An Essay on ecumenism in the Nordic region and on the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, (NEI), in particular with regards to how NEI understood the Membership Structure of the emerging World Council of Churches (WCC) and how that understanding was put into practice in the Nordic region.
1. **Introduction.**
   1.1 The Object of the Present Investigation?
   1.2 Presentation of the Problem.
   1.3 Method.
   1.4 Author’s thesis.
   1.5 Research on the Nordic Ecumenical Institute.
   1.6 Outline.

2. **Setting the Scene.**
   2.1 At the Stockholm Central Railway Station on September 1st 1939.
   2.2 Ecclesiastical regions and the Nordic region.
   2.2.1 Institute and Council.
   2.3 Abstract.

A **A Background to the formation of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI**

3. **The Nordic Region.**
   3.1 A General Description of the Nordic Region and its Folk churches.
   3.2 Denmark and the Church of Denmark.
   3.3 Norway and the Church of Norway.
   3.4 Iceland and the Church of Iceland.
   3.5 Sweden and the Church of Sweden.
   3.6 Finland and the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland.
   3.7 The Significance of the Nordic region.

4. **Ecumenism and cultural/political cooperation in the Nordic Region.**
   4.1 Earlier Scandinavian Attempts to Establish a Cultural /Political or Church cooperation in the Nordic region.
   4.2 Scandinavian Church Assemblies.
   4.3 A Remarkable Political Initiative.
   4.4 Proposals Regarding a Nordic Church Council in 1871 and in 1946.
   4.5 Examples of Other Nordic Joint Church Activities.
   4.5.1 Missionary Conferences.
   4.5.2 Nordic Christian Students’ Meetings.
   4.5.3 Nordic Sunday School Conferences /Diaconal Conferences.
   4.6 Nordic Bishops’ Council.

5. **Attempts to Create a Nordic Ecclesiastical Body.**
   5.1 Some Post-Great War Ecclesiological Observations -in a new political landscape, that embraced a renewed willingness to engage in cooperation in the Nordic region.
   5.1.1 Political Development.
   5.1.2 Cultural Development.
   5.1.3 Ecclesiastical Development.

6. **The Regional Membership Structure Agreed in Utrecht 1938.**

7. **Observations along the Road Leading to the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, Established in 1940 as an Intended Regional Body for the Emerging World Council of Churches.**
   7.1 The Meaning of Oikoumene.
   7.2 Svenska Missionsrådet (Swedish Missionary Council).
   7.3 Ecumenical Meetings of Missionary Societies in 1888, 1890 and the Meeting in Edinburgh in 1910.
7.4 The International Missionary Council.
7.5 World Alliance (WA) for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches.
7.6 Trends in Theology between Wars, a Meeting in Oud Wassenaar in 1919, and proposals for a World Council of Churches, WCC.
7.7 *Koinonia ton Ekklesion* proposed in 1920 by the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople.
7.8 Anglican-Lutheran Relations Develop through the Lambeth Conferences.
7.10 The Meeting in Lausanne in 1927.
7.11 A New Theology in Sweden.
7.13 The Utrecht Conference in 1938, Preparations for the Amsterdam Assembly 1948.
7.14 The Provisional Committee of WCC (in Process of Formation).
7.15 International Lutheran Cooperation and WCC.
7.16 Considerations on Competence and Representation for the World Council of Churches, WCC, and the Role of the International Missionary Council, IMC.
7.17 Regional Ecumenism and Amsterdam 1948.
7.18 Christian National Councils.
7.20 The International Missionary Council, IMC, and the Regional Councils.
7.21 The Nordic Missionary Council.
7.22 Three Important Sources of Inspiration for the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI.

8. **The World Council of Churches, WCC, Inaugurated in 1948, as a Vehicle was Meant to Reflect and Build upon Regional Structures.**
8.1 The World Council of Churches, WCC, and Further Considerations on the Membership Structure.
8.2 Clarifications of the Confessional System.
8.3 Ecclesiology of the World Council of Churches, WCC.
8.4 An Ecclesiology Expressed at the World Council of Churches, WCC, Faith and Order Conference in Lund in 1952, Focusing on Christ and His Church.

9 **The Formation of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI.**

9.1 Prominent Nordic Leaders Working for the Unity of the Churches.
9.1.1 Further Plans for a Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI.

10 **The Establishment, Initial Considerations and Activities of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute/Council NEI/NEC.**

11 **The Nordic Bishops.**
11.1 Bishops in the Church of Denmark.
11.2 Bishops in the Church of Norway.
11.3 Bishops in the Church of Iceland.
11.4 Bishops in the Church of Sweden.
11.5 Bishops in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland.
Informal Meeting of the Nordic Bishops in Copenhagen in 1945.

Formal Meeting of the Nordic Bishops in Sweden in August 1946.

The Porvoo Common Statement.

C

The transformation from a Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI, to a Nordic Ecumenical Council, NEC.

   12.1 Looking back at the Nordic Churches in the 19th Century.
   12.2 The Nordic Ecumenical Institute/Council after the Second World War, a Future Role of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI; a Change from Institute to Council.

D

Collapse and Reconstruction of the Nordic Ecumenical Council, NEC.

13 Nordic Ecumenical Council, NEC, Continued Activities and Continued Questioning.
   13.1 Collapse and Reconstruction.
   13.2 Matters dealt with by the Nordic Ecumenical Institute/Council, NEI/ NEC.
   13.2.1 Matters Related to Politics.
   13.2.2 Research Projects.

14. The Road from Utrecht to Amsterdam and some Post-War Roadblocks between Nordic Churches, Principal Conclusions.
   14.1 From Utrecht 1938 to Amsterdam 1948 via Sigtuna 1940. Further Conclusions:
   14.2 On Episcopacy and the Nordic Bishops’ Council.
   14.3 On Regionalism.
   14.4 On Research Institute.
   14.5 On Institute or Council.
   14.6 On Scandinavianism in Church and Society.
   14.7 On a Nordic Church Council.
   14.8 On Patterns of Church Cooperation in a Political Landscape.
   14.9 A Brief Summary and Considerations regarding the Conceivable Survival of Ecumenism in The Nordic Region, EIN.
   14.10 Further research

15 Bibliography.
1 Introduction.

1.1 The Object of the Present Investigation.
The Nordic Ecumenical Institute NEI, from its very establishment in 1940, remained controversial in the eyes of Nordic churches. Over and over again NEI was put in question. NEI was accused of being too Swedish, too Academic and generally out of touch with what the churches in the Nordic region really saw as essential. In 2003 the Nordic Ecumenical Council’s membership disintegrated. Eventually, the organisation was restructured in 2004. The purpose of this essay is to look into the background and context of NEI in order to endeavour to establish if there were from the very start innate defects that eventually brought NEI to its breakdown. Hence my focus is on the background and context for the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, established in 1940, as well as on the collapse of the Nordic Ecumenical Council in 2003.

1.2 Presentation of the Problem.
In the 20th Century, the Nordic Region was often regarded as a politically, socially and ecclesiastically homogenous area. Archbishop Söderblom was partly responsible for that conception by creating a Nordic Bishops’ Council and by conducting its business with intent to coordinate actions and declarations by the Nordic Folk churches. In this paper I intend to inquire into the fate of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute and in doing so also look at the notion of Scandinavism and a Nordic region. I shall explore regions as areas for Christian cooperation. Furthermore the terms Institute and Council (as in the Nordic Ecumenical Institute and, from 1991, the Nordic Ecumenical Council) will be studied. I intend to look at Manfred Bjorkquist’s attempts to create a Nordic Ecumenical Institute, and his strategies to deal with considerable scepticism in the Nordic region, expressed particularly by the Church of Norway. Is it correct to say that the Institute from its very beginning did not have sufficient support in the Nordic region and that the very lack of support eventually led to an enforced restructuring in the 21st Century?

If that is so, this paper will endeavour to find the cause or causes of the lack of support for the Nordic Ecumenical Institute from 1940 and onwards. Attempts to do so will necessitate a survey also into the historical background of the Institute. In this paper I will try to give an answer to the question regarding whether the Nordic churches truly wanted to cooperate or if they simply preferred to coexist in the Nordic region without any complicating or embarrassing coordinating structure. My ambition is to focus particularly on the first years of operations for the NEI in order to, if possible, identify any early causes for its disintegration much later.

1.3 Method.
Using relevant literature and archive documents, the rise & fall, as well as the reconstruction of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute/ Council will be studied against a backdrop of the Nordic Region and of the Ecumenical Movement.

The forming of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, the objects eventually agreed and the Institute’s role in relation to the Nordic Folk churches and to the International ecumenical movement will be studied.

In the process different perspectives could be utilised. In research regarding the 1940s and the Second World War one may often discern a moral perspective on motives and responsibility for actions and crimes. The moral perspective, however, easily turns anachronistic, if we regard and judge actions of the past utilising our contemporary insights and opinions. According to the English historian, Michael Marrus, there is a considerable risk that a moral perspective may constitute a hindrance for a more scientific historical analysis and approach.1 When looking at history and regarding actions by churches and nations one must make an effort to discern what those involved actually did or said as well as trying to understand their contemporary dilemmas and motives. My ambition therefore is to apply a method that is focusing on the respective actors in the course of events.

1 Åmark, Klas: Att bo granne med ondskan. Sveriges förhållande till nazismen, Nazityskland och Förintelsen, Bonniers Stockholm 2011, p.33
1.4 Author’s thesis.
Manfred Björkquist attended the Utrecht Meeting in 1938 at which a Draft Constitution for the emerging World Council of Churches, WCC, was agreed. That Draft Constitution was based on a regional membership structure. It is my understanding that such a structure suited Manfred Björkquist perfectly, as he saw an additional role for his beloved Sigtuna Foundation in a future structure for Nordic ecumenism. In Sigtuna, Nordic ecumenism could potentially be fostered for the benefit of, as Björkquist saw it, a much needed, fundamental renewal of the Nordic Folk churches.

The Draft Constitution from Utrecht 1938, however, was never ratified. Instead WCC General Assembly in Amsterdam in 1948, influenced particularly by North American Lutherans, agreed a Constitution with a membership structure primarily based on denominations and on member churches. The Nordic Ecumenical Institute, created in 1940 as a research & information centre and as a sub central to WCC in the Nordic region, appears in practice to have ignored the new (1948) WCC membership structure. It endeavoured to carry on its activities as a research centre which in 1940 some of the Nordic Folk churches did not approve of and as a regional sub central to WCC which had rejected the idea of an exclusive regional membership structure.

In this paper I attempt to demonstrate that the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI, in 1948 by ignoring the new membership structure of WCC and in 1940 by ignoring “Nordic doubts” about its intended role as a research institute, in fact prepared for its own disintegration. Those two factors, I believe, constituted the real vulnerability for NEI in a Nordic context dominated by stressful political experience and opposing views on Episcopacy.

1.5 Previous Research on Ecumenism and on the Nordic Ecumenical Institute.
Whereas general academic research on the Ecumenical movement internationally, regionally and nationally is wide and extensive there is, to the best of my finding, no survey conducted into the very cause of the disintegration of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute/Council. Dr Björn Ryman has offered a considerable insight into the Church of Sweden as a bridge-builder between political affiliations, churches and traditions and also studied the various activities at the Nordic Ecumenical Institute. I have not found any research on the very reasons behind NEI’s disintegration.

1.6 Outline.
After a “Setting of the Scene”, given with a wish to grant the reader a little bit of a glimpse into the atmosphere of Sweden in 1939, this Essay, as an initial introduction, offers, in Section A, a background to the formation of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute. For such a background to be helpful, I maintain that it must start with a basic description of the Nordic region, its nations and churches and their different experiences of the Second World War.

As a second important contribution to a background to potential Nordic cooperation, the Essay then presents an introduction to Scandinavism in the Nordic region and to various manifestations of Scandinavism, also in the life of the churches. Chapter 5 offers some ecclesiological observations.

At this point the Utrecht Conference of 1938 is highlighted (in chapter 6). I have decided to emphasise the Utrecht Conference in this manner, as I regard that conference of fundamental importance for the emerging Nordic Ecumenical Institute. Decisions taken in Utrecht 1938 convinced Manfred Björkquist that a Nordic regional structure must be offered WCC in formation. No doubt, the Utrecht proposals were related to the

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International movement of ecumenism why, in chapters 7 and 8, I take the reader on a rhapsodic wandering through the development of that international movement of ecumenism, which ultimately led to Utrecht 1938 and created a perceived need for a Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI.

In Section B, chapters 9-10, some main personalities in Nordic ecumenism are introduced, the actual formation of the Institute is described as well as, in chapter 11, contemporary problems afflicting both the Nordic Episcopate and the Nordic Ecumenical Institute. By introducing problems experienced by the Nordic Bishops after the Second World War I attempt to demonstrate that Nordic church cooperation was often generally unrewarding.

Section C takes up that theme and describes “the beginning of the end” as the Institute was transformed into a Council over which conflicting Nordic interests ravage.

Section D tells the story of the Collapse and Reconstruction of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute/Council and looks into the nature of the matters dealt with by NEI/NEC. The last chapter, 14, offers some attempts to conclusions over the very cause of the disintegration of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute/Council and over the fate of ecumenism in the Nordic region.

2. Setting the Scene.

2.1 At the Stockholm Central Railway Station on September 1st 1939.

Nils Ehrenström, head of the Ecumenical Secretariat in Geneva recalls:

*On September 1st 1939, early in the morning I arrived at Stockholm Central Railway Station and saw there instantly at the News Agent’s placards: German assault on Poland, Warsaw bombarded! Walking to and fro with a multitude of fellow passengers in the large hall pondering over the dramatic news, I suddenly ran into Manfred Björkquist who told me that he had just arrived by train from Oslo. The Nordic Bishops had agreed, Björkquist told me, to support the proposals for a Nordic Ecumenical Institute in Sigtuna, Sweden. Such an Institute, Björkquist added, would now be more in demand than ever before. We must instantly prepare for the establishment of that Institute in Sigtuna. During the months that followed we were more than busy preparing for the Institute. The Nordic National Ecumenical Organisations resolved to create NEI and in February 1940 the new Board convened.*

2.2 Ecclesiastical regions and the Nordic region.

Most commonly, according to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, a region is a geographical term. A region may be a collection of smaller units, for instance “the New England states” or a part of a larger whole, i.e. “the New England region of the United States” or “the Nordic region of Europe”. Regions can be defined by characteristics that are physical, human or functional.

In the 20th Century one could note the fostering of Ecclesiastical regions, even if repeated political conflicts presented obstacles. As early as during the 19th Century, pan-Protestant movements in Germany attempted to overcome the 16th Century divisions between Lutherans and Calvinists, and in doing so provide a strong alternative to a Roman Catholic advance. In the 1920s, controversies between Protestants and Roman Catholics led to the formation of the *Internationaler Verband zur Verteidigung des Protestantismus*, (i.e. The Protestant Federation), a movement which spread to several countries in various forms. This development was one source of an emerging pattern of ecclesiastical regions. Between Lutherans in Germany and Lutherans in the USA the First World War, i.e. the Great War, infused division and mistrust.

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4 Ryman, Björn 2010, Brobyggarkyrka, p. 62 note 104 Translation into English by Lennart Sjöström.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Region
6 Pan-Protestantism is carefully described by Wadensjö, Bengt in: *Toward a World Lutheran Communion. Developments in Lutheran Cooperation up to 1929*, Stockholm 1970.
The Second World War created two separate Protestant German church entities, in the East the Bund der Evangelischen Kirchen in der DDR, and in the West the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (the EKD). This artificial division was only resolved when Germany was reunified in 1990, after the collapse of the Communist rule in Eastern Europe.

Ecumenical unity in Germany and beyond was the ambition when in 1967 the Schauenberg Theses were agreed, leading to the Leuenberg Concordat five years later. That Concordat brought together 90 churches and fellowships within the Lutheran and Calvinist traditions. After 1989 and its fundamental changes in the European political landscape there were attempts to restart a Protestant anti-Roman-Catholic campaign similar to the one appearing in the 1920s. Even if the campaign failed, the attempts demonstrated a perceived lack of confidence by the leadership of Continental (German) Protestantism. I find it quite possible that such a lack of confidence may be partly explained by the new and solid relationship the Nordic and Baltic Folk churches were about to develop to the Anglican churches on the British Isles (resulting in the Porvoo Agreement in 1992). In addition the churches of Finland and Sweden had succeeded in an improved relationship to the Roman-Catholic Church. The Porvoo Agreement, however, was rejected by Den danske folkekirke, the Folk Church of Denmark (at least temporarily) and by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia. In the Folk churches of Sweden, Finland, Norway, Iceland, Estonia and Lithuania the Porvoo Agreement was accepted and warmly welcomed, making Pan-Protestant arrangements even less viable.

The Leuenberg Concordat is very much dominated by German Protestant churches within an ecclesiastical region. This may be explained by financial strength and theological capacity. In the same ecclesiastical region we find Scottish, Swiss and Dutch churches and some churches with strong historical links to Germany. Through the Leuenberg Concordat these churches have been given a strengthened position as they are integrated into a wider reformed tradition.

Clearly The Porvoo Communion is also an ecclesiastical region in a geographical area/region around the Baltic Sea and the British Isles, possibly dominated by the Church of England and the Church of Sweden with long and strong traditions giving character to the whole body.

The conflicts of the 16th and 17th Centuries had left Europe divided ecclesiastically. Nathan Söderblom referred to that fact when claiming that Sweden was the most Evangelical-Catholic country in Europe, and Spain the most Roman-Catholic, representing “Germanic” and “Latin” mentalities. To Nathan Söderblom, Northern Europe (including the Nordic region and Germany) constituted a heartland of Evangelical Catholicity. Southern Europe constituted a home of Roman Catholicity, whereas Eastern Europe was shaped by Greek Catholicity. This way of discerning regions, popular in a wide circle of High-Church theologians from different denominations, was probably to some extent influenced by political ideology rather than by denominational doctrine.

The World Council of Churches, in process of formation, agreed in Utrecht in 1938 to operate through a Membership Structure based on geographical regions. Before any ratification of such a structure had taken place North American Church leaders, supported by the International Lutheran World Convention, proposed an alternative structure based on denominations and member churches, as these would be held together by their common doctrines. A geographical system, the American Lutherans argued, would diminish the role of minority churches in a specific geographical region. However, in practice the difference turned out to be minimal for a representation from the Nordic region.

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9 Brodd, Sven Erik: Europe’s regional ecclesiastical divisions from an ecumenical perspective, Sonderdruck aus: “Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte, Internationale Halbjahrezeitschrift für Theologie und Geschichtswissenschaft” p.541.
The new structure, however, probably made the churches more candid and outspoken, unrestricted by any regional consideration. In the work of WCC a tension between the two different structural models has been demonstrated, as delegates have been compelled to pay attention to contextual interpretations and political situations in their regions, rather than showing consideration for denominational traditions. In the process a West German majority and an East German minority of Lutherans ended up opposing each other. Danish Lutherans could be separated from Finnish Lutherans and Swedish Lutherans could potentially be separated from Germans of the same denomination.  

The formation of the Lutheran World Convention (later transformed to the Lutheran World Federation, LWF.), was preceded by tensions between three ecclesiastical areas: Lutherans from Germany and Eastern Europe, from Scandinavia and from North America. Partly the tension concerned ecclesiology, i.e. the notion of Folk church (between Europe and North America), and partly general theological interpretations (between Scandinavia and Germany). Nevertheless, LWF established itself as a Communion of churches.

Between the two World Wars the Nordic region was regarded by many as a unified area also in respect of theology and ecclesial character. This view was supported by the existence of a Nordic Bishops’ Council and by the way in which the Nordic Bishops’ Council normally operated. After the First World [Great] War Archbishop Nathan Söderblom had very much inspired the Nordic churches to engage in ecumenical Cooperation for the benefit of peace and in order to offer help to the victims of the Great War. The Life and Work conference in Stockholm/ Uppsala in 1925 had emphasised a place for Sweden and for the Nordic region on an International stage for ecumenism. An ecumenical Research Centre had been established in Geneva in 1927 as a result of what had been resolved in Stockholm. Mr. Nils Ehrenström had been recruited by Archbishop Söderblom to head the Geneva Centre and at the same time remain secretary of the Swedish Ecumenical Council.

2.2.1 Institute and Council.
Initially (in 1940), Nordic ecumenical work and research was the concern of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute. In 1991 the Nordic Ecumenical Institute adopted a new Constitution and at the same time changed its name from Institute to Council (the Nordic Ecumenical Council).

An Institute is, generally speaking, a permanent organizational body created for a certain purpose. Very often an Institute is centre for research with or without links to a university.

A Council, generally speaking, is often a committee that has a governing and coordinating function.

More specifically, one should note that the English word Council derives from more than one source and has more than one meaning:

- Council, as derived from the Latin concilium, i.e. [church] assemblies of Bishops representing their church, in full communion with regard to confession of faith, celebration of the sacraments, the

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16 First: Latin concilium, Swedish: kyrkomöte, synod, biskopsmöte; French: concile; Italian: concilio; German: Konzil; Second: Latin consilium, Swedish: råd; French: conseil; Italian: consiglio; German: Rat.  
16 contnd. In English both concilium and consilium are referred to as Council and in Swedish, according to Nationalencyklopedin, Ordbok, “Konsilium is sometimes spelled Koncilium”. As a consequence both the English Council and the Swedish concilium/konsilium (råd) may cause confusion and generate misleading expectations.
exercise of ministry and acceptance of the Ecumenical Councils. Such Assemblies, which may be local or universal, take decisions which are binding on the churches represented.

- Council, as derived from the Latin *consilium*. A Council, understood as a *consilium*, is a consultative body, possibly engaging in common action. Councils of Churches, understood as *consilium*, do not imply the same degree of communion as that presupposed in the Ecumenical Councils or Regional Synods and such Councils cannot take decisions on behalf of their members. Professor Hervé Legrand, at a conference on National Councils of Churches, arranged by the World Council of Churches in Geneva in 1988, referred to a Faith and Order Meeting in Accra in 1974 that called such Councils “pre-conciliar bodies”.

In my opinion the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, when founded in 1940, was given the role of an Institute to indicate an ambition to let a substantial part of the ecumenical work consist of research. That ambition was immediately strongly questioned by Bishop Berggrav, of Oslo, and by Bishop Runestam, of Karlstad. Much later, in 1991, after considerable Nordic disagreements regarding the role of the Institute, the Institute decided to change its name to the *Nordic Ecumenical Council (Nordiska ekumeniska rådet)*, most probably indicating a new ambition to operate mainly as a co-ordinator of projects supported by the Nordic churches. As demonstrated above, the very name Council might have added to further confusion and misunderstanding over the actual nature and role of the Nordic ecumenical body.

### 2.3 Abstract.

In 2003 and 2004 the Nordic Ecumenical Council, (NEC) disintegrated and was restructured, as the Folk churches of Denmark and Norway resigned and the Church of Iceland as well as free churches abstained from membership of NEC. In this Paper I intend to follow the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI, from its foundation in 1940 to its disintegration and restructuring in the 21st Century.

My theory is that Manfred Björkquist and a few other enthusiasts for a Nordic Ecumenical Institute in Sigtuna failed to recognise or accept that the World Council of Churches (at its first Assembly in 1948) resolved to introduce a Membership Structure primarily based on denominations and on member churches rather than on Regional Councils. A Membership Structure based on regions had in fact been previously agreed, in the presence of Manfred Björkquist, in Utrecht in 1938. It is possible that Björkquist and the Board of NEI chose to ignore the new membership structure, eventually ratified in Amsterdam in 1948. If so, such ignoring constituted an innate defect in the organisation causing substantial problems in the Nordic region later on and, eventually, the disintegration of NEC in 2003.

Maybe there were other problems built in already at the start in 1940? Maybe Björkquist and the “faithful” around him preferred to carry on as originally resolved rather than risk failure after the Amsterdam Assembly in 1948? In my quest for answers I shall not only look at NEI and the Nordic region and its attempts to cooperation, but also follow Scandinavism and the general Ecumenical endeavours leading to the establishment of a WCC. In addition I intend to highlight some characteristics of the Nordic nations and their Folk churches, as such characteristics may provide explanations to why Nordic ecumenical efforts have been impeded.

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18 Interview with Ms Gunnel Borgegård (Director of EIN) on 27.10.2010.

A Background to the formation of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI.

3. The Nordic Region.

In order to assist in the understanding of the conditions under which the Nordic Ecumenical Institute/Council had to operate, I here offer a description of the Nordic nations and their churches.

3.1 A General Description of the Nordic Region and its Folk churches.

The Nordic region consists of five countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, and their associated territories, including the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Svalbard and Åland. The region is sometimes referred to as Scandinavia often including Finland, Denmark and Iceland, even if the Scandinavian Peninsula, strictly speaking, only includes Norway, Sweden and a part of northern Finland.

The five states share much common history and display considerable similarities in their respective societies, including their political systems. The Nordic countries have a combined population of some 25 million.  

The Christian faith was brought to the Nordic region mainly by missionaries from the south and from the west. From the middle of the 12th Century monks and nuns from Germany, France and Britain established religious orders in the Nordic region and brought new agricultural methods as well as the Christian culture. Churches built in the Middle Ages have been well preserved for use also to-day. No iconoclast was brought to the Nordic region by the Reformation. As a result, churches and church life in the Nordic region still demonstrate certain continuity with Continental Christianity. This is particularly true in the eastern part (Sweden, Finland) of the Nordic region.

Agriculture was predominantly the backbone of the economy, financing both kingdoms and church provinces. In Denmark agriculture was dominated by the nobility as owners of much of the land, whereas in the rest of the Nordic region farming to a higher degree was done by independent farmers on free holding farms.

Education remained a privilege for the few. Students from the Nordic region pursued their higher education at universities in Paris or Bologna. It was also against a backdrop of European influence that universities eventually were founded in Uppsala 1477 and in Copenhagen 1478.

Despite many wars over the years since the formation of modern nation-states in the 10th Century, the region has been culturally and politically close, even if the constellations and the alliances have shifted over the years. The Region was united through the Kalmar Union from 1397.

One nation, one law, one faith developed into a structure embraced by all parts of the Nordic region. Bishops were often both spiritual leaders and powerful landowners and politicians. This was a fact that contributed to the popularity of the Reformation, particularly in Denmark. In Sweden, Reformation was introduced by the King in attempts to confiscate church property for royal and public spending. The King of Sweden severed both the ties with the Pope and with Denmark and the Kalmar Union.

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In the 19th Century a renewed political union was contemplated and proposed. However, the plans failed as Denmark was not given proper military support by the other Nordic states in the conflict with Prussia over Schleswig.

Cooperation in the 20th Century in the Nordic region mainly focused on the Nordic Council (Nordiska Rådet) and the European Union. The churches in the Nordic region created, in 1940, the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, based in Sigtuna, Sweden, for cooperation, information and joint research in church related matters.

The dream for Nordic unity is far from extinct. As late as in 2010 the Nordic Council published a book, Förbundsstaten Norden (A United Nordic Federation), edited by Jesper Schou-Knudsen and written mainly by Gunnar Wetterberg, who argues that the Nordic states presently have an opportunity to let its 25 million inhabitants enjoy the full potential fruits of a federal unification in the Nordic region.24

Linguistically, the region has got three language groups: 1/ the North Germanic (Danish, Norwegian and Swedish), 2/ the Baltic-Finnish and Sami branches of Uralic languages and 3/ An Eskimo-Aleut language spoken in Greenland. 25

Traditionally the Nordic countries were and still are regarded as culturally homogenous and highly developed welfare states with high taxation introduced by strong Social Democratic Parties, which have been in power for most of the time after the Second World War. This Socialist domination in the region was eventually broken towards the end of the 20th Century.

The Nordic countries have their own indigenous minority groups, Sami in Finland, Norway and Sweden. Denmark includes Greenland (with a population of 57,000) and the Faroe Islands (with a population of 48,000). To various extent, all the Nordic countries have had recent immigration first by guest workers in the 1960s and then more recently by refugees in the 1980s and 1990s. In Denmark and Sweden some 10% of the population is consisting of persons not born in their country of residence. In the other Nordic countries the number of immigrants is considerably lower.26

Sweden and Denmark have been independent states for centuries, sometimes acting as multi-ethnic states with involvement in international warfare and colonies. The other Nordic states have gained their independence more recently: Finland from Russia in 1917, Norway from Sweden in 1905, Iceland from Denmark in 1944.

Due to its geographical position Finland had to act prudently until 1990 not to anger its powerful neighbour, the Communist Soviet Union. Finland and formally neutral Sweden have never been members of NATO, whereas for the three western Nordic countries such membership was regarded as essential and natural after the Second World War. Finland is a committed member of the EU. Denmark and Sweden are somewhat more reluctantly belonging to the same union. Norway and Iceland as well as the Faroe Islands and Greenland are still formally outside the EU.27

Since the 16th Century there are rather similar National established churches in the Nordic countries. In the Nordic region the 17th Century has been described as the “Age of Confessionalism”. Confessio Augustana (1530) was declared to be the teaching of the nations in the Nordic region, whereby the Nordic nations were linked to European principalities (i.e. in northern Germany) where Lutheran doctrine was taught. Through the local church all inhabitants were expected to learn by heart Martin Luther’s Small Catechism and attend the Sunday service as well as bring their newly born to baptism. Burials were offered

to all in the local parish church. In this manner, state and church became fully intertwined. Formal population records were kept by the church, facilitating military recruitment. The records show an extraordinary high literacy rate also among the peasants, particularly for those living not too far from the parish church. The church played a considerable part in introducing new methods in public health and agriculture, like the introduction of potatoes during the 18th Century.

The kings (of Sweden and Denmark) saw themselves as defenders of Protestantism against Catholicism in Europe. From 1618 to 1648 Germany was the battleground for foreign troops fighting wars allegedly over religious affiliation. Sweden was regarded as a victor and Denmark a loser, foremost to its rival Sweden. After 1648 Sweden had an ambition of making the Baltic Sea a Swedish sea, resulting in numerous wars with Russia, Poland and the Baltic provinces. Six wars were fought between Russia and Sweden, many of them on Finnish soil.

To some extent political realities also shaped the churches. A Western type of Lutheranism developed in Denmark, Norway and Iceland. An Eastern type established itself in Sweden and Finland. To-day a majority (some 80%) of the population of the Nordic region belongs to Nordic National churches.

Despite the many similarities there are also considerable differences between the Nordic Folk churches. To a high degree the differences follow the line between the Eastern (Sweden-Finland) and the Western (Denmark-Norway-Iceland) traditions. Reformation in Denmark removed the very infrastructure (leadership and vision) from the Church, whereas in Sweden Reformation was very harsh in financial terms but moderate and gradual in other respects. In Sweden the church kept its identity and had, until 1861, a certain influence on matters of politics through the clergy seats in Parliament. After the Reformation the differences between the Eastern and Western traditions have mainly manifested themselves in different ecclesiological attitudes primarily towards the Episcopal Office and the Apostolic Succession. There are, however, some differences also between the churches within the Eastern and Western traditions respectively. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland appears to be far more consciously Lutheran than its Swedish sister church (probably due to a need to offer a profile in coexistence with the likewise established Orthodox Church of Finland). The Church of Norway has been open to the introduction of a democratic synodical structure in church governance, while the Church of Denmark so far has been unable or unwilling to introduce such structures.

Archbishop Nathan Söderblom had a clear ambition to make the Nordic region a distinct Lutheran ecclesiastical area to be taken into account together with North American and Central-European Lutheranism.

During the discussions leading to the (British/Nordic/Baltic) Porvoo Agreement there was a considerable focus on Episcopacy as a significant element of the churches’ ecclesiology. This essay offers a review of Episcopacy in the Nordic region (chapter 11).

The revival movements in the 19th Century marked the National churches in different ways: in Sweden 6% of the population was organised into free churches. In Norway and Iceland the corresponding figure was 4% and in Denmark and Finland, where revivals were kept within the National church, only 1%. The Established Orthodox Church of Finland has got 1% of the population registered as members. Due to immigration Sweden now estimates that 3 - 4% of its population belong to the Muslim tradition. Also through

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immigration, membership of the Roman-Catholic Church and of Pentecostal congregations has increased, mainly in Sweden and Denmark.\footnote{Raun Iversen, Hans: The Political, Ecclesial and Religious Profile of the Nordic Countries. In: Raun Iversen, Hans (ed.): Rites of Ordination and Commitment in the Churches of the Nordic Countries, 2006 p.37.}

Gradually, internal church governance, Bishops’ Conferences, Synods, Diocesan and Parish Councils, have been introduced in all the National Lutheran churches in the Nordic region. However, in Denmark this development has so far only concerned the parish level. The churches have various degrees of independence in relation to the state. The Church of Sweden was disestablished in 2000. The Church of Norway is presently in a process towards full or partial disestablishment. The Lutheran Churches of Finland and Iceland have considerable independence in internal matters. The Church of Denmark has no formal independence even if church and state agencies increasingly share responsibility for church affairs.

When the Porvoo Agreement was proposed in 1993 and ratified by several churches in 1996 the Church of Denmark declined to join, while the other Nordic Lutheran Folk churches decided to sign the Agreement. Together with the Anglican churches on the British Isles they entered the Porvoo Communion. At the end of 2009 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark eventually took the decision to become a signatory of the Porvoo Common Statement and join the Porvoo Communion. The decision was celebrated in September 2010 at the Copenhagen Cathedral.

The Nordic countries are regarded as highly secularised and record a very low rate of church attendance and demonstrate at the same time, possibly surprising, a high rate of formal church affiliation. This fact is generally explained by five hundred years of compulsory state church religion keeping a majority of the population from having any sense of practical responsibility for their church. This passive attitude is somewhat counter-balanced by a remarkably high degree of personal, existential, partly ethical and partly religious concern among individuals in general. However, these individuals seldom look to their churches for answers to existential and ethical questions. On the other hand there is strong evidence that the churches are still playing an important role as the implicit legitimating body of the Christian culture of their members. For same-sex marriages it has been regarded, by a very active lobby and by the influenced general public, as most important to obtain the church’s approval and “blessing”, particularly in Sweden. The church members in the Nordic region tend to turn faithfully to their National church for Pastoral Services, i.e. Baptism, Confirmation, Weddings and Funerals.\footnote{Raun Iversen, Hans: The Political, Ecclesial and Religious Profile of the Nordic Countries. In: Raun Iversen, Hans (ed.): Rites of Ordination and Commitment in the Churches of the Nordic Countries, 2006 p.38.}

No doubt the church members in Finland are those with the most affirmative attitude to their church and to the Christian faith. The lowest church attendance is reported from Denmark, followed by Sweden and Norway. The lowest degree of conformity with the Christian teaching is found in Sweden, while Christianity is almost completely invisible in Danish public life, even if “Danish culture” almost as a contradiction still remains remarkably connected to the notion of the Danish Folk Church.\footnote{Jensen, Jørgen I: Historiens Palestina i Brohed, lngmar (ed.): Kykka och nationalism i Norden, 1998 p.117.}

In the Nordic countries I have often heard expressions like “he/she is in his/her heaven” and “I am a Christian – but in my own way”. This attitude may be expressed by people who insist that if there is a God, he or she is the good one and by people who endorse the importance of good morals and some sort of personal eternal life, albeit with a minimum of relationship to the Apostles’ Creed. Allegedly contemporary globalisation, multiculturalism and the presence of non-Christian religions have made people in the Nordic region more affirmative of Christianity without turning them to regular church attendance or to conformity with the teaching of the churches.\footnote{Raun Iversen, Hans: The Political, Ecclesial and Religious Profile of the Nordic Countries. In: Raun Iversen, Hans (ed.): Rites of Ordination and Commitment in the Churches of the Nordic Countries, 2006 p.38.}

The Nordic region did not escape the Second World War. Once the Nazi occupation of Poland was concluded in 1939 there followed a weird period of war inactivity. Nazi Germany appeared to prepare itself
to bring the war to an end by a forceful advance on the Western front, including the occupation of the Netherlands and Belgium, as outlined in a Memorandum by Adolf Hitler October 9th 1939.36

According to the Memorandum Nazi Germany expected Sweden, Norway and Denmark to remain neutral and open for unbroken trade arrangements. The Nazi German change of mind and the subsequent invasion of Denmark and Norway may be explained by the communications from the Norwegian Nazi leader, Mr Vidkun Quisling. The Norwegian Nazi leader argued that Great Britain enjoyed popularity and was influential in Norway and might even contemplate a friendly invasion to obtain naval and air force bases in Norway for warfare against Germany.37 Nazi German Admiral Raeder supported Quisling’s message and influenced Adolf Hitler to act prior to any feared British action. Great Britain at this time appeared to have been focused mainly on actions that could create an effective blockade of Nazi German trade and maritime activity.38 In particular Britain wanted to put an end to German import of petroleum from Rumania and iron ore from Sweden. As the blockade was less effective than required, Britain did consider the possibility of an invasion of Scandinavia in order to disrupt at least the Swedish export of iron ore to Germany via Narvik.39

In January 1940 the British government wrote to the Norwegian government (with a copy sent to the Swedish government) claiming that Germany had conducted military actions against shipping in Norwegian territorial waters. The British government therefore had resolved to put an end to German maritime trade on the Norwegian coast. Norway and Sweden strongly opposed such British plans. Possibly, as a result of the protests, the plans led to no British action. In the meantime Mr Quisling had visited Berlin and repeated his warnings that Britain might invade Scandinavia [claiming that it did so in order to help Finland fighting the Soviet Communists].40 In fact there were indeed plans for a British–French campaign to assist Finland. Norway and Sweden, however, refused to grant the Allied troops leave to pass through neutral territories. So the plans led to nothing. Finland had to negotiate a peace deal with the Soviet Communists. In Berlin Mr. Quisling met with Mr Hitler and Admiral Raeder and made Hitler reconsider his warfare on the Western front and start preparations for an invasion of Norway and Denmark.41 After the invasion of Norway and Denmark, Sweden was offered assistance from France and Great Britain should Nazi-Germany chose to attack Sweden as well.42 In 1947 Swedish politicians had to defend themselves as media in Norway and Denmark asked harsh questions regarding how much the Swedish Government in fact had known prior to the Nazi invasion in April 1940.43

Plans for the creation of a Nordic Ecumenical Institute were opposed by Bishop Berggrav of Oslo in 1939. He argued that the churches rather ought to use all available resources to work for international peace. Before long, Berggrav would admit that churches in occupied Nordic countries badly needed the Nordic Ecumenical Institute for networking.

In the sections that now follow I will highlight conditions in the Nordic states including the role played by the churches in order to offer a background to the sometimes complicated conditions under which the Nordic Ecumenical Institute had to operate.

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36 Kungliga utrikesdepartementet: Handlingar rörande Sveriges politik under Andra världskriget; Förspellet till det tyska angreppet på Danmark och Norge den 9 april 1940. Norstedts-äå, Stockholm 1947, p. IX.
37 Kungliga utrikesdepartementet: Handlingar rörande Sveriges politik under Andra världskriget; Förspellet till det tyska angreppet på Danmark och Norge den 9 april 1940. Norstedts, Stockholm 1947, p. IX.
38 Kungliga utrikesdepartementet: Handlingar rörande Sveriges politik under Andra världskriget; Förspellet till det tyska angreppet på Danmark och Norge den 9 april 1940. Norstedts, Stockholm 1947, p. X.
39 Kungliga utrikesdepartementet: Handlingar rörande Sveriges politik under Andra världskriget; Förspellet till det tyska angreppet på Danmark och Norge den 9 april 1940. Norstedts, Stockholm 1947, p. XI.
40 Kungliga utrikesdepartementet: Handlingar rörande Sveriges politik under Andra världskriget; Förspellet till det tyska angreppet på Danmark och Norge den 9 april 1940. Norstedts, Stockholm 1947, p. XI.
41 Kungliga utrikesdepartementet: Handlingar rörande Sveriges politik under Andra världskriget; Förspellet till det tyska angreppet på Danmark och Norge den 9 april 1940. Norstedts, Stockholm 1947, p. XIV.
3.2 Denmark and the Church of Denmark.

Membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark is 86% of a population of 5.3 million. The Roman-Catholic Church has got 35,000 members or less than 1% of the population. 1% belongs to free churches out of which the largest are the Baptist Church and the Pentecostal congregations with some 5,000 members.44

In 1945 Denmark was very much the same sort of society as it had been in the 1930s. The years of Nazi-German occupation amounted to a conservation of practices and attitudes prevailing before the Second World War. In addition the harsh war-time experience meant that very strong anti-German feelings were prevalent.

Just after the Second World War the Church of Denmark, decided to offer, primarily, pastoral care for 200 000 German refugees in Denmark.45 In that decision the Church of Denmark was poorly supported by its members who engaged in a heated debate. In Sweden just after the Second World War, the extradition of Baltic refugees created a similar national trauma. Another heated debate was initiated in Denmark in 1945, when a Law Amendment had introduced a retroactive (backdated) death penalty for acts “contrary to the welfare of the State of Denmark” (i.e. treason). The debate focused on the Concept of Justice, particularly as during the occupation the Danish Coalition Government had considered it important (for survival) to agree on a legislation which enabled Danes to work for the occupying Nazi forces.46

In 1946 a debate, initially started in 1919, was held on the ordination of women to the priesthood. The law was changed in 1947, when the word “man” was substituted for “person” in the bill.47

One can hardly overestimate the importance of the Second World War for Denmark, for the Church of Denmark and for the self-concept of the Nation. Bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard wrote of May 5th 1945 that that very date, 5.5 1945, ought to be written “in letters of gold” in the history of Denmark. On May 5th 1945 the Nazi occupiers capitulated and freedom was regained for the people of Denmark. “We give thanks”, the Bishop wrote, “for the end of hostilities and we give thanks for the Nation’s strength to endure. During the war and the occupation of Denmark from April 9th, 1940 to May 4th, 1945 the Danish Folk Church [den Danske folkekirke] played an important role as a rallying point for many Danes. The war strengthened its identity as a Folk church and a National church. The church, through its Bishops, clergy and parishioners supported the Danish government in its forced collaboration with the German occupiers. The idea was that as much as possible must be done to preserve the Danish society and welfare from devastation. German troops controlled Denmark, but the country was ruled by a Danish government even if it had to operate under German instructions. Under the protection of the Danish government the population of Denmark including its Jews were able to live an almost normal life even if it nevertheless was a life in abnormality which generated protests over and over again.

In the autumn of 1943 the situation changed dramatically for the worse. In August 1943 Nazi-Germany lost its patience with the oppositional and even protesting Danes and introduced severe methods to control the country. The government resigned and resistance groups increased their efforts. Denmark was now ruled by a caretaker government. As a deadly sign of harsher times even the Holocaust was brought to Denmark. A series of articulated protests against Nazi-Germany and its brutality was offered by the Revd. Kaj Munk, who after much attention over his forcefully Christian-national protest eventually was killed by the Germans in 1944.48 On September 23rd 1943 Adolf Hitler issued a specific order to all German forces to arrest the Jews in Denmark.49

46 Balling, Jakob: Danmark i befrielseskriget 1945-46. in Schjørring, Jens Holger (ed.): Nordiske folkekirker i opbrud. 2001, p 93.
As the Swedish Foreign Office had understood the new German policy for Denmark and its consequences for the Jews, it had from September 1943 started preparations for a Rescue Operation to save the Jews. Instrumental to this was Mr. Gösta Engzell, Principal Assistant Secretary at the Swedish Foreign Office. In Denmark the Leader of the German occupation, Dr. Werner Best, had deliberately leaked information on mass arresting of Danish Jews to take place on the First and Second of October 1943. As a consequence most of the Jews had found alternative, comparatively safe accommodation. On October 2\textsuperscript{nd} the Swedish government in a radio broadcast declaration offered the Danish Jews entry permits to Sweden. The Germans were not amused but its administration in Denmark nevertheless decided to remain passive and let the Jews disappear. Dr. W. Best was more interested in an operational occupation than in a sily chasing of Danish Jews for their extermination. Research in Denmark has demonstrated that the German navy was not ordered to patrol Öresund (The Sound) until the Jews, most of them in chartered fishing boats, had managed to reach neutral Sweden.\textsuperscript{50} The total number of Danish Jews escaping in this manner has been estimated to 7 900. In all 474 Danish Jews were arrested and taken to the Nazi-German concentration camp Theresienstadt. It caused some controversy when, after the war, it was revealed that the owners of the Danish fishing boats had charged the refugees high prices for the transportation – and for the risk taking. Remarkable was the actual local German attitude in letting the massive escape and rescue operation take place.\textsuperscript{51}

The years of war gave to Nordic nations a sense of solidarity and fellowship in which process the churches played a considerable part. “The churches in the Nordic region must now,” Bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard declared in 1945, “after the war, safeguard and foster that fellowship. Indeed not only in the Nordic region but beyond, internationally, the churches must genuinely combat all hatred that was generated by War atrocities. Only divine love may achieve that and bring about righteousness.” The Bishop concluded his message by quoting the Revd. Kai Munk, who, a few days before being assassinated by Nazi soldiers, had suggested that his parents should adopt a German orphan as an act of atonement. With those words Bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard told the Danish nation and the Church of Denmark that only in genuine forgiveness is there hope for the future.\textsuperscript{52} As an active contribution to that hope for the future Bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard was very active in the establishment in 1948 of the World Council of Churches, WCC, and in 1947 of the Lutheran World Federation, LWF. As a Bishop during the war he had had close contacts both with the Confessional Church in Germany and with laypeople in the Danish resistance movement. The Bishop of Copenhagen also played an important role in the formation in 1940 of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute and in 1959 of the Conference of European Churches.\textsuperscript{53} Bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard argued that the war created a Nordic solidarity. It is also true that the Nordic solidarity was challenged by the events during the war. Many in Denmark and Norway failed to accept that Sweden at large managed to escape the horrors of war. Again many in Denmark and Norway were also most upset over Finland’s military cooperation with Nazi-Germany.

The Danish Constitution from 1849, confirmed in 1953, defines that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark is the Danish Folk Church, which the Kingdom of Denmark is obliged to support.\textsuperscript{54} The Constitution introduced the principle of freedom of religion, as membership became a personal, voluntary matter. At the same time the Constitution frankly declares that it is the Evangelical Lutheran Church that enjoys the status of state supported Folk Church.

In 1937 The Social Democrats in Denmark scrapped their plans for a separation between church and state. Instead the Socialists and their Party regarded themselves as the protector of the Folk Church against any potential attempts by Bishops, clergy or specific interest groups to lead the church. Parliament should lead the church according to the Socialist strategy. Hence the Social Democratic Party came to rule the church


\textsuperscript{52} Kristen gemenskap 1945 p. 66.


and lead it into the new welfare state, making the church principally an aspect of the state.\textsuperscript{55} In the process, the church, in the hands of the state, opened up to embrace the Grundtvig movement as the theological movement of the Danish welfare state.\textsuperscript{56} This movement was challenged by the Home Mission (\textit{Indre Mission}) and other pietistic movements, that advocated a broader ecclesiology for the official church in order to engage in ecumenism, mission and diaconia (charitable work). For a long time the Grundtvig movement remained sceptical over any independent church structure. Nevertheless, in 1954 the Council of Inter-Church Relationship was established as a focal point for co-operation between the Danish Folk Church and WCC, LWF, CEC and NEI.\textsuperscript{57} In 1989 councils for inter-church relations were established also in the dioceses.

Generally speaking, there seems to be a consensus in Denmark over the preserving of the relationship between state, people and church, even if there is some disagreement over how to secure the status quo under new and changed circumstances. The basis for a status quo consists of statistics showing a Folk Church membership of 4.5 million or 86 per cent of the population. 80% of all children are baptized, 81% of all youth take part in confirmation classes, 53% of all marriages are solemnised in the Folk Church, which also takes funeral services for 93% of all of the deceased. These high numbers are not reappearing in connection with reports on church attendance, according to which 1.3% of the population attend “every Sunday” and 3.9% “once a month”. However, as long as more than 50% belong to the Folk church there seems to be a consensus to retain the state church system.\textsuperscript{58}

As an illustration to the complicated and confused conditions in the Nordic region during the Second World War, I now remind the reader that representatives for Denmark as well as for Norway in April 1945 more than once requested that the Swedish Government should prepare for sending Swedish troops into Denmark and Norway in order to pacify Nazi-German military forces, as Nazi-Germany in mid-April faced a total collapse. Russian forces were near Berlin; allied troops approached and entered Germany from the south and from the west. In Denmark and Norway many feared that Nazi-German forces after a German capitulation in Continental Europe would continue to occupy and bring a final devastation to the nations. The Swedish Government was as before most reluctant to become involved in the conflict between the Great Powers, and suggested that a Swedish military intervention in Denmark or Norway could trigger a Nazi-German excessive demonstration of force and violence and lead to immense and unnecessary suffering. Sweden was also involved in serious “end of hostilities talks” conducted through Count Folke Bernadotte and Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler concerning Bernadotte’s intended rescue operation to save in the first place Danes and Norwegians in Nazi-German concentration camps. Himmler was mainly interested in discussing a Nazi-German capitulation on the Western front. Himmler regarded it most likely that Hitler would die very soon and leave the leadership to him, Himmler. Bernadotte and Swedish diplomats convinced Himmler that a capitulation on the Western front must include Denmark and Norway. Prospects were very promising indeed for a rather peaceful end to the Nazi-German occupation of Denmark and Norway. On April 30\textsuperscript{th} 1945 Adolf Hitler committed suicide after having appointed as successor the Head of the German fleet, Admiral Dönitz. Suddenly the situation had changed for the worse. On April 24\textsuperscript{th} the Swedish Government had in fact approved plans to take highly secret steps for a military intervention in Denmark and in Norway, should that be required.\textsuperscript{59} It now appeared most likely that such an intervention should be necessary. May 3\textsuperscript{rd} was agreed as the most likely day for action. The Swedish Government accepted a proposal by the Allied forces to enter talks with General Eisenhower’s headquarter regarding required Swedish military action particularly in Norway but also in Denmark.\textsuperscript{60} The Allies, however, did not expect the Swedish Government to undertake any warlike operations by themselves.\textsuperscript{61} As the development of the war was changing circumstances constantly the Norwegian Government was invited to send a Governmental representative to Stockholm for continuous consultations for actions of importance both for Norway and for

\textsuperscript{55} Lodberg, Peter: \textit{The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark 1940-2000}. In: Ryman, Björn et al.: \textit{Nordic Folk churches, A Contemporary Church History}, 2005, p. 22.

\textsuperscript{56} Lodberg, Peter: \textit{The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark 1940-2000}. In: Ryman, Björn et al.: \textit{Nordic Folk churches, A Contemporary Church History}, 2005, p. 22.

\textsuperscript{57} World Council of Churches, Lutheran World Federation, Conference of European Churches, Nordic Ecumenical Institute.


\textsuperscript{60} Kungl utrikesdepartementet: Förhandlingarna 1945 om svensk intervention I Norge och I Danmark. Norstedts, Stockholm 1957, p. 33.

Denmark. Before any such consultations took place, however, a general Nazi-German capitulation again changed the situation.

Eisenhower at negotiations 5-7 May 1945 demanded a Nazi-German capitulation without any preconditions on all fronts, i.e. including Norway and Denmark. Left with practically no options Admiral Dönitz had to agree, which meant that there was really no need for further talks in Stockholm neither with a Norwegian Governmental representative nor with an Allied delegation regarding any Swedish initiatives. Allegedly Rudolf Best, the Reichsbevollmächtigter of Nazi-Germany in Denmark had on April 28th heard Swedish Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson in conversation with German diplomats in Copenhagen explain that Sweden would not remain passive, should Nazi-German forces in Denmark continue the occupation even after a Nazi-German capitulation on other fronts. Rudolf Best warned Admiral Dönitz for a Swedish intervention in Norway and Denmark. If that was of any consequence we do not know, but the two Nordic nations were included in the general capitulation.

The most complicated negotiations at the final stage of the Second World War serve as an illustration to the most stressful conditions under which NEI had to operate. Initially, the Second World War had created an unexpected need for NEI. The war also generated a most troublesome stress which added to the tension between the Nordic nations and their National churches, expected to cooperate through NEI.

Denmark, like Sweden, did not incur any substantial war damage. As a result war-torn countries turned to Denmark for aid. Since 1922 Denmark had had a well organised institution called Emergency Aid to the Evangelical Churches in Europe, led for many years by its founder, Dr. Alfred Th. Jørgensen. The Danish Emergency Aid cooperated with the American Protestant Federal Council and was regarded as the “giving arm” of the National church in Denmark, supporting Lutheran congregations in central Europe. It also strongly supported those in need in Finland, particularly children and young people. After the war the organisation had to expand to meet the devastation of many European countries.

3.3 Norway and the Church of Norway.
Out of 4.5 million Norwegians some 85.7% belong to the Church of Norway. Another 6.3% belong to other registered faith communities (Christian and non-Christian). The Roman-Catholic Church has got 1% of the population as registered members. Of the same size (1%) is the membership of Norwegian Pentecostal congregations.

The Church of Norway, created through the work of missionaries from the British Isles and Central Europe, received its first organisational or diocesan structures after the death of St Olav in 1030. The first Episcopal sees were established in Oslo, Bergen and Trondheim (Nidaros). When an Archdiocese was established in (the then Danish) Lund in 1104, the Norwegian Dioceses were made part of that province. In 1152 a separate Norwegian province was established with Nidaros as the Archiepiscopal see. Dioceses in Iceland and the isles of the North Sea and the Isle of Man were added.

At the time of the Reformation, in 1537, Norway was placed under the Danish King and remained so until 1814. Hence the Orders for the Church of Denmark became applicable also to the Church of Norway and the Church of Iceland. Through the Reformation, the King, Christian III, did not intend to create a new church but to cleanse the church from unbiblical teachings and practices. However, in that process the Church of Denmark as well as the Church of Norway and the Church of Iceland emerged as Established State and Folk churches and are still very much are so. The Reformation did not interrupt the Church of

Norway in her basic work which went on in the same churches, in the same schools, in the same charitable institutions. The medieval church carried on, the Church of Norway maintains, renewed and restored. 66

As a Folk and National church the Church of Norway estimates a membership of a significant majority of the population. It has over the years obtained its own Church Assembly (Synod) and a National Church Council. Administration of the Church of Norway has been gradually transferred from state to church institutions. 67

Before the Second World War the Church of Norway was very much influenced by revivalist movements. In Norway these movements often remained within the Church. This was particularly the case for the revival inspired by Hans Nielsen Hauge (1771-1824), which strongly influenced the Church of Norway, of which it, at the same time, was often rather critical. The Hauge Revival resulted in the creation of several Christian associations cooperating with the National Church of Norway (e.g. Det norske misjonselskap, Det vestlandske indremisjonsforbund, Det norske lutherske Kinamisjons-forbund). 68 There are also free churches, mainly the result of a parallel Pentecostal revival and, particularly in the north, a considerable presence of revivalist Lestadian congregations (i.e. initiated by the preaching of the Swedish clergyman Lars Levi Lestadius, 1800-1861) in close cooperation with Lestadians in Sweden and in Finland. The Christian Associations or the Societies, even if at times critical of the National Church of Norway, were basically in agreement with that National church in opposition to liberal theology. 69

The Second World War created a situation that established differences between the Nordic countries and, as a consequence, between their Folk churches, more than ever. Finland suffered an attack by the Communist Soviet Union in 1939, Denmark and Norway were occupied by Nazi-Germany in 1940, Iceland developed close contact with Great Britain and USA, and Sweden declared continued neutrality. The Nordic churches identified themselves naturally with their respective nations. The churches became affected by the lot of their nations. The Nordic churches, thus swayed, sometimes demonstrated an impaired ability to cooperate in the Nordic region.

Norway, as well as Denmark, was attacked by Nazi-Germany in April 1940, allegedly to prevent France and Britain from doing so. In fact France and Great Britain had seriously considered a landing of troops in Denmark/Norway primarily to put an end to the transportation of iron ore from Sweden via Narvik to Germany. 70

The Nazi Leadership in Germany had fostered a dream over the Nordic region. The dream did not consist of military action. It rather resulted in a policy of sending German lecturers from 1933-1945 to Nordic universities, mainly in Sweden. The aim was to foster a common understanding of what it means to be Nordic. In the Nazi way of looking at things the Nordic region and its inhabitants were included in the Germanic “race”. The German expectations, in this respect, were hardly met or accepted in the region in question. From Sweden disillusioned German lecturers and propaganda officers reported on considerable resistance to Nazi strategies against the Jews and to some lesser degree against the communists. 71 The reaction in the Nordic region was extremely negative and very strong when the Germans at the end of 1943 by police force closed Oslo University. Even Arthur Engberg, Swedish Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs, who in the past had made surprisingly anti-Jewish statements, declared that a Nation behaving like the Nazi-German administration must be isolated from any political contacts. The Germans could neither by occupation nor through persuasions achieve sufficient sympathy for the Nazi ideology in Norway or in the Nordic region. 72

70 For further reading on this, please refer to: Aktstycken utgivna av Kungl. Utrikesdepartementet: Handlingar rörande Sveriges politik under Andra världskriget: Förelope till det tyska angreppet på Danmark och Norge den 9 april 1940, Norstedts, Stockholm 1947.
In 1940 there were 300 Swedish citizens joining the Norwegian army fighting the Nazi-German invasion. Of equally great importance were not less than 8000 Swedes serving on different allied merchant navy vessels. Some 700 Swedes served in the Norwegian merchant navy.\footnote{Gyllenhaal, Lars: Fler svenskar dog för Norge. www.krigsmyter.nu/svenskarnorge, 2011, p.1.} This fact has not been fully recognised by historians who have tended to describe with dismay Sweden’s agreement with Nazi-Germany over the transportation of German troops and war equipment through Sweden to Norway and [later] to Finland. The 300 volunteers fighting in Norway had no doubt been joined by many more, had not the Swedish Coalition Government issued a ban on Swedish volunteers for fighting in Norway in response to Nazi-German pressure. Later during the war, in 1944, however, the political wind blew in a different direction, and more than 6000 Swedes were permitted to be registered as volunteers for a Swedish Norway Battalion, which never served in any real acts of war. That might partly explain why it has attracted little attention.\footnote{Gyllenhaal, Lars: Fler svenskar dog för Norge. www.krigsmyter.nu/svenskarnorge, 2011, p.1.}

Nazi-Germany closed its borders for escaping refugees in 1941. This happened as Sweden adopted a more liberal attitude towards arriving refugees. In 1942 Nazi-Germany introduced even harsher methods in its occupation of Norway. In October a number of male Jews were arrested and brought to a camp in Norway for imminent transportation on s/s Donau from Oslo to Germany and to Nazi concentration camps in Eastern Europe. That transportation took place in November, when a new wave of actions was directed against the Jews in Norway. In this way 770 Norwegian Jews were sent by ship from Norway to Auschwitz. Most of them were killed on arrival. 34 of the 770 survived. In total 1 100 Jews fled Norway and managed to reach Sweden. At the same time, in November 1942, the Swedish Foreign Office introduced a considerably more liberal policy with regard to arriving Jewish refugees. The Swedish Coalition government informed Nazi-Germany that Sweden was prepared to welcome all Jews residing or staying in Norway. In addition the Swedish authorities initiated negotiations with the Germans regarding free passage for Jewish persons with attachment to Sweden.\footnote{According to Åmark 2011, p.535 this could be argued for Jews travelling on Swedish passport, and for individuals who were instantly given Swedish passports, and for Jews with relatives living in Sweden.}

A heroic part of the rescue operation was carried out by the Norwegian Hjemmefronten and by other Norwegians who assisted the Jews aiming for Sweden.\footnote{Gyllenhaal, Lars: Fler svenskar dog för Norge. www.krigsmyter.nu/svenskarnorge, 2011, p.1.}

For Norway the experiences from 1940 to 1945 were determinative for years and decades to come. The German attack in the morning of April 9 1940 was a shocking experience to the Norwegian nation and to its people who had hoped to stay neutral in the world conflict. Politicians and other leaders tried to operate in a way that would save lives in the chaotic situation. Bishop Eivind Berggrav of Oslo was a member of the Administration Council that attempted to bring some normality to an abnormal situation. Berggrav was misused by German propaganda and misunderstood by the Allies but managed to give to the Church of Norway an important role as a leading institution in a time of extraordinary crisis.\footnote{Heiene, Gunnar: The Church of Norway since the World War II, in Ryman, Björn et al.: Nordic Folk churches, A Contemporary Church History, Cambridge 2005, pp.41-42.}

During the Second World War the Christian societies supported the Norwegian Bishops’ opposition and fight against the Nazi Administration. The revivalist movement was weakened during the 1930s and remained weak during War, when the National churches in Scandinavia were all noticing that they were “in greater demand”, as so much uncertainty threatened ordinary life. The churches also came to be key institutions for the distribution of aid to the victims of War. In Norway the National Church of Norway (not least through Bishop Berggrav, of Oslo) was a constant voice articulating human rights in opposition to the Nazi-German occupation.

In 1942 the conflict between the Nazi administration and the Church of Norway escalated. Already in 1940 Berggrav and Hallesby\footnote{Amark, Klas: Att bo granne med ondskan. Sveriges förhållande till nazismen, Nazityskland och Förintelsen, Bonniers, Stockholm 2011 p. 536.} had propagated for actions by the Church of Norway to go against the Nazi occupiers. In February 1942 Dean Fjellbu [in Trondheim] was not allowed by the Nazi administration to celebrate the Church Service at the[Nidaros] Cathedral. The conflict escalated as the Nazi administration
attempted to make the Church of Norway change its liturgies to a Nazi-friendly style. On February 24th 1942 the Bishops of the Church of Norway resigned from the “state element” of their commission as they argued that they had to uphold the justice of the Church in opposition to the injustice of the Nazi occupation administration. 79

At Easter 1942 the Bishops, led by Eivind Berggrav, of Oslo, explained their stand in writing in a document called *Kirken grunn* (The Foundation of the Church). The spiritual freedom of the Church required independence from a non-Christian state, particularly from a Nazi state. On Easter Sunday 1942 the content of *Kirken grunn* was read from pulpits in most churches of the Church of Norway. A total of 797 clergy (out of 858) followed their Bishops in resigning. The Nazi authorities put Bishop Berggrav first in prison then in house arrest, where he remained until the end of War. 80

In July 1942 Ole Hallesby (theologian teaching at the Free Faculty of Theology) had been elected to head a Temporary Church of Norway Administration. When, in May 1943, Hallesby was imprisoned by the Nazi occupiers, the Temporary Church Administration was replaced by a Secret Church Administration. 81 After the publication of *Kirken grunn* Bishop Berggrav, under house arrest, wrote *Staten og mennesket*, describing historically and systematically a development from Machiavelli to Hitler: *We observe the contemporary in a better way when we recognise it in the past*, Berggrav wrote. The manuscript had to be kept hidden to be protected from Nazi inspections. During the summer of 1944 the manuscript was smuggled out of Norway to Mr Harry Johansson at the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI, in Sigtuna, Sweden. The Institute arranged for a publication in Swedish and for translations into English and German. The thinking of Bishop Berggrav over church and state has been regarded as relevant also for the contemporary debates in the 20th and 21st centuries. 82

Norwegian resistance to the German occupation was extraordinary strong. In a remarkable initial military success, Norwegian coastal defence managed to fire torpedoes sinking the heavy cruiser *Blücher* as it was sailing into the Oslofjord on the night of April 8th 1940, to seize the capital of Norway. The confusion that followed enabled the King and his government to escape and set up an Exile Government in London. Another surprising defeat had been suffered by German forces in May 1940 in Narvik. In the long run, however, the resistance had limited means to combat the professional German army. As that large army also had to be fed locally, Norway experienced a most troublesome shortage of food supplies. Large quantities of food were, for instance, sent from Sweden to the Swedish parish church in Oslo for local distribution, organised by the Swedish Rector, Axel Weebe. Even if Oslo suffered under severe food restrictions, conditions were even worse in the north. In Finnmark, where the Germans in 1944 burned churches and other buildings as they were withdrawing from Finland, there was a desperate need for aid. Appeals went out after the war to the ecumenical partners and with the help of foreign aid and local resources much in the north of Norway was rebuilt and restored in a few years to a pre-war standard. 83

As an illustration to the complicated and confused conditions in the Nordic region during the Second World War I have already mentioned that representatives for Denmark as well as for Norway in April 1945 more than once requested that the Swedish Government should prepare for sending Swedish troops into Denmark and Norway in order to pacify Nazi-German military forces, as Germany in mid-April faced a total collapse. As early as February 1st 1945 the Norwegian Government in Exile [in London] had approached the Swedish Government with information that a more formal request could later in the year follow asking for a Swedish military intervention in Norway in order to secure a peaceful Nazi-German withdrawal. The first message was sent even if Norwegian politicians were hesitant over the wisdom in asking for Swedish assistance. Johan Beck-Friis, Swedish Minister Plenipotentiary to Norway reported that a Norwegian Government Minister in January 1945 had declared that “politically, it would in Norway be most unpleasant to accept help from Sweden”. 84 In February he added in a report to the Foreign Office in Stockholm that

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83 Ryman, Bjørn: *Into the Ecumenical World* in: Ryman, Bjørn et al.: *Nordic Folk churches, A Contemporary Church History*, Cambridge 2005, p.73
even if there appears to be in Norway an emerging acceptance of a Swedish initiative there are still people in Norway who would regard a Swedish military initiative in Norway “most shameful”. They would, according to Beck-Friis, prefer not to be saved rather than to be saved by a Swedish military intervention. The Swedish Government was, as before, most reluctant to become involved in the conflict between the Great Powers, and suggested that a Swedish military intervention in Norway [or in Denmark] could trigger a Nazi-German excessive demonstration of force and violence and lead to immense and unnecessary suffering. Swedish Foreign Minister Chr. Günther was also aware of the risk that a Swedish military intervention in Norway could for a considerable time harm the relations between the two nations. The Nazi-German withdrawal from Finland through the Northern parts of Norway did strongly underscore such fears. The Nazi-German forces did burn and destroy what they possibly could destroy during their withdrawal from Finland.

Sweden was also involved in serious “end of hostilities talks” conducted between Count Folke Bernadotte and Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler concerning Bernadotte’s intended rescue operation predominantly for Danes and Norwegians in Nazi-German concentration camps. Himmler was mainly interested in discussing a Nazi-German capitulation on the Western front. Himmler regarded it most likely that Hitler would die very soon and leave the leadership to him, Himmler. Bernadotte and Swedish diplomats convinced Himmler that a capitulation on the Western front must include Denmark and Norway. Prospects were indeed very promising for a peaceful end to the Nazi-German occupation of Denmark and Norway. On April 30th 1945 Adolf Hitler committed suicide after having appointed as successor the commander of the German fleet, Admiral Dönitz. Suddenly the situation had changed for the worse. On April 24th the Swedish Government had approved plans to take highly secret steps for a military intervention in Denmark and in Norway. It now appeared most likely that such an intervention would become necessary. May 3rd was agreed as most likely day for a Swedish military action. The Swedish Government accepted a proposal by the Allied forces to enter talks with General Eisenhower’s headquarters regarding required Swedish military action particularly in Norway. The Allies, however, did not expect the Swedish Government to undertake any warlike operations by themselves. As the development of the war was changing circumstances constantly, the Norwegian Government was invited to send a Governmental representative to Stockholm for continuous consultations for actions of importance for Norway. Before any such consultations took place, however, a general Nazi-German capitulation again changed the situation.

Eisenhower had at German/Allied negotiations 5-7 May 1945 demanded a Nazi-German capitulation without any preconditions on all fronts, i.e. including Norway and Denmark. Left with practically no options Admiral Dönitz had to agree, which meant that there was really no need for further talks in Stockholm neither with a Norwegian representative nor with an Allied delegation regarding any Swedish initiatives. Admiral Dönitz gave strict orders on capitulation to General Franz Boehme, Commander-in-Chief in Nazi-German-occupied Norway.

These most complicated negotiations at the final stage of the Second World War serve here as an illustration to the most stressful conditions under which NEI had to serve. The war had led to an unexpected profound need for NEI. The same war generated tensions between the Nordic nations with destructive consequences also for NEI.

When the German armed forces capitulated in May 1945 the Norwegian resistance movement emerged and shouldered responsibility for law and order awaiting the arrival of the Crown Prince and his government from London. Collaborators were arrested. In June 1945 some 14 000 Norwegian Nazi collaborators were in custody awaiting trial. In all 25 Norwegians were executed and 72 were imprisoned for life. The population appeared to accept that rule of law. However, no law could be referred to with regard to the treatment of Norwegian women (i.e. tyske-jentene) who had been the war-time partners of German soldiers. A popular

opinion of detestation sometimes led to unofficial anarchic actions and sometimes courts were urged to take action. Clergy who had maintained links with the Nazi-church were sacked by their Bishops on May 9th 1945.  

Like in Finland the diaconal resources in parishes played a very important role in Norway during and after the war. But unlike the situation in Finland, the National church of Norway was not after the war long term strengthened as a church for the people. Instead, the post-war Social Democratic government in Norway favoured to develop and promote secular institutions to an extent that diminished church influence on society.  

During the occupation of Norway and immediately after the Second World War the various fractions of Christianity, as indeed was the case also in the other Nordic countries, had put down their differences first under the absorbing oppression and then, after the war, in joy over peace regained. Soon, however, the Church in Norway had to deal with opposing fractions threatening the popularity that the National church to a considerable extent had enjoyed in war-time Norway.  

Recognising after the war, the war-time support from churches in the free world the Church of Norway opened up to a committed ecumenical approach, taking the Church of Norway into the new post-war ecumenical organisations (WCC, LWF, CEC and NEI).  

After the war there was a widespread, futile hope among the revivalists that a new revival would emerge, making once again the people of Norway a Christian people of Norway. Alas, it did not happen. The Associations continued to recruit their members from the circles of the Revival movement, from its children and grandchildren, often individuals without any experience of a personal conversion. Not until the end of the 20th Century did the Christian associations experience a serious downturn in donations and recruitment as a result of a faded identification with the old revival movement.  

When Norway was offered Marshall Help to rebuild what had been damaged, particularly in the North, it first declined, fearing to be tied to the West in such a way that future neutrality would be impossible. However, realising the level of aid required, Norway accepted Marshall help which was given until 1952.  

In June 1945 the political parties agreed on a common policy for action, stressing the need for the rule of law in relation to those who had betrayed Norway and particularly stressing the need for full employment to avoid such devastating unemployment as had been the case after the First World War. Employment had to be offered to some 90 000 who had been working for the German occupying armed forces and some 50 000 who had returned from exile. At the first election after the war Socialists and Communists increased their support from 43% to 53%. The Christian People’s Party also gained in popularity, increasing their seats in Parliament from 2 to 8. As a result a debate arose regarding the suitability of a Christian political party. As demonstrated above the Church of Norway, after the war, had to find its way to operate in a new context, dominated by materialism and non-Christian Humanism. In that context, however, the Church of Norway, according to both politicians and Church leaders, remained responsible for the people of Norway. Hence, the Church was expected to open kindergartens, where needed, organise youth work in parishes and offer religious instruction at Schools in Norway. Still, the Church of Norway could not operate in a monopoly style. In addition the church had considerable financial worries. In the North (in Finnmark) 26 churches and several other ecclesiastical buildings had to be rebuilt after the war.

The civil government did not always support the Established National Church of Norway. This was for instance the case when religious instruction was cancelled in higher education. Social centres for soldiers run by YMCA and the Church of Norway were nationalised to be run solely by the Armed Forces.

In dealings with the Nazi Occupation Administration during the war, the Church of Norway, supported by various church fractions, had more than once acted firmly claiming to represent the legitimate Norwegian government. After the war the various factions were less inclined to be quiet. The two Norwegian theological faculties did not cooperate.

More problems awaited the Church of Norway. Reforms prepared before the war were eventually not approved by the government. Instead tension between church and state intensified. The government failed to promote Christian culture and the Church of Norway saw its influence diminish.

After the war Peace absorbed all attention. When attention finally was directed towards the church, the church was criticised for its pietistic roots. In vain, Bishop Berggrav and the Dean of Trondheim came up with a slogan: All that concerns the people concerns the Church.99

The Oslo Bishop had to concern himself with the question of justice and the fate of the former collaborators. Parliament reintroduced the death penalty against the wish and advice of the Bishops. After the war Bishop Berggrav appears to have preferred a disestablished church. That did not happen. After the war and until 1953 the Church of Norway, as part of the establishment, was compelled to abstain from expressing opinions on political issues and rather focus on theology, leaving the other questions to the political parties.100

Despite Bishop Berggrav’s views, public opinion in Norway expressly preferred a National established Folk church.101 The political parties agreed, and were, in 1948, willing to grant the Church of Norway the institutions necessary for its work. The overall political ambition was to maintain the unity exercised during the war. Berggrav, however, did not accept the ambitions of the Arbeiderpartiet (the Socialists) which as an ideal saw a very strong state in all respects caring for its entire people. Bishop Berggrav demanded for the Church of Norway the freedom to preach, the freedom to confess and the freedom to be called. 102 The Socialists were not impressed.

The proposals for a new Church Ordinance, granting more freedom to the Church of Norway, were rejected by Parliament in 1953. That same year internal conflicts hit the Church of Norway in a heated debate on the existence and on the nature of “Hell”. The main combatants were professor Ole Hallesby (Menighetsfakulteten) and the Bishop of Hamar, the Rt Revd Kristian Schjelderup.103 On an international level, Bishop Berggrav gave a talk at a Lutheran World Federation, LWF, Meeting in Hanover in 1952 where he introduced his very state-critical book (written during the war) Staten og mennesket. Later Bishop Berggrav claimed that the modern welfare state could not be reconciled with Luther’s teaching on the two Kingdoms.

In 1950 Parliament ruled that the clergy should no longer receive their payment from the Vicarages but rather be paid as state employees. In the debate this was given as an example of secularisation as the clergy no longer were to earn their income as the [rural] parishioners did. In 1951 the State introduced a ceremony for “Civil Confirmation”, a measure some in the Church of Norway saw as yet another measure to create a secularised society.

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101 outlined in Kirkens ordring i Norge, 1945.
In short, after the war the Church of Norway lost much of its influence in society. The Socialist State was no longer dependent on the church and appeared to prefer to please those who were hostile to the church, which, however, remained established and collected its strength to counteract, creating a Christian press with papers like Vårt Land (The Our Land) and Norsk tidskrift for Misjon (The Norwegian Magazine on Mission).104

In 1947 the Church of Norway decided to create Kirkens Nødhjelp (Church of Norway Aid) and in 1945 When the Church of Norway had resolved to join the World Council of Churches, WCC., the Government had been consulted but no debate had been initiated. The King, after proposals by the Bishops, appointed delegates for the constituting session of WCC in Amsterdam (1948) and their expenses were paid for by the Norwegian Foreign Office. The Church of Norway had also joined the Lutheran World Federation, LWF, in 1947, an organisation much criticised by some Christians in Norway. My impression is that the Ecumenical movement for a considerable time very much failed to attract any profound public interest in Norway, despite Bishop Berggrav’s efforts in networking and despite the support given to Norway by international agencies during the hardship of war-time occupation. The Church of Norway did join the international ecumenical organisations, but popular support for ecumenism remained frail.

Just as the Second World War had a grave influence on Denmark and on the Church of Denmark, one can hardly overestimate the impact of the war on the Norwegian nation and on the Church of Norway. Experiences from the years of occupation influenced the self-concept for years to come.

After the Nazi capitulation in May 1945, Bishop Berggrav wrote, that in order for the Nordic and International ecumenical work to succeed it must engage in tangible tasks relevant to real life. “The Faith and Order” aspects must be given a concrete form in a “Life and Work” context, even if the starting point remains in “Faith and Order”. The Bishop offered an example when he insisted that the Church of Norway, as well as the other Nordic churches, and indeed all Christian churches must engage in the promotion of International Law. Only the churches had a Divine basis for such work, the Bishop argued.105

As we have seen, the post-war situation for the Church of Norway included challenges from a secularised culture. The popular support enjoyed by the church during the war could not last in peacetime. The church took a number of initiatives to meet the challenges. Pastors were employed to work particularly among secularised people often in urban areas. An Institute for Christian Education was opened. Alas, hopes for a new Christian awakening were an illusion.106

After the war there was nevertheless some notable enthusiasm for joint efforts for a better world. In a Thanksgiving Service for the Peace at Westminster Abbey, in London, Bishop Fjellbu of Trondheim said in his sermon that after the Nazi occupation the people of Norway and the people of Denmark were united as sister nations as never before. The Nations now ought to fully consider St Paul’s exhortation: Outdo one another in showing honour (Romans 12,10) “This is what the war taught the Danish and the Norwegian peoples to practise. If the terrible war could so unite us, may the peace not make us cluster into separated herds. 107 The churches should lead the way knowing that all that concerns the people, concerns the Church”, the Bishop of Trondheim concluded.

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105 Kristen gemenskap 1945 p. 63.
106 Heiene, Gunnar: The Church of Norway since the World War II, in Ryman, Bjørn et al.: Nordic Folk churches, A Contemporary Church History, Cambridge 2005, p. 44.
107 Kristen gemenskap 1945, p. 69.
3.4 Iceland and the Church of Iceland.

Out of a population of 288,500 some 86% belong to the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Iceland. 5% are members of a number of free churches, the largest of which is the Evangelical-Lutheran Free Church of Reykjavik (2%). Another 2% are Roman-Catholics. 2.4% are registered as having no religious affiliation.  

Iceland was granted Home Rule in 1904 and was, nevertheless, formally placed under the King of Denmark, as Head of State in 1918. In 1997 much of the legislation in Church affairs was transferred to the Church Assembly [Synod]. During the Great War, Public Opinion in Iceland came to favour a system with an Established National church. At the same time two new Episcopal sees were created, in Hólar and Skálholtme.

According to the Icelandic constitution of 1874 the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Iceland is regulated in exactly the same way as the Church of Denmark is regulated in the Danish Constitution. In the Icelandic Constitution there are liberal rules regarding membership, including the right to form and to join other faith communities. Parliament (Altinget) passes laws for the Church of Iceland. Icelandic clergy are state employees. Some 20% of the population in Reykjavik and Hafnafjödur belong to free congregations of the Church of Iceland with less governmental and more local power.

Iceland declared its independence from Nazi occupied Denmark on June 1st 1944, which did not alter much for the Church of Iceland. The Progressive Party tried to protect the Church of Iceland from undermining proposals brought forward by Liberals and Socialists. Only the Communists proposed disestablishment. In 1957 a Church Assembly was created. The Church of Iceland now attempts to operate in concord with the cultural heritage and to be engaged in local education. The most influential political party, Framstegspartiet (The Progressive Party), favoured a traditional structure with an Established church, with Bishops as symbols of national unity, as was indeed the case when Iceland declared its independence.

In May 1940 British troops arrived in Iceland allegedly as a safety measure after the Nazi occupation of Denmark and Norway in April 1940. At the outbreak of war Iceland had declared itself neutral. As Iceland did not have any armed forces Great Britain could not exclude a German invasion and decided to stop any such attempts by sending friendly troops to Iceland. The British troops were replaced by troops from USA in 1941. After the war much controversy arose due to the presence of American troops and military installations in Iceland. However, the way in which the Communists misbehaved in Eastern Europe increased a general acceptance of the American post-war military presence in Iceland. In 1949 Iceland joined NATO in spite of protests from the political left wing. Since 1951 there has been a regular presence of NATO forces in Iceland. Later on, in the 1960s, NATO-membership was generally regarded as essential and almost popular, particularly since the Soviet Communists had once again shown their ambitions and misbehaved, crushing the liberal development in Czechoslovakia by military means in 1968. Nevertheless, Icelandic authorities tried to limit the social and cultural impact of NATO presence on Icelandic society.

The troops from USA brought their own chaplains representing many different Christian traditions leading to an understanding in Iceland that Christianity was full of nuances and far more varied than in the Icelandic reality. This may explain an increasing openness and inclination to engage in ecumenical endeavours. In addition the American and later on NATO bases offered excellent employment opportunities for the local population, which increasingly left the countryside for dwellings in urban areas.

During the Second World War the fishing industry had been the most important support sector financially. After the war, Marshall Help was received for the benefit of a more varied financial sector. Indeed in the 1970s Iceland was regarded as one of the most prosperous countries in the world. In that context the Church of Iceland operated, inspired by the business-like society, attempting to modernise old structures and reform

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the parish structure, as urbanisation went on. Locally, however, very little enthusiasm could be recorded over
the alteration of parish borders or the closing down of redundant churches and parsonages. The local
church and the local parsonage were indeed regarded as indispensable assets for the local community.

The Church of Iceland ordained a woman to the priesthood in 1974. It did attract rather limited opposition
from some of the clergy. As clergy and Bishops of the Church of Iceland were – and are – civil servants,
those in favour of the Ordination of women could simply refer to a law from 1915, in which it is stated that
without discrimination men and women are entitled to be appointed to public office in the State service.
However, it was only in 1982 that a second woman was ordained to the priesthood in the Church of Iceland.
Thirty years later 50% of the students at the Faculty of Theology are female.

It is worth noting that the Liturgical revival in the Church of Iceland is rooted in the revival movements
and in the YMCA and the YWCA as well as in the Christian Student Association. Together they opposed
influences from Liberal Theology and introduced both Prayers at the Canonical Hours and the Mass
celebrated in a traditional manner. They did so with the blessing of both the Faculty of Theology and of the
many Mission societies.

3.5 Sweden and the Church of Sweden.
In Sweden the population totals 9 million, making Sweden the country with the largest population in the
Nordic region. 79.6 of those are members of the Church of Sweden. 2.4% belong to Protestant free churches,
the largest of which is the Mission Covenant Church (1.5%). 1.4% belong to Pentecostal congregations. The
Roman Catholic Church counts 1.6% and Orthodox and Oriental churches have almost 1%. The largest of
the latter churches is the Syrian Orthodox Church with 29,000 members.

After 1905, the theology of the Folk church developed in Sweden to the dismay of the free churches.
They could never be reconciled with the idea that God´s grace should be understood as extended to all
people regardless of any personal decision or faith. The Folk church, inspired by the Young Church
Movement, insisted that everybody within the parish was to feel included in the church. From 1910 up to the
Second World War, the Young Church Movement proclaimed as a slogan that “the people of Sweden” was
“a people of God”. The slogan, however, was to be understood as a future-oriented vision of the church
rather than a realistic description of a contemporary situation. The Young Church Movement also was keen
to distance itself from the German Christians who misused the term “folk” to signify the Germanic folk as a
folk chosen by God. Once war had broken out, a new slogan, inspired by the Oxford Group Movement,
was heard in Sweden: Sweden’s line is the Christian line.

During the Second World War the Church of Sweden was held in high esteem by the population as the world crisis turned from bad to very bad. An estimated 44% of the inhabitants listened to the daily morning prayers and to the Sunday Services broadcast by Radio Sweden on its single channel. Prospects for the National Folk church looked favourable. As bad times soon arrived, as after the war the political left did its best to attack and discredit the Church of Sweden.

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111 Pétursson, Pétur: Island: Kyrkan, självständigheten och politiken. In: Schjørring, Jens Holger (ed.): Nordiske folkekirker i
112 Pétursson, Pétur: Island: Kyrkan, självständigheten och politiken. In: Schjørring, Jens Holger (ed.): Nordiske folkekirker i
113 Hegstad, Harald: Den lavkirkelige vekkelsebevegelse i Norge. In: Schjørring, Jens Holger (ed.): Nordiske folkekirker i
opbrud, 2001, p.258.
114 Malmgart, Liselotte: The Nordic Churches: A Brief Statistical Profile in Raun Iversen, Hans (ed.): Rites of Ordination and
Commitment in the Churches of the Nordic Countries, 2006, p.42.
115 Ryman, Björn: Church of Sweden 1940-2000 in Ryman, Björn et al.: Nordic Folk churches, A Contemporary Church History,
116 Ryman, Björn: Church of Sweden 1940-2000 in Ryman, Björn et al.: Nordic Folk churches, A Contemporary Church History,
Cambridge 2005, p.54.
117 See below p. 47.
118 Ryman, Björn: Church of Sweden 1940-2000 in Ryman, Björn et al.: Nordic Folk churches, A Contemporary Church History,
Cambridge 2005, p.54.
In Sweden the welfare state emerged, as in other Nordic countries, just after the Second World War. Attempts had been made in the 1930s by the Social Democrats. As early as in 1928 the Swedish Prime Minister had launched the concept of “the welfare state”. He used the term “folkhemmet”, a metaphor utilised before in Sweden and elsewhere. In 1898 the term had been introduced in Sweden to describe a project aiming at the establishment of a library and social centre in the parish of Adolf Fredrik in Stockholm. According to historian Henrik Björck, the term was inspired by the German Volksheim, a term used to describe institutions established in German industrial areas in the 1890s, with inspiration from the English corresponding “settlements” (institutions run by academic or church volunteers in labourers´ housing areas in industrialised towns). Manfred Björkquist, leader of the Young Church Movement, had heard his prospective father in law, conservative politician, Rudolf Kjellén use the word. Björkquist found the term most useful and utilised it publicly around 1912 and might thereby have inspired Per Albin Hansson to express what he and his party had in mind for Sweden. 

Archbishop Nathan Söderblom died in 1931. To the surprise of many, the liberal government (under Prime Minister Ekman) appointed Erling Eidem, Professor of New Testament Theology in Lund, to serve as Söderblom’s successor. Eidem was not as charismatic nor as experienced in ecumenism as Söderblom, but very well versed in traditional theology with numerous friends and colleagues in the German academic world, a culture that Eidem cherished. Archbishop Eidem had around him skilled theologians who carried forward the ecumenical program initiated by Söderblom. During the war they managed to keep contacts with the Confessing Church in Nazi-Germany. Through Swedish clergy (predominantly Rectors of Swedish congregations) serving in Berlin, Paris, London, Copenhagen, Oslo and elsewhere Eidem was kept informed of the war-time situation. Some of them, and particularly Swedish clergy serving in Berlin and in Vienna (the latter administered by Israelmissionen), were actively involved in saving Jews and others from the atrocities of the war. From Vienna three thousand Jewish children were transported to freedom in other countries. Towards the end of the war Swedish clergy assisted Count Folke Bernadotte in rescuing mainly Scandinavian prisoners from Nazi-German concentration camps in the White Buses operation. In the process the churches realised that they must take most seriously the issue of human rights for all regardless of confession.

The financial break down in the 1930s also affected Sweden. As a solution the Socialists attempted to control the financial flows nationally and managed to establish “a corporate Sweden”, from 1932 dominated by the Social Democrats and loyal institutions. When war broke out in 1939 the two-party Coalition Government resigned and a multi-party Coalition Government was formed to deal with the extraordinary situation.

During and after the Second World War, in theory neutral Sweden was accused of having surrendered itself to a policy of appeasement when it was brought up against repeated challenges from Nazi-Germany. It has recently been established by historians that during the first part of the Second World War the Swedish Coalition Government was unnecessarily compliant to pressure from Nazi-Germany. Mr. Klas Åmark, professor of History at the Stockholm University, in his Att bo granne med ondskan (To Live next to Wickedness), has thoroughly analysed the Swedish war-time situation. His conclusions are that in Sweden self-interest and almost nothing else dictated political decisions. However, Professor Åmark reminds us, the Coalition Government acted in a context most different to our contemporary situation. It would take an

exorbitant level of imagination to live fully the part of war time Swedes. We know to-day that Nazi-Germany did not seriously contemplate an attack on Sweden. All the members of the war-time Swedish Government did not know that.  

When studying relevant literature and the various documents regarding Swedish reactions to the Nazi-German aggression against Denmark and Norway and persisting demands on Sweden from April 1940, I agree that the situation for Sweden was very complex and difficult. The coalition government tried its best to run the country in a manner that was not particularly heroic but was aimed at the survival of the Swedish nation and of its inhabitants. Actions taken and declarations made did however cause other Nordic countries to criticise Sweden bitterly. Such criticism had an effect on the Nordic Ecumenical Institute and its prospect of succeeding in offering a platform for close Nordic church cooperation.

The war-time coalition government under Mr. Per Albin Hansson, according to Professor Åmark, did not regard the World War as a serious combat between Democracy and Dictatorship, but rather as a conflict and a war between the Great Powers, during which Sweden had a vested interest in neutrality. Neutrality in itself was nevertheless not as important as avoiding hostilities in order to be able to run the country without disarray. Sweden had failed to keep up or improve its military defence and was therefore left with very few options in the grave situation.

The Governments of Norway and Great Britain strongly criticised the way in which Sweden claimed to be neutral and nevertheless from April 1940 permitted Nazi-Germany certain transit transportations through Sweden. Initially the transit permits concerned transportation of food rather than soldiers and military equipment. Some of the food was meant for the Norwegian civil population.

Professor Åmark demonstrates what many strongly suspected, namely that the policy of appeasement was not primarily designed to safeguard peace and neutrality but served different, mainly materialistic purposes, i.e. to safeguard trade, export as well as import. The professor even suggests that the policy was simply a Policy of Bargaining. Already in the 1930s the coalition between the Socialist Party and the Centre Party (i.e. Bondeförbundet) had developed a policy of neutrality that strongly favoured both expressions of Nordic solidarity and a promotion of international trade. A considerable trade with both the UK and USA as well as with the emerging Nazi-Germany would benefit Sweden’s industry and labour market.

In order to safeguard trade and the national food and necessities supply the Swedish war time Coalition Government was prepared to restrict and limit the freedom of the press, culture and the media considerably. Over and over again Sweden had to enter tough negotiations with Nazi-Germany over essential trade arrangements. Germany desperately needed iron ore and ball bearings while Sweden simply had to find coal and coke for its industries and for domestic heating. With some difficulty Nazi-Germany could provide what Sweden needed in exchange for what Germany at this time very much needed.

The Spanish Civil War in 1936 had turned into a situation through which a most dangerous development could be discerned, potentially leading into a European war. To avoid that, the Great Powers had introduced a policy of non-intervention. This policy agreement had been ratified also by Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union. Alas, they all shamelessly broke the agreement and supported their respective favorite side in the
Spanish Civil War. Sweden also ratified the agreement and abstained from any sale of arms. Sweden even declared that it was illegal to enroll as a volunteer in the fighting. Nevertheless, the Campaign for Solidarity with the Fighting People of Spain operated intensely all over Sweden for three years, supported by the Swedish Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) as well as the Social Democratic Party in political competition with two Communist parties and with the Syndicalists. 400 local Committees for the Support of a Democratic Spain were created. Considerable amounts were collected in aid and not less than 500 Swedes (mainly Communists) went in defiance to the ban to fight the Franco troops in Spain. A third of them had been killed in the hostilities.

In 1935 Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson had declared that his government [Centre and Socialist] by disassociating itself from the Communists had established a solid base for a democratic socialism and cooperation between various sections of Swedish society. The intention was to form a welfare state that would incapacitate totalitarian aspirations both from the Left and from the Right. The pre-war government as well as the Coalition Government succeeded in creating opposition towards the Communist Soviet Union, demonstrated through the Campaign for Help to Finland, but were, due to considerations of coalition partners, less successful in formulating a total repudiation from the Nazi regime in Germany.

Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson spoke to the Swedish people in August 1939 claiming that Sweden possessed a proper military preparedness (vårt försvar är got) as well as a proper structure for a secure national food supply. It was simply not true. Once the Second World War had broken out Hansson spoke again and declared publicly that Sweden must remain strictly neutral with friendly relations to all the nations – those in a state of war and to those who were not. Once peace had been restored, neutral Sweden, according to Hansson, would be prepared to contribute to the rebuilding. No reiteration of the statement on military preparedness was heard.

In 1939, it was generally regarded as a natural arrangement, to create a Coalition Government in order to avoid any national disunity. There were many contemporary examples illustrating the fatal consequences of not dealing with national disunity. Even before the war Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson had expressed sympathy for the idea of a broad coalition in extraordinary times. In 1936 a coalition between the large Social Democratic party and the much smaller Bondeförbundet (Agrarian/Centre party) had been established. That coalition enabled the Socialists to pursue their main financial and social projects, while the Centre party operated chiefly to safeguard the interests of farmers and farm labourers. Above all the Centre party was devoted to the upkeep of profitability in the farming sector. For a broader war-time coalition the Liberals (Folkpartiet) and the Conservatives (Högerpartiet) had to be invited. The two were at this time politically rather far from each other. The Conservatives argued for a strong defence and military support to Finland. The Liberals were particularly focused on democracy and liberty of speech and were much more hesitant regarding military assistance to Finland. As a consequence the Coalition government did not consist of two blocs (socialist and non-socialist). It was rather a coalition of several different units.

The Communist Soviet Union attacked Finland in 1939. That tragic event caused the Socialists in Sweden to propose a Coalition Government, primarily in order to work to safeguard an access to supplies necessary to the Swedish nation and its people. The Swedish Communists were not invited to take part in a coalition, which instead comprised all the democratic parties. The Social Democratic party remained the dominant part and Per Albin Hansson continued as Prime Minister. Christian Günther (non-political) took over the Foreign Office. Per Edvin Sköld (Socialist) remained Minister of Defence. From the old coalition were also retained: Ernst Wigforss, Minister of Finance and Gustav Möller, Minister of Social Affairs, soon to be assisted by Tage Erlander as Under-Secretary of State in a Ministry responsible for the police and for the refugees. The National Economy and National Supplies Ministry was also given a Socialist leader, Herman Eriksson. The Ministry of Trade, however, was headed by Fritiof Domö (Conservative). The Centre Party retained The Ministry of Agriculture under Axel Pehrsson (from Bramstorp). K G Westman (Centre) kept the Ministry of

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134 Åmark, Klas: Att bo granne med ondskan. Bonniers Stockholm 1911 p.82.
135 The Civil War in Spain, The Quisling fifth column in Norway, the Munic Crisis and the Sudeten-German fifth column under Henlein.
Justice, with a responsibility both for press censorship and for policies regarding immigration and refugees. Gustav Andersson (from Rasjön) (Liberal) was given the post of Minister for Communications and had later to deal with the most controversial applications for German transit transportation of troops and equipment. At the outbreak of the Second World War, Sweden had not taken part in a war since 1814. The Armed Forces of Sweden, as a consequence, did not possess any real own experience of war, with the exception of a few officers who had served during the Finnish Civil War in 1918, and some volunteers from the Winter War (1939, between Finland and the Soviet Union). In the 1920s the Social Democrats in government had decided to reduce Sweden’s armaments, which had previously, during the Great War, been slightly strengthened. In 1936 a limited rearmament was resolved as a reaction to the massive rearmament in Germany. In 1939 the Swedish army was a typical “summer army” with no training in winter warfare. One third of the forces had no military training at all. To rectify such obvious defectiveness the Coalition Government agreed to invest in defence improvements up till 1941. One reason for a serious lack of military resources in 1939-1940 was that a considerable part of available military equipment had been sent as support to Finland in 1939 without proper replacement. When Nazi-Germany invaded Denmark in 1940 Sweden defended its Southern part with police patrols and a few, most inadequate, military units with a minimum of ammunition. The Social Democrats had not at all realized that war could become a harsh reality before long. Sweden did not possess an adequate military defence. From 1939 Sweden developed strategies to cope with threats of war and trade sanctions. Swedish politicians and the general public felt that they had reasons to fear the German blitzkrieg, which served Nazi-Germany’s expansionist ambitions well until 1941. In 1940 Nazi-Germany had conquered Denmark and Norway, as well as Holland and Belgium and demonstrated that Nazi-Germany had the ability to strike with surprise and inclination to ignore international agreements. No nation could expect to be spared when Nazi-Germany wished to expand its lebensraum (i.e. habitat, or living space). Professional diplomats and politicians had to acknowledge that Adolf Hitler of Nazi-Germany was utterly erratic and capable of sending his troops to wherever his sudden mood dictated. That insight led to a Swedish war time political inclination to operate in such a manner that Mr. Hitler was spared as many reasons as possible to abhor Sweden. The German Embassy in Stockholm sent a “Notiz” to the Swedish Foreign Minister Günther on April 9th 1940 at 07.00: Die Deutsche Regierung erwartet von Schweden Wahrung strengster Neutralität: Unterlassen von Massnahmen jeder Art, die sich gegen die deutsche Besetzung Dänemarks und Norwegens richten, insbesondere von militärischen Mobilmachungs- und Aufmarschmassnahmen. In addition the Germans instructed the Swedes for their safety not to send any military vessels into international waters south and west of Karlskrona. The Germans also insisted on uninterrupted permission to use the Swedish telegraph network for their military purposes.

We now know (see below) that Hitler and his generals did not seriously contemplate an attack on Sweden in 1940. The Swedish Coalition Government at the time did not know that. They feared a Nazi-German attack. Such a fear was supported by regular telegrams from the Swedish Embassy in Berlin. What on the other hand Nazi-Germany and Adolf Hitler feared was a coordinated attack on occupied Norway by the UK and Sweden. As a result Nazi-Germany maintained a more than proportionally large army in Norway, without any offensive plans regarding Sweden. Hitler was preoccupied with other plans, indeed the Nazi-German attack on the Soviet Union, eventually initiated in 1941. In relation to Sweden, Germany preferred negotiations and expanded its Stockholm Embassy accordingly. Independent Sweden served Nazi-Germany rather well as an international venue and an ample opportunity for intelligence.

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137 86000 light fire-arms and 45 million cartridges, 415 heavy and 216 light pieces of artillery and 280 000 shells, as well as 32 fighter aircrafts had been sent to Finland in aid, according to Åmark, Klas: *Att bo granne med ondskan*, 2011 p.88.
On the 8th of April Great Britain placed mines in Norwegian territorial waters south of Narvik in an attempt to interrupt the transportation of Swedish iron ore from Narvik to Germany. The German attack on Denmark and Norway in April 1940 [9.4] had been planned in Germany for some time and did not come as a direct response to the actual British breaking of Norwegian neutrality. Still the German attack came as a chilling surprise to many in the Nordic region. Denmark was instantly conquered with minimal resistance. In Norway things developed in a different manner. German troops attacked major Norwegian towns and cities from the sea. The Norwegians managed to counterattack and sink the battle-cruiser Blücher at the sea-approach to Oslo, which created considerable German confusion and allowed Parliament and the King of Norway to find time and means to escape to London. Allied troops assisted the Norwegians and managed to free Narvik, and the Germans had to withdraw and seek refuge in the surrounding mountains. The Germans, keen to secure the port of Narvik for the Swedish export of iron ore, were then faced with a major problem of logistics in their attempts to relieve their troops around Narvik. By sea they were stopped by the Allies and there were no roads or railroads from the south to Narvik. So Nazi-Germany insisted on using the Swedish railways to transport troops and war materiel to the north of Norway. Severe and complicated negotiations followed from April to July 8th 1940, when the initial agreement over Transit Transportation was signed. A German historian, Sven Radowitz, in his thesis from 2005, has shown that German archives bear witness of no military threats whatsoever against Sweden. His research also demonstrates that Nazi-Germany could simply not find available military resources strong enough for a successful attack on Sweden, as other campaigns were regarded as much more important. The Swedes, however, did not know that, then.

But some weeks later, in May 1940, the Intelligence Department of the Swedish Defence Force could calm the Swedish Prime Minister with genuine information that there seemed to be no imminent threat of war by Nazi-Germany whatsoever. The background was as follows. Nazi-Germany had negotiated permission to use Sweden’s network for telegrams and telecommunication. The communication was kept secret by the Germans through a system of cryptography (Geheimschreiber). What the Germans did not know was that a Swedish professor of Mathematics, Arne Beurling, soon after the signing of the first Transit Agreement had cracked the German codes. From May 1940 until June 1942 the Swedish Defence Forces could in plain language follow the German military telecommunication on the Swedish network. From that intelligence it became apparent to the Swedish Defence that no plans for any imminent attack on Sweden existed. I have not been able to establish to what extent that information was shared by all the members of the Government. The telegrams revealed that Finland was increasingly involved in the German preparations for war against the Soviet Union. The Swedish government also now knew in advance that Germany intended to obtain Swedish permission for troop transportation from Norway to Finland.

So, the Swedish defence capacity was minimal at the time of the German invasion of Denmark and Norway. The Minister of Defence, Per Edvin Sköld, had not thought that there was a risk of war, even if the signs were most alarming. On the morning of April 9th 1940 the Nazi-German message to Sweden consisted simply of a demand that Sweden must observe total neutrality. As a result the Coalition Government, in fear, decided to put a stop to a popular reaction, an emerging solidarity movement aiming to assist Norway with volunteers to fight the Nazis. Sweden, however, at the same time in a way defied the Nazis by issuing a mobilisation order, increasing available troops from 90 000 to 320 000 soldiers within weeks, which apparently impressed the Germans. There existed now (from April 15th) no longer any possibility for the Germans to initiate a Blitzkrieg on Sweden.

A Coalition Government decision was taken on April 12th 1940 to operate in strict neutrality, not granting any transit facilities to Nazi-Germany for as long as hostilities continued in Norway. Prime Minister Hansson made this resolution publicly known in a radio address to the Swedish people. So, Hansson had to stick to that policy. As the fighting in Norway went on, Nazi-Germany again insisted on a new Transit Facility which the Swedish negotiators, having been urged by the Germans to observe strict neutrality, objected to.

142 Kungliga utrikesdepartementet: Handlingar rörande Sveriges politik under Andra världskriget; Förselepet till det tyska angreppet på Danmark och Norge den 9 april 1940. Norstedts, Stockholm 1947, p. XII.
143 Kungliga utrikesdepartementet: Handlingar rörande Sveriges politik under Andra världskriget; Förselepet till det tyska angreppet på Danmark och Norge den 9 april 1940. Norstedts, Stockholm 1947, p. XI.
Eventually Sweden found a compromise on April 17th in permitting transit transportation of Red Cross staff and of wounded soldiers. Sven Grafström of the Swedish Foreign Office, sent to the south of Sweden to inspect the trains, reported on the transportation of numerous male military nurses, who, according to Grafström’s report, could easily remove their Red Cross badges and be turned into soldiers.

Sweden’s Ambassador in Berlin, Arvid Richert, argued intensely for an even more liberal Swedish approach to the Transit Applications in order to avoid a much feared Nazi-German military attack and eventually earn a privileged position in a new Europe shaped by Nazi-Germany. With the exception of Foreign Minister Günther, Richert found no real support for his opinion in the Swedish Coalition Government. In Parliament, the political debate was strong. Leading Social Democrats (Möller, Wigfors, Sköld, Sandler and Undén) were prepared to take considerable risks by assisting Norway against Nazi-Germany, for which they enjoyed support from the Crown Prince, but not from the King of Sweden. Other leaders [not only Foreign Minister Günther (non-political) but also Liberal leader Andersson, (from Rasjön), and the Minister of Justice, K G Westman (Centre) were more in favour of a policy of appeasement towards Nazi-Germany.

As the Germans were successful in Norway and also in Holland, Belgium and France, the opposition by Social Democrats in Sweden to Transit Agreements with the Germans diminished. Sweden’s Ambassador to the Court of St. James’s [the UK], Björn Prytz, sent a telegram in which he reported that the Foreign Minister, Lord Halifax had informed Prytz that Britain would be prepared to seek a reasonable peace with Nazi-Germany, as common sense, not bravado should determine British foreign policy. The message had no doubt an impact on Swedish Social Democrats, even if it is rather uncertain whether Lord Halifax spoke for the entire British Government or not. Churchill for one would have expressed himself differently. The Swedish Coalition Government, probably partly influenced by Lord Halifax’s views, resolved on June 18th to grant Nazi-Germany additional transit facilities for German soldiers on leave. In September the Swedish Government agreed to even more traffic. The Government was most keen to communicate to Parliament and to the general public good reasons for its decisions and announced arrogantly that the Transit Agreements in no way challenged Sweden’s strict neutrality!

The Swedish political arrogance in words and deeds did at the time very little to facilitate church cooperation in the Nordic Region. Nevertheless, the Nordic Ecumenical Institute did enjoy a certain wartime popularity as it could provide for churches in occupied and war ridden countries an opportunity for much needed contacts.

In 1940 the Swedish Armed Forces were still inadequately equipped and poorly trained, even if Germany had been impressed by the Swedish mobilization. A stronger argument, however, than the military one was Sweden’s iron ore, allegedly desperately needed by Germany. Sweden therefore decided to leak to Nazi-Germany that Sweden had booby trapped most of its iron ore mines, and that they would all be made totally useless in the event of a Nazi-German attack on Sweden. In May 1940 Gösta Bagge, Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs, wrote in his diary that luckily all the mines in Northern Sweden had now been booby trapped and that similar actions were under way in the remaining mines further south. These booby traps probably made it even more uninteresting for Nazi-Germany to venture an attack on Sweden. Diaries written in 1940 by Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson (Socialist), Minister of Justice K G Westman (Centre) and Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs Gösta Bagge (Conservative), nevertheless bear witness of a constant Swedish fear for a Nazi-German invasion. A general impression is that government ministers were poorly informed regarding the general situation in Europe, including the actual situation in Norway. The Swedish Government might even have been unaware of the fact that Germany from May 1940 in occupied Belgium and France had obtained access to mines providing iron ore. The Swedish mines, however, contained iron

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150 This was done by Swedish business man Birger Dahlerus in talks with Herman Göring on May 6th 1940 Dahlerus said to Göring: In the event of a German attack on Sweden the iron ore mines will instantly be made useless for several years to come. Göring responded: Yes, that is what I have told the others. (Bagge’s Diary, after Åmark, Klas 2011 p.105)
ore of a higher quality why Nazi-Germany continued to buy from Sweden during the Second World War iron ore shipped increasingly from Luleå and Oxelösund. The iron ore was accepted by Germany as payment for coal and coke still desperately needed by Sweden for its industries and domestic heating.

In order to remedy its poor quality, the Swedish Intelligence Service was given considerably improved resources in 1940. In particular there was a desperate need to improve on the ability to analyse and coordinate information received as well as finding proper and safe ways for the sharing of information with key politicians. Leading politicians in Sweden had been taken by surprise when Nazi-Germany invaded Denmark, Norway, Holland and Belgium. They also tended to exaggerate the risk for a Nazi-German invasion of Sweden, when at the same time they failed to fully realize the horrible extent of Nazi-Germany’s brutality. Diplomats like Arvid Richert in Berlin contributed to the distortion in Sweden of the true and ugly nature of Nazism.

With a few exceptions The Swedish press was ready to support the Coalition Government in its efforts to rule without disturbances and in particular to remove all reasons for Nazi-Germany to lodge complaints over Swedish press reports, particularly regarding alleged Nazi-German atrocities. There were, however, some editors not willing to be silenced. Among the most active in anti-Nazi journalism one could mention, The Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning, GHT, (“The Gothenburg Commercial and Shipping Newspaper”, (Liberal) edited by Dr. Torgny Segerstedt), The Ny Dag (The New Day, Communist) and the anti-Nazi and left wing Trots Allt (“The Despite Everything”, edited by Ture Nerman). Also rather outspoken in their criticism of Nazi-Germany were The Aftontidningen (Socialist) and to some extent, through its editor of foreign news, Johannes Wickman, The Dagens Nyheter (Liberal).

Through pre-war legislation the Swedish Government had the right to initiate a prosecution against a newspaper for material that provoked a foreign nation. Such Press Law Suits were attempted with rather limited success against Swedish papers publishing information regarding Nazi-German atrocities. In some cases and, again, with reference to old legislation the Government argued it had the right to confiscate papers after actual complaints from a foreign nation. As an alternative measure, the Government in some cases imposed restrictions regarding the transportation and distribution of non-cooperating newspapers. The overall purposes of such actions appear to have been to counteract any foreign [Nazi] criticism and to minimise domestic alarm.

Swedish businessmen in Poland did contribute to reveal Nazi-German crimes in Poland, as they smuggled out from Poland detailed information on atrocities committed by Nazi-German military forces in Poland. Via Sweden, the information eventually reached the UK, where it was published and distributed. The Warsaw-Swedes were later arrested by the Nazi-German security forces in Poland and four of them were sentenced to death. In 1944 they were pardoned by the Nazi administration and eventually permitted to return to Sweden. Representatives of the Polish Government in exile in Sweden were handed a Swedish expulsion order for their part in the information leak involving the Warsaw-Swedes. In this way the Swedish government effectively stopped further information on the need to assist the Polish people suffering under Nazi-German occupation. The Swedish Government was seen to be rather unhelpful to the efforts to intensify the much needed distribution of information regarding the persecution of Jews in Germany and in territories occupied by Nazi-Germany.

From 1942, however, Swedish media were able to inform the general public regarding what Nazi-Germany actually were attempting to do in Europe. On October 13th 1942, the Göteborgs Handels- och

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It was not only the media that were restricted by the Swedish Coalition Government during the Second World War. Even if there were some distinguished and self-appointed spokespersons for Nazi-Germany in Sweden (Professor Fredrik Böök, Professor Hugo Odeberg and the Explorer Sven Hedin), it is also true that the Nazi-ideology evoked very strong disgust in circles of Swedish intellectuals. *The Swedish Institute for Racial Biology* which had been rather influential in the 1920s, proposing sterilisation of persons not suitable for parenthood, had in the 1930s been given a new director, Dr. Gunnar Dahlberg, who was in fact actively working against any sign of racism or racial biology. Indeed Dr Dahlberg was instrumental to creating a barrier against a racial anti-Semitism in Sweden. In those efforts he was supported by the mainstream Swedish politicians. Less understanding was the war time Coalition Government in its attitude towards artists and authors who strongly ridiculed or criticised the Nazi-German ideology and advance. Swedish authors Wilhelm Moberg (in *Rid i natt, Ride Tonight*, 1942) and Eyvind Johnson (in the triology *Krilon*, 1941-1943) were both highly critical of Nazi-Germany, but escaped nevertheless any specific governmental restrictions.\(^\text{159}\)

It was very different for the film industry, over which the official Swedish Bureau of Cinema Censorship ruled with instructions from the Coalition Government. Several films particularly some that were not produced in Sweden were banned from distribution in Sweden. Another well-known example of State censorship was the banning of the artist Karl Gerhard from performing his song *Den ökända hästen från Troja* at his theatre in Stockholm.\(^\text{160}\) The German Embassy staff disliked the highly ironic lyrics and succeeded in persuading the Swedish Coalition Government to remove from the Stockholm stage the displeasing revue song:

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\begin{align*}
\text{Det är den ökända hästen från Troja/} & \quad \text{Look at the horse, the most infamous, from old Troy} \cr
\text{moderniserad till femte kolonn. /} & \quad \text{modernised to fifth column} \cr
\text{Majoren Quisling är en papegoja /} & \quad \text{Herr Major Quisling resembles a parrot,} \cr
\text{som imiterar så gott han har förstått} & \quad \text{when imitating as best, as best he can}\end{align*}
\]

\(^\text{161}\)

Sweden was simply not genuinely neutral and it did not regard the brutal treatment of Jews on the continent as a Swedish responsibility. When on the other hand Jews in the Nordic region (in Norway and later in Denmark) were harshly maltreated the Swedish attitude changed instantly. Prior to that, when Nazi-Germany initially appeared to be victorious in the war as a result of its blitzkrieg, Sweden had appeared to be more eager to win a privileged position in the new Europe, potentially to be established by the Nazi-German successes.\(^\text{162}\) A combination of the contemporary Nazi-German lack of success and of incoming information on Nazi atrocities eventually made the Swedish politicians less inclined to obey Nazi-German wishes.

During the Great War (1914-1918), as in many other wars, fortunes of war were determined not only by battle strategies per se but ultimately by a secured access to naval transportation. Germany was eventually

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\(^\text{159}\) Åmark, Klas: *Att bo granne med ondskan..* Bonniers, Stockholm 2011, p. 454.
\(^\text{160}\) Åmark, Klas: *Att bo granne med ondskan..* Bonniers, Stockholm 2011, p. 455.
\(^\text{161}\) Translation by Lennart Sjöström.
defeated in 1945, as well as it had been in 1918, mainly through a war of attrition resulting in an alarming German lack of supplies, military and nutritional.163

In countries strictly neutral during the Great War 1914–1918, like Sweden and the other Nordic countries, there had been a most troublesome lack of food supplies as well as a lack of fuel and other imported goods. As a key for understanding the reasoning behind policies pursued by the Swedish Coalition Government during the Second World War one may apply “the supply problem” which strongly guided the Swedish war time politicians in their efforts to avoid a situation similar to the one that had prevailed particularly during the years 1914 – 1918.164

The Swedish Foreign Office, according to Mr. Rickard Sandler, Minister for Foreign Affairs, in a statement in 1933, was “predominantly a Trade Agency”. The Foreign Office was instructed above all to promote export and to identify favorable offers on goods required by Sweden.165 Rickard Sandler, however, also strongly argued for Swedish military support of Finland, when the Communist Soviet Union attacked that country in 1939. His views were not shared by his Socialist party colleagues and at the formation of the Coalition Government on 13 December 1939 he was replaced by a generally conservative, professional diplomat, Christian Günther, a civil servant without political affiliation.

National and Christian themes had been combined in November 1941 when the Oxford Group Movement invited Parliament and the Church Assembly to a joint manifestation at which the organisers declared: “The Swedish line of Policy is the Christian line of Policy”. Instantly criticism had been expressed by the liberal newspaper The Dagens Nyheter and from the free churches through The Svenska Morgonbladet. Bishop Cullberg was aware of the dangers in mixing the national and the Christian perspectives. However, at this time many declared that there was in Sweden a true need for a spiritual preparedness. During the war the clergy had noted an accentuated general interest in religion, which after the war disappeared.166 The rather arrogant expression must have been hard to accept in countries and by churches critical of Swedish war-time attitudes.

After the Second World War, there was in Sweden a strong political will and determination to introduce a Socialistic, “modern” society for which the recent war had constituted a hindrance. Prominent socialists, Alva and Gunnar Myrdal, were called in to formulate proposals suitable for a Socialist state, which to a considerable extent, strangely enough, were inspired by Roosevelt’s USA, full of optimism and rationalism. No religious instruction was offered by schools in America. So schools in Sweden, according to Alva Myrdal, ought to have a minimum of links to the Church of Sweden and, if possible, no religious instruction at all. To the Myrdals it was obvious that modern humans in Sweden required a fundamental socialist “retraining”.

The Myrdal concept was to start a new education for the young, aiming at the creation of a generation cast in the mould of socialism and democracy. The Schools shaped by socialism could make a change as complete as the change had been at the Reformation. The ideas were put in print in 1946: Proposals for a New School. The new school should discontinue the transfer of knowledge and ideals that had characterised pre-war Sweden and now create a generation of faithful Social Democrats. For obvious reasons the war time Coalition Government had not been prepared to approve any such plan, but after the elections in July 1945 a Socialist Government replaced the coalition and lots of changes could be introduced, even if the Socialists did not dare to nationalise industries and businesses as they feared strong conservative reactions and possibly an election defeat. Reactions against the socialist retraining were strong enough, however, and in 1948 the

163 Stechert, Kurt: Thrice against England / by Kurt Stechert ; translated from the German original ”Dreimal gegen England-Napoleon, Wilhelm und Hitler”, in Swedish: Tre gånger mot England, Kooperativa förbundets förlag, Stockholm 1942. passim,


Liberals gained considerable support. In 1951 election results forced the Socialists to adopt a more pragmatic program in a renewed coalition with the Bondeförbundet (the Agrarian /Centre Party). 167

In 1949, Sweden in vain proposed a defence alliance for Scandinavia. However, Denmark and Norway, after the war, realised that they needed a stronger confederate [i.e. NATO] than Sweden. Finland was hardly free to ignore its more than potentially dangerous Communist Neighbour and had to abstain. 168

The Church of Sweden was, by many, associated with “war time conditions” and had much less relevance in the post-war new Socialist climate with attempts to modernise Sweden making the Church of Sweden less relevant. Urbanisation added to the secularisation, and in an attempt to stem that development the Church of Sweden initiated a scheme for the construction of new small churches in new housing areas. Lay people became increasingly involved in church activities through this project. 169 The peaceful way in which the Church of Sweden and the free churches had cooperated during the war, was - after the war - replaced by controversy and a fierce debate on the nature of the Church and on the Sacraments. For some time the Church of Sweden nevertheless found considerable sympathy among the church goers for presenting an alternative to modernism. In 1942 the Church of Sweden had produced En bok om kyrkan (A Book on the Church), in which it was stressed that the Church of Sweden was truly a part of the Universal Church and in the 1950s the High Church Movement influenced considerably the liturgical development in the Church of Sweden. 170

Towards the end of the war (1944), the Socialists declared that they intended to seek disestablishment for the Church of Sweden. Bishop Brilioth remarked in 1947 that it was strange to observe:

... How there is a growing distance between on the one hand a secularised society and its Government and on the other hand the Church of Sweden when at the same time one must notice an emergence of ever stronger ties between the State administration and the Church, to the extent that the Church appears to operate in a “State Strait-Jacket”. 171

The Church of Sweden was generally regarded as a part of the public administration. In the 1950s, in my opinion, the Folk church ideal, based on a religious imperative, was succeeded by a Folk church ideal based on a democratic political ambition, often dictated by a Socialist majority.

In Sweden the MP Mrs Alva Myrdal, articulated a rather wide-spread feeling of guilt and bad conscience for having been spared the horrors of the war. However the trend in Sweden was to focus more on disclosing to what extent individuals and in particular some specific private commercial companies had had Nazi sympathies, rather than to question the very policy of the Social Democratic Party and the Coalition Government.

The Church of Sweden and its Archbishop, Dr Erling Eidem, were accused of (alleged) failure to oppose convincingly the Nazi rule in Germany and in the occupied territories. In 1942 the Lutheran World Convention was accused of Nazi affiliation. Collections had been taken in churches in Sweden for the benefit of the Lutheran Academy in Sondershausen, and in Parliament it was remarked how naïve the leaders of the Church of Sweden must have been, as they had not, until 1943, realised that the Luther Academy in reality was a Nazi institution. And furthermore, how could the Church of Sweden refer to the German war against the Soviet Union as an “evangelical activity”? In Parliament the Socialist MP Nancy Eriksson criticised the Church of Sweden for Nazi sympathies and was rebuked by Bishop Anders Nygren who, after an inquiry,

claimed that no funds from collections had been used at all for anything that could be described as Nazi activity. However, Bishop Nygren agreed that criticism was justified with regards to clergy articulating Nazi sympathies, particularly those expressed in the privately owned The Göteborgs stiftstidning (The Diocesan Gazette of Gothenburg).\footnote{Jarlert, Anders: Sverige: Modernisering utan rättsuppgörelse in: Schjørring, Jens Holger (ed.): Nordiske folkekirker i opbrud, 2001, p.85.}

In 1946 the Bishops of the Church of Sweden reacted strongly against the Government’s decision to extradite to the Communist Soviet Union Baltic refugees (i.e. former non voluntary conscripts, drafted by the Axis to the Nazi army fighting the Soviet Union in World War II). The extradition in 1946 caused a moral trauma in Sweden and public opinion shifted from being anti-Nazi to becoming anti-Communist.

In August 1939 The Soviet Union had reached an agreement on cooperation and non intervention with Nazi-Germany, The Molotov Ribbentrop Pact. As a result Stalin’s communists in the secret police, NKVD, extradited to Hitler’s Gestapo a number of Germans who after 1933 had escaped to the Soviet Union. In other words, the communists were accustomed to a practice of extradition, and might have expected Sweden to send back the Baltic refugees without any debate or hesitation.

On 2 June 1945, the Soviet Union demanded that Sweden should extradite all Axis soldiers. The government minutes from 15 June were kept secret until they became public on 19 November. The decision to extradite was supported by most of parliament and the Swedish Communist Party wanted to go even further, by extraditing all civilian refugees who had arrived from the Baltic states. The majority of the Baltic soldiers eventually extradited were Latvians who had escaped from the Courland Pocket at the close of Second World War hostilities. When the refugees had reached Sweden, those arriving in uniform had been detained in detention camps. The extradition to the Communists took place on 25 January 1946 in the port of Trelleborg for transportation on the s/s Beloostrov. The extradition of the Balts was most controversial since the Soviet dictatorship viewed them as Soviet citizens, as the Communist Soviet Union had occupied the independent Baltic states in 1940. The Communist regime in the Soviet Union regarded the Balts as traitors. The group therefore realistically feared torture and death sentences upon arrival in occupied Latvia. According to the Hague Conventions a neutral state was not required to extradite soldiers to anyone. The events led to a bitter conflict between leaders of church and state in Sweden and did very little to facilitate ecumenical cooperation in the Nordic region.

During the war, as exemplified in various sections of this essay, Swedish Church leaders attempted to find a role for the Church of Sweden as an intermediary of information and of aid. In 1942 the Swedish Bishops’ Council distributed a Message for Lent, in which Sweden’s solidarity with the rest of the Nordic region was expressed. That ambition was still strong at the end of the war when, however, the capitulation of Nazi-Germany and the creation of an Eastern and a Western zone in Central Europe left very little for the Church of Sweden to do as an intermediary.\footnote{Jarlert, Anders: Sverige: Modernisering utan rättsuppgörelse in: Schjørring, Jens Holger (ed.): Nordiske folkekirker i opbrud, 2001, p.85.}

Archbishop Eidem of Uppsala wrote a message to the people of Denmark on 5th May 1945, and to the people of Norway on 14th May 1945, giving praise to God for the end of hostilities and expressing a hope that the liberated nations would be able to insist on a Rule of Law to replace the lawless and evil rule of the Nazi occupation. “After years of darkness we greet the Spring of Freedom”, the Archbishop concluded.\footnote{Kristen gemenskap 1945 p. 65 (translation into English by Lennart Sjöström)}

Eventually through the Lutheran World Federation, LWF, the Church of Sweden was able to offer considerable aid to the victims of the war. In the process, Swedish Church leaders, through the emerging international organisations, switched from being familiar with continental churches, Germanic language and habits, to be at ease with an English-speaking style, a process culminating at the constituting meetings for the Lutheran World Federation, LWF, in Lund in 1947 and for the World Council of Churches, WCC, in Amsterdam in 1948.
After the war the Church of Sweden had to respond to considerable criticism expressed by the media over various “scandals” affecting the Church of Sweden. As we have seen, the left wing press, possibly by inclination, enjoyed criticising the Archbishop for, allegedly, having been too compliant in his contacts with Nazi-Germany. The Archbishop was also criticised for a lack of control over the financial administration of a benevolent war fund, *Till Bröders Hjälp* (Assisting the Brethren), which was dissolved and eventually replaced by *Svenska kyrkohjälpen*, *Swedish Church Aid*.

Additional criticism of the Church of Sweden was expressed when it was revealed that Episcopal candidate Dr. Dick Helander, most probably, had written and distributed defamatory information about his co-candidates. Finally a very well publicised debate on *Faith contra Science* initiated by Professor Ingemar Hedénius did little to improve the image of the National Church of Sweden. Some, however, saw the writings of author Lars Ahlin, inspired by Anders Nygren and by Karl Barth, as an instrument to counter balance that debate. Ahlin wrote convincingly about Communists who were losing their faith in the Communist ideology. Wilhelm Moberg, on the other hand, was expressively anti-clerical in his immensely popular *epos* over the 19th Century Swedish emigrants (*Utvandrarna, Invandrarna, Nybyggarne, Sista brevet till Sverige, 1949-1959*). Moberg, without convincing historical backing, persuaded a generation of Swedes that the wave of emigrants was first and foremost motivated by religious oppression (rather than desperate poverty), in particular exerted by the Established Church of Sweden. Still, a majority of the population remained members of the Church of Sweden in spite of simplified ways to leave the Church of Sweden, introduced in 1951.

The Church of Sweden was a National Established Church right into the 20th Century embracing the whole society. For a considerable time, the international contacts of the Church of Sweden had been somewhat limited. Through Archbishop Söderblom (1866-1931) the Church of Sweden began to open up and establish relations with other churches. Conversations with Anglican and Lutheran churches in Northern Europe influenced the Church of Sweden in its self-concept. The Church of Sweden thereby acknowledged its apostolicity through an Episcopate founded in the Holy Spirit. In its ecumenical endeavours the Church of Sweden maintained that other churches may have different ministerial structures that are valid insofar as their teaching on ministry and sacraments is compatible with the teaching of the Church of Sweden.

As democratic structures became increasingly dominant in Church administration, there emerged in the Church of Sweden a situation where the status of the Bishop is so diminished that the Bishop canonically is almost powerless. Another problem for the Church of Sweden, as I see it, is that it is operating without any supranational institution with authority to correct national aberration. It remains to be seen if the Porvoo Community shall be able to provide such a corrective.

After the war Archbishop Eidem invited international church leaders to a meeting at the Samariterhemmet in Uppsala in July 1946. Bishop Hans Meiser of Munich represented Germany, a country that had waged war against so many countries. Bishop Meiser was warmly welcomed by Eidem in German language with expressed hope that the Bishop should rest assured that he was welcomed to be received in brotherly love. The German Bishop gave a long and most humble response, admitting atrocities committed by the Germans during the Hitler regime. Bishop Meiser stated that according to available documentary evidence it was a fact that had Hitler been successful the real difficulties for the churches would have just begun...

The declaration was of decisive importance for the future. German church representatives denounced Nazism, its expansionism, lack of morality and confessed guilt over the Nazi-German treatment of the Jews. The declaration played a part in the reconciliation necessary between former enemy countries.

From the 1950s a more affluent and materialistic society emerged in the Nordic region, first in Sweden and in Denmark, while this development was slightly slower in Norway and Finland. The last fifty years have probably produced more shifts in people’s intrinsic values than during the last half millennium.179

So the secularisation in Swedish society increased. It could be argued that the Secularisation was caused by a politically organised, diminished church involvement in education after 1946. Others may claim that existing secularisation was a motivating factor for that diminished educational church involvement. The catchwords of education in the post-war years in Sweden had very little or nothing to do with culture, knowledge, classical education or tradition but sounded rather like democratic attitudes, objectivity, student in focus, free choice and pluralism. Even if it the post-war secularisation was part of an apparently unstoppable West-European trend, I maintain that the Social Democratic politicians and educationalists did very little to try to counteract secularisation and to defend the Folk Church, its teaching and value systems. Through the educational changes the monolithic world of the Folk Church was irrevocably gone and still the Folk Church in a way lived on.180 To a remarkably high extent the population of Sweden demonstrates an ability to argue in line with ethical standards, be it in relation to world politics or to social services. Archbishop KG Hammar, in my view, served as a catalyst of a remaining Folk church consciousness when he communicated non fundamentalist Christian ideals in public debates and caused large number of Swedes to express solidarity with a church expressing such a theology.

I find that from the Second World War and onwards in Swedish politics there has not seldom appeared an almost arrogant and hypocritical element. I think it was first demonstrated by Prime Minister Hansson’s statement to the general public in 1939 about the existence of a “proper defence capacity in Sweden” and even more unabashed when the same Prime Minister in 1940 went on arrogantly to declare, that permitting the Nazi-Germans to use Swedish railways for the transportation of troops and equipment was “not at all a deviation from Sweden’s strict neutrality”. To my mind the same sort of political arrogance was much later exhibited by Prime Minister Olof Palme, who on the one hand excelled in rhetoric praising extreme Left wing political ideals, and at the same time silently made sure that old military safety nets were in operation. In an attempt to understand Palme, I can only presume that Palme’s actions might have been part of a desperate vote-catching, utilising the remarkable contemporary international left wing surge, and avoiding a drain of Socialist ideals causing the Social Democrats to lose elections, as indeed it eventually happened towards the end of the 20th Century. As an example of the Olof Palme strategy I would like to quote Per T. Ohlsson’s article (Understrekeare) in The Svenska Dagbladet on April 13, 2011: De enda som inte visste var svenskarna (Only the Swedes didn’t know), which for instance tells how Olof Palme urged Commander-in-Chief Stig Synnergren (överbefälhavaren), who had commented on Palme’s strong criticism of the US and the war in Vietnam: “For God’s sake, Synnergren, when I harass the Americans over Vietnam, you must see to it that we have safe relations with their Armed Forces!”181 In reality, Sweden cooperated with NATO and relied on NATO support for a considerable time. A brochure distributed annually to all households in Sweden called Om kriget kommer (In case of War) proclaimed in the 1980s:

In Sweden we all wish that our country shall be a country enjoying freedom and independence. That is why in times of peace we do not have any military cooperation with other nations. And in case of war we intend to remain strictly neutral without affiliation to any side of a conflict.

179 Lodberg, Per, Ryman, Björn: Church and Society in Ryman, Björn et al.: Nordic Folk churches, A Contemporary Church History, Cambridge 2005, p.110.
181 Ohlsson, Per T: De enda som inte visste var svenskarna, Understrekeare I SvD 13 april 2011, Original version in Swedish: ”Nu när jag bråkar med amerikanarna så se för Guds skull till att vi har goda relationer på det militära området.”
Again, the statement was simply not communicating the truth.\(^{182}\)

In my comments on Sweden from 1939 and onwards, expressed here to offer an illustration to the grave difficulties political realities created for Nordic church cooperation and for NEI, I find that the Social Democrats, having contributed admirable to the social welfare of Swedish society, nevertheless through Alva Myrdal’s Proposals for a New School in 1946 failed and has deliberately continued to fail to counteract secularisation in Sweden. In this way, I find that the politicians have deprived younger generations of profound cultural insights and insights into what could have constituted a base for a personal and deeply rooted outlook on life. The effects have recently been studied and presented in a doctor’s dissertation in Uppsala making plain that the probably most secularised country in the Western world (Sweden) prides itself with excellent health records while at the same time large groups admit that they lack existential orientation and do not feel well at all.\(^{183}\)

In addition, I find that ecumenical cooperation was impeded when the Socialists of Sweden behaved in a hypocritical manner in its foreign and domestic politics, particularly during the Second World War when they dominated the Coalition Government. Much later this hypocritical style appears to have been inherited by Socialist leaders. In particular this was demonstrated during the time in which Olof Palme served as Prime Minister, Openly and evidently in a shameless way he flirted with the extreme Left wing movement of the 1960s. Olof Palme, self-appointed defender of nations in conflict with USA, shouted “murderers” to the Americans when journalists could offer coverage and publicity. Behind the scene realities dictated a different attitude, insisting on support from USA, should such support be needed. With a convincing number of examples Mikael Holmgren has, in his Den dolda alliansen (The Hidden Alliance, Atlantis, Stockholm, 2011), demonstrated how Socialist governments in Sweden simply lied to the general public about alleged Swedish neutrality. In Holmström’s book an American Admiral is quoted from an encounter in 1987 (i.e. one year after the tragic and violent death of O Palme), when Swedish officers paid a visit to the US military base in Keflavik, Iceland. The US Admiral welcomed the Swedes as Allied. When it was pointed out that the officers came from neutral Sweden, the Admiral added: “I know, but it is a comfort to know that you are neutral on our side”.\(^{184}\) I suppose such an answer is fitting for a nation, in which political correctness is fostered by leading politicians. However, for a Nordic Church cooperation such attitudes created a considerable amount of stress from the 2nd World War and onwards.

3.6 Finland and the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland.

Some 84.1% of Finland’s population of 5.2 million belong to the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland. The membership of the Orthodox Church is 60,000 or 1.1% of the population. Another 1.1% belongs to some other religious organisation (including non-Christian) and 1% of the population are members of Pentecostal congregations.\(^{185}\) At the end of the Second World War 96% belonged to the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland. In 2004 that number had dropped to 85%.

Finland was attacked by the Soviet army in November 1939. The short but cruel Winter War was over in March 1940. However, the war against the Soviet Union continued in the years 1941-1944. In that Continuation War, Finland was allied with Nazi-Germany.

The Finnish government had very much hoped Sweden would assist Finland as it was under attack by the Communists in 1939. The Swedish Social Democrats refused, however, to enter the war. Public opinion in Sweden nevertheless was very strong for the cause of Finland. Many young Swedish men rallied to fight on the side of the Finns, including three sons of Archbishop Nathan Söderblom. Alas, Finland’s army had to surrender and hand over important land areas to the Soviet Union, when, at the same time, Finland had to take care of half a million refugees. One source of consolation was the considerable support the Evangelical

\(^{182}\) Ohlsson, Per T: De enda som inte visste var svenskarna, Understreckare I SvD 13 April 2011

\(^{183}\) Melder, Cecilia: Vilsenhetens epidemiologi – om existentiell ohälsa (Uppsala universitet, 2011)

\(^{184}\) Ohlsson, Per T: De enda som inte visste var svenskarna, Understreckare I SvD 13 april 2011

Lutheran Church of Finland was able to offer the Finnish people. Despite all odds Finland survived as an independent nation, even if the Winter War created a national urge for revenge.

As the Winter War was brought to a close, The Nordic Folk churches and ecumenical organisations agreed to set up the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, which came to serve as a platform for information and contact between the Nordic churches during the Second World War.

Nazi-Germany had in 1940 negotiated permission to use Sweden’s network for telegrams and telecommunication. The communication was kept secret by the Germans through a system of cryptography (Geheimschreiber). What the Germans did not know was that a Swedish professor of mathematics, Arne Beurling, had cracked the German codes. Therefore, from May 1940 until June 1942 the Swedish Defence Forces could in plain language follow the German military traffic, including information on German troop movements towards Finland in early 1941. From these leaks it became apparent to the Swedes that Finland was increasingly involved in the Nazi-German preparations to attack the Soviet Union. The Swedish government also knew in advance that Germany intended to obtain Swedish permission for troop transportation from Norway to Finland. For Finland Nazi-Germany was simply the only available partner in the losing battle against the Communists of the Soviet Union. The Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland did not object to the cooperation as it realised the desperate situation. In addition there was a deep affinity between German and Finnish Lutheranism as well as manifold cultural and spiritual influences from Germany. The Germans had also supported the “white” side in the civil war 1918 against the “red” communists. Clergy of the Lutheran Church of Finland trusted the Germans. That trust, however, came to a quick and painful end when towards the end of the Second World War information was spread about the Holocaust and German atrocities in concentration camps and elsewhere. As an illustration to Finland’s complicated political war-time dilemma one could mention the fact that Great Britain, as a result of the German/Finnish Continuation War against the Soviet Union, felt obliged to give in to Stalin, co-operate with the Communists and declare war on Finland in December 1941. British aircrafts had already in July 1941 attacked Linhammar /Petsamo, an important harbour on Finland’s north coast by the Arctic Ocean. Apart from that attack, Great Britain abstained from further actual hostilities against Finland, a “friendly” nation - technically on the side of the main enemy, Nazi-Germany.

It is true that during the Second World War Finland did not see many refugees arrive. Finland after the wars had its own stream of refugees from land captured by the Communists to cater for. In June 1941 (when Germany attacked the Soviet Union) there resided in Finland some 2000 Finnish Jews and 200-300 refugees from Austria and Poland. When Finland initiated its mobilisation in preparation for the Continuation War against the Soviet Union, Jews and other refugees were expected to serve as soldiers or participate in community services. In 1942 refugees were sent to Lapland, to a camp, under the command of German troops. Allegedly they were most badly treated. In September 1942 rumours circulated in Finland regarding allegedly intended actions by Valpo (the Finnish security police). The rumours contained information on how Valpo should have expressed a wish to extradite all Jewish refugees from Finland. The rumours were repeated to such an extent that in Helsinki Embassies for Sweden, Switzerland and USA reacted to what was whispered in Finland. Newspapers in Finland and in Sweden commented on the matter and asked if possibly the proposals were dictated by Nazi-Germany. The Finnish government denied such allegations and claimed that the rumours had started when the authorities had wished to extradite a few criminals who happened to be Jewish. Eventually, a group, consisting of eight persons, was extradited, and the Minister for Internal Affairs declared that those concerned were criminals, spies, thieves and saboteurs. On November 6 they were sent by boat to Tallinn for land transportation to Berlin and eventually Auschwitz, where all but one were killed. The fate of the extradited was widely reported on in Sweden, to the irritation

of the Finnish government. However, the end result was that public opinion in Sweden changed in favour of the Jews and meant that the political willingness to grant Jewish men and women entry visas to Sweden increased at this time.

After the Second World War, Finland was regarded as a country that lost the war. No doubt this had an effect also on how the other Nordic churches regarded Finland and its churches. In 1946, Finland had been at war for five years. It had suffered under Soviet Union attacks, but the Communists never succeeded in occupying Finland. The Allies regarded Finland’s cooperation with Nazi-Germany unforgivable and Finland lost some of the sympathy the Allies had felt for Finland’s heroic Winter War struggle against the powerful Soviet Communists. After the war the Evangelical–Lutheran Church of Finland was criticized not only for Finland’s military Cooperation with the Nazi-German Armed Forces but also for cooperating with the Nazi-dominated German Protestant Church, i.e. Deutsche Christen (German Christians). At an informal Nordic Bishops’ Meeting in Copenhagen in August 1945, Bishop Berggrav (of Oslo) strongly expressed that criticism as he was most upset over the fact that Archbishop Lehtonen (of Turku /Åbo) had chosen not to attend the Copenhagen Meeting, that Bishop Berggrav had initiated. Before long, when the cold war between the Communist East and the Democratic West dominated the political scene, Finland’s international status improved. The Western countries remembered Finland’s truly brave war effort in their honourable defence against the Soviet Communists.

Finland had through the war lost 12% of its territory to the Russian Communists. 2.5% of the population had lost their lives and 50,000 were disabled. Finland was no doubt the hardest hit country in the Nordic region. The eastern part of the country had been lost to the Communist Soviet union. 420,000 refugees had to be resettled. Most of them were allotted small areas of land for agriculture. Finland in addition had to pay to the Communists a war reparations compensation. A colossal amount of USD 300,000,000 had to be paid to the Soviet Union by Finland. Many in Finland regarded this as monstrous. After all Finland had initially been attacked in 1939 and later simply tried to win back what had been lost. Finland regarded the war compensations as a betrayal by the Western powers. In the most difficult situation the Evangelical-Lutheran church served its people. In every parish a deacon or deaconess was employed for parishioners´ social and spiritual needs. The church was truly a servant of the people.

Internationally, The Evangelical–Lutheran Church of Finland was soon looked upon with more sympathy and was welcomed into ecumenical relations, regionally (Nordic) and world-wide. Initially, the ecumenical efforts by the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland were conducted in parallel with Finland’s political and diplomatic aims.

During the war the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland had as indicated above identified itself strongly with the ordinary Finnish people, who suffered on the front and at home. As a result that church enjoyed much confidence from the entire population. The church had been on the side of the people, so, after the war, the people sided with the church in solidarity. A much expected general Christian revival, alas, did not happen, even if clergymen blended religious teaching with nationalism. Christian values and cooperation with other Western churches would, sermons could argue, support the small Finnish nation in future times of need.

Strong patriotism remained a typical feature of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland. That outlook was transferred to the next generation, preserving an anti-communist and an anti-Soviet attitude. People’s

190 Schjørring, Jens Holger: Introduktion to Nordiske folkekirker i opbrud, 2001, p 12.
191 Schjørring, Jens Holger: Introduktion to Nordiske folkekirker i opbrud, 2001, p 12.
fear of a possible Soviet occupation of Finland after the Second World War lent support to the Lutheran church, which was appreciated as a stable institution with strong Finnish values.197 In areas conquered by the Soviet Union the Evangelical-Lutheran Church lost numerous church-buildings, vicarages and other ecclesiastical buildings. In areas controlled by the Finns not less than 16 churches, 25 vicarages and 14 parish halls had been destroyed by the hostile invaders. However, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church had not only lost property. Several ministers had served during the war as pastors and officers. It was felt by the public that the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland in solidarity had shared the fate of the entire population and in that process the Church of Finland had gained public respect. After the war, the same church became increasingly involved in diaconal (caritative) work and pastoral care. The so called “New Pietistic Movements” now gained strength, sometimes in opposition to groups described as supporting the Folk church.

However, stronger than opposing views on lifestyle and ethical questions was the common ambition to offer to the people of Finland a Christian faith as a source of security in an insecure world. In particular joint efforts were made to improve the Evangelical-Lutheran Church’s work among young people. Confirmation classes (Skriftskolan) were given extra resources often creating possibilities to offer Confirmation Camps to a large number of young people in Finland. Soon the general attitude in the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland to regional ecumenical cooperation (like NEI) became very positive. After all, Finland had received considerable support through such organisations during the war.198

After 1945 the Lutheran church responded to the rapid industrialisation and urbanisation by developing new forms of social work, including counselling alleviating the distress of the working poor and strategies for Christian work at hospitals. After 1945 some Lutheran ministers in the Turku/Åbo diocese initiated a “High Church Movement” influenced through connections with the Anglicans. The main Folk Church, however, remained traditionally Lutheran with firm links to theologians in Lund, Sweden.199 In Finland the main effort was focused on making the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland a true Folk Church. To that effect the Bell ringing from Turku/Åbo Cathedral is still broadcast at noon all over Finland, as has been the case since 1944. As late as in the 1950s, 95% of the inhabitants were members of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland. Popular opinion claimed that during the Second World War Finland had fought an anti-Christian enemy. Now, after the war, the population remained loyal to “home, faith and Fatherland”200

The experiences from yet another war added to the self concept of the Finnish nation and of its Established churches. The faith inherited had helped the Finns to endure the dark years. That faith should also give strength for the future. At the end of the war, in 1945, Archbishop Lehtonen (Åbo) wrote: “Together the Nordic churches will have to foster the peace for the future. In doing so they will have to hold in trust the Lutheran heritage of the Grace of God, offered for the benefit of all Christianity.”201 Archbishop Lehtonen also underscored the socio-ethical responsibility that the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland would have to shoulder in State administration, in society and in individual homes. A major task will be to counter-balance all embitterment heaped-up during the war in the minds of the people, in order to stop arrogant self-assertion from tainting church and society.202 In a message soon after the war, Professor G. O. Rosenquist (of Åbo Academy) urged Christians in the Nordic region to engage in the future development of their Christian fellowship.203

In Finland the Second World War was a unifying factor for the people. The war bridged the internal division that had been created by the civil war in 1918. The Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland

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200 Lauha, Aila: *Ansvar för folket förblir kyrkans kallelse* in Schjørring, Jens Holger (ed.): *Nordiske folkekirker i opbrud*, 2001, p 63
201 *Kristen gemenskap* 1945, p 68 (translation into English by the author of this essay).
202 *Kristen gemenskap* 1945, p 69
203 *Kristen gemenskap* 1945, p 85.
identified itself with the people of Finland and showed solidarity both with the political and the military leadership.204

In the 1950s the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland became involved in a soul-searching question regarding the responsibility for the suffering during the war. Had the church been a home only for the “white” (bourgeoisie) section of society, leaving the “red” (socialist) part of the population without a church? This soul-searching was essentially pietistic in character. When pacifism and disarmament became overly politically correct in other countries and in other churches the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland took a different view, stressing that it was indeed a proper national defence force that had saved Finland and the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland in 1939. The heathen communist Soviet Union could attack Finland again and, therefore, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland supported a strong defence.205

In spite of or maybe because of the fact that the Communist Party of Finland after the war voiced strong criticism of the church there was never any mass movement away from the church. Even a majority of the Communists remained members of the church, allowing their children to be baptised and given religious education in schools and church.206

During the 1960s there were radical leftist and liberal movements in Finland, challenging traditional Christian values. There were futile attempts to discontinue religious instruction at schools. Students argued that the Christian faith was connected to a capitalistic system, exploiting the Third World. Even some members of the Church’s youth groups were arguing along such at the time political correct lines. During the 1970s, years of Communist radicalism, supporters of the Lutheran Church feared it would lose its status as an established Folk church. Wise and proactive archbishops (Simojoki 1964-1978 and Juva 1978-1985) managed to prevent disestablishment by focusing on the Church’s social responsibilities and church reform.207

According to tradition, Christianity was brought to Finland from the east by the Russian Orthodox Church and from the west by a Swedish king, Erik Jevvardsson, and an Anglican Bishop, Henric. The Finnish Church regards 1155 as the year in which it was founded. Bishop Henric took up residence in Nousiainen, 40 km north of Åbo. He was murdered by a local peasant and was soon regarded as Finland’s Patron Saint. As indicated, Christianity also came from the east, from Novgorod. However, at the beginning of the 13th Century the Western Christians gained the upper hand. The centre for the Episcopal see was moved nearer to Turku/Åbo (to Räntamäki – St Mary). In 1248 Finland and Sweden were formally united even if, at the same time, the Finnish Church established closer relations to Rome. Through the Middle Ages the entire Finland belonged to the diocese of Turku with some 70 parishes, most of them close to the western coast. Between 1397 and 1523 when the Nordic countries formed a union, the Bishops of Turku first supported the idea of a union and later worked for a separate state consisting of Sweden and Finland. As the Nordic Union was dissolved, Gustav Vasa was elected King of Sweden and Finland (in 1523). Through the Diet of Västerås and the Assembly in Uppsala the King was given supreme power over the church in Finland and in Sweden. In 1527 Gustav Vasa appointed Martin Skytte, a Dominican prior, to be Bishop of Turku. Skytte was consecrated by Petrus Magni in Västerås, who had himself been canonically consecrated in Rome. Hence the historic episcopate was preserved. The Pope never confirmed the appointment and the Bishops lost the support of the International Church (the Pope) and became dependent on the King, who confiscated most of the Bishop’s revenue and destroyed his Palace (Kuusisto- Kustö). Later the King founded a new diocese of Viipuri (Viborg) and appointed Mikael Agricola (the Reformer) to be Bishop of Turku and Agricola’s assistant Paul Juusten to be Bishop of Viipuri. No Papal confirmation was required, the King announced, as the King from now on made the appointments. The new bishops were consecrated by the Bishop of Strängnäs, Sweden. From the early 17th Century Sweden was a major power with subjects in different parts

205 Lauha, Aila: Ansvar för folket förblir kyrkans kallelse in: Schijorning, Jens Holger (ed.): Nordiske folkekirker i opbrud, 2001, pp. 57-60
of Europe kept together by their Lutheran confession. The Church Law of 1686 expressed that religious unity was the determinative factor for state unity and that the Bishops were required to promote that unity. In the process the Bishops were made ex officio members of the Swedish Parliament. The Church was also closely connected to school and university (Åbo Academy, from 1640). The professors of Theology were also members of the Diocesan Chapter. In Viipuri the lecturers of the Cathedral schools had the same position. Most of the teachers in higher education were ministers of the Church.

For Finland it was a great disaster when Sweden lost its position as a great power. The Russians invaded Finland in 1710 and in 1714. The two Bishops fled to Sweden and several ministers were deported to Russia. During this disorder a Dean, Jacob Ritz, of Somero, assumed responsibility for the Church of Finland and ordained a number of students to serve as clergy. In the Peace Treaty of Uusikaupunki (Nystad) 1721, Karelia was lost to Russia and Viipuri irretrievably ended up on the Russian side of the border. As a consequence the see was moved to Porvoo (Borgå) in 1723. After further hostilities in 1741 and in 1743, Russia gained yet another part of eastern Finland. These Russian parts of Finland were ecclesiastically governed by the consistories in Viipuri and Hamina (Fredrikshamn).

In 1809 Sweden lost Finland in its entirety to Russia. Through history, this was most probably Sweden’s greatest disaster. The disaster meant that Sweden lost 1/3 of its territory to Russia, which transformed Finland into the Duchy of Finland, within the Russian Empire. The emperor Alexander I promised, at a Diet of Porvoo, that Finland would be given an autonomous status as a Duchy connected with the Russian Empire. The Emperor would assume the title of Grand Duke of Finland. Swedish laws and institutions would be retained. So the Constitution of 1772 was kept and also the Church Law of 1686. Finland should be given the right to elect a Parliament and form a government of its own. Parts in eastern Finland previously ceded to Russia were reunited with Finland and came ecclesiastically under the Diocese of Porvoo. In 1817 the Bishop of Turku was given the title of Archbishop to indicate that the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland had now become an independent church. When eventually the Finnish Parliament convened in 1863 it passed a Church Law to replace the old Swedish one from 1686. The new Church law only applied to members of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland, making the church an entity separate from the state. A Synod was established to serve as a governing body for the church. The links between church and education were dissolved. Diocesan chapters should now comprise the Bishop, the Dean, two elected ministers and a lawyer. New dioceses were founded in Kupio – later Oulu (Uleåborg) - and in Savolina (Nyslott). The Bishops were made ex officio members of the Finnish Parliament (House of Clergy): This political influence was lost when Finland established a one-chamber Parliament in 1906. A Bishops’ Conference was established in 1908.

In December 1917 Finland declared its independence and adopted a new constitution in 1919. Religious freedom was granted as Finland supported two established Churches, the Orthodox Church of Finland and the Evangelical- Lutheran Church of Finland. In the wake of a strong Swedish nationalistic movement in Finland at the time when independence was declared it was resolved that parishes with a majority of Swedish-speaking members of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland would be united into the Diocese of Porvoo (Borgå). In 1934 an agreement was reached with the Church of England on Eucharistic hospitality and on mutual participation in Episcopal Consecrations in the respective Churches. During the conversations leading to the agreement Archbishop Kaila declared that the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland appreciated the historic Episcopate as an extremely valuable form of ecclesiastical supervision and as an external sign of the unity of the Church throughout the ages. The Church of Finland did not, however, consider the historic Episcopate as necessary for a valid ministry. In 1939, just before the outbreak of the war, a new diocese was founded in Kuopio. After the Winter War 1939-1940, when Karelia was ceded to the Communist Soviet Union, the entire Finnish population of Karelia was moved to other parts of Finland. Many of them moved back to Karelia during the Continuation War 1941 – 1944. They were, nevertheless,

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209 Cleve, Fredric: *Episcopacy in our Churches. Finland*. Essay in *Together in Mission and Ministry* [The Porvoo Documentation], 1993, p.73-
210 Cleve, Fredric: *Episcopacy in our Churches. Finland*. Essay in *Together in Mission and Ministry* [The Porvoo Documentation], 1993, p.73-
forced to leave Karelia again after the cease-fire in 1944. The See of Viipuri was moved to Mikkeli (St Michael). A Designated Benevolent Fund was set up by affluent parishes to assist church activities in parishes damaged during the war.

The Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland has been keen to take part in ecumenical cooperation through the Nordic Ecumenical Institute/ Council, the Nordic Bishops` Conference, LWF, WCC and the KEK (Conference of European Churches).

3.7 The Significance of the Nordic region.

Even if the regional structure agreed in the WCC Utrecht Draft Constitution was at the end rejected by the World Council of Churches`, WCC, Assembly in Amsterdam in 1948, regions have maintained a significance in the ecumenical world. As explained in chapter 8 below, WCC very soon saw reasons to modify a strict denominational Church Membership Structure to allow for some influence also from the regions. It is therefore not entirely surprising to note references to “the Nordic region” in contemporary international ecumenical documents. In a Report by Simon Kangas Larsen from the Conference of European Churches, CEC, Central Committee meeting in 2003, the Danish “Mellemkirkelige Råd” (Ecumenical Council) is informed of Important resolutions by the Meeting including an item announcing an election of Karsten Fledeius to the Church and Society Commission, being “a prestigious representation from the Nordic/Baltic Churches”. 211 In a Report from LWF Council Meeting at Geneva 1-7 September 2004 Archbishop Anders Wejryd writes about the Council that it has got 49 members. The Home Page of the Lutheran World Federation, LWF, adds the following information:” The Council elects five Vice-Presidents from among its membership. In view of the global nature of the Federation, the President, Vice-Presidents, and the Treasurer are so elected that one person comes from each of the seven geographical areas: Africa, Asia, Latin America & the Caribbean, North America, Central Eastern Europe, Nordic countries, and Central Western Europe”. 212 Archbishop Wejryd, referring to that structure, reports that each of the seven regions (geographical areas) is represented. “The Nordic region is represented by Professor Jan Olav Henriksen, Oslo…” 213

The examples demonstrate how international ecumenical bodies tend to refer to geographical areas (regions) as a natural area for representation even if Nordic Churches, after the 1948 General Assembly in Amsterdam, sometimes appear to have preferred to operate ecumenically as independent churches without any perceived restricting regional considerations.

Even as NEC in 2002/3 was increasingly criticised and questioned by churches in the Nordic region it could in its Verksamhetsplan (Plan for Activities 2002-3) with confidence declare that it as late as in 1997 obtained confirmation over its status of Associated Organisation to CEC and of International Ecumenical Organisation in working relationship with WCC. 214

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214 Verksamhetsplan för 1/7 2002 -31/12 2003 p.6.
Ecumenism and cultural/political cooperation in the Nordic Region.

4.1 Earlier Scandinavian attempts to establish a cultural/political or Church Cooperation in the Nordic region.

After the French Revolution many states in Europe were drawn into major conflicts. Initially, in 1800, Sweden joined the states that declared themselves neutral. In 1805, however, Sweden entered the war affiliated to Britain against Napoleon and France. Denmark, on instructions from France and Napoleon, attacked Sweden in 1808. King Gustav IV Adolf (of Sweden) intended to strike back at Denmark and Norway, but he was too preoccupied with the war in Finland. Sweden stubbornly kept the alliance with Britain and in 1809, as a consequence, Sweden lost Finland to France’s post-Tilsit confederate Russia. The Swedish-Russian war 1808-1809, was illustrated when Finland’s National poet J. L. Runeberg narrated in Fänrik Ståls sägner, (The Legends by Sub Lieutenant Stål). The Legends (part 1) were published in 1848, when once again the Nordic region was under political threat. Runeberg was very outspoken in his criticism of the Swedish King (Gustavus IV), his generals and administration, and full of admiration for individual war heroes, particularly the ordinary, private, Finnish soldier, defending the eastern part of Sweden/Finnland. After the war politicians and the general public of Sweden gradually repressed the loss of Finland and paid more attention to the Western parts of the Nordic region.

In spite of all animosity in the past, a Movement called the Scandinavism emerged during the 19th Century. The movement was led by prominent authors and intellectuals; in Denmark (Oehlenschläger, Ingeman and Grundtvig) and in Sweden (Ling, Geijer and Tegnér). The movement advocated that it was time to replace the hatred and conflicts of the past with cooperation and Nordic brotherhood. King Gustavus III (of Sweden) had paid a visit to Copenhagen in 1787 and been greeted with considerable enthusiasm. The periodical Minerva commented the visit writing:

*Every resident of Scandinavia must agree that it is wonderful to observe three Scandinavian peoples walking hand by hand.*

Five years later, 1792, professor Jens Schieldrup (of Denmark) spoke at the Norwegian Club in London, stressing the importance of a union between the three Nordic nations. In 1796 a Scandinavian Literary Society was formed in Copenhagen, publishing for several years a periodical, Museum of Scandinavia, aiming to establish viable literary links between the three nations in the Nordic region.

In Denmark and Sweden the Scandinavism strongly focused on literature and science. However around 1830, particularly in Denmark, a political Scandinavism had emerged expressing as a goal the establishment of an effective Scandinavian defence treaty (as a reaction to threats from Prussia) and ultimately a united Scandinavia, to counterbalance aspirations in Germany and Russia. When King Fredric VII (Denmark) announced the Danish liberal political plans for German Schleswig, where Danish was spoken, and for Holstein, uprising followed in the two provinces. The uprising was exploited by Prussia and other German states, while Denmark attempted to obtain military aid and support from Sweden/Norway. Some newspapers

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in Sweden were keen to express solidarity with Denmark, but the political establishment in Sweden was unwilling to get involved in a war with the German states.\textsuperscript{220}

A movement of liberal political nationalism in Denmark published articles by its spokespersons Orla Lehman and Carl Ploug in the newspaper \textit{Fædrelandet (The Fatherland)}, claiming that the welfare of Denmark was a Scandinavian duty and responsibility. This view was marketed at the joint Scandinavian students’ gatherings in the 1840s. Such gatherings had commenced in 1838, in the winter, when the ice was strong enough to allow students from Copenhagen to walk between Denmark and Sweden to Lund for a Scandinavian encounter.

Four years later, in 1842, Swedish students from Lund came to Copenhagen. The following year, 1843, students from Copenhagen and Lund came to Uppsala. The King of Sweden and his government did not share the enthusiasm of the Danish students and that of their Swedish and, in a few cases, Norwegian sympathisers. A gathering planned to take place in Copenhagen in 1844 was cancelled, as King Oscar I (of Sweden) was totally against the concept of Scandinavism and particularly against the political ethos behind the gatherings. In 1845, however, a student’s gathering was held in Copenhagen with some participation of students from Kristiania, Norway. Spokesperson Orla Lehman delivered a controversial political address urging the students from Sweden and Norway to engage in military support of Denmark and Schleswig. Sweden did not offer military support in 1848 but negotiated a truce and, eventually, peace between Prussia and Denmark.\textsuperscript{221}

For some 10 years Scandinavism was almost out of focus in Denmark, but in 1856 Prussia and Austria sided with the Holstein uprising against Denmark. Again Denmark attempted to obtain military support from Sweden. The King of Sweden, Oscar I, now showed some sympathy and at a students’ gathering in Uppsala in 1856 Carl Plough strongly advocated Scandinavian unity. At a subsequent reception for the Scandinavian students at the Drottningholm castle, Stockholm, King Oscar I spoke to the students telling them that the Scandinavian peoples were brothers between which no war now could be fought. Instead the Scandinavian nations ought to assist each other in defence. Some diplomatic initiatives were also taken by Sweden to gain French and British support for a defence of Denmark. Denmark, under King Fredrick VII, declined a Swedish proposal for a Defence Treaty covering Denmark and Schleswig, but excluding Holstein. After that the King of Sweden fell ill and the Swedish attitude changed. France warned Sweden strongly not to connect to any political \textit{Scandinavism}. In 1864 Prussia and Austria attacked Denmark in what has been called the 2\textsuperscript{nd} War over Schleswig. No Nordic military support was given to Denmark and political Scandinavism appeared to be dead.\textsuperscript{222}

Instead initiatives were later taken to create associations for cooperation in the Nordic region, i.e. The Nordic Society (in Denmark), The Nordic National Association (in Sweden), and the Scandinavian Club (in Norway). As a result of attempts to realise viable Scandinavian cooperation, a joint Scandinavian currency was agreed and introduced in 1873 between Denmark and Sweden. Norway was affiliated to the monetary union two years later. In 1872 efforts were made to harmonise legislation and administrative regulations in the Nordic region. This successful development in \textit{Scandinavism} suffered when the union between Sweden and Norway was broken in 1905. During the Great War, however, the Nordic nations managed to remain neutral and develop cooperation even if the monetary union had to be discontinued due to financial needs.


\textsuperscript{221} On Scandinavism, see: Wikipedia \url{http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scandinavism}

\textsuperscript{222} On Scandinavism, see: Wikipedia \url{http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scandinavism}
Incompatibilities in the region. In 1919 the Nordic Association was founded with Iceland as an additional member from 1922 and Finland from 1924.223

In Norway the sentiments on Scandinavism were quite different from those in Denmark. In 1816 the Revd Nicolai Wergeland wrote *A True Recollection of Danish Crimes towards the Kingdom of Norway*. His son Henrik Wergeland continued to foster an anti-Danish sentiment.224 And the enforced union with Sweden in 1814 did very little to foster any love in Norway for Scandinavian unity.225 Students from Norway appear not to have participated in large numbers in most of the Scandinavian gathering for students particularly as the movement turned political, embracing a vision of a United Scandinavia in support of the Danish ambition to incorporate Schleswig–Danish-speaking but part of Germany.226 In the war 1848-1851 several Swedish students joined volunteer corps on the Danish side. In Norway only gradually the Danish cause was regarded with a little more sympathy.

4.2 Scandinavian Church Assemblies

After the Reformation, the Nationalised churches in Scandinavia had had only few and sporadic encounters in line with what the actual political situation had demanded or permitted. Political structures created two natural Ecclesiastical regions:

1. The Church of Sweden & the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland.
2. The Church of Denmark & the Church of Norway & the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Iceland & the Church of the Faroe Islands and the Church of Greenland.

Inspired by cultural and political Scandinavism, churches in the Nordic region also tried to operate together. Church historians have pointed out that the cultural and political Scandinavism constituted a considerable source of inspiration for the Scandinavian Church Assemblies, commenced in Copenhagen in 1857.227 Christian Kalkar, from a Jewish background, Dr of Theology and clergyman in the Church of Denmark, acted as an intermediate for influences from Germany and the *Kirchentag* that was arranged there by the Evangelical Alliance.228 Kalkar imagined a united Scandinavian Church emerging through a repeated Nordic style *Kirchentag*. Kalkar published an article presenting this idea in 1853. Eventually, a Scandinavian Church Assembly was held in Copenhagen in 1857 inspired not only by Dr Kalkar but also by a renewed general sense of unity experienced in the Nordic churches over a shared common history and, in particular, over the shared Augsburg Confession.229 The original formal proposals to call an Assembly allegedly came from Sweden, signed by J. H. Thomander (Bishop of Lund), Peter Wieselgren (Dean of Gothenburg) and three vicars (C A Bergman, P G Ahnfelt and H B Hammar). The formal invitation, directed to “Fellow Clergymen of the Augsburg Confession” was issued later by 12 clergymen from Denmark, Sweden and Norway.230 At the Meeting in Copenhagen questions relevant to Danish Christians dominated the agenda, ardently commented by those in favour or by those opposed to Grundtvig and his understanding of the Christian Church and of the Holy Scriptures (i.e. Scripture is rooted in the Church).231 The Copenhagen Meeting did not approve the Grundtvig view on Church and Scripture, but expressed support for the political


229 Fil.Lic. Åke Holmberg wrote an Essay on the Scandinavian Church Assemblies that were held in Copenhagen in 1857, in Lund 1859, in Kristiania 1861 and in Copenhagen 1871.


aim to unite the Scandinavian countries and incorporate Schleswig into Danish hegemony. The Assembly also found some time to consider the question of Freedom of Religion. A Low Church majority made the Assembly make a statement that strongly recommended such freedom in the Nordic region.

In Sweden High Church Swensk Kyrkotidning (Church Times of Sweden), was expressing doubt about the wisdom of arranging Scandinavian Church Assemblies, while the Low Church Theologisk Tidsskrift (Theological Review) expressed support for the Assemblies. Positive reactions to the resolutions at the Assembly were published by the general press in Denmark (Faedrelænderet and Dagbladet).

At the Scandinavian Church Assembly in Lund 1859 further discussions followed on proposals for a continuation of the Scandinavian Church Assemblies and on Scandinavian cooperation regarding Mission. In an attempt not to be mistaken for promoting Political Scandinavism there was a gradual change from calling the Meetings Scandinavian Assemblies to naming them Nordic.

At the Nordic/Scandinavian Church Assembly in Kristiania 1861 the Grundtvig view on Church and Scripture was fiercely discussed. Norwegians inspired by Lutheran Orthodoxy and a pietistic revival ethos accused the Grundtvig supporters of “taking the Church directly to Rome”. Professor Gisle Johnson led the considerably strong Norwegian opposition to the Grundtvig ideas. The heated debate left no room for reflection over Scandinavian unity or Scandinavian Church-Cooperation.

During the Second War over Schleswig in 1864 no military support at all was given by Sweden/Norway, bringing the political movement for a united Scandinavia to a bitter end.

Initially (Copenhagen 1857) the Nordic Church Assemblies were highly inspired by Political/Cultural Scandinavism. Gradually and acutely after the Danish-German war over Schleswig the Nordic Church Assemblies, particularly the Assembly in Copenhagen 1871, attempted to distance themselves from Political/Cultural Scandinavism. In the process the Scandinavian Church Assemblies were replaced by Nordic Lutheran conferences on Mission (in Malmö 1863, Göteborg 1885, Oslo 1889, Copenhagen 1893, Stockholm 1897 and Oslo 1902).

4.3 A remarkable political initiative.

According to “the London Minutes” (1850, 1852) Christian of Glücksburg would succeed Fredrick VII as King of Denmark and Schleswig Holstein were to be part of Denmark, but with very strong local governance. A decade later and before the Second War over Schleswig in 1864 a remarkable political initiative was taken in Denmark. In 1863 a verbal agreement had, allegedly, been reached between the Danish and the Swedish monarchs on mutual military assistance. This agreement, however, was never politically ratified. Already in 1837 the Swedish Foreign Secretary af Wetterstedt had instructed the Swedish Heads of Legations not to engage in any attempts to alter the political structure of the three Nordic nations.

Remarkably, two Danish Government Ministers, Orla Lehman (Interior) and Bishop D G Monrad (Culture – Church) initiated talks with Sweden’s Legation Minister in Copenhagen discussing a

\[\text{References:}\]


236 European Diplomatic conference in London over the Danish-German conflict.


238 For further reading on Scandinavism, please refer to: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scandinavism
4.4 Proposals regarding a Nordic Church Council in 1871 and 1946.

As an epilogue to the efforts to achieve a united Scandinavia, a Nordic Church Assembly was held in Copenhagen in 1871. Now a Scandinavian political union was not even mentioned. Instead proposals were heard to create a Nordic Church Council, a plan meant to be further discussed at a proposed Assembly planned to be held in Stockholm in 1876. Theological controversy and disappointment over the outcome of War 1864 meant that there was no enthusiasm left for efforts to achieve any unity. The Stockholm meeting was never held. The Nordic Church Council, according to Dag Thorkildsen, was as an idea proposed as a way to distance the Nordic Church Assemblies from Political Scandinavism.

75 years later, at a Nordic Ecumenical Meeting, arranged by the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI, in a place called Lejondal near Stockholm, in 1946 (29.1 -31.1), Bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard (of Copenhagen) echoed the proposals from 1871 by suggesting that a Nordic Church Council ought to be created with both clerical and lay representation. The objects of such a Council, according to the Bishop, would be to foster a viable Nordic church cooperation with an Ecclesiastical unity in the Nordic region as a visible goal. A Nordic Church Council could engage in efforts for unity in Worship, Education of the clergy, the production of a Nordic church newsletter and an information service. Professor K.E. Skydsgaard (Denmark) spoke in favour of the Bishop’s proposals even if he feared that an official Nordic Church Council might have a negative effect on voluntary work in the churches. At the Nordic Bishops’ Conference at Stora Sundby in August 1946 the proposals were presented and discussed. A Select Committee was appointed to prepare a Nordic Episcopal response (Lehtonen, Sigurdsson, Fjellbu, Rodhe), to be discussed at the following Nordic Bishops’ Conference at Sagu in Finland in 1949. In the report from Sagu 1949 printed in Kristen gemenskap a sermon by Archbishop Lehtonen on ecumenism is reported on at length but not a single word is reproduced in print about the proposals for a Nordic Church Council. It is quite possible that the Nordic Bishops’ Council had found that a Nordic Church Council would not be at all helpful as it might confuse the role of the Nordic Bishops’ Council.

In the 19th Century a Nordic Church Council, as I understand it, could have given to the Nordic churches an escape from the trap of political and cultural Scandinavism and enabled the churches themselves to take on the missionary and ecumenical tasks in a credible and effective way. Instead political Scandinavism led to a collapse of the Nordic church cooperation, as the following Danish quote distinctly describes. In 1921 Dr. A. Th. Jørgensen wrote an article: When we met again, published in Nordens kirker og Aandsstrømninger etter Verdenskrigen (Copenhagen 1921), commenting on the failed attempts to bring the Nordic churches together:

In the time of our Grandparents a Church Scandinavism gained considerable strength. To many prominent Nordic church leaders, the Nordic Church Assemblies, commenced in 1857, appeared to constitute the finest days of their lives. However, it became evident that the Scandinavism, of the 1850s, also that of the churches, was like a plant without any root, a creation of romantic dreams,

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240 The event is reported on by Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scandinavism
243 Kristen gemenskap 1946 p.27.
244 Kristen gemenskap 1946 p.166.
245 Kristen gemenskap 1949 p. 141.
fostered by words rather than deeds, idle talk rather than collaboration. The war in 1864 came like a winter storm over the rootless plant that withered away.246

I find that in 1946, when the importance of regions had diminished in the worldwide ecumenical landscape, a Nordic Church Council, as proposed that year by the Bishop of Copenhagen, could have presented a viable tool to make the Nordic churches more loyal to each other and hence more effective in the ecumenical process. Ideally the Nordic Bishops’ Council, to my mind, would have been integrated into the Nordic Church Council, leaving the Nordic Ecumenical Institute to serve as its secretariat and research centre.

4.5 Examples of other Nordic Joint Church activities.

As examples of other attempts to foster joint church activities in the Nordic region one could list:
- A Nordic Missionary Conference in 1863
- A Nordic Conference on Diaconal (charitable) Work in 1874
- A Nordic Conference on Sunday School matters in 1880
- A Nordic Student Conference in 1890.

Nordic Regional Conferences arranged by World Alliance for International understanding through the Churches (WA) from 1927 (first in Bergen, Norway)
- Kristen Gemenskap, Ecumenical News issued from 1928 by and for the Nordic region of WA.247

Administratively the various Nordic Conferences had a rather blurred structure. More often than not the administration was left in the hands of committed individuals in for example Norway, where Students’ Meetings and other ecumenical conferences were dependent on individuals working for their ideals. In some cases a national committee was responsible for ecumenical work. That was the case for the World Alliance, Life and Work, Faith and Order and The International Missionary Council.248 Potentially, the Nordic Ecumenical Institute could have added, I believe, some structure to an unclear administration of Ecumenical affairs in the Nordic region.

4.5.1 Missionary Conferences.

The Missionary Conference in Malmö in 1863 brought further ideas, regarding a Scandinavian Missionary Agency, from the Nordic Church Assembly in Lund 1859, when Mission had been in the focus of attention. A second motivating factor came from Denmark. The Danish Halle Mission had handed over its Tamil Mission in India to the German Leipzig Mission, which was strongly confessional and conservative. Denmark thereafter, many complained, had no missionary assignments. A Scandinavian cooperation might bring a remedy. Dr Christian Kalkar was the one who had prepared the proposals for a Joint Scandinavian Ecumenical Mission project, which as a side effect would bring the Nordic churches into a closer relationship, Kalkar argued.249 This was also communicated at the Nordic Church Assembly in Kristiania 1861. Committed Danes and Swedes sent invitations to members of Evangelical Lutheran Missionary Societies in Denmark Sweden and Norway to attend a Missionary Conference in Malmö, Sweden, in 1863. Finland had only just started a Finnish Missionary Society (1859), but had so far no missionaries overseas.250 Some 200 delegates attended the Malmö conference in 1863 (75 from Denmark, 125 from Sweden and 3 from Norway).

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246 The Quotation [translation into English by Lennart Sjöström] appears in a letter from Mr Harry Johansson of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute to Bishop Gustaf Aulén, Strängnäs, 22 January 1944. The letter is kept in the archives of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute c/o Church of Sweden, Uppsala.
247 Kristen Gemenskap, särtryck 4/1950, marking NEI’s 10 years service to the Nordic region.
The very few delegates from Norway were nevertheless the most influential. Sven Bruun (Norway) was elected chair for the Malmö Meeting. In Norway there was at this time a considerable interest in missionary work, but only very limited interest for any Nordic joint missionary projects. Delegates from Sweden and Denmark, on the other hand, appeared to be very keen on the Scandinavian aspects of the missionary projects discussed in Malmö. To escape this dilemma, Waldemar Rudin, leader of the Evangeliska fosterlandsstiftelsen (The Swedish Evangelical Mission), proposed that the Malmö conference should only agree on a joint academic missionary magazine and on future Missionary conferences, and not argue about joint missionary projects, which, according to Peter Fjellstedt, could be resembled to “attractive clouds”. The proposals were carried by the conference.

A planned Nordic Missionary Conference in Copenhagen had to be cancelled because of War over Schleswig in 1864, when Denmark complained strongly over Sweden’s indifference and unwillingness to assist its neighbor militarily. The Danish pain over the political situation meant that no Nordic Missionary Conferences were called until the Gothenburg Conference in 1885. No proposals for a Joint Nordic Missionary Project were presented in Gothenburg. Instead the conference dealt with theological and methodological questions related to mission. After Gothenburg, Nordic Missionary Conferences were held in Oslo1889, Copenhagen 1893, Stockholm 1897 and in Oslo in 1902.

Of particular interest was the growing missionary project in northern India (The Santal Mission), supported by revivalist movements in Norway, Denmark and Sweden. The Nordic Missionary Conferences were very “Lutheran” and rather church affiliated, even if they were colored by revivalist and pietistic movements. At the conferences Danish/Norwegian “Indre (Home) Mission”, Swedish “Low church” and Finnish revivalist movements dominated and influenced the agenda to include the relationship between mission overseas and mission at home. Dr H. W. Tottie represented the Church of Sweden Mission and a slightly different, not always generally accepted, approach. For Dr. Tottie and the Church of Sweden a paramount ambition for the missionary efforts was to establish or plant in far away places a branch of the Church Universal. After the Oslo conference in 1902 a conference in Copenhagen should have followed in 1906. It did not, however, convene until 1922, delayed by the dissolved union between Norway and Sweden and by the Great War. Renewed Nordic efforts followed to provide a Nordic influence of the International Missionary Council IMC (founded 1921). A Nordic Missionary Council was created in 1923 and operated like a regional sub structure to the IMC.

4.5.2 Nordic Christian Students’ Meetings.
The Nordic Missionary conferences were conferences based upon a Lutheran confessional foundation. The Nordic Christian Student Conferences of the 20th Century on their part were very much ecumenical and inter-confessional. In Oslo a Student Mission Society was founded in 1881, after an initiative from the USA. The Nordic Christian Student Conferences were inspired by the Missionary movement and by Anglo-Saxon revivalist movements. Before any Christian Student Conferences had been arranged in the Nordic region Christian students had convened in Japan in 1889 and the same year in Northfield USA. Nathan Söderblom had attended the Northfield meeting and heard the greeting sent from Japan: “Make Jesus King”. Karl Fries, General Secretary of the YMCA in Stockholm, attended the Nordic Missionary Conference in Oslo in 1889 and heard there the same greeting from Japan, now brought to Norway. Fries relates how the telegram read out in Oslo brought enthusiasm to those attending the Missionary Conference. Martin Eckhoff, Cand.Theol. and a leader of the Student Missionary Society, exclaimed commenting the message: *If students in the Far

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East come together in the name of their King, Jesus Christ, shouldn’t we in the European North be able to do the same?

The students agreed and commissioned M Eckhoff to organise Christian Student Conferences, the first in Hillerød in Denmark in 1890. The meeting in Denmark was followed by another 6 Nordic Christian Student Conferences in Horten, Norway 1892, Vadstena, Sweden 1895, Herlufsholm, Denmark 1897, Setnesmoen, Norway 1899, Leckö, Sweden 1901 and Sørø, Denmark 1903.

To the Meeting in Norway in 1892 came for the first time students from Finland. At Horten 1892 Robert P Wilder attended, trying to recruit students for future missionary work. Mr Wilder introduced to a Nordic student audience a phenomenon well known in the USA, Christian academic volunteer corps (The Student Volunteer Movement). At the Christian Student Conference in Vadstena in 1895 American ecumenist John R. Mott attended and was instrumental to the Vadstena resolution to create The World Student Christian Federation. At Vadstena female students attended, allegedly for the first time.

Ecumenical pioneer Ms Ruth Rouse had visited the Nordic universities in 1897 promoting female participation in the Christian Student Conferences, which resulted in a considerable female student participation at Herlufsholm in 1897.

The Student Volunteer Movement arranged a Missionary conference in Stockholm in the same year, 1897, and another one in 1898. In 1899 The Student Volunteer Movement coordinated its Missionary conference with the Christian Student Conference in Setnesmoen, Norway, where a revivalist spirit predominated. At Leckö, Sweden, in 1901, the revivalist spirit was overcome by a less Anglo Saxon atmosphere. Dr. Lydia Wahlström took part, critical of the propaganda of the Revivalist movement. Nathanael Beskow introduced social matters concerning human responsibility. Finally, at Sørø, Denmark, in 1903, so many students had expressed a wish to attend that the organizers had to accept that the lack of facilities meant that a maximum of 470 could attend at Sørø. A secondary improvised conference was arranged at Herlufsholm catering for an additional 200 students. One of the speakers at Sørø was Nathan Söderblom. After this Christian Student Conference in 1903, political unrest (the union between Sweden and Norway was discontinued in 1905 and the Great War commenced in 1914) forced the organizers to a temporary halt. It was not possible for the Christian students to convene again until at Nyborg Strand, Denmark in 1919 and at Nädendal, Finland in 1921.

4.5.3 Nordic Sunday School Conferences.

Other examples of Nordic Christian cooperation are the many Nordic Sunday School Conferences arranged in Scandinavian capitals between 1880 and 1922. The Conferences were very well attended and influenced by Anglo-Saxon spirituality. This was for the Sunday school a “golden age”. During the second part of the 19th Century a number of establishments for the training of Deaconesses (in charitable work) were established in the Nordic countries. These institutions sent representatives to Nordic Diaconal Conferences arranged regularly from 1889.

When Manfred Björkquist attended the Provisional WCC conference in Utrecht, Holland, in 1938, which conference discussed, agreed and proposed a regional membership structure for a future World Council of Churches, WCC, he came from a region (the Nordic) which did not lack experience of attempts to engage in regional church cooperation, even if the Nordic Church Assemblies had not been crowned with success.

4.6 Nordic Bishops’ Council.

When proposing and inviting to a Nordic Bishops’ Council in 1919 the intention of Archbishop Söderblom appears to have been to create for the Nordic Folk churches a prominent role both in a Lutheran and in a more international context. His goals might not have been fully achieved, even if the Nordic Bishops met regularly during the years to come (in Denmark 1924, Norway 1927, Sweden 1930). A strong negative reaction to Söderblom’s initiative came from the Archbishop of Finland, Gustav Johansson, who allegedly disliked Söderblom, whom he regarded as a theologian dangerously close to liberalism. Johansson blocked as far as he was able any Finnish cooperation with the Church of Sweden and he expressed a wish that Söderblom should never be allowed to visit Finland. However, Söderblom enjoyed a very good and useful friendship with the Bishop of Porvoo (later Tampere) Jakko Gummerus. To Söderblom it was clear that the Bishops should lead the Nordic churches into unity and cooperation. The Nordic Bishops’ Council should constitute a platform from which the Nordic churches would act as a strategically important unit in Christendom. Söderblom saw three great centres of Christianity besides Rome, and they were: Constantinople, Canterbury and Uppsala. Uppsala should lead a North European union of churches, a corpus evangelicorum.

Attempts to create a Nordic Ecclesiastical body.

5.1 Some Post-Great War Ecclesiological Observations - in a new political landscape, that embraced a renewed willingness to engage in cooperation in the Nordic region.

5.1.1 Political development.

After the Great War peace treaties introduced major changes for the Nordic nations. From Germany Denmark was given back that part of Schleswig in which a majority of the population was Danish-speaking. Iceland gained independence from Denmark even if the bonds were not completely broken until 1944. Finland gained independence from Russia and established itself, after a bloody civil war, as an independent republic with two official languages (Swedish and Finnish) and two Established churches (the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland and the Finnish Orthodox Church). The cultural and political history of Finland meant that Finland was regarded as naturally belonging to the Nordic region, traditionally close to Sweden. Norway, independent from Sweden since 1905, constituted a significant and regenerated part of the Nordic region. In short, after the Great War the Nordic region came out politically reshaped and, as I understand it, open for renewed national and regional manifestations of cooperation.

The Nordic region did not follow a European post-Great War trend to abolish the state- church system. In the Nordic region, generally regarded as ethnically, culturally and religiously homogeneous, the Lutheran state churches were retained more or less as they had been shaped at the Reformation. The close ties between church and state should become even closer during the Second World War, as the Folk churches were able to contribute towards a much needed national identity and play an important role as a moral force against Communist or Nazi command.

Before long, the Democratic Nordic region was surrounded by totalitarian states, the Communist Soviet Union and Nazi-Germany. Few feared aggression from Germany. Bolshevism was the real threat, according to many in the region. Germany, close to ruin, had been restored by the Nazi Party, for which they were

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admired by many. Such admiration, however, never resulted in election successes in the Nordic region. In free elections Nazi parties only managed to obtain 0.7% in Sweden, and 1.5% in Norway.\footnote{Ryman, Björn: Into the Ecumenical World in Ryman, Björn et al.: Nordic Folk churches. A Contemporary Church History, Cambridge 2005, p.65.}

In my view it is rather obvious that politicians in the Nordic region supported the Folk church for as long as that would strengthen the party and the party policies pursued.

### 5.1.2 Cultural development.

Nordic cooperation intensified after the Great War. Föreningen Norden (The Nordic Association) was formed in 1919 in an atmosphere of Nordic solidarity and “belonging together”, an atmosphere that soon became evident also in the Nordic Folk churches.\footnote{Österlin, Lars: Churches of Northern Europe in Profile. A thousand years of Anglo-Nordic relations. The Canterbury Press, Norwich, 1995. p 246.} Nathan Söderblom commented on that sense of Nordic unity in an article published in 1920 in the (first) Year Book of the Nordic Association.

### 5.1.3 Ecclesiastical development.

Just after the Great War, Archbishop Nathan Söderblom initiated the Nordic Bishops’ Council in 1919.\footnote{Österlin, Lars: Churches of Northern Europe in Profile. A thousand years of Anglo-Nordic relations. The Canterbury Press, Norwich, 1995. p 246.} This forum developed into the most important body for cooperation between the Nordic national churches. The Nordic Bishops met regularly and Söderblom was of the opinion that it was the Nordic Bishops that should lead the Nordic communion of churches in cooperation.\footnote{Österlin, Lars: Churches of Northern Europe in Profile. A thousand years of Anglo-Nordic relations. The Canterbury Press, Norwich, 1995. p 246.}

In Vadstena in 1895 the World Student Christian Federation had been founded and young Nathan Söderblom had been present. The student movement became most important as a source of inspiration for the ecumenical movement between the wars. Of similar importance was the Young Men’s Christian Association, YMCA, offering “alliance ecumenism” as it was introduced in the Nordic region. In all the Nordic countries YMCA assisted young people, particularly as they were moving from rural to urban areas.\footnote{Ryman, Björn: Into the Ecumenical World in Ryman, Björn et al.: Nordic Folk churches. A Contemporary Church History, Cambridge 2005, p.63.}

Nathan Söderblom died in 1931 and was succeeded by Erling Eidem in 1932. Eidem had served as Professor of New Testament Theology in Lund and enjoyed close contacts with the academic world of Germany. The new (i.e. after 1933) Nazi rulers in Germany were bewildering to the Swedish academic world. Some, like Hugo Odeberg, were rather enthusiastic over Hitler’s ideas and rule. Others, like Gustaf Aulén and Yngve Brilioth, took a clear stand and distanced themselves completely from all forms of Nazi tendencies. Yngve Brilioth developed close contacts with a group of ecumenically committed theologians, willing to carry on the work of Archbishop Söderblom. The ecumenically minded theologians supported Archbishop Eidem who was rather inexperienced in international affairs. Formal links were retained to the Protestant churches of Germany, even if the contemporary ecumenical development contributed towards closer contacts with the Anglican world.\footnote{Ryman, Björn: Into the Ecumenical World in Ryman, Björn et al.: Nordic Folk churches. A Contemporary Church History, Cambridge 2005, p.64.} Yngve Brilioth had very close contacts with George Bell, former assistant to the Archbishop of Canterbury (Randall Davidson) and Bishop of Chichester, who was also a formal and formidable leader of the ecumenical movement in formation. Brilioth published two major works introducing Anglicanism to readers in Sweden: Eucharistic Faith and Practice and The Anglican Revival. He had represented Sweden at the Faith and Order conference in Lausanne in 1927 and the year after in Prague (1928), when the three ecumenical branches (i.e. Faith and Order, Life and Work, World Alliance) met for a working conference.\footnote{Ryman, Björn: Into the Ecumenical World in Ryman, Björn et al.: Nordic Folk churches. A Contemporary Church History, Cambridge 2005, p.64.}
No doubt, the ecumenical development in the Nordic region was influenced by the general international ecumenical movement and its early organisational manifestations as outlined in this essay. I would here like to highlight as examples not only the Nordic Bishops’ Council but also the Nordic Missionary Council, the Nordic Council for Sunday Schools and the World Alliance (WA) for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches and the Christian Students’ Movement.

In 1933 the Swedish Ecumenical Council was formed. It started its activities by a public statement in which Swedish Christians jointly expressed dismay over and protest against the Aryan Paragraph introduced in Nazi-Germany. Information from the Swedish Ecumenical Council was distributed in the Nordic region through the publication *Kristen gemenskap*. The Council in that way reported on the church struggle in Germany and distributed news from the Confessing Church (*Die bekennende Kirche*) and its leaders Barth and Bonhoeffer.

During the 1930s Nordic theologians and church leaders participated in several ecumenical conferences (i.e. Edinburgh, Oxford and Hampstead. When the German churches abstained from participation, Archbishop Eidem as a benevolent gesture, daringly said the intercessional prayer at St Paul’s Cathedral, London, in German. In many ways Scandinavian theologians played an important role at those formative meetings.

The Nordic Folk churches through its leadership took initiatives for peace and reconciliation. In particular Bishop Berggrav of Oslo engaged in such campaigns when just before the war he served as vice president of the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches. In 1939 Berggrav produced a program for peace called *God’s Calling to Us Now*. It was signed not only by Berggrav himself, but also by Ole Hallesby, the more conservative and somewhat fundamentalist Norwegian leader. The initiative, supported by Royal families in the Nordic region, did not succeed in its peace efforts, but established Bishop Berggrav as an international and ecumenical spokesman for the Nordic region, potentially a new Söderblom.

International links had brought to the Nordic region sympathy also for pietism and Low Church ideals.

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277 As early as during the 19th Century, International links had brought to the Nordic region a strain of pietism or evangelism. This was the case already when the German Moravians sent missionaries or “Diaspora workers” to the Nordic region. Later their followers were open to other Revivalist influences, for instance to English Methodism or Presbyterianism. That openness was still very obvious between the two world wars. John Paterson (Methodist) and Ebenezer Henderson (Scottish Presbyterian), unable to reach India for intended missionary work near Calcutta, had arrived in Copenhagen in 1805. The Napoleonic wars disrupted their voyage attempts to reach India and the two missionaries instead engaged in ecumenical work in the Nordic countries, in Copenhagen, Gothenburg, Stockholm and Turku. As a result the Finnish Bible Society was established in 1812, and the Norwegian Bible Society was founded in 1816. Especially in Norway the Bible Society flourished to establish a widespread organization with diocesan committees and Episcopal support. Their presence constituted a base for further ecumenical endeavours during the following Century. Behind the successful Bible Societies there was an underlying enthusiasm for Evangelical revivalism. Besides the National Bible Societies, the British and Foreign Bible Society established branches in Nordic countries. Between 1832 and 1885 the branch in Stockholm distributed 3 million bibles in Sweden. The branch in Norway, financed from England, carried on successfully until the end of the nineteenth Century. Similar societies, i.e. *Traktatsällskap* (Tract Societies), were distributing tracts and pamphlets all written in a spirit of revivalism. These Societies provided formal structure to the people of the Revivalist movement and fellowship for those who were engaged in Nordic ecumenical endeavours after the Great War. The circles surrounding the Bible Societies can be attributed early attempts to found Societies for mission overseas. George Scott, a 29 year old Methodist from Scotland, was appointed Director of the British Bible Agency in Stockholm. Against all odds a small Methodist chapel had been approved for worship in Sweden’s rather limited religious freedom. Scott served part time at that Methodist chapel, which counted the industrialist Samuel Owen as a member of the congregation. George Scott was instrumental for early Methodist work in Sweden and for some ground breaking initiatives to cooperation with leaders of the Church of Sweden. Through such cooperation the *Svenska Missionssällskapet* (the Swedish Missionary Society) was founded as an inter-denominational society with prominent and influential members of society as trustees. In addition to Scott’s innovative activities as a leader of the Bible Society and of the
As outlined in this essay the early Nordic ecclesiastical development was, to some considerable extent, carried and, no doubt, influenced by political and cultural currents. The Scandinavism collapsed when real politics did not in fact support the aims of Political Scandinavism. Political/Cultural Scandinavism nevertheless inspired the Scandinavian/Nordic Church Assemblies which, again, later collapsed over both political and theological controversies.

The ideas that carried the different strands of Scandinavism must, in my view, have survived and found a home in the aspirations for a Nordic church cooperation after the Great War. The general longing for a Scandinavian/Nordic unity was tied together with both Archbishop Söderblom’s work for an Episcopal communion and with contemporary impulses for Home and Foreign mission. The result was a Nordic ecclesiastical movement which sometimes, both at home and internationally, was perceived as an established reality. Interest in Nordic ecclesiastical cooperation was expressed not only in Sweden but also in Denmark by, for instance, the Bishop of Zealand, Hans Ostenfeld, who was later to be appointed Bishop of Copenhagen and by Valdemar Amundsen, Bishop of Haderslev, (in the recently by Denmark regained Southern Jutland), who was an active and keen supporter of Nordic ecclesiastical cooperation. It is probably no coincidence that Nordic ecclesiastical cooperation was promoted by Bishops in the 1920s, as Nathan Söderblom in 1919 had initiated the Nordic Bishops’ Conference. The Nordic Folk churches appear to have welcomed the initiative – with the exception of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and its Archbishop Gustav Johansson, who strongly disliked his Swedish counterpart. The conservative and most pietistic Archbishop Johansson regarded Nathan Söderblom as too liberal and culturally too open. During the 1920s Archbishop Johansson managed to block any Finnish attempts at collaboration with the Church of Sweden. However, this Finnish negative attitude, was somewhat softened through Söderblom’s ecumenically minded friend the Bishop of Porvoo, Jacob Gummerus.278

For Söderblom it was most natural that the Bishops should lead a Nordic church cooperation. It was through the Bishops, Söderblom argued, that a far reaching ecumenical vision would be realised. The Nordic churches, through the Nordic Bishops’ Council, would establish themselves as an important Nordic unit in Christendom. The Nordic Bishops’ Council could, some early press reports suggested, play a role similar to that of the Anglican Lambeth Conference. In Söderblom ‘s view a Nordic ecclesiastical body would be most useful and the optimal form for such a body would consist of the Nordic Bishops’ Council.279

For Söderblom it was not enough to create a Nordic ecclesiastical body. The apostolic succession maintained in the Church of Sweden and in the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland could potentially be embraced by the other Nordic churches and serve as a tool for further communion between Lutheran and, for instance, Anglican churches throughout the world.280 In that manner, the Nordic cooperation, important in itself, could also serve a more ambitious ecumenical goal, according to Söderblom.

In the 1980s initiatives were taken involving NEI to establish an ecclesiastical area consisting of Lutheran churches in the Nordic and Baltic regions as well as Anglican churches of the British isles. At an annual meeting of the Secretariat for the Nordic Folk churches in 1991 the Revd Kaj Engström, Director of NEI, reported that the talks were useful and could possibly be concluded in Denmark the following year [that was not to happen. Instead the Agreement was completed in Järvenpää, Finland in 1993]. The minutes from 1991 include information on technical assistance provided by NEI during the Nordic/Baltic/British talks and on

Methodist movement, he became a major source of inspiration for C. O. Rosenius, the leader of Swedish nineteenth Century revivalism, which was brought together in Evangeliska Fosterlands-Stiftelsen (The Swedish Evangelical Mission), a movement and organisation with preserved structural links to the Church of Sweden. Parallel to the Revivalist movement the 19th Century also saw a shift in culture away from rationalism towards more spiritual values. Tradition, represented by the Nordic national churches, was again highly esteemed. The Bible Societies, the Missionary agencies and diaconal institutions offered administrative facilities to the various emerging Nordic ecumenical conferences. The revivalist movement had a tendency to cross national borders. The Evangelical Alliance was formed in the middle of the 19th Century for the strengthening of international fellowship, and it constituted an early example of revivalist ecumenical activity. (after Österlin, Lars: Churches of Northern Europe in Profile. A thousand years of Anglo-Nordic relations. 1995)

the fact that “the Anglicans were asking NEI to carry on in its endeavours to coordinate the talks on the Nordic side.”

Manfred Björkquist attended the Utrecht Conference in May, 1938, where Bye Laws for the Secretariat in Geneva, as well as a Draft Constitution, including a structure for membership for the emerging World Council of Churches, WCC, had been agreed. Björkquist travelled back to Sigtuna obsessed by the idea to create there, in Sigtuna, an Ecumenical academy or a Regional institute for studies relevant to and serving the World Ecumenical movement as well as the churches in the Nordic region. The Institute, when established, would not only be a centre for studies but at the same time serve as a “sub centre” in the Nordic region to the Geneva Secretariat.282 WCC Draft Constitution, agreed in Utrecht in May 1938, presupposed a membership structure based on regional Christian councils. Certainly, the signals from Utrecht in 1938 prompted Manfred Björkquist to work intensely on the realisation of a Regional Nordic Ecumenical Institute in Sigtuna, intended to serve purposefully as an Ecumenical Academy dealing with contemporary issues in order to brief and influence churches in the Nordic region and to offer feed back to WCC.283 284 In 1939 Manfred Björkquist wrote in 
Kristen gemenskap that after the resolutions in Oxford and Edinburgh in 1937, it appeared to be increasingly evident that Ecumenism had a role to play, as important as that of Mission.
Manfred Björkquist regarded Regional ecumenism as a viable instrument for a much needed revival of the Nordic national churches. In order to achieve such a viable ecumenism Björkquist argued that the Ecumenical Secretariat in Geneva must be given several regional sub centres. Such centres were indeed planned for in the United Kingdom and in North America. The churches in the Nordic region ought to create a similar structure as that of the United Kingdom or that of North America, Björkquist argued.285

In many respects, including that of ecclesiological self understanding, the Nordic region, however, as we have seen in chapter 3, was far from unified.

7. Observations along the Road Leading to the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, Established in 1940 as an Intended Regional Body for the Emerging World Council of Churches, WCC.

In chapter 7 I intend to remind the reader of the most important steps taken by the emerging Ecumenical movement that led to a perceived need for a Nordic Ecumenical Institute.

7.1 The Meaning of Oikoumene.
In the New Testament “Ecumenical”, as a term, refers to what concerns the whole world (oikoumene), or the civilized world. The word is derived from Greek οἰκουμένη (oikoumene), which usually is translated "the whole inhabited world".286

In the Primitive Church, oikoumene was used to describe how Christ and his Church had a meaningful relationship to the world. The Ecumenical Council of Nicea in 325 was ecumenical because the Council had been called by the Emperor, ruling the whole inhabited world, for decisions with significance to that whole world. The Church itself was not called ecumenical, but catholic.287

In The Formula of Concord (Fo’rmula conco’rdiae), which is a part of the Book of Concord, written in 1577, the word ecumenical is used as a description of the Athanasian, Niceno-Constantinopolitan and Roman-Apostolical confessions. The Confessions are called catholica sive (or) oecumenica. The Church is not.

282 Kristen gemenskap häfte 4, 1950 p 162, NEI 10 år.
284 Kristen gemenskap 1950 p.162.
285 Kristen Gemenskap 1939 p.73.
286 Brodd, Sven Erik: 
EKUMENISKA PERSPEKTIV. Föreläsningar publicerade av Svenska kyrkans forskningsråd, Kisa rapport Nr 4-5 1990 pp 10-11.
287 Brodd, Sven Erik: 
EKUMENISKA PERSPEKTIV. Föreläsningar publicerade av Svenska kyrkans forskningsråd, Kisa rapport Nr 4-5 1990 p.11.
In our contemporary understanding *Ecumenical* refers to initiatives to achieve greater unity or cooperation between Christian churches or denominations. Unity between religions, on the other hand, is referred to as “interfaith dialogue”.

The Christian ecumenical vision comprises both a search for a visible unity of the Church as formulated in *Ephesians 4,3* and a Christian unity in the whole inhabited world, as outlined in *Matthew 24,14.*

### 7.2 Svenska Missionsrådet.

It is my understanding that the very existence of the Missionary Council of Sweden served as a source of inspiration for those who regarded Ecumenism as a calling as important and relevant as that of the mission of the Church. If Mission had its regional structure so should Ecumenism! Ecumenism would, Manfred Björkquist argued, properly organised constitute a potential that might rekindle the Nordic Folk churches. In 1912 the Missionary Council of Sweden was established as an "umbrella organisation" for churches and organisations in Sweden involved in missionary work and for organisations in Sweden working for international aid. The Missionary Council of Sweden is still (2011) active in promoting knowledge and awareness concerning international affairs and matters related to global justice. The Council represents several Christian traditions aiming at promoting Christian unity and cooperation.

From the late 19th Century and during the early 20th Century the world saw the establishment of national, regional and international organisations for Christian cooperation both in the form of alliances between different churches and organisations and as attempts to create greater consensus on faith and ideology.

The Missionary Council of Sweden was founded just over a year after the important meeting for Missionary societies in Edinburgh in 1910.

### 7.3 Ecumenical Meetings of Missionary Societies 1888, 1890 and the Meeting in Edinburgh in 1910.

For missionaries it became obvious that divisions between the Churches constituted a fundamental obstacle to successful mission. This was reported on and discussed at conferences for World Mission in 1888 and in 1890. The divisions of the Churches constituted a grave hindrance to the credibility of the Christian Church’s mission of reconciliation. Healing was contradicted by Christian disunity.

On the international scene the ecumenical movement towards visible unity and cooperation between churches was given considerable support at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910. This eventually led to the establishment (in 1921) of the *International Missionary Council*, which fostered cooperation in mission activity not least among the young churches. At the Edinburgh Conference representatives of Missionary Societies convened. There were no delegates representing churches.

Bishop Charles Brent, of the Episcopal Church of the United States of America, recognized that the unity of the Church would only be brought about if there was firm agreement in faith. However, it took from 1910 (Edinburgh) to 1927 (Lausanne) to set up the first *World Conference on Faith and Order*. When the decision was taken at the conference in 1927 in Lausanne, Switzerland, 70 commissions in 40 countries had been involved in preparing for the Meeting. The work was mainly carried out by Protestants, including the

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289 *eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* (Ephesians 4,3); *And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations and then the end will come.* (Matthew 24,14)


Anglicans, and by the Orthodox. The Pope expressed sympathy for the venture, but the Roman-Catholic Church nevertheless declined to be a part of the Faith and Order movement.293

During the preparations to form a Faith and Order Structure those involved argued that nothing but ‘comparative ecclesiology’ was proposed, i.e. there should be no attempt to commit any participating Church. As a consequence no direct promotion of unity schemes took place, as it was felt that only the Churches themselves could initiate such major decisions. The immediate task was to build trust and confidence among the churches.294

7.4 The International Missionary Council.

In many respects The International Missionary Council (IMC) was instrumental to the formation of the World Council of Churches. Initially membership of the IMC comprised a few of the many mission agencies that had gathered in Edinburgh in 1910. Soon, however, the IMC discontinued being a Council of Mission Agencies to take up a role as a Council of Councils – a council of the many National-level councils or Regional networks of mission agencies. John R. Mott, chair of the Edinburgh conference, during his lifetime, according to himself, succeeded in establishing a total of 22 councils of missions in regions receiving missionaries. The national-level councils were of different kinds. In Western countries they were councils of sending missions based in the very countries from where these missionaries were sent. Other councils were set up in the missionary-receiving countries and consisted of field executives of most of the missions originating in the Western countries.295 The National Christian Council of India may serve as an example.296

This difference between the Western and the non-Western councils may to some extent help to explain why the IMC later came to be transformed into a far less influential division of the World Council of Churches (in New Delhi, in 1961). The new role indicated a shift from various missions to a situation in which national churches were partners and mission was conducted by the churches themselves. In the colonial era it was difficult for missions to develop a satisfactory relationship to the young churches, which missionary sending Churches for a long time regarded as their “children”. This post-war development resulted in a strengthening of the “church” as an active part in the Ecumenical movement.

The evolution from mission to church was not an easy one. At an International Missionary Council, IMC, conference in Whitby (Toronto) in 1947 this evolution was considered and eventually a common statement was agreed. The key phrase agreed in Whitby was “Partnership in Obedience. Older as well as younger churches were equally called to accept the responsibility of mission and they were to work in an equal partnership.”297

The ecumenical work during the 19th Century did not involve the churches themselves, and as late as in Edinburgh 1910 there were no formal representatives of churches taking part.298 After Edinburgh the IMC arranged conferences in Tambaram/Madras 1938, in Whitby/ Toronto 1947, in Willingen / Germany 1952 and in New Dehli/ India 1961.299

7.5 World Alliance (WA) for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches.

The World Alliance was created in Germany (Constance) in 1914 as an organization that would assist Christian churches and church members to influence peoples and governments to engage in much needed peace efforts. The Alliance had national councils in 30 countries. Particularly active were the councils in Britain and in the USA engaging in debates on disarmament, racial and religious minorities, the League of Nations, conscientious objection, refugees, peace education and arms control. The Alliance was not invited to merge with the World Council of Churches, but acted for the peace objects publishing a newsletter in conjunction with the Church Peace Union until 1956. The fact that the Alliance had national councils might have influenced the emerging World Council of Churches in its search for a similar and suitable structure.  

The WA National councils might well have served as an inspiration for the architects of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute searching for a Nordic regional structure.

7.6 Trends in Theology between the Wars, a Meeting in Oud Wassenar in 1919, and Proposals for a World Council of Churches, WCC.

After the First World War (the Great War) the search for the true identity (nature) of the Church was an important feature in Theology and church life. Liberal theology with its optimistic approach had lost much of its appeal during the Great War. In 1919 Karl Barth published his commentary on St Paul’s Letter to the Romans in which he offered a new theology where organic and paradoxical aspects were allowed to be expressed in a new understanding of the Church. Karl Barth emphasised the unity between Christ and the Church. The Kingdom of God is transcendent but also present in Christ and in his Church — the organism which is the Body of Christ and the People of God. This organic understanding, based on realistic exegetics, was shared and expressed by the Liturgical movement. Karl Barth introduced as distinct categories: Catholic and Protestant Churches, to which Anders Nygren (of Sweden) objected claiming that the Church of Sweden is Catholic indeed. Dr Yngve Brilioth linked the Church to the Gospel in a way that emphasised the Church as a Sacrament and in a way that would not exactly have received agreement from Karl Barth. In addition, in Lutheran Churches there was a real “Luther-renaissance”. Later on in Sweden (in the 1930s) studies of Luther’s theology were combined with realistic exegetics producing a new understanding of the Church with a focus on Christ. In 1939 Bo Giertz’s book The Church of Christ was published, and further publications on Ecclesiology followed in Sweden in 1942: A Book on the Church and, in 1951, A Book on the Ministry of the Church that added to the by now well established theological focus on the Church. With Karl Barth, a Church-oriented theology influenced the emerging WCC. In Sweden, less influenced by Karl Barth, Anders Nygren and Gustav Aulén, rather inspired by Linton’s writings on Christ and the Church in the New Testament, did their part to prepare ground for a “Church-centred” ecumenical development.

Prior to the Stockholm Meeting, in 1925, Archbishop Söderblom had attended a conference in Oud Wassenar, The Netherlands, in 1919, and presented there for the first time his expression Evangelical Catholicity. He also took the opportunity to propagate there for the recreation of a union between churches, or a “World Council of Churches” to provide guidance on religion and on ethics in a world afflicted, as he saw it, by (political and cultural) tempests during the Great War. The Meeting in Holland served as a preparation for the Stockholm Meeting in 1925 at which Internationalism would be a prevailing attitude and overshadow old war-time Provincialism.

302 Heiene, Gunnar: The Church of Norway since World War II in Ryman, Björn (Ed.) Nordic Folk churches, a Contemporary Church History, Eerdmans 2005 p. 125.
304 Kristen gemenskap 1939 häfte 1 p.1 Report by Mr.Nils Ehrenström, Geneva.
7.7 **Koinonia ton ekklesion proposed in 1920 by the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople.**

At this time (1920) the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople gave considerable support to the ecumenical movement in issuing his encyclical message *Koinonia ton Ekklesion* in which he publicly appealed for a permanent organ of fellowship and cooperation of all the churches, a League of Churches. This call helped Archbishop Söderblom to gather support for the Meeting in Stockholm and for the plans to create a World Council of Churches.  

Nils Ehrenström, secretary at the Ecumenical secretariat in Geneva, commented in 1939 the encyclical message from Constantinopol, by pointing out that the Koinonia as a term implies much more than a body for cooperation. Koinonia is a profound form of a devoted union, Ehrenström writes. Later on the term Koinonia became a key notion of the Ecumenical movement used to describe the nature of the Church and of churches in fellowship.  

7.8 **Anglican-Lutheran relations develop through the Lambeth Conferences.**

From 1867, Archbishops of Canterbury invited Bishops from all the Anglican Provinces in the world to attend a Lambeth Conference in London/Canterbury every 10th year. (The Archbishop’s London residence is called Lambeth Palace).

The Anglicans regarded the Church, as it had existed undivided before the schism between the eastern and the western parts of Christianity and before the Reformation, as an ideal supranational community. In order to find a formula by which the Anglicans might establish links to churches, which consequently they regarded as “proper churches”, the Lambeth Conference in 1888 had identified 4 criteria to be found in a proper church. The statement came to be called *The Lambeth Quadrilateral*. The essential qualities for churches to be welcomed into a reunited Christian fellowship were that they acknowledged and made use of:

A. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments, as containing all things necessary for salvation, and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith.
B. The Apostles` Creed and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statements of the Christian faith.
C. The two Sacraments ordained by Christ himself – Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.
D. The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of His Church.

The Anglican striving for finding ecumenical partners was, as I understand it, partly inspired by a positive experience of Anglican–Lutheran Cooperation in North-America. It was, probably, also partly triggered by a somewhat frosty relation to the Roman-Catholic Church, eventually reflected in a Papal Bull, *Apostolicæ Curae*, issued in 1896 by Pope Leo XIII in which the Pope had declared all Anglican orders to be “absolutely null and utterly void”.

The Lambeth Quadrilateral was used as a guide when the Anglicans, and not least the Church of England, were engaged in seeking ways to establish links to other churches and soon identified the Orthodox Churches, the Old Catholics, the Moravians, the Church of Sweden and the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland as realistic candidates. In 1908 the Church of England invited a Swedish Bishop to attend the Lambeth Conference and to engage in conversations aiming at an ecumenical agreement (The Church of

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305 Kristen gemenskap 1939 häfte 1. p.2.
Sweden appointed The Rt. Revd. Tottie of Kalmar, who had an acceptable command of English). Delayed by the Great War it was only in 1920 that the Lambeth Conference, as a result of talks with Bishop Tottie, proposed to the Church of Sweden an agreement on mutual Eucharistic hospitality.

The Swedish Bishops responded in 1922, stating that they welcomed and accepted the proposals while, however, they wished to state that they did not recognise any essential difference, de jure divino, between the two or three Orders into which the Ministry of Grace may have been divided. Nevertheless, an Agreement had been reached. As a result of the reached understanding two Anglican Bishops were invited to be present and take active part in the Consecration of Bishop Einar Billing and of Bishop Viktor Rundgren in 1920. Five years later Photios, Patriarch of Alexandria, took part in the Consecration of Bishop Edvard Rhode. Archbishop Söderblom consecrated into apostolic succession Bishops in Tallinn, Estonia, and Tranquebar, India (1921), Riga, Latvia (1922) as well as in South Africa, Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and Tanganyika (Tanzania). For this Archbishop Söderblom was later on rebuked by some conservative Lutheran churches. His “generosity with apostolic succession” constituted later on a complication for the Archbishop in his ecumenical endeavours.

The Nordic Ecumenical Institute played an important part in coordinating the Nordic and Baltic participation in talks with Anglican churches on the British isles eventually resulting in the Porvoo Agreement. The Agreement may be regarded as a fortunate conclusion of attempts initiated by the Bishop of London [Robinson] already in 1717 to bring the Churches of England and Sweden closer to one another.

7.9 The Stockholm/Uppsala Meeting 1925 and the Ecumenical Secretariat operating in Geneva from 1928.

In 1925 Archbishop Nathan Söderblom hosted the Ecumenical Meeting in Stockholm/Uppsala, for which Meeting a planning session had convened in Geneva in 1920. At the Stockholm Conference the Archbishop propagated for Evangelical Catholicity as a model for the Church of Sweden, through which it could develop further links to the Anglicans (Canterbury) and to the Orthodox (Constantinople). His strategy, however, failed to win support from the Roman-Catholic Church. When opening the meeting, at the Blasieholmens Church, in Stockholm, Söderblom remarked that “they were gathered, 700 delegates representing 100 Churches: Paul is here (i.e. the Protestants) and so is John (the Orthodox) only Peter (the Roman-Catholics) is still missing”.

At the Stockholm Meeting, Archbishop Söderblom stressed that the churches ought to assist the ever so important and newly (1920) formed League of Nations. The League had been given a body, an organization, but it also needed a soul (the churches) to inspire the work for peace. The peace effort, according to Söderblom, was an effort more urgent than ever, which the horrors of the recent Great War had demonstrated.

Söderblom suggested again the formation of a World Council of Churches, which, as we know, was eventually established in Amsterdam, in 1948, after yet another devastating World War. As a direct result of the Stockholm Meeting in 1925, an International Ecumenical Secretariat was set up in 1928 in Geneva. The well attended ecumenical Meeting in Stockholm/Uppsala considered questions regarding war and peace, race, education, finances and the social order. In the process The Life and Work Movement came into existence.

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The Ecumenical Meeting in Stockholm/Uppsala in 1925 served as an introduction to future International Ecumenism as well as to a regional and national ecumenism under development. It has also been pointed out that most delegates to the Stockholm Meeting arrived as members and representatives of their Churches. That fact may have indicated a future pattern: churches, rather than individuals; churches rather than organisations or regional bodies, taking a lead in international ecumenism.

The Stockholm Meeting was strongly criticized by circles normally hostile to ecumenism. In particular Lewi Pethrus, outspoken leader of the Pentecostal movement, did express his ill feelings when preaching in Stockholm on that very Sunday, August 23, 1925, saying (and his words were repeated in a pamphlet printed and distributed in Stockholm shortly afterwards): Roman Catholicism is drawing closer now, this whore with hands covered in blood, this dreadful church responsible for the death of millions of men and women, this papal church about to re-enter Sweden, something this Ecumenical Meeting appears to promote. Equally anti-ecumenical, but somewhat less dramatic, views were expressed by Dr. David Hedegård, and eventually published when Dr. Hedegård was serving the Church of Sweden Low Church movement (Evangeliska Fosterlandsstiftelsen) the Swedish Evangelical Mission. The very thought that Roman-Catholics had been invited to Stockholm was apparently enough to awake strong negative feelings, even if no Catholic attendance could be recorded.

As one tangible result of the Stockholm Meeting, an Ecumenical Secretariat was set up in Geneva, in 1928, soon to be headed by Mr. Nils Ehrenström, who was recruited for the post by Nathan Söderblom in 1930 to work with questions of a socio-ethical nature in line with the aspirations of the Life and Work Movement. Ehrenström later served as Director of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute for some years from 1940. He was also at the same time Director of the Study Department of WCC 1938-1954. In 1948 Ehrenström initiated a study project called Christian Action in Society. Attention focused on 1/ the Witness of the Church in Communist Societies; 2/ the Role of the Church when working for a Responsible Society; and 3/ the Meaning of Work in a “Technical Age”.

7.10 The Meeting in Lausanne in 1927.

The very first meeting of the Faith and Order Commission was held in Lausanne on August 3rd, 1927. The Faith and Order Movement was one of several movements within a rather complex and varied ecumenical movement. The search for agreement in Faith took place alongside other ecumenical activities. With very high expectations the supporters of the Faith and Order Movement met in Lausanne. Delegates meant that a visible unity would eventually be attainable. This is indeed still a strong and motivating vision of the Faith and Order Movement within WCC, producing agreements and key documents like the BEM (Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry) and working on projects like: the Call for Unity; the Nature and the Mission of the Church; the Common Confession of the Faith. The vision of a visible unity would constitute a leading theme whenever the Faith and Order Commission was to meet again: Edinburgh 1937; Lund 1952; Montreal 1963 and Santiago de Compostela, 1993.

In 1927 at the Lausanne Meeting, Archbishop Söderblom expressed a view on the Church, which was very much in line with an ecclesiology rooted in his own understanding and in the thinking of Einar Billing and Gustaf Aulén. The Grace of God, as the Swedish theologians saw it, was the constitutive principle for the Church. That Grace was found in the Gospels and was mediated both by the Word and by the

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Sacraments. This view had been fully explained in the 1922 response to the Anglican proposals for intercommunion between the Church of Sweden and the Anglican Communion. Also present in Lausanne, Gustaf Aulén, Yngve Brilioth and Anders Nygren succeeded in promoting a strong accent on the denomination of their own, still representing an ecumenically-minded Lutheranism. The Swedish theologians were seeking unity in the Gospel and tried at the same time to safeguard the truths of their Lutheran heritage. The search for agreement on matters of faith and Church order that in an organized way begun in Lausanne 1927, has continued ever since between churches and within churches struggling with disunity.

Both in Geneva 1920 and in Lausanne 1927 the Faith and Order delegates found reasons to restrict ecumenical ambitions and focus mainly on the missionary church cooperation, as they feared and maintained that “service unites, doctrine divides”.

At the Lausanne Meeting in 1927 the movement developed a Comparative Ecclesiology when declaring that they nevertheless explored the things wherein we agree and the things wherein we differ. Dr. Ragnar Persenius writes that Archbishop Söderblom together with other prominent Swedish theologians attended the Lausanne conference in 1927 at which only a few important decisions were made, as this general strategy (i.e. the comparative ecclesiology) to avoid controversial questions prevailed.

During much of the 1930’s “heathen political” and “Christ-opposing” forces made the Ecumenical movement rather hesitant. Because of these forces “the time was not yet ripe”, Ehrenström wrote in 1939.

Towards the end of the 1930s there were nevertheless held some most crucial meetings promoting international church cooperation, including meetings that would generate hope for structured ecumenism in the Nordic region.

7.11 A New Theology in Sweden.

Particularly after the Second World War, the Church of Sweden in its ecclesiology tended to focus on Jesus Christ. In this respect the Church of Sweden very much sided with the Roman-Catholic Church. With Professor Anders Nygren as Editor, En bok om Kyrkan was published in 1942 and appeared in an English translation (This is the Church) in 1952. The book mirrors a new Swedish consensus (Den nya kyrkosynen), (The new Understanding of the Nature of the Church). This ecclesiology maintains:

- The Church was founded by Christ,
- The Church is the Body of Christ,
- The Church represents Christ.

The Church, according to this “New Theology”, is an agent for Christ and personifies him. Where Christ is, there the Church is. Bishop Aulén added: “where the Church is, there Christ is”. For the theologians the Church was an eschatological entity and an object for faith. They emphasized the divine character at the expense of the human character almost to the extent of “docetism”.

Another feature of this new understanding of the Church is the Sacramentality, stressing a continuing incarnation of Christ. In particular Anton Fridrichsen and Bo Giertz claimed that this feature was the most important one. The Church, for them, was an object of faith with a hidden, transcendental life, which only faith may recognize.

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329 Kristens gemenskap 1939 häfte 1 p.3
Word and Sacraments, with the Ministry as an instrument, are decisive for determining the borders and the unity of the Church. The Church is where the Word is preached and the Sacraments administered.

The new view of the Church caused the free churches to engage in strong opposition. In their opinion the “new view” failed to take into account personal faith which they regarded as necessary for church membership and unity. In addition the free churches felt that “the new view” overestimated the importance of the Sacraments and that it put too much emphasis on identifying Christ and the Church.

In En bok om Bibeln (A Book on the Bible) published in 1947 Swedish theologians claimed that Christ and the Church are the unity of the Bible. In Sweden, a debate on ecclesiology followed as well as a debate on Scripture.

The Church as a legal entity was also scrutinised. In 1951 Laws on Religious Freedom had been introduced by Parliament leading to a perceived lack of correspondence between the legal and the religious definitions of membership in the Church of Sweden. Baptism was not (at this time) formally required for membership, even if church leaders increasingly regarded baptism as the proper prerequisite for church membership.

As the High Church movement gained strength in Sweden, debate deepened over the nature and the role of the Ministry. The debate concerned the question of a God-given ministry. Which ministry was God-given: The Bishop’s? the Priest’s? the Preacher’s?

The debate also covered the representation of Christ in the person of the Minister and how that could be reconciled with proposals for the ordination of women to the priesthood. Finally the discussion dealt with the status of the Ministry in relation to the congregation.

One cannot exclude the possibility that the ever increasing focus on the Church, expressed by Karl Barth in 1919, and, in a Lutheran context, independently considered by Swedish theologians in the 1940s, might have contributed to the shift from the initially intended regional to a confessional or denominational (church) membership representation in WCC, eventually agreed in Amsterdam in 1948. The Nordic Ecumenical Institute keen to contribute in the ecumenical dialogue got in 1940 engaged in an aspiring study project regarding the very nature of the church. The Institute had to produce two different reports to satisfy both the Folk churches and free churches.

NEI operated very much in the spirit of the International ecumenical movements, which in 1936 had intensified efforts to accomplish a coordination of the main ecumenical movements, i.e. Life and Work, Faith and Order, as well as possibly WA and IMC. Dr. Yngve Brilioth (Sweden) attended a planning session in Switzerland, which after debate favoured proposals by William Temple (Canterbury) and Yngve Brilioth (Sweden) to work for an ambitious integration of the movements commencing with Life & Work and Faith & Order to create a solid centre.


In spite of the politically “frosty climate” of the 1930s, important international ecumenical conferences were held in August 1937, in Oxford by the Life and Work movement and in Edinburgh by the Faith and Order movement. On the eve of these meetings representatives of both the Life and Work and the Faith and Order movements met in Hampstead (London) and agreed, in the presence of Archbishop Temple, Bishop Bell and Dr Brilioth, to bring the two movements together by setting up a representative assembly of partaking churches. Then followed the meetings in Oxford and Edinburgh.

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334 NEI Annual report 1940.
335 Hallencrutz, Carl F.: Yngve Brilioth, Svensk medeltidsförsöke och internationell kyrkoledare Uppsala University, Uppsala, 2002 p.130.
Edinburgh as a conference venue was a natural choice for the Faith and Order movement. Here the World Missionary Conference had been held in 1910 at which an agreement had been reached over a plan for world-evangelisation. The Edinburgh meeting has been regarded as a starting point for the modern Ecumenical movement. In Edinburgh, in 1910, a Continuation Committee had been elected to prepare for an International Missionary Council, leading to increased cooperation between missionary societies. The Faith and Order Movement also regarded Edinburgh 1910 as a starting point for ecumenism, even if some delegates expressed that they would have preferred a special Faith and Order Conference.\(^{337}\)

The Faith and Order inspired Conference in Edinburgh in 1937 focused on the notion of the Church. Scandinavian theologians (Nygren and Nørregaard) managed to gain support for their view that the Grace of God is the constitutive principle for the Church and its unity. In fact in Edinburgh a Swedish ecumenical slogan was formulated: The *Way to the Centre is the Way to Unity*. In their section the Scandinavian delegates managed to establish a consensus over a view on God’s Grace and the Church. In other sections disunity was considerable and consensus was only reached on the need to form a special commission (to meet in 1938) in order to deal with several unresolved issues on church unity. Progress had been made, however, on an agreement regarding “the Christ Centred Nature of the Church” and on “the Unity of the Church”. The unity expressed was a unity between Christians and between the denominations in Christ. Section 1, led by Archbishop Temple, had agreed on a view in which God’s Grace is regarded as an ecclesiological starting point. No agreement on this or on the controversial question regarding the (visible) boundaries of the Church could be achieved unanimously in Plenum. Some delegates expressed strong views on the personal faith, professed as a prerequisite for church membership. Baptism was, however, generally recognised as a requirement for membership in a future potentially united church.\(^{338}\)

### 7.13 The Utrecht Conference in 1938, Preparations for the World Council of Churches, WCC, Assembly in Amsterdam in 1948.

The original Draft Constitution for WCC, agreed in Utrecht in 1938, was fully based on a regional principle.\(^{339}\) That principle was deeply rooted in a vision of Christian unity liberated from “Western parochialism”, and offering a balance among churches of east and west, south and north.\(^{340}\) This principle, however, was later questioned by Professor Anders Nygren, Sweden, and particularly by some Lutheran churches in the USA, which in 1945 presented a counter-proposal through which WCC membership would be based primarily on “World Confessional Families”. The main argument for the new approach was that WCC needed to be in direct touch with the National churches in order to be able to speak with authority. Dr. Yngve Brilioth reported in *Kristen Gemenskap (1946)* that American Lutherans insisted on a confessional representation of churches in the new WCC.\(^{341}\) Notwithstanding such attempts, The Nordic Ecumenical Institute (NEI), acting as a somewhat self-appointed regional sub-centre in the Nordic region for the emerging WCC, initiated regional gatherings prior to the Amsterdam Assembly for studies over the proposed theme for that Assembly in 1948: “Man’s Disorder and God’s Design”.\(^{342}\)

In addition, during the very Amsterdam Assembly 22.8 – 4.9 1948 NEI took active part and arranged regional briefings for the Nordic delegates over issues covered in the various Assembly sections.\(^{343}\)

The legally valid Constitution of WCC, eventually adopted in Amsterdam in 1948, took account of, primarily, confessional and, to some much smaller degree, regional representation. National councils of Churches and regional ecumenical organizations in working relations with WCC were normally to be invited to send (non-voting) representatives to General Assemblies.\(^{344}\)

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\(^{340}\) Chmielewski, Wendy [Curator], www.oikoumene.org/member-Churches/regions.html

\(^{341}\) *Kristen Gemenskap* 1946 p.9.

\(^{342}\) *Kristen Gemenskap* 1946 p. 41.

\(^{343}\) *Kristen Gemenskap* 1949. p.37.

The Utrecht Conference, that convened on May 9, 1938, had prepared a structural foundation for WCC with a recommendation that a future WCC should have a membership based on a regional structure. Furthermore the future WCC should only rely on “spiritual” authority and it should not become a “super Church”. In Amsterdam 1948 the regional structure was abandoned to give space for a Church representation in a WCC that should still avoid becoming a “super Church.”

After Amsterdam, the basic formula for membership would be expressed: the World Council of Churches is a fellowship of Churches which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour.

On structure, it had been resolved in Utrecht in 1938, that representation both to a Central Committee and to a General Assembly should be appointed according to a regional system rather than to a confessional system. Present as a delegate from Sweden at the Utrecht Meeting 1938 was Manfred Björkquist, who returned to Sweden and his beloved Sigtuna Foundation determined to create in Sigtuna an Institute for Nordic regional ecumenism serving l’Institute International de Christianisme Social in Geneva and the emerging WCC. From then on Ecumenical World conferences were to be preceded by Nordic regional meetings arranged through a Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI, in Sigtuna.

In Utrecht in 1938 a Provisional Committee for WCC was also elected to serve during the interim period, prior to the first General Assembly of WCC. Elected to this Provisional Committee were: Archbishop Temple of York, chairman; Archbishop Germanos of Thyatira; Dr. John R. Moth and Dr. Marc Boegner, Vice Chairmen; Dr. W.A. Visser’t Hooft, General Secretary; Dr. William Paton and Dr. Henry Smith Leiper, Associate General Secretaries.

The Provisional Committee decided in January 1939, that a first General Assembly should be held in 1941, which of course the Second World War made impossible. Instead, The Provisional Committee did set up Secretariats in Geneva, London and in New York for contacts with churches throughout the world. After the Second World War there was a noticeable shift from ecumenism led by individuals committed to the reconciliation of divided Christendom to an ecumenism enacted by the churches. Ecumenism became a Movement of the Churches. That development had its consequences for NEI.

Once the Second World War was over, it was resolved by the Provisional Committee, in February 1946, that the first General Assembly of WCC should now be held in Amsterdam in 1948. Five presidents were chosen: Archbishop Fisher of Canterbury, Archbishop Germanos of Thyatira, Archbishop Eidem of Uppsala, Pastor Marc Boegner and Dr. John R. Mott.

The creation of the (Bossey) Ecumenical Institute was approved and made viable thanks to a donation by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. In September 1946, the Ecumenical Institute, housed at the Chateau de Bossey in Celigny, Switzerland, opened its doors officially. Sadly no corresponding donation was received by NEI, which had to operate under harsh financial realities.

Later on, in Amsterdam in 1948, as we have seen, the General Assembly of WCC changed the Utrecht proposals on Regional representation to rules stating that representation to the Central Committee and to the Assembly would be determined according to a confessional system with some elements of Regional compensation.

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As an illustration to the complicated balancing act WCC had to perform in respect of regional and confessional representation, let me present here proposals dated 1972, agreed by a Structural Committee of WCC (commissioned at the Uppsala Assembly in 1968). The Structural Committee, having carefully considered all relevant aspects, proposed that all delegates should be elected by the member Churches, but ¼ of the delegates should be nominated by WCC Central Committee in order to meet a need for a national, geographical (regional) and cultural balance. These Rules regarding representation were eventually approved by the General Assembly in Porto Alegre in Feb 2006.

7.14 The Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches, WCC, (in process of Formation).

The Provisional WCC reported in August 1941, after its first Meeting: “The proposed WCC shall be a Koinonia of those who confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior, and integrate both Life & Work and Faith & Order”. Potentially, a new and extended role for the Ecumenical Movement was envisaged bringing the Churches into a more active role, rather than leaving ecumenism to movements in which persons with a particular interest in Ecumenism may be active. Far from being an Administration the proposed Council shall, as stated above, be a Koinonia leaving to the Churches to define more precisely how they interpret the Creed.

The future WCC shall not, the Provisional Committee announce, be a supreme Board but a forum for consultation through which the Proposed Council shall:

1./ Continue the work carried out so far by Life & Work and Faith & Order,
2./ Facilitate cooperation between the churches,
3./ Promote a joint study department for the churches along the lines of the Life & Work Movement dealing with issues like:
   a/ The Church as a Moral Reality and Power,
   b./ The Basic Questions Related to the Christian Faith,
   c/ The Church and the Contemporary Question of Freedom,
   d./ The Church in a Context of Political Confrontation,
   e./ The Church and the Refugees,
   f./ The Church and the Non-Aryan Clergy Prohibited to Work in Nazi-Germany,
4./ Foster an “ecumenical inclination” in all the churches,
5./ Liaise with other Christian World Movements (confessional and ecumenical),
6./ Arrange conferences ad hoc and when required on various themes,
7./ Administer and call every 5th year a General Assembly, and annually a Central Committee,
8./ Seek ways to involve women and lay people up to at least 1/3 of the Assembly and of the Central Committee,
9./ Seek active Cooperation with: World Alliance for Friendship through the Churches – (Världsförbundet för mellanfolkligt samförstånd genom kyrko-samfunden), The International Missionary Council, IMC, The Christian Student World Federation, YMCA, and YWCA,
10./ Publish a periodical called: Koinonia, Records of Ecumenical Thought and Progress.
11./ Employ a Secretary, based in Bloomsbury, London, for matters regarding the Refugees.

NEI, according to Manfred Björkquist, very much wanted to serve WCC as a regional Nordic representation with an active Study Department.

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353 Kristen gemenskap 1946 p.7.
354 Kristen gemenskap 1946 pp.7-8.
7.15 International Lutheran Cooperation and the World Council of Churches, WCC.

For a long time after the Reformation the Nordic Lutheran Churches had had rather few links to each other and somewhat stronger links to the Lutheran Churches in Germany. These old continental links, however, were very useful when the Nordic Lutheran churches sent invitations to the Evangelical-Lutheran General Conference in Lund in 1901, at which conference also Lutheran churches from other parts of the world attended. The Conference focused on the Lutheran tradition in dealing with contemporary issues, for example Christianity and Culture, World Mission and Diaconal (charitable) Work. The Conference also took decisions in preparation for the establishment of the Lutheran World Federation, eventually formed in Lund in 1947.\(^{355}\) At the Lund conference in 1901 the German Allgemeine Lutherische Konferenz (AELK) was transformed to become the German-Nordic Lutheran Conference. Lutheran meetings in Uppsala (1911) and Eisenach (1923) followed. At the Eisenach meeting in 1923 the Lutheran World Convention was formed.\(^{356}\)

Prior to the Eisenach Meeting, Lutheranism had established itself in three distinct regions, i.e. as:

1. German Lutheranism not foreign to Pan-protestant tendencies in the homeland of the Reformation,
2. American Lutheranism with ambitions to mark a denominational quality in the quest for Lutheran Cooperation and
3. Lutheranism in a Baltic-Scandinavian area in which, as stressed by Nathan Söderblom, episcopacy was emphasized as an important sign for Church Unity.

The main initiative for a World Lutheran cooperation was taken by American Lutherans who were hostile to a closer link between Lutheran and Reformed traditions, and who often were in favour of a strong Confessional Lutheranism manifested in a Congregationalist style.\(^{357}\) My impression is that this American attitude prevailed, eventually strengthened by the outcome of the Second World War, and contributed to a shift in the ecumenical development from plans for a regional membership structure to a confessional Church membership structure for the emerging WCC.

When, eventually, LWF was formed in Lund in 1947, Professor Anders Nygren propagated for a confessional (rather than regional) basis for a future World Council of Churches, WCC.\(^{358}\)

The General Secretary of the Provisional WCC joined in saying in 1947:

*The World Council of Churches (in process of formation) is deeply aware of the fact that the ecumenical task can only be performed if the main confessional federations and alliances perform their task of bringing the churches of their confessional family together in close fellowship and so prepare way for the even greater and more difficult task of establishing the wider ecumenical Christian brotherhood.*\(^{359}\)

This was a clear indication that the Ecumenical movement was about to abandon the regional structure for WCC membership and introduce a structure related to what later on (after the Report of Secretaries of World Confessional Families, Geneva 1967) was called “World Confessional Families”.\(^{360}\) It is rather obvious, to my mind, that World Confessional Families did not exactly fit a Nordic ecumenical structure as the one intended for NEI.


7.16 Considerations on Competence and Representation for the World Council of Churches, WCC, and the Role of the International Missionary Council, IMC.

According to clarifications resolved by the Utrecht Conference in 1938 a future WCC should have no power to legislate for member churches or to commit them to action without their proper consent, but still be influential enough to win respect and motivate church leaders as well as lay people, holding posts of responsibility and influence in the secular world, to give time and thought to the work of WCC.

At a preparatory meeting in the UK (in Hampstead, London, just before the Oxford and Edinburgh conferences in 1937) proposals for a WCC were accepted and members of a Committee of 14 were appointed. That Committee met in Utrecht in May 1938, creating a Provisional Committee to handle WCC in formation. The Provisional Committee established the foundation for WCC by resolving constitutional questions concerning authority and structure. In the autumn 1938 formal invitations were sent to 196 Churches (sic!). In addition Archbishop Temple, chairman of the Provisional Committee, wrote a personal letter to the Secretary of State of the Vatican.361

At a World Mission Conference in 1938 in Tamaram, near Madras, India, in a political climate of escalating threats from undemocratic regimes in Europe and beyond, the International Missionary Council, IMC, resolved to continue as a separate body and not seek to merge with WCC in formation. At the Tamaram IMC conference advice was offered to Christian churches to adopt a practice of listening and dialoguing, when seeking proper administrative structures for the future. A number of missionary societies did not want to come under the control of the churches, and there was fear that the churches of North America and Europe would not give to the younger churches elsewhere the place they deserved. 362

Eventually, in spite of scepticism, an integration of the IMC with WCC took place in 1961 at WCC Assembly in New Dehli. Regional Mission councils affiliated to IMC became affiliated to the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of WCC. The Division on World Mission and Evangelism and its Divisional Committee took over IMC work and responsibility and the IMC ceased to exist.

The IMC, had been formally set up in 1921 in Lake Mohonk N.Y., and had linked numerous national and regional Protestant (predominantly) mission organizations. Indeed IMC may be regarded as one of the early expressions of modern ecumenism. The first idea to create an international Mission council was voiced in Edinburgh in 1910. The IMC, once established, focused on the effort to spread the Gospel to non-Christians and avoided to be drawn into questions of doctrine or ecclesiology.363

Ten or twenty years after its formation in 1948, WCC still found that some younger churches were uncertain of their proper place in WCC. In their respective regions some of them had rather limited contact with other churches. However, as younger churches increasingly applied for membership of the World Council of Churches, they were recognized as equals to the older churches. At the same time they realised that in order to fulfil their ecumenical calling, they would have to come together on a regional level to learn from other churches in the region, to undertake common tasks and to bring jointly their specific questions to the international ecumenical movement. It was strongly felt that the specific concerns of each region might be useful to the larger community and that the dealing with the specific concerns could ultimately also assist churches regionally. Already in Amsterdam in August 1948, the non-western delegates feared that the newly


created WCC would be given a far too one-sided, Western character. In the past, the Life & Work movement as well as the Faith & Order movement had demonstrated only limited awareness of important ecumenical work outside Europe and North America. The old churches were preoccupied with their earlier conflicts. In the past The International Missionary Council had managed to overcome such Western parochialism, but in 1948 they did not actively participate in the establishment of WCC. In his report to the Provisional Committee of WCC in 1947, Secretary General Visser’t Hooft stressed the importance of full participation from the younger churches in forming WCC. Despite several initiatives to stimulate active involvement of delegates from the young churches, a representative of the young churches (P.D. Devanandan) confessed after the Amsterdam Assembly in 1948:

Some of us from the so-called younger churches left Amsterdam with a heavy heart, because we could not help feeling that somehow we did not belong. The entire trend of discussion veered round problems of life and thought which primarily concerned the older churches. Moreover, we gained the impression, rightly or wrongly, that we were being made to think and act in accordance with the ideas, doctrinal and political, which are current in the older churches.  

7.17 Regional Ecumenism, and the World Council of Churches, WCC, Assembly in Amsterdam in 1948.

In my view, it is reasonable to assume that, at least partly, the dilemma expressed by P. D. Devanandan (above, end of 7.16) was a result of the strong emphasis and focus on the confessional identity at Amsterdam in 1948. This emphasis was demonstrated in significant changes to the rules of representation for WCC in 1948. As we have seen the earliest draft of WCC constitution, adopted in Utrecht in 1938, ruled that the membership in WCC Assembly and in the Central Committee was to be determined according to a regional principle. In 1948 in Amsterdam at the General Assembly, this principle was replaced by a ruling that WCC seats should be allocated among the Member Churches with “due regard being given to such factors as numerical size, adequate confessional representation and adequate geographic distribution”. At the Amsterdam Assembly in 1948 regional representation was regarded as less important compared to denominational and proportionate numerical re-presentation. Representatives of so called younger churches had hoped that WCC would give a clear priority to the regional rather than the confessional loyalty. Ever since 1948, therefore, questions have been asked whether WCC in fact fosters an inter-confessional ecumenism at the expense of an inter-regional one. The concern, expressed by younger church delegates, is that the churches through WCC must act as truly catholic (i.e. out of all the nations of the earth) and truly missionary (i.e. sent to all the nations of the earth). The insistence on regions, expressed by younger churches, was far from only an isolationist aim to counterbalance Western parochialism, but rather a profound concern that the Church must be both catholic and missionary as an act of obedience. At an inaugural Assembly for the East Asia Conference in 1959 the following declaration was agreed: Believing that the purpose of God for the churches in East Asia is life together in a common obedience to Him for the doing of His will in the world, the East Asia Christian Conference is hereby constituted.  

In Roman Catholic circles, the Second Vatican Council emphasised through Bishops from Asia, Africa and Latin America an intercontinental aspect of the ecumenical movement. The Church is seen as the sacrament of the salvation of the world and of the unity of mankind. It is in that context the regional development is emphasized. For the church to become truly Catholic, particular churches in the different regions and nations must retain their own traditions and contribute through their special gifts to the good of the other parts of the whole of the church. Hence, according to the Second Vatican Council, a regional development is necessary for the Church to be truly catholic and missionary. 

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367 For further details, see: “Amsterdam Series” 1948, vol V, p.199
Regional Christian Councils were formed in Asia and Africa, inspired not least by the American John R. Mott, e.g. the East Asia Christian Conference, EACC, and the All Africa Conference of Churches AACC, as well as the Near East Christian Council, NECC. The first two were based upon national Christian councils. The Near East Council was not and therefore constitutes an organisation half way between a national and a regional council. In North America cooperation emerged between national councils in the USA and in Canada. In Latin America a regional body was created called The Committee on Cooperation in Latin America CCLA.

In Rolle near Geneva, during a WCC conference in 1951, Europeans initiated a discussion on the creation of a regional European conference of churches. Discussions continued at the 1952 Faith and Order conference in Lund. In 1959 in Nyborg, Denmark, CEC (the Conference of European Churches) was established. Several further annual meetings at Nyborg were used to develop a more definitive structure. The CEC reflected on matters like:
1/ the Task of the Church in a Divided Europe and a Changing World, and
2/ Secularization in a Society where the Constantinian Era has Come to its End.

Difficulties for the CEC (to over-come) are: a lack of lay involvement, an ecumenical competition on the European scene, and a politically and linguistically divided Europe.

It is of considerable importance to notice how the Ecumenical movement often found it natural to get organised in a regional structure. The Nordic Ecumenical Institute was established to fit in such a generally accepted structure. It was only after the Second World War that the regional structure was challenged and replaced by a structure dominated by the churches.

7.18 Christian National Councils.

When Manfred Björkquist planned for the Nordic Ecumenical Institute he saw it as a regional sub central for the emerging WCC, which in Utrecht in 1938 had indeed resolved that WCC should be based on a regional membership structure. Manfred Björkquist very much based his ecumenical strategy on a regional structure. Dr Björn Ryman claims that M Björkquist had in particular two role models, Archbishop Nathan Söderblom of Sweden, and American ecumenist Dr. John R. Mott, founder of the Christian World Student Union [Vadstena 1895], and promoter of regional Christian councils. Dr. Mott once wrote: My first and my greatest contribution to the International Missionary Council was to bring about the formation of the National (or Regional) Christian Councils. For a long time the National Christian Councils were the only body to knit the younger churches into the organized fabric of world Christianity, according to R. Hogg in his Ecumenical Foundations, The formidable significance of regional Christian councils for the ecumenical movement has been expressed by several ecumenists. Frank Short, in his chapter on National Councils of Churches in Harold Fey’s The Ecumenical Advance, 1970, asks if the National Councils have fulfilled the expectations and the promises of the early years of their existence. I am inclined to ask if International Ecumenical bodies, like WCC, have fully recognised the ecumenical significance of these regional councils. According to the January issue of International Review of Missions 1949, at the time of the inauguration of the World Council of Churches, there had been an extraordinary increase in the number of Regional Christian (Missionary) Councils in the world:

National Missionary Council of Australia
Conseil missionaire Protestant de Belgique
Confederacao Evangelica do Brasil
Ceylon National Christian Council
China National Christian Council
Conseil Protestant du Congo
Dansk missionsraad

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372 Ryman, Björn: Brobyggarkyrka, Artos, Skellefteå 2010, p.60.

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In addition to the above mentioned members of the International Missionary Council there were in 1948 another twenty-two Christian cooperative organisations in different parts of the world. The IMC corresponded with all of them. Ten of these 22 eventually joined the IMC as members. There must have been an enormous potential in this worldwide Ecumenical network linked to the IMC which, according to its Constitution, should:

- stimulate thinking on questions related to the mission and expansion of Christianity around the world
- help to co-ordinate the activities of the National missionary organisations and Christian councils of the different countries
- bring about united action where necessary in missionary matters

My question remains. Why did WCC fail to utilise fully the regional networks? It appears that in the turmoil of different preferences expressed by potential Members of WCC (in formation), the voice of the American Lutherans was the one the Amsterdam Assembly favored. Was that so because of the ever augmenting theological focus on the church? Or did the American Lutherans prevail because of the outcome of the Second World War and against a backdrop of American financial power? I have no certain answer, but I now turn to how, after the Second World War, many changes took place for the councils.

It would not be impossible to argue that the increased focus on the church was part of a general post-war ideological trend.

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After the Second World War, the colonial era was over. A new political structure had established itself and the National Christian Councils changed to fit the new reality. Burma, Pakistan and India soon had their own Christian National Councils rather than the former regional one. This development could be observed in many parts of Asia and later also in Africa and Latin America. At the same time Missionary Councils were transformed into National Christian Councils or Councils of Churches, as it was considered inappropriate for missionary agencies to have membership in a National Christian Council. The National Councils appreciated the financial contributions from the Mission Agencies but argued that their membership obscured the proper nature of a National Christian Council. As a result National or Regional Christian Councils of Churches and Missions became National or Regional Christian Councils of Churches. This was, for example, the case in India in the 1950s. In a revised Constitution of 1956 it was determined that only organised Church bodies were entitled to direct representation in the Christian Council. Missions that were not integrated in a church in India could become associate members. In 1948 the Near East Christian Council for Missionary Cooperation became the Near East Christian Council. Later it changed identity to become the Near East Council of Churches.

The trend is most obvious: Mission was regarded as somewhat outdated and the young churches made an effort to engage in ecumenical work nationally, regionally and internationally.

Also in the “missionary-sending” countries there were similar or parallel developments. The International Missionary Council of Australia and New Zealand was transformed into the Division of Mission of the Australian Council of Churches, and the National Council of Churches of New Zealand.

In USA the Foreign Missions Conference of North America became the Division of Foreign Missions of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, famously abbreviated N.C.C.C.U.S.A. In Canada, a separate Canadian Overseas Mission Council was created in 1946, which six years later became the Department of Overseas Missions of the Canadian Council of Churches.

Many National or Regional Christian Councils offered the so-called young churches a role in the international ecumenical movement. WCC was not unaware of that and must have realised the potential importance of National or Regional Christian Councils for the furtherance of its own work. The IMC needed, for its part, close contact with the churches that were related to its member councils. As there was this interdependence it comes as no surprise that in September 1948 the Central Committee of WCC decided to invite some constituent councils of the IMC in “younger church areas” to assist WCC in the promotion of its activities.

This might simultaneously have been an attempt to rectify damages inflicted by the shift from regional to confessional representation in WCC Constitution approved at the Amsterdam Assembly in 1948. At the second Assembly of WCC, in Evanston, provisions were made to establish a formal working relationship by creating a new category of “associated councils”. At the 3rd Assembly it was reported that eighteen councils had accepted the invitation to become associated councils. It is also worth mentioning that the regional councils often served as channels for the interpretation, support and implementation of WCC activities. Some regional councils even reproduced in their own structures some elements of the departmental organisation of WCC.

This development shows a growing commitment of National/Regional Christian Councils to the life and work of the International ecumenical movement and to ecumenical efforts in their own respective regions.

The World Council of Churches, WCC, also recognised the importance of the regional/National Councils by organising Consultations on National Councils of Churches in 1971, 1986 and in 1988.

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7.20 The International Missionary Council, IMC, and the Regional Councils.
In 1961 the International Missionary Council, IMC, was integrated into the World Council of Churches, WCC, to become its “Division and Commission on World Mission and Evangelism”. The Regional Member Councils of the IMC became affiliated councils of the C.W.M.E. (Council on World Mission and Evangelism), thus gaining a direct relationship with WCC.\(^{382}\) As early as in 1946 a joint committee of WCC, and of IMC had emphasised the common background and the common calling of the two bodies. At the same time they urged WCC in formation to foster and further develop an emerging “mission-consciousness” of the churches and a “church–consciousness” of the missions.\(^{383}\) It was not enough for IMC and WCC to be in association with each other. If theological insights of the relationship between Church and mission should lead to tangible structures a proper integration was instead called for. Integration, however, was opposed by some member councils of IMC (particularly in Latin America, Africa and in Northern Europe). The opposition partly focused on fears that WCC would in spite of its constitution become a gigantic “super-Church” or a mammoth bureaucratic organisation without proper doctrinal basis and without real evangelistic or missionary concern. Even stronger opposition arose from fears that integration would have a divisive effect on the Regional councils and their cooperation. The General Assembly, planned to take place in New Delhi in 1960, was delayed until 1961 to allow all parties ample time to consider the proposed integration. In New Delhi it was eventually resolved that, at the integration, all constituent councils of the IMC would, automatically become affiliated members of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of WCC. The Congo Protestant Council and the Norway Missionary Council withdrew their membership allegedly due to pressure from sponsors overseas and from fears that the missionary service would be weakened. In spite of such fears, the other old member councils of the IMC became affiliated to the Commission on World Mission or associated with the World Council of Churches as a whole.\(^{384}\)

7.21 The Importance of the Nordic Missionary Council.
18\(^{th}\) Century pietism and influences from the Moravians were of decisive importance for the first missionaries from the Nordic region. Initially Nordic missionaries acted on behalf of the British and Foreign Bible Society. One example is the Revd. Cornelius Rahmn, former Rector of the Swedish Church in London, who served the Bible Society in Russia 1818 -1823. Before him Zacharias Kjernander had been sent by S.P.C.K. to serve in India from 1740 to 1799.\(^{385}\) Cornelius Rahmn went on to serve the London Missionary Society in London until 1833.

With inspiration from abroad, Missionary Societies were formed in Denmark (1821), Sweden (1835), Norway (1842) and in Finland (1859). In Sweden a number of free churches set up missionary societies, whereas in the other Nordic countries foreign mission was offered through or in cooperation with the established churches.\(^{386}\) In an attempt to coordinate Nordic missionary work the Nordic Missionary Council was established in 1923. Some missionary projects were indeed supported by churches in more than one Nordic country, e.g. the Santal mission in northern India (supported from Denmark, Norway and, somewhat later, Sweden). The Nordic Buddhist Mission (Reichelt’s mission) was supported by a joint Nordic committee. The Zulu Church in South Africa gained support from Norway and Sweden. Over the years the Nordic Missionary Council has been very active and successful in research projects related to missionary work.

In my opinion, the very existence of a viable regional Nordic Missionary Council must have influenced Manfred Björkquist in his attempts to create a regional Nordic Ecumenical Institute.

7.22 Three important sources of inspiration for the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI.
At this stage I would like to summarise and identify a few of the main sources of inspiration behind the creation of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute (NEI). The first is the Nordic region itself and its ecclesiastical significance developed by Nathan Söderblom as explored in chapters 4 and 5. The Second is Manfred Björkquist\(^{387}\) who

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\(^{385}\) Sundkler, Bengt, Missionens värld, Norstedts, 1963, p. 210


\(^{387}\) Please refer to chapter 9.
developed a profound vision for ecumenism in the Nordic region. The third source of inspiration was most probably the general ecumenical movement and specifically its manifestation in the Nordic Missionary Council. In addition to these three elements, one should no doubt add the direct impulse given at the Utrecht Meeting in 1938 when regionalism was promoted in the draft Constitution agreed for WCC. That Draft Constitution clearly indicated a regional membership structure for WCC and that suited Manfred Björkquist extremely well as he worked on in what shape Nordic ecumenism could be fostered as a sub central for WCC.

8. **The World Council of Churches, WCC, Inaugurated in 1948, as a Vehicle was Meant to reflect and build upon Regional Structures.**

The World Council of Churches, WCC, was created very much as a result of the Student and Lay Movements of the 19th Century. The Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910 and the Orthodox encyclical in 1920 suggesting a “fellowship of Churches” similar to the League of Nations were important steps on the road to the establishment of a World Council of Churches. Archbishop Söderblom of Sweden acted as a keen supporter of a World Council of Churches. The Second World War delayed its inauguration, which eventually took place in Amsterdam in 1948.

The World Missionary Conference was held in Edinburgh in 1910 with 1200 participants. The Student Volunteer Movement had propagated strongly for such a conference to be called. The Conference resulted in the establishment of a “Continuation Committee which, in 1921, after the confusion of the Great War, was transformed into the International Missionary Council, IMC, to stimulate and foster mission and studies in Christian faith and in the Nature and the Mission of the Church.**

Movements incorporated in WCC in 1948 included the Faith & Order (theology, sacraments, ordinances) and the Life & Work (social ministries, international affairs, relief services) movements, and in 1961 the International Missionary Council. A fourth stream –Christian education – was incorporated in 1971.

On August 23, 1948 WCC came officially into existence with 147 member churches, predominantly from Protestant and Western traditions. In 1961, at the 3rd Assembly of WCC in New Delhi, the IMC was merged with WCC, giving WCC an enlarged agenda in world mission and evangelism and, potentially, a network of regional councils.

The Nordic Folk churches were not formally one block, but they performed very much as one unit, not least through NEI. The Nordic Ecumenical Institute was very active during this formation phase of the WCC, assisting the Nordic Folk churches to coordinate their preparatory work prior to each assembly or commission meeting. The Nordic churches demonstrated genuine involvement and responsibility for the emerging ecumenical body. Archbishop Erling Eidem (Sweden) served WCC as president 1948-1950 and was succeeded by Eivind Berggrav, Bishop of Oslo. Without exception a there has been a Nordic church leader at the top of WCC and other Nordic representatives in the Central Committee and other WCC bodies on a rotational basis. American Lutherans promoted a membership structure for WCC based on the different confessional families. They were not entirely successful at the Assembly in Amsterdam 1948 even if they managed to persuade the Assembly to scrap the plans for a regional membership structure and replace them with proposals for a membership structure based on member churches with an element of influence by confessional families.

In the 1960s WCC was enriched through many Orthodox churches joining and by several newly autonomous churches from formerly colonial regions seeking membership. Also, in the 60s, the Second Vatican Council

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considered and opted for a potentially fruitful cooperation between WCC (and its local, national or regional manifestations) and the Roman-Catholic Church.\textsuperscript{391}

Since its formation WCC has been engaged in aid, encouraging member Churches to work with refugees, migrants, and among the poor. During the “cold war” WCC provided a forum for an East-West dialogue. WCC initiated a special Program to Combat Racism and assisted in that way the efforts to eventually overcome apartheid in southern Africa.

In 1982 The Faith and Order department of WCC presented a landmark document, \textit{Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry}, BEM, – providing remarkable theological consensus in the quest for Christian unity.\textsuperscript{392}

WCC has held its assemblies every six to eight years until now in:

Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 1948  
Vancouver, Canada, 1983

Evanston, USA, 1954  
Canberra, Australia, 1991

New Delhi, India, 1961  
Harare, Zimbabwe, 1998

Uppsala, Sweden, 1968  
Porto Alegre, Brazil, 2006

Nairobi, Kenya, 1975

At the Amsterdam Assembly in 1948, the choice stood between a regional or a confessional membership structure. As we know, the Assembly opted for a confessional /denominational structure. Lutheran Churches in North America as well the newly formed LWF inspired by Professor Anders Nygren of Lund, propagated for a distinct confessional approach. Visser’t Hooft, the General Secretary of the Provisional WCC, had at LWF Assembly in Lund in 1947, expressed strong sympathy for a membership structure that recognised the Confessional Families. However, in Amsterdam a formula was sought to combine to some extent both a regional and a confessional membership structure for WCC. The result read:

\textit{Seats in the Assembly shall be allocated to the member Churches by the Central Committee, due regard being given to such factors as numerical size, adequate confessional representation and adequate geographical distribution.}\textsuperscript{393}

By this compromise WCC favoured a membership of churches and, granting the Central Committee considerable influence, recognised at the same time both confessional groups and geographical regions.\textsuperscript{394} WCC representation was then discussed for a long time and was eventually formalised at the General Assembly in Porto Alegre in 2006.

For NEI the adopted Amsterdam Constitution meant that NEI’s formal raison d’être was drastically removed, adding to existing tension in the Nordic region.


\textsuperscript{392} Nationalencyklopedin vol. 11, p.614.


8 The World Council of Churches, WCC, Inaugurated in 1948, as a Vehicle was Meant to Reflect and Build upon Regional Structures.

8.1 The World Council of Churches, WCC, and Further Considerations on the Membership Structure.
Regional representation was replaced by overriding denominational or confessional factors in the membership structure as proposed by American Lutherans when WCC was constituted in 1948 by 147 churches, mostly European and North American. When WCC convened in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1998, membership comprised not less than 336 churches from 100 countries. Churches that agree with WCC basis are eligible to apply for membership, provided they can demonstrate “sustained independent life and organisation” as well as “constructive ecumenical relations” with other churches in its country (i.e. membership of the National council of churches). Churches applying for membership are expected to report a membership of at least 25 000 members. Churches with at least 10 000 members may apply for Associate (non-voting) membership.395

8.2 Clarifications of the Confessional System.
The Utrecht conference ruling on Regional Representation back in 1938 was, as we have seen, challenged not only by Professor Anders Nygren in Sweden but also by American Lutheran Churches. In 1945 these Lutheran Churches in the US presented a counter-proposal through which WCC membership would be based, primarily on world confessional families. The main argument for the American approach was that WCC needed to operate in direct contact with National churches in order to be able to speak with authority. WCC Constitution, eventually adopted in Amsterdam in 1948, took account of primarily confessional and, to a very much smaller extent, regional representation. National councils of Churches and regional ecumenical organisations in working relations with WCC were normally to be, and still are, invited to send (non-voting) representatives to assemblies.396

In Toronto during the General Assembly in 1950 the Confessional system was clarified by a ruling stating that WCC is not intended to become a “Super-Church”, nor shall it negotiate any union between churches. Instead it shall bring churches into living contact with each other and it shall study the notion of church unity. It shall not be based on one conception of the Church but continue the work of the Life & Work and the Faith & Order movements and promote ecumenical consciousness in the members of all the churches.397

The Second General Assembly of WCC was held in Evanston, Illinois, USA, in 1954. The General Assembly examined the mission of the Churches in the light of the Assembly theme “Christ, the Hope of the World”. The Third General Assembly met in New Delhi, in 1961, and had for its theme “Christ, the Light of the World.” At this Assembly, the Orthodox Churches of Russia, Bulgaria, Romania and Poland were admitted to membership. The International Missionary Council, IMC, with its regional councils was at the same time integrated into the structures of WCC.

8.3 Ecclesiology of the World Council of Churches, WCC.
At the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948 one of the Sections was given the task to deal with a notion called “The Universal Church in God’s Design”. A Preparatory Commission, presided over by the Swedish Bishop Gustaf Aulén, had aimed at producing a single description of the Biblical Understanding of the Church. It failed to do so. Instead, five denominational statements were produced.

In Amsterdam an ecumenical methodology inspired by Karl Barth’s dialectical method was put to use: First an agreement was proposed, then disagreements within the agreement were studied, and finally one focused on to

396 Tveit, Olav Fykse [Secretary General] 2011: World Council of Churches, 1895- (archive)
what extent the disagreements contained points of agreement.398 This was in fact a continuation or a version of the Comparative Ecclesiology practised at Lausanne more than ten years earlier. No doubt the motive for the method was to enable churches and denominations to become acquainted with one another. However, Bishop Aulén and other Swedish theologians were not at all satisfied with this method, as it certainly and largely served to demonstrate clearly existing differences and disagreements, but did not bring about any unity.399 This became obvious when a description was produced over a cleft between a Roman-Catholic and a Protestant conception of the Church, a description which certainly did not bring the ecumenical ecclesiology any further.

In Edinburgh the Faith and Order Commission had been asked to produce four books explaining: 1/ the Church in the Bible, 2/ the historical view of the Church, 3/ Denominational statements on the Doctrine of the Church, 4/ a Synthesis. It took from 1937 to 1951 to produce any result, even a poor one, as only the last two books were completed by the Commission.400

During the Second World War several papers on Biblical and Denominational conceptions of the Church were produced by an American theological committee. A report from this work was integrated in a Faith and Order Paper in 1952, The Nature of the Church. The previous year, in 1951, Faith and Order had produced the fourth book, the synthesis simply called: The Church. Here the Comparative Ecclesiology had eventually been brought to an end over the Roman-Catholic/Protestant cleft. Nevertheless, the 1951 report offered an agreement of some considerable importance in declaring: Every communion holds that the Church is not a human contrivance, but God’s gift for the salvation of the world, that the saving acts of God in Christ brought the Church into being and persists in continuity in history by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.401

The Swedish theologians were pleased to note the agreement on the Church as God’s gift, even if the full report also contained several points of disagreement.402 The continued theological focusing on “the Church” underscored a relevance of the shift from a Regional structure to a structure of Member Churches in WCC, which created a rather problematic situation for NEI.

8.4 An Ecclesiology Expressed at the World Council of Churches, WCC, Faith and Order Conference in Lund in 1952, Focusing on Christ and His Church.

The Faith and Order Movement was established in Lausanne in 1927 and convened again in Edinburgh in 1937. A Faith and Order conference (called the 3rd) was held in Lund in 1952 and presented a new methodology for the ecumenical ecclesiology. Christology was now made a starting point. The Comparative Ecclesiology had eventually been brought to a close. The conference focused on the Church as the leading theme. Bishop Anders Nygren, supported by Professor Torrance (representing the Church of Scotland), proposed a Christological method, which was accepted. A drafting committee produced a document called Christ and His Church, which eventually was placed as the central part of the Lund Report, in which it was noted that “as we seek to draw closer to Christ, we come closer to one another”. Therefore, the Lund Report concluded, we need to penetrate behind all divisions to a deeper and richer understanding of the mystery of the God-given union of Christ with his Church.403

The Report also demonstrated the relation between “Pneumatology” and “Ecclesiology”, explaining that the presence of Christ in the Church is dependent upon the Holy Spirit. The Report gave prominence to the close connection between Christ and His Church. The Deeds of Christ through Word and the Spirit were identified as constitutive for the Church. With regard to any visible borders of the Church the message from Lund was that

“the Church is a visible community of people and this community has a hidden transcendental life”. There were, the Report claimed, no detectable borders for the Church. The Lund Report communicates that the pre-existing unity is given to the Church by Christ with the administration of the Sacraments and the proclamation of the Word as signs of that unity. The conference, however, failed to agree on a shared view on the historic Episcopate. No agreement was reached over Organic Union as a common goal for the Ecumenical movement. Congregationally shaped churches favoured a covenant relationship between independent denominations. Nevertheless, the Lund Conference was regarded as having progressed in establishing consensus regarding a pattern first acknowledged in Edinburgh in 1937: The Way to the Centre is the Way to Unity.

It is my impression that the ecclesiology expressed in Lund 1952 was to some extent related to the ecclesiology, which was embraced by the prospective member churches of WCC that had shaped the WCC membership structure in its church focused form, making a regional structure less applicable. In the Nordic region NEI got engaged in a study project regarding the Nature of the Church. NEI failed to produce an all-embracing study report. Instead two reports had to be adopted to satisfy National churches as well as Free churches in the region.

The Lund Conference established for future use The Christological method, as well as a description of the Church based on Christology, resulting in an Ecclesiology developed in Sweden as a useful tool for the Unity of the Church.

At the conference Archbishop Brilioth presided together with the Bishops Anders Nygren, of Lund, and Gustaf Aulén, of Strängnäs. It was remarked at the conference that Brilioth “presided on the scene of his early triumphs as a theologian, a prophet with honour in his own country”. The conference in 1952 was seen as a crowning experience for Yngve Brilioth. The conference also confirmed a shift from German theology to an Anglican tradition, with stress on apostolic succession and the role of the Bishop.

Ten years later the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) created a new ecumenical climate in many respects and in many regions, including a new understanding between Roman-Catholics and the Orthodox.

Having completed the rhapsodic journey past significant stations on the road to an established cooperation between Christian churches in the world, which created a perceived need for a Regional ecumenism. We are now ready to look at the establishment and the fate of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI.

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406 NEI Annual report 1940.


409 Pope John XXIII invited ecumenical guests to attend as observers at the Second Vatican Council in 1963. This was a new signal to the Ecumenical Movement by the Roman Catholic Church. Pope Paul VI travelled to Jerusalem in 1964 to greet and kiss the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I. The following year, on December 7, 1965, simultaneously by Pope Paul VI at St.Peter’s Basilica in Rome and by Athenagoras I at St. George Patriarchal Cathedral in Constantinople, a joint statement was issued by which the *anathemas* and the excommunications of 1054 were nullified in an expression of joint commitment to Christian Unity. In the summer of 1967 Pope Paul VI called on Patriarch Athenagoras I in Constantinople and in October that same year, 1967, Patriarch Athenagoras I called on Pope Paul VI in Rome. This ecumenical opening should not be underestimated. Please refer to: Archbishop Athenagoras (Kokkinakis): Ecumenism – the Movement of Love 1952, see: http://www.orthodoxresearchinstitute.org/about.htm and http://www.orthodoxresearchinstitute.org/articles/ecumenical/john_thermon_/history_ecumenism.htm
B The Formation of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI.

9 Prominent Nordic leaders working for the Unity of the Churches.

In 1914 Nathan Söderblom was consecrated Archbishop of Uppsala. For seven years up till 1901 he had served as Rector of the Swedish Church in Paris (and at the same time as Seamen’s Chaplain in Calais and Dunkirk). He was fluent in French and most familiar with continental customs. At the same time as he served as a Rector and Chaplain he was also engaged in post graduate studies in theology and became the first foreigner to earn a Doctor of Theology degree at the Protestant Faculty of the Sorbonne. From 1901 until 1914 Söderblom served as a Professor at Uppsala University and from 1912 also as visiting Professor at the Leipzig University. Hence, the new Archbishop in 1914 had an extraordinary background and potential to engage in the search for the unity of the Church and for profound church-cooperation.

Eivind Berggrav (1884-1959) was born in Stavanger, son of Otto Jensen, theologian, parish priest, politician and eventually Bishop of Hamar. Eivind Berggrav, after completing studies in theology, worked as a teacher for 10 years during which time he also became engaged in journalism as editor of Kirke og Kultur (The Church and the Culture). From 1919 Berggrav served as parish priest and from 1925 as Prison Chaplain. Further studies and research led to a Doctorate in Psychology of Religion 1925. In 1928 Berggrav was appointed Bishop of Hålogaland/ Tromsø, where he established himself as an active, energetic Bishop with considerable public support. He aimed at strengthening the role of the Bishop in the Church of Norway, which occasionally led to conflicts with the Department of Church Affairs. In 1937 Berggrav was appointed Bishop of Oslo a post he remained at until poor health in 1950 forced him to resign. The Oslo Bishop showed a remarkable width in activities. He played an important role as a literary critic and pursued a side career as an Educationalist in the field of Religion. He was chair of the Norwegian Bible Society 1938-1955. From the 1930s Berggrav was active in the Movement of International Ecumenism, particularly in WA (World Alliance). As war broke out, Eivind Berggrav, supported by Crown Prince Olav, Nordic industrialists and the Archbishop of Sweden, engaged in futile attempts to bring about a reconciliation between Germany and Great Britain. During the Second World War he was the undisputed leader of the Norwegian Resistance to the Nazi occupation. In 1942 Berggrav and all the Bishops in the Church of Norway resigned from the official [state] elements of their Episcopal Offices in protests over the Nazi occupation and administration. When at the same time his book Kirkenes grunn (The Foundation of the Church) was published with uncompromising condemnation of the Nazi administration many feared that Berggrav should be murdered by the Nazis. Instead he was sentenced to House arrest in his own holiday home in Asker, to which he was confined until the end of the war. In Asker the Bishop found time to write about Church constitution and about the State and the individual (Staten og mennesket). After the war Berggrav resumed an active role in International ecumenism, in the World Council of Churches, WCC, and in the Lutheran World Federation, LWF. Bishop Berggrav was critical of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute in Sigtuna, which he found too Swedish and rather unnecessary as the Churches could and should speak for themselves without any agents. He was, in addition to being very critical of Sweden and of Swedish proposals, in particular focused on peace efforts [through WA.], which were of such a paramount importance that various attempts to organise Ecumenism in the Nordic region were at best unnecessary, if not unhelpful. Bishop Berggrav died from heart failure in 1959.

The Inspirer for the Nordic Ecumenical Institute (NEI) was the formidable innovator Manfred Björkquist (1884-1985), who was born in Gideà, and had studied Semitic languages and Philosophy at Uppsala University

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413 For further reading, please refer to: Heiene, Gunnar: Eivind Berggrav, En biografi. Universitetsforlaget, Oslo, 1992
gaining a Licentiate of Philosophy. In Uppsala Manfred Björkquist had been a charismatic leader of the Christian Student Association and, working with Robert Sundelin and Axel Lutteman, he was partly influenced by High Church Anglicanism and shaped his vision of the Church of Sweden: ‘The People of Sweden – a People of God.’ Together with Nathan Söderblom, JA Eklund and Einar Billing he developed a theology, characterised by cultural openness, historical-critical methods in Bible research and a new Church-centred Lutheran theology. After the dissolution of the Union with Norway in 1905, Björkquist’s ideas were shaping a church movement in the Church of Sweden, called Ungkyrkörerelsen (Young Church Movement). Together with Sven Stolpe, Manfred Björkquist initiated a national subscription in aid of Sweden’s naval defence. He was the man who managed to find support for the creation of the Sigtuna Foundation and the Sigtuna Humanistic Public Grammar School. Manfred Björkquist attended the Utrecht Conference [1938], when a Regional membership structure was agreed for WCC in formation. Such I structure required a Regional organisation in the Nordic region, Björkquist argued. In 1939, when war had broken out, Manfred Björkquist managed to gather Nordic support and some [inadequate] funds to create, in February 1940, The Nordic Ecumenical Institute in Sigtuna. In 1942 Manfred Björkquist was consecrated Bishop of Stockholm, from which post he retired in 1954. He was appointed Doctor of Theology h. c. (honoris causa) in Lund (1923) and in Berlin (1932).

Jens Nørregaard (1887-1953) served as a Professor of Church History at the University of Copenhagen from 1923 until 1953. He had studied theology in Germany, Switzerland, Italy, England and Scotland. In Germany he studied for Adolf von Harnack. Of particular interest he found von Harnack’s seminars on Saint Augustine’s Confessions, and he wrote his doctoral thesis on St Augustine. von Harnack, liberal theologian in Berlin, remained for Nørregaard a teacher from which he took considerable inspiration. In his publications he tended to look upon church history as carried forward by individuals with a particular religious and theological personality. From 1942 to 1948 Nørregaard served as Rector (i.e. Vice Chancellor) of the University of Copenhagen. Due to his extraordinary administrative skills he also took a leading role in Danish church life. He served on the Continuation Committee of the Faith and Order Movement and on the Board of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI.

To most of the preparatory meetings for WCC Nørregaard contributed and he was a Danish delegate at WCC General Assembly in Amsterdam 1948. Together with the Bishop of Copenhagen, H. Fuglsang-Damgaard, he initiated the establishment of the Ecumenical Council in Denmark and served as its chairman from 1941 to 1942. From 1933 Nørregaard was preoccupied with the German church struggle, and had very close links to the clergy of the Confessing Church. He followed intensely the discussion regarding the Aryan Paragraph in the German church and the persecution of German Jews. He actively supported German Jews who managed to escape to Denmark and initiated Societies and Committees for the relief offered to Jewish refugees. Such work he regarded as an integral part of the social responsibility of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark. After the Second World War Nørregaard established yet another committee, now for the benefit of 200,000 German refugees in Denmark, over which considerable public complaints was expressed in society. Jens Nørregaard, however, was convinced that reconciliation with Germany was of paramount importance for a post-war Europe. Professor Nørregaard was awarded Doctor of Honour degrees in Uppsala (1932), Oslo (1945) and St Andrews, Scotland (1945).

Martti Simojoki, Archbishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland during the post-war period, was probably one of the most influential Finnish personalities during the 20th Century. He was very much shaped by the pietistic religiosity of the revival movement. Martti changed his surname from that of his father, Pastor Simelius, to Simojoki, an action in line with his involvement in the movement that was promoting the Finnish language. As a student he was also active in the nationalistic Academic Karelia Society. After his ordination and some years as a teacher and parish priest he took up post-graduate studies and received his doctorate in ecclesiology (practical theology) at the University of Helsinki. In his dissertation Preaching and Teaching he studied the teaching function of the sermon. Other books of his pen were of a meditative and devotional nature.

During the Winter-War, Martti Simojoki served as a military chaplain. The war experience transformed his personality, turning him into a member of Asevelipapit (Priests for Brothers in Arms). The organisation aimed at
pastoral care among Finnish men both in war and peace. After the war the activities of Asevelipapit expanded to constitute a basis for the post-war social program of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Finland. Simojoki served as Editor in Chief for the organisation’s periodical Vartija (The Watchman). In addition Simojoki was active in a reform movement called Neo-Folk-Church, which operated under the Directorship of Simojoki from 1950 to 1951. From its training institute in Järvenpää (Swedish: Träskända), the Neo-Folk-Church tried to promote ecclesiastical reform and pastoral care in hospitals as well as family counselling. In 1951 Simojoki was consecrated Bishop and served as Bishop of Mikkeli until he was made Bishop of the new Diocese of Helsinki in 1954. He was elected Archbishop of Finland/Åbo in 1964. Simojoki, familiar with pietistic groups very soon had to defend the church leaders when neo-pietistic groups accused the Church of Finland for too much stressing the church’s social responsibility. In a tranquil and fatherly style Simojoki explained that a cultural dialogue involving the church did not mean that the church had turned exclusively social ethical or even secularised. In 1964 Simojoki openly criticised a Finnish writer, Hannu Salama, for the manner in which Salama depicted Jesus in the novel Midsummer Dance. Against Simojoki’s wishes the dispute ended in court and attracted a lot of media attention. Simojoki was the strongly criticised by young Finns who found the Archbishop “outdated”. Conservative Christians in Finland rather found his statements and actions too moderate. Archbishop Simojoki offered NEI considerable support and attended several NEI conferences and Annual General Meetings. Present at a NEI Board Meeting in June 1973 Archbishop Simojoki acknowledged that ecumenism in the Nordic region has got several problems but is nevertheless slowly advancing bringing integration to the movement.417

Possibly inspired by NEI, Archbishop Simojoki turned in the 1970s even more ecumenically oriented and stressed that the churches had a worldwide social responsibility. He was very skilled in diplomacy and administration. These talents Simojoki pursued in his support internationally primarily of LWF. He is remembered in the Church of Finland as an observant church leader, taking notice of individuals regardless of their status. In retirement Simojoki kept a low profile leaving church affairs to younger generations.418

9.1 Further Plans for a Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI.
The Nordic Ecumenical Institute was planned and created as Europe prepared itself to engage once again in the horrors of warfare. The Nordic Ecumenical Institute was first and foremost a result of the International Ecumenical development which led to the formation of the World Council of Churches, WCC. Manfred Björkquist saw an undisputable need for a regional body for the Nordic National churches as well as for the Free churches to channel information to and from a World Council of Churches, WCC. By inviting the National Ecumenical councils in the Nordic region not only the Folk churches but several Free churches as well as both Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches were involved in the work of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute.

The outbreak of the Second World War created a growing awareness of the need for mutual support in the Nordic region and made the Nordic Lutheran Folk churches inclined to agree to the creation of a Nordic Ecumenical Institute in Sigtuna, Sweden, in February 1940.319 As an illustration of the contemporary need for administrative support in the field of Information and Research, one could note the proposals in 1940 by The Committee for Cooperation between the Free Churches in Sweden, to create a Research institute and (a few years later), a Press bureau for the Free churches.420

10 The Establishment, Initial Considerations and Activities of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute/Council NEI/ NEC.
In October 1938 Manfred Björkquist informed the Swedish Ecumenical Council about his plans for a Nordic Ecumenical Institute to serve as 1/ a research academy for the Nordic churches and as 2/ a regional sub-central of WCC for the Nordic churches as members of a WCC. NEI should be led by a Board comprising representatives from each Nordic country. In December 1938 the Sigtuna Foundation offered to provide administrative facilities, i.e. office space and use of the Library, for NEI.

417 NEI Board Meeting in Kupio, Finland, 15-16 June 1973 §1 and §4. (Document kept at the Archives of EIN, c/o Church of Sweden Archives, Uppsala).
Manfred Björkquist, in proposing a Nordic Ecumenical Institute, was no doubt guided by the early draft for a WCC constitution, stressing regional structures. Furthermore, Björkquist was deeply inspired by the American John R. Mott who played a significant role in creating regional ecumenical structures in different parts of the world.

In the future, the Ecumenical movement could serve as an agent, Manfred Björkquist felt, that might renew the Nordic Folk churches. WCC was about to be created. To make the Nordic churches genuinely active members of the new International ecumenical body, Björkquist saw a profound role for a regional ecumenical network, a Nordic Ecumenical Institute. Other Nordic church leaders were less enthusiastic. Bishop Berggrav (of Oslo) in particular sensed Swedish attempts to take an arrogant lead.

During 1939, after completing a “business plan” for a Nordic Ecumenical Institute at the Sigtuna Foundation, Manfred Björkquist, assisted by Mr Harry Johansson, initiated a “promotional campaign” with lectures and newspaper articles explaining the merits of the idea. The Business Plan initially referred to decisions taken in Oxford and Edinburgh in 1937 to create a World Council of Churches, WCC. It thereafter explained how these resolutions, when implemented, would necessitate some regional administrative resources, indeed also in the Nordic region. There would be a need for a Nordic “Sub central” for WCC. The Nordic Ecumenical Institute should organise a Research Academy for the Nordic churches and also engage in an Information and Propaganda drive in order to motivate church members to engage in the Ecumenical movement. When doing so, the Institute should be well informed regarding the needs of the Christian Unity. This second task (Information and Propaganda) was most probably highlighted to satisfy what Bishop Berggrav of Oslo was asking for. He had declared that Information [predominantly on peace] should be the first priority for the Ecumenical movement, particularly now when there was a real threat of war breaking out.

The 1939 “promotional campaign” was conducted through the main Swedish newspapers: The Dagens Nyheter, The Svenska Dagbladet, The GöteborgsPosten and a few other papers, reported from a conference in Roskilde, Denmark, at which Manfred Björkquist had explained the general idea behind and the plans for a Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI:

“Not only will NEI serve as a Research Unit in cooperation with the Ecumenical Secretariat in Geneva but also as a Centre for Information to and from and between the Nordic churches, enabling the churches to engage in a profound ecumenical contribution.”

One of the papers added a comment: “Contemporary political unrest in the world places upon churches in the politically neutral Nordic region, with its comparatively stable economy, a responsibility not easily escaped from”. The Media reported on support for NEI expressed at the Ecumenical Meeting at Roskilde (arranged by the World Alliance for Friendship through the Churches, WA).

According to the reports such support had been expressed at the Meeting by Bishop Axel Rosendahl (of Finland) and by Bishop Eivind Berggrav, (of Norway). It was reported that the Dannekekmiske Fællesraad (the Danish Ecumenical Council) had indeed decided to support the plans to establish NEI. There were, however, other players. And Bishop Berggrav, whatever he had said in Roskilde, was far from convinced about the merits of NEI.

World Alliance, in which movement Bishop Berggrav (of Oslo) was very involved, as vice chair, had been left outside mainstream ecumenism as a result of plans drawn up in Hampstead [London] and of the resolutions in Oxford and Edinburgh in 1937.

In spite of his formal support expressed in Roskilde (at the WA conference), Bishop Berggrav, a few weeks later, at the Nordic Bishops’ Council in Fritzöehus (Denmark), expressed serious

421 Please, see the Utrecht Conference 1938 above 7.13.
426 Kristen genskap 1939 p.73.
427 Kristen genskap 1939 p.73.
428 according to a report from Manfred Björkquist to Archbishop Erling Eidem.
429 For further reading, please refer to: Heiene, Gunnar: Eivind Berggrav En biografi. Universitetsforlaget, Oslo, 1992
430 The 1937 resolutions proposed a WCC consisting initially of a merger between the Faith and Order and the Life an Work movements.
doubts about the wisdom of establishing NEI in the contemporary dangerous political situation. Bishop Berggrav also expressed dissatisfaction over that the proposals for NEI appeared to be far too Swedish and not Nordic enough.\textsuperscript{432} It appears, however, that a majority of the Nordic Bishops had expressed support for NEI at Fritzöehus, even if they had expressed a wish for some modifications of the plans.\textsuperscript{433}

When war broke out on September 1\textsuperscript{st} 1939 WA found an increased acceptance of their proposals for, as Bishop Berggrav might have put it, a “down to earth” cooperation between the churches, rather than the more academic approach advocated by the supporters of the Provisional WCC and the enthusiasts for a Nordic Ecumenical Institute.\textsuperscript{434} Oslo’s Bishop, E. Berggrav, supported by Royal families and industrialists in Norway and in Sweden as well as by the Archbishop of Uppsala, did in fact propose in September 1939, an ambitious peace plan based on suggested mutual compromises for the belligerent powers. A fortnight later (23-24.9 1939) Berggrav visited Uppsala and gave his reluctant approval of plans for NEI in a form now slightly modified after instructions from Archbishop Eidem, as requested by the Nordic Bishops in Fritzöehus, The modification had been carried out by the Swedish Ecumenical Council. Bishop Berggrav’s fear that NEI would be far too Swedish had been contemplated and resulted in a modified draft constitution, by which a strengthening of the role of the Nordic Ecumenical councils (i.e. Danske Ekumeniske Faellesraad and corresponding councils in the other Nordic countries) on the Board of NEI was introduced. Furthermore, in this final version of a Business Plan for NEI, approved by Eidem and Berggrav, there is no trace of any proposals for an academic research unit at NEI.

Information and propaganda remain central tasks in the final proposals.\textsuperscript{435}

The Swedish Ecumenical Council now found the time ripe to invite all the National Ecumenical councils in the Nordic region seriously to consider and eventually to agree on the creation of a Nordic Ecumenical Institute. As a result of their approval NEI was established in 1940. However, it had been badly hurt in the initial process.

NEI had lost the important element of academic research. Soon it would also loose the regional role, which, as Manfred Björkquist saw it, the Utrecht Conference had planned for.

NEI held a first meeting in February 1940, despite some additional objections voiced by Bishop Berggrav in Oslo, who now even questioned the very idea of WCC, when the War created so many obstacles. Earlier Bishop Berggrav had argued that the Research Department of NEI was totally uncalled for when the war required the churches promptly to take a firm stand and engage in more tangible projects.\textsuperscript{436}

It is quite possible that Berggrav’s strong involvement with W.A. had resulted in a fraction of wounded pride, when W.A. was not instantly offered to be part of the emerging WCC. In turn such wounded pride could have produced his totally negative attitude towards any attempts to serve the emerging WCC through Nordic Academic research or to coordinate the Nordic Folk churches through a sub-central of that same WCC.

War between Finland and the Soviet Union clearly indicated that the Nordic region could hardly expect to escape hostilities. Bishop Berggrav, as we know, eventually agreed to the establishment of a Nordic Ecumenical Institute in Sigtuna, Sweden – possibly as a price to be paid for Archbishop Eidem’s support of Berggrav’s recent and ambitious Peace plan. Nevertheless, Berggrav would no doubt have preferred to see NEI established in Oslo. The whole concept for NEI was, according to Berggrav, still far too Swedish.\textsuperscript{437}

In the autumn of 1939 (at a joint meeting 18 – 19 October), Nordic Heads of States expressed full sympathy with Finland, after the attack on Finland by the Communist Soviet Union in 1939. In early 1940 Continental Europe was illusory calm - despite the state of war.

That situation enabled Bishop Berggrav and others to pursue his peace initiatives. In Sweden support for the Berggrav initiative was expressed through declarations by the King of Sweden and by the Archbishop of Uppsala,

\textsuperscript{437} Ryman, Björn: \textit{Brobyggarkyrka}. Svenska kyrkans engagemang i utrikesfrågor, Artos & Norma bokförlag AB, Skellefteå, 2010, p.61.
but the general public as well as politicians in Sweden were less inclined to agree with such initiatives, as it was generally felt that the proposals, if implemented, would seriously harm Finland in its conflict with the Communist Soviet Union. Bishop Berggrav’s Peace initiative did actually very little to facilitate the planning for NEI.

On October 20, 1939 representatives for churches in Germany (Hans Schönfeld) and in the United Kingdom (William Paton) met at the palace of the Bishop of Copenhagen, in an effort to explore possibilities for the churches to contribute to an end of hostilities. Participants from the Nordic region were Bishop Eivind Berggrav (Oslo), Mr. Nils Ehrenström (Geneva/Sigtuna) and the host, the Rt. Revd. Hans Fuglsang-Damgaard, Bishop of Copenhagen. Meetings of this kind would become frequent in the Nordic region during the war, in particular under the auspices of NEI. In fact political dialogue and networking during the war would widely become the most called for and appreciated form of activity pursued by NEI.

According to reports given by William Paton, to the Church of England, Bishop Berggrav at the start of the Meeting (20.10.1939) strongly questioned the wisdom of the establishment of WCC and particularly of a Nordic sub central to WCC, when nations were in a state of war. Berggrav argued that it would be much better if the respective church administrations saw to it that contacts could be established and maintained between the churches themselves in countries at war. William Paton, one of the chief architects of WCC, responded strongly against Berggrav arguing that:

The establishment of Sigtuna, the famous and most remarkable educational foundation between Stockholm and Uppsala as a Northern branch of the Ecumenical movement is a matter of first-class importance. It is understood that Ehrenström, who has returned from Geneva once more to the North, will make that his headquarters and help to establish it in a position of authority in the North.

At large, William Paton’s view was shared by the Ecumenical Councils both in Norway and in Denmark. Regardless of Berggrav’s grudging, they expressed their approval of NEI in formation, when it attempted to be engaged in a number of tasks including:
1/ an effort to gain acceptance for the idea that NEI should function as a sub central to WCC,
2/ efforts to reduce tensions over opposing views on the very objects of NEI, and
3/ recruit a suitable Nordic Director for NEI.

Nils Ehrenström, who would become the first Director of NEI and still operate as head of the Ecumenical Secretariat in Geneva, managed to negotiate with Berggrav a model in which the research (detested by Dr. Berggrav) would only concern surveys on contemporary matters, particularly international affairs and peace.

At a regional conference for the World Alliance, W.A., in Oslo 22-23 November 1939 Manfred Björkquist explained the ideas behind the proposed NEI, which Bishop Berggrav now appears to have accepted. A few days after the November conference the Ecumenical Council of Norway announced approval of the plans for NEI and informed M Björkquist that Professor Einar Molland and Mr Kristian Hansson had been appointed to represent Norway on the Board of NEI. The Danish Ecumenical Council announced that Professor Nørregaard and the Revd G Sparring Petersen would represent Denmark and from the Ecumenical Council of Finland information was received that Finland would be represented by Professor G O Rosenqvist and Professor E G Gulin.

On February 6, 1940 a final and detailed plan for NEI was completed by Mr. Ehrenström. It now confirmed the removal of academic research from its list of objects:

If research shall at all be a task for NEI, Mr Ehrenström had been constrained to agree, such research shall concentrate on and effectively deal only with contemporary political issues. As an example the Plan refers to the special responsibility for peace that rests with the Nordic churches. Another example of “permitted” research was

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research to foster close contacts with Lutheran churches in Germany and in the Baltic countries. In giving up Research as a Nordic ecumenical priority NEI lost a fundamental element. The idea of creating a Study centre in the Nordic region in cooperation with WCC had been a vital part of NEI’s objects.

On February 26, 1940 NEI was officially inaugurated. On the Board, representatives from the start established two groups. One group gathered around Bishop Runestam (Karlstad) who, with expressed support from the Norwegian delegates, advocated that a first task for NEI ought to be to stimulate an ecumenical revivalist movement of evangelisation, similar to that which had been inspired by the Moral Re-Armament, M.R.A. (an Organisation that in 1940 had not yet lost its credibility).

Norwegian Board Members Molland and Hansson argued, as in an echo from the Oslo Bishop, that ecumenical research efforts in the past had had negative impacts [no examples were given] and that NEI above all ought to promote peace and nothing else. Professor Gulin, of Finland, agreed that the current situation required tangible ecumenical projects.

The other group, led by Manfred Björkquist and supported by the Danish delegates, Nørregaard and Sparring-Petersen, was in favour of research activities and regarded evangelisation as something NEI only with very limited success could engage in. The discussion between the two groups resulted in minor changes to the paragraph regulating the Objects of NEI, possibly adding confusion and uncertainty, opening up for future conflicting interpretations.

Statutes for NEI, approved by the Board on February 27, 1940, indicate in short that the objects of NEI are to: a/ operate as a central institution for the Nordic churches in their essential cooperation. b/ offer the Nordic churches a channel for cooperation with non-Nordic ecumenical institutions (like WCC and WA).

The first Board Meeting, in February 1940, disclosed remaining uncertainty regarding the understanding of these objects. Bishop Runestam engaged in a lengthy argument trying once again to change the objects so that they should include as a first task a campaign for evangelisation in the Nordic region to make the churches and their members ready to oppose the evil structures the war had forced upon them and to promote peace.

The Board noted the view of Bishop Runestam (of Karlstad) and that of the delegates from Norway, who agreed with the Bishop of Karlstad. The Board, however, offered the following resolution as an attempt to further clarify the objects already agreed:

NEI shall:

1/ attempt to make even more profound the unity between the Nordic churches and also foster contacts with non-Nordic churches.
2/ produce articles for the benefit of the Ecumenical Secretariat in Geneva on Church Affairs in the Nordic region.
3/ engage in a Nordic research project regarding the nature and the mission of the Church.
4/ engage in efforts to promote peace.

The Board Meeting on 26-27 February, 1940 approved a Budget Estimate, which demonstrated a rather precarious financial basis for the new organisation. The Swedish Ecumenical Council contributed as expected. No essential cross border contributions could be envisaged at this time. The Budget Estimate was to an alarming degree based upon contributions “to be confirmed later through Manfred Björkquist.” Financial uncertainty would remain and cripple NEI during years to come.

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444 Statutes of NEI 1940. As recorded in the Minutes from a Board Meeting held in Sigtuna by NEI on February 26-27, 1940. Nordiska ekumeniska institutets arkiv i Svenska kyrkans arkiv, Uppsala.
445 §26, Minutes from a Board Meeting held in Sigtuna by NEI on February 26-27, 1940. Nordiska ekumeniska institutets arkiv i Svenska kyrkans arkiv, Uppsala.
446 Detailed minutes of the discussion at the Board Meeting of NEI 26-27 Feb 1940
447 Minutes of NEI 26-27 Feb 1940. Svenska kyrkans arkiv, Uppsala
448 Minutes from the Board Meeting of NEI, Sigtuna 26-27 Feb 1940 §20.
As the Second World War engulfed Europe and also involved Nordic countries, the newly created Nordic Ecumenical Institute found that it was required to give whole-hearted support to the oppressed Nordic churches during the brutal war rather than to stick to what had originally, after considerable hullabaloo, been planned for the Institute. Through the state of war the Nordic countries had involuntarily ended up on different sides: Norway and Denmark had been occupied by Nazi-Germany. Finland, oppressed by the cruelty of the Winter War and by the ongoing Communist-Soviet threats and intimidations, invited Nazi-Germany to assist in fighting the Soviet Union. It was, however, fortunate that NEI had been located in Sweden, as Sweden was the only Nordic country that had been able to maintain the official neutrality all the Nordic countries initially had declared.  

Sweden’s controversial but tolerably respected neutrality made it possible for NEI to act as a mediator for the Nordic churches. The Institute exerted itself to the utmost to perform its tasks in total neutrality, as demonstrated during a visit to Sigtuna in 1940 by the German Bishop Heckel of the Nazi-German Kirchliches Aussamenat. A scheme for cooperation was then agreed upon including the exchange of theological literature, lecturers and general information. All that had been agreed should, however, be subject to approval by the inter-Nordic Board of NEI. No such approval was given. Bishop Heckel then tried to propose a German – Swedish agreement, excluding the National churches of Denmark and Norway. These proposals were also turned down by NEI, in this approach strongly supported by Archbishop Eidem. It was stressed by Eidem and by the Bishop of Karlstad, NEI Board Member A. Runestam, that NEI in the contemporary complicated war time situation must not take any decisions on any international cooperation without the consent of all its member churches.

It was often quite complicated for NEI to operate with complete impartiality. Towards the end of 1941 there was actually a proper war going on between the Church of Norway and the Nazi-German Quisling Government. Often NEI came to act as and be used as safe channel for information between churches in the Nordic region.

NEI operated with an ambition to keep in touch with the resistance in Germany. A rather famous meeting was held at the Institute in Sigtuna for Bishop Bell (of Chichester, UK) and Dietrich Bonhoeffer (of the Confessing Church in Germany). Bishop Bell was officially in Sweden to visit the Anglican congregations in Sweden, but managed to modify the program to allow for this rather sudden encounter at NEI in Sigtuna. The main purpose of the meeting was to gather evidence to convince the British War Cabinet that there existed in Germany a genuine resistance movement.

Not only Bonhoeffer dared to meet representatives of the enemy at NEI, Sigtuna during the war. Other Germans who engaged in meetings arranged by NEI in Sigtuna in what the Nazi administration regarded as treason included: Eugen Gerstenmaier (of Das Auswärtige Amt, the German Foreign Office) who in 1945, rescued from prison by the Allies, initiated Evangelische Hilfswerk; Helmuth James von Moltke (of Das Auswärtige Amt, The German Foreign Office), leader of the Kreisau group (Kreisau was Moltke’s family estate), executed by the Nazis in January 1945; Theodor Steltzer (serving under Nikolaus von Falkenhorst, who was the Commander of the German troops in Norway between 1940 and 1944). Steltzer was sentenced to death after the July 20th 1944 coup against Hitler. He was saved from execution after a remarkable intervention by NEI and released from prison in May 1945; Adam von Trott zu Solz (a colleague of von Moltke in Das Auswärtige Amt, the German Foreign Office), sentenced to death and executed in August 26, 1944.

Theodor Steltzer served as a transport officer in Norway and had the freedom and duty to travel in Sweden regularly. Very often he arranged a stop over in Sigtuna as he operated as a secret messenger between the detained Bishop Berggrav in Oslo, and NEI in Sigtuna. Through Steltzer, the Church of Norway could communicate with the outside world. It was Steltzer who smuggled Berggrav’s manuscripts to Sweden for publication, including those on his Christian view of society, written in detention.

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In 1942 the Board of NEI’s met in Finland. As previously resolved, the meeting was held in Åbo as a conference with additional participants from Sweden and Finland. No participation could be achieved from Denmark or Norway, as exit visas were refused by the Nazi-German authorities. After the Åbo meeting a visit was arranged to Helsinki and to the recaptured Karelia. The conference (i.e. the extended Board meeting) in Åbo dealt to some considerable extent with the situation in Norway. Strong reactions from Norway followed and Bishop Heckel (Kirchliches Aussenamt) visited Finland in order to try to calm things down. The Church of Norway in that situation expressed increasing frustration over Finland’s friendship with Nazi-Germany. NEI tried its best to keep the Nordic churches together in a reasonable friendship.453

Towards the end of the War the task to bring about mutual understanding between the churches in the Nordic region became even more important. In 1944 professor Molland (of Norway) had attended a NEI meeting in Sweden, as he then stayed in Sweden as a refugee. The 1944 NEI meeting dealt with the situation in Finland as well as with the situation in Denmark and Norway. The members from Finland, G O Rosenqvist and Elis Gulin, explained how, after the Winter War, the people of Finland were not particularly interested in Nazi-Germany but simply wanted to endure and overcome the attacks from the Soviet Union. That had made natural the cooperation with Nazi-Germany. In addition no other substantial military help was on offer. In September 1944 when Finland eventually had entered a separate Peace Agreement with the Soviet Union, another NEI meeting was agreed and held in Helsinki in April 1945. The intention was to support Finland generally and to initiate a process of reconciliation for the Nordic churches separated by War. As Denmark and Norway were still occupied, the churches were represented only by Danish/Norwegian leaders in exile in Sweden. (i.e. Einar Molland, J. Natvig, Blom-Salomonsen and G Sparring-Pedersen).454

At the Helsinki meeting in April 1945 G O Rosenqvist noted that political and military conflicts had had a very negative effect on the unity between the Lutheran Folk churches in the Nordic region. The situation could only be rectified by a very slow and careful process during which motives for actions in the past could be explained openly in an attempt to distribute absolutely correct information. Professor Einar Molland explained, from a Norwegian perspective, that most members of the Church of Norway totally failed to understand how the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland could cooperate with Bishop Heckel and with the Luther Academy in Sondershausen. Furthermore, in Norway it was impossible to understand Finland’s military cooperation with Nazi-Germany. Even so, the Norwegian professor concluded, the unity of the churches must be re-established. From the Finnish side Max von Bonsdorff explained that after the Winter War, Finland received several warm expressions of sympathy but very little or actually no proper military assistance. As the Soviet Union continued to intimidate Finland, only German assistance was available. Particularly in Norway this was hard to understand and impossible to accept. For NEI the complicated war situation in the Nordic region constituted both a strong raison d’être during the War and an equally strong potential risk for disintegration after the Second World War.455

After the war, in May-June 1948 the Board of NEI met in Oslo to discuss the perceived uncertain role of NEI. Bishop Manfred Björkquist admitted that, when founded, the basis for the Institute’s ecumenical role had been rather fragile.456 At the Oslo meeting Manfred Björkquist left it to Mr. Harry Johansson, former assistant, now Director of NEI, to summarize the situation explaining that:

1. NEI had been shaped in accordance with conditions prevalent between the World Wars, when the ecumenical visions had been rather vague and the regional institutions had been rather weak or undeveloped. WCC Secretariat in Geneva had been quite small in relation to its tasks and international expectations. Finally, there had been some confusion over the relationship between the notions of Ecumenical and Nordic.

2. The Second World War had prompted NEI to take on new important tasks rather different than those originally intended. A positive result of this tragic fact was that NEI had been seen as profoundly important and been able to operate as a relevant Centre in the Nordic region during the difficult years of the war.

456 Minutes from a Board Meeting of NEI held at Oslo 31.5-1.6 1948 §12. Svenska kyrkans arkiv, Uppsala.
3. After the war provisional WCC had grown strong and its institute at Bossay deemed more and more important. Lutheran ecumenical cooperation also became more prominent. Most importantly, a general trend could be observed by which the churches themselves took a more active part in the ecumenical work than before, leaving national or regional councils less useful or less called for.457

It appears that the meeting agreed that the role of the churches now tended to overshadow that of a Regional Nordic Ecumenical Institute. Two months later the General Assembly of WCC would adopt in Amsterdam a Constitution confirming the new role of the churches, i.e. as Member Churches of WCC.

With the exception of Bishop Björkquist’s comment recorded in §12 in the Minutes from the Oslo Board Meeting 31.5-1.6 1948, and Mr.Harry Johansson’s explanation recorded in §11 item 3 (at the same Board Meeting) reported on above, the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI, seems to have ignored the new prerequisite for world ecumenical endeavours, in place after Amsterdam 1948. The Nordic Ecumenical Institute appears to have continued its activities assuming the brittle role of an imagined or self-appointed regional sub-central to WCC, which, through its now agreed membership structure, had decided to let the churches speak for themselves.

In Oslo, Mr. Johansson, director of NEI, probably aware of the upcoming complications, argued that NEI now had to concentrate on the study department, increasing the flow of Nordic church information and, in the process, foster a strong unity between the Nordic Folk churches.458 Mr Johansson in recommending an increased focus on research or the Study department jumped from one precarious element [the abandoned regional representation] to another [Research] that had been most controversial from the very start.

In addition, Johansson went on, NEI must be open for participation by both Established and Free churches. Finally NEI must be given additional staff in order to operate properly, according to Mr. Johansson.459

A fragile economy together with opposing Nordic views on the real raison d’être of NEI and on the Objects of NEI in combination with the downgrading of the regional significance, eventually resolved at the General Assembly of WCC in August 1948, appear to have contributed gradually to a disintegration of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, later Nordic Ecumenical Council, NEC, a disintegration that was eventually completed in 2003. A persistent lack of funds did nothing to facilitate the activities of NEI.

In this essay I now have to abstain from following NEI in detail through its many years of useful service and support to the Nordic churches. There is simply not any space for such a detailed scrutiny. I will have to leave that to research in the future. Instead I will look into the last years of NEI/NEC and try to establish to what extent rulings and decisions during NEI’s initial years reveal intrinsic defects with serious consequences for the organisation in the 21st Century.

At this stage, however, I will first study the Episcopate in the Nordic Folk churches, as the understanding of the Episcopate was problematic in the Nordic region, with one view in the Eastern part of the region, contrasting with a different view in the Western part. It is fair to say that the views on the Episcopate added to the tension under which NEI/NEC operated. It is also correct to point out and remind the reader that NEC was eventually given a role [as it coordinated the conversations that were leading to the Porvoo Agreement] to heal the misunderstandings regarding Episcopacy and Apostolic Succession in the Nordic region and beyond.460 One may therefore claim that Episcopacy in the Nordic region for a long time constituted a problem for NEI, and that NEI in the 1990s eventually contributed to a Nordic consensus regarding Episcopacy.

11 The Nordic Bishops.

In this chapter (11) the role of the Bishop in the Nordic region will be dealt with. The role of the Bishop developed in a different manner in the Eastern and Western parts of the Nordic region. For a long time it was regarded as a fact that apostolic succession had been preserved in Sweden and in Finland, while it had been lost or

457 Minutes from a Board Meeting of NEI held at Oslo 31.5-1.6 1948 §11. Svenska kyrkans arkiv, Uppsala.
458 Minutes from a Board Meeting of NEI held at Oslo 31.5-1.6 1948 §11. Svenska kyrkans arkiv, Uppsala.
459 Minutes from a Board Meeting of NEI held at Oslo 31.5-1.6 1948 §11. Svenska kyrkans arkiv, Uppsala.
460 Minutes from a Board Meeting of Nordiska Folkkyrkosekretariatet (the Secretariat for the Nordic Folk churches, c/o NEC) 1991 0602 §5. Svenska kyrkans arkiv, Uppsala.
actively eradicated in the Folk churches in Denmark, Norway and Iceland. The different attitudes in the Nordic Folk churches created a tension between Folk churches of the two parts of the Nordic region. It is my understanding that the respective views on the Episcopacy in the Eastern and the Western parts of the Nordic region added to the tension otherwise often caused by political circumstances from time to time. I regard those two factors, Episcopacy and politics, as the two main factors that as a general background made it difficult for the Nordic Ecumenical Institute to establish any ecumenical unity in the Nordic region. I intend to show by facts recorded in this chapter (11) as well as in section 12.3 that not only was Episcopacy since the Reformation problematic and church dividing in the Nordic region, but also that NEI in a significant manner contributed to a Nordic consensus over Episcopacy with far reaching ecumenical consequences through the Porvoo Common Statement.

In the following sections of this chapter I attempt to give an account of Episcopacy in the respective Nordic Folk churches.

11.1 Bishops in the Church of Denmark.
This section seeks to illustrate Episcopacy in the Church of Denmark, bearing in mind the formative role the Church of Denmark played for the Church of Norway and for the Church of Iceland, not least in relation to Episcopacy.

The Danish Church History presents two different attitudes towards the National church. These attitudes may be explained by the thinking of Søren Kirkegaard (1813-1855) and of N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783-1872). The latter understood the church in a similar way as the Romantics, who had opposed Rationalism and in the process re-discovered the Bible and “old-fashioned Lutheran piety” (to use Grundtvig’s own words).

Grundtvig, however, did not stop there, but went on studying Nordic mythology and ancient Icelandic literature. Out of this mixture of sources of inspiration Grundtvig created an ecclesiology in which the church precedes the Bible. This approach contrasted strongly with traditional Lutheran orthodoxy. Grundtvig maintained that the Word of the Bible only comes alive in the midst of a gathered congregation. Christianity, for Grundtvig, was a cultic drama, and that sort of Christianity grew into a distinguishing mark for the Church of Denmark. Grundtvig’s views were very different both to Rationalism and to Pietism.

In addition to this ecclesiology Grundtvig added a personal view on human life. Christian life should be an ordinary human life among the ordinary people to which one belongs, speaking the language of the fathers and mothers, being part of the local culture and its history, “Human first – and then Christian”. That is also still a most distinguishing mark for the National Church of Denmark.

Part of Grundtvig’s influence on the Church of Denmark came through his creation of the “Folkhögskolan”, a College of Higher Education, fostering the personal development of the individual when teaching the culture and the traditions of the Land. Grundtvig’s followers soon formed themselves into a popular Revivalist movement even with a right to be exempt from membership in the local parish. Through the arrangement a formal split in the Church was avoided. Hence, the Church of Denmark, from 1849 known as Den Danske Folkekirke (The Danish Folk church), has members both in the Evangelical Revivalist movement Indre misjon (Home Mission) and in the Grundtvig movement. The Danish Folk church is indeed regarding itself as a Folk church with democratic ideals and a nationalistic ecclesiology of a “Grundtvigian” brand, within a framework of an Established State church.

However, the nationalistic ecclesiology did not remain unopposed. The opposition was mainly expressed by Søren Kierkegaard, who reacted strongly when in an obituary the Bishop of Zealand was referred to as a genuine witness to the truth, a link in the holy chain of witnesses to the truth, which extends throughout time from the days of the Apostles onwards.

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462 Österlin Lars: Churches of Northern Europe in Profile, 1995, p. 175.
463 Österlin Lars: Churches of Northern Europe in Profile, 1995, p. 175.
Kierkegaard did not accept this as he felt that the deceased Bishop had rather been a well-heeled and socially well-connected member of the privileged elite, with very little in common with Jesus Christ, the crucified, and with his apostles and martyrs. A witness to the truth could hardly be a church leader in the society of the established upper classes in a triumphalist church, Kierkegaard maintained.  

Kierkegaard’s attack was not very well received as it was an attack not only on a recently departed prominent church leader but also on the National church itself. The followers of Grundtvig, for whom it was natural to accept the society in which one lived, and to thank God for the good things it provided for one’s well-being and benefit, objected to Kierkegaard’s attack even if they did not fully accept that they were targets of Kierkegaard’s criticism. They were of the opinion that the true Church of Christ was far from identical with the National church, which were merely a social institution and a framework for the true life of the Spirit. Therefore the Grundtvig movement embraced an ecclesiology that could accept both the institution of the State church and its true Spiritual dimension.

Kierkegaard’s criticism had sprung from a background very different to the affluent life-style of Danish upper-middle class society but it also appears to have roots in a much older discussion in Denmark related to the historic Episcopate. In his research Canon Dr. John Halliburton († 2004) refers to an unpublished typescript by F.R. Stevenson from 1951 and to further research concerning Denmark at the beginning of the 16th Century, at which time there were seven sees (dioceses) in Denmark. The Danish Bishops at the time were, like many medieval prelates, wealthy landowners and powerful both on a local and on a National level. Allegedly, they were also most unpopular.

Gerhard Pedersen, in his Essay on Episcopacy in the Church of Denmark, states that, on the threshold to the Reformation, Episcopacy in the Church of Denmark was in a state of grave decay. As early as 1522 King Christian II had sensed this and ruled (as reflected in the Law Books of 1522) that every Ecclesiastical case should be tried at the Episcopal court at Roskilde rather than be referred to Rome. At the same time the Bishops’ courts were reduced to be licensed to deal only with cases regarding matrimony and adultery. The Bishops were caustically instructed to remain in their dioceses during all Church festivals, preach to and instruct their people and not, as so often in the past, parade in the streets accompanied by bands of drummers and pipers! The reform was biting and the main target of the criticism was the Episcopate.

Christian’s successor Frederick I abolished the Episcopal court at Roskilde and simply ordained that Rome should no longer have any say in Episcopal appointments in Denmark. When a new Archbishop of Lund was to be recruited, disagreements between the King, Canons and the Pope led to an embarrassing interregnum of six years. Eventually a presbyterer, never consecrated Bishop, was appointed. This was to happen in other dioceses as well. By 1535 only three properly consecrated Bishops remained. Of these, two were deprived of their Offices for having been involved in the Counts’ Feud 1534-1536. The remaining Bishop had a see in an area not properly part of Denmark but in Schleswig-Holstein. For some years this Bishop, the Rt Revd Ahlefeldt, was the only consecrated Bishop in the Kingdom of Denmark.

In 1526 the King had opened up Denmark for Lutheran preachers, who established a considerable presence. One of these preachers, Peder Laursen, drew up a confession, called the Copenhagen Confession, which was a Statement of Reformation principle. After the death of King Frederick, Christian II tried to make a come-back and civil war broke out. Eventually the son of Frederick was crowned King under the name Christian III. In Parliament in 1536 the Bishops were accused of having dithered during the civil war, failing to elect a new king quickly enough. They were also accused of having divided the estates of the Crown among themselves and others. The worst accusation, according to E. H. Dunkley, was that they had postponed the election of a King, which had led to the civil war. The new King had all seven Bishops deposed and imprisoned. In 1536 on July 2nd the

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464 Österlin Lars: Churches of Northern Europe in Profile, 1995, p.177.
465 Österlin Lars: Churches of Northern Europe in Profile, 1995, p.178
King, Christian III, invited Dr Johannes Bugenhagen, a priest exercising a superintendent ministry in Wittenberg, to crown the King and his consort and to “ordain” seven superintendents to the seven vacant sees in Denmark and one in Norway. The Ordination Service for the Superintendents took place in the Church of our Lady in Copenhagen. These Superintendents, most of them already presbyters, should for the future have authority to ordain ministers.  

A new Church Ordinance (Ordinatio Ecclesiastica Regnorum Daniae et Norwegiae et Ducataum Sleswicensis Holtsatiae etc.) was presented in 1537 and, in 1539, ratified with a Danish translation, (Kirkeordinans), in which the orders of Bishop and Presbyter were retained as well as Cathedral Chapters and religious houses, provided all concerned submitted to a Lutheran theological training. The Kirkeordinans contains an Order for the Consecration of Bishops, most probably the one used by Dr Bugenhagen in 1536.  

Dr. Bugenhagen was a Lutheran Pastor in Wittenberg. In addition to his duties as a Parish Priest he was exercising a Superintendent style of Ministry in the Wittenberg part of Electoral Saxony. Canon Halliburton concluded in his research that Bugenhagen’s Ministry of Superintendent had a distinctly Episcopal style. “Superintendent”, in English, sounds like an official of the State employed to inspect and control. In German Superintendent is a term for someone who is an overseer, i.e. with a ministry of Episcopal. That appears to have been Bugenhagen’s own view, as reflected in a letter he wrote to King Christian III in November 1537: Ich wil E.M. zu troste nicht verbergen das Got durch seine arme Bischofe oder Superintendenten viel guts ausgerichtet.  

A 16th Century Lutheran Bishop or Superintendent, as the one in Albertine Saxony, was appointed by the local Prince and expected to be learned and godly. His prime ministry was to the clergy, whom he must visit, instruct, warn, and admonish, correct and help. He had a special care for those preparing to be ordained. And he had to be particularly solicitous for the widows of the clergy, seeing them into proper care before the appointment of a new pastor. Such a ministry is nothing but Episcopal. The Lutheran reformation churches soon realised that a ministry of unity and pastoral care of the clergy was necessary if the church should survive. However, instead of in the medieval understanding, seeing the presbyterate as a development from the Episcopate, the Lutheran interpretation was instead that the Episcopate or Superintendent ministry emerged from the presbyteran order.  

In Denmark the consecrations by Bugenhagen were regarded as extraordinary but still valid and thereafter only Bishops consecrated and ordained.

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476 Halliburton, John: Orders and Ordination in Denmark, Norway and Iceland. An essay by Canon John Halliburton in Together in Mission and Ministry
477 Halliburton, John: Orders and Ordination in Denmark, Norway and Iceland. An essay by Canon John Halliburton in Together in Mission and Ministry

96
In short, the existing 16th Century Danish Episcopate, trapped in political and social upheavals, could survive neither as individuals nor as a credible spiritual leadership. Three of them were not even consecrated Bishops and all of them had lost their credibility. Kierkegaard’s later criticism was in keeping with the Reformation attitude towards the old regime.

In The Book of Order [Service Book] of the Churches of Denmark and Norway of 1685 the term Bishop is reintroduced. The Office of Superintendents, now more often called Bishops, appears to have been fully preserved in the National Church of Denmark, which nevertheless, much later, sometimes demonstrated an almost arrogant pride over the lack of apostolic succession, eventually demonstrated in its fullness by the refusal to ratify the Porvoo Common Statement in the 1990s.

At the Reformation, the King of Denmark could either have found, appointed and have had a number of new recruits consecrated for the vacant sees, or he could have chosen to go for the new “Presbyterian order” which flourished in Geneva or Zurich. Eventually, the King, formerly Prince of Schleswig, decided to look at a more familiar, German alternative: Wittenberg. Here he found a reformed style of oversight, a pastoral style free from the trammels of property and state office, free from interference by non Danish-speaking delegates from Rome. Dr. Johannes Bugenhagen represented a Protestant version of a Bishop, appointed solemnly with the laying on of hands, with obvious uncertainty regarding the succession personalis, but standing in a tradition of those who were given the task to care for all the churches in the historic sees, by teaching and guarding the faith and exercise oversight regarding how that faith was presented by the pastors in the diocese. Dr Bugenhagen’s consecrations were therefore, in the eyes of modern Anglicans, to be regarded as valid and within a tradition, which intends to continue a succession that always has been. On the basis of that continuity Anglicans were confident to move beyond the hesitations about Episcopacy in the Danish, Norwegian and Icelandic Churches in the Porvoo Common Statement in 1993.

That continuity made the Porvoo Communion, not least through the Bishop of Portsmouth, the Rt. Revd. Dr. Kenneth Stevenson (†2010), candid in its repeated invitations to the Church of Denmark to reconsider and join the Porvoo Communion after its “No” in 1995.

For some time, prior to the Porvoo decision it had been most controversial to suggest participation of Swedish Bishops at the consecration of Danish Bishops as “accidental historic succession” could occur. Bishop Harald Ostenfeld of Copenhagen suggested in 1921 that Nordic Bishops (including Uppsala and Oslo) should participate in a consecration, at which Bishop Ostenfeld was due to officiate. The suggestion met fierce criticism. The Professor of Church History J. Oskar Andersen argued that it might cause a split in the Danish Church if one of its Bishops were drawn into the “Swedish succession”. In addition the notion of apostolic succession, according to the Professor, was “un-evangelical” and “the Danes might be forced into a re-unification with the Anglicans” (sic!). The Bishop of Copenhagen withdrew his suggestion and subsequently no “risky” participation was offered. The practice today, according to the Order of 1898, includes the laying on of hands by the Consecrating Bishop and two Danish Bishops from bordering Dioceses; Bishops from abroad do not participate in the laying on of hands. Gerhard Pedersen claims that this practice has had no negative effect on the Scandinavian fellowship.

Dr. Pedersen was also of the opinion that Episcopacy in Denmark had gained in prestige as the Bishop in a multicultural society was looked upon for guidance in matters of faith. It has been claimed that nobody can speak for the Church of Denmark except Parliament, but Dr. Pedersen reminds the reader that during the Second World War the Bishops of Denmark were at times heard speaking on behalf of the Church of Denmark condemning for instance the persecution of Jews in Nazi–occupied Denmark. Even so, traditionally the Danish Bishops have refrained from speaking on behalf of the whole Church of Denmark, leaving that to Parliament.

483 Osterlin Lars: Churches of Northern Europe in Profile. 1995, p.249
On 9th December, 2009 the Church of Denmark, by a decision of its Board for Inter-Church Relations, asked to be included in the Porvoo Communion. In January 2010 the Bishops’ Council of the Church of Denmark expressed support for the decision and declared that it was indeed within the competence of the Inter-Church Relations Board to take such a decision. However, considering the intense debate before the Church of Denmark’s “no” in 1995, a new public debate prior to any decision would, according to the Bishops, have been useful.485

Prior to that “no” in 1995, the Porvoo Common Statement had been sent to Parish Councils, pastors, professors of theology and other interested individuals for an open hearing, which eventually did not produce evidence of widespread consent. Opponents to the proposals seized the initiative and made it impossible for the Danish Bishops to endorse the Statement. But the Bishops never rejected the Statement either, stating: “We find no church dividing differences in the Lutheran and Anglican foundations of faith, and we rejoice that our churches have not previously maintained that such differences existed”.486

So, the invitation had remained open, in awareness of the anomalous situation in which the Church of Denmark had rejected a proposal which had indeed been prepared to accommodate the very churches of the Danish reformation. I would like to add that the proposal, through that accommodation, included an ecclesiology with a more profound doctrine of the ministry and a sustainable view of Episcopacy in the service of the apostolicity of the Church.

It is rather obvious that recent decisions by Anglican churches regarding the ordination of women as priests and, possibly, as bishops had facilitated for the Church of Denmark to resolve to join the Porvoo Communion in December 2009. It is also true that the Church of Denmark in joining the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe (Leuenberg) had demonstrated that it had the means of taking such decisions and had strengthened its “Protestant credentials”, which some had feared could be impaired by an alliance with Anglicans.487

With the Church of Denmark as a strong Lutheran member of the Porvoo Communion it remains to be seen if the Church of Denmark shall become more at ease with the Porvoo Common Statement: “that each church has maintained in 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”.488

11.2 Bishops in the Church of Norway.

The Kalmar Union, which attempted to make permanent the personal union between Denmark and Norway including Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands, was broken at the Reformation, when nevertheless Norway was placed under the King of Denmark and the Church of Norway was given a similar status as that given to the Church of Denmark.

Technically outside the order of apostolic episcopal succession, Dr. Bugenhagen ordained a Lutheran Bishop also for Norway.489 There was never any intention to remove the true Episcopal office from the churches in Denmark, Norway and Iceland, but rather an ambition to free Episcopacy from political malpractice and secular authority. The Church of Norway, throughout her history, has maintained the Episcopal office for oversight.

In order to understand the Church of Norway and its view on Ministry one should, however, start with the concept of the Church, i.e. its ecclesiology, which, in accordance with Confessio Augustana (CA) VII, is to be understood as the congregation of believers, congregatio sanctorum. In that congregation the Word of God is rightly (according to the Gospel) preached and the sacraments rightly administered.

The Gospel and the faith in the Gospel is considered as an apostolic tradition in the Church. To establish such faith God has instituted the Office of Ministry. This Ministry, ministerium ecclesiasticum, is the basic ministry, which through the Holy Spirit communicates the Gospel and creates faith in those who hear the Gospel. The Bishop is a pastor who through the rite of consecration (in Denmark and Norway often referred to as ordination) is given a new authority to carry out oversight (episcopé, supervision). The office of Bishops in the Church of Norway (and Denmark) is described in the Church Ordinance of 1537 and 1685. The latest version is to be found in Alterbook (Service Book) for the Church of Norway 1990.

11.3 Bishops in the Church of Iceland.

As we have seen, Iceland was part of the Norwegian kingdom from 1262. After the dissolution of the Union of Kalmar 1523, Iceland remained under Danish control and from 1662 Iceland recognised the absolute rule of the King of Denmark. In 1918 Iceland was made a sovereign state in personal union with Denmark and declared itself an independent republic in 1944.

From 1106 there were two dioceses in Iceland; Skálholt (in the south) and Hólar (in the north). In 1801 the two sees were united under the Bishop of Reykjavik. When Christianity originally was established in Iceland the island came under the jurisdiction of the Arch bishopric of Bremen. Later that role was entrusted to the Archbishopric of Lund and later, when established, to the Archbishopric of Trondheim. After the Reformation, when links with Denmark became stronger, the Bishop of Zealand was made superior Bishop or Primus of Iceland.

In medieval times the local Bishops of Iceland were chosen by clergy and laity at the Alting (i.e. Parliament). This changed in 1237 when it was resolved that the Chapter in Trondheim should be given the right to elect the Bishops of Iceland, a choice to be approved by the Archbishop and eventually also by the King of Norway. From 1350 the Pope managed to get involved in selecting Bishops for Iceland. A hundred years later the King of Norway resolved that Iceland should be given no Bishop unless approved by the King of Norway. Even if formally the Chapter of Trondheim was entitled to nominate Bishops that power was gradually taken over by a clerical synod in the diocese concerned.

At the Reformation, the Ecclesiastical Ordinance of King Christian III, issued in 1537, was adopted in the Diocese of Skálholt in 1541. In Hólar the pre-reformation Bishop opposed the Ordinance and no Reformation occurred there until the Bishop had been executed in 1550. In both dioceses the Reformation was regarded as a rather foreign and negligible movement, which was mainly a matter for a small number of educated individuals close to the Danish monarchy.

The first Lutheran Bishop in the see of Skálholt was proposed by the resigning pre-reformation Bishop, who due to ill health and blindness wished to resign in 1539. The candidate had been an assistant to the Bishop. Both the Clerical Synod and the Altinget supported the appointment of the candidate who had studied abroad and, in Wittenberg, been influenced by the teaching of Dr. Martin Luther, which for a time had been complicating the relationship between the outgoing Bishop and his assistant. The Bishop might have felt, however, that the assistant could prove to be an ideal candidate at a time which required skill to unify old tradition with new ideas. The consecration of the new Bishop was postponed until 1542 when it was carried out by the Bishop/Superintendent of Zealand.

The arrival of the first post-reformation Bishop in Hólar was more dramatic. After the execution of the last pre-reformation Bishop in Hólar, clergy and laity chose his son to succeed him, an appointment the King refused to confirm. Instead the King introduced a new candidate conversant with evangelical teachings, who eventually was consecrated by the Bishop/ Superintendent of Zealand.

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Eventually, the Protestant Ecclesiastical Ordinance adopted in Denmark was accepted also in Iceland after several years of uncertainty during which old Catholic legal statutes together with more recent Icelandic, Danish and even Norwegian laws had been used as a guide for legal Ecclesiastical administration. The Danish monarchy tried its best to harmonize religious practices in Iceland with customs in Denmark, however different the two areas were, particularly in respect of population distribution. The Church Ritual Ordinance of 1685 may serve as an example. It was never brought into force in Iceland, even though it had considerable influence on Christian practice there. Icelandic Bishops were consecrated in accordance with the Ritual Ordinance of 1685, just like their colleagues in Norway and Denmark were. Locally an Icelandic Prayer Book, compiled by the Icelandic Bishops, was used by the clergy. An Icelandic Bible translation was introduced in 1584.

As Icelandic Bishops after the Reformation were consecrated in Denmark by the Bishop/ Superintendent of Zealand, it was an innovation when a Royal Decree in 1789 authorized the “Ordination” (consecration) in Iceland, with the Bishop in one diocese consecrating his counterpart in the other diocese. This measure became irrelevant when, ten years later, the two dioceses were merged into one see with one Bishop thereafter consecrated as before by the Bishop of Zealand. That practice was discontinued in 1908 when the outgoing Bishop consecrated his successor.

From the account above on the Episcopate it is apparent that Bishops in Iceland had a status similar to that of their counterparts in other parts of the Kingdom of Denmark. However, the title Superintendent was never used in Iceland, where continuity with the medieval church was emphasised in a context distant to the Danish court. In the 19th Century the Danish rule became more visible, and a supreme representative of the Danish crown (the Stiftsamtmadur) took over most administrative Church affairs, including appointments. The Bishop ordained ministers. Churches on the other hand were sometimes consecrated by Deans. As transport links improved, Bishops took over also the consecration of churches.

In 1909 the posts of two suffragan (assistant) Bishops were created for the old dioceses of Hólar and Skálholt, mainly to provide a possibility to consecrate in Iceland a new Bishop for the united diocese when the outgoing Bishop could not do so. The two suffragan Bishops in the united Diocese of Iceland are technically speaking assistant Bishops. The creation of their posts may be seen as signs of the weakening of the ties between Iceland and the Danish state as nationalism and struggle for independence emerged. It is interesting to note that in that process Episcopacy and the local consecration of Bishops was regarded as significant. A paramount incentive to create the posts of suffragan Bishops was that it ensured that a post-reformation continuity within the Danish Lutheran Church was secured.

Episcopacy in the Church of Iceland has maintained a strong position with considerable responsibility for Church affairs together with a Church Council that meets several times per year and a Church Assembly that convenes annually. The secretariat serving the Bishop is small enough to leave the Bishop involved in the details of most areas of ecclesiastical affairs.

It appears that in the eyes of the nation the Bishop is an important leader among other leaders in the country.

The Revd. Dr. Hjalti Hugason, in his Essay on Episcopacy, argues that the doctrinal conception of the Episcopal Office in the Church of Iceland may be understood in the light of the positive reception by the
Church of Iceland of the *BEM (Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, the Lima Report)*. In addition, heremarks, the Liturgies for the Consecration of Bishops in the Church of Iceland have been influenced by a general trend to return to more classical liturgical forms. The Church of Iceland, which in the 19th Century responded positively to a never implemented suggestion by Anglicans to let Icelandic Bishops be consecrated in England rather than in Denmark. The Church of Iceland was, however, prepared to enter into new cooperation that would bring the Church back into the historical Episcopal succession. After all, the break in succession had to do with circumstances in the Danish and Norwegian churches rather than with anything Icelandic.

11.4 Bishops in the Church of Sweden.

Archbishop Söderblom (in office 1914-1931), using the Anglican Branch Theory, saw Christianity consisting of three branches: Greek-Catholic, Roman-Catholic and Evangelical- Catholic. For Söderblom the Church of Sweden was truly Evangelical-Catholic, because in Sweden the Reformation had been an act of Church improvement and a purification of a Church of Sweden that at the same time faithfully continued what had commenced long ago. The National Church of Sweden brought together the medieval traditions and the Reformation insights, safeguarding the historic episcopate.

At the Reformation several Episcopal sees were unoccupied in Sweden. In 1524 Petrus Magni, the director of the Birgittine Community in Rome, was elected and consecrated Bishop of Västerås, Sweden. Eventually, in 1528, Bishop Magni officiated at the coronation of King Gustav I and was at the same time made to consecrate two Bishops who had no Papal confirmation. It is true that a request had been sent from Sweden to Rome for Papal confirmation of the election of a new Archbishop for the Uppsala Archdiocese, but the request had been lost and failed to reach Rome. The King was most irritated over the request that had gone astray and, influenced by Lutheran theologians, he announced that he would now take over the Pope’s right of confirmation. Laurentius Petri, a scholar of Lutheran theology, was elected Archbishop and consecrated in 1531 by Bishop Magni.

The Church Ordinance of 1571, written by the same, Laurentius Petri, comprises parts that are to be regarded as proper theological statements including a comprehensive outline of the Episcopate in the Church of Sweden. The Episcopal Office was established, the Church Ordinance argues, by the Early Church as a gift given by the Holy Spirit. Episcopacy had been approved by Christendom in all parts of the world and should therefore remain in the Church for as long as the world lasted. The Bishop’s duty, the Ordinance maintains, is to ordain the clergy and to consecrate Bishops. The Bishop shall, according to the Ordinance, visit his diocese, with jurisdiction over his clergy; he shall be responsible for the teaching of the true faith and see to it that the sacraments are rightly administered. In fact, with all his clergy he shall be the servant of the Gospel, a *verbi divini minister* serving his diocese.

According to the Church Ordinance 1571 the new Bishop had to be approved, appointed and given an official proof thereof through a Letter of Appointment. Once that had been provided Episcopal Ordination would follow. The Episcopal Ordination was rather similar to the Ordination to the Priesthood. At the Episcopal Ordination, however, the elected Bishop was expected to make the Solemn Promise (i.e. to Take an Oath of Office) and the Royal Letter of Appointment should be recited. In a similar manner the Canon Law 1686 described the Episcopal Ordination. It is obvious that the Swedish Bishop after the Reformation was given an Ordination (or consecration) rather than an Installation.

The next Archbishop of Sweden was consecrated in 1575 in Åbo in the Swedish Province of Finland by Bishop Paul Juusten, securing a non disputable transfer of the *successio manuum* and the *successio sedis* from the medieval Church to the reformed Lutheran Established Church of Sweden.

During Sweden’s period as a Great Power (c.1617-1719) the Episcopate enjoyed a strengthened position in society. At the same time the Bishop exercised *de jure divino* a prophetic role sometimes critical of the Crown.

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and of the nobility. The Bishops managed to consolidate the independence of the Bishops and of the dioceses.\textsuperscript{508} The King still appointed the Bishops. The nobility eventually managed to circumscribe the power of Bishops and the Clergy when, in 1864, a more democratic form of government replaced the old Diet of the Four Estates. At the same time a National General Synod for Church Affairs (Kyrkomöte), including lay representatives, was set up.

In occupied areas in Germany and Baltic nations that were controlled by Sweden, ecclesiastical regions were given Superintendents rather than Bishops. If such a Superintendent (with the right to ordain) was elected Bishop in one of the old dioceses in the Kingdom of Sweden he had to be consecrated Bishop before taking up his Office.\textsuperscript{509} During the reign of Gustavus III, French influence replaced the traditional Lutheran German influence. Gustavus III was keen to make sure that the Bishops in the Church of Sweden were of a similar standing as the Bishops in the Roman Catholic Church or in the Church of England.\textsuperscript{510} A few remaining superintendents were consecrated Bishops, for instance in Visby in 1772, once the island of Gotland (in the Baltic Sea) had been recaptured from Denmark.\textsuperscript{511} During the 18\textsuperscript{th} Century there were attempts to transform the Ordination of Bishops into simply Acts of Installation. Particularly through Professor [of Law] David Nehrman-Ehrenstråle it was argued that a new Bishop was given a new task but remain a clergyman. So according to such German influences the Bishop was installed as a new Rector was installed in his parish.\textsuperscript{512} King Gustavus III ruled in 1786 that only Bishops may officiate at Ordinations to the Priesthood. In doing so the King the King deliberately intended to consolidate the status of the Bishop and preserve the view on Episcopacy expressed in the Church Ordinance 1571.\textsuperscript{513}

It was laid down in a new Liturgy for the Consecration of Bishops (1811) that at the consecration, the Bishop shall be given a crosier and a mitre. Since 1811 Bishops in the Church of Sweden are wearing an Episcopal cope, mitre and holding a crosier. King Gustavus IV ruled, as had indeed his father intended to do, that all the Bishops in Sweden and Finland should be given golden Episcopal pectoral crosses as insignia.

As a “Royal Peculiar” one could note that between 1783 and 1883 the \textit{Royal Order of the Seraphim} had an Episcopal Office of its own with a (non diocesan) Bishop responsible for the chaplains who officiated at its various charitable institutions.\textsuperscript{514}

Nowadays Bishops in the Church of Sweden are consecrated at Uppsala Cathedral before the other Bishops by the Archbishop of Uppsala as consecrator. Bishops from other Lutheran and Anglican churches are invited to attend and to take part in the laying on of hands. The Archbishop says, about a Bishop’s mission, that a Bishop shall have oversight over the diocese and its congregations and be responsible for God’s word being preached in purity and clarity, for the sacraments being rightly administered and for the works of charity being practised according to God’s will. A Bishop shall ordain and inspect, visit, take and give counsel, listen and make decisions. The Bishop shall live like a servant of Christ and shall be a shepherd for God’s flock. With wisdom and vigilance, the Bishop shall serve the unity of the Church in Christ. The apostolicity of the consecration is expressed in the readings from the Bible and also in the final words by the consecrator: \textit{In apostolic manner, by prayer and by the laying on of hands in God’s name, X has been ordained Bishop. Receive him as an Ambassador for Christ.}

In a Service, led by the Dean at the Diocesan Cathedral, the consecrated Bishop will then be welcomed to his Diocese. The new Bishop will also occupy a place in the Church of Sweden Bishops’ Conference, a non canonical collegial institution often voicing a view on ecclesiastical matters.

The Bishop today, far from being regarded as a representative of the authorities, is looked upon as a \textit{pastor pastorum} and the spiritual leader of the Diocese.\textsuperscript{515} Alas, the canonical powers of the Bishop have been appropriated by politically dominated Synodical structures.

\textsuperscript{511} pp. 184-192.
\textsuperscript{514} p.187.
\textsuperscript{515} Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. 1998.
11.5 Bishops in the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland.

From the middle of the 13th Century until 1809 Finland constituted an Eastern part of Sweden and the (Lutheran) Church of Finland belonged to the ecclesiastical Province of Uppsala and therefore it comes as no surprise that in Finland the Bishop’s office developed mainly along the same lines as in Sweden.

During the last twenty years new legislation has been prepared in order to create a transparent independence for the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland from the Republic of Finland. The new arrangement will hardly affect the role of the Bishop. The Bishop will still be elected by clergy and lay representatives of the diocese. Three elected candidates shall be presented for the President of the Republic who appoints one of the candidates. A Bishop is paid by the state, traditionally representing the state in relation to the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland. That role has faded over time and the Bishop, nowadays, is more often seen as a representative of the church.516

A newly appointed Bishop is consecrated, usually in the Cathedral of the Bishop elect. The Church Law provides also for a situation in which the Church has got no consecrated Bishop, as indeed was the case in 1884 when the Finnish Church lost four Bishops within ten months. Many then favoured a suggestion to invite the Archbishop of Sweden to consecrate. Others preferred to apply the Church Law and invite an ordained minister to officiate. The new (elected) Archbishop of Turku chose to apply the Church Law and he was ordained by Axel Fredrik Granfelt, professor emeritus of Systematic Theology at the University of Helsinki. The Church of Finland has maintained that the ordination in 1884 was a valid consecration. The presence of Swedish and Estonian Bishops at Episcopal consecrations in Finland should not be regarded as attempts to reintroduce the succession but rather as a witness to the unity of the Church of Christ.517

Professor Cleve, in his Essay of 1993518, states that the Service Book of 1886 refers to Episcopal consecration as “On installing a bishop in his office” In 1963 this was changed to “Ordination of a bishop”. Explanatory notes in the Service Book state that “The Ordination of a bishop is an installation”. The Preamble to the Order of 1984 instructs that “relevant parts of this Order may be used when a bishop, after having been translated from one diocese to another, is installed in his office”.

It appears that the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland distinguishes between Consecration (Professor Cleve uses the term Ordination) and Installation, but further clarification would be helpful.519 The Service (of Consecration/Ordination) comprises traditional elements, i.e. reading of a letter of appointment, Bible reading, the Bishop elect reads the Nicene Creed and gives vows under oath – or a solemn assurance, promising to promote the Confession of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland, promote peace in the country and obedience to the authorities.

The Archbishop then entrusts the Bishop with his office. Assistants invest the new Bishop with his Episcopal vestments, the Archbishop hands over the crozier and the pectoral cross while the congregation sings Veni Creator Spiritus, after which follows the laying on of hands with blessing and intercession, and finally the Lord’s Prayer, a commission and the Blessing.

The bishop, appointed by the President of the Republic, remains, according to the Order of Service, a minister of the Church. The Office is given by the Archbishop and places the new Bishop into the succession of Bishops serving prior to him. The Intercession, led by the Archbishop, focuses on the beseeching of the Holy Spirit to help the Bishop to fulfil his duties rightly. The Bishop promises to preserve the identity of the Church and be loyal to the community. The Bishop supervises the pastors and the parishes in his diocese according to Acts 20, 28. The Archbishop is Primus inter Pares and does not govern any dioceses except his own (Turku).520

11.6 The Informal Meeting of Nordic Bishops in Copenhagen in 1945.

During the Second World War churches in the Nordic region were able to keep in touch through the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI, in Sigtuna. After the war that “go between” was not called for, as tensions between the Nordic churches became even more obvious. They were acutely demonstrated when initiatives were taken for a first meeting by Nordic Bishops (after the Second World War), held in Copenhagen 21-23 August 1945. In addition to the tension created by the war there was in the background the ever present unequal view on Episcopacy in the Eastern and Western part of the Nordic region.

Professor Jens Holger Schørring, Århus, has studied the controversy and found that Archbishop Eidem initially intended to invite the Nordic Bishops to Sweden for a first post-war Nordic Bishops´ Council. However, Bishop Berggrav of Oslo totally opposed such a plan. He did so because of the political role Sweden appeared to have had during the war, accepting German troops and military equipment in transit travel, permitting export and transportation of iron ore to German ships in Nazi occupied Narvik and in particular because of the nervous and cringing way in which, allegedly, the Swedish Bishops had generally behaved in relation to Nazi-Germany. Berggrav also failed to understand how, when the, privately owned and edited, paper The Göteborgs Stifts-tidning (The Gothenburg Diocesan Gazette) had ventured to criticise the Church of Norway, the Bishop of Göteborg, The Rt Revd. Carl Block, had remained silent not objecting to such defamatory writings by the local Diocesan Gazette/ Stiftstidningen! The Oslo Bishop was even more upset because of Finland’s Cooperation with Nazi-Germany and the Finnish Evangelical–Lutheran Church’s Cooperation with the Nazi-German Reich-Church. It was felt that only Bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard (Copenhagen), was in a position to invite the Nordic Bishops. However, even Denmark had had its Nordic controversies. Many in Denmark stood flabbergasted when Iceland, supported by the Church of Iceland, had declared itself an independent Republic on June 14, 1944. Nevertheless, to Bishop Berggrav, Denmark was the only realistic country in which the Nordic Bishops could now convene. A Bishops’ meeting was indeed held in 1945 in Copenhagen, but participation turned out to be by private choice rather than as members of a representative assembly. However somewhat surprisingly, the informal meeting demonstrated a strong wish to initiate renewed efforts to foster a Nordic church cooperation as the war now had ended.

The Nordic Bishops present in Denmark (i.e. from Denmark: Fuglesang-Damgaard, and Hans ølgaard; from Norway: Berggrav and Fjellbu; from Sweden: Rohde, Aulén and Eidem; from Finland: Salomies; from Iceland: Sigurdsen) had agreed, as proposed by Bishop Berggrav, Oslo, to meet in private, and as a result no minutes were taken. Professor Jens Holger Schørring, however, has found that the Bishop of Copenhagen gave a verbal report at a Danish Bishops’ Meeting in September 1945 on the informal Nordic Bishops’ Meeting.

11.7 The Formal Meeting of the Nordic Bishops in Sweden in 1946.

The Nordic Bishops’ Meeting in Sweden in 1946 was given an official status as the 8th Nordic Bishops’ Meeting and was held at Stora Sundby north of Katrineholm by Lake Hjälmaren in Sweden. The owner of Stora Sundby, Baron Gustaf Adolf Klingspor, was aware of the conflicts surrounding Bishop Berggrav as he wrote to Archbishop Eidem on January 29, 1946 confirming his invitation to host the Nordic Bishops’ Meeting in August 1946: “even if our enthusiasm is somewhat dampened as this will obviously not be the first meeting by the Nordic Bishops after the War, and as the spiteful remarks of Bishop Berggrav, however sincere, had not been helpful”.

All the Bishops from Sweden participated; from Norway: six Bishops - Berggrav was not one of them; from

524 Letter 29 Jan. 1946 from Baron Klingspor to Archbishop Eidem. Biskopsmötets handlingar, Svenska kyrkans arkiv, Uppsala 104
Denmark: nine Bishops; from Finland: five Bishops including Archbishop Lehtinen; from Iceland: Bishop Sigurdsen.

In his welcoming address, Archbishop Eidem did not mention the Copenhagen Meeting but simply reminded the Nordic Bishops of the previous regular Nordic Bishops´ Meeting, the 7th held in Fritzøehus, Denmark in 1939 – just before “the Great Misfortune”.  

From Stora Sundby the Bishops issued a Declaration, in which they acknowledged that so many, guided by a sense of justice, had lost their lives during the war, fighting tyranny, brutality and oppression. That sense of justice must serve as a guide when we seek answers for the future. We fear that mutual mistrust will endanger peace and obstruct the rebuilding of the world. Selfish gain obscures the paramount objective which is the common welfare for humanity. The nations must not accept arrangements that establish permanent complications and affliction for generations, the Bishops declared.  

From their joint discussions and deliberations in August 1946 the Bishops in the Nordic region agreed to declare the urgent need for a Universal society based on law and justice to provide authority and ability to take action. We fear, the Bishops wrote, that mutual mistrust will endanger peace and obstruct the rebuilding of the world. Egoistic gain obscures a clear vision, the Bishops concluded. The Nordic Bishops appear in August 1946 to send signals very similar to those expressed in February 1946 by the Interim Board for a World Council of Churches, WCC, as reported by Bishop Brilioth, Växjö, Sweden.  

The Nordic Bishops set out a vision of what it meant for the churches to get engaged in the fostering of a sense of justice and never tire to assist those in need. The churches have a role to play in the creation of a new international community which must be founded on the rule of law. The Church is here (in the Nordic Bishops´ declaration) seen as a body promoting righteousness and the rule of law. 

The difficulties experienced by the Nordic Bishops after the Second World War appear, as I see it, to be rather similar to the difficulties experienced by the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI, in its quest for an accepted and meaningful role in the post-war Nordic region.

### 11.8 The Porvoo Common Statement.

In 1992 in Järvenpää, [near Porvoo/Borgå], Finland, delegates from Lutheran Folk churches in the Nordic and Baltic regions and from Anglican churches on the British isles agreed a Common Statement in which the respective churches were recommended to adopt and ratify the statement and acknowledge each other as true churches, all with a preserved historic episcopate [in various forms] active as a sign of unity. During the conversation the delegates had realised how similar the various churches basically were despite several differences. The main achievement consisted of a more profound understanding of the Apostolic Succession describing it as a sign of, rather than as a guarantee for continuity in faith. Nordic churches [the Western] allegedly lacking the Historic Episcopate, were found to have faithfully preserved both the Apostolic faith and the very Episcopate with its historic sees. The actual conversations commenced, in accordance with an agreement between Archbishop Runcie and Archbishop Werkström, in Sigtuna in 1989, even if actually early initiatives to closer cooperation between the Churches of England and Sweden were taken by the Bishop of London and the Swedish Ambassador to the Court of St James´s as early as in 1717. The 1989 conversations were, in the Nordic region, successfully coordinated by NEI. Episcopacy which had constituted a major complication for NEI was.

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525 Nordic Bishops´ Meetings were held:
1933 (5th) in Finland/
1936 (6th) in Langsö, in Norway /
1939 (7th), in Fritzøehus, in Denmark,
1946 (8th) in Stora Sundby, in Sweden/
1949 (9th) “Stilla dagar” in Sagu Finland/
1952 (10th) in Nyborgstrand, in Denmark/
1955 (11th) in Liev, Norway /
1964 (12th) Løgumskloster Denmark.


526 Kristen gemenskap 1946 p119-120.

527 Kristen gemenskap 1946 p. 12.
given a prominent consensus through a skilful ecumenical input by NEI. That consensus was however not quite acknowledged by the Church of Denmark, while the Church of Norway seemed to welcome the new understanding and at the same time hang onto its serious reservations about the ecumenical “broker”, NEI, as we shall see below.

C The transformation from a Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI, to a Nordic Ecumenical Council, NEC.

As a result of the Reformation, the churches in the Nordic region were left without any supranational institution capable of unifying them. The churches became separate national units often on opposing sides as dictated by political realities, on the one side the churches of Denmark, Norway and Iceland and on the other the churches of Sweden and Finland. Between the two sides there was little or no contact for the simple reason that more often than not the two were at war with each other. This warfare between the nations lasted from the middle of the 16th Century to the beginning of the 19th Century. The national churches were urged or inclined to pray for their own nation, fighting a neighbouring nation. Church cooperation over the National borders would have been regarded as next to revolutionary activism or treason.

The Nordic Ecumenical Institute had to find a modus vivendi for its activities after 1940 in a region where, traditionally church cooperation had been obstructed by political circumstances. It was almost a paradox that after 1940 it was the very state of war in the Nordic region that made the churches prepared to engage in some cooperation, as they desperately needed a channel for contacts both with politicians and churches in belligerent countries and with churches and leaders in neutral nations.

12.1 Looking back at the Nordic Churches in the 19th Century.
Generally speaking, Scandinavian culture and church life had, for a considerable time, found its inspiration in Germany, (i.e. the German Romantics and the Evangelical Revival on the Continent). In Denmark, as mentioned above in this essay, this inspiration was conveyed by people like Thorvaldsen, H.C. Andersen, S. Kirkegaard and Grundtvig. In Sweden Professor/Bishop Thomander pleaded for a separation between an ecclesiastical/ religious sphere and a civil one both on the local and on the national level, as it had indeed happened in some German states. In the 1860s a Church Assembly (i.e. a General Synod) was established in Sweden and a separation took place on the local level between secular and ecclesiastical administration. A similar arrangement was introduced in Finland by the new Church Law in 1869. In Denmark, Norway and Iceland the system established at the Reformation was maintained so that Church government remained exclusively in the hands of the State through a Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs. The movement to separate Church and State also had its opponents. In Sweden Archbishop Reuterdahl defended the old order through which Society was sanctioned and sanctified by religion and embraced by the National Church, for which the Lutheran /Augsburg Confession was normative.

12.2 The Nordic Ecumenical Institute/Council after the Second World War.
After the Second World War the very existence of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI, was challenged more often than not. Mr Harry Johansson reported that even at the first meeting in 1940 a board member of NEI had expressed profound uncertainty regarding the central objects of the Institute. In Kristen Gemenskap, 1940, Harry Johansson declared that the experimental stage was over and that NEI now had to demonstrate the validity of its mission. NEI had been created to circulate in the Nordic region relevant information regarding ecumenical efforts in the world. To recipients outside the Nordic region NEI was meant to supply information on religious, ecclesiastical and community affairs in the region. Hence NEI regarded itself as a clearing house or a Press Agency. During its first year of activity NEI forwarded articles written by Nordic theologians on Nordic churches

531 Kristen gemenskap 1940 p.140.
particularly to the Swiss paper, *La Vie Protestante*. A key partner in the information task was *Der Oekumenischer Presse- und Nachrichtendienst* of the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva. An equally important task was the work carried out by the Study Department of NEI, which during the war took on a study project on the *Nature of the Church*. In addition the Study Department had to produce material motivated by the crises created by the war. For 1940 plans were made for a conference dealing with a most urgent theme: *The War Time Voice of the Church*.533

Manfred Björkquist, who in the late 1930s had come up with the original idea to create the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, declared thirty years later that it would be of paramount importance to rethink the activities of the Institute and to examine the role of the member churches. Therefore, in 1966, when Lars Thunberg had been appointed director of NEI, the board of the Institute initiated a general discussion on the objects and on the activities as well as on the very existence of a Nordic ecumenical cooperation.534 The discussion led to a considerable “soul searching” and eventually a new constitution was adopted in 1970. Nevertheless, minutes and annual reports still contain complaints regarding the lack of financial and administrative resources, allegedly due to insufficient commitment and support from the member churches. The ambition and the activities of the Institute appear not to have matched the level of Member church commitment. Nor did the commitment match the expectations voiced by the Member churches.535

NEI also had to face some extraordinary anti-ecumenical expressions during the 60s. A clearly anti-international and anti-ecumenical view was expressed in 1963 by some representatives of the Swedish Free churches in a publication called *Världsekonumenik eller nytestamentlig enhet? (The World Ecumenical Movement or a Unity as it had been manifested in the New Testament?)*536 The publication included articles produced by an international lobby trying to counteract the international ecumenical development.

### 12.3 A Future Role of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI; the Change from Institute to Council

As early as in 1946 the Rt. Revd. Fuglesang-Damgaard (Copenhagen) at an Ecumenical meeting in Sweden had suggested that a Nordic Church Council ought to be established. As far as I have been able to follow events, the proposals by the Bishop of Copenhagen led to almost nothing. However, I ask myself if Bishop Fuglesang-Damgaard sensed that the ecumenical base for NEI was weak in the Nordic region and could be improved by an implementation of his proposals?537

At a Board Meeting of NEI in 1969 (20th October) there was a real sense of urgency in finding a proper structure for the future work of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute. The possibility of an establishment of a Nordic Ecumenical Council representing regionally both WCC and LWF was contemplated. The minutes record however considerable discord regarding the feasibility of such an arrangement.538 It was reported that a “Top Conference” were to be called to convene in Sweden on 2-3 March 1970, with representatives of Nordic Folk churches, Free churches and Governmental Church Ministries, in order to discuss optimal structures for Nordic ecumenism. When eventually held in Hässelby, Sweden, on March 3rd 1970, the Conference focused mainly on possibilities to secure Nordic governmental financial support of Ecumenism in the Nordic region, particularly from Denmark and Norway.539

In the 1970s Archbishop Gunnar Hultgren (in retirement) had been asked by the Board of NEI to chair a Commission considering a future role of NEI as a proper and generally accepted Nordic regional sub-centre of WCC, and possibly as a Nordic Ecumenical Council comprising a maximum of Nordic Folk and Free churches as

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532 *Kristen gemenskap* 1940 p.141.
533 *Kristen gemenskap* 1940 p. 146.
534 Brodd, Sven Erik and Hansson, Per: *Utvärdering av Ekumeniskt Institut för Norden EIN* 2006 del 2 (report kept at the offices of EIN c/o Sveriges Kristna råd, at Sundbyberg, Sweden) p.4.
535 Brodd, Sven Erik and Hansson, Per: *Utvärdering av Ekumeniskt Institut för Norden EIN* 2006 del 2 (report kept at the offices of EIN c/o Sveriges Kristna råd, at Sundbyberg, Sweden) p. 5.
536 Bergsten, Torsten *Frikyrkor i samverkan*, Den svenska frikyrkokumenikens historia 1905-1993 Libris Verbum AB, Stockholm/1995 p.204 Contributors were David Hedegård, Torsten Nilsson (EFS), Egon Melin, Stig Abrahamsson (HF), Harald Gustafsson, Willis Säwe (PR), Erik Hertz (SAM), Edvin Österberg (SB), Axel Gustafsson, Helmer Prozt (SMF), C G Helin, Jean Malm, Josef Sollerman (ÖM)
537 Please refer to Kristen gemenskap 1946. p. 27.
538 NEI Board Meeting 1969-10-20 §7 Minutes kept at the Archives of NEI c/o Svenska kyrkans arkiv, Uppsala)
539 NEI Board Meeting 1969-10-20 §7 Minutes kept at the Archives of NEI c/o Svenska kyrkans arkiv, Uppsala)
well as both Roman Catholic and Orthodox participation in addition to Nordic National ecumenical organisations. The Commission, in which there had initially been considerable enthusiasm over the prospect of a new regional structure, soon realised that the Nordic churches did not share that enthusiasm. There were three main reasons given for the negative reactions, which sounded very much like arguments of the past:

1. / To become a formal sub centre of WCC would alter the appreciated informal character of NEI to the more official one of WCC.
2. / A sub centre would come between WCC and the churches themselves.
3. / A general scepticism over WCC was expressed by some churches.

Gunnar Hultgren and his commission did not propose any new structure.\\footnote{Thunberg, Lars in Nordisk ekumenisk årsbok 1972, p. 76.}

Archbishop Simojoki (of Finland) acknowledged in 1973 that ecumenism is problematic generally and in the Nordic region. Nevertheless, the Archbishop claimed that ecumenism in the Nordic region is advancing fostering a useful integration in the region. In my understanding, such a statement should be taken mainly as a signal to NEI that the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland is firm in its support of NEI. Simojoki’s statement may be regarded significant, as over the years the most substantial support of NEI seems to have been given by churches in Finland.

From 1980, as suggested by the Swedish Bishops’ Council, the Director of NEI should (by 50%) also lead a new organisation, **Nordiska Folkkyrkosekretariatet** (The Secretariat for Cooperation between the Nordic Folk churches).\footnote{NEI Board Meeting in Kuopio, Finland 15-16 June 1973 §1 and §4.} Mr Lars Thunberg resigned and Dr. Kjell-Ove Nilsson was appointed Director from 1979. Under Dr, Nilsson’s leadership the Office of the Director was highlighted and the Board of NEI appeared to play a somewhat secondary role.\footnote{Brodd, Sven Erik and Hansson, Per: Utvärdering av Ekumeniskt Institut för Norden EIN 2006 del 2 (report kept at the offices of EIN c/o Sveriges Kristna råd, at Sundbyberg, Sweden) p. 5.} The Revd Tulliki Koivonen Bylund was employed as assistant Director with special tasks in relation to the members in Finland.

Already in 1983, Danish and Norwegian Bishops questioned the very existence of The Secretariat for Cooperation between the Nordic Folk churches. Far from being committed to the activities of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute they wished, once again, to investigate and analyse the activities for a future ruling on whether the Nordic Churches should at all support an Institute or possibly a Council. \footnote{Ola Tjørholm (from Norway) served as director until 1988. He reported the fact that the various reports and the activities of NEI were in great demand by the Nordic Folk churches, which however at the same time never ceased to question the very existence of NEI. Between 1988 and 1991 The Revd. Kai Engström (from Finland) served as director of the Institute, which was given a new constitution in 1991.}

In 1985 the administrative office of NEI was transferred from Sigtuna to Church House, Uppsala. From 1987 Dr. Ola Tjørholm (from Norway) served as director until 1988. He reported the fact that the various reports and the activities of NEI were in great demand by the Nordic Folk churches, which however at the same time never ceased to question the very existence of NEI. Between 1988 and 1991 The Revd. Kai Engström (from Finland) served as director of the Institute, which was given a new constitution in 1991.\footnote{Mr Lars Thunberg resigned and Dr. Kjell-Ove Nilsson was appointed Director from 1979. Under Dr, Nilsson’s leadership the Office of the Director was highlighted and the Board of NEI appeared to play a somewhat secondary role. The Revd Tulliki Koivonen Bylund was employed as assistant Director with special tasks in relation to the members in Finland.}

As a response to renewed expressions of uncertainty regarding the role of NEI Dr. Tord Harlin, Director of Church of Sweden Inter-Church relations (Nämnden för mellankyrkliga förbindelser, MEF), which department was in charge of cooperation between NEI and the Church of Sweden, drew in 1986 up a Policy Document listing what, according to the Church of Sweden, ought to be the top priorities for NEI, viz. a./ contacts with ecumenical organisations based in Geneva, b./ research and conferences, and c./ highlighting the spiritual dimension of ecumenism. NEI could, according to Harlin, without harm reduce the number of publications and mainly publish reports instantly after its conferences. The Church of Sweden expressed a wish that the Secretariat for the Nordic Folk churches should initiate relevant consultations on for example: a./ baptism and church
membership, b./canon law, c./ democracy in the church, d./ Nordic church relationship to the Church of England.

In 1989 The Nordic Ecumenical Institute was given the important and fruit bearing task to coordinate the Nordic (and Baltic) participation in the conversations leading to the Porvoo Common Statement. Through the conversations, administered by NEI in the Nordic region, it became clear that the understanding of Episcopacy had historically been a problematic and church dividing factor. The conversations produced however a new consensus over Episcopacy with repercussions in the Nordic region and beyond. That meant that Episcopacy, which had constituted a problem for NEI, was partly by NEI’s work, transformed into a solution. Episcopacy was understood in such a way that churches could acknowledge each other and be open for cooperation. Hence, NEI ought to have gained an accepted platform for future activity. Alas, more problems were waiting.

At the same time as the Porvoo conversations were initiated [1989] it was reported that, according to the Board of NEI, there ought to be a better balance between the contributions to NEI by the Nordic Folk churches. When the Revd. Kaj Engström in 1990 summarised the activities of NEI during 1989, he highlighted the Anglican Nordic/Baltic Lutheran conversations and the visit to the Nordic region by His Holiness, the Pope. NEI was given the task to compile and print the various sermons and addresses delivered by the Pope during his visit to the Nordic region. But how could NEI operate if the support of it was not genuinely shared?

In 1990, after five years in Church House, Uppsala, the Nordic Ecumenical Institute moved its administration to the Chancellery of the Archbishop of Sweden. That year an Executive Committee for NEI was created as well as an Editorial Group to back up the administration.

The Constitution (1991) introduced the change from Institute to Council. Ms Gunnel Borgegård (from Sweden), who took over as Director of NEC after Kai Engström in 1991 and also served from 2004 as Director of EIN, (Ecumenism in the Nordic Region), into which NEC had been transformed, confirmed during an interview that the aim of the name-change in 1991 had been to remove at last the notion of academic research from Nordic ecumenism and to emphasise mutual support and cooperation in the Nordic region. In addition the Board of NEI at its Meeting 12 June 1989 had agreed (as reported in the Minutes of that meeting, §7) that the term Council [more than Institute] corresponded to what the organisation actually was doing. The 1991 Constitution listed the Objects of the Nordic Ecumenical Council, NEC, not particularly dissimilar to what the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI, had aimed at achieving:

1. To promote ecumenical work in the Nordic Region
2. To foster cooperation between National churches and Free churches in the Nordic Region
3. To lead Nordic Ecumenical organisations into a close cooperation.
4. To pass information on ecumenical matters to churches in the Nordic Region.
5. To promote an increased commitment by the Nordic churches in international ecumenism.
6. To distribute information on Nordic ecumenical activities
7. To promote Nordic Church Participation in the cultural and social life in the Nordic Region. [This item refers to cooperation with the Nordic Council]
8. To handle matters related to the Secretariat of the Nordic Folk churches.

547 Harlin, Tord: PM ang. samarbete mellan MEF och NEI, document kept at the offices of EIN c/o Sveriges Kristna råd, at Sundbyberg, Sweden).
549 NEI Board Meeting 1989-06-12 §5. (kept at the Archives of NEI c/o Church of Sweden Archives, Uppsala.)
550 NEI Board Meeting 1990-06-06 §4. (kept at NEI Archives c/o Church of Sweden Archives, Uppsala)
551 Brodd, Sven Erik and Hansson, Per: Utvärdering av Ekumeniskt Institut för Norden EIN 2006 del 2 (report kept at the offices of EIN c/o Sveriges Kristna råd, at Sundbyberg, Sweden) p. 12.
553 Interview with Ms Gunnel Borregård 27 Oct 2010.
554 Board Meeting of NEI 1989-06-12 §7. Minutes kept at Church of Sweden Archives in Uppsala.
The Constitution of NEC 1991-01-01 listed in an appendix the following members [huvudmän] of NEC:

**The Nordic region:** The Salvation Army in the Nordic region, The Methodist Church in the Nordic region, The Greek-Orthodox Metropolitan Province of Sweden and Scandinavia; **Denmark:** The Danish Baptist Union, The Church of Denmark, The Oecumenical Council of Denmark; **Finland:** The Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland, The Orthodox Church of Finland, The Oecumenical Council of Finland; **Iceland:** The Church of Iceland; **Norway:** The Church of Norway, The Oecumenical Council of Norway; **Sweden:** The Baptist Union of Sweden, The Church of Sweden, the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden, the Oecumenical Council of Sweden, The Sigtuna Foundation. 556

### D Collapse and Reconstruction of the Nordic Ecumenical Council.

#### 13. Continued Activities and Continued Questioning.

At a NEI Board Meeting 25/27 August 1983 members had referred to WCC General Assembly in Vancouver held that summer, at which Assembly delegates had discussed “regional relationships”. The Board of NEI resolved to instruct its director to write to WCC in order to obtain a clarification over what status WCC attached to NEI. The Director was also asked to discuss with NEI members [huvudmän] the possibility of transforming Nordic Ecumenical Institute into some kind of Nordic Church Council. 557

In 1989 Archbishop Vikström, Åbo, and his Nordic fellow primates had asked NEC to publish the various sermons, speeches and addresses delivered by the Holy Father [the Pope] during his visit to the Nordic region. 558

In 1990 a request from the Bishops of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland was received by NEI. The Bishops asked NEI to study and report on marriages between Christians and Muslims. 559

A new constitution for NEC was adopted at the AGM of NEI in 1990. The board should now only comprise five members, in order to reduce cost. When in 1991 Ms. Gunnel Borgegård took up office as director, a new structure was developed for the activities of the Nordic Ecumenical Council, NEC, which council, however, eventually collapsed over opposing views regarding the objects of the Council. NEC was later on reconstructed and replaced by Ekumeniskt Institut för Norden EIN,(Ecumenical Institute for the Nordic Region) 560, financed mainly by grants from the Church of Sweden and from the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland. At the same time EIN was transformed into a Project within the Sigtuna Foundation.

At a Meeting with the Nordiska Folkkyrkosekretariatet (The Secretariat for the Nordic Folk churches) in 1990 it was officially recognised and recorded that it was a constant problem to identify what was a genuine matter for The Secretariat and what was strictly relating to NEI. 561

Already at the 1991 AGM of NEC it was noted that financially the Church of Sweden was supporting NEC out of proportion compared to what the other Member Churches contributed.

In 1992 the Secretariat for the Nordic Folk churches c/o NEC was asked by the Nordic Folk churches to consult with the Rt. Revd. Andreas Aarflot, Oslo, and make sure that the Porvoo Common Statement was translated into the five Nordic and the three Baltic languages. 562

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558 NEI Annual Report for 1988, including a report from the Primates’ Meeting in Finland.
559 Letter from Bishop Erik Vikström, Borgå, 1990 02 01 (letter kept at the offices of EIN c/o Sveriges Kristna råd, at Sundbyberg, Sweden)
560 Brodd, Sven Erik and Hansson, Per: Utvärdering av Ekumeniskt Institut för Norden EIN 2006 del 2 (report kept at the offices of EIN c/o Sveriges Kristna råd, at Sundbyberg, Sweden) p.7
561 Nordiska Folkkyrkosekretariatet protokoll 1990-06-06 §5 (kept at the Archives of NEI c/ Svenska kyrkans arkiv, Uppsala)
562 NEC Annual Report for 1992 p.10 (Report kept at the offices of EIN c/o Sveriges Kristna råd, at Sundbyberg, Sweden)
In 1993 *The Ekumenisk Orientering* was reorganised to appear as a properly printed *Nordisk Ekumenisk Orientering*, published until 2002, when, due to financial restraint, the publishing was discontinued, leaving the reconstructed EIN without any effective tool to communicate ecumenical news.\(^{563}\)

In 1994 the Secretariat for the Nordic Folk churches was reorganised to be fully integrated into NEC. In the same year at NEC’s AGM it was resolved to set up a structure for future Faith an Order studies in the Nordic region. In 1996 the Revd. Henrik Roelvink, representing the Roman Catholic Church in the Diocese of Stockholm in the Nordic region wrote to NEC suggesting that NEC ought to regard the Faith and Order work as its top priority, and also foster relations to WCC and CEC, not neglecting contacts with the Nordic Council and the European Ecumenical Commission for Church and Society, EECCS.\(^{564}\)

In the 1990s, the national ecumenical councils in the Nordic countries favoured a restructuring of NEC in order to coordinate the international work of the national councils and the work by NEC.\(^{565}\)

In 1995 (15.11) a Select Committee of the Church of Denmark Council on Inter-Church Relations produced a statement in which (recorded in §6) it declared that the cooperation through NEC by the Nordic Folk churches becomes obsolete and artificial, as the Nordic Folk churches tend to communicate directly and without any Nordic coordinator.\(^{566}\) Notwithstanding such a statement the same report added that NEC was most important as a tool for cooperation between Nordic minority churches and the National Folk churches. To the surprised reader the Report continues declaring that in addition the Folk churches do benefit from NEC for their mutual cooperation. So the Church of Denmark here probably unintentionally expressed how confused the views were on what NEC really ought to be.\(^{567}\)

In an ambition to secure a recognised status for NEC Dr Ragnar Persenius affirmed in 1997 that the Church of Sweden supported NEC’s application to serve as an Associated Organisation within the CEC.\(^{568}\) The same year the chair of NEC, Bishop Even Fougner, officially applied to CEC for such a status.\(^{569}\) Most important was a message from Dr Konrad Raiser of WCC in 1997 that the World Council of Churches regarded NEC as a “Regional Ecumenical Organisation in correspondence with WCC”.\(^{570}\) Mrs Gunnel Borgegård, Director of NEC, wrote to Dr. Raiser expressing satisfaction over the message from WCC. It had now been clarified how the International ecumenical organisations regarded NEC.

In 1999 another Select Committee (representing the NEC) worked on the Constitution of NEC, and referred to the unsatisfactory state of affairs NEC had come up against, when at the AGM of NEC in Iceland in 1997 not less than three persons from Sweden had been elected to the Board (two from the Church of Sweden and one from the Roman-Catholic Diocese of Stockholm). The Select Committee, well aware of the need for budgetary adjustments and additional funding, strongly recommended that the Constitution of NEC should be amended to make sure that each of the five Nordic Folk churches had a representative on the board, increasing the total number of board members to nine. The Committee did not, however, propose any alteration in respect of the Objects of NEC.\(^{571}\) It appears that the main concern was that Sweden must not be allowed to be seen to dominate NEC proceedings.

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\(^{563}\) Brodd, Sven Erik and Hansson, Per: *Utvärdering av Ekumeniskt Institut för Norden EIN* 2006 del 2 (report kept at the offices of EIN c/o Sveriges Kristna råd, at Sundbyberg, Sweden) p.13.

\(^{564}\) H.Roelvink to NEC on 1996 09 16. (letter kept at the offices of EIN c/o Sveriges Kristna råd, at Sundbyberg, Sweden)

\(^{565}\) Brodd, Sven Erik and Hansson, Per: *Utvärdering av Ekumeniskt Institut för Norden EIN* 2006 del 2 (report kept at the offices of EIN c/o Sveriges Kristna råd, at Sundbyberg, Sweden) p.13

\(^{566}\) Referat från en Arbetsgrupp inom Church of Denmark Council on Inter-Church Relations. Report dated 15 Nov 1995. §6. (report kept at the offices of EIN c/o Sveriges Kristna råd, at Sundbyberg, Sweden)


\(^{568}\) Letter from Dr Ragnar Persenius, Church of Sweden to NEC 1997 05 03 (kept at the offices of EIN c/o Sveriges Kristna råd, at Sundbyberg, Sweden)

\(^{569}\) Letter from Dr Ragnar Persenius, Church of Sweden to NEC 1997 06 05 (kept at the offices of EIN c/o Sveriges Kristna råd, at Sundbyberg, Sweden)

\(^{570}\) Formal letter from NEC Chairman, Even Fougner, to CEC 1997 05 30(kept at the offices of EIN c/o Sveriges Kristna råd, at Sundbyberg, Sweden)

\(^{571}\) Letter from Mrs Gunnel Borgegård to WCC 1997 09 01(kept at the offices of EIN c/o Sveriges Kristna råd, at Sundbyberg, Sweden)

\(^{571}\) Report by the NEC Select Committee on matters related to the NEC Constitution.1999 04 28. (report kept at the offices of EIN c/o Sveriges Kristna råd, at Sundbyberg, Sweden)

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Mr Urban Gibson, representing NEC wrote to the Church of Sweden, Central Board in August 1995, reporting the following regarding Nordic Folk churches and their contributions to NEC. If related to the size of the membership the Church of Sweden did not exercise any exorbitant generosity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Number of Members</th>
<th>Contributions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ev Luth Ch of Finland</td>
<td>254 000</td>
<td>5.9 öre per member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Norway</td>
<td>200 000</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Denmark</td>
<td>130 000</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ev Luth Ch of Iceland</td>
<td>20 000</td>
<td>8 öre per member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch of Sweden</td>
<td>350 000</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mr Gibson argued that the Church of Sweden ought to increase its share in the funding to match the Norwegian 5.3 öre per member, taking the Swedish contribution to 413 000 per annum. In 2004 the Church of Sweden did increase its support of EIN, even if an ongoing need to reduce cost at the National level of the Church of Sweden constituted an increased threat.

13.1 Collapse and Reconstruction.

In 2001, when expressly invited by NEC to present ideas on a future structure for Ecumenical cooperation in the Nordic region, the Folk churches differed greatly in their responses. The Church of Denmark preferred a networking style NEC while the Church of Sweden favoured a NEC governed by a Board democratically elected by the Member churches. The Church of Norway wished to see NEC as a “a centrally positioned tool for the intent of the Church of Norway to engage in Nordic regional ecumenical work”, (i.e. “what is useful for the Church of Norway is useful for NEC”). The Church of Iceland proposed an international evaluation to achieve a NEC “which supports rather than distresses the Nordic churches”. The Roman Catholic Bishops’ Conference maintained that it had favoured membership in NEC in order to foster Ecumenical cooperation rather than to obtain gain for its own Church. Similarly the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland pointed out that the activities of NEC should be a question for the organisation’s AGM and its elected Board rather than for “interfering churches”. It appears to have been a Sisyphean task if not an impossible one to satisfy these disparate preferences expressed by the Nordic churches. In 2002 The Church of Denmark proposed that the Nordic Ecumenical Council, NEC, should act as a Network rather than as an independent organisation. The opposing views possibly heightened or triggered by the fact finding surveys initiated in 2001 by NEC itself, degenerated into a power struggle and scramble in which the representatives tried to grab what they could. The Norwegian delegates from the Ecumenical Council of the Church of Norway proposed that year [2001] at an NEC Assembly in Copenhagen that the activities of NEC should be discontinued. There were 4 votes cast in favour of the Norwegian proposal , 16 against and 5 abstentions. As the Assembly repudiated that proposal, the Church of Norway decided to leave NEC in 2003. Similarly the Swedish Baptists and the Church of Denmark decided to leave the Nordic Ecumenical Council. The Archbishops of Finland (Paarma) and Sweden (Hammar) were asked to express what their churches felt about the crisis and possibly could do as NEC was closing down in 2004, leaving all assets to Sigtunastiftelsen (The Sigtuna Foundation).

The Professors, Sven Erik Brodd and Per Hansson concluded in their report on NEC that some Member churches had found it essential to see to it that NEC never grew into a powerful organisation which could pose “a threat” to the Member church itself, as it remained inclined to maintain useful links to German theologians rather than to the Nordic ones.

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572 U Gibson to the Central Board of the Cho f Sweden 95 08 27(copy of letter kept at the offices of EIN, c/o Sveriges Kristna råd at Sundbyberg, Sweden).
574 Brodd, Sven Erik and Hansson, Per: Utvärdering av Ekumeniskt Institut för Norden EIN 2006 del 2 (report kept at the offices of EIN c/o Sveriges Kristna råd, at Sundbyberg, Sweden) p. 16.
575 Brodd, Sven Erik and Hansson, Per: Utvärdering av Ekumeniskt Institut för Norden EIN 2006 del 2 (report kept at the offices of EIN c/o Sveriges Kristna råd, at Sundbyberg, Sweden) p. 6.
576 NEC AGM 2001 in Magleås, Denmark, §23.
577 Brodd, Sven Erik and Hansson, Per: Utvärdering av Ekumeniskt Institut för Norden EIN 2006 del 2 (report kept at the offices of EIN c/o Sveriges Kristna råd, at Sundbyberg, Sweden) p 6.
578 Brodd, Sven Erik and Hansson, Per: Utvärdering av Ekumeniskt Institut för Norden EIN 2006 del 2 (report kept at the offices of EIN c/o Sveriges Kristna råd, at Sundbyberg, Sweden) p 6.
The new EIN [Ecumenism in the Nordic Region] organisation was in 2004 given a role similar to that of the discontinued NEC. The old ambiguity between Institute and Council seems to have been inherited by EIN.579 EIN shall, however, no longer aim to bring closer together the Ecumenical organisations in the Nordic countries, but rather try to find the most viable formula for a long-term Nordic ecumenical cooperation. According to Dr Johan Dalman, at the time Ecumenical Officer of the Church of Sweden, the new EIN had a potential to become more effective than NEC, presumably due to having fewer members. During an interview, Ms Gunnel Borgegård, Theological Secretary of EIN, explained that when the Church of Sweden and the Evangelical–Lutheran Church in Finland agreed to continue the Nordic ecumenical project and cooperation in the Nordic region the following former partners of NEC chose not to support a reconstructed NEC: The Anglican Archdeaconry of Scandinavia, Stockholms katolska stift, Svenska Missionskyrkan, Sigtunastiftelsen and the Orthodox Church in Finland. The Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Iceland decided to follow the example of the other West Nordic established churches of Denmark and Norway and remained outside EIN.580

A new organisation, Ekumeniskt institut för Norden (EIN, Ecumenical Institute for the Nordic Region, later [from 2007/2008] called EIN, Ecumenism in the Nordic Region) was hence created to operate from 2004 within the Sigtuna Foundation (Sigtunastiftelsen). From 2008 EIN operates as a project within the Swedish Ecumenical Council.581 Members of the reconstructed EIN were the National churches of Finland and Sweden as well as Free churches through their membership of Svenska Ekumeniska nämnden (Swedish Ecumenical Council). Many chose to re-join as direct members of EIN: The Salvation Army in the Nordic Region, the Methodist Church in the Nordic and Baltic region, The Catholic Bishops’ Conference in the Nordic region, and the Orthodox Church in Finland, Baptistsamfundet in Sweden and in Denmark, Svenska Missionskyrkan, and the Anglican Archdeaconry of Scandinavia.582

In 2011 a new problem caused EIN to fear that Nordic Ecumenism would suffer an irreparable blow. While the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland in 2011 contributed to EIN 72,000 Euro [650 000 SEK] the Church of Sweden signalled an intention to reduce its contribution from 600 000 SEK to SEK 100 000. By indicating such a reduction the Church of Sweden actually declared that the activities of EIN might as well be discontinued.583

EIN applied to WCC and to CEC to be accepted as a continuation body representing Member churches as had been the case for NEC. EIN was approached by the Anglican-Lutheran Society to become its Nordic co-ordinator.

The main impression, noted by Dr Brodd and Dr Hansson in their 2006 Report, is that EIN carries on with the work of NEC only in a modified administrative fashion.584 That renewed administration included a structure through which EIN was first integrated into and possibly subordinated the Sigtunastiftelsen for a limited period of three years. The Director of EIN was reduced to the ranks of Ecumenical secretary, a rather junior position for an important ecumenical task. From 2008 EIN left the Sigtuna Foundation to become affiliated to the Christian Council of Sweden.

Instead of a Board and an Assembly elected by the Member churches EIN in 2004 was given an informal Board, called Samrådsgruppen (the Consultation Committee) selected by the Sigtunastiftelsen (Sigtuna Foundation) to represent the Member churches and indeed Sigtunastiftelsen. Dr Brodd and Dr Hansson indicate in their Report that the integration of EIN into the Sigtuna Foundation was hardly a happy one.585

579 Brodd, Sven Erik and Hansson, Per: Utvärdering av Ekumeniskt Institut för Norden EIN 2006 del 2 (report kept at the offices of EIN c/o Sveriges Kristna råd, at Sundbyberg, Sweden) p.8.
580 Interview on 25/9/10 with Ms Gunnel Borgegård, EIN.
581 Brodd, Sven Erik and Hansson, Per: Utvärdering av Ekumeniskt Institut för Norden EIN 2006 del 2 (report kept at the offices of EIN c/o Sveriges Kristna råd, at Sundbyberg, Sweden) p. 7
582 Interview with Ms Gunnel Borgegård, director of EIN, on 27.10.2010
583 Interview with Ms Gunnel Borgegård, Director of EIN, 13.06.2011
584 Brodd, Sven Erik and Hansson, Per: Utvärdering av Ekumeniskt Institut för Norden EIN 2006 del 2 (report kept at the offices of EIN c/o Sveriges Kristna råd, at Sundbyberg, Sweden) p. 9.
585 Brodd, Sven Erik and Hansson, Per: Utvärdering av Ekumeniskt Institut för Norden EIN 2006 del 2 (report kept at the offices of EIN c/o Sveriges Kristna råd, at Sundbyberg, Sweden) p. 10.
The activities of EIN according to the same Report appear to have been numerous and often quite successful – even if a lack of formal participation by the Folk churches of Denmark, Iceland and Norway was often regretted.\(^{586}\)

From 2008 EIN is integrated in the Christian Council of Sweden, CCS, and operating under an Administrative Committee consisting of the Secretary General of CCS, the Director of the Sigtuna Foundation, the Theological Secretary of EIN (rapporteur), and one representative of each of the following: the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland, the Orthodox Church of Finland, Stockholms katolska stift (the Roman-Catholic Diocese of Stockholm), Svenska missionskyrkan (the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden), the Church of Sweden has got two representatives.\(^{587}\)

The question overshadowing all other concerns for EIN in 2011 is the financial intricacy. There is a risk that the Church of Sweden might let Ecumenism in the Nordic region down.

### 13.2 Matters dealt with by the Nordic Ecumenical Institute/Council, NEI/NEC.

#### 13.2.1 Matters related to politics.

During the Second World War NEI mainly dealt with burning issues brought up by the war. In 1939 Bishop Berggrav of Oslo proposed, supported by Kings of Norway and Sweden, the Archbishop of Uppsala and other influential leaders (e.g. of industries), that the belligerent nations should consider a peace viable through compromises. The proposals did somewhat complicate the simultaneous presentation of plans for a Nordic Ecumenical Institute.

In October 1939 the Bishop of Copenhagen gathered at his Copenhagen residence church leaders from Germany and Britain as well as from the Nordic countries and representatives of the proposed NEI. At the meeting Bishop Berggrav, according to a report, given by William Paton to the Church of England, initially argued that no WCC should be established during a serious war. And therefore no regional ecumenical institutes should be created. Instead the leaders of the Nordic churches themselves ought to take responsibility for information between churches divided by war. William Paton, war time director of the London office of the Provisional WCC, opposed this and argued that he knew that a regional structure to serve a new WCC in the Nordic region was about to be launched and that obviously such a Nordic Ecumenical Institute ought to fulfil such a role as information provider. Through Ehrenström, the proposed NEI would enjoy the utmost respect. If Ehrenström were to head the Nordic regional Ecumenical Institute, Visser’t Hooft had by letter informed Archbishop Eidem, “WCC in process of formation” could, if Switzerland were to be brought into war, consider a substantial transfer of its activities from the Secretariat in Geneva to NEI in Sigtuna, Sweden.

In May 1942 British and German church leaders met in Sigtuna. Bishop Bell, of Chichester UK, heard, together with Manfred Björkquist, Nils Ehrenström and Harry Johansson, the Revd Bonhoeffer explain how the German Resistance contemplated a removal of Adolf Hitler and the creation of a non-Nazi-German government for which Bonhoeffer sought British preliminary approval. The German diplomat Adam von Trott zu Solz came to Sweden later that year for further consultations on the subject of a Nazi-free Germany. Through NEI he was able to meet Bishop Brilioth in Nässjö (a railway junction in the diocese of Växjö), after which meeting Brilioth travelled to England for a meeting with Anthony Eden, Foreign Secretary. On Brilioth’s return a meeting was arranged between Brilioth and Hans Schönfeld, of the German Resistance. Bishop Brilioth could then through Schönfeld report back to the Resistance from his talks with Anthony Eden.\(^{588}\)

Mr Harry Johansson of NEI in Sigtuna was also instrumental in establishing contacts via a secretary to Dr. Felix Kersten, a physiotherapist regularly treating SS-Reichsführer Himmler, through which contacts he managed to influence Himmler not to execute Theodor Stelzer, one of the leaders of the Kreisau group.\(^{589}\)

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\(^{586}\) Brodd, Sven Erik and Hansson, Per: Utvärdering av Ekumeniskt Institut för Norden EIN 2006 del 1. (report kept at the offices of EIN c/o Sveriges Kristna råd, at Sundbyberg, Sweden)

\(^{587}\) Interview with Ms Gunnel Borggärd 1.2.2011.

\(^{588}\) Langhoff, Johannes NEI 50 år Et tilbageblik. in Nordisk Ekumenisk årsbok 1988-1990. p.32.

13.2.2 Research Projects.

From its formation in 1940, NEI accommodated two opposing strategies for research. On the one hand Björkquist and Ehrenström (who was responsible for research at the International Ecumenical Secretariat in Geneva) were of the opinion that research was a key to a successful ecumenical development. Ecumenical work in the Nordic region, on the other hand, was restrained by opinions held by the Bishop of Oslo, E. Berggrav, who argued that if there should at all exist a Nordic Ecumenical Institute it should totally refrain from research, when the horrors of war dictated completely different priorities. According to Berggrav, all resources should be directed towards initiatives for peace.

Research projects were nevertheless part of the activities of NEI, but, as a compromise between the two “camps”, they were almost completely dictated by the contemporary war situation. Rather soon the two opposing groups argued constantly over the proposed research activity within NEI. Bishop Runestam of Karlstad, supported by delegates from Norway, argued, along the Berggrav ideas, that no research activity should reduce the much needed energies to engage in an ecumenical revivalist movement in the Nordic region inspired by the thinking of the MRA, the Moral Re-Armament, a most respected movement at the time. Such a revival would make the Nordic peoples prepared to contribute towards peace. The Norwegian delegates, Molland and Hansson, added that ecumenical research in the past had brought very few blessings. Instead NEI should, if at all engaged in research, focus on contemporary problems and on peace. Professor Gulin, from Finland, saw no prospect for a research department, when instead the contemporary problems called for action. Delegates from Denmark (Nørregaard and Sparring-Petersen) argued with Björkquist that evangelisation was hardly within the scope of a NEI.593 No doubt, the ongoing compromise over and downgrading of Research constituted an incipient illness for the Nordic Ecumenical Institute.

A major research project undertaken by NEI concerned the Nature of the Church for which separate documents were prepared in 1940 and 1941 describing the view of the Church of Sweden and that of the free churches. The project was related to the Faith and Order project on the Nature of the Church.591

A think tank was initiated in 1942 when a study group of NEI was commissioned to work on a document called Swedish Memorandum on Christian Guidelines on the Reconstruction Work after the War. This was a work of social ethics commencing with the following sentence: “It makes a difference for a Christian person how the political problems are resolved”. Pax et Justitia were the key words of the Memorandum, which hardly concealed allusions to the war slogan: “The Swedish line is a Christian line”.

In the document we find the following main items:

How to organize the participation of the churches in the reconstruction?
How to maintain and develop justice and liberty among the democracies?
How to restore the respect for justice and liberty in Germany?
How shall peace and justice be prevailing in the life of the states?592

My question over this Memorandum is: Was this too Swedish and not so little arrogant? The presumptuous slogan about the Swedish line in particular ought to have been easily disliked in sadly war ridden Norway, Denmark or Finland. On the other hand the churches in the Nordic region were, together with the emerging international ecumenical movement, truly in full agreement over the imminent need for a new World Order ruled by precisely Pax et Justitia.593

In 1945, after the Second World War, NEI was not required as a secret “go between” any more. Instead NEI had to assist in the often painful open process of bringing the Nordic churches, with their different war

591 NEI Annual Report 1940.
experiences, together. At an Ecumenical meeting in Lejondal, Sweden, in January 1946, this process was initiated by NEI, focusing on contemporary concerns for the churches and the peoples in the Nordic region.⁵⁹⁴

NEI, at ecumenical post-war conferences, dealt with burning issues like: Christianity and the International Law, The Church and Secularization, The Church and its Concern for Marriage and Family Life, Politics, Mission and International Aid. In the 1950’s NEI managed to involve more lay people to attend conferences held in Helsingør, Nyborg and Sigtuna, dealing with emerging issues regarding ethical concern in modern societies (for instance gene manipulation). Conferences also covered themes related to Liturgy, Ministry and Catecumenism.⁵⁹⁵

NEI organised Nordic conferences prior to Assemblies held by WCC and LWF. These conferences proved to be of particular importance for the delegates from the Nordic region. In this way NEI served as an eye opener for many to achieve a greater understanding of International Affairs. As an exception one may regard the (possibly stubborn) decision by the Executive Committee of NEI in August 1948 not to arrange any Nordic conference evaluating decision taken at WCC Assembly in Amsterdam. The Committee recommended, keenly aware of what the WCC now thought of regional arrangements, that the Nordic churches themselves should arrange such conferences nationally.⁵⁹⁶ The same Executive Committee Meeting resolved, however, to accept recommendation from the Nordic delegates at Amsterdam 48 to compile and publish the reports from the Sections active at the Amsterdam Assembly, The full Report should be printed in the Nordic countries with introductions written by the respective Archbishop or Primus of the country.

From 1965 until 1970 Ekumenisk Orientering (Ecumenical Briefing), through four issues per year, provided information on Faith and Order, Church and Society, Evangelism, Youth and Missionary Studies. For financial reasons the publication was discontinued.

In 1970 NEI assumed responsibility for the publication of Kristen Gemenskap, replaced by Nordisk Ekumenisk årsbok from 1972.⁵⁹⁷

As early as in 1945 The Faith and Order Committee had initiated a renewed Ecumenical Project to discuss the Nature of the Church. Dr Ruben Josefsson was asked by NEI to prepare a Paper for discussions after the war. In 2005 the WCC Faith and Order Movement was still engaged in that very project, publishing that year: The Nature and the Mission of the Church.⁵⁹⁸ Ecumenism in the Nordic region (i.e. the restructured Nordic Ecumenical Council) was still involved arranging a translation into Swedish and seminars in the reception process.

14. The Road from Utrecht to Amsterdam and some Post-War Roadblocks between Nordic Churches, Principal Conclusions.

14:1 From Utrecht 1938 to Amsterdam 1948, via Sigtuna 1940.

In this paragraph I intend to report on the main conclusions drawn from my survey into Nordic ecumenical cooperation as it appears in the framework of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute.

In my understanding, the Nordic Ecumenical Institute was created mainly through initiatives taken by the enthusiast Manfred Björkquist - in spite of considerable Nordic doubts expressed principally by another enthusiast, the Bishop of Oslo, Dr Eivind Berggrav. Manfred Björkquist, firmly rooted in the Young Church Movement, saw in the emerging international ecumenical movement a potential tool for the renewal of the Nordic Folk churches. If such a tool could be operated from his beloved Sigtuna, Björkquist argued, so much the better. When the World Council of Churches in formation convened through elected ecumenists in Utrecht in 1938 to

⁵⁹⁴ Kristen gemenskap 1946 p.58.
⁵⁹⁶ Minutes, NEI Executive Committee 27.8.1948. Archives of NEI c/o Svenska kyrkans arkiv, Uppsala.
draw up a Draft Constitution for the emerging World Council of Churches, it was resolved to propose a membership structure based on regions. Manfred Björkquist, serving as a Swedish delegate at the Utrecht meeting, found such a structure most fitting for his plans for a Nordic Ecumenical Institute in Sigtuna which could serve as a regional sub centre for the World Council of Churches in its relation to churches in the Nordic region. According to Björkquist, such a centre should strongly engage in research related to the Ecclesiastical Nordic region. Again, according to Björkquist, the Nordic centre ought in this respect to cooperate with and serve the Ecumenical secretariat in Geneva.

The Nordic Ecumenical Institute was created and in operation from 1940. In the process leading to the establishment of the Institute there was much Nordic disunity on the very objects of the proposed Institute, and in particular on its proposed role as a research institute. Bishop Berggrav managed to force the emerging institute to abstain formally from research. By adopting a constitution and bye-laws excluding the academic task of research the Nordic Ecumenical Institute lost a fundamental “Raison d'être” and accepted thereby a somewhat frail basis for its existence. The Nordic doubts, however, were not only about Academic research.

As an attempt to establish a pattern for the Nordic doubts regarding the proposed Nordic Ecumenical Institute the following background and factors appear plausible: There were two major circumstances that created a general platform for Nordic skepticism. A./ Political tension in the Nordic region had since old times, and particularly since the Reformation shaped the inhabitants into peoples who easily mistrusted each other. The collapse of Scandinavism facing political strain is one example. B./ Episcopacy came after the Reformation to be regarded in a different ways that separated the National churches in the Western part from the National churches in the Eastern part of the Nordic region. I regard A and B as a background to more recent causes for NEC to collapse. The more recent causes were, according to my conclusions: 1./ the fact that WCC resolved in 1948 to drop the proposals for a regional membership structure; 2./ the fact that Academic research was removed in 1939-1940 from NEI’s list of Objects. 3./ the fact that not even Board Members of NEI were always clear about what NEI was or ought to be. Should it be an Institute or a Council? And what was the real competence of a council? 4./ the stress caused by political realities during the Second World War in the Nordic region. 5./ After 1945 there was no motivating factor for NEI which during the Second World War, in spite of political problems and misunderstandings, had served Nordic churches very well. The more recent causes[1-5] had for NEI possibly not been fatal enough, had it not been for circumstances A and B.

Following the development leading to the establishment of the World Council of Churches I could highlight a shift in the ecumenical movement from actions taken by individual enthusiasts and regional councils to a structured role played by the churches. This shift was helped by a development in theology in which increasingly the Church was in the focus. Eventually, when the World Council of Churches was established in Amsterdam in 1948, the plan for a regional membership structure was abandoned and replaced by a membership structure principally built on member churches. The Nordic Ecumenical Institute appears to have noted this new prerequisite but preferred in 1948 to rely on “business as usual”, commenced in 1940. As reported above NEI, however, took a decision not to arrange any evaluating Nordic ecumenical conference after Amsterdam 1948. Such an evaluation was instead “left to the Nordic churches themselves”. This indicates a NEI awareness of the new ecumenical realities after 1948. By more or less ignoring the scrapping of WCC regional membership, NEI navigated in a manner that would eventually be unsustainable. In 1948 NEI could have challenged the churches in the Nordic region in order to commit them to a profound solidarity and cooperation, possibly resulting in the church renewal Björkquist had hoped for. Instead the members of NEI accepted the new WCC structures agreed in Amsterdam and opted for “business as usual”.

By losing the research element and by not strongly reacting to and not in fact finding intelligent ways to adapt to the new membership structure of WCC the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, in my opinion, prepared for its own disintegration. The Nordic Ecumenical Institute was so much more vulnerable as Nordic churches, according to my findings, with few exceptions operated from a remarkably egoistic agenda. If there was, as had been the case during the war, no absolute need for a Nordic Ecumenical Institute, Nordic churches were normally not willing to give up their total independence and accept a Nordic coordinating agent. During the Second World War Nordic churches desperately needed NEI and appreciated its existence. But after the war and up to the 21st Century, the Nordic churches were often merely coexisting, even if occasionally Nordic church leaders spoke warmly about cooperation. Without the war as a motivating factor, Nordic churches found no reason to spend resources on Ecumenism in the Nordic region.
The Church of Sweden appeared to fail to show sufficient empathy or sympathy for the churches in Nordic countries that were fighting a cruel Nazi occupation or Communist outrage. Decisions taken by the Coalition Government in Sweden in respect of Nazi-Germany did very little to augment understanding in the Nordic region. The Church of Norway operated in a context of the most severe Nazi rule that might help to explain that the Bishop of Oslo often failed to find time for Nordic cooperation. From my reviews I find that the Church of Denmark, possibly as Denmark initially was not under so severe an occupation as Norway, often supported the idea of Nordic church cooperation and that the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland often sided with the Church of Sweden in a cooperation that was not seldom dictated by a desperate need for support to combat the Russian Communists.

As a general observation I note that attempts to cooperation between Nordic churches failed both in the 19th Century and in the 20th and 21st Century when political circumstances constituted a non-manageable stress.

In the rest of this chapter, 14, you will find further details and conclusions from my analysis of the background to the Nordic Ecumenical Institute as well as its rise and fall.

Further Conclusions:

14.2 On Episcopacy and the Nordic Bishops´ Council.
Archbishop Söderblom had grandiose plans for the Nordic Bishops´ Council. Potentially, it could by time come to serve as a leading Regional body in future World Ecumenism. The strain of the Second World War, however, almost brought the Nordic Bishops´ Council to a collapse, when its regular Meetings were to be resumed after the war. Manfred Björkquist in many respects appears to have taken over Söderblom’s regional aspirations and applied them to “his” Nordic Ecumenical Institute. The Nordic Ecumenical Institute/ Council, however, also had to operate in a climate of increasing Nordic scepticism similar to the disunity within the Nordic Bishops´ Council at the close of war and afterwards. The Nordic Bishops´ Council managed nevertheless to survive as a useful meeting place for fellow-Bishops in the Nordic region. A proposal in 1946 by the Bishop of Copenhagen to establish a Nordic Church Council was considered by the Nordic Bishops without any manifest proposals by the Nordic Bishops´ Council. Ultimately inspired by Archbishop Söderblom the Nordic Bishops might have considered their own Nordic council the most expedient forum for Nordic church cooperation. A Nordic Church Council could have obscured the role of the Nordic Bishops. In a similar way Nordic Bishops might have regarded the Nordic Ecumenical Council as an expensive luxury not really called for.

Since the Reformation Episcopacy had been understood differently in the Eastern and Western parts of the Nordic region. The National churches in the Eastern part had maintained and cherished the Historic Episcopate, while in the Western part the Historic Episcopate had not without pride been abolished. NEI organised Anglican/Lutheran conversations in the Nordic region between Folk Churches that lead to a new consensus over Episcopacy in the British/Nordic/Baltic Porvoo Common Statement and the Porvoo Agreement. By doing so NEI contributed strongly to a new, profound understanding of Apostolic succession, which, as the Church of Denmark now (2010) has joined the Porvoo Communion might create a new prospect for real church cooperation in the Nordic region.

14.3 On Regionalism.
As a part of the background for the Nordic Ecumenical Institute I have attempted to sketch the rather diversified road leading to the creation of the World Council of Churches. I have tried to point out important landmarks on that road. In my attempts I have highlighted how the Student and Missionary endeavours of the 19th Century opened up for the Ecumenical movement. The Missionary movement often established itself in regional councils. In a similar way the World Alliance (W.A.) for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches organised its activities locally in National or Regional structures. Regional Missionary Councils as well as National Councils for W.A. appear to have influenced the architects of the emerging WCC as they convened in Utrecht in 1938 to draw up a Draft Constitution for a future WCC. Manfred Björkquist attended the Utrecht Meeting and returned to his beloved Sigtuna full of enthusiasm over the prospect of an additional ecclesiastical role for the newly created Sigtuna Foundation. Björkquist, having followed the Ecumenical advance, was more and more convinced that the Ecumenical Movement possessed an intrinsic potential to renew the churches, in
particular the Nordic Folk churches. The Utrecht Meeting proposed for the future WCC a membership structure that was based on regions. To Manfred Björkquist this triggered an enormous exertion to create for the emerging WCC a coordinating sub-centre in the Nordic region. The centre should channel information to WCC from the Nordic churches as well as information from WCC to the Nordic churches. In a similar manner reports from the centre’s intended Research Institute would be shared by the churches and the international organisations. In the process the Member churches would foster mutual understanding and cooperation. This was the master plan.

During the years leading up to the WCC Assembly in Amsterdam in 1948 theologians contributed to an accentuated focus on the Church and its nature. In particular Lutherans from the USA presented an alternative to the Utrecht Draft Constitution. In the American proposal there was little room for a regional membership structure. Instead denominational criteria should open up for a membership structure based principally on member churches, according to the American Lutherans. WCC General Assembly in Amsterdam in 1948 resolved to adopt a Constitution based very much on the American proposals.

Prior to the Assembly in Amsterdam in August 1948 [22.8-4.9] the Board of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute met in Oslo in May-June 1948 discussing the perceived uncertain role of NEI. Bishop Manfred Björkquist admitted that, when founded, the basis for the Institute’s ecumenical role had been rather fragile. Now, according to the Minutes, NEI noted the diminished role the regions were to be given in the Ecumenical field, in which instead the role of the churches was highlighted.

Even if NEI at the Oslo meeting openly admitted that a new situation would surround NEI after the decisions on membership they obviously expected the General Assembly to take in Amsterdam later that year, the minutes do not reflect any real change of plan or attempts to adapt to the new reality. Minutes from a NEI Executive Committee convened on 27.8 1948 §2 tell us, however, about a resolution not to arrange a Post Amsterdam de-briefing in the Nordic region, but rather leave such arrangement to the respective Nordic churches!

When in August 1948 WCC openly abandoned the originally intended regional structure for membership, NEI lost an important basis for its existence (the first basis lost being the almost complete abandonment of the NEI Research Project). The board of NEI noted during a meeting in Oslo in the early summer of 1948 the potential loss of regionalism, but appears to have preferred to ignore that fundamental change and carry on operating in a way that by 1948 had become familiar.

The Nordic Ecumenical Institute appears to have opted for “business as usual” by which NEI would attempt to continue to act as a WCC sub-centre, representing churches which, WCC had declared, should speak for themselves. In my view this attitude and lack of alternative plans was to a considerable degree responsible for the collapse of the NEC fifty years later.

14.4 On Research institute.

When Bishop Berggrav, of Oslo, in 1939 succeeded in making the emerging NEI remove instructions from its Draft Constitution to operate as a research institute it was a first major blow to the Institute, which nevertheless persisted and included all the same some research projects in its operations. NEI persevered in initiating research projects even though some board members (Runestam and the Norwegian members) expressed serious doubts over such projects. No doubt, the compromise over and downgrading of Research constituted an incipient illness for the Nordic Ecumenical Institute.

Opposing Nordic views over the real raison d’être of NEI and over its Objects, particularly in combination with the WCC 1948 downgrading of the regional significance appear to have contributed gradually to an accelerating confusion over the role of NEI, and eventually a disintegration of NEI/NEC, completed in 2003.

I am inclined to add that NEI might have succeeded to overcome even such difficulties, had it not been hit by an extraordinary narrowness of outlook and self-interest exercised by Nordic churches when in the early 21st Century NEC tried to establish Nordic unity over its very Objects and Rules of Procedure.
14.5 On Institute or Council.
In 1990 NEI adopted a new Constitution, valid from 1991, at which point its name was changed from the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI, to the Nordic Ecumenical Council, NEC. The purpose appears to have been a wish to make the research element of the activities even less prominent and instead underline a renewed role of NEC as a coordinator and supporter of the Nordic Folk churches. At a NEI Board meeting it was recorded that Council was a word that, better than Institute, covered the actual work NEI involved in. The development after 1990 bears witness of a somewhat different outcome than the one envisaged. It appears that the Institute, even if it had been constantly questioned, was easier to understand than an Ecumenical Council, over which opinions and expectations highly differed. As demonstrated above, in chapter 2.2.1, a Council could be understood in more than one way with regard to competence. A main problem for Nordic ecumenism, as I understand it, was fundamental uncertainty over what an Ecumenical Council could or should be.

I suspect that members from the Eastern part of the Nordic region understood NEC as a Consilium, i.e. a consultative organisation without authority to take decision binding for all the churches represented. Members from the Western part behaved as if they dreaded a Concilium, which potentially could take binding decision they utterly disliked. My conclusion regarding opposing interpretations of the meaning of a council is based upon the input given by Nordic churches when in 2001 they were invited by NEC to do so.

As NEC disintegrated in 2003 and was in the process of reconstruction in 2004, the churches in the Nordic region regressed into familiar and traditional constellations, i.e. the churches of Sweden & Finland [East] supporting Ecumenism in the Nordic region and the churches of Denmark & Norway & Iceland [West] remaining outside what would be reconstructed into EIN).

14.6 On Scandinavism in Church and Society.
When depicting the background to NEI, I have written at length about political and cultural Scandinavism in the Nordic region. No doubt, political/cultural Scandinavism influenced greatly the Nordic churches as they attempted to cooperate in the 19th Century. So close was the link between political/cultural Scandinavism and the Nordic Church Assemblies, that when the former collapsed in the wake of a perceived lack of Nordic solidarity during the Danish/German war over Schleswig, no enthusiasm was left to carry the Nordic churches into profound cooperation, when, in addition, theological controversy (mainly over Grundtvig) placed obstacles in their way.

Political/cultural Scandinavism failed in Denmark when the nation’s self-interest was disregarded during the 19th Century Danish/German War over Schleswig. At the same time Scandinavism was most unsuccessful in Norway, because of previous Danish and contemporary Swedish domination. The self interest in Norway was understood as Total Independence (rather than Scandinavism). In Finland, after 1809, the nation had had to develop a precarious modus vivendi as a Russian Great-Duchy. Local political leaders promoted the Finnish language to develop a viable National identity. In Finland Scandinavism was understood as too close to the Swedish heritage and a dangerous challenge to the Russians. Scandinavism in Sweden was replaced by “Nordism”, which turned out to be almost as unsuccessful as the Scandinavism, even if some projects (like the Monetary Union) succeeded for a time. For Sweden Finland was lost, and before long Norway would be lost. Sweden did simply not dare to take any risk by engaging in the Danish-German war. Self-interest in Sweden dictated a political wariness. Political Scandinavism in Sweden had then to find a less ambitious version of cooperation. In the wake of the Union dissolution in 1905 the Young Church Movement in Sweden partly offered such a version. It is probably correct to allege that self interest in all the Nordic countries obliterated the political and cultural Scandinavism.

14.7 On a Nordic Church Council
On two occasions, as we have also seen in this paper, Nordic churches heard proposals, presented in vain, regarding a Nordic Church Council. These proposals were heard first in 1871 at a Nordic Church Assembly in Copenhagen and then in 1946 echoed in Sweden by the Bishop of Copenhagen, Fuglsang-Damgaard, during an Ecumenical conference arranged by NEI.

599 See 4.4.
A Nordic Church Council would have required a most careful preparation for a Constitution that could in a binding way offer a viable Nordic church cooperation and solidarity. Such a Council would probably have been given a strict constitution making the Nordic churches truly accountable towards each other and making a Nordic Church Council more effective and productive than the 1991 Constitution enabled the Nordic Ecumenical Council, NEC, to be. It is paradox that this must be said about NEI/NEC, even as it had successfully coordinated the most innovative ecumenical agreement, the Porvoo Common Statement.

In fact the Nordic Ecumenical Council disintegrated in the early 21st Century over incompatible expectations entertained by the Nordic member churches.

In 1946, when the Nordic Ecumenical Institute had operated for more than five years during the most difficult Second World War, Bishop Fuglsang-Damgaard of Copenhagen repeated the old proposals for a Nordic Church Council - in vain. A positive response in the 1940s would, again, to my mind, have potentially produced a mutual Nordic Church solidarity and accountability. The proposals by the Bishop of Copenhagen appear to have been consigned to oblivion by a committee of Nordic Bishops (appointed in 1946). Archbishop Söderblom had regarded the Nordic Bishops’ Council as the leading body for ecumenism in the Nordic region and beyond. Archbishop Eidem and his fellow Nordic Bishops, considering the Danish proposal, might have been tempted to persevere in a similar perception. The Nordic Bishops did not act upon the proposals from Copenhagen. Instead Nordic ecumenism (NEI and later NEC and again, later, EIN) was left to navigate through an increasingly complicated archipelago with rocks of ecclesiastical provincialism and egoism that eventually caused the Nordic ecumenical craft to capsize.

As indicated I find that in 1946, when the importance of regions had diminished in the worldwide ecumenical landscape, a Nordic Church Council, as proposed in that year by the Bishop of Copenhagen, could have presented a viable tool to make the Nordic churches more loyal to each other and hence more effective in the Ecumenical process. Ideally the Nordic Bishops’ Council, to my mind, would have been integrated into a Nordic Church Council, leaving the Nordic Ecumenical Institute to serve as its secretariat and research centre.

However, not even a Nordic Church Council would have constituted a quick fix for the Nordic solidarity. It has been observed above that when a Secretariat for Cooperation between the Nordic Folk churches was established and coordinated with NEI, Danish and Norwegian Bishops in 1983 very much questioned its existence and it is quite possible that a Nordic Church Council would have been shipwrecked by a similar well established Nordic scepticism.

What Dr Jørgensen wrote about failed attempts in the 19th Century was in a sense equally to the point a hundred years later when the Second World War had exposed the Nordic Churches to a considerable level of stress:

In the time of our Grandparents a Church Scandinavism gained considerable strength. To many prominent Nordic church leaders, the Nordic Church Assemblies, commenced in 1857, appeared to constitute the finest days of their lives. However, it became evident that the Scandinavism, of the 1850s, also that of the Churches, was like a plant without any root, a creation of romantic dreams, fostered by words rather than deeds, idle talk rather than collaboration. The War in 1864 came like a winter storm over the rootless plant that withered away.600

14.8 On Patterns of Church Cooperation in a Political Landscape
I have observed the following pattern regarding the attempts to establish Church cooperation in the Nordic region:

The ethos of Scandinavism, highly relevant also to Nordic church cooperation, was, particularly in Sweden, transformed into an ethos of "Nordism" and, in order to escape the political connotations, increasingly focused on the missionary task. Manfred Björkquist attempted to channel the enthusiasm for the missionary task into an enthusiasm for the ecumenical task, which - according to Björkquist - should be equally powerful and able to revive and renew the Nordic Folk churches. These churches, however, appear to have been rather reluctant to engage in any proper Ecumenical cooperation that could appear to diminish their cherished self-determination.

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600 Quotation from a letter by Mr Harry Johansson to Bishop Gustaf Aulén, Strängnäs, 22 January 1944. Archives of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute c/o Church of Sweden, Uppsala
The Nordic churches were, however, permanently very much exposed to political influence: In Denmark the German-Danish war coloured much of the church’s agenda in the 19th Century, later on in Sweden the break up of the Union with Norway triggered reactions also within the Church of Sweden, which found a new source of inspiration in the Young Church Movement. After the Second World War, secularization campaigns particularly by the Social Democrats hit the Nordic churches, mainly in Norway and Sweden. In Finland the ever present threat from the Russian Communists steered the Church of Finland towards a more conservative ethos compared to what was the case in the other Nordic countries. Particularly in Denmark the Social Democrats came to defend the state church system as part of a strategy to reduce by political means the influence of Bishops and their clergy as much as possible. In Sweden the Socialists managed through school reforms to create a society that was more and more foreign to Christian traditions and values, as they were replaced by a veneration of democracy and socialism.

The formation of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute made it rather obvious to what high extent stress from political realities and attitudes obstructed a profound and trustful church cooperation in the Nordic region. Representatives of The Church of Norway could not stand alleged and real Swedish hypocrisy regarding Sweden’s attempts to remain neutral and trading during the Second World War. In addition the Norwegians failed to understand how Finland could cooperate with oppressors like Nazi-Germany. Finland could not accept that so little support was given from the Nordic region when they were attacked by the Soviet communists. Denmark had its own political trauma as Iceland decared independence from Nazi-occupied Denmark during the war. The stress over political conditions appear to have made church representatives unable to find time and enthusiasm to engage in any long term church cooperation in the Nordic region. Under political stress it was, as before and during the Second World War, easier to stick to one’s own circumstances and remain “impeccable”.

14.11 A brief Summary and Considerations regarding the Conceivable Survival of Ecumenism in the Nordic Region, EIN.

In searching for a background to the perceived need for a Nordic Ecumenical Institute as well as circumstances that created a general platform for Nordic skepticism, I have identified firstly how political tension in the Nordic region since old times, and particularly after the 16th Century had shaped the Nordic inhabitants into peoples who easily mistrusted each other. This sort of mistrust was still in place during the Second World War. Secondly I found that together with political stress theological controversy served as an effective hindrance to any profound church cooperation in the Nordic region.

The perceived need for a structured Nordic ecumenism was generated by the International Ecumenical movement. When Manfred Björkquist attempted to implement such a Nordic structure, he failed to counteract two complicating developments: In 1939-1940 Björkquist did not manage to convince Norwegian members of the NEI Board that Academic research should be accepted as a vital part of NEI’s list of Objects for the benefit of Nordic ecumenism. Later, in 1948, Björkquist and his fellow Board Members failed to relate constructively to the non-regional church-oriented membership structure WCC adopted at the first General Assembly in Amsterdam in 1948. The Amsterdam ruling effectively removed the most obvious and formal raison d’être for NEI. NEI’s failure to come up with an alternative plan contributed to its downfall.

NEI opted in 1948 for “business as usual” rather than for a thorough rethinking of its business plan. Again, that attitude, according to my understanding, would eventually prove most fatal for NEI. Forty years later NEI tried to counteract increasing confusion over identity and objects by introducing a new constitution and a change of name from Institute to Council, NEC. The new name generated even more confusion and discord as there was profound disagreement regarding the competence of a Nordic Ecumenical Council.

The various problems that hit NEC to the extent that it was closed down in 2003 can’t alone explain the misfortune. There must have been a more powerful fundamental reason for the collapse of Nordic ecumenism.
The Faith and Order movement never abandoned its vision of a visible unity between the churches, and NEI over the years tried its best to make the churches in the Nordic region committed in the sharing of a similar vision. The success, however, has been rather limited.

I have found that the difficulties experienced by the Nordic Ecumenical Institute should be understood primarily against a background of harsh political experiences worsened by theological controversy.

The Second World War led to a mixed blessing for NEI (the Nordic Ecumenical Institute). On the one hand the war increased a general political stress and frustration in the Nordic region, on the other the war meant paradoxically that NEI for the moment was regarded as extremely useful by Nordic churches in occupied countries.

After the Second World War, some Nordic Bishops declared that the Second World War had brought the Nordic churches into a closer fellowship. They pronounced in 1946 that this very special Nordic fellowship should be “safeguarded for future common benefit”. Such declarations, however, did not always quite correspond to the actual emotional state in the nations of the Nordic region, where strong feelings of provincialism and pride had been acquired and developed through history. In the 19th Century people in Denmark had experienced how the rest of the Nordic region had betrayed the ideals of Cultural and Political Scandinavism and failed to show any substantial Scandinavian solidarity towards Denmark in its war with Prussia over Schleswig. Such disappointment caused the dreams of Scandinavism, caused the dreams about Scandinavian unity and cooperation to collapse in Denmark and beyond. People in Norway were tired of centuries of Danish domination and hardly more satisfied by the enforced Union with Sweden from 1814. During the Second World War such feelings of National pride were once again hurt by a ruthless invader making people in Denmark and Norway instinctively negative to anything supranational. It was far from helpful when Sweden permitted Nazi-German transit transportation to Norway of troops and materiel and arrogantly declared such an act was not at all contrary to Sweden’s declared neutrality! In the east people in Finland felt abandoned by the rest of the Nordic region when Soviet Communists attacked in 1939. The political stress did not support any Nordic ecumenism. On the contrary, Ecumenism coordinated in Sweden appeared in such a context of political stress particularly for people in Norway to constitute almost a threat.

As a paradox, the Second World War also opened un-assumed prospects for a now much needed Nordic church cooperation through the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, for mainly political purposes of high National priority as well as for much needed ecclesiastical contacts for Nordic churches otherwise confined to isolation, and for charitable efforts to alleviate suffering caused by the harsh conditions of the war. The Nordic Ecumenical Institute served perfectly as a platform for such work and in particular for informal political networking. After the war, no such services were required and the north-western Lutheran churches (i.e. of Denmark, Norway and Iceland) preferred to adapt to the officially [from 1948] Church focused membership structure of WCC and bypass the somewhat self-appointed Regional Nordic Ecumenical Institute and communicate directly with WCC, LWF, and CEC.

The political stress was hardly diminished by theological controversy. In the 19th Century such controversy was highly focused on Grundtvig’s theology on Church and Scripture. Conservative Theologians in Norway were absolutely furious when there were attempts to introduce Grundtvig’s ideas in Norway. In the 20th Century the old controversy over Episcopacy was ventilated, as Bishop Ostenfeld in 1921 wished to invite Nordic church leaders to an Episcopal consecration in Copenhagen and was strongly rebuked by those who feared or despised the “Swedish succession”. In my understanding controversy over the Episcopate contributed, together with stressful political events, to make the prerequisites for a successful Nordic church cooperation through NEI minimal.

There was, after the Second World War, simply no remaining political need for a Nordic Ecumenical Institute. In addition, national pride and theological controversies turned Nordic ecumenical cooperation into a troubled coexistence. This is, as we have seen, a pattern we recognise from the discontinuation of the Nordic Church Assemblies in the 19th Century. The Nordic Christian assemblies were discontinued due to political conflicts and theological disunity. When much later (in 1993) Anglican Churches of the British Isles and the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Folk churches were invited to agree with a Common Statement and join the proposed “Porvoo Communion”, the Lutheran churches of Latvia and Denmark declined to do so, allegedly on theological grounds.
In the 1970s, I heard on Belgian Television News a local politician claim that political unity within Belgium was almost impossible to achieve. The politician concluded, however, that unity could be achieved within the larger context, i.e. within EU. Having studied the futile attempts to bring the Scandinavian states or churches into a union of cooperation in the 19th and 20th Centuries, I am tempted to compare the Scandinavian/Nordic context to the Belgian one and note that it appears to be only in a larger body of cooperation, like LWF, WCC, CEC or possibly the Porvoo Communion, that the Nordic churches may get closer to one another and engage in profound common projects and cooperation.

During the 19th Century it was demonstrated at the Church assemblies how close the political considerations were to the ambitions for church unity. When the political aim (Schleswig) was regarded as lost, church unity also lost its attraction. Theological controversy (over Grundtvig) put a definite end to the ambitions for church unity in the 19th Century. In the wake of the futile political/cultural “Scandinavism” of the 19th Century the churches failed to create any viable platform for church cooperation. During the 20th Century it was, paradoxically, only political oppression that made the NEI truly required by all the Nordic Folk churches. After the war, the Nordic churches displayed anger over past conflicts, political and theological, and found simply no motivating factor for NEI.

The Church of Denmark, dominated by Socialist politicians, had difficulties with the Anglican and Swedish ecclesiastical view on Episcopacy. It was indeed not only in the 19th Century that theological controversy added to political frustration. In a Norwegian context political aspirations probably entailed an acquired aversion to anything supranational. NEI was perhaps regarded as a foreign vile attempt to control the Church of Norway.

Nordic Students, Diaconal and other institutions were nevertheless able to carry on cooperating in the Nordic region, even if political events made also this Nordic cooperation difficult at times.

Nordic churches particularly in the West, almost as “by default”, critical of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute/Council, might have mistaken the Nordic Ecumenical Institute/ Council for a potential supranational authority: a “popish” function they by instinct felt obliged to reject. There was, after the Second World War, no real motivating factor for Nordic church cooperation. So the churches in the Nordic region had to be content with a simple coexistence. Such simple coexistence was nevertheless challenged when Anglican and Nordic/Baltic churches in the 1990s were offered a more profound cooperation in the context of the Porvoo Communion (i.e. of Anglican churches of the British Isles and Lutheran Folk churches in the Baltic and Nordic regions). As mentioned above, most of the Folk churches in the region resolved to join the Porvoo Communion, with the exception of the Lutheran churches in Denmark and in Latvia.

In December 2009 however, the Church of Denmark decided to join the Porvoo Communion. It now remains to be seen if the Lutheran Folk churches in the Nordic region (now, that they are all in the Porvoo Communion) will, in the context of the (larger) Porvoo Communion, find a platform less intimidating for a candid church cooperation in their North European region in the 21st Century. Maybe there would be a motivating factor for NEI to be found in the Porvoo context?

A major drawback for the Nordic church cooperation has been the fact that the movement for too long depended largely on individual enthusiasts representing mainly themselves. After the Second World War, however, church cooperation in the Nordic region has increasingly focused on churches, rather than on individuals, being represented at larger Confessional or International organisations - to some extent at the same time making the Nordic Ecumenical Institute /Council in Sigtuna somewhat redundant.

When, in 2003, the Nordic Ecumenical Council, NEC, was abandoned by the Church of Denmark and by the Church of Norway, the Nordic Ecumenical Council was nevertheless regarded as essential by some of the [Eastern] Nordic churches and therefore transformed into the Ecumenical Institute for the Nordic region. From 2008 Nordic ecumenism is operating as a project, Ecumenism in the Nordic region (EIN), within the Swedish Ecumenical Council, supported mainly by the Church of Sweden, the Swedish Covenant Church, the Roman-Catholic Diocese of Stockholm, and the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland.
In this paper I have attempted to demonstrate that the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, NEI, in 1948 evidently by ignoring the new membership structure of WCC and in 1940 likewise by ignoring “Nordic doubts” about its role as a research institute, in fact prepared for its own disintegration in an Ecclesiastical region where self-interest appeared to shape much of the agenda. I regard these two facts as innate defects of the organisation.

I have also argued that such defects alone may not explain the downfall of NEC. It is only against a backdrop of political tension and theological controversy that the downfall may be understood.

It now remains to be seen if Ecumenism in the Nordic Region, EIN, shall survive yet another trial, as the present (i.e. 2011-2012) threat/ attempt to cut cost at the National level of the Church of Sweden might prove too hard an obstacle to overcome. EIN is under threat to lose half of its funding, if the Church of Sweden persists in abandoning Ecumenism in the Nordic region. The permanently impecunious state of the Nordic Ecumenical organisation (in its various appearances) would then at last have claimed its victim.  

14.10 Further Research
As this paper focuses particularly on the background and the beginning of the Nordic Ecumenical Institute in 1940 and then on the disintegration of the Nordic Ecumenical Council in 2003, further research may be devoted to a more detailed history of Nordic ecumenism in the intermediate period than what has been accomplished in this essay.

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601 As early as in 1940 the Nordic Ecumenical Institute had to accept a budget estimate that to a considerable extent was based on whatever future “fund raising” Manfred Björkquist could manage to secure.
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3 Documents kept by Dr Sven Erik Brodd, Professor, University of Uppsala, Sweden


End.