

Figure 3. Vrigsted Church. Interior after restoration looking east. © Roberto Fortuna, National Museum, 2000.



introduced after the Reformation, or even earlier. Nowadays, parishes sometimes wish to remove the altarpieces, to have the light from the east and establish contemporary altars. The following example deals with this aspect.

In Lyngby Church, north of Copenhagen, this request was put forward and the National Museum rejected the proposal. The displacement of the existing valuable Renaissance altarpiece would destroy the appearance of the church interior as a unit (Figure 4). Apart from historical aspects, the practical consequence of creating backlight results in a silhouetted vicar, which usually convinces church councils to change their minds. However, in the case of Lyngby, the local vicar had an uncompromising attitude from the very beginning. Several meetings between the church council, the parish vicar and the architect did not lead to an agreement, and in the end the National Museum was ‘overruled’ by the bishop and the window was opened. The altarpiece was kept in the church building, moving it to the side nave (Figure 5).