

arguments could not break through the resistance formed by a church council who had not understood their role as custodian of the heritage. Basically, they did not take the responsibility for protecting the paintings, but rather assigned it to the National Museum. Several meetings did not change their attitude and, with no support from the diocese, the Museum had no chance of changing the situation.

The climate chamber is still in place and a happy ending has just recently become a reality after a private foundation, Augustinus Fonden, donated the money for the conservation. Irretrievable loss occurred because of local incompetence/ignorance, the authorities' different priorities, and our – the National Museum's – fault in communicating the heritage arguments. The saving of a national treasure ended up being dependent on a private grant.

Open-minded church councils, on the other hand, can lead to unexpected and controversial results. This proved to be true in Vrigsted Church, situated in the eastern part of Jutland. The parish church was subject to an extensive restoration in 1999, and, during the process, it was necessary to remove plaster from the walls and vaults. Traces of wall paintings from eight periods, from the twelfth to the nineteenth centuries, were revealed as fragments or weak traces of figures and ornamentation. In cooperation with the National Museum, the architect responsible for the project proposed to leave all surfaces as found in a ruinous state without any restoration interventions, but with conservation measures, where necessary (Trampedach, 2005, pp. 167-168).

From the beginning, there was strong resistance to this decision on the part of the congregation, with the exception of the chairman of the church council, who decided to fight for the cause. A dialogue was established between all parties, public meetings were arranged and opponents were gradually converted. In the end, a vote among the board of trustees showed a majority for the project. The compromise leading to this agreement was a renewal of the pews, which were designed for the church, and a cross as altar decoration, which was acceptable to the National Museum (Figure 3). The church was given a 'modern-day appearance', harmonious with its archaeological traces. Additionally, the restoration pays testament to a parish with the courage to think and act unconventionally. Furthermore, the advisers were able to convey their message well (Trampedach, 2002).

When confronted by currents of fashion, the various points of view are affected by emotions. The Church is a mirror of the changes which have occurred over the centuries, and, as the Church is first of all a living house, we all are a part of this process and leave our mark. The challenge is to let it happen, with respect for historical values. Each change, big or small, has to be considered and seen in a larger context. A way of presenting the problem is illustrated by a present trend to reopen bricked-over east windows in apses or chancels. From a historical point of view, we do not want to open the windows as they were usually closed when new altarpieces were