

APPENDIX H

REPORT ON THE PORVOO CONSULTATION ON THE DIACONATE

A Consultation on the Diaconate involving Porvoo Churches was held in the St Katharine's Foundation, London from January 25th to 27th. It gathered members of the signatory Churches of The Porvoo Agreement along with members from Denmark. The background to the Consultation lies in a recognition of the need to examine together the diaconate, a ministry which in various forms we share, in accordance with the commitment given in the Agreement itself. Hitherto interchange across the Porvoo Churches has centred, where possible, on involvement of bishops in episcopal ordinations and in the exchange of presbyteral ministry as we in Ireland know from the dioceses of Clogher, Cork, Dublin and Ferns. It was felt to be time to examine the diaconal strand.

The diaconal question is a difficult one. The Consultation was honest enough to admit that equivalence and interchangeability lie a long way in the future. This derives in part from the various theological emphases and expressions of the Reformation in Europe. The work of Collins (principally in JN Collins *Diakonia: Re-interpreting the Ancient Sources*, OUP 1990) on the diaconate in the New Testament context has added significantly to the understanding of *diakonia* and this was shared as a new way of appreciating diaconal ministry in its entirety. As well as the 'serving at tables' model with which we are familiar, the linguistic evidence of the *diakonia* family of words, argues Collins, points to ministry as responsible initiative as much as to ministry as humble service. Neither contradicts the other. Both need recognition.

The caritative, the liturgical and the catechetical emerged as irreducible elements in an episcopally ordained diaconate. Papers and discussion showed how the orders of ministry - deacon, priest (or presbyter), bishop – derive from the ministry of Christ and are given expression through the apostolicity of the church. This expression is generous and redemptive, it is about salvation, hence it takes place within and without the church and can appropriately be called ministry-in-mission. It was agreed that this is the appropriate context in which to understand episcopal ordination to specific orders of ministry.

At one point discussion centred on the recognition that in one of the Nordic churches, any baptised person may become a bishop and, on election, is ordained priest and then bishop. This is not new. After all, the same thing happened to Ambrose of Milan in 374, and he had not in fact been baptised when chosen. Although the diversity became quite acute at this point, all of this also needs to be set in the context of what this same church is doing in making considerable moves towards an ordained diaconate where hitherto there had not been one. Things are complicated but across the Porvoo Churches there is a willingness seriously to grapple with episcopal ordination and the diaconate together. From this perspective, the Anglican system of a triple ordination within a three-fold ministry looks as if it is already very structured. The overwhelmingly transitional character of the Anglican diaconate was also addressed in the context of discussing a more permanent diaconate.

Both sides have a number of areas of untidiness internally and with one another. It was suggested that regarding the diaconate, deacons in the Anglican tradition spend too much

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time in church, with Lutheran deacons spending too much time in the world. Surely both ought to spend a good deal of time in each! The plethora of lay ministry within the Anglican tradition, often more parish-based than anything else, itself creates a difficulty for those with an ecclesiological structured caritative diaconate. There is, furthermore, significant variation across the Lutheran family in the proportion of social and church diaconate.

In conclusion, the Consultation afforded the opportunity for signatories of The Porvoo Agreement to express and explore theologies of ministry with a new urgency and impetus. This began in a consideration of diaconal ministry which was seen as an essential component in the understanding of all ministries in the signatory Churches. There emerged a recognition of the one-ness of the ministry and the holding of differentiation in ministries within the one ministry of Christ. This developed into a further recognition of the Christological and ecclesiological sides of ministry. For those present the Consultation was particularly important in bringing a concrete issue to the Porvoo table in the second decade of the life of the Agreement.

The Right Reverend Dr Michael Jackson,
Bishop of Clogher

**THE COMMUNION OF THE PORVOO CHURCHES
CONSULTATION ON THE DIACONATE
25-27 JANUARY 2006
THE ROYAL FOUNDATION OF SAINT KATHARINE LONDON**

PARTICIPANTS

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

Other participants were

The Revd Prebendary Dr Paul Avis, (Church of England)
The Revd Canon Rosalind Brown (Church of England)
The Revd Dr Stephanie Dietrich (Church of Norway)
The Revd Atis Grinbergs (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia)
The Revd Peter Hayler (Church in Wales)
The Revd Canon Dr Charles Hill, Anglican Co-Secretary, Porvoo Contact Group (Church of England)
Mr Leiv Sigmund Hope (Church of Norway)
The Rt Revd Dr Michael Jackson (Church of Ireland)
The Revd Knut Erling Johansen, (Church of Norway)
The Revd Dr Tapio Luoma (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland)
The Revd Øyvind Meling (Church of Norway)
The Rt Revd Karsten Nissen (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark)
The Revd Tiit Pädam (Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church)

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The Revd Canon Robert Paterson (Church in Wales)
The Rt Revd Stephen Platten, (Church of England)
The Revd Dr Matti Repo, Lutheran Co-Secretary, Porvoo Contact Group (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland)
Professor Turid Karlsen Seim (Church of Norway)
Deacon Ninni Smedberg (Church of Sweden)
The Revd Dr Anne Tomlinson (Scottish Episcopal Church)
The Revd Osmo Vatanen (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland)

Observers

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

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

Within the strong Lutheran tradition of caritative *diaconia*, steps are currently being taken in some of the Baltic and Nordic Porvoo Churches towards integrating this into the ordained ministry. Discussion is continuing in each Church, and on the practical level there has been some sharing of diaconal ministries. Within the Anglican tradition, there is a concern to take further the study and development of the distinctive diaconate which is flourishing in some dioceses. In both traditions, there is on-going work on the understanding of ministry, ordained and lay.

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

For Anglicans

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

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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?