

APPENDIX J

Report on the Porvoo Consultation meeting between Youth representatives Edinburgh, 22nd-24th September. 2006.

For the attention of Honorary Secretaries, Church of Ireland and the CIYD Executive committee.

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Introduction:

It was a genuine pleasure to attend the above meeting recently on behalf of the Church of Ireland. Representatives from the following denominations were in attendance

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland,
The Church of Sweden,
The Church in Wales,
The Church of England,
The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland,
The Church of Wales,
The Episcopal Church in Scotland.

Our time was facilitated by Mrs Elspeth Davey the Scottish Episcopal Ecumenical Officer.

The Programme:

As this was the first occasion to formally meet as Youth representatives, significant time was given to introducing each other to our respective ministries. I found this a very worthwhile exercise in so far as noting both differences and similarities in our work with young people.

It is clear that being “state funded”, the Nordic Churches have significant resources to underpin their youth work. Across the board, these denominations have a strong emphasis on youth democracy issues, confirmation practice, and global citizenship. In the case of Sweden and Finland in particular, youth ministry is almost entirely a professional service, one where significant numbers of youth pastors are ordained.

The Churches across the British Isles were more varied in their youth ministry practice. CIYD along with the Church of England would to some extent receive Government monies, although it was noticeable that the CIYD work was also about producing youth resources that drew a favourable response from colleagues present. The CIYD website for example, was commended as an excellent resource. Both the Church in Wales, and the Scottish Episcopal Church struggled in not having a Provincial youth work, and in relating to small groups of young people across vast areas.

Reflections on the Conference:

- It was clear that we as representatives of the Porvoo Churches did not fully understand what the Porvoo Agreement might mean to our young people initially. However our discussions soon threw up areas of potential collaboration. (See Recommendations).
- In reality we only spent a full day together in session. My honest feeling was that by the time we were finishing, we were beginning to engage in dialogue and exploration of commonalities. It was as if the aircraft had got to the end of the runway but had not quite taken off!
- To our shame, this turned out to be the first occasion (in many years), when the Anglican Churches across the British Isles had got together at a Youth level.

Recommendations:

- I was particularly impressed with the Finnish Lutheran Church, and its emphasis on Confirmation, youth ministry pastors/diaconate, and a strong professional youth ministry basis. These are questions we within the Church of Ireland currently need to address. (Confirmation being a very high priority).
- In turn the Finnish Church recognised that we within the Church of Ireland have a strong Diocesan based youth ministry which unlike their service draws on large numbers of volunteers. It was also noted that our work both within CIYD and the Church of Ireland's Diocesan Youth Officers puts a large emphasis on resourcing the spiritual development of our leaders. **I would strongly recommend considering some form of appropriate linkage between our denomination and the Church in Finland as a direct out working of the Porvoo agreement. One suggestion might simply be that CIYD in 2007 hosting a group of Finnish Youth Pastors coming across to experience one of CIYD's residential.**
- Similarly, for the Anglican Churches across the British Isles to come together and share issues around best practise would be of added value to our ministry. **Whilst CIYD can be involved at this level, I would strongly recommend that our Diocesan Youth Officers are encouraged to engage with our sister Churches. We have a lot to gain and certainly a lot to offer!**
- **That CIYD will host links to the above denominations on our website.**
- **That representative young people from the Porvoo Churches be invited to participate on each others youth events. For the Church of Ireland we might easily host some young people at Summer Madness or Anois for example.**
- **That funding is sourced for possible exchange work from the Ecumenical European Youth Council towards these projects.**