

FOR AND AGAINST JOINING PORVOO

Robust attacks and defence in criticism of 'undemocratic' process



Porvoo consultation in Copenhagen in 2009

As reported in the December edition of *Church News from Denmark*, at their meeting on 9th December 2009 the Council on International Relations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark voted for the church to join the Porvoo Fellowship – a practical collaboration between Anglican and Lutheran churches in the Nordic countries, the

United Kingdom, Ireland and the Baltic countries, begun in 1996.

Inge Lise Pedersen, Chair of the National Association of Parish Councils, has criticised not so much the result as the process whereby the decision was achieved and claims that it was taken behind closed doors and that the laity were being treated as “useful idiots”.

Even harsher words were used by Pastor Soren Krarup, MP for the Danish People's Party, who claimed in an article in the daily *Kristeligt Dagblad* that “The Danish Lutheran Church has not become a member of the Porvoo Fellowship. The playroom that calls itself the Council on International Relations can go ahead and play the game that the Church has joined Porvoo... but it could equally well have played the game that the Church has become Roman Catholic!”

After Porvoo was first discussed by all the Danish parish churches in 1995, the Danish Church refrained from signing the declaration and was granted observer status. The first woman bishop in Denmark, Lise Lotte Rebel, was elected in 1995 and among Danish concerns was the Anglican rejection of women bishops, a position it has since changed.

“Risk of ending up as a religious allotment garden”

In response to the criticism a council member, Bishop Kresten Drejergaard, says: “There is no difference here from, say, our signature in 2001 to the Leuenberg Fellowship with over 100 Reformed churches in Europe.

Parliament has given the Council on International Relations the authority to sign and we have used it. Since we have no synod or supreme authority in the Lutheran Church in Denmark, *without* the council the Danish Church runs the risk of ending up as a religious allotment garden!”

In a letter to *Kristeligt Dagblad* Dr. Anders Eyvind Nielsen supports the signature and plays down the scare image painted by Soren Krarup. “Porvoo is a practical implementation of the fundamental view that under the Augsburg Confession we are united but different... we don't need to convert just because we change address from one national church to another.”

- ▶ New collects and prayers, P2
- ▶ Danish Church Days 2010, P2
- ▶ Run-off for election of new Bishop of Aalborg, P3
- ▶ Minister moves country pastors into town, P3
- ▶ New pay regulations pressurise parish councils, P3
- ▶ Peter's Story updated, P4
- ▶ Son of God = 25%, Saviour of the world = 18%, P4



Church News from Denmark is published bi-monthly by the Council on International Relations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark. Editors: Hanna & Edward Broadbridge.

Sources: Danish newspapers, the Christian Daily in particular.

Council on International Relations
Peter Bangs Vej 1D
DK-2000 Frederiksberg C
interchurch@interchurch.dk
www.interchurch.dk

NEW COLLECTS AND PRAYERS

Well-known pastor Holger Lissner publishes new book



Hymn and collect writer
Holger Lissner
www.kristendom.dk

Pastor Emeritus Holger Lissner is well-known for his hymnwriting. No fewer than 6 of his hymns and 9 translations of foreign hymns appear in the new Danish hymnbook (2002), and he has been instrumental in the collects that supplement it.

In his retirement he has been

working on new collects for the Morning Service as well as new prayers to introduce and close the service.

Collects and Prayers (Aros 2009) is the result.

Collects and prayers ... need extensive use before we can be sure that they are durable

The new Bishop of Copenhagen, Peter Skov-Jakobsen, is enthusiastic about the collection and ready to try out the new texts. 'Collects and prayers need to be spoken,' he says to the daily, *Kristeligt Dagblad*. 'It is always like that with new texts for the liturgy. They need extensive use before we can be sure that they are durable.'

Below is one of Holger Lissner's new collects for the 1st Sunday in Advent:

Collect

God, You who were, who are and who will be!
Now, as the days grow short and the darkness increases,
We long for You, for our unease is great,
And our hope is like a flickering flame.
Let us not be carried away by all that we must manage,
And all that we insist on managing,
But teach us to live slowly,
To be open and attentive when You come and stand
among us,
Light of eternity.
Come, Lord! Lead us out of the darkness
To the freedom that You grant
For ever and ever.

DANISH CHURCH DAYS 2010

Theme: "Heaven and Earth in Motion"

For 4 days around Ascension Day 2010 (13-16th May) the triennial Danish Church Days are being held – for the 15th time. This year in Viborg the Church Days will gather 3,000-4,000 interested Danes from throughout the country to celebrate the faith and inspire fellow-Christians with innovative ideas and practices. The programme comprises worship, workshops, lectures, discussions and performances under the headline: "Heaven and earth in motion". Altogether there will be 140 workshops, debates and meetings available.

Under 'worship' there will be a rock-service drawing on U2's music and lyrics, an open-air Biker service, a Danish folk music service and a gospel workshop and service. The programme includes a debate between the Dean of Copenhagen Cathedral, the Minister of Defence, a pastor and a left-wing MP on the inspiration and consequence of the Christian faith on modern-day values. A new hymn has been written for the occasion with a tune by Erling Lindgren to a text by Lars Busk Sorensen. There are local pilgrimages and a market, plus a talk and discussion on interfaith dialogue between Christians and Muslims led by Andrew Wingate, advisor to the Bishop of Leicester.

Drama and musical

Among the performances is the open-air production of a new drama, *With Law A Country Must Be Built*, by local author Henning Pedersen. The play is about Bishop Gunnar of Viborg who lived from 1152-1251 and was instrumental in formulating the major legislation called *Jutland Law* in 1241. At the age of 94 he asked the Pope if he might be relieved of his duties!

The well-known children's entertainer Sigurd Barrett and his puppet, Snapper, will tell Bible stories and there will be a performance of the new musical drama, *Peter's Story*, (see below) by the children of St. Clemens Church, Randers, followed by a Q & A session on working with children in a modern context.

Bishop of Viborg Karsten Nissen celebrates the 950th year of the diocese in Viborg. Together with Pastor Poul Erik Knudsen and Thomas Frank he is the leading local organiser.

To celebrate the faith and inspire fellow-Christians

RUN-OFF FOR ELECTION OF NEW BISHOP OF AALBORG

Three-way result requires second round of elections

With a huge 90.5% of the electorate voting in this month's election of the new Bishop of Aalborg to replace Soren Lodberg Hvass, none of the three candidates reached the required 50% of the votes in the first round to win the election outright. The result was:

Pastor Marianne Christensen – 790 votes (44%)

Dean Henning Toft Bro – 659 votes (37%)

Assistant Professor Jorgen Kjaergaard 316 votes (18%)

The general consensus in the diocese has been that any one of the three would make a good job of the position.

Well-attended election meetings have demonstrated that there was not a lot to choose between the candidates in terms of qualifications, personality or programme, so the second round due to take place next month will doubtless also be a close-run contest.

Denmark's first woman bishop, Lise Lotte Rebel, Bishop of Elsinore since 1995 was followed in 2003 by Bishop of Ribe, Elisabeth Dons Christensen. There is a good chance that Pastor Marianne Christensen will be the third woman bishop of the 10 bishoprics in Denmark.

MINISTER MOVES COUNTRY PASTORS INTO TOWN

“Pastors must be where the people are.”

A number of Denmark's benefices were demarcated hundreds of years ago and in some cases they go back to the Iron Age! Now Minister for Church Affairs, Birthe Roenn Hornbech, is planning changes in their regional distribution in line with the general movement from country to town and city to suburb under the dictum: “Pastors must be where the people are.”

Within the next 5 years 26 benefices are therefore being moved mainly from the countryside into the suburbs, not least into Aarhus, Roskilde and Elsinore. For the first time in history bishops will have to swap benefices with each other.

Outgoing Bishop of Aalborg, Soren Lodberg Hvas, who is giving away 7.8% of his benefices, comments: “Some pastors will simply have to serve more churches in the diocese and people will have to learn to live with the light turned down a bit.”

On the other hand Elsinore diocese gains no fewer than 13.5 new benefices, a welcome relief for Bishop Lise-Lotte Rebel, who says “One-fifth of the Danish population live here! Some of the parishes have over 20,000 inhabitants and are still expanding. In some cases a single pastor is serving over 4,000 parishioners.”

NEW PAY REGULATIONS PRESSURISE PARISH COUNCILS

New pay regulations for some 10,000 personnel in the Danish Lutheran Church have created problems for many of the parish councils, according to Ritzau news agency. For organists, vergers, sacristans and sextons these came into force on January 1st but agreements have yet to be reached in a number of churches. The sticking-point has been that each individual parish has now been made responsible for deciding the pay for

its personnel within the financial framework set up by Parliament. Parish councils, who are all voluntary unpaid members, are finding it heavy going to implement the 28 pages of new regulations. This is especially true of the country parishes with small councils where, for example, it can be difficult to sit down and negotiate pay face-to-face with one's neighbour on an employer/employee basis.

PETER'S STORY UPDATED - JESUS FEEDS 5,000 ON RANDERS GOLF COURSE

Among the highlights for children at Danish Church Days 2010 will be the new musical, *Peter's Story*, written by the children and leaders of Club Clemens at St Clemens Church in Randers and performed by the children on Saturday 15th May. The church has a 30-year tradition of producing musicals, but nothing quite like this one has been done before. It tells the story of the apostle Peter from his call at the great catch of fish until he is led out of Herod's prison by an angel.

But *this* Peter fishes in the lake outside Randers, and *this* Jesus comes from the nearby village of Bjerregrav. When Jesus calls the 12 they all receive a numbered t-shirt and line up like a team (Judas is number 13). Jesus heals two blind men, who promptly call up the local radio station to tell their story. When the multitude of 5,000 (the audience) run out of food on Randers Golf Course, Judas and two of the other disciples take off into town to find a hot-dog stand. The 30 children who perform the music-drama are all used to microphones and lights, as they have previously



The disciples line up in Peters historie in St Clemens Church, Randers.

performed in *The Christmas Musical* and *The Easter Musical*, which are annual events at St. Clemens. A 3-piece band accompanies them.

SON OF GOD = 25%, SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD = 18%

New poll confirms renewed interest in religion and faith

These are the percentage figures for the Danes' belief in two of the understandings of who Jesus is. The poll was recently carried out by the analytical institute, YouGov, among 1,114 Danes between 18 and 74. The figures come as a positive surprise to Marie Vejrup Nielsen, who researches in Modern Christianity at the Faculty of Theology in Aarhus. "We hear so often about the loss of tradition and the dwindling interest for Christianity, but

the figures show that it's not quite so bad after all. Religion and faith are clearly back on the agenda, especially, according to the poll, for the 30 to 39-year-olds and for the older generation. This doesn't mean that people go to church more, but rather that their own individualised religion has come to mean more to them, not least in their response to the growth of Islam in Denmark."

Please send us your feedback

We would like to hear your opinion about Church News from Denmark - whether favourable or critical. Reactions are welcome by e-mail:

interchurch@interchurch.dk