A Missiology of Listening – for a Folk Church in a Postmodern Context

Introduction

In 2006 the Ministry of Church Affairs published an official report from a working group about the tasks of the parishes, deaneries and dioceses in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark. In the first paragraph of this report it was stated: ‘The mission of the Folk Church as a Christian church is to preach Christ as the saviour of all the world. ... This main task is the reference point for all the concrete forms that church life takes in diocese, deanery and parish. All specific objectives must serve this task’.1

For the first time since the Evangelical Lutheran Church was written into the Danish Constitution in 1849 as the ‘Folk Church’ an overall goal was set for the church. Church members had of course engaged in domestic as well as foreign mission through mission societies and other private organisations, but this was the first time that the concept of mission appeared in an official document of the church.

The Danish Folk Church has been a member of the World Council of Churches since its foundation in 1948, but the understanding of mission as part of the church – implicit in the merger of the International Missionary Council with the World Council in 1961, formulated as ‘mission in six continents’ in 1963 – had no impact on church life in Denmark. 98% of the population were baptized members of the Folk Church and most of the remainder belonged to other churches, so the predominant perception in the Folk Church was that mission was irrelevant in the Danish context.

Since then, however, the context has changed. The process of secularization has led to a situation where Folk Church membership has fallen to 80%, the average Sunday church attendance has fallen to 2%, and the population is becoming increasingly alienated from the Christian tradition. Globalization has led to a religious pluralisation of Danish society, so that Muslims now constitute 4% of the population and Eastern religious and spiritual traditions are gaining influence in an increasingly individualised culture in which people are composing their own religious diet.

The emerging recognition of this situation has prepared the theological soil in Denmark for a serious consideration of a missional ecclesiology. Inspiration has come from among others: The Gospel and Our Cultures network; the Missiology of Western Culture study program; and books and conferences on missional church. A ‘missional church’-network for pastors, theologians, and mission leaders was established in 2001, and since 2004 national conferences focusing on the mission challenge of the Folk Church have been held every two years with full support from the bishops. In the last couple of years learning networks of

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pastors, laypeople, and congregations have begun to experiment with missional practices in the Folk Church.  

Since there is a consensus also in Denmark that mission must be contextual, the question arises: How are we to understand mission in a Danish context? What kind of missiology of Danish culture could guide local congregations of the Folk Church in their mission?

This article is a modest attempt to outline the contours of a missiology for the missional engagement of the Folk Church with Danish culture. First I shall briefly analyse the Danish cultural context and reflect on practical experiences of listening to people in that context. Based on this I shall propose ‘listening’ as a theological lens for the development of a missiology, and consider the practical implications of a missiology of listening.

1. Context of Mission

This article does not allow for a deep and comprehensive analysis of the Danish context so I will focus on one question: What is the relation of the Danish population to Christianity and the Folk Church?

Cultural Christianity as traditional religion
The Danish Folk Church has been described as the world’s weakest monopoly church. Very few churches in the world have as high a percentage of national membership as the Danish Folk Church, yet hardly any church has a lower average attendance at Sunday services. ‘Belonging without believing’ is characteristic of most Danes. About 70% of all Danes claim that they are ‘Christians – in their own way. According to the Danish theologian Hans Raun Iversen this leads to a churchless de-christianized Christianity which functions for most Danes as their traditional religion:

A traditional religion is not necessarily fraught with deep theological conviction for its followers, nor one followed with devout piety. It is rather the religion which in the final analysis lies at the deepest level of consciousness and cultural identity, and it is the religion to which one instinctively turns for refuge in a crisis.

The Folk Church is seen as ‘the distant church’ that does not interfere in its members daily lives or place any specific demands on them, but should just ‘be there’ whenever its members need it, in particular for the major transitional events of life.

Christianity has for many centuries influenced Danish culture to the extent that there would hardly be any national Danish culture without it. Iversen has described the most widespread form of Christianity present in Denmark as ‘cultural Christianity’, whose content is ‘a Christian-influenced worldview, a Christian concept of man, and some basic ethical and existential values deriving from the teaching of Christianity through the centuries’. Cultural

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3 Hans Raun Iversen, Church, Society And Mission. Twelve Danish Contributions To International Discussions 10.
4 Iversen, Church, Society And Mission. Twelve Danish Contributions To International Discussions 125.
Christianity, however, in spite of all its values, is not to be mistaken for Christian faith; Cultural Christianity is a Christian-influenced culture and does not involve any confession or discipleship of Christ, and most often exhibits no, or very little, Christian practice.\(^5\)

**Hesitant faith and hesitant atheism**

During the last 40-50 years secularisation has had a widespread impact on Danish society, and the public role of Christianity and the church has been significantly reduced. Most Danes have a very limited knowledge of Christianity and their level of individual Christian practice is low, but the majority continue to use the Folk Church for transition rites. At the same time most Danes maintain a feeling of identification with, and a belonging to, Christianity.

In an interview a Danish man expresses a typical opinion about Christianity: ‘I am not at all afraid that Christianity should disappear from here, for it lies deep in us. But practising it – that is not something we do.’\(^6\) This may be in line with what a Ghanaian pastor in an international church in Copenhagen has observed: ‘Danes are very cautious regarding religion. They do not want to be patronized.’ But he adds that ‘There is something inside the Danes that longs for God. They are not as godless as many think they are.’\(^7\)

Despite the low level of active interest in Christianity, less than a quarter of the population would call themselves convinced atheists or non-believers, and a high percentage of both groups still believe that there is some kind of god or spiritual power. Furthermore, the majority of these two groups still feel that a religious ceremony is important at birth and death, roughly one in seven pray or meditate, and about a third have strong confidence in the Folk Church.\(^8\)

**Religious encounter**

Whereas for centuries Denmark was a religiously very homogeneous society, the last 40 years have witnessed the development of a growing religious pluralisation. The immigration primarily of Muslims but also of Hindus and Buddhists has brought about a situation where many Danes are now meeting people of other faiths on a daily basis. This encounter with other religions seems to have led more Danes to identify themselves as Christians. This may be due not to an attraction to Christianity, but rather to a rejection of Islam. Still, this new situation has led to a self-reflection among Danes concerning their religious identity.

There are many indications of an interaction between immigration and religious change. In the integration process of Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists into Danish society, they encounter a culture influenced by Christianity, they encounter Danish Christians and the Folk Church, and for various reasons some of them decide to convert to Christianity. About half of the converts have joined the Folk Church through baptism. Similarly, some Danes with a Christian

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\(^7\) Iversen, Church, Society And Mission. Twelve Danish Contributions To International Discussions  125-128.

background convert to the other religions. The faith and practice of immigrant Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists has certainly been influenced by the encounter with Danish society and with Danish Christians, and vice versa.

Whereas some decades ago religion was almost a non-issue in public life due to secularisation, the very visible presence of adherents of other religions – and the conflicts around them – has today brought religion onto the public agenda. Faith issues have attracted a lot of attention in the media and led to discussions about differences and similarities between the Christian faith and other religions.

New Spiritual Awakening
Thus although Danish society once seemed to be a typical example of the apparently unstoppable process of secularisation, leading to the eventual withering away of religion, in recent decades we have witnessed what might be called a new spiritual awakening. About 140 new religious and spiritual groups have been established in Denmark, most of them under Eastern or esoteric inspiration. It is estimated that about 40,000 people are attached to them in one way or another, but their influence goes way beyond that number. It is further estimated that the number of alternative healers in Denmark is between 7,000 and 9,000, the vast majority of whom draw on similar inspiration as the movements mentioned above.

On the one hand we might say that this spiritual awakening has bypassed the Folk Church – as well as other Christian churches. There is no indication that these new spiritual seekers are beginning to turn up in any significant numbers at church services or other programs in the church. On the other hand this spiritual awakening is related to the Folk Church in the sense that most of these seekers are its baptized members and continue to see themselves as Christians. Two-thirds of the alternative healers, for instance, claim that they are also Christians. And about a fourth of all Danes say that they believe in reincarnation.9

Characteristic of the Danish context is that most people in Denmark are influenced by all the above-mentioned cultural elements: the long Christian tradition, modernity’s secularisation, the religious pluralism brought about by globalisation, and post-modernity’s individualism and new spiritualities. Furthermore, with the exception of the still relatively small number of adherents of non-Christian world religions, almost all Danes identify with Christianity in some way, but most people are cautious about explicit faith, and there is a significant ambivalence towards the Folk Church as an institution.

2. Missional Praxis

Many spiritual seekers have explained that when first approaching the Folk Church they had the experience of not being heard or understood, and of not even being taken seriously. They felt attracted to the old church building, to the strong rituals of the church, but they lacked a living spirituality among pastors and church members.

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The Importance of Listening to the Context

This underlines the critical importance of listening to the context in the mission of the church. Not only when approaching spiritual seekers, but generally when the church wants to be in mission in the Danish context today.

Dialogue is an important dimension of mission, in particular between people of different faiths. A space is created where both parties can express themselves and listen to the other. What is called for here, however, is a little different, it is a unilateral deep listening to the other, where the focus is on the other, his or her perceptions and understanding, his or her life experiences, longings and fears, understandings and convictions. By doing so we are creating a space in ourselves for the other in his or her alterity or otherness. To use a metaphor from Miroslav Volf’s analysis of reconciliation as embrace, it means that we are “opening the arms”, when we adopt a truly deep listening posture. Opening your arms – listening deeply to the other – you are also opening yourself to be changed by what you hear. You make yourself vulnerable and you have to live with the undetermination of the outcome. The other may also open his arms – and insist on listening deeply to you – but he or she may also decide not to do so. 10

Most relationships are asymmetrical in terms of status and power. Mission in Christ’s way is not mission based on a position of power, but mission in vulnerability. When the Folk Church – being the church of the great majority and a state church – engages in mission there is a need to find a way of doing so that is consonant with the way of Christ. The approach of deep listening may be such a way.

Over the last five years I have had the privilege to participate in a series of listening initiatives, where representatives of the Folk Church have approached various groups of people offering to listen to them. Reflecting on these experiences may help us to develop a relevant missiology for the Danish context.

Listening to Muslims

In the first months of 2006 the country experienced its most serious international political crisis since the German occupation of Denmark in 1940-45. A few months earlier the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten had published a series of cartoons of the prophet Muhammad that many Muslims in Denmark as well as in other parts of the world considered extremely offensive. Muslims demonstrated in many countries, and in Africa and Asia lives were lost in clashes between Muslims and Christians.

In this tense situation DanChurch Interfaith Relations11 on behalf of the Danish Lutheran Church initiated a listening tour to 24 mosques and Muslim organisations in Denmark, a tour in which I was involved. We came to listen to Danish Muslims, how they perceived the cartoon crisis, what they had experienced as immigrants and Muslims in Denmark, what wishes and

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11 DanChurch Interfaith Relations is an interfaith office set up by dioceses in the Folk Church. See www.religionsmoede.dk.
hopes they had for the future, and what ideas they had about a possible cooperation between Christians and Muslims to solve some of the new problems facing the multi-religious Danish society.

Our listening approach was very much appreciated. Often Muslims had felt overlooked by the media, but now at least somebody from the official Folk Church had come to listen to them, to their perspectives and pains, their insights and interests. In the midst of this tense atmosphere in Denmark the listening tour led to the development of relationships between Christian and Muslim leaders based on mutual confidence and a common concern for Danish society. Later in 2006 a national dialogue conference for Christian and Muslims leaders was conducted for the first time, and since then annual conferences have been held. A Christian-Muslim Dialogue Forum was established where even delicate issues could be addressed with a view to how we as Muslims and Christians together could contribute to the common good of society.

Listening to spiritual seekers
As outlined above, the ‘spiritual awakening’ seems to have bypassed the Folk Church. Instead of exploring the rich Christian tradition of spirituality the spiritual seekers mentioned above are looking to Buddhist, Hindu, Theosophical, and other traditions for their inspiration. In 2007 DanChurch Interfaith Relations therefore decided to go and listen to representatives from 12 organisations and centres inspired by Eastern spirituality and religiosity.

As a listening team we experienced a warm welcome from all the spiritual seekers, who were eager to talk to us about their spiritual life. Almost all of them had had personal experiences that had started them on their spiritual journey. For various reasons they did not find help in the Folk Church to interpret these experiences, so they began to search for answers in Eastern religious traditions.

Surprisingly, in listening to their experiences and longings we found that, all differences apart, we had a lot in common. Most of them were still members of the Folk Church; they appreciated the old church buildings and the rituals of the church, but deplored what they perceived to be a lack of living spirituality. They nevertheless hoped for a spiritual development of the Folk Church and some of them were eager to contribute to this. For most of them Christ played a significant role in their spirituality, although their Christology might appear to be ‘unorthodox’.

The act of listening to their experiences and simultaneously interpreting it – while answering their questions – brought us into a meaningful relationship and gave us a feeling of accompanying each other on our spiritual journeys – and as a Christian I would add, in the

presence of God. The door seemed to be open to exploring together the significance of Jesus for our spiritual life.13

Listening to Christian Bridge-builders
In 2008 DanChurch Interfaith Relations decided to follow up on the listening tour among spiritual seekers by going to listen to 10 people with unique experiences. All of them were members of the Folk Church, half of them were or had been pastors in the Folk Church and the other half were laypeople, all of whom for many years had been in contact with the alternative spiritual organisations and spiritual seekers. They were all well-versed in the Christian tradition, had established strong friendships with people in the new religious movements, and had got to know their traditions very well.

They viewed themselves as bridge-builders between the Folk Church and these new spiritual movements, and as such they were both open to learning from them and ready to share the gospel with them. They were pioneers walking in the borderland between traditional Christianity and Eastern-inspired spiritualities, a region that is both hazardous and fertile, but one where they as Christians felt called to move – to learn from other spiritual pilgrims and to share the gospel with them. Their experience was that listening to spiritual seekers might lead to the transformation of both parties.

However, most of these twelve people we interviewed felt very strongly that their pioneer work had not been appreciated by the leaders of the Folk Church. They shared with us their pain of not being listened to or taken seriously, but of being met with suspicion. By listening to these experienced bridge-builders who had moved in the borderland between the church and Eastern-inspired spiritual groups we learned a lot from their experiences – and our simple act of listening seemed to bring some healing to these ‘wounded’ Christians.14

Listening to people on the periphery of the church
In 2009 a missional learning network for pastors and laypeople in Denmark was set up. Inspired by the work of Church Innovations in St. Pauls, Minnesota,15 we decided among other things to conduct focus-group interviews with people in our local communities who were on the periphery of the Folk Church or even completely alienated from it. There were relational questions about family and friendship, existential questions about suffering and meaning, and religious and spiritual questions about faith, prayer, and the church.

When this was proposed, some critics said that the Danes were too shy about religion to be willing to spend an evening talking with people from the local church about such personal issues. But those who conducted the interviews found that many were willing to participate in, and indeed appreciated, the listening approach. They enjoyed sharing elements from their life stories and discussing their existential reflections.

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15 www.churchinnovations.com
Those representing the Folk Church learned much about how such people view Christianity and the church. By being listening to those interviewed got a unique opportunity to verbalise their understanding of life and in many cases also their weak and implicit faith. This deep listening often led to open conversations with a mutual sharing of experiences and insights, and relationships were established that might become bridges between Christianity and the lives of these people alienated from the church.

3. Missiological Reflection

At the centre of any understanding of Christian mission is the gospel of Jesus Christ. How then do we communicate the good news in a Danish context characterised by traditional Christianity, secular modernity, globalised multi-religiosity, and post-modern spiritualities? A context where there are often no sharp borders between those who are Christians and those who are not? Traditionally we would say that the gospel is communicated by what we say and what we do, by preaching and diaconia, but the experiences described in the previous section suggest that it would be helpful if a missiology of Danish culture started somewhere else, in a listening presence in a local context.

There are of course many different kinds of listening, but the listening in question is a ‘deep listening’ which may be characterized as a ‘listening that is guided not by the aim of conquering or controlling but by the aim of being with another in a sensitive way and of responding with wisdom and compassion.’

A listening God

The mission of the church is participation in the mission of God. Do we participate in God’s mission by listening to our culture? Is God not only a speaking God and an acting God, but also a listening God? And is listening central to who God is and to what God does and says?

One of the most important manifestations of the Christian faith is prayer. Jesus taught his disciples to pray to God as their heavenly father. Prayer was not seen as an act of obedience to a divine law, but was an invitation to communion with God. The premise for Jesus’ teaching on prayer is that God our Father listens to our prayers, is moved by our prayers, and responds to our prayers by what he says and does to us, and for us, and to and for others in the world. Furthermore, listening seems to be part of the communion of the trinity, for repeatedly the gospels speak of the ‘Son’ praying to the ‘Father’.

In his article ‘In the Beginning is the Listening’, the American theologian Jay McDaniel writes:

> Even God must begin with listening. After all, God cannot respond to the cries of the world or share in its joys unless God first hears those cries and feels those

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joys. And if there was once a time when God existed all alone – when there was no universe as we know it but only the potential in God’s mind for there being a universe – then God had to listen to the potentialities. In the beginning, even for God, there had to be a listening.\textsuperscript{17}

According to the New Testament, God not only loves, God is love. A significant expression of God’s love is his listening to us. As McDaniel says, ‘This means that the very essence of God includes deep receptivity, deep feeling, deep listening. Without the Listening, there would be no God. God is Deep Listening.’\textsuperscript{18} Underlying and informing all that God says and does to the world is his deep listening to his creation. He expresses his love for mankind by his decision to listen to us in a way that moves him to action. When human beings experience the deep listening of God in their communion with Him, they come alive and God listens to them ‘into free speech’. Deep listening is thus an integral dimension in God’s mission in our world.

As human beings we have been created ‘in the image of God’, i.e. in the image of a listening God, and we have been created with the potential for deep listening. When God calls his church to participate in his mission in the world, he calls us to participate in his own deep listening. This deep listening will inform not only our actual encounter or meeting with people, but also the way we try to discern God’s guidance for us in mission and the basic spirituality of mission.

\textbf{Missional spirituality of listening}

Since the mission of the church is participation in the mission of God, mission starts by the church listening to the God of mission. Through listening to the Word of God we may experience communion with God and begin to see and understand our own individual life stories as part of the great story of God from creation to redemption, from the Fall of Man to the Kingdom of God. When a local group of Christians together listen to the Word of God and together reflect on what they hear, and then respond in prayer and worship, they are being formed as a community for participation in God’s mission.

Such a missional spirituality of listening may be practised in many different ways. One that has worked very well in a Danish Folk Church context is the method developed by Church Innovations in St. Pauls, Minnesota, namely ‘Dwelling in the Word’. This is an exercise in ‘deep listening’ where a text is selected relevant to the missional situation of the church, e.g. Luke 10:1-12 (Jesus sending out the seventy-two), and read aloud in the group. ‘This deep listening happens in dwelling because the practice involves hearing the passage, reflecting silently upon it, and then finding a partner we don’t know well and listening that person into speaking freely (sic) about what thoughts or feelings came during the reading.’ Afterwards in the plenary each participant reports as accurately as possible what he or she has heard from the partner. ‘Then [you] wrestle together as a group with what God might be up to in the passage for your group on that day.’\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{17} McDaniel, In the Beginning Is the Listening, 29
\textsuperscript{18} McDaniel, In the Beginning is the Listening, 35.
\textsuperscript{19} Ellison, Pat Taylor and Patrick Keifert, Dwelling In The Word (Church Innovations, n.d.) 10-11.
The founder of Church Innovations, Patrick Keifert, shares how the practice of Dwelling in the Word over a long period might impact a group of people by developing their Christian imagination of the Kingdom of God, which is ‘at hand’, i.e., present in our daily life, but not ‘in hand’, i.e., under our control.

... something close to a miracle happens to the imaginations and hearts and eventually the actions of the leaders of the local church and of the many that follow them. They begin to imagine their lives being lived within the life of the living, triune God. Within this imagination, they experience both the at-hand-ness of the Reign of God and also its clear not-in-hand-ness ... [they] begin to speak freely of their sense of God’s engagement in their lives and a sense of their partnership within the mission of God. Within this strengthened Christian imagination, they begin to see and experience the world, especially their immediate community, service area, and those with whom they live their daily lives, in new terms, no longer only as humans would see them but as God does.20

This form of a missional spirituality of listening is easy to practise, also for laypeople, and it is open for all to join in, also for people who do not know whether they would consider themselves Christians or not.

**Missional discernment of listening**

The former Bishop of Winchester John V. Taylor is quoted as saying that ‘Mission is finding out what God is doing and joining in’. How do we as a church discern what God is doing in our context, so that we might join in as partners in his mission?

First of all, a missional discernment involves listening to, and reflecting together on, the Word of God and the tradition of the people of God. Practising a missional spirituality of listening to God, for example through the practice of ‘Dwelling in the Word’, helps to develop a ‘Christian imagination’ where we begin to sense God’s engagement in the global and in our local world.

A missional discernment also involves listening to the culture and society in which we are called to be in mission. In the next section we will focus on a missional accompaniment of listening to other people; when we practise this we will get a glimpse of what God is doing in the lives of people in our neighbourhood.

Finally, a missional discernment involves listening to the experience of the faithful. In the church we must endeavour to ‘listen each other into free speech’, in informal conversations and formal interview processes where we together in an appreciative way inquire into the experiences of the congregation to find out what God has been doing in and through them. Our God-given hopes and dreams are shared in order to sense what God may be calling the congregation to do.21

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**Missional accompaniment of listening**

The story in Luke 24 of the two disciples walking to Emmaus is the prime example of a missional accompaniment of listening. Apparently distressed by the death of Jesus whom they had hoped would be the promised Messiah they leave Jerusalem to go to Emmaus. First, Jesus meets the two disciples and accompanies them on their way. Second, he listens to them, to what they are concerned about, and asks them questions. The outcome of this missional accompaniment of listening is a conversation and meal fellowship in which the disciples encounter the risen Christ.

This missional accompaniment of listening may be creatively practised in numerous ways, in more formal and more informal ways, and by developing a dimension of deep listening in the way the church is present in the local community, in its diaconal activities, and in its communication. Instead of beginning by asking people to come to us in the church to listen, we go to them, accompany them on their way, and listen to them.

What is the significance of the listening dimension in the mission of the church? In discussing how to lead people to Christ the Danish theologian and philosopher Søren Kierkegaard explains why listening is so critically important.

> In order truly to help someone else, I must understand more than he – but certainly first and foremost understand what he understands. If I do not do that, then my greater understanding does not help him at all ….. But all true helping begins with a humbling. The helper must first humble himself under the person he wants to help and thereby understand that to help is not to dominate but to serve, that to help is not to be the most dominating but the most patient, that to help is a willingness for the time being to put up with being in the wrong and not understanding what the other understands.22

We must practise deep listening to really understand where people are, and deep listening is an expression of the patience and humility that is the mark of mission in the way of Christ.

Where then are our fellow-Danes, who have become more or less alienated from the church, and with whom we are called to share the gospel? And how do they understand the situation? Through deep listening we will probably become come across elements of the Christian tradition or maybe even a hidden weak faith or a longing for meaning and hope. The former leader of the Danish diaconal organisation ‘Kirkens Korshær’ (Church Army), Bjarne Lenau Henriksen, has explained in a few words what deep listening does to people. ‘It’s about letting the other person speak and perhaps come alive. It’s about being present, being present, always being present.’

‘Faith comes from hearing’ (Rom 10:17), but the faith of our heart needs to be voiced to come or stay alive (Rom 10:9-10), and deep listening is conducive to the voicing of a personal faith. In one of our Danish hymns, N. F. S. Grundtvig emphasises this dynamic relationship between heart and mouth:

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My mouth and my heart did
a covenant make
in joy and in anguish
to never forsake
each other for ever
and to conceal never
what in them has been given life.\textsuperscript{23}

Some might object to the understanding of mission as listening and ask if the preaching or proclamation of the gospel is not mistakenly omitted. For many centuries the gospel has been preached by the Folk Church from a position of power and authority. In a post-modern context where there is a ‘cry for authenticity’,\textsuperscript{24} the Folk Church is often still perceived to operate on the basis of a state institution. In an article analysing the shift in mission from modernity to post-modernity, Jørgen Skov Sørensen, Director of the Interchurch Council of the Folk Church, concludes that:

It is a journey where we actually leave an authoritarian mission attitude behind, but at the same time look forward towards being authentic to our faith, tradition, and current context through the interpretive ethos of post-modernity and in a witnessing encounter with a culturally and religiously polycentric world.\textsuperscript{25}

Deep listening to the other may be an expression of an authentic mission approach. By this deep listening to the other’s perspectives and experiences we may earn the right ourselves to be listened to so that we may share our spiritual journey with God.

\textbf{Conclusion}

For most congregations in the Danish Folk Church, mission is still a very sensitive issue. On the one hand the Danish population, with a few distinct exceptions, is considered to be Christian, while mission – as it is known to have been practised among adherents of other religions in Africa and Asia – is therefore perceived to be a provocation. On the other hand, there is a growing realisation that \textit{something} must be done in response to the increasing alienation of Danes from the Folk Church and possibly also from the Christian faith. In this situation a missiology of listening might be a way out of the dilemma. It begins with the practice of a missional spirituality of listening, and through a process of a missional discernment it leads to a missional accompaniment of listening.

\textsuperscript{23}Translated by Edward Broadbridge.
Bibliography


