unity and more effective mission.

Present also in the meeting were observers from other churches and ecumenical church organisations, making valuable contribution to the discussions. These were representatives of the Old Catholic Churches, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany, the Conference of European Churches, the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (the Leuenberg Church Fellowship) and Cytûn (the Council of Churches in Wales).

News and pictures from the consultation were published on a separate blogsite.

Sigtuna, Sweden 18th-21st March 2010

Summary

The Church of Sweden hosted the Porvoo Church Leaders Consultation (CLC) 2010 at Sigtuna, Sweden from March 18–21. The Consultation is held every four years and includes bishops, clergy and lay people, in accordance with the Porvoo Declaration and the Porvoo Common Statement. The signatory churches were invited to send a delegation of 3, which normally includes the Primate or Presiding Bishop; the General Secretary or equivalent; a woman who is engaged in the work of the church at national level and a lay person who is engaged in the work of the church at national level. If possible, one of the delegation members should be a young person (under 35). Delegations from the Diocese in Europe and churches who are observers are entitled to send 1 person in addition to their PCG representative. (Please see Appendix for List of Participants).

In his sermon at the beginning of the consultation, Martin Wharton, the Bishop of Newcastle and co-chair of the Porvoo Contact group reflected on the example of St Cyril a fourth century bishop of Jerusalem. St Cyril was faithful

to the tradition he inherited yet responsive to new questions, new opportunities and open to new ways of learning and new insights. His contribution to making the gospel alive, understood and relevant to people around him still influence our liturgy and mission today.

Within the framework of regular worship and Bible study, the consultation reflected on its overarching theme of 'Growing Together', focusing on the following three areas of work within the communion:

- *Ministry*: lay ministry; the diaconate; women in the episcopate.
- *New Contextual Challenges and Realities within the Porvoo Communion*, such as:
 - The ecumenical challenge of migration and integration with a case study from Finland;
 - The rich/poor divide with a case study from Iceland;
 - Secularisation and its challenge to mission;
- Responding to conflict.
- *Interfaith Engagement*: after an informative presentation on interfaith engagement from the Scottish Episcopal Church, CLC leaders met in groups to share their interfaith stories and challenges from around the communion.

In an independent session the General Secretaries of the member churches emphasised the importance of the Porvoo Communion. The communion had done enormous work during the last years and had responded creatively to the continuing challenges of growing together. Although the financial situation was difficult, the General Secretaries were clear that future commitments within the Porvoo Communion could not be neglected.

In the concluding plenary session the Church Leaders Consultation recognised the good work done by the PCG. A sense of trust was visible throughout the discussions. The Church leaders unanimously reiterated their commitment to support the work of the Porvoo Communion in unity and mission and provided the Porvoo Contact Group with suggestions to keep up the momentum towards greater unity and closer fellowship.

Bishophthorpe, York, England 17-19 September 2014

Communiqué

Forty-five church leaders from The Porvoo Communion of Churches met in York, UK, from 17-19 September 2014, and received the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad and the Lutheran Church in Great Britain as new member churches of the Porvoo Communion. The co-chairs of the Porvoo Contact Group, the Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson and the Rt Revd Dr Peter Skov-Jakobsen, welcomed participants and introduced the theme Towards Greater Unity and Closer Fellowship. Most of the sessions were held at Bishophthorpe Palace, office and home of the Archbishop of York, the Most Revd Dr John Sentamu, who greeted the church leaders and took part in the deliberations.

Bible studies were led by Bishop Helga Haugland Byfuglien of the Church of Norway and by Archbishop John Sentamu. The group openly shared different viewpoints, hopes and aspirations for the future of the churches and their life in communion together. The co-chairs presented introductory reflections related to the theme, which were followed by presentations from participants on communicating the gospel in today's world; leadership as servanthood and Christian witness; religious freedom and human rights; and engaging young people in the church. The presentations focussed on the Porvoo context and led to extensive discussion and further input.

The meeting affirmed:

- The role of servanthood, leadership and discipleship in authentic Christian witness, with a special focus on the current situation in Europe
- The need to provide space and opportunities for prayer, spiritual expression and pilgrimage
- The need for a refreshed emphasis in mission as a way of life with and in the community
- The importance of including young people emphasising their visible and active role in the life of the Communion
- The important contribution of majority and minority churches in the Porvoo Communion.

Based on the discussions, the church leaders agreed a tentative work plan for the next four years, which allowed flexibility for appropriate changes to be made by the Porvoo Contact Group.

Participants attended Evensong at York Minster each day and the meeting concluded with a solemn celebration of the Eucharist, at which the Most Revd Dr Antje Jackelén preached and Archbishop John Sentamu presided. During the celebration, the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad and the Lutheran Church in Great Britain signed the Porvoo Declaration. Those who signed were Archbishop Elmars Ernsts Rozitis and Bishop Martin Lind. The two churches were welcomed as the newest members of the Porvoo Communion.

II Serving Unity: Meetings of Primates and Presiding Bishops

Porvoo, Finland, Oct. 12-13 2009¹

Climate change, diaspora congregations and the understanding of communion amidst the current economic crisis were among the topics discussed as the primates and presiding bishops in the Porvoo Communion met in Porvoo, Finland on Oct. 12–13 2009.

The primates and presiding bishops of the Porvoo Communion meet every other year to discuss matters of common interest. This year the meeting was held in the historic city of Porvoo, which gives its name to this communion of Anglican and Lutheran churches in several European Countries.

The Norwegian presiding bishop, the Rt. Revd Olav Skjevesland gave a presentation on climate change and its impact on the world's economy, especially its detrimental effects in many of the developing countries. He also shared the resolution of the Church of Norway to enter into a process of ecological reform on all levels of church life.

The bishops welcomed a presentation from a Lutheran and an Anglican from Finland on how communion can work in practical ways. Rev. Dr. Tomi Karttunen gave an overview of how the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland has worked for many years with immigrant churches and how the Anglican Diocese in Europe has contributed to the enrichment of the life and worship of the Lutheran Church. Rev. Rupert Moreton, local Anglican chaplain of the Diocese in Europe, gave a moving description of worship in an Anglican Sudanese congregation in northern Finland and challenged the bishops to look at diaspora congregations in the light of diverse patterns of migration. The bishops called for a consultation on diaspora communities in the Porvoo context.

Common challenges in the Porvoo churches at present include the impact of the current economic crises, issues in human sexuality and the question of the responsibilities and privileges of being in communion. These challenges are felt within each church family. The archbishop of Wales, the Most Revd Barry Morgan gave an insight into the complexities of finding consensus within the Anglican Communion. The archbishop of Sweden, the Most Revd Anders Wejryd spoke

¹ The Primates Meetings convene biannually: 1999 London, 2001 Uppsala, 2003 Edinburgh, 2005 Trondheim, 2007 Dublin, 2009 Porvoo, 2011 Wales, 2013 Reykjavik and 2015 Edinburgh

about the Lutheran World Federation and how it is working through potentially divisive issues.

The bishops recommended that further work needed to be done on how the Porvoo churches, as churches in communion, should consult with one another about decisions that would have communion wide consequences.

The Porvoo Communion is a communion of churches, mostly in Northern Europe, that have signed a declaration to “share a common life in mission and service”. The churches that signed the agreement are The Evangelical-Lutheran Churches of Estonia, Lithuania, Sweden, Norway, Iceland and Finland and the Anglican churches of Wales, Ireland, Scotland and England. Two churches from Southern Europe also belong to the Porvoo Communion. They are the Lusitanian Church in Portugal and the Reformed Episcopal Church of Spain. The Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Denmark and Latvia have observer status.

Llandaff, Wales, Oct. 3–4 2011

Sharing a Common Life in Mission and Service Church leaders of the Porvoo Communion meet in Llandaff

The Primates and Presiding Bishops of the Porvoo Communion of Churches met in Llandaff, Wales, on October 3–4, to review common work undertaken since the last meeting, to discuss areas of common concern and to share information about important issues in their respective churches.

The biannual meeting of the Primates and Presiding Bishops is one of the consultation processes in the Porvoo Communion of Churches, who have committed themselves to “share a common life in mission and service.”

In reviewing the work carried out since their last meeting the Primates and Presiding Bishops commended the “Guidelines for Interfaith Encounter” which had been further developed at a Porvoo Consultation in 2011, and also the work on responding to conflict which is part of an on-going process for consultation within the Communion. Information on these consultations can be found on the website of the Porvoo Communion, www.porvoochurches.org under “resources”.

In discussing the current economic crisis in Europe the Primates and Presiding Bishops recognized that this affects all the countries and churches in different ways. Unemployment is rising in most of the countries. Changing patterns of migration have created a challenge to the churches in providing pastoral care to the new migrants. A Consultation on Diaspora and Migrant Churches will be held by the Porvoo Communion in March 2012. The Primates and Presiding Bishops also called for a consultation on Economy and Ethics, recognising the effect that the current economic environment has on their countries and the moral responsibility of the richer churches towards the poorer churches.

The next consultation of the Communion, to be held in Finland in November 2011, will be a Consultation on Marriage. The consultation will enable the Porvoo churches to share each other’s understanding and experiences as well as each other’s traditions, histories and differences.

The Porvoo Communion is visible in different areas in the life of the churches, for example in twinning and visits between dioceses and congregations, and in the mutually enriching engagement of diaspora congregations in the life of the churches of the Communion. The Primates and Presiding Bishops asked that creative work with young people across the Communion should be explored.

Reykjavik, Iceland, 20-22 October 2013

Justice faints and hope fades when the church looks in on itself

The Presiding Bishops of the Porvoo Communion of Churches, meeting in Iceland, unanimously agreed to the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad and the Lutheran Church in Great Britain becoming full members of the Porvoo Communion of Churches. This decision was warmly welcomed by all present and is commended to the processes of the member churches as may be necessary.

The Presiding Bishops of the churches of the Porvoo Communion meet every other year to discuss matters of mutual concern, receive reports of activity within the Communion and to guide the future shared work of the churches. At the meeting in Reykjavik, generously hosted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland, the Bishops shared news of developments in their churches and wider societies, particularly against the background of austerity and economic challenges faced by all the members of the Porvoo Communion from Portugal in the south to Finland in the north. Hope within the mission and service of the church was seen as vital to the work of all the churches and their shared life. The Presiding Bishops also commented on the reports received on Porvoo consultations carried out on marriage; on issues related to migration; and on the diaconal ministry (ministry of service).

The Churches of the Porvoo Communion, based mostly in Northern Europe, are Lutheran and Anglican Churches that have signed an agreement to “share a common life in mission and service”. The name Porvoo comes from the Finnish diocese and city in whose Cathedral the Eucharist was celebrated on the final Sunday of the conversations in 1992 leading to the Common Statement and thus to the Porvoo Communion of Churches.

The Bishops, together with members of the local church and other Porvoo representatives, participated in two services of Holy Communion. At the first, which took place in the Lutheran Cathedral (Domkirkjan) in the historic centre of Reykjavik, the Bishop of Iceland, Agnes M Sigurdardottir, presided. In his sermon, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said: “Justice faints and hope fades when the church looks in on itself. The Kingdom of God is proclaimed by a church that is caught up in the glory of God and the reality of the world around..... If we are to continue to grow closer, so that our [Porvoo] communion becomes family, and that family becomes the transforming influence in our society, which is so desperately looking for a new way, after the decades of reliance on material growth have betrayed us; if that family is to become what it should, then we need each other more than ever, not for comfort in the cold, receding

tides of Christian faith, but to stretch and challenge each other to an ever closer walk with God and evermore passionate fulfilling of his mission.” (The full text of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s sermon can be found on the website of the Porvoo Communion of Churches).

The Bishops closed the meeting with a commitment to meet again in two years in Edinburgh, hosted by the Scottish Episcopal Church, and to extend the duration of the meeting to enable a deepening of their engagement with each other.

Edinburgh, Scotland, 20-22 October 2015

Communiqué

In the context of the crisis in the Middle East, Europe is facing one of its greatest challenges since World War II.

The Primates and Presiding Bishops of the Porvoo Communion of Churches met in Edinburgh for their regular biennial meeting, and reflected with urgency and compassion on current geo-political and social challenges as well as ways to further strengthen their relationships and work together towards building a confident and missional Church in an increasingly secular and pluralistic Europe.

On a daily basis people risk their lives to cross the Mediterranean sea; people walk long distances to cross into Europe because they do not have any other choice; also in parts of Europe, for example, houses have been set alight, so that refugees do not find a home; and there is a rising anxiety in some parts of Europe that democracy is being eroded by intimidation towards strangers seeking refuge and security.

The Primates and Presiding Bishops were unanimous in reiterating that we should not stand back and remain silent, but must both speak and act, remembering the words of Jesus; " For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matt. 25:35). They were also unanimous in their concern and prayers for Christians and other minority groups threatened by extinction in the Middle East.

A number of Primates and Presiding Bishops spoke of practical initiatives already underway in churches and communities in consultation with governments. Primates acknowledge the complexity and difficulty of the crisis unfolding also in Europe. They recognise that many countries have made and are making enormous efforts in hospitality, aid and finance. Accepting the pressure on political leaders they called for prayer and support for them and for those who resist the destructive calls of extremist groups that reject all support for the migrant stranger and those seeking refuge.

Churches continue to have a critical role:

- They are called to understand and evaluate what is happening and to provide spiritual and pastoral leadership. For example, when those who are already vulnerable are on the frontline of receiving those who are even more vulnerable than themselves, the churches must act to encourage and support such communities to meet the challenge facing them.

- Churches are called to witness to the distinctive Christian values of mercy, forgiveness, justice, reconciliation and human dignity. This testifies to the essential dignity of the human person and recognises that refugees arrive in an alien place traumatised with their experiences. One example of this witness is showing solidarity with those whose genuine needs and aspirations are diminished and who are stigmatised as enemies.
- They are called to promote a vision of relationships and reconciliation beyond the immediate conflicts and challenges. This is needed because the world should not become locked into a situation where powerful nation states compete for assertion and dominance, leading to hopelessness and despair. In Jesus barriers are overcome, giving opportunity for the mature and compassionate recognition of difference. Power and dignity to the victims who seek protection, comfort and support as well as to the perpetrators who dare to change their action and dare to ask for forgiveness and reconciliation.

The Primates also discussed the report of the Porvoo consultation on *Perspectives on Economics and Ethics – Behaviour Under Scrutiny*. They thanked the Porvoo Contact Group for a document containing key biblical and theological insights, important sections on human rights, engaging with the economic system and reflections on, for example, the Jubilee imperative that points us to ethically based economic principles and behaviour, the question of who is our neighbour and our relationships as God's gift to us, so that there is life and the world may believe. Primates recommended that the document be widely circulated as an additional resource to churches to reflect upon and use as appropriate.

The Primates took note of the successful Porvoo Pilgrimage from Porto to Santiago de Compostela and requested the Porvoo Contact Group to explore ways of replicating this pilgrimage model to enable mutual learning and sharing inter-generationally. The value of pilgrimage remains an essential part of the spiritual life of the churches.

The Primates meeting was rooted in the Celtic spirituality of worship and prayer as a way of living with God, creation and our neighbours. It was hosted by the Scottish Episcopal Church that provided the meeting with insight into the aspects of national identity, the issues around Scottish independence and Scotland's relationship to the European Union. The Primates expressed their gratitude for their warmth and hospitality.

The presence of Primates from all Churches of the Porvoo Communion was indeed a sign of the gift of unity given in Christ being joyfully received. Primates were keen to encourage the Porvoo Contact Group to carry the Porvoo vision

of being together in mission and ministry into the 20 year Porvoo anniversary meetings in 2016.

The Porvoo Communion of Churches is the result of the single most important ecumenical agreement that brought together a wide range of Anglican and Lutheran Churches who have been sharing a common life in mission and service for the past 19 years. The Presiding Bishops of the churches of the Porvoo Communion meet every other year to discuss matters of mutual concern, receive reports of activity within the Communion and to guide the future shared work of the churches. The Churches of the Porvoo Communion, based mostly in Northern Europe, are Lutheran and Anglican Churches that have signed an agreement to “share a common life in mission and service”. The name Porvoo comes from the Finnish diocese and city in whose Cathedral the Eucharist was celebrated on the final Sunday of the conversations in 1992 leading to the Common Statement and thus to the Porvoo Communion of Churches.

The Bishops closed the meeting with a commitment to meet again in two years in Lithuania, hosted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lithuania from 12–14 October 2017.

III Porvoo Theological Conferences

Durham, England, 8-13th September 2000

Concluding document

1. Introduction

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

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

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

In two respects in particular, namely in relation to the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate, and to views about homosexuality, there are profound differences of conviction between and within the member churches of the

Porvoo Communion. It was evident that these differences comprised not merely diverging judgements, but also varieties of approach, method and understanding in theological questions. We did not attempt to resolve all these matters, but we made a preliminary effort to evaluate their weight and significance for the future deepening of fellowship between us. Important considerations emerged, some of which we have set down in what follows.

As Anglicans and Lutherans we have already considerable experience of diversity and (indeed) tensions within our own communions. But more fundamentally we acknowledge together that diversity was built into the experience of Christian unity from the very first. Studies of the New Testament period have shown that there was a plurality of ways in which the apostolic gospel was preached and lived. Consequently, although unity of heart and mind between fellow Christians is a gift of God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, it still had to be sought in daily life. Diversity is and always has been the natural condition of fellow Christians. But the same study of the New Testament documents makes plain that diversity contained dangers of factiousness and deviation in faith which had to be taken with the utmost seriousness. This is still the case today.

2. Recognitions

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

2.1 DIVERSITY AND DIVISION

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

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

Moreover, the diversities within the respective churches are often greater than the diversity which exists between our churches, for example on issues of class,

race, gender, sexuality and spirituality. There is a need to recognise the distinction between diversity and division. For example, in some churches charismatic movements may be both enriching and divisive. Diversity has very different connotations in different societies: a courageously prophetic stance in one context would not necessarily be so in another.

2.2 A SHARED LIFE

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

2.3 YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE CHURCH

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

2.4 MISSION AND COMMUNICATION

The church has to be aware of the complex issues behind the choice of reiterating the gospel in its traditional form and rephrasing it in interaction with contemporary society. These may be stages of a process rather than simple alternatives. But there is a need to articulate the gospel in a way which can be heard by people profoundly influenced by postmodern culture. The concept of forgiveness is still a part of public discourse with which the Christian message resonates. There is a new interest in the telling of story as the raw material for doctrinal statements, which opens up new possibilities for reading Scripture and understanding the faith.

2.5 SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

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

3. Recommendations to the Porvoo Churches

3.1 RESHAPING THEOLOGY

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

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

3.2 SHARING THEOLOGY

To encourage specific initiatives to:

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

3.3 YOUTH CULTURE

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

- i. to find ways of facilitating the mutual interchange between 'church' and 'youth' cultures, between the resources of theology and the semantics of youth cultures;
- ii. to contribute to the understanding of being Church within the new generation.
- iii. to develop ministry in areas of concern distinctive to young people.

3.4 DEVELOPING MEANS OF MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

To promote mutual accountability between our churches, by ensuring that

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

3.5 MISSION

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

- i. studying the issue of a shared language/discourse between Christian and non-Christian in response to the stress on common mission contained in the Porvoo Common Statement;
- ii. exploring how the gospel can be expressed in action and new ways of communication;

- iii. studying the possibilities for new symbolisms to be 'baptized' and incorporated into liturgical practice as well as to link them to the narratives of the Christian faith;
- iv. promoting the notion of *ecclesia domestica* (nurturing spiritual formation at home) in order to connect life, church and faith.

4. Affirmation

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

St John's College Durham, 13th September 2000

Skállholt, Iceland 23–27 September 2004

Report and Recommendations

Theologians of the Anglican and Lutheran Churches of the Porvoo Communion met from 23 to 27 September at Skállholt, hosted by the Church of Iceland.

The Porvoo Common Statement www.porvoochurches.org/statements/en.htm reminds the churches of their common calling to mission and service; in pursuit of that calling, the churches are committed to common theological consultation. The first Theological Conference was held in Durham, England, in September 2000 www.porvoochurches.org/last4years/durham2000.htm and, as one of its recommendations, encouraged specific initiatives to “offer theological tools ... to address diversity in the local context”. The Skállholt Consultation 2004 met in fulfilment of these purposes.

We came together to pray, study and discuss

Tools for Discipleship – The Vocation and Mission of the Whole People of God: Our Common Challenge.

We received five major presentations, which are posted on the Porvoo Churches website www.porvoochurches.org/iceland.html and which we commend to all the churches for further study:

The European Context – Current Challenges Professor Grace Davie, England

The Cultural Context – Church Values and Popular Culture Revd Professor Carl Reinhold Bråkenhielm, Sweden

The Theological Context – The Relation Between Mission and Ministry Revd Prebendary Dr Paul Avis, England

New Ways of Reaching Post-Modern Society Revd Professor Heikki Kotila, Finland

The Anthropological Context – Christian Vocation in the Family Revd Erling Petersen, Norway

In the light of what we have heard and discussed, we recommend that our churches ...

<i>What?</i>	<i>By whom?</i>	<i>When?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • share initiatives for helping people to read and respond to the Scriptures 	Church officers and Bible societies, co-ordinated by Contact Group members	Contact Group to discuss in October 2005 with a view to a consultation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work together to equip Christian believers to give an account of their faith 	Church officers, co-ordinated by Contact Group members	Report on progress via Contact Group at the Church Leaders' meeting in March 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and share successful models of lay education 	Church officers, co-ordinated by Contact Group members (with reference also to 'Theological Education for the Anglican Communion')	Report via Contact Group at the Church Leaders' meeting in March 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work together to equip the Christian people to engage in living encounters with people of other faiths 	Church officers, co-ordinated by Contact Group members (with reference the Porvoo Churches Inter-faith Consultations)	Report via Contact Group on progress at the Church Leaders' meeting in March 2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage collaboration in rediscovering holiness in everyday life and developing simple patterns for Christian living 	Contact Group members, in collaboration with each primate and local church officers	Report to the meeting of Contact Group on progress in 2005
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish and maintain a mechanism for the exchange of views on important topics of political, social and cultural concern, leading to common action 	Contact Group members	Initially report to the Contact Group in October 2005, then ongoing.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each identify, evaluate and present to the other churches one aspect of its mission that it does well 	Church officers, in collaboration with Contact Group members, to post its findings on the Resources section of the Porvoo Churches website	To be reviewed in the Contact Group meeting in October 2005
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These recommendations were arrived at by a rigorous process of discussion in groups and plenary sessions. [A text which includes the method for the implementation of each recommendation – *By whom?* and *When?* – and a list of the participants is available: www.porvoochurches.org/iceland.html]

The Churches of the Porvoo Communion wish to express their gratitude to all the participants at the Consultation, and give glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus to the One who, by the power at work among us, is able to accomplish abundantly far more than we can ask or imagine: glory to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen. (*Ephesians 3. 20, 21*)

London, England 22 to 25 January 2008

The Porvoo Communion of Churches is a family of churches in Northern Europe who entered a relationship of communion through the Porvoo Agreement of 1996. This agreement includes a commitment by the member churches 'to establish appropriate forms of collegial and conciliar consultation on significant matters of faith and order, life and work' and 'to encourage consultations of representatives of our churches, and to facilitate learning and exchange of ideas and information in theological and pastoral matters'.

The member churches are the Churches of England and Ireland, the Church in Wales and the Scottish Episcopal Church, together with the Churches of Norway and Sweden, and the Evangelical Lutheran Churches of Estonia, Finland, Iceland and Lithuania.

The conference was an expression of the Porvoo churches' mutual commitment to consult on matters of common concern, and part of an ongoing process of consultation on ethics and communion between the churches. The conference took place at the Royal Foundation of St Katharine in London from 22 to 25 January 2008. The participants joined in daily prayer and the celebration of the Eucharist in its chapel.

The conference focused on a theme of major importance both within and between the churches – the ethical dimension of being 'in communion'. It explored how relationships can be maintained when churches diverge on ethical teaching, policy and practice. The papers given examined the nature of communion and its biblical basis, and recent developments and current tensions within our two world communions (the Anglican Communion and the Lutheran World Federation). The conference went on to explore the connection between doctrine and ethics and between the church's mission and its social and cultural setting, and looked at the question of the impairment of communion and of our responsibility to maintain communion.

It is hoped to publish the papers in due course and that a further round of consultation will take place.

Copenhagen, Denmark 8-11 October 2012

Theme: The Sacraments in the mission for the church

Introduction **The Churches of the Porvoo Communion**, mostly in Northern Europe, are Churches that have signed an agreement to "share a common life in mission and service". The name Porvoo comes from the Finnish diocese and city in whose Cathedral the Eucharist was celebrated on the final Sunday of the conversations in 1992 leading to the Common Statement and thus finally to the Porvoo Communion.

The vision of the Porvoo Common Statement is to be together in mission and ministry. This conference contributed to ongoing reflection on this shared vision. It is hoped that the contributions made to the Conference will provide useful resources and a deeper communion in the faith and life of the Churches in the Porvoo Communion.

The Conference reflected on an enduring gift of the presence of Christ in the life of the church by considering the vital link between sacraments and mission, since sacraments are the life blood of the church and mission is the core mandate of the church.

Members of the Porvoo Churches live in rapidly changing contexts in which the traditional pre-suppositions for celebrating the sacraments and communicating the Christian faith can no longer be taken for granted. The major concerns addressed by the Conference include the following:

- Lack of Christian confidence in a multi-cultural, multi-faith and increasingly secularised Europe.
- The impact of the economic situation in Europe and its implication for Christian mission.
- Tensions between social customs and tradition on the one hand and church commitment and membership on the other.
- The increasing percentages of people who feel estranged from or have no contact with the church
- The desire of the non-baptised to receive Holy Communion in some contexts
- The possibilities and difficulties of inter-church marriages
- The contributions of the world church to European Christianity towards understanding mission engagement

The Conference was rooted in prayer and worship. The opening and closing Eucharist was celebrated at the local parish church of Dragon. At the opening Eucharist the Bishop of Copenhagen, Peter Skov-Jakobsen preached on the transfiguration theme and the Bishop of Newcastle, Martin Wharton presided. At the closing Eucharist the Archbishop of Dublin, Michael Jackson, preached on sacraments and social justice and Bishop emeritus Karl Sigurbjornsson of Iceland was the celebrant.

Giving some attention to the place of confirmation albeit conflicted in the initiation practises of the churches, the presentations of the Conference focused particularly on Baptism and the Eucharist. Both are understood to be fundamental sacraments of the church, making the church itself a sign to the world of the Kingdom, which is its mission to announce.

All presentations were followed by plenary discussions. There were three concluding workshops to facilitate more meaningful small group discussions. Through public conversations in an interview format Keynote Listeners provided the participants with the insights they had gained from the presentations and group work.

During the conference the participants visited the Church of The Holy Spirit in the city centre of Copenhagen and heard a moving presentation by Revd Carina Wolck on the parish work with people living with HIV. The participants also heard about the Greenlandic congregation, and enjoyed a beautiful mini-concert.

All presentations along with the notes from Keynote Listeners will be collated and further reflected on during the next Primates meeting.

Snapshots of Contributions

The Keynote paper on the theme was delivered by Paul Avis who provided the Conference with insight into how the Church of Jesus Christ receives its essential identity from God in word and sacrament. The Church has a sacramental life because Jesus Christ is the sacrament of God and the Church is the sacrament of Christ because he works through her. The church is therefore an instrument of the mission of God.

Jonas Jorgensen spoke about *Non-Western Perspectives on the Sacraments of the Church* with examples of marginal forms of Christian practices in Bangladesh and South India, such as the Sufi Islam with Jesus as their prophet and the Christ Bhaktas. Some of the rites were similar to our western traditional liturgical practice, while reflecting a deep and principled concern for contextualisation.

Karl Sigurbjarnsson presented a paper on *Understanding Discipleship as the Working-out of Baptism*. He pointed out that discipleship as working-out of baptism is being an apprentice of the master, in a growing, learning and listening relationship, acquiring skills in faith, listening skills to the word of God, trusting

skills in being carried and held by grace through suffering and pain, through sin and guilt, through life and death and being loved and forgiven. Discipleship is not about performance or achievement, it is all about grace received and given.

Ian Paton presented a paper on the *Baptised in Mission*. A significant point in his paper was that the gifts of baptism for the building up of the Body of Christ are received and employed in the context of real life — economic, social, political, professional and personal. It is this life which is being transformed to be a Christian life. Christians remain part of their society with a duty to exercise citizenship, and it is there that they serve and witness to God's kingdom. The church isto witness God's love. Renewing the church is not all about structures, strategies or committees, but trying to practise a life of prayer and the love of one's neighbour. Such a baptismal ecclesiology could open up fresh possibilities for understanding and practising a baptismal missiology.

Sandra Gintere reflected on *The Unity given in Baptism as Foundation for Christian Reconciliation Work in the World* pointing out the ecumenical complexities of the relationship of baptism and membership of the church. The identity of being a member of the universal church given in baptism is primary and that of belonging to a denomination is secondary. However, as she pointed out, due to lack of full communion baptism appears to make the secondary identity the primary one.

Christopher Cocksworth in his paper on *Confirmation in the Missionary Practice of the Church* discussed a variety of understandings of confirmation, pointing out the uncertainty in both theory and practice that exist in the churches. He advocated that confirmation be more closely related to empowerment for missionary activity in the world. He suggests that the sacramental initiation processes of the church should intersect with the evangelistic courses of parishes.

Jaakko Rusama identified *Challenges for Mission Theology Today*. He described the rapid shift of the centre of world Christianity to the Global South. The mission of the church is a window to what happens in the life of all religions. He argued that a new evangelism for the transmission of the Christian faith would need to reflect cross-cultural interdependence.

Michael Jackson's paper *Eucharist: A Sacrament of Unity and Mission* in one key thought pointed to the perspective of Michael Ramsey. Michael Jackson observed that Ramsey provides a strategic backdrop for an understanding of the Eucharist in the Porvoo context. It respects the New Testament shape of the Eucharist and takes us far beyond any static and memorialist understanding of Holy Communion. Eucharist is firmly set in the context of the Incarnate and Ascended life of Christ. This perspective, he went on to say, accommodates well the very resolute Porvoo perspective that the unity and mission are those of Christ.

Peter Stjerndorff gave examples from his pastoral ministry to illustrate the theme *Eucharist A Sacrament of Hope*. He described how people at various times and in some contexts have felt themselves excluded from the Eucharist because of a sense of its seriousness and holiness and their own unworthiness. This situation has kept them away from experiencing the joy and hope of the sacrament. However, all people should be welcome at the Lord's table because Eucharist can inspire hope in those whose lives are oppressed and affected by difficulties of different kinds.

Tomi Karttunen in his paper *Lutheran Teaching of the Lord's Supper and its Implications for Mission* traced the rediscovery of Martin Luther's realistic thought in the Eucharist. Tomi argued that God as the giver of everything good is the basis of Luther's theology of Holy Communion. Luther's understanding of the Holy Supper underlines that the Holy Trinity, God as self-giving love who sends his Church, Christ's disciples into the world to proclaim the Gospel in word and deed, in the unity of faith and love and carried by the proclaiming hope for the world, is the basis of the mission of the Church.

Rachael Jordan presented *The Sacramental Life of Fresh Expressions of Church*, which is a more recent movement within the Church of England and other denominations to reach the un-churched and the de-churched. This is an answer to the challenge posed by the fact that an increasing proportion of the English population has no direct contact with the church. Fresh Expressions gathers people together outside traditional forms of congregation to guide them towards a position of faith and active discipleship.

Gwynn ap Gwilym reflected on Archbishop Rowan Williams lecture *The Fellowship of the Baptised* and its implication for the Porvoo vision. The Archbishop explains baptism and the identity of a baptised person by saying that baptised identity is being where Jesus is; and Jesus is both in the neighbourhood of God the Father and in the neighbourhood of the sinner. This experience of the baptised is not the experience of endings but of repeated new beginnings. To be in the place where Christ is means being vulnerable. The baptismal body, the Church, is a wounded body and those wounds are often self-inflicted, but it is also a self-healing body because it is Christ's body. Rowan Williams draws consequences from this for the situation of inter-church marriages. They could be a mark of the self-healing body. This could also be applied to the Churches in the Porvoo Communion.

IV Porvoo Consultations

The First Consultation on Diaconal Ministry 25–27 January 2006 The Royal Foundation of Saint Katharine London, England

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

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?

The Second Consultation on Diaconal Ministry in Oslo, Norway 27-30 April 2009

1: The consultation

Representatives of the communion of the Porvoo Churches gathered for this Consultation in order to continue the work of deepening 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 questions which had previously been raised by the Communion of the Porvoo Churches Consultation on the Diaconate in London held 25–27 January 2006 helped to shape the second consultation. The questions are set out in Appendix 1.

In addition to times of discussion, the consultation members visited a number of diaconal projects in Oslo.

2: Diaconate and diakonia

The change of title from the first conference ['the diaconate'] to the second ['diaconal ministry'] may at first seem to be a small detail, but it signals an emphasis in the second conference on *diakonia* as an essential aspect of the ministry of the whole church, participating in God's mission in and to his world. Whilst deacons exemplify and represent *diakonia*, it is not sufficient to understand the concept of *diakonia* narrowly in relation to a single category of ministers.

3: Work since the 2006 conference

Our churches have continued to explore practical expressions of diaconal ministry exercised by distinctive deacons and others. In the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland a committee dealing with the question finished its report with the title *Ministry of the Deacon* in September 2008. The Faith and Order Advisory Group for the Church of England produced a report *The Mission and Ministry of the Whole Church* in 2007, which includes substantial sections on *diakonia* and associated concepts with reference both to the New Testament and contemporary mission. This period has also seen the implementation of the Norwegian church's *Plan for Diakoni*, and in Estonia the *Development plan for diakonia in the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church for 2007-2012*. In this report we note the importance of developments in the wider church on the meaning of *diakonia*, giving clearer emphasis on the theme of commissioned authoritative service or

ministry, without losing the complementary theme of service to neighbour carried out in God's name.

4: *Diakonia and mission*

As a fundamental starting-point, all our churches regard *diakonia*, exercised creatively in a way that reflects needs and resources, as an essential aspect of mission. It encompasses a loving response to everyday need, often made in an informal way by individuals and parishes; the organised efforts of deacons and diaconal workers; and the specialised work of institutions and organisations. It includes a prophetic setting forth of God's call for justice and our responsibility towards the environment in the name of its Creator. *Diakonia* finds expression and symbolism in liturgy, and must be a theme of preaching and education. We believe that such a common understanding is important in itself. Within the Lutheran churches there seems to be an increasing tendency for the deacon to be the leader of *diakonia* in the parish. In an Anglican setting, and with current patterns of ministry, it is rare for there to be a vocational deacon in the parish. We look to the possibility of a revived vocational diaconate in Anglican churches: but even with the present system, it could be helpful and creative for the parish priest to be understood truly to be exercising the office of deacon (not obscured or superseded by ordination as priest) in the work of leading and enabling the *laos* in its diaconal work.

5: *Faith, works, and diakonia in Lutheran thought*

Some interpretations of the traditional Lutheran distinction between law and gospel have made it difficult to express the interrelatedness of the means of grace and *diakonia*. The word and sacraments have been seen as tools of the gospel, and *diakonia* as an expression of the law. On the basis of Luther's theology and the Lutheran Confession one can yet maintain that faith and love are connected through the real presence of Christ in faith as the foundation of good deeds. In this way also *diakonia* is a dimension of the Christian life – reflecting the love of God in Christ. This understanding of faith and works can be noticed for instance in the Lutheran – Roman Catholic Joint Declaration on the doctrine of justification. Going on from this it can be seen that *diakonia* is the gospel in action, an essential dimension of the being of the church, which offers a creative approach to the interrelatedness of liturgy and *diakonia*.

6: Unity and diversity

All ministry has a fundamental unity, because it is grounded in a unity that is derived from Christ himself; for the power to fulfil mission is the gift of the risen Christ (*Porvoo Agreement* paragraph 37). Different expressions or forms of ministry reflect the differentiation of callings and functions within the body of Christ. All ministries derive a rationale for their form in the interrelatedness of word and sacrament. In the case of *diakonia*, particularly as it is expressed through the ministry of deacons, this includes the imitation of Christ's service to others done altruistically, though being exemplars of a ministry where Christ must be recognised in those who are served (Matthew 25), and through enabling the church to be what it is, the sacrament of Christ in the world.

7: Diakonia and forms of ministry

Differences between the theology and work of deacons in the Lutheran churches on one hand and Anglican churches on the other may at first seem considerable, most obviously insofar as it is currently assumed that most newly-ordained Anglican deacons are 'on the way' to ordination as priests. Anglicans retain sequential or cumulative ordination to the diaconate and presbyterate from ancient or at least medieval precedent, whilst the Lutheran churches practise direct ordination to the presbyterate. The question whether deacons are or should be ordained is a live one within the Lutheran family, particularly at this time in Norway, and we look forward to further clarification. We envisage the prospect that our common understanding of the diaconate or of *diakonia* may not be expressed in a complete *outward* uniformity of practice. Notwithstanding these differences, including the substantial question of how *diakonia* as an aspect of the church's nature is expressed in the personal ministry of deacons, we believe that we have seen a growth in mutual understanding, and we remain committed to working towards further convergence. As an aspect and expression of this, we encourage Anglicans to use the language of *diakonia* to describe the love of God for all people and the whole of creation revealed through the church's life and service, seeing that caritative service as a context in which the dignity of God's creation is affirmed in practice.

8: Public and ordained ministry

Ordination is an 'ecclesial sign', *i.e.* a sign expressing something that is true of the whole church. Within this understanding, ordination is (1) a public affirmation

of God's gift and call, recognised by the church, (2) set in the context of liturgy, (3) giving strength and grace for the candidate's task, (4) conveying authority in the church's name, and (5) introducing the candidate into new or changed relationships and responsibilities. Ordination is permanent and unrepeatable for each individual. We commend an approach to understanding ordination on the basis of its being inextricably linked with three themes – the service of *word* and *sacrament*, and offering *pastoral care* – and we suggest that these aspects also encompass the public and prophetic aspects of authorized representative ministry.

9: The scope of the diaconate

In some of the Lutheran Porvoo Churches there is a question concerning which church workers – youth workers, mission secretaries, cantors – can and should be included in a broadened ministry of deacon. We request our respective churches to inform partners of developments in thinking and practice in this area.

10: The role of the deacon in liturgy

The role of the deacon in liturgy connects worship and the mission of the church. Within our traditions this is expressed in a range of ways, *e.g.* leading intercession, service at the Lord's table, and the dismissal which commissions the congregation to 'go' and serve. Therefore we see considerable possibilities in the liturgical role of the deacon, which spring from the interrelatedness between liturgy and *diakonia*, between elements of worship and the 'liturgy after the liturgy' (the work of the church outside specific times of worship). Such an interrelatedness is also a safeguard against inappropriately 'domesticating' the role and identity of the deacon by confining it to the liturgy.

11: Distinctiveness

Whilst there are some vocational (or distinctive) deacons in the Anglican Porvoo churches, the majority of persons who are ordained deacon are then ordained priest (normally a year later). It has been remarked with some justification that this tends to obscure the distinctiveness of the diaconate in the Anglican context. Furthermore, the criteria used in the Anglican Porvoo churches for the discernment of individual vocations and the programme of initial ministerial education and formation do not always clearly and explicitly distinguish between presbyteral and diaconal aspects of ministry. Work is currently being done in the Anglican Com-

munion [*e.g.* Theological Education for the Anglican Communion¹] to address this. We encourage Anglicans to use more explicitly the language of diakonia in relation to aspects of the mission of the church and in relation to the diaconal work of all baptized people, whether ordained or not; and, if ordained, whether or not they have subsequently also been ordained priest.

We also encourage further thinking in the Anglican Porvoo churches that could lead to a more widespread practice of those whose vocation is discerned as diaconal and not presbyteral remaining vocational deacons, with this development being helped by criteria for selection that would make the distinction clearer. We believe that there is a challenge to Anglicans to consider the extent to which a strong culture of perceiving deacons as junior apprentice clergy (and habitually using the word deacon only to describe those in their first year of ordained ministry) perhaps subliminally reinforces a limited understanding of the diaconate. Anglicans should take seriously the fact that ordination rites describe the ministry of deacons as one that has its own integrity, and which might be supplemented but is not superseded by ordination to the presbyterate. At liturgies where ministries are reaffirmed, presbyters should be re-commit themselves to diaconal ministry alongside other deacons, and the impression should not be given through word or action that presbyters are no longer to be counted among the deacons.

12: Hierarchy and mutuality

The 2006 conference report refers to hierarchy. Our churches self-critically face questions about power and authority. Our caution about those things must not however prevent us from welcoming effective leadership rooted in the Spirit's gifts, set within a context of mutual accountability between members of the Body. But in any case the depth of true spiritual authority is not something that corresponds to orders or categories of ministry, or to anything that could be described as an organisational rank. Again the model is Christ himself who is head of all and yet came willingly 'to deacon' (Mark 10.45) and to take on the role of *doulos*, slave (John 13.16).

1 www.anglicancommunion.org/ministry/theological/teac/grids/DeaconsGrid110406.pdf

13: Rites and canons

We suggest that further work be done, building on existing study, comparing the rites by which individuals are admitted to the diaconate in our respective churches, together with other formularies and church law, in order to gain a clearer picture of the various understandings and expectations of the diaconate.

Further work commended to our churches

ALL CHURCHES

- To continue to exchange information and developments in thinking on *diakonia* and the diaconate
- To collaborate in further study on the forms of admission to, and the canonical context of, the diaconate
- To collaborate in the education and formation of those who will exercise *diakonia* as the focus of their public ministry

LUTHERAN CHURCHES

- To define more clearly those areas of ministry that are understood as belonging to the diaconate
- To clarify whether, and in what sense, deacons are understood as being ordained in each respective church
- To explore possibilities inherent in the role of the deacon in liturgy

ANGLICAN CHURCHES

- To develop ways in which the element of *diakonia* in the mission of the church may more explicitly be understood and named as such
- To develop an understanding of the diaconate that is not automatically associated with junior ministerial status
- To recognise and affirm the diaconal aspect of the vocation of presbyters, and describe it explicitly
- To consider how the vocation of those who are called to distinctive diaconate may be discerned, and how they may be encouraged and supported

The Third Consultation on Diaconal Ministry Dublin, Ireland 15-18 April 2013

Theme: Diaconal ministry as a proclamation of the gospel

Introduction

The **Porvoo Communion of Churches**, mostly in Northern Europe, are Churches that have signed an agreement to “share a common life in mission and service”. The name Porvoo comes from the Finnish diocese and city in whose Cathedral the Eucharist was celebrated on the final Sunday of the conversations in 1992 leading to the Common Statement and thus finally to the Porvoo Communion.

The vision of the Porvoo Common Statement is to be together in mission and ministry. This consultation held at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute, contributed to on-going reflection on this shared vision and has followed two earlier consultations on the subject, in London (2006) and in Oslo (2009). It was co-chaired by the Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Revd Michael Jackson, and the Bishop of Uppsala, the Rt Revd Ragnar Persenius.

The Archbishop of Armagh attended one of the evening sessions, welcoming participants to the Church of Ireland, emphasizing that ecumenism remain a key factor in the life of the church.

The purpose of this consultation was to bring all churches up to date with developments in the Communion. It furthermore aimed to reflect on fresh opportunities to strengthen the ministry of deacons in today’s fast changing European scene. It will also call on the Churches of the Communion to co-operate in this endeavour and thereby add momentum to our Christian witness to contemporary society. The theme was chosen keeping this purpose in mind.

The Conference was rooted in prayer, worship and Bible studies. The Chaplain, the Revd Canon Patrick Comerford had prepared proper worship booklets. Choral Evensong on 17th April was in St Patrick’s Cathedral.

All presentations were followed by plenary discussions. There was one general discussion in small groups and one thematic workshop session. Through public conversations in an interview format Keynote Listeners provided the participants with the insights they had gained from the presentations and group work.

The members of the consultation expressed their appreciation to the Director of the Church of Ireland Theological Institute (CITI), the Revd Dr Maurice Elliott, and to the Church of Ireland, for the hospitality given. Dr Elliot intro-

duced the participants to the philosophy and the ministry of CITI. Its aims are best captured under the phraseology of its mission statement:

- Integration - We are called to be a community of faith that integrates living worship with academic excellence.
- Contextualisation - We exist for the benefit of all traditions within Irish Anglicanism
- Diversity - We are for the resourcing of ministry and not simply ordained ministry
- Renewal - We are for the development of existing and new patterns of church

Bible Studies

Dr Katie Heffelfinger of the Church of Ireland Theological Institute led Bible studies on Matthew 25.31–46. She asked the participants to consider what demands the call to service place on them as individuals, on the church as a whole and on the consultation itself. The Gospel text, also referred to as an apocalyptic drama, opens up a whole range of challenges, which became evident during the group work. Discussions focused on the elements of serving, not necessarily a sign of charity, but as an interchange which sees the potential of the one being served as someone who also has something to give. There is no middle ground between serving and not serving. The text is a challenge for churches to fulfil their calling to be ‘the agent of the coming Kingdom’.

The Revd Kieran O’Mahony OSA of the Orlagh Retreat Centre, Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, worked with participants on John 13:1–17. From a historical-critical point of view, the foot washing is an enacted parable created by the Fourth Evangelist. He uses material from the Synoptic tradition, in this particular case Luke. The reason for this is to face head on a double crisis threatening the community:

- Belief in the cross and resurrection of Jesus, or rather lack of it
- The practice of mutual service, or rather its lack

In this Gospel there is more service than moral behaviour. Salvation itself was a lowly act of loving service by God, through the lifting up of his Son in death and resurrection. Christian service is a continuation of that service, so that the Father continues to act through the Son through us today. Participants concluded that Christian diakonia participates in and is a continuation of God’s service of humanity in Christ and is an agent of transformation and change.

The Rt Revd John Armes, Bishop of Edinburgh, reflecting on the overall theme of the consultation, addressed the question of what the Gospel that we proclaim really is. The text chosen was Ephesians 2:21–22. Although this Epistle is more commonly perceived as a presbyteral, it is yet an Epistle of grace and the nature of our being in Christ. This certainly includes Diakonia. He noted that in this text the notion of conflict does not appear as a distraction from the Gospel. In group discussion it was expressed that although reconciliation remains an important element for Christians to focus on, the area of unity today should not be seen in terms of uniformity. The Porvoo understanding of dialectical unity (living creatively with difference) is a concept which also pays attention to context and which is ever increasingly bringing us together.

Plenary Sessions

Professor Kjell Nordstokke of the Diaconal University College in Oslo, Church of Norway, presented a key paper on the theme *Diaconal Ministry As A Proclamation Of The Gospel*. He referred to Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, in his reference to the diaconal work of the church, stating: ‘We are asked to step out of our comfort zones and heed the call of Christ to be clear in our declaration of Christ, committed to prayer in Christ and we will see a world transformed’.

Professor Nordstokke referred to the work of the Lutheran World Federation, resulting in the resource booklet *Diakonia in context*. He also referred to the work of the Anglican-Lutheran International Committee (ALIC) and its latest report titled: *To love and serve the Lord. Diakonia in the life of the Church*. One of the key Anglican-Lutheran insights is to no longer confront issues that need to be church dividing, but rather focus on ‘diakonia and the fullness of its expression in the spirit of the prophets and the gospel of Jesus the Son of God’. Professor Nordstokke notes that these expressions of Anglican and Lutheran Communion at ‘a global level largely correspond to the findings we as Porvoo churches have been discussing on the understanding of diaconal ministry’.

Some key thoughts

- The discussion on the diaconate has changed from focusing on ministry as an order to ministry as an ecclesiastical expression. This was reflected in the 2009 Oslo report, which emphasized diakonia as an essential aspect of the ministry of the whole church, participating in God's mission in the world. Deacons represent diakonia but diakonia must not be understood narrowly in relation to an order of ministry.

- The recent ALIC report noted, diakonia is the ministry of all the baptised, supported by the ordered ministries of the church. Diakonia is an expression of koinonia, the communion in and with Christ through baptism. This implies that diakonia is not a human action but a divine intervention with the purpose of transforming, reconciling, empowering and healing the world.
- Diakonia is related to proclamation. Both are expressions of the gospel and are core elements of the mission of the church. Both are vehicles of the unconditional love of God, who accepts persons while they are sinners and without regard to their background. Proclamation without action falsifies the Word, as it makes the gospel abstract and denies God's transforming power in creation. The deed without the Word, however, would fail to convey the fullness of God's gift of salvation. Diaconal action is an integral part of the mission of the Church; Word and deed cannot be separated.
- Inter-relating diakonia and proclamation will depend upon the context and it is not possible to devise a pattern that will apply in all cases. General guiding principles might be formulated but cannot be prescriptive.
- The fundamental principle is that diakonia is the Gospel in action, in continuity with the diakonia of Jesus and in line with the commission of John 20.21. It means holistic mission, encompassing proclamation, care for those in need and advocacy for promoting human dignity and justice. Through its action diakonia offers a visible sign which witnesses to the proclamation of the Gospel promise of God's liberating grace in Christ, which brings reconciliation and newness of life.

The Rt Revd Michael Burrows, Bishop of Cashel and Ossory, Church of Ireland, emphasised the failure to 'reinvent' the diaconate in recent times and the consequent loss. He suggested that the ordination service contains hints of the nature of a distinctive diaconate that could be developed in the ministries of at least some churches. Three features can be highlighted:

- The tied stole must be tied in the spirit of the foot-washing. It symbolises a ministry that is untidy, ready to drop everything and flee from the sanctuary to meet real need. Diaconal ministry is a ministry of responsive untidiness, liberated from the chains as well as the beauties of the altar.

- In the breaking of the bread the deacon ensures that when bread is broken there is enough for all. Deacons are a sign of solidarity with the poor. The ministry of bringing a specifically Christian perspective into the development area is a ministry that calls for ordination, and is emphatically diaconal.
- Deacons dismiss the people at the end of the Eucharist, sending them away from the sanctuary to serve God in the sacramentality of the world. They remind the church of the dangers and limitations of not leaving its sanctuaries and comfort zones to pursue authentic holiness. Art, music, poetry are examples of the sacramentality of the world, to be used for the re-enchantment of the world, as we have allowed so much to become desacralized. This could become a distinctive diaconal witness.

The Revd Dr Tiit Pädam, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Estonia, addressed the question: ‘What we have lost through not necessarily connecting the deacon to worship?’ Based on his research of the diaconate in the Nordic Lutheran Churches, he pointed to problems and questions that still need to be addressed about different models of the diaconate. There are churches who ordain deacons to a distinct diaconate. Bishops can give permission to deacons to serve parishes where there is no priest available. This opens a possibility for permanent practice. There are also churches who do not allow ordination of deacons, who commission deacons, but not as part of the ordained ministry.

Although the diaconate takes different forms in the Nordic Lutheran churches, it is a skilled ministry with a distinct caritative function. The core of the diaconal ministry is based on Jesus’ words in Mark 10:45: *For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.* This passage is used when ordaining or commissioning deacons.

In this understanding of the diaconate, the service at the Lord’s table is understood in connection with the service at the table of those in need. But the service of those in need is also brought back to the service at the Lord’s table, as expressed in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland: *Diakonia begins at the altar and return to the altar.* If we limit the ministry at the table, preparing the coming of Christ, we indicate that deacons are not an expression of the Church. Deacons are called to this go-between ministry, an expression of God’s work through the Church to the world and back, in the name of Jesus Christ. We have lost an essential part if we don’t understand diakonia as a response to the calling of God.

Bishop John Armes and Anne Tomlinson, both of the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC), explained recent developments in SEC in relation to diaconal ministry, focusing on training for and exercise of distinctive diaconal ministry.

Bishop John Armes told the consultation about this important work of the SEC, seeing diakonia as an essential aspect of the ministry of the whole church. A working party has been addressing some of the questions raised in the Oslo consultation. The SEC then drafted a paper setting out an alternative training route for candidates for a distinct diaconate. Further, the SEC has been addressing the question of how Deacons might be deployed at diocesan and congregational levels. The Diocese of Moray, Ross and Caithness has a number of women and men currently exploring diaconal vocation. This may lead to a 'College of Deacons' being established in company with the Bishop. In the plenary discussion, possibilities of exchange of deacons and diaconal students were raised, as well as exchange of curriculum for diaconal formation.

The Archbishop of Dublin, Michael Jackson, reflected on how Anglicans had changed in relation to earlier consultations. He observed that the Lutheran members of Porvoo had helped Anglicans to set the context for a new dimension of diaconal ministry. Porvoo had shown that there is 'one ministry, that of Jesus Christ' and that all ministry depends on this. Dr Jackson felt that hierarchies were 'essential for responsibility, accountability, leadership and the granting and enacting of permissions'. However, he also observed that hierarchies were often 'self-serving'.

Archbishop Michael Jackson referred to the work of the Diaconal Institute in Oslo where formation for deacons take place particularly in the fields of theology and education, while church diaconal training is carried out in the context of a hospital and social institutions on the same site. This provides a model which he hoped could be mirrored in the Church of Ireland before long. In the broader context, he commented: 'the time surely is coming when the numerical balance is overturned and there are more lay ministers than clerical'. Recognising these important signals from the Church of Ireland, it was pointed out that clear distinction must be made between the ministry of the diaconate and lay ministries in the church.

The Bishop of Uppsala, Ragnar Persenius presented an overview of how diaconal ministry is organised in all the Nordic countries. All have a distinct focus on being a caritative ministry, and as such they are geared to be adaptable to changes in society. Most of the Nordic churches ordain deacons to the ministry, but not all churches regard it as part of a three-fold ministry. In some of the churches it is also necessary to clarify the role of the deacon with regards to administration of the Eucharistic sacrament. There are also different practices as to the role of the deacon in liturgical life.

The Nordic Lutheran churches all emphasise the calling of the whole church to diaconal ministry and the priesthood of all the baptised. However, today there is a need for distinct leadership in diaconal ministry. In many congregations this

leadership is conducted by the ordained deacon, while the ordained deacon is under the oversight of the bishop. But the calling to diaconal ministry is a calling of the whole church, which means that there is stronger emphasis on the link between diakonia and the mission of the church. Although the tradition of diaconal orders is changing, diaconal institutions remain an important part of the diaconal ministry of the church. There is also a growing awareness of diaconal work in other church-related organisations.

A Panel discussion summarising some significant areas was moderated by the Archbishop of Dublin. Panel members - Canon Helene Steed, Canon Ian Ellis, Deacon Frances Hiller, Deacon Ninni Smedberg and the Revd Pekka Huokuna also responded to questions.

- Are we actually getting a closer understanding of each other or are the structures too embedded to change?
- If we're not getting closer, how can we give recognition to each other's ministries?
- If we are not changing in relation to each other, are we then changing in relation to society?

Panel members felt that the Porvoo Churches are coming to understand each other's approach to diaconal ministry more clearly and observed that the consultation had learned of the variety of expressions of diaconal ministry across the Porvoo Communion.

It was felt that changes were indeed taking place in the Porvoo Churches with regard to diaconal ministry, but in some parts change was deeper than in others. The Scottish experience was a striking example of a Church re-evaluating diakonia in quite fundamental ways.

The Scottish experience was a striking example of a Church developing its diaconal ministry in quite fundamental ways.

Furthermore, it was recommended that the Porvoo Churches could give greater recognition to each other's ministries by arranging diaconal exchange, so that the Churches could challenge each other through direct experience of diaconal ministries with varying emphases.

It is important that the voices of those who are serving in longer-term diaconal ministries should be heard more clearly, it was stated.

Panel members saw the Porvoo Churches as changing to varying extents in relation to society at large, but it was noted that the Church's credibility, among people in general, is largely influenced by the extent to which its life is marked by service, diakonia.

Participants concluded that this Porvoo Consultation had highlighted the recognition and respect for the ministry of deacons together with the living diakonia in our churches.

It has helped to re-engage afresh with the dynamic diaconal component in discipleship and ordination enabling those exercising diaconal ministry to establish a network of communication leading up to a Porvoo Consultation of Deacons.

Concrete Tasks

1. PREPARATION OF A QUESTIONNAIRE AND FOLLOW-UP

- *The distinctive deacons at this consultation will prepare a questionnaire to be presented to the PCG by October 2013.*
- *They will form the core group with an option to co-opt as required.*
- *The questionnaire will use the insight and material of this consultation.*
- *The information received will then be shared with deacons and co-workers in diaconal ministry, church policy makers and bishops in our churches.*
- *The material coming from the questionnaire will be the basis for discussion in a consultation among deacons and co-workers in diaconal ministry to be held within two years.*
- *The discussion does not end with the consultation, but deacons and co-workers in diaconal ministry will be asked to feed back into PCG, so that actual action can emerge.*

2. INTERFAITH ENGAGEMENT

- *Use the Porvoo Keys of Interfaith Engagement at the parish and other levels in diaconal ministry to strengthen the interfaith engagement in local communities as well.*

3. INTERCHANGE

- *Promote and strengthen the interchange of deacons between member churches, also in the field of diaconal studies and curriculum.*

4. DIASPORA, MISSION AND CHRISTIAN CONFIDENCE

- *Work towards strengthening diaspora congregations in mission and building Christian confidence in society.*
- *Develop further reflection on participation in international diakonia*

Commentary on the Porvoo Declaration, Meeting of the Church Lawyers of the Porvoo Communion in Westminster, England 16-17 January 1998

1. Status of the Declaration

The Porvoo Declaration is not itself legally binding (except in a church which has incorporated it into its law). However, the churches which have approved the Declaration are morally bound to implement the commitments which it contains.

2. Comments on Commitments (i) - (vi)

- i. *to share a common life in mission and service, to pray for and with one another, and to share resources;*

to share resources

The term 'resources' is understood to cover expertise, publications, and spiritual and liturgical resources, as well as material and financial resources. Gifts may be made by a whole church or by a diocese, parish or agency within it.

No church has a right to claim any particular gift or assistance from another church on the basis of this commitment.

The possibility of making financial donations depends in any case on the terms of any trust under which financial assets are held and on the purposes of any particular charity.

- ii. *to welcome one another's members to receive sacramental and other pastoral ministrations;*

sacramental ministrations

Baptized members of one signatory church who have been admitted to communicant status in that church and remain in good standing should be admitted to communion in all of the other signatory churches.

- iii. *to regard baptized members of all our churches as members of our own;*

In the case of churches which have parish membership lists, baptized members of any signatory church are to be regarded as potential members of a parish. If they request membership of a parish in which they are resident they should be admitted to membership of that parish without any special requirements. In particular, they should not be required to renounce their confession. Baptism with water in the name of the Holy Trinity in any of the signatory churches is recognized.

Anyone who is admitted to membership of a particular parish thereby receives all the rights and becomes subject to all of the obligations which pertain to membership of a parish in the church concerned.

The Porvoo Declaration does not require signatory churches to make it possible for people to be simultaneously registered as a member of more than one congregation (whether of the same or a different denomination or confession) in the same country.

- iv. to welcome diaspora congregations into the life of the indigenous churches, to their mutual enrichment;*

The incorporation of diaspora congregations into the structure of the indigenous church so that they become parishes of that church is not required (although that possibility is not excluded). Each church should identify ways of allowing the clergy and people of diaspora congregations to become involved in its life which are appropriate to its particular context. The clergy of such congregations should thereby be placed in a relationship (though not necessarily a legal relationship) with the local bishop.

- v. 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;*

persons episcopally ordained

The commitment only covers those who have been ordained by a bishop of one of the signatory churches. Churches are not obliged to accept for service those who were ordained by a cathedral dean or those who were ordained in a church which is not a signatory but were subsequently accepted for ministry in a signatory church without re-ordination.

to serve., in that ministry in the receiving church

Clergy of one church who are authorized for ministry in another church are allowed to perform in the receiving church only such duties as belong to their order in the receiving church.

by invitation

No *right* to appointment or authorization in general, or to appointment to a particular post, or to authorization to minister in a particular parish or on a particular occasion, is conferred by this agreement on any particular individual.

in accordance with any regulations which may _from time to time be in force

Clergy will be subject to the regulations of the receiving church.

In particular, they will be have to make the declaration(s) and take any oath(s) which are required of clergy of the receiving church.

Possession of the knowledge, skills and linguistic competence necessary for exercising a particular ministry or being appointed to a particular post will be required.

In the case of appointment to posts in a signatory church, educational qualifications of a certain level may be required. It is for the receiving church to evaluate the qualifications of particular candidates.

It is acknowledged that restrictions are in operation in certain churches regarding the ministry of women bishops (and those ordained by them) or women priests in particular places.

The requirements for employment in a signatory church should not be such as to exclude the entire clergy of another signatory church from any possibility of such appointment.

Clergy serving in a signatory church are subject to the discipline of that church. In cases where a penalty is imposed by the authorities of one signatory church on a bishop, priest or deacon ordained in another signatory

church, this should be reported to the sending church. It would be for the sending church to decide whether this should have any consequences for the ministry of the person concerned in that church.

- vi. 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;*
normally

This means 'as a norm', but not necessarily on each individual occasion.

3. Commitments (vii)–(x)

Commitments (vii)–(x) are collective commitments, which it is the responsibility of the Contact Group to pursue, and which do not raise legal problems.

Porvoo Consultation on Churches Teaching on Marriage - Challenges in Applying the Teaching and Theology Turku, Finland 2011

The Context in which we live is a rapidly changing one. State legislation on marriage is changing, drawing response from the churches of the Porvoo Communion.

Central to the task of the Porvoo churches is to witness together for Christ to the needs of a rapidly changing and confusing Europe. Traditionally marriage has offered just such an opportunity. Throughout its history the Christian Church has had to face the challenges of the changing nature of the societal context in which she ministers and in which the people live. The church in every age is called to serve the people of her society. The church is in but not wholly of the world as she seeks to live and proclaim the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ afresh in each generation.

Although the church seeks to provide teaching on marriage, frames an explicitly Christian understanding of a natural order and seeks to celebrate the union of hearts and minds, it is endeavouring to respond to trends in wider society. Such an endeavour involves tension and struggle. This struggle is not new. It has been the case in every generation.

In the light of this ever changing context and new challenges, the Porvoo Communion of Churches decided to hold this consultation on marriage. All the churches in the communion benefits by sharing their official teaching on marriage.

The **Opening Eucharist** was held at Turku Cathedral. The Revd Sari Lehti from the Evangelical

Lutheran Church in Finland presided and the Presiding Bishop of Norway, Helga Haugland Byfuglien preached. She reflected on the text 'overcome evil with good' (Rom.12.21) setting the spiritual context for the consultation and connected it to the local experiences in her Norwegian context during the summer months. The **Closing Eucharist** was held at St Mary's Church near the consultation centre. Bishop Martin Wharton (Co-Chair of the Porvoo Contact Group) presided and Bishop Stephen Platten (Church of England) preached, reflecting on the tensions which issue from the Gospel's engagement with wider culture in every age. Marriage and committed human relationships are subject to these same theological cultural tensions.

During the **Opening Session** Bishop Martin Wharton welcomed all participants. Bishop Hans-Erik Nordin of Sweden was welcomed as the Lutheran Co-Chair for this consultation.

Bishop Martin Wharton then pointed to the **aim** of this Consultation on Marriage as an opportunity in a changing context to listen, share, understand

and learn from each other's histories, experiences, pastoral contexts as well as to deepen our knowledge of our churches' current teaching and practice regarding marriage. He also explained how the Porvoo consultation on 'Churches Responding to Conflict' (Feb. 2011) provides a framework for discussing and responding to controversial issues.

The **challenges** are many. However, the churches present agreed that:

- they can continue to address critical issues resulting from differing theological positions and pastoral practices;
- they are called to a sense of mutual responsibility as churches in communion
- they work towards wider consensus through prayer and engagement as well as with time,
- patience and a commitment to Spirit led discernment.

Reflection on scripture took a central role in the consultation. Participants also focussed on the many significant changes in State law and in society have already happened and how our churches' are seeking to respond to them in faithfulness to the Gospel. This led to an exploration of the evolving theological understanding of marriage implicit in our liturgies, doctrinal statements and pastoral practices, and their relevance in our diverse contexts. The **Bible Studies** throughout the consultation addressed aspects of theological substratum of marriage, beginning with creation and the texts in Genesis 1 and 2 relevant to the creation of humankind.

Presentations

The presentations brought a variety of thoughts to the consultation and fed the work of the groups and workshops.

Prof Dr Antti Laato presented the first paper of the consultation on an 'Interpretation of biblical passages related to marriage in the Old and in the New Testaments'. *Prof Carl Reinhold*

Braakenhielm explored the question of what might count as 'theological justification' for same-sex marriage.

Responding, *Professor Oliver O'Donovan* considered the circumstances under which doctrine might be understood to develop and evolve within the Church.

Bishop Jana Jeruma-Grinberga brought the perspectives of human genetics to the consultation. By explaining the complexities of human genetics, she pointed out why there are individuals who do not fall neatly into the binary categories of 'male' and 'female'.

Small Groups and Workshops

In Small Groups participants were able to share and discuss material relating to marriage submitted in advance by their churches. The workshop sessions were thematic, addressing three key areas: Theological and Liturgical; Context, Society and Witness; Relationships – Ecumenical, Communion and Internal.

Reflecting Process

Central to the process of reflection were the Keynote Listeners. At the end of each day they engaged in a kind of public conversation. They were asked several questions in an interview format to draw out themes which had emerged in the intense discussions in small groups and workshops.

Findings and Texts of Presentations

The consultation made clear that differences over the introduction of same-sex marriage remain unresolved. It is clear that there are a variety of views and pastoral practices along a theological spectrum. Some believe same sex marriage to be a legitimate development in the Christian tradition, whilst others see the potential for a serious departure from the received tradition. Nevertheless the the consultation affirmed the benefits of 'belonging to one another'. The value of honest encounter and strengthened friendship provides a platform of sustained communication in the face of issues which raise such difficulties for us.

The findings of the consultation are available in an interim report. The core-group will, however, complete a report for further discussion in the Porvoo Contact Group. The texts of presentations will be made available to participants in due course.

Porvoo Consultation on Diaspora and Migration 2012

22 members of the Churches in the Porvoo Communion and observers met in Uppsala, Sweden from 21 to 24 March 2012 to consider issues relating to diaspora and migration.

In section b (iv) of the Porvoo Common Statement, members commit themselves “to welcome diaspora congregations into the life of the indigenous church for mutual enrichment.” The original reference was perhaps only related to branches of one Porvoo church located in another Porvoo country, but in the light of increasing migration into northwest Europe and consequent ethnic diversity both in the indigenous churches and in what had been described as “diaspora congregations”, it was appropriate to consider this principle in a changing context.

Read more ...

The consultation heard case studies from representatives of Norwegian, Latvian and Chinese congregations in London and from Finnish and Sudanese Anglicans in Finland, and visited Finnish and Anglican churches in Stockholm as well as a Church of Sweden parish, hosting an Ethiopian Mekane Yesus (Lutheran) congregation. Both the presentations and the visits raised questions about the static and dynamic roles of culture and language for identity among migrants and diaspora communities.

Kristina Hellqvist, advisor to the Church of Sweden for refugee and integration issues, provided some statistics about migration in Europe, and a summary of some recent issues, and Barbara Moss from the Church of England Diocese in Europe spoke on “Challenges of Integration”, emphasizing that integration is not the same as assimilation; both the hosts and the new arrivals must be prepared to be transformed by the process.

The same theme was illustrated in the first of three bible studies ably led by Revd Dr John Perumbalath, who presented the book of Ruth as an example of Naomi, on her return home, providing for the needs of Ruth, the young immigrant, for a home and security. The second bible study, from 1 Peter, identified the theme “Christians in Exile” as applied to diaspora congregations then and now, pointing out that all Christians are migrants in the sense of being people on a journey: they have not yet arrived, and never should – a message echoed in the final statement of Mika Pajunen’s account of Finnish Anglicans: “Our story is not over – keep moving!”

The talks and visits were supplemented by discussions in small groups and workshops on three themes:

- The significance of different causes of migration for the particular identities of diaspora congregations;
- Diaspora congregations becoming part of the indigenous churches;
- Challenges raised by second-generation members of diaspora congregations.

Keynote listeners Bishops Jana Jeruma Grinberga (Lutheran Church in Great Britain) and David Hamid (Church of England Diocese in Europe) and Revd Dr Christopher Meakin (Church of Sweden) attended the small groups and workshops, and summarized the highlights of the proceedings.

Recommendations

1. To ask the Porvoo Contact Group:
 - to explore how the sharing of stories, including biblical narratives, which has been such an important part of this consultation, may be brought to a wider audience;
 - to find ways of encouraging further theological reflection;
 - and to develop and collate appropriate resources for our member churches.
2. To ask the Porvoo churches, in collaboration with their national ecumenical instruments, to collect existing guidelines or draw up new ones for the sharing of church buildings and other resources, including sample contracts and other working agreements, in order to identify and inform about good practice.
3. Recognizing that changing patterns of migration have led to the formation of gathered congregations within Porvoo churches with a geographical parochial system, to ask those churches to reflect on how members of these diaspora congregations may be welcomed into membership of the host church in the place where they worship together.
4. To ask the Porvoo churches:
 - to encourage their clergy and ordinands to become competent in engaging with
 - cultural differences;
 - to build up databases of deacons, priests and pastors able to minister in languages
 - other than the majority languages and English;

- and to ensure that the speakers of these languages can find, in their own languages, access to this information.
5. To encourage host and migrant congregations to become involved together in the local ecumenical scene as equal partners with their Christian brothers and sisters, sharing their gifts for mutual enrichment.

Porvoo Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela Report 2015

From 24 to 29 August 2015, 27 young members from the Anglican Churches of Ireland, Scotland, England, Portugal and Spain and the Lutheran Churches of Norway, Sweden and Finland belonging to the Porvoo communion went on a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, located in Galicia, northern Spain.

The theme was «*Jesus, the living water in our pilgrimage of life*» sustained in the biblical dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan woman (John 4, 5–42). The pilgrimage was a time of Christian living and spiritual enrichment of the pilgrims and of approximation between people and churches of the Porvoo Communion.

During an eucharistic celebration in Porto the participants were sent as pilgrims and started the way in Spain following the «Sanabrés way» in a total of approximately 130 kms. Daily there was time for prayer and Bible study, lead by Reverend Jenny Sjogreen, and for the knowledge and experience of different traditions and cultures present. It was a time of pilgrimage, prayer and spirituality.

In the current context of economic and social crisis, this pilgrimage between young people from the North and the South of Europe, were a sign of the necessary solidarity that should exist between people, communities, churches and countries in the European continent.

Through the spiritual communion that was achieved among the participants a deeper understanding of the purposes of the Porvoo Communion was experienced as well as embodied.

On arrival to Santiago Compostela the participants gathered for a eucharistic service giving thanks to God for the pilgrimage and the spiritual journey.

The pilgrimage was graciously hosted by the Lusitanian Church (Portugal) and the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church, and accompanied by bishop Jorge Pina Cabral and bishop Carlos Lopez Lozano.

Based on this experience the participants strongly suggest the Porvoo Communion to continuing provide space for this kind of mutual learning and sharing among young people and church leaders in the Communion.

IX CHURCHES OF THE PORVOO COMMUNION

Member Churches of the Porvoo Communion

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark

The Church of England

The Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland

The Church of Iceland

The Church of Ireland

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania

The Church of Norway

The Lusitanian Church of Portugal

The Scottish Episcopal Church

The Reformed Episcopal Church of Spain

The Church of Sweden

The Church in Wales

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia Abroad

The Lutheran Church in Great Britain

One church have observer status:

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia

X ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

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The Right Revd Dr José Jorge Pina Cabral
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