

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

Communiqué

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

Participants were welcomed by the Rt Revd Dr. Voitto Huotari. The Revd Prof. Dr. Viorel Ionita introduced the Porvoo Common Statement in the wider context of ecumenical relations in Europe. Members of the consultation were encouraged to explore issues of common theological concern and the possibility of applying the methodology of Porvoo to other ecumenical relations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. The Holy Spirit: creation and growth inside and outside the Church
 - a) The spiritual life and entering into the mystery of the Trinity
 - b) Growth and unity in the context of conflict
 - c) The canonical and the charismatic in the Church
 - d) Creation, Church and the whole world

From the group discussion, the following emerged:

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

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

3. The Church’s purpose is located within God’s redemption of the cosmos, and the Eucharist has an inescapably eschatological dimension. The Church is a divine reality which must be expressed in canonically defined forms, but cannot be wholly identified with them. The Holy Spirit is at work everywhere, even outside the boundaries of the Church. The doctrine of the Trinity implies both diversity and unity of the Church. Conflict can sometimes be understood positively, as a dynamic of growth. All these statements require much further exploration.

The consultation was conducted in the spirit of the *Charta Oecumenica*, chapter 6: “We belong together in Christ and this is of fundamental significance in the face of our differing theological and ethical positions... In order to deepen ecumenical fellowship, endeavours to reach a consensus in faith must be continued at all cost. Only in this way can church communion be given a theological foundation. There is no alternative to dialogue.”

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

are further invited to share their rich theological experience of the consultation with their colleagues and church members.

Järvenpää, 3 December 2005

List of Participants

I. Anglican

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

II. Lutheran

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

III. Orthodox

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

IV. Observers

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

V. Staff

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