

3a Abstracts

1. Majorstua+ as Youth Cathedral: A case of framing arena-based Christian communities

Majorstua+ was established in 2011 by the Diocese of Oslo and the Common council of the city parishes, and was thus a joint venture within the dual managerial structure in the Church of Norway. The project, which is now made permanent, intends to reach persons aged 18-30 and strengthen their church affiliation. Located in a central inner-city church in the capital, the activities gathers mostly students and are structured in a tripartite way: The diaconal Soup & Mass, concerts, and Sunday evening services.

The aim of this study is to gain access to the actors' notions of communities in a context of organizational change. What kind of communities are being practicing within Majorstua+, and how are they conceptualized in meaningful ways for the actors? Methodologically, two researchers have studied central documents related to Majorstua+, and 5 group interviews were conducted. The material contains a richness of perspectives reflecting the actors various organizational roles and positions. Majorstua+ is framed and described as a youth cathedral, a church, a base, an arena, a network, a community, and a congregation. As a Christian community, Majorstua+ is outside the conventional congregational taxonomy. The findings witness, however, that despite a pluralism of meaning, the parish is nevertheless a point of reference.

Stephen Sirris

PhD-fellow

stephen.sirris@diakonhjemmet.no

Harald Askeland

Professor

harald.askeland@diakonhjemmet.no

Institutt for diakoni og ledelse

Diakonhjemmet Høgskole/VID vitenskapelige høgskole, Oslo

2. Small numbers, wide space – pastors amidst the changes in the East German churches

Affected by demographic change and shrinking numbers, confronted with processes of peripherisation and the extension of areas of responsibility for professionals, East German churches, especially in rural areas, represent a most interesting area of change. The paper will present the results of a qualitative empirical dissertation project (2010-2015) focused on Protestant pastors in the context of rural East German congregations. The project has explored the role of implicit ecclesiological and pastoral-theological orientations on pastors' perceptions of the situation, challenges they see and resources/strategies they have and operate with. The results are presented in three parts: 1. A typology of perceptions of rural areas as pastoral living and working spaces and influence factors on these differing perceptions. 2. A typology of orientations towards the process of minorisation in relation to different dimensions of ecclesiology. 3. The connection between the guiding pastoral profile and the challenges perceived in the context of extended areas of responsibility as well as the strategies to cope with these challenges. As a conclusion, the consequences for pastoral theology, education of church leaders and personnel management within the church are outlined.

Kerstin Menzel

Philipps-Universität Marburg

KerstinMenzel@googlemail.com

3. Views of obstacles and possibilities in church boards - as seen from within

According to the Church Ordinance for Church of Sweden every parish should have a parish board. These parish boards are highly influential and have decisive influence over both content and budget in the local parish. At the same time as they are understood as important they are also affected by internal changes in Church of Sweden as well as of a rapidly changing society.

This paper will give an initial presentation and analysis of a project that has just started. Representatives from three parish boards (chosen from parishes of different size and from different dioceses) have been interviewed in a qualitative study and questions have been sent to every parish board in Church of Sweden in a parallel quantitative study. The qualitative study as well as the quantitative explores in what way members of the parish boards understand their role. Is it meaningful, non problematic and open for future possibilities or is it filled with obstacles and weighed down by conflicts, or... In a second part of the study the aim is to discuss the material from a theological point of view.

PhD Niclas Blåder
Svenska kyrkans forskningsenhet
niclas.blader@svenskakyrkan.se
0768-000165