



Information Service

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EDITOR

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ADDRESS FOR ALL CORRESPONDENCE

Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity

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POPE FRANCIS AND ECUMENISM

ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS TO MEMBERS OF THE CATHOLIC COMMITTEE FOR CULTURAL COLLABORATION WITH ORTHODOX CHURCHES AND ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES

*Clementine Hall
Saturday, 11 January 2014*

On Saturday 11 January, Pope Francis greeted the clergy and laity from the Orthodox Churches and Oriental Orthodox Churches who are completing their theological formation in Rome at Catholic Institutions. The audience marked the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Catholic Committee for Cultural Collaboration with the Orthodox Churches and Oriental Orthodox Churches. The following is a translation of the Pope's address, which was given in Italian.

Your Eminence,
Dear Brothers in the Episcopate,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am meeting with you at the start of this year, in which we recall the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the *Catholic Committee for Cultural Collaboration with the Orthodox Churches and the Oriental Orthodox Churches*. I greet especially Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, under whose direct responsibility the *Committee* acts, and I thank him for his words, as well as Bishop Johan Bonny of Antwerp, President of the *Committee*.

The Second Vatican Council had not yet concluded when Paul VI established the *Catholic Committee for Cultural Collaboration*. The path of reconciliation and fraternal renewal between the Churches, wonderfully marked by the first historic meeting between Pope Paul VI and the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, also needed the experience of friendship and sharing that had been born from the mutual understanding of the exponents of the different Churches, and in particular among the young people entering sacred ministry. Thus was born, by the initiative of the Eastern Section of the then Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity, this *Committee*. Today as then, with the help of generous benefactors, it allocates scholarships to members of the clergy and lay people in the Orthodox Churches and Oriental Orthodox Churches who wish to complete their theological studies at academic institutions of the Catholic Church, and sustains other joint ecumenical projects.

* Sources of the texts are designated as follows: OR: *L'Osservatore Romano*, daily edition in Italian; ORE: *L'Osservatore Romano*, weekly edition in English. If texts come from sources other than *L'Osservatore Romano*, this will be noted. When translation is undertaken by the *Information Service* it is indicated by the abbreviation: *IS*.

I express my warm thanks to all the benefactors who have supported and continue to support the *Committee*. With gratitude I greet the members of the Management Board, convened in Rome for the annual meeting. Without your valuable contribution, this work would not be possible. Therefore, I encourage you to continue in your work. May God bless you and make fruitful your much appreciated collaboration.

I address a special greeting to you, dear students, who are completing your theological studies in Rome. Your time with us is important between the Churches of today and especially of tomorrow. I thank God for giving me this beautiful occasion to meet with you and to tell you that the Bishop of Rome wishes you well. I wish for each one of you a joyous experience of the Church and of the City of Rome, enriching both from the spiritual and cultural aspects, and may you feel yourselves not as guests but as brothers among brothers. I am sure, on the other hand, that by your presence you are an asset to the communities of study which you attend.

Dear brothers and sisters, I assure you of my remembrance in prayer, and I trust also in yours for me and for my ministry. May the Lord bless you and may Our Lady protect you.

ORE, 17 January 2014

GREETINGS TO THE FINNISH ECUMENICAL DELEGATION ON THE OCCASION OF THE FEAST OF SAINT HENRY

Friday, 17 January 2014

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Dear Friends from Finland,

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (*Rom 1:7*). I offer you a very warm welcome, as my Predecessors, Blessed John Paul II and Benedict XVI, have done for over twenty-five years, as I receive your ecumenical delegation on the occasion of the Feast of Saint Henry, Patron of Finland.

Writing to the members of the community of Corinth, marked by divisions, Saint Paul asked: “Is Christ divided?” (*1 Cor 1:13*). This question has been chosen as the theme for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which we begin tomorrow. Today that same question is being asked of us. Ignoring voices which no longer recognize the full and visible unity of the Church as an achievable goal, we are urged not to grow weary of our ecumenical efforts, but to remain faithful to the petition which the Lord Jesus made to the Father: that “all may be one” (*Jn 17:21*).

In our day, ecumenism and relationships between Christians are changing significantly. This is due above all to the fact that we profess our faith within a society and a culture increasingly less concerned with God and all that involves the transcendental dimension of life. We see this especially in Europe, but not only here.

For this reason, our witness has to be centred on the core of our faith: the proclamation of God's love made known in Christ his Son. This gives us a great opportunity to grow in communion and unity by promoting that spiritual ecumenism which flows directly from the commandment of love given by Jesus to his disciples. The Second Vatican Council itself alluded to it in these words: "Change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement, and can rightly be called spiritual ecumenism" (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, 8). Ecumenism is a spiritual process, one which takes place in faithful obedience to the Father, in fulfilment of the will of Christ and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

So let us constantly implore the help of God's grace and the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, who leads us to the fullness of truth, the source of reconciliation and communion.

Renewing my warm welcome, I gladly invoke God's blessings on you, on all the Christians of Finland and on the nation.

ORE, 24 January 2014

POPE FRANCIS TO THE BISHOPS OF BULGARIA DURING THEIR 'AD LIMINA' VISIT

13 February 2014

Dear Brothers in the Episcopate,

[...] Your communities, dear Brothers, live and work next to those of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. Therefore, I ask you to convey my cordial greeting to Patriarch Neofit, who in a few days will celebrate the first anniversary of his canonical election, and I warmly invite you to continue the efforts to promote an ever more intense and fraternal dialogue with the Orthodox Church. In mutual and prayerful listening to the Word of God, I hope that the hearts and minds of all may open so that the hope of realizing a celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice together may become ever more possible, that Sacrifice in keeping with the Word of Our Lord, who on the eve of his death prayed to the Father that his disciples "may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou hast sent me" (Jn 17:23).

On 27 April the canonization of John XXIII and John Paul II will be held in Rome. I am pleased that the Diocese of Sofia and Plovdiv, as well as that of Nicopoli and the Apostolic Exarchate for Catholics of the Byzantine-Slavic Rite, will be present at the solemn celebration with their supporting delegations. This is an eloquent sign of how much the first Slavic Pope made his mark on the soul and life of the Catholic community in Bulgaria, especially during his visit to your homeland in May 2002. It is also a sign of what a lasting memory Archbishop Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli left in his nine years working in Bulgaria as the Apostolic Delegate. When taking his leave of the country, he thus expressed himself: "Wherever I happen to live, if someone from Bulgaria comes to my house, during the night, amidst life's problems, he will always find a lit lamp. Knock, knock. He will not be asked if he is Catholic or Orthodox, he is a brother from Bulgaria! Enter with both arms open fraternally, a warm friendly heart, will welcome him with joy" (*Christmas Homily*, 25 December 1934). These words reveal the affection of Archbishop Roncalli Apostolic Delegate for the Bulgarian people, who amid the vicissitudes of history maintained the living flame of faith in Christ. [...]

ORE 21 February 2014

CONDOLENCES TELEGRAM ON THE DEATH OF PATRIARCH IGNATIUS ZAKKA I IWAS

Pope Francis sent a telegram of condolences to the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East upon the death of Patriarch Ignatius Zakka I Iwas who passed away in a German hospital on March 21, at the age of 80. Below is the full text of the Pope's message.

To the Locum Tenens of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East,

With deep sorrow I have learned of the passing of His Holiness Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, father and chief pastor of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch and all the East, and I hasten to express to you, to the Bishops, clergy and lay faithful, my personal condolences and the prayerful closeness of all Catholics at this time of deeply-felt loss.

The whole Christian world has lost one of its outstanding spiritual leaders, courageous and wise in leading people through very difficult times. Following his election as Patriarch in 1980 His Holiness was an engaged witness of the successive violent conflicts that have brought untold death and suffering to the Middle East, especially to Iraq and most recently Syria. His Holiness was a man of dialogue and peace with regard to the followers of all religious traditions. In particular I give heartfelt thanks to God for his constant work to

improve relations among Christians and, from the time he attended the Second Vatican Council as an observer, for his extraordinary contribution to strengthening communion between Syrian Orthodox Christians and the Catholic faithful.

May the Almighty receive him into his kingdom and grant him eternal rest, and may the memory of his long and devoted service to the Church live on as a challenge and a stimulus to all.

From the Vatican, 22 March 2014

FRANCISCUS

News.va

POPE FRANCIS' TELEGRAM TO THE NEW SYRIAN ORTHODOX PATRIARCH OF ANTIOCH AND ALL THE EAST, HIS HOLINESS MOR IGNATIUS APHREM II

To His Holiness Mor Ignatius Aphrem II
Patriarch of Antioch and All the East
and Supreme Head
of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church

I received with joy the news of the election of Your Holiness as Patriarch of Antioch and All the East and Supreme Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church. I gladly extend to you and to the clergy and faithful of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate my good wishes and prayerful solidarity, asking the Holy Spirit to bestow his abundant blessings upon your lofty ministry.

It is my prayer that Your Holiness may be a spiritual father for your people and an untiring builder of peace and justice, serving the common good and the good of the entire Middle East in today's difficult circumstances. It is important for all Christians to bear witness to the love and fellowship that binds us together, mindful of the prayer offered by our Lord at the Last Supper: that all may be one, so that the world may believe (cf. Jn 17:21). I thank the Almighty for the bonds of fraternity between the Catholic Church and the Syrian Orthodox Church and I hope and pray that our continuing friendship and dialogue may be further developed and deepened.

May our heavenly Father fill Your Holiness with peace and strength for the noble task that awaits you.

From the Vatican, 2 April 2014

FRANCISCUS

ORE 11 April 2014

MESSAGE OF POPE FRANCIS TO HIS HOLINESS TAWADROS II

On the first anniversary of their fraternal meeting in Rome on 10 May 2013, which has become known as the "day of friendship" between Copts and Catholics, Pope Francis wrote a letter to His Holiness Tawadros II, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St Mark. The following is the English text of the Holy Father's letter.

To His Holiness Tawadros II
Pope of Alexandria
and Patriarch of the See of Saint Mark

As the first anniversary of our fraternal meeting in Rome on 10 May 2013 approaches, I take this opportunity to write to Your Holiness as a way of reliving the joy and gratitude we experienced on that occasion. Our encounter strengthened those spiritual bonds which unite the See of Peter and the See of Mark, and which had been renewed by the historic encounter between Pope Paul VI and Pope Shenouda III in 1973.

It is with thanksgiving to the Lord that we reflect on the journey of reconciliation and friendship which we have undertaken together. With God's help, we have learned better to understand one another and to build solid foundations for overcoming longstanding differences. Conscious that what unites us is far greater than what separates us, we already experience a real communion, while recognizing that it is neither full nor perfect. With trust in the Lord's grace, we continue to strive through dialogue in charity and truth to overcome the remaining obstacles to full communion. Building upon our shared moment of prayer in the course of Your Holiness's visit to Rome, let us continue to pray to God that all his children, born to new life through the waters of baptism and enlightened by faith, may also become one in love. For my part, I assure Your Holiness of my unceasing prayer for all Christians in Egypt and throughout the Middle East. May the Lord inspire in those who are responsible for the destiny of peoples in these lands, a firm resolve to seek just and peaceful solutions respectful of the rights of all.

On this joyful occasion, which has rightly become known as the day of friendship between Copts and Catholics, I exchange with Your Holiness a fraternal embrace of peace in Christ our Lord.

From the Vatican, 5 May 2014

FRANCISCUS

ORE, 16 May 2014

POPE'S MESSAGE FOR THE ENTHRONEMENT
OF THE SYRIAN ORTHODOX PATRIARCH OF
ANTIOCH AND ALL THE EAST, HIS HOLINESS
MOR IGNATIUS APHREM II

To His Holiness Mor Ignatius Aphrem II
Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and All the East

*"Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord
Jesus Christ" (Gal 1:3)*

It is with fraternal joy that I send greetings to Your Holiness on the happy occasion of your enthronement as Patriarch of Antioch and All the East. To my Venerable Brother Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity, I have entrusted the task of conveying these greetings to you, and to the clergy and faithful of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate, together with assurances of my closeness in prayer as you assume the high office of chief shepherd of the Syrian Orthodox Church.

May Your Holiness, like your beloved predecessor, His Holiness Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, be a shepherd for your people and an untiring builder of peace and harmony. Your Holiness has been called to undertake a guiding role at a time when Christians in Syria are facing many serious difficulties. It is my prayer that you

may be blessed with Spirit-filled insight and discernment, in the awareness of the importance for all Christians to bear witness to the love and fellowship that binds them together, mindful of the prayer offered by our Lord at the Last Supper: that all may be one, so that the world may believe (cf. Jn 17:21).

I express my solidarity with the Christian communities in the Middle East and particularly in Syria, praying for the cessation of conflicts and violence, and the building up of peace and harmony. Through the intercession of Saint Ephrem, the great Syriac theologian and saint, I pray that the bonds of fraternity and friendship between the Catholic Church and the Syrian Orthodox Church may be further strengthened and deepened.

May our heavenly Father fill Your Holiness with peace and strength for the noble task that awaits you. I ask for your own prayers as I exchange with Your Holiness a fraternal embrace.

From the Vatican, 29 May 2014

FRANCISCUS

CELEBRATION OF THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY IN ROME

18-25 January 2014

GENERAL AUDIENCE DURING THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

22 January 2014

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

Last Saturday the *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity* began and will conclude this coming Saturday, the Feast of the Conversion of the Apostle St Paul. This invaluable spiritual initiative has brought Christian communities together for more than a century. It is a time dedicated to prayer for the unity of all the baptized, according to the will of Christ: “that they may all be one” (Jn 17:21). Every year, an ecumenical group from a region of the world, under the guidance of the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, suggests the theme and prepares reflections for the *Week of Prayer*. This year it was proposed by the Churches and Ecclesial Communions of Canada, and they made reference to the question St Paul posed to the Christians of Corinth: “Has Christ been divided?” (1 Cor 1:13).

Of course, Christ was not divided. But we should recognize with sincerity and pain that our communities continue to live in division that is scandalous. Division among us Christians is a scandal. There is no other word: a scandal. “Each one of you,” St Paul wrote, “says, ‘I belong to Paul,’ or ‘I belong to Apollos,’ or ‘I belong to Cephas,’ or ‘I belong to Christ’” (1:12).

Even those who professed Christ as their leader were not applauded by Paul, because they used the name of Christ to separate themselves from others within the Christian community. But the name of Christ creates communion and unity, not division! He came to bring communion among us, not to divide us. Baptism and the Cross are central elements of the Christian discipleship which we share. Division, however, weakens the credibility and effectiveness of our work in evangelization and risks stripping the Cross of its power (cf. 1 Cor 1:17).

Paul rebukes the Corinthians for their disputes, but he also gives thanks to the Lord “because of the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, that in every way you were enriched in him with all speech and all knowledge” (1 Cor 1:4-5). These words of Paul are not a mere formality, but a sign that he sees primarily — and for this he sincerely rejoices — the gifts given by God to the community. The Apostle’s attitude is an encouragement for us and for every Christian

community to joyfully recognize God’s gifts in other communities. Despite the suffering of division, which sadly still exist, let us welcome the words of St Paul as an invitation to sincerely rejoice for the graces God has given to other Christians. We have the same Baptism, the same Holy Spirit who gave us the Grace: let us recognize it and rejoice in it.

It is beautiful to recognize the grace with which God blesses us and, still more, to find in other Christians something we need, something that we could receive like a gift from our brothers and our sisters. The group from Canada who prepared the texts for this Week of Prayer did not invite communities to think about what they could give to their neighbour Christians, but urged them to meet with one another in order to understand what they all can receive each from the others. This requires something more. It requires much prayer, it requires humility, it requires reflection and continual conversion. Let us go forward on this path, praying for the unity of Christians, that this scandal lessens and that it may cease among us.

ORE, 24 January 2014

CELEBRATION OF VESPERS AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

25 January 2014

Pope Francis concluded the ecumenical celebration of Vespers on Saturday afternoon, 25 January, in the Basilica of St Paul Outside-the Walls by greeting the representatives of the various Christian denominations. Joining him in the gesture of brotherhood and friendship was Orthodox Archbishop Gennadios Zervos, Metropolitan of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople to Italy and Malta and Exarch of Southern Europe, and Archbishop David Moxon, the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Representative to the Holy See, and Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome. At the beginning of the celebration, the Pope prayed with them before St Paul’s tomb. Assisting him in the recitation of second Vespers – on the Solemnity of the Conversion of St Paul and the conclusion of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity – were Cardinal James Michael Harvey, Archbishop of the basilica, and his predecessor Cardinal Francesco Monterisi. At the conclusion of Vespers, on behalf of President Cardinal Kurt Koch, who was unable to attend, Bishop Brian Farrell, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting

Christian Unity, thanked Pope Francis for his attention to ecumenical dialogue. He remarked on how the gift of unity requires conversion from all people. Also present were members and officials of the Pontifical Council, with Undersecretary Msgr Andrea Palmieri, together with 30 students from the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, and many of the Orthodox and Oriental rite students in Rome. Welcoming the Pope and accompanying him in the celebration was Fr Edmund Power, the Abbot of the Basilica, as well as other Benedictine monks. The following is the English text of the Holy Father's homily.

HOMILY OF POPE FRANCIS

“Has Christ been divided?” (1 Cor 1:13). The urgent appeal which Saint Paul makes at the beginning of his First Letter to the Corinthians, and which has been proclaimed at this evening's liturgy, was chosen by a group of our fellow Christians in Canada as the theme for our meditation during this year's Week of Prayer.

The Apostle was grieved to learn that the Christians of Corinth had split into different factions. Some claimed: “I belong to Paul”; while others claimed: “I belong to Apollos” or “I belong to Cephas”, and others yet claimed: “I belong to Christ” (cf. v. 12). Paul could not even praise those who claimed to belong to Christ, since they were using the name of the one Saviour to set themselves apart from their other brothers and sisters within the community. In other words, the particular experience of each individual, or an attachment to certain significant persons in the community, had become a yardstick for judging the faith of others.

Amid this divisiveness, Paul appeals to the Christians of Corinth “by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” to be in agreement, so that divisions will not reign among them, but rather a perfect union of mind and purpose (cf. v. 10). The communion for which the Apostle pleads, however, cannot be the fruit of human strategies. Perfect union among brothers and sisters can only come from looking to the mind and heart of Christ (cf. *Phil* 2:5). This evening, as we gather here in prayer, may we realize that Christ, who cannot be divided, wants to draw us to himself, to the sentiments of his heart, to his complete and confident surrender into the hands of the Father, to his radical self-emptying for love of humanity. Christ alone can be the principle, the cause and the driving force behind our unity.

As we find ourselves in his presence, we realize all the more that we may not regard divisions in the Church as something natural, inevitable in any form of human association. Our divisions wound Christ's body, they impair the witness which we are called to give to him before the world. The Second Vatican Council's Decree on Ecumenism, appealing to the text of Saint Paul which we have reflected on, significantly states: “Christ the Lord founded one Church and one Church

only. However, many Christian communities present themselves to people as the true inheritance of Jesus Christ; all indeed profess to be followers of the Lord but they differ in outlook and go their different ways, as if Christ were divided”. And the Council continues: “Such division openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalizes the world, and damages the sacred cause of preaching the Gospel to every creature” (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, 1). We have all been damaged by these divisions. None of us wishes to become a cause of scandal. And so we are all journeying together, fraternally, on the road towards unity, bringing about unity even as we walk; that unity comes from the Holy Spirit and brings us something unique which only the Holy Spirit can do, that is, reconciling our differences. The Lord waits for us all, accompanies us all, and is with us all on this path of unity.

Christ, dear friends, cannot be divided! This conviction must sustain and encourage us to persevere with humility and trust on the way to the restoration of full visible unity among all believers in Christ. Tonight I think of the work of two great Popes: Blessed John XXIII and Blessed John Paul II. In the course of their own lives, both came to realize the urgency of the cause of unity and, once elected Bishops of Rome, they guided the entire Catholic flock decisively on the paths of ecumenism. Pope John XXIII blazed new trails which earlier would have been almost unthinkable. Pope John Paul II held up ecumenical dialogue as an ordinary and indispensable aspect of the life of each Particular Church. With them, I think too of Pope Paul VI, another great promoter of dialogue; in these very days we are commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of his historic embrace with the Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople.

The work of these, my predecessors, enabled ecumenical dialogue to become an essential dimension of the ministry of the Bishop of Rome, so that today the Petrine ministry cannot be fully understood without this openness to dialogue with all believers in Christ. We can say also that the journey of ecumenism has allowed us to come to a deeper understanding of the ministry of the Successor of Peter, and we must be confident that it will continue to do so in the future. As we look with gratitude to the progress which the Lord has enabled us to make, and without ignoring the difficulties which ecumenical dialogue is presently experiencing, let us all pray that we may put on the mind of Christ and thus progress towards the unity which he wills. And to journey together is already to be making unity!

In this climate of prayer for the gift of unity, I address a cordial and fraternal greeting to His Eminence Metropolitan Gennadios, the representative of the Ecumenical Patriarch, and to His Grace David Moxon, the representative in Rome of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and to all the representatives of the various Churches and Ecclesial Communities gathered here this evening. With these two brothers representing

everyone, we have prayed at the Tomb of Paul and have said to one another: "Let us pray that he will help us on this path, on this path of unity and of love, as we advance towards unity". Unity will not come about as a miracle at the very end. Rather, unity comes about in journeying; the Holy Spirit does this on the journey. If we do not walk together, if we do not pray for one another, if we do not collaborate in the many ways that we can in this world for the People of God, then unity will not come about! But it will happen on this journey, in each step we take. And it is not we who are doing this, but rather the Holy Spirit, who sees our goodwill.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us ask the Lord Jesus, who has made us living members of his body, to keep us deeply united to him, to help us overcome our conflicts, our divisions and our self-seeking; and let us remember that unity is always better than conflict! And so may he help us to be united to one another by one force, by the power of love which the Holy Spirit pours into our hearts (cf. *Rom* 5:5). Amen.

ORE, 31 January 2014

VISIT TO ROME OF A DELEGATION OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

7 March 2014

The Holy Father met privately with the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC), Reverend Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, in an audience on Friday 7 March. After the private encounter, the Pope gave a public address in the presence of the delegation of the WCC, during which he insisted that divisions should not be considered as “an inevitable part of the historical experience of the Church”, because in reality they are “a serious obstacle to the witness of the Gospel in the world”.

The following is the address of the Holy Father and the WCC General Secretary.

ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS

7 March 2014

Dear Brother,
Dear Friends from the World Council of Churches,

I wish all of you a warm welcome and I thank Dr Tveit for his words to me on your behalf. This meeting marks one more stage, an important one, in the long-standing and fruitful relationship between the Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches. The Bishop of Rome is grateful to you for the work you are doing in support of Christian unity.

From its inception, the World Council of Churches has contributed greatly to making all Christians aware that our divisions represent a serious obstacle to the witness of the Gospel in the world. We cannot be resigned to these divisions as if they were merely an inevitable part of the historical experience of the Church. If Christians ignore the call to unity which comes to them from the Lord, they risk ignoring the Lord himself and the salvation he offers through his Body, the Church: “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name ... by which we must be saved” (*Acts* 4:12).

Relations between the Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches, developing since the Second Vatican Council, have brought us to a sincere ecumenical cooperation and to an ever increasing “exchange of gifts” between the different communities by overcoming mutual misunderstanding. The path to full and visible communion is still today an uphill struggle. The Spirit encourages us, however, not to be afraid, not to allow ourselves to be satisfied with the progress we have made in recent decades, but to move forward in trust.

Prayer is fundamental on this journey. Only with a spirit of humble and unceasing prayer will we be able to have the necessary foresight, discernment and motivation to serve the human family in all its struggles and needs, both spiritual and material.

Dear brothers and sisters, I assure you of my prayers that during your meeting with the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity it will be possible to find the most effective way for us to

advance together on this path. May the Spirit of the Lord sustain every one of you and your families, your colleagues at the World Council of Churches and all those who have the cause of Christian unity at heart. Pray also for me that the Lord may permit me to be a docile instrument of his will and a servant of unity. May the peace and grace of the Lord accompany all of you.

ORE, 14 March 2014

ADDRESS OF WCC GENERAL SECRETARY REVEREND DR OLAV FYKSE TVEIT

7 March 2014

Your Holiness, Pope Francis, Bishop of Rome,

We greet you on behalf of the World Council of Churches, the fellowship of 345 member churches including Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant churches in more than 110 countries. Together with senior colleagues from Geneva, I thank you for this opportunity to meet with you, our brother in Christ, together with His Eminence Cardinal Koch, and other dear colleagues from the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

We are all included in the prayer of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: “That they all may be one!” (*John* 17:21) Today we give thanks to God that we in the one ecumenical movement, to which also the Catholic Church contributes substantially and faithfully, see significant expressions of being one, although not yet a full visible unity. Through important studies in the WCC we can affirm that: mutually we recognize the one baptism; we do confess together the one faith in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; and the churches are sent into the world with the one common call to serve.

I believe that in our time God is opening new ways for us to unity, and for how the world can see our communion in Christ, particularly in the ways we can serve the world together. The WCC rejoices that the call to work for justice and peace, in deep Christian solidarity and for the benefit of all human beings, is

seen as a Gospel imperative by so many parts of the Christian family.

Your Holiness, today we want to thank you for the way you invite Christians around the world to not be preoccupied with ourselves but to freely share the love of God in words and ministry. When we as staff of the WCC studied your recent Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, we were impressed by your accent on the *joy* of sharing the Gospel. You also convince us that this is possible, through your personal tone, colored by your ministry as pastor and bishop in Buenos Aires and in Rome. We particularly have noticed how you call on us to remember the poor, and therefore to work for economic justice.

The Faith and Order convergence text on *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (2013) clearly speaks of the Servant church. In our recent statement about mission, *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in a Changing Landscape*, we also emphasize how the church must be inclusive, sharing in a mission from the margins.

The WCC recently held its 10th Assembly, in Busan, Korea, and we thank you for your significant greeting (conveyed through His Eminence, Cardinal Koch). The prayer of the Assembly was “God of Life, lead us to justice and peace”. The Assembly agreed on a text about our call to unity, searching humbly for the gift of unity as an expression of the life for which God has created us, and for which the church is called to be a sign.

The Assembly committed the fellowship of the churches in the WCC to join in a *Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace* as the main emphasis of our work. The Assembly invited all churches, and all people of good will, to join us. In our time, we see how the world needs and asks for people and leaders of faith that humbly and courageously can contribute to solutions to the conflicts and crises of the world. Therefore, Your Holiness, we are grateful particularly for your leadership and your accompaniment and for being so committed and sensitive to the needs for justice and peace in our world.

Of particular urgency for the WCC are questions in the areas of climate change and the Economy of Life. The future of humanity is threatened; the poorest among us are already feeling the worst consequences of

them. We encourage you and the Roman Catholic Church to be with us in mobilizing a real change of mind, heart and priorities, in government, business and civil society, particularly as a response to the call from the UN General Secretary, Ban Ki- Moon this year.

At the end of the first Assembly of the WCC in 1948, the churches declared their intent to “stay” together. At the 2013 Assembly, the churches declared their intent to “move” together. Or, as you have said in Italian: *Avanti!*

The entire fellowship of the WCC, but especially our Orthodox brothers and sisters, remembers the two historic pilgrims of justice and peace who met in Jerusalem in 1964, your predecessor Pope Paul VI, and the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I. All Christians rejoice in your pilgrimage to Jerusalem this year to meet your brother, His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

For many years the WCC has worked and prayed for peace for Jerusalem and all the peoples living there. We know that religion and faith play a significant role in the conflict in what should be a city of peace. We believe that only peace with justice in a shared city of three religions, and Israel and Palestine as two independent states, can bring an end to the occupation and the violence in this region. We heartily appreciate that you are going there as a pilgrim at a time urgently calling for a sustainable conclusion to the peace process. Your call for prayers for the people in Syria and other places have been warmly supported by our member churches, and as WCC we do what we can to nurture the hope of peace with justice for the people of Syria and for the future presence and witness of the Christian churches in the Middle East.

We commit ourselves to continue to pray for you - and with you and St Francis of Assisi - that God will make us instruments of His peace.

May the Triune God of life continue to bless your ministry with great joy, your Holiness, and may God grant us all many opportunities of joint service for unity, justice and peace.

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PILGRIMAGE OF POPE FRANCIS IN THE HOLY LAND

24-26 May 2014

Pope Francis visited the Holy Land from 24-26 May on the 50th anniversary of the historical meeting in Jerusalem between Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras. The Holy Father's pilgrimage commenced in Jordan and continued in the Palestinian territories and in Israel, where he met with the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in Jerusalem. Below are the texts of the main address of Pope Francis and Patriarch Bartholomew.

COMMON DECLARATION OF POPE FRANCIS AND THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW I

Apostolic Delegation (Jerusalem) Sunday, 25 May 2014

After the welcoming ceremony near Tel Aviv, on Sunday afternoon, 25 May, the Holy Father was taken to Jerusalem by helicopter, some 60 kilometres away, landing on Mount Scopus. He was greeted by the Mayor of Jerusalem, Mr Nir Barakat, and was then taken to the Apostolic Delegation in Jerusalem where he had a private encounter with the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. The private audience concluded with the ritual exchange of gifts, after which the Pope and the Patriarch signed a common declaration reaffirming their commitment to seeking unity in the Church. We publish below the text of the Common Declaration.

1. Like our venerable predecessors Pope Paul VI and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras who met here in Jerusalem fifty years ago, we too, Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, were determined to meet in the Holy Land “where our common Redeemer, Christ our Lord, lived, taught, died, rose again, and ascended into Heaven, whence he sent the Holy Spirit on the infant Church” (*Common communiqué of Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras*, published after their meeting of 6 January 1964). Our meeting, another encounter of the Bishops of the Churches of Rome and Constantinople founded respectively by the two Brothers the Apostles Peter and Andrew, is a source of profound spiritual joy for us. It presents a providential occasion to reflect on the depth and the authenticity of our existing bonds, themselves the fruit of a grace-filled journey on which the Lord has guided us since that blessed day of fifty years ago.

2. Our fraternal encounter today is a new and necessary step on the journey towards the unity to which only the Holy Spirit can lead us, that of communion in legitimate diversity. We call to mind with profound gratitude the steps that the Lord has already enabled us to undertake. The embrace exchanged between Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras here in Jerusalem, after many centuries of silence, paved the way for a momentous gesture, the removal from the memory and from the midst of the Church of the acts of mutual excommunication in 1054. This was followed by an exchange of visits between the respective Sees of Rome

and Constantinople, by regular correspondence and, later, by the decision announced by Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Dimitrios, of blessed memory both, to initiate a theological dialogue of truth between Catholics and Orthodox. Over these years, God, the source of all peace and love, has taught us to regard one another as members of the same Christian family, under one Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and to love one another, so that we may confess our faith in the same Gospel of Christ, as received by the Apostles and expressed and transmitted to us by the Ecumenical Councils and the Church Fathers. While fully aware of not having reached the goal of full communion, today we confirm our commitment to continue walking together towards the unity for which Christ our Lord prayed to the Father so “that all may be one” (Jn 17:21).

3. Well aware that unity is manifested in love of God and love of neighbour, we look forward in eager anticipation to the day in which we will finally partake together in the Eucharistic banquet. As Christians, we are called to prepare to receive this gift of Eucharistic communion, according to the teaching of Saint Irenaeus of Lyon (*Against Heresies*, IV,18,5, PG 7,1028), through the confession of the one faith, persevering prayer, inner conversion, renewal of life and fraternal dialogue. By achieving this hoped for goal, we will manifest to the world the love of God by which we are recognized as true disciples of Jesus Christ (cf. Jn 13:35).

4. To this end, the theological dialogue undertaken by the Joint International Commission offers a fundamental contribution to the search for full communion among Catholics and Orthodox. Throughout the subsequent times of Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI, and Patriarch Dimitrios, the progress of our theological encounters has been substantial. Today we express heartfelt appreciation for the achievements to date, as well as for the current endeavours. This is no mere theoretical exercise, but an exercise in truth and love that demands an ever deeper knowledge of each other's traditions in order to understand them and to learn from them. Thus we affirm once again that the theological dialogue does not seek a theological lowest common denominator on which to reach a compromise, but is rather about deepening one's grasp of the whole truth that Christ has given to his Church, a truth that we never cease to

understand better as we follow the Holy Spirit's promptings. Hence, we affirm together that our faithfulness to the Lord demands fraternal encounter and true dialogue. Such a common pursuit does not lead us away from the truth; rather, through an exchange of gifts, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it will lead us into all truth (cf. Jn 16:13).

5. Yet even as we make this journey towards full communion we already have the duty to offer common witness to the love of God for all people by working together in the service of humanity, especially in defending the dignity of the human person at every stage of life and the sanctity of family based on marriage, in promoting peace and the common good, and in responding to the suffering that continues to afflict our world. We acknowledge that hunger, poverty, illiteracy, the inequitable distribution of resources must constantly be addressed. It is our duty to seek to build together a just and humane society in which no-one feels excluded or emarginated.

6. It is our profound conviction that the future of the human family depends also on how we safeguard – both prudently and compassionately, with justice and fairness – the gift of creation that our Creator has entrusted to us. Therefore, we acknowledge in repentance the wrongful mistreatment of our planet, which is tantamount to sin before the eyes of God. We reaffirm our responsibility and obligation to foster a sense of humility and moderation so that all may feel the need to respect creation and to safeguard it with care. Together, we pledge our commitment to raising awareness about the stewardship of creation; we appeal to all people of goodwill to consider ways of living less wastefully and more frugally, manifesting less greed and more generosity for the protection of God's world and the benefit of His people.

7. There is likewise an urgent need for effective and committed cooperation of Christians in order to safeguard everywhere the right to express publicly one's faith and to be treated fairly when promoting that which Christianity continues to offer to contemporary society and culture. In this regard, we invite all Christians to promote an authentic dialogue with Judaism, Islam and other religious traditions. Indifference and mutual ignorance can only lead to mistrust and unfortunately even conflict.

8. From this holy city of Jerusalem, we express our shared profound concern for the situation of Christians in the Middle East and for their right to remain full citizens of their homelands. In trust we turn to the almighty and merciful God in a prayer for peace in the Holy Land and in the Middle East in general. We especially pray for the Churches in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, which have suffered most grievously due to recent events. We encourage all parties regardless of their religious convictions to continue to work for reconciliation and for the just recognition of peoples' rights. We are persuaded that it is not arms, but

dialogue, pardon and reconciliation that are the only possible means to achieve peace.

9. In an historical context marked by violence, indifference and egoism, many men and women today feel that they have lost their bearings. It is precisely through our common witness to the good news of the Gospel that we may be able to help the people of our time to rediscover the way that leads to truth, justice and peace. United in our intentions, and recalling the example, fifty years ago here in Jerusalem, of Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras, we call upon all Christians, together with believers of every religious tradition and all people of good will, to recognize the urgency of the hour that compels us to seek the reconciliation and unity of the human family, while fully respecting legitimate differences, for the good of all humanity and of future generations.

10. In undertaking this shared pilgrimage to the site where our one same Lord Jesus Christ was crucified, buried and rose again, we humbly commend to the intercession of the Most Holy and Ever Virgin Mary our future steps on the path towards the fullness of unity, entrusting to God's infinite love the entire human family. "May the Lord let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you! The Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace!" (Num 6:25-26).

Jerusalem, 25 May 2014

ORE, 30 May 2014

ECUMENICAL CELEBRATION AT THE BASILICA OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

Sunday, 25 May 2014

After their private meeting at the Apostolic Delegation in Jerusalem, Pope Francis and Patriarch Bartholomew went to the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre on Sunday evening, 25 May. There they concluded the day with an ecumenical celebration. Those participating included the Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land, as well as representatives of all the Churches and Christian confessions present in the Holy City. The following is the English text of Pope Francis' reflection at the ecumenical celebration in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, which was given in Italian, followed by the address of the Ecumenical Patriarch.

ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS

Your Holiness,
Dear Brother Bishops,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In this Basilica, which all Christians regard with the deepest veneration, my pilgrimage in the company of my beloved brother in Christ, His Holiness Bartholomew, now reaches its culmination. We are

making this pilgrimage in the footsteps of our venerable predecessors, Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras, who, with courage and docility to the Holy Spirit, made possible, fifty years ago, in this holy city of Jerusalem, an historic meeting between the Bishop of Rome and the Patriarch of Constantinople. I cordially greet all of you who are present. In a special way I express my heartfelt gratitude to those who have made this moment possible: His Beatitude Theophilos, who has welcomed us so graciously, His Beatitude Nourhan Manoogian and Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa.

It is an extraordinary grace to be gathered here in prayer. The empty tomb, that new garden grave where Joseph of Arimathea had reverently placed Jesus' body, is the place from which the proclamation of the resurrection begins: "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead'" (*Mt 28:5-7*). This proclamation, confirmed by the testimony of those to whom the risen Lord appeared, is the heart of the Christian message, faithfully passed down from generation to generation, as the Apostle Paul, from the very beginning, bears witness: "I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures" (*1 Cor 15:3-4*). This is the basis of the faith which unites us, whereby together we profess that Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of the Father and our sole Lord, "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead" (*Apostles' Creed*). Each of us, everyone baptized in Christ, has spiritually risen from this tomb, for in baptism all of us truly became members of the body of the One who is the Firstborn of all creation; we were buried together with him, so as to be raised up with him and to walk in newness of life (cf. *Rom 6:4*).

Let us receive the special grace of this moment. We pause in reverent silence before this empty tomb in order to rediscover the grandeur of our Christian vocation: we are men and women of resurrection, and not of death. From this place we learn how to live our lives, the trials of our Churches and of the whole world, in the light of Easter morning. Every injury, every one of our pains and sorrows, has been borne on the shoulders of the Good Shepherd who offered himself in sacrifice and thereby opened the way to eternal life. His open wounds are like the cleft through which the torrent of his mercy is poured out upon the world. Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of the basis of our hope, which is this: *Christòs anestì!* Let us not deprive the world of the joyful message of the resurrection! And let us not be deaf to the powerful summons to unity which rings out from this very place,

in the words of the One who, risen from the dead, calls all of us "my brothers" (cf. *Mt 28:10; Jn 20:17*).

Clearly we cannot deny the divisions which continue to exist among us, the disciples of Jesus: this sacred place makes us even more painfully aware of how tragic they are. And yet, fifty years after the embrace of those two venerable Fathers, we realize with gratitude and renewed amazement how it was possible, at the prompting of the Holy Spirit, to take truly significant steps towards unity. We know that much distance still needs to be travelled before we attain that fullness of communion which can also be expressed by sharing the same Eucharistic table, something we ardently desire; yet our disagreements must not frighten us and paralyze our progress. We need to believe that, just as the stone before the tomb was cast aside, so too every obstacle to our full communion will also be removed. This will be a grace of resurrection, of which we can have a foretaste even today. Every time we ask forgiveness of one another for our sins against other Christians and every time we find the courage to grant and receive such forgiveness, we experience the resurrection! Every time we put behind us our longstanding prejudices and find the courage to build new fraternal relationships, we confess that Christ is truly risen! Every time we reflect on the future of the Church in the light of her vocation to unity, the dawn of Easter breaks forth! Here I reiterate the hope already expressed by my predecessors for a continued dialogue with all our brothers and sisters in Christ, aimed at finding a means of exercising the specific ministry of the Bishop of Rome which, in fidelity to his mission, can be open to a new situation and can be, in the present context, a service of love and of communion acknowledged by all (cf. John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint*, 95-96).

Standing as pilgrims in these holy places, we also remember in our prayers the entire Middle East, so frequently and lamentably marked by acts of violence and conflict. Nor do we forget in our prayers the many other men and women who in various parts of our world are suffering from war, poverty and hunger, as well as the many Christians who are persecuted for their faith in the risen Lord. When Christians of different confessions suffer together, side by side, and assist one another with fraternal charity, there is born an ecumenism of suffering, an ecumenism of blood, which proves particularly powerful not only for those situations in which it occurs, but also, by virtue of the communion of the saints, for the whole Church as well. Those who kill, persecute Christians out of hatred, do not ask if they are Orthodox or Catholics: they are Christians. The blood of Christians is the same.

Your Holiness, beloved brother, dear brothers and sisters all, let us put aside the misgivings we have inherited from the past and open our hearts to the working of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of love (cf. *Rom 5:5*), in order to hasten together towards that blessed day when our full communion will be restored. In

making this journey, we feel ourselves sustained by the prayer which Jesus himself, in this city, on the eve of his passion, death and resurrection, offered to the Father for his disciples. It is a prayer which we ourselves in humility never tire to make our own: “that they may all be one ... that the world may believe” (*Jn* 17:21). And when disunity makes us pessimistic, distrusting, fearful, let us all commend ourselves to the protection of the Holy Mother of God. When there is spiritual turmoil in the Christian soul, it is only by seeking refuge under her mantle that we can find peace. May the Holy Mother of God help us on this journey.

FRANCIS

ORE, 30 May 2014

ADDRESS OF PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW

25 May 2014

The following is the Ecumenical Patriarch's address, which he delivered after the proclamation of the readings at the ecumenical celebration in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre.

“Do not be afraid; for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” (*Matt.* 28.5-6)

Your Holiness and dearly beloved brother in Christ,
Your Beatitude Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem,
much loved brother and concelebrant in the Lord,
Your Eminences,
Your Excellencies,
and very reverend representatives of the Christian churches and confessions,
Esteemed brothers and sisters,

It is with awe, emotion and respect that we stand before “the place where the Lord lay,” the life-giving tomb from which life emerged. And we offer glory to the all-merciful God, who rendered us, as His unworthy servants, worthy of this supreme blessing to become pilgrims in the place where the mystery of the world's salvation transpired. “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.” (*Gen.* 28.17)

We have come as the myrrh-bearing women, on the first day of the week, “to see the sepulcher” (*Matt.* 28.1), and we too, like they, hear the angelic exhortation: “Do not be afraid.” Remove from your hearts every fear; do not hesitate; do not despair. This Tomb radiates messages of courage, hope and life.

The first and greatest message from this empty Sepulcher is that death, “this last enemy” of ours (see *1 Cor.* 15.26), the source of all fears and passions, has

been conquered; it no longer holds the final word in our life. It has been overcome by love, by Him, who voluntarily accepted to endure death for the sake of others. Every death for the sake of love, for the sake of another, is transformed into life, true life. “Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling down death, and to those in the tombs He has granted life.”

Do not, then, be afraid of death; but do not also be afraid of evil, despite any form that this might assume in our life. The Cross of Christ amassed all the arrows of evil: hatred, violence, injustice, pain, humiliation – everything that is suffered by the poor, the vulnerable, the oppressed, the exploited, the marginalized and the disgraced in our world. However, rest assured – all of you who are crucified in this life – that, just as in the case of Christ, the Cross is followed by the Resurrection; that hatred, violence and injustice have no prospect; and that the future belongs to justice, love and life. Therefore, you should work toward this end with all the resources that you have in love, faith and patience.

Nonetheless, there is another message that emanates from this venerable Tomb, before which we stand at this moment. This is the message that history cannot be programmed; that the ultimate word in history does not belong to man, but to God. In vain did the guards of secular power watch over this Tomb. In vain did they place a very large stone against the door of the Tomb, so that none could roll it away. In vain are the long-term strategies of the world's powerful – everything is eventually contingent upon the judgment and will of God. Every effort of contemporary humanity to shape its future alone and without God constitutes vain conceit.

Lastly, this sacred Tomb invites us to shed another fear that is perhaps the most prevalent in our modern age: namely, fear of the other, fear of the different, fear of the adherent of another faith, another religion, or another confession. Racial and all other forms of discrimination are still widespread in many of our contemporary societies; what is worst is that they frequently even permeate the religious life of people. Religious fanaticism already threatens peace in many regions of the globe, where the very gift of life is sacrificed on the altar of religious hatred. In the face of such conditions, the message of the life-giving Tomb is urgent and clear: love the other, the different other, the followers of other faiths and other confessions. Love them as your brothers and sisters. Hatred leads to death, while love “casts out fear” (*1 John* 4.18) and leads to life.

Dear friends, Fifty years ago, two great church leaders, the late Pope Paul VI and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, cast out fear; they cast away from themselves the fear which had prevailed for a millennium, a fear which had kept the two ancient Churches, of the West and East, at a distance from one another, sometimes even setting them up against each other. Instead, as they stood before this sacred space,

they exchanged fear with love. And so here we are, as their successors, following in their footsteps and honoring their heroic initiative. We have exchanged an embrace of love, even as we continue along the path toward full communion with one another in love and truth (Eph. 4.15) in order “that the world may believe” (John 17.21) that no other way leads to life except the way of love, reconciliation, genuine peace and fidelity to the Truth.

This is the way that all Christians are called to follow in their relations among themselves – whatever church or confession they belong to – thereby providing an example for the rest of the world. The way may be long and arduous; indeed, to some it may occasionally seem like an impasse. However, it is the only way that leads to the fulfillment of the Lord’s will “that [His disciples] may be one.” (John 17.21) It is this divine will that opened the way traveled by the leader of our faith, our Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified and resurrected in this holy place. To Him belong glory and might, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, to the ages of ages. Amen.

“Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God.” (1 John 4.7)

ORE, 30 May 2014

GENERAL AUDIENCE

28 May 2014

On Wednesday 28 May, at the General Audience in St Peter’s Square, the Holy Father retraced the milestones of his pilgrimage to the Holy Land days before, which he described as “a great gift for the Church”. The following is an excerpt of his words, which were initially pronounced in Italian.

[...] The main purpose of this pilgrimage was to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the historic meeting between Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras. That was the first time a Successor of Peter had visited the Holy Land: thus Paul VI inaugurated, during the Second Vatican Council, papal journeys outside Italy in the modern age. That prophetic gesture of the Bishop of Rome and the Patriarch of Constantinople was a milestone along the painful yet promising path to Christian unity, which since then has made significant steps forward. Therefore my meeting with His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew, our beloved brother in Christ, represented the culminating moment of the visit. Together we prayed at the Sepulchre of Jesus, and with us were the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos III and the Apostolic Armenian Patriarch Nourhan, as well as Archbishops and Bishops of various Churches and Communities, civil Authorities and many faithful. In that place where the announcement of the Resurrection resounded, we felt

all the bitterness and pain of the divisions which still exist among Christ’s disciples; and truly this does great harm, harm to the heart. We are still divided; in that place where the very announcement of the Resurrection resounded, where Jesus gave us life, we are still somewhat divided. But above all, in that celebration filled with mutual brotherhood, esteem and affection, we heard loudly the voice of the Risen Good Shepherd who desires to make all of his sheep one single flock; we felt the desire to heal the wounds that are still open and to continue with tenacity on the journey to full communion. Once more, as former Popes have done, I ask forgiveness for what we have done to foster this division, and I ask the Holy Spirit to help us heal the wounds we have inflicted on other brothers. We are all brothers in Christ and with Patriarch Bartholomew we are friends, brothers, and we have shared the desire to walk together, to do all that we can do from this day forward: pray together, work together for God’s flock, seek peace, take care of creation, the many things that we have in common. And as brothers we move forward.

[...] On this pilgrimage, which was a true grace of the Lord, I wished to bring a word of hope, but I also received one in return! I received it from so many brothers and sisters who hope “against all hope” (Rom 4:18), amid such suffering, like those of one who has fled his own country because of the conflicts; like those of all who, in various parts of the world, are discriminated against and scorned on account of their faith in Christ. Let us continue to stay close to them! Let us pray for them and for peace in the Holy Land and throughout the Middle East. May the prayer of the whole Church also support the journey to full Christian unity, so that the world may believe in the love of God who in Jesus Christ came to dwell among us.

And I invite everyone now to pray together, to pray together to Our Lady, Queen of Peace, Queen of Christian unity, the *Mamma* of all Christians: that she may give peace to us, to the whole world, and that she may accompany us on this path of unity.

ORE, 30 May 2014

INTERVIEWS

Pope Francis had the opportunity on several occasions to speak about his pilgrimage to the Holy Land in interviews with journalists. We publish below his responses to questions regarding ecumenism.

POPE FRANCIS IN AN INTERVIEW GRANTED TO THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF 'CORRIERE DELLA SERA'

5 March 2014

[...] *Will your upcoming visit to the Holy Land lead to an agreement of inter-communion with the Orthodox, which Paul VI, 50 years ago, almost signed with Athenagoras?*

We are all impatient about achieving “signed and sealed” results. But the path of unity with the Orthodox above all means walking and working together. In Buenos Aires, several Orthodox were coming to catechetical courses. I usually spent Christmas and 6 January together with their bishops, who would sometimes also ask advice from our diocesan offices. I do not know if the story is true that Athenagoras told Pope Paul VI that he proposed that they walk together and send all the theologians to an island to discuss among themselves. It’s a joke, but it is important that we walk together. Orthodox theology is very rich. And I believe that, at this time, they have great theologians. Their vision of the Church and collegiality is marvellous. [...]

ORE, 14 March 2014

INTERVIEW OF POPE FRANCIS WITH JOURNALISTS DURING THE RETURN FLIGHT FROM THE HOLY LAND

Papal Flight, 26 May 2014

During the return flight from the Holy Land on Monday evening 26 May, Pope Francis spoke for more than an hour with representatives from the international media. He answered a series of questions, a few regarding the pilgrimage but several more on other topics. The interview was introduced by the Director of the Holy See Press Office, Fr Federico Lombardi, SJ. The following is an excerpt of the English text of the Italian transcript.

Q. – [...] During your pilgrimage, you spoke at length, and on a number of occasions met with Patriarch Bartholomew. We were wondering if you also spoke about concrete means of rapprochement, if you also had occasion to speak of this. I wonder also if perhaps the Catholic Church could be able to learn something from the Orthodox Churches – I am speaking of married priests, a question which many Catholics in Germany consider urgent. Thank you.

A. – But the Catholic Church has married priests, no? Greek Catholics, Coptic Catholics, no? They exist, in the Eastern rites, there are married priests. Because celibacy is not a dogma of faith, it is a rule of life which I highly esteem and I believe is a gift for the Church. Since it is not a dogma of faith, the door is always open: at this time we have not spoken about this, as a programme, at least not now. We have more important things to do. With Bartholomew, this subject was not broached because it is secondary, really, in our relations with the Orthodox. We spoke about unity, but unity happens along the way, unity is a journey. We can never create unity in a theology conference. He told me something I already knew, namely, that Athenagoras had said to Paul VI: “Let us quietly go forward; we can put all the theologians on an island to carry on their discussions, while we keep walking on in life!” It is true, as I thought it was... No, no, it is true. Bartholomew himself told me so in these days. To walk together, to pray together, to cooperate on the many things we can do together, to join in helping one another. For example, with our churches. In Rome, and in numerous other cities, many Orthodox communities use Catholic churches at certain times as a help in this moving forward. Another thing about which we spoke, which perhaps the Pan-Orthodox council may do something, is the date of Easter, since it is a little ridiculous: “Tell me when does Christ rise for you?” ... “Next week” ... “For me he rose last week...” Yes, the date of Easter is one sign of unity. And with Bartholomew we spoke as brothers. We like each other, we tell each other about our difficulties in governance. And one thing we have frequently spoken about is the issue of ecology: he is very concerned [about this], as I am. We have spoken enough to cooperate on a joint project on the issue. Thank you.

ORE, 30 May 2014

POPE FRANCIS INTERVIEW WITH SPANISH DAILY «LA VANGUARDIA»

13 June 2014

[...] *You and your friend, the Rabbi Skorka, hugged each other in front of the Western Wall. What importance has that gesture had for the reconciliation between Christians and Jews?*

Well, my good friend Professor Omar Abboud, president of the Institute for Inter-religious Dialogue of Buenos Aires, was also at the Wall. I wanted to invite him. He is a very religious man and a father-of-two. He is also friends with Rabbi Skorka and I love them both a lot, and I wanted that that friendship between the three be seen as a witness.

You told me a year ago that “within every Christian there is a Jew.”

Perhaps it would be more correct to say “you cannot live your Christianity, you cannot be a real Christian, if you do not recognize your Jewish roots.” I don’t speak of Jewish in the sense of the Semitic race but rather in the religious sense. I think that inter-religious dialogue needs to deepen in this, in Christianity’s Jewish root and in the Christian flowering of Judaism. I understand it is a challenge, a hot potato, but it can be done as brothers. I pray the divine office every day with the Psalms of David. We do the 150 psalms in one week. My prayer is Jewish and I have the Eucharist, which is Christian.

How do you see anti-Semitism?

I cannot explain why it happens, but I think it is very linked, in general, and without it being a fixed rule, to the right wing. Antisemitism usually nests better in right-wing political tendencies than in the left, right? We even have those who deny the holocaust, which is crazy.

One of your projects is to open the Vatican archives on the Holocaust.

They will bring a lot of light.

Does it worry you something could be discovered?

What worries me regarding this subject is the figure of Pius XII, the Pope that led the Church during World War II. They have said all sorts of things about poor Pius XII. But we need to remember that before he was seen as the great defender of the Jews. He hid many in convents in Rome and in other Italian cities, and also in the residence of Castel Gandolfo. Forty-two babies, children of Jews and other persecuted who sought refuge there were born there, in the Pope’s room, in his own bed. I don’t want to say that Pius XII did not make any mistakes - I myself make many - but one needs to see his role in the context of the time. For example, was it better for him not to speak so that more Jews would not be killed or for him to speak? I also want to say that sometimes I get “existential hives” when I see that everyone takes it out against the Church and Pius XII, and they forget the great powers. Did you know that they knew the rail network of the Nazis perfectly well to take the Jews to concentration camps? They had the pictures. But they did not bomb those railroad tracks. Why? It would be best if we spoke a bit about everything. [...]

You have also made a great effort to become closer to the Orthodox Church.

The invitation to Jerusalem from my brother Bartholomew was to commemorate the encounter between Paul VI and Athenagoras I 50 years ago. It was an encounter after more than a thousand years of separation. Since the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church has made efforts to become closer and the Orthodox Church has done the same. Some Orthodox churches are closer than others. I wanted Bartholomew to be with me in Jerusalem and there emerged the plan to also come to the Vatican to pray. For him it was a risky step because they can throw it in his face, but this gesture of humility needed to be extended, and for us it’s necessary because it’s not conceivable that we Christians are divided, it’s a historical sin that we have to repair.

<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/pope-francis-interview-with-la-vanguardia>

VISIT TO ROME OF HIS HOLINESS KAREKIN II SUPREME PATRIARCH AND CATHOLICOS OF ALL ARMENIANS

7–9 May 2014

On Thursday morning 8 May 2014, Pope Francis received in audience His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, with whom he also shared a prayer moment. The addresses of the Pope and the Catholicos are published below.

MEETING WITH POPE FRANCIS

8 May 2014

On Thursday morning 8 May, Pope Francis welcomed His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of the Armenian Apostolic Church, with whom he shared a moment of prayer. During this meeting the Roman Pontiff gave a short address, the following of which is the English text.

ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS

Your Holiness,
Dear Brother in Christ,

I gladly offer a most heartfelt welcome to you and to the distinguished delegation accompanying you. Through Your Holiness, I also extend respectful and affectionate greetings to the members of the Catholicate family and to all Armenians around the world. It is a particular grace to greet you here so close to the tomb of the Apostle Peter and to share this moment of fraternity and prayer.

With you, I praise the Lord, because in recent years relations between the Armenian Apostolic Church and the Church of Rome have been strengthened, thanks to the events which are so dear to our memory. Here I recall the visit of my sainted predecessor to Armenia in 2001, and the welcome presence of Your Holiness in the Vatican for the official visit to Pope Benedict XVI in 2008 and for the inauguration of my ministry as Bishop of Rome last year.

Here I wish to recall another occasion full of meaning in which Your Holiness participated: the commemoration of the witnesses to the faith of the twentieth century, which took place in the context of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. In truth, the number of disciples who shed their blood for Christ during the tragic events of the last century is certainly greater than that of the martyrs of the first centuries, and in this martyrology the children of the Armenian nation have a place of honour. The mystery of the Cross, precious to the memory of your people and depicted in the splendid stone crosses which adorn every corner of your land, has been lived as a direct participation in the chalice of the Passion by so many

of your people. Their witness, at once tragic and great, must not be forgotten.

Your Holiness, dear Brothers, the sufferings endured by Christians in these last decades have made a unique and invaluable contribution to the unity of Christ's disciples. As in the ancient Church, the blood of the martyrs became the seed of new Christians. So too in our time the blood of innumerable Christians has become a seed of unity. The ecumenism of suffering and of the martyrdom of blood are a powerful summons to walk the long path of reconciliation between the Churches, by courageously and decisively abandoning ourselves to the working of the Holy Spirit. We feel the duty to follow this fraternal path also out of the debt of gratitude we owe to the suffering so many of our brothers and sisters, which is salvific because it is united to the Passion of Christ.

In this regard, I wish to thank Your Holiness for the effective support given to ecumenical dialogue, and in particular to the work of the joint commission for theological dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, and for the skillful theological contributions offered by representatives of the Catholicate of All Armenians.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any way afflicted with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God” (2 Cor 1:3-4). Full of trust, may we walk the path that lies ahead of us, sustained by so great a cloud of witnesses (cf. Heb 12:1), and implore the Father for the unity which Christ himself prayed for at the Last Supper (cf. Jn 17:21).

Let us pray for each other: may the Holy Spirit enlighten us and lead us to that day, so greatly desired, in which we can share the Eucharistic table. We praise God in the words of Saint Gregory of Narek, “Accept the song of blessing from our lips and deign to grant to this Church the gifts and graces of Zion and of Bethlehem, so that we can be made worthy to participate in salvation”. May the all-holy Mother of God intercede for the Armenian people now and always.

ORE, 9 May 2014

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS KAREKIN

It is an immense spiritual joy for our delegation to once again visit Your Holiness this day, to embrace with a greeting of Christian love in order to renew with you our fraternal oath, and to discuss critical issues facing our faithful and our churches, cooperation between our churches, a unified witness in the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, and the reinforcement of spiritual values in the world.

At this moment of spiritual renewal we recall the well-known words of the psalmist, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Psalm 132.1.) Your Holiness' spiritually uplifting enthronement ceremony is still fresh in our mind, when We together with the president of the Republic of Armenia and representatives of our sister Churches had the opportunity to congratulate Your Holiness as a spiritual leader and friend of the Armenian Church and People. Since that moment many meaningful days have passed. We have happily followed Your Holiness' activities, and how with God-given courage You as the good shepherd and tireless and wise leader have demonstrated energetic devotion in the fulfillment of Your mission by expanding your activities for the sake of the splendor, welfare and good order of the Catholic Church, contributing greatly to the rebirth of Christianity throughout the world, to the strengthening of spiritual values, the defense of human rights, and the establishment of peace and solidarity.

Beloved brother in Christ, We are gratified to acknowledge that Your Holiness' unique attention to the youth and your care for the poor and the oppressed have engendered a great love towards your person everywhere. We joyfully note that this contagious excitement speaks to us, because our apostolic and ancient Church, now free of the Soviet yoke, is also focusing her efforts on fulfilling her mission in the Homeland, in Independent Artsakh, the Republic of Nagorno Karabagh, and in the Diaspora, and is giving great importance and attention to ministering to the youth, providing spiritual moral education to the young generation, assisting the impoverished, and dealing with mankind's modern challenges, in accordance with the Holy Tradition of our fathers and the message of the Holy Gospel.

We are pleased to reflect that in overcoming the challenges set before our Church we have realized many instances of cooperation among our Sister Churches, including with the Catholic Church. Indeed, the relations of the Armenian and Catholic Churches have historical roots. Our mutual relations, which were bearing fruit back in the time of the illustrious Armenian Church Patriarchs Gregory Bahlavooni and Nersess the Graceful and the Roman Popes Innocent II and Anastasius IV, are experiencing a renaissance today through the grace of God. The fruit of our relationship is reflected in the mutual visits of Church leaders and cooperative educational and humanitarian programs. For us, the theological

dialogue taking place between the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church has importance, as its goal is the rediscovery of our commonalities and the strengthening of our mutual relations. We are grateful that today many young Armenian clergy, having studied at Catholic academic institutions, offer their devoted service to the Armenian Church. The cooperation between our churches is multilayered and multifaceted.

Beloved brother in Christ, our encounter on this day, May 8th, is significant, as it precedes May 9th, the day when many nations and governments celebrate the victory over evil fascism. Decades have passed since World War II, which caused so much suffering for mankind created in God's image. Unfortunately, man has not yet been freed from the evils of war and the various political, economic and moral crimes committed against humanity. We must acknowledge with pain the current international political movements, particularly the situation reigning in the Middle East and Syria. We are confident that Syria continues to be the focus of Your Holiness' attention. That land, where Christians and Muslims have lived in peace and harmony for centuries, is today in the throes of a civil war in which many Christians, as well as the innocent and defenseless, have fallen victim. We strongly condemn what is happening in Syria, the terrorism committed in the name of religion, and the violence and discrimination carried out against Christians by radical groups, which are sometimes tolerated by the civilized world. For war waged in the name of God is condemnable, as the Apostle says, "For God is a God not of confusion but of peace" (1 Corinthians 14:33). Recently Turkey's complicity with armed extremists in the destruction and forced expulsion of Armenians from Kessab, the majority of whose population is Armenian, has only contributed to the horrors of the Syrian situation.

The Middle East and Syria are close to the Armenian people. Because the remains of thousands of Armenians, who were victims of the first crime committed against humanity in the twentieth century, the Armenian Genocide, are buried in the Syrian deserts of Der Zor. Syria was that land which gave refuge to the survivors of the Armenian Genocide. One of the great thinkers has expressed the idea that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to live through it again. Sadly, because the Armenian Genocide was neither severely nor seriously condemned, the world witnessed yet one more great crime, the Holocaust of the Jewish people during World War II. The Genocides in Sudan and Darfur are still fresh in our minds. We are well aware that Your Holiness, both during your years of leadership in Argentina and now as the Roman Pontiff, have expressed yourself and presented your position on the Armenian Genocide. Next year, the Armenian people in Armenia and in the Diaspora will commemorate the centennial of the Armenian Genocide. We invite Your

Holiness to Armenia and to the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin to participate in the service of remembrance on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Genocide.

Your visit would be a source of great spiritual comfort to our faithful people and we would have the opportunity to offer a unified prayer to God Most High for the souls of the innocent victims of the Genocide, and to beseech the Lord for peace on earth and for the good welfare of humanity.

With a feeling of immense solace we also inform you that our Holy Church has initiated the process of canonization for the martyrs of the Armenian Genocide of 1915.

We pray that the Lord God grant Your Holiness a long and luminous pontificate and a calm and undisturbed life to the clergy and faithful of our sister Church, to the whole world and all mankind.

www.armenianchurch.org

VISIT TO ROME OF HIS HOLINESS ARAM I CATHOLICOS OF CILICIA

3–6 June 2014

On Thursday morning, 5 June, Pope Francis welcomed His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of Cilicia of the Armenians, with whom he shared a moment of prayer at the 'Redemptoris Mater' chapel. The subsequent meeting took place in the Clementine Hall of the Apostolic Palace. The following is the English text of the Holy Father's address which was given in Italian, as well as the address of the Catholicos.

ADDRESS OF THE POPE

Your Holiness,
Dear Brothers in Christ,

It is a particular pleasure for me to extend to Your Holiness, and to the distinguished members of your delegation, a cordial greeting in the Lord Jesus. It is a greeting which I also offer to the bishops, the clergy and all the faithful of the Catholicosate of Cilicia. "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (*Rom 1:7*).

One month ago, I had the pleasure of receiving His Holiness Catholicos Karekin II. Today I have the joy of welcoming Your Holiness, the Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia. Together with you, I give thanks to the Lord for the continued growth of fraternal relations between us. I consider it a true gift from God that we can share this moment of encounter and common prayer.

Your Holiness's commitment to the cause of Christian unity is known to all. You have been especially active in the World Council of Churches and you continue to be most supportive of the Middle East Council of Churches, which plays such an important role in assisting the Christian communities of that region as they face numerous difficulties. Nor can I fail to mention the significant contribution which Your Holiness and the representatives of the Catholicosate of Cilicia have made to the Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches. I am convinced that on our journey towards full communion we share the same hopes and a similar sense of responsibility as we strive to be faithful to the will of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Your Holiness represents a part of the Christian world that is irrevocably marked by a history of trials and sufferings courageously accepted for the love of God. The Armenian Apostolic Church has had to become a pilgrim people; it has experienced in a singular way what it means to journey towards the Kingdom of God. The history of emigration, persecutions and the martyrdom experienced by so many of the faithful has inflicted deep wounds on the hearts of all Armenians. We must see and venerate these as wounds inflicted on the very body of Christ,

and for this very reason a cause for unfailing hope and trust in the provident mercy of the Father.

Trust and hope. How much these are needed! They are needed by our Christian brothers and sisters in the Middle East, especially those living in areas racked by conflict and violence. But we too need them, as Christians who are spared such sufferings yet so often risk losing our way in the desert of indifference and forgetfulness of God, or living in conflict without brothers and sisters, or succumbing in our interior struggle against sin. As followers of Jesus Christ, we need to learn humbly to bear one another's burdens and to help each other to be better Christians, better followers of Jesus. So let us advance together in charity, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, offering himself to God as a pleasing sacrifice (cf. *Heb 5:1-2*).

In these days before Pentecost, we prepare to relive in mystery the miracle of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the nascent Church. In faith, let us invoke the Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, that he may renew the face of the earth, be a source of healing for our wounded world, and reconcile the hearts of all men and women with God the Creator.

May he, the Paraclete, inspire our journey towards unity. May he teach us to strengthen the fraternal bonds which even now unite us in the one baptism and in the one faith. Upon all of us I invoke the protection of Mary, the All-Holy Mother of God, who was present in the Upper Room with the Apostles, that she may be for us the Mother of Unity. Amen.

ORE, 6 June 2014

ADDRESS OF THE CATHOLICOS

It gives me profound spiritual joy to greet Your Holiness in the spirit of Christian love and fellowship. This is my third formal visit to the Holy See during my pontifical ministry as Catholicos of Cilicia. I paid my first visit to His Holiness John Paul II of blessed memory, in June 1997. My second visit was to His Holiness Benedictus XVI in November 2008. These meetings provided us with the unique opportunity to deepen our spiritual fellowship and broaden our ecumenical collaboration.

A special relationship has existed between the Church of Rome and the Armenian Church in Cilicia since the 11th Century. Mutual visitations, theological discussion and close cooperation on issues of common concern have marked these relations. The fall of the Armenian Kingdom in Cilicia in 1375, the emergence of the Armenian diaspora due to the genocide and the uprooting of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia from its historical seat in Cilicia and its establishment in Antelias Lebanon gave a new shape and impetus to the long-standing relations of our two churches.

I firmly believe that in this age of ecumenism all the churches are challenged to engage in closer collaboration and frank dialogue aimed at the visible unity of the church. This is indeed the call of Christ to His Church. The unity of the church, which is the gift of God in Christ, needs to be given visible articulation and concrete manifestation in a secular world, which increasingly is challenging the credibility and relevance of the church. With this clear objective and strong commitment, the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia will continue its active participation in the theological dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches.

Unity should not be separated from mission; they are intimately inter-connected. The church, being essentially a missionary reality, should go beyond its institutional walls and liturgical confines to the people in the pews. From its apostolic inception, the Armenian Church has been the church of the people. Hence, I warmly welcome the continuous efforts of Your Holiness to take the Gospel values to the people. The church, through its diakonal action and evangelistic witness, is called to identify itself with the poor, the marginalized, the oppressed and the victims of injustice. Under no circumstances should the church compromise this sacred vocation entrusted by Christ.

In fact, witnessing to the Gospel of Christ, in word and in deed, has never been an easy missionary task for the church. Hardship and persecution have marked the life of the church. Its history has been one of continuous martyrria in life and in death. Today the churches in the Middle East are going through the same experience. However, in spite of enormous challenges, huge difficulties and deep concerns facing our faithful daily, the churches, empowered by the Holy Spirit and in faithfulness to their missionary

calling, are determined to remain strongly attached to the Middle East, the birthplace of Christianity. Indeed, the recent visit of Your Holiness to the Holy Lands and the continuous support and solidarity of the Vatican will undoubtedly give renewed hope and spiritual strength to the Christian presence and witness in our region.

Your Holiness, as you know, most Armenians live in diaspora outside of their homeland, Armenia. The existence of this world-wide diaspora was a result of the genocide and deportation planned and executed by the Ottoman Turkish empire in 1915. As a consequence of this first genocide of the 20th Century, not only did we lose one-and-a-half million Armenians; we also lost our churches, schools, community centers, spiritual and cultural treasures and properties belonging to our people. The recognition of the genocide and reparation are claimed by every Armenian. The Armenian Church, as the promoter and defender of human rights, has always identified itself with the legitimate aspirations of its people. Next year is the centennial of the Armenian Genocide. One of your predecessors, Pope Benedict XV, wrote a letter to Ottoman Sultan Mehmed V in September 1915, condemning the Armenian Genocide and urging him to put an end to the suffering of the Armenians. Indeed, the solidarity of Your Holiness with the Armenian people on the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide will have a pivotal importance for our people at this important juncture of their modern history.

This encounter here today in the presence of our archbishops and laity, representing our communities in the Middle East, Europe and North and South America, will certainly enhance our ecumenical fellowship and open new spheres of closer ecumenical collaboration on the way towards visible unity and common witness.

I pray to the Almighty God to strengthen Your Holiness physically and spiritually to carry on your pontifical ministry in a world torn apart by so many conflicts and crises.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of us.

VISIT TO ROME OF HIS GRACE JUSTIN WELBY ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

15–16 June 2014

On Monday morning 16 June 2014, Pope Francis met with His Grace Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of the Anglican Communion, with whom he also shared a prayer moment in the Chapel of Urban VIII. An exchange of gifts took place after their respective addresses. The Pope presented Archbishop Welby with the book “Tu es Petrus” by Giancarlo Alteri, a limited edition volume published by the Vatican Apostolic Library to mark the 500th anniversary of the construction of the Basilica of Saint Peter. Archbishop Welby presented the Pope with a cutting of a white ‘Ficus carica Marseilles’ grown in the garden of Lambeth Palace, as well as a volume reproducing some precious illuminated manuscripts conserved in the library of the Palace, together with a facsimile copy of an ancient bull of Cardinal Reginald Pole’s register as Papal Legate in England. Below are their addresses.

ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS

16 June 2014

Your Grace,
Cardinal Nichols,
Cardinal Koch,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!” (Ps 133:1). Once again we meet, Your Grace, as co-workers in the Lord’s vineyard and fellow pilgrims on the path to his Kingdom. I welcome you and the distinguished members of your delegation, and I pray that today’s meeting will serve to strengthen further our bonds of friendship and our commitment to the great cause of reconciliation and communion between Christian believers.

The Lord’s question – “What were you arguing about on the way?” (Mk 9:33) – might also apply to us. When Jesus put this question to his disciples they were silent; they were ashamed, for they had been arguing about who was the greatest among them. We too feel ashamed when we ponder the distance between the Lord’s call and our meagre response. Beneath his merciful gaze, we cannot claim that our division is anything less than a scandal and an obstacle to our proclaiming the Gospel of salvation to the world. Our vision is often blurred by the cumulative burden of our divisions and our will is not always free of that human ambition which can accompany even our desire to preach the Gospel as the Lord commanded (cf. Mt 28:19).

The goal of full unity may seem distant indeed, yet it remains the aim which should direct our every step along the way. I find a source of encouragement in the plea of the Second Vatican Council’s Decree on Ecumenism that we should advance in our relationship and cooperation by placing no obstacle to the ways of divine providence and by not prejudicing future promptings of the Holy Spirit (cf. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 24). Our progress towards full communion will not be the fruit of human actions alone, but a free gift of God. The Holy Spirit gives us the strength not to grow

disheartened and he invites us to trust fully in the power of his works.

As disciples who strive to follow the Lord, we realize that the faith has come to us through many witnesses. We are indebted to great saints, teachers and communities; they have handed down the faith over the ages and they bear witness to our common roots. Yesterday, on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity, Your Grace celebrated Vespers in the Church of San Gregorio al Celio, from which Pope Gregory the Great sent forth Augustine and his monastic companions to evangelize the peoples of England, thus inaugurating a history of faith and holiness which in turn enriched many other European peoples. This glorious history has profoundly shaped institutions and ecclesial traditions which we share and which serve as a solid basis for our fraternal relations.

On this basis, then, let us look with confidence to the future. The *Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission* and the *International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission* represent especially significant forums for examining, in a constructive spirit, older and newer challenges to our ecumenical engagement.

At our first meeting, Your Grace and I discussed our shared concerns and our pain before a number of grave evils afflicting our human family. In particular, we shared our horror in the face of the scourge of human trafficking and forms of modern-day slavery. I thank you for the leadership you have shown in opposing these intolerable crimes against human dignity.

In attempting to respond to this urgent need, notable collaborative efforts have been initiated on the ecumenical level and in cooperation with civil authorities and international organizations. Many charitable initiatives have been undertaken by our communities, and they are operating with generosity and courage in various parts of the world. I think in particular of the action network against the trafficking in women set up by a number of women’s religious institutes. Let us persevere in our commitment to combat new forms of enslavement, in the hope that we

can help provide relief to victims and oppose this deplorable trade. I thank God that, as disciples sent to heal a wounded world, we stand together, with perseverance and determination, in opposing this grave evil.

(Pope Francis)
Don't forget the three "p":

(Welby)
Three "p"?...

(Pope Francis)
Prayer, peace and poverty. We must walk together.

(Welby)
We must walk together.

Your Grace, I thank you once more for your visit. I ask the Lord to shower his blessings on your ministry and to sustain you and your loved ones in joy and peace. Amen.

ORE, 20 June 2014

ADDRESS OF HIS GRACE JUSTIN WELBY

Your Holiness, Dear Friends,

My heart is full of gratitude to God, that I have the privilege and pleasure of addressing you once again in this city of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul. I marvel at the way God guides frail human vessels to be bearers of the message of salvation, leaving us a legacy across hundreds of years, to which we in our time are called to be faithful. We also know that from the start, as for so many at this time, this has been a witness unto death. I was moved to be in San Bartolomeo where amongst many recent martyrs, the seven members of the Anglican religious order the Melanesian brotherhood are commemorated.

Your Holiness much has happened in the year since I first received your gracious hospitality here. I am grateful for the progress that has been made through the generous support of many, to draw to the attention of the world to the evils of Modern Slavery and Human trafficking. The Global Freedom Network can achieve much practically to dismantle what you have so often rightly said is a grave crime against humanity. It is a crime that we all need to overcome as a matter of urgency, as a matter of human dignity, freedom and wholeness of life. May God give us the resolve and cooperation we need together.

With so many around the world I am profoundly grateful for your remarkable witness of care for the poor and suffering of the world, for your passion for reconciliation, as witnessed so recently in your visit to the Holy Land.

Calling the faithful to pray for peace and reconciliation and doing that publicly is a witness to the power of prayer, one that I have sought to imitate. Such prayers are urgent and vital in so many countries. I especially hope and pray that our collaboration may lead to effective challenge to the unspeakable disaster of wars and civil conflict. In recent months I have travelled with my wife to many of them, into the heart of the areas of war, and the memory of the dead lying unburied and the suffering of the survivors is imprinted on our hearts. What more could be done by our churches together to challenge the resort to war and offer the dream of peace?

Your Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* was inspirational for all Christians. The task of making disciples is of compelling urgency so that the light of Christ may shine into every corner of the world. I have personal reasons for gratitude for the work of the Alpha Course of evangelism, so it is significant for me that it has found a place in the Catholic Church, especially in Latin America. We continue to develop many other means of evangelism, most recently in the Pilgrim Course, pray that we may continue to learn from one another about the joyful task of leading people to know Jesus Christ.

As we remember the precious spiritual heritage that is common to us both, I pray for the continuing work of the members of the official groups who conduct our ecumenical conversations. Remembering always the desire of Our Lord that "all may be one", we remain deeply committed to this work. I realise that there are matters of deep significance that separate us. Yet looking back, we see that the Grace of God has led so much to happen. In November this year it will be 50 years since the decree on ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, was promulgated by your blessed Pope Paul VI, and it is right that I should pay tribute to the work of the Holy See through the PCPCU through these fifty years towards the goal of full visible unity. In 2016 we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of Archbishop Ramsey's historic visit, commemorated in the ring given him by Pope Paul VI.

Your Holiness when we first met, I expressed the hope that we might find ways to strengthen what we share, and that we might seek opportunities as pastors of the Christian family to pray, act and speak together. I am glad that there have been opportunities as well for me and His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols to do just that. I have found much encouragement in this. A further sign of this joyful intention is the establishment of the Chemin Neuf Community at Lambeth Palace. This religious Order with an ecumenical charism founded by Fr Laurent Fabre, is a daily sign of hope to us in our spiritual life of what we can share spiritually. Last Wednesday I saw again Jean Vanier, and we prayed together. What a gift he is to the whole of the poor of the earth.

Please be assured, Your Holiness, of the continuing respect and affection of the Anglican Communion, and

the assurance of our prayers as we seek with you to serve the call of Christ to maturity in faith, and to do so full of joy in service.

I'd like to end with a prayer for the Global Freedom Network in its struggle to persevere against modern slavery and human trafficking: that the Church has the

freedom and courage to witness to and to serve the cause for peace, together, globally. Amen.

ORE, 20 June 2014

VISIT TO ROME OF A DELEGATION FROM THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE FOR THE SOLEMNITY OF STS PETER AND PAUL

27–30 June 2014

If we can learn to look at one another in God our cooperation will be “all the more easy in the many areas of daily life which already happily unite us” and we will be able to overcome the difficulties that are still present on our path to unity. Pope Francis said this on Saturday morning, 28 June, when he received the delegation, led by His Eminence Metropolitan John of Pergamon, sent every year by the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I for the Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, within the context of the traditional exchange of visits between the Church of Rome and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople for their patronal feasts – respectively Saints Peter and Paul on 29 June and St Andrew on 30 November.

We publish below the addresses of Pope Francis and Metropolitan John, followed by the text of the letter sent to the Pope by the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS TO THE DELEGATION OF THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE

Saturday, 28 June 2014

The Solemnity of the Holy Patrons of the Church of Rome, the Apostles Peter and Paul, once again gives me the joy of greeting a delegation from the sister Church of Constantinople. In extending to you a warm welcome, I express my gratitude to the Ecumenical Patriarch, His Holiness Bartholomew I, and to the Holy Synod for having sent you to share with us in the joy of this feast.

I have vivid and moving memories of my recent meetings with my beloved brother Bartholomew. During our common pilgrimage to the Land of Jesus, we were able to relive the gift of that embrace between our venerable predecessors, Athenagoras I and Paul VI, which took place fifty years ago in the holy city of Jerusalem. That prophetic gesture gave decisive impulse to a journey which, thank God, has never ceased. I consider it a special gift from the Lord that we were able to venerate the holy places together and to pray at each other's side at the place of Christ's burial, where we can actually touch the foundation of our hope. The joy of that meeting was then renewed when, in a certain sense, we concluded our pilgrimage here at the tomb of the Apostle Peter as we joined in fervent prayer, together with the Presidents of Israel and Palestine, for the gift of peace in the Holy Land. The Lord granted us these occasions of fraternal encounter, in which we were able to express the love uniting us in Christ, and to renew our mutual desire to walk together along the path to full unity.

We know very well that this unity is a gift of God, a gift that even now the Most High grants us the grace to attain whenever, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we choose to look at one another with the eyes of faith and to see ourselves as we truly are in God's plan, according to the designs of his eternal will, and not what we have become as a result of the historical

consequences of our sins. If all of us can learn, prompted by the Spirit, to look at one another in God, our path will be even straighter and our cooperation all the more easy in the many areas of daily life which already happily unite us.

This way of “looking at one another in God” is nourished by faith, hope and love; it gives rise to an authentic theological reflection which is truly *scientia Dei*, a participation in that vision which God has of himself and of us. It is a reflection which can only bring us closer to one another on the path of unity, despite our differing starting points. I hope and I pray, then, that the work of the Joint International Commission can be a sign of this profound understanding, this theology “on its knees”. In this way, the Commission's reflections on the concepts of primacy and synodality, communion in the universal Church and the ministry of the Bishop of Rome will not be an academic exercise or a mere debate about irreconcilable positions. All of us need, with courage and confidence, to be open to the working of the Holy Spirit. We need to let ourselves be caught up in Christ's loving gaze upon the Church, his Bride, in our journey of spiritual ecumenism. It is a journey upheld by the martyrdom of so many of our brothers and sisters who, by their witness to Jesus Christ the Lord, have brought about an ecumenism of blood.

Dear members of the Delegation, with sentiments of sincere respect, friendship and love in Christ, I renew my heartfelt gratitude for your presence among us. I ask you to convey my greeting to my venerable brother Bartholomew and to continue to pray for me and for the ministry with which I have been entrusted. Through the intercession of Mary, the Most Holy Mother of God, and of Saints Peter and Paul, the princes of the Apostles, and Saint Andrew the first-called, may Almighty God bless us and fill us with every grace. Amen.

ORE, 4 July 2014

LETTER FROM HIS ALL-HOLINESS
ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW
TO HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

To His Holiness and Beatitude Pope Francis of Senior Rome: rejoice in the Lord

Once more, the joyous day is dawning for the venerable feast and sacred remembrance of the chief Apostles Peter and Paul, who were martyred for Christ's sake in the see of Your Church. Wherefore, we hasten to concelebrate and commemorate with You again this year through our formal delegation in accordance with the long-established blessed custom.

We retain in our heart, like a precious treasure, the recollection of our recent personal encounters with Your Holiness both in Jerusalem and Rome, which further renewed and sealed our fraternal bonds, while also affirming our desire to continue on the path toward our full union and communion desired by the Lord. Thus, in the Holy City during this past May we were deemed worthy together to venerate the sacred place where the leader of our faith, our Lord Jesus Christ, taught, suffered, was buried and arose from the dead, even as we honored the fiftieth anniversary of the historical meeting there of our late predecessors Pope Paul VI and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, whose bold initiatives opened up the period of rapprochement and reconciliation for our Churches.

Moreover, our meeting in Rome, through the gracious initiative and invitation of Your Holiness at the beginning of this month, for the purpose of together contributing - with the Presidents of Israel and Palestine - to the prevalence of peace in a region of the Middle East torn apart by conflict, was profoundly and personally moving, while at the same time conveying a message of our Lord's peace and love to a contemporary world that so thirsts for this.

For all these things, we again express our sincere gratitude to Your Holiness together with our wholehearted prayer that the Lord may strengthen You with His grace and power in order that You may for many years continue Your invaluable leadership and service in our modern world, inspiring everyone with the virtues of Your personality and love toward God and humanity.

May the celebrated chief Apostles Peter and Paul intercede to God for His Church and the whole world guiding and encouraging us along the way of truth and love "until we all attain to the unity of the faith ... speaking the truth in love in order that we might grow in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ." (Eph. 4:13-15)

These congratulatory and festive feelings will be conveyed to Your Holiness by our delegation - led by His Eminence Metropolitan John of Pergamon, accompanied by His Excellency Archbishop Job of Telmessos and the Very Reverend Archdeacon John

Chryssavgis - representing the Ecumenical Patriarchate and ourselves during the celebrations of the Thronal Feast of Your Church.

In communicating these sentiments with Your Holiness in a spirit of deep love, we embrace You fraternally in the Lord, and remain with love and special esteem in Him.

At the Ecumenical Patriarchate; on June 24th, 2014

Your Holiness' beloved brother in Christ

+ Bartholomew of Constantinople

ORE, 4 July 2014

ADDRESS OF HIS EMINENCE
METROPOLITAN JOHN OF PERGAMON

28 June 2014

Your Holiness,

It is a great honour and a special privilege for us to stand before You at this moment in order to bring to You and the venerable Church of Rome, the Church which "presides in love", according to St. Ignatius of Antioch, the fraternal love and good wishes of the Church of Constantinople and His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew on the occasion of the feast of the Patron Saints of Your Church and our common Saints, the great Apostles Peter and Paul.

We have come again this year, following the blessed custom established by our two Churches after the restoration of their fraternal relation in faithfulness to the spirit of reconciliation demanded from us by our common Lord. This custom is much more than a mere formality; it expresses the commitment of our Churches to continue following the difficult but blessed path towards the restoration of our full communion at the Eucharistic Table, the communion that we enjoyed during the first millennium of the Church's history.

This time, we have come with our hearts filled with joy and gratitude to our Lord, as we still live with the memory of the great event of the recent encounter of Your Holiness with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in the Holy City of Jerusalem to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the historic meeting which took place there between the two great and courageous leaders of our Churches, Pope Paul VI and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras, both of blessed memory, a meeting that marked the end of a long period of distance and estrangement between our two Churches and the beginning of the present state of our fraternal relations.

The fraternal encounter of Your Holiness with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at the place where our Lord lived, taught, suffered the Cross and rose from the dead; the prayers offered before the sacred Tomb of our Lord; and the common declaration signed by Your Holiness and our Patriarch – all this sent a strong message of love and peace to the world at a time when so much conflict and suffering prevail, particularly in the region of the Holy Land and the Middle East.

Equally, the invitation issued by Your Holiness to the Presidents of Israel and Palestine to come to Rome at the beginning of this month in order to pray with You for peace in their region – an event in which our Patriarch also participated at the gracious invitation of Your Holiness – has left a deep impression in the hearts of all peace-loving people throughout the world.

We give glory to God for these historic events, and we express gratitude to Your Holiness for all that you have done to bring them about.

Your Holiness,

We all know that our message of peace and reconciliation to the world can be credible only if it is first applied to ourselves, i.e., to the Church. It is for this reason that we continue with full commitment our efforts to promote the theological dialogue between our two Churches, which continues in a spirit of love, mutual trust and respect. The Mixed International Commission of the dialogue is scheduled to meet in plenary next September to continue the discussion of the subject of primacy in the Church. It is a difficult subject but, with the grace of God, we hope to make progress. The way that Your Holiness understands and applies ecclesial primacy offers inspiration and hope in our efforts to reach agreement on this thorny issue.

Your Holiness,

As we celebrate the feast of the two Apostles of our Lord, the words of St. Paul to the Philippians come to mind:

“Complete my joy by being of the same mind and having the same love, with one mind and a common care for unity. Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Phil 2, 2-4).

Your Holiness,

Today, more so than ever before, there is an urgent need to “be of the same mind and have the same love, with one mind and a common care for unity”. In the spirit of this apostolic admonition, and in earnest hopefulness at the prospect of Your visit to Constantinople next November for the Thronal Feast of our Church, we have the honour of presenting to You the personal letter of His All-Holiness, extending once again the fraternal love and good wishes of the

Church of Constantinople and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew on the solemn occasion of Your Patronal Feast.

May our Lord, through the intercessions of the holy Apostles whose memory we keep today, protect His Church together with all His creation, leading us to the fulfilment of His will “that we all may be one” (Jn 17, 21) for the glory of His most holy name. Amen.

EXCERPT FROM THE HOMILY OF POPE FRANCIS ON THE SOLEMNITY OF SAINTS PETER AND PAUL

29 June 2014

“Our true refuge is trust in God”. Pope Francis repeated this at Mass on Sunday, 29 June, the Solemnity of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, in the Vatican Basilica. In his homily, the Holy Father asked various questions of the metropolitan archbishops on whom he conferred the pallium, as is traditional on this feast day. The following is an excerpt of the Holy Father’s homily.

On this Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, the principal patrons of Rome, we welcome with joy and gratitude the Delegation sent by the Ecumenical Patriarch, our venerable and beloved brother Bartholomew, and led by Metropolitan Ioannis. Let us ask the Lord that this visit too may strengthen our fraternal bonds as we journey toward that full communion between the two sister Churches which we so greatly desire.[...]

ORE 4 July 2014

ECUMENICAL NEWS

DELEGATION OF THE APOSTOLIKÍ DIAKONÍA IN ROME

From 21 to 26 March 2014 a delegation of the Apostolikí Diakonía, an ecumenical organization promoting pastoral work, and cultural editorial activities for the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in Greece, visited Rome. On Monday, 24 March, Pope Francis met with members of the delegation. The meeting was an opportunity to renew the commitment to ecumenism and collaboration with the Holy See. The delegation was led by the director general Bishop Agathangelos.

Cultural collaboration between the Holy See and the Apostolikí Diakonía was discussed, beginning with the improvement of relations which resulted after John Paul II's visit to Athens in 2001. Among the most important ecumenical initiatives is the summer programme of the modern Greek language and Orthodox culture which is held in Athens and where Catholic students from the Pontifical universities come to study on scholarship. The programme has been in place for ten years and hundreds of students have been able to take advantage of these scholarships offered by the Apostolikí Diakonía. For two years the Pontifical Oriental Institute has also held a professorship for the modern Greek language. Lessons are offered by a native Greek to all students who desire to learn the language and understand more deeply the Greek Orthodox Church and her rich theological heritage. The organization is also publishing a book on Ancient Greek manuscripts, in collaboration with the Vatican Apostolic Library.

During their stay in Rome the group visited the papal Basilicas of St Peter and St Paul Outside-the-Walls – to venerate the tombs of both Apostles – and met the President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, the Archivist and Librarian of Holy Roman Church, and those responsible for the Vatican Publishing House.

ORE, 28 March 2014

LUTHERAN, MENNONITE, CATHOLIC TRILATERAL DIALOGUE COMMISSION ON BAPTISM

Strasbourg (France), 26-31 January 2014

Representatives of the Lutheran World Federation, the Mennonite World Conference and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity met in Strasbourg, France, from 26 to 31 January 2014 for the second meeting of the Trilateral Dialogue Commission.

The general topic of the dialogue “Baptism and Incorporation into the Body of Christ, the Church” was developed in the meeting through papers on the theme “Baptism: God's Grace in Christ and Human Sin”. Archbishop Luis Augusto Castro Quiroga and Rev. Gregory Fairbanks (Catholic), Professors Alfred Neufeld and Fernando Enns (Mennonite) and Professor Friederike Nüssel (Lutheran) presented papers on this topic. The commission also continued to study the baptismal rites of each participating Christian tradition, with special attention in this meeting to the Lutheran tradition, particularly regarding the contextualization of baptismal rites in the African region. Papers on these themes were presented by Professor Sarah Hinlicky-Wilson and Rev. Dr Kenneth Mtata. The commission began its working days with prayers and joint reflections on biblical texts relating to baptism.

The meeting, hosted by the Lutheran World Federation, took place at the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg, where the staff welcomed the commission with warm hospitality. The Institute also hosted a reception which offered a possibility for the commission members to meet with representatives of the local Catholic, Lutheran and Mennonite communities in Strasbourg. Further theological and spiritual impulses were offered to the members of the trilateral commission during an excursion to the neighbouring city of Colmar, where Professor Theodor Dieter gave a presentation on the Isenheim Altarpiece.

Participants of the meeting on the Mennonite side were Professor Dr Alfred Neufeld (co-chair, Paraguay), Prof. Dr Fernando Enns (Germany), Prof. Dr John Rempel (Canada), Rev. Rebecca Osiro (Kenya), and Rev. Dr Larry Miller (co-secretary, France). The Catholic Church was represented by Archbishop Luis Augusto Castro Quiroga (co-chair, Colombia), Rev. Dr William Henn (USA/Italy), Rev. Dr Luis Melo (Canada), Sister Dr Marie-Hélène Robert, N.D.A. (France), and Rev. Dr Gregory Fairbanks (co-secretary, USA/Vatican). The Lutheran participants were Prof. Dr Friederike Nüssel (co-chair, Germany), Prof. Dr Theodor Dieter (Germany), Professor Peter Li (Hong Kong), Rev. Dr Kaisamari Hintikka (co-secretary, Finland/Switzerland), and Prof. Sarah Hinlicky-Wilson (USA/France) as a visiting specialist. Reverend Dr Kenneth Mtata (Zimbabwe/Switzerland) attended the meeting part-time as a proxy for Bishop emer. Musa Biyela (South Africa) who was unable to attend the meeting.

The third meeting of the trilateral commission will take place in February 2015 in the Netherlands, hosted by the Mennonite World Conference, and will discuss the theme “Baptism: Communicating Grace and Faith”. The annual meetings of the commission are envisaged until 2017 after which the commission is expected to

submit its final report to the Lutheran World Federation, the Mennonite World Conference and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

INTERNATIONAL REFORMED-CATHOLIC DIALOGUE

Coatbridge (Scotland), 6-12 April 2014

The fourth meeting of the fourth phase of international dialogue between the World Communion of Reformed Churches and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity took place 6-12 April 2014 at the Conforti Institute in Coatbridge, Scotland. The PCPCU and the WCRC are especially grateful to the Church of Scotland for hosting the meeting. The two teams were also privileged to receive members of the Joint Commission on Doctrine of the Church of Scotland and the Catholic Church in Scotland, which has promoted ecumenical conversation since 1977. The members of the Joint Commission shared with them results from more recent rounds of talks, including a study document on the ecclesiological significance of the sacrament of baptism and a publication containing papers given at two theological conferences: the first in Glasgow (2009) to commemorate the quincentenary of John Calvin's birth and the second in Edinburgh (2010) to mark the 450th anniversary of the Scottish Reformation.

The overall theme of this phase, which is scheduled to be completed by 2017, is *Justification and Sacramentality: The Christian Community as an Agent for Justice*. Bishop Kevin Rhoades, Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend in Indiana, USA, and Rev. Dr Martha Moore-Keish, of the Columbia Theological Seminary, in Decatur, Georgia, USA, co-chair this dialogue on behalf of the Catholic Church and the World Communion of Reformed Churches respectively. The secretaries for the co-chairs are Rev. Dr Douwe Visser, Executive Secretary for Theology, Mission and Communion for the WCRC and Rev. Dr Gregory J. Fairbanks of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

The Reformed participants for this meeting included Rev. Dr Reinerio Arce-Valentin (Cuba); Rev. Dr Marina Ngursangzeli Behera (India); Dr Christopher Dorn (USA); Rev. Dr Benebo Fubara-Manuel (Nigeria); Rev. Dr George Hunsinger (USA); Dr George Sabra (Lebanon); and Rev. Dr Lindsay Schlüter (Scotland).

The Catholic participants were Dr Peter Casarella (USA), Dr Peter De Mey (Belgium), Rev. Dr William Henn, OFM cap. (USA/Italy), Dr Annemarie Mayer (Germany) and Rev. Dr Jorge Scampini, O.P. (Argentina).

The two teams discussed several papers on topics related to the theme of justice. Rev. Dr Marina Behara presented a paper titled "Sanctification: The middle term between justification and justice." Rev. Dr Jorge Scampini presented a paper on "The relationship between the Eucharist and justice from a Catholic

perspective." Dr George Hunsinger addressed the topic "The Eucharist and social ethics." Dr Peter De Mey offered a paper on "Justification and the universal call to holiness."

There have been three previous phases of dialogue between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU). These phases resulted in the reports: "The Presence of Christ in Church and World" (1970-1977); "Towards a Common Understanding of the Church" (1984-1989); and "Church as Community of Common Witness to the Kingdom of God" (1998-2005). The World Communion of Reformed Churches was born through the merger of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Reformed Ecumenical Council in June 2010.

In spring 2015 the two teams will convene to receive and revise drafts of chapters to be included in the final report. A venue has still to be determined.

CATHOLICS AND DISCIPLES OF CHRIST COMMISSION FOR DIALOGUE

Rome, 14-20 June 2014

The Second Session of the Fifth Phase of the Disciples of Christ-Catholic International Commission for Dialogue took place in Rome from 14-20 June 2014. The general theme for the present phase of Dialogue is "Christians Formed and Transformed by the Eucharist". After an introductory meeting (Nashville, January 2014), the Commission made a first approach to questions related to the theme "Formed by the Eucharist: The Structure of Liturgies Among Catholics and Disciples". The goal of the dialogue, which started in 1979, is the full visible unity between the two communions.

Genuine exchange and frank dialogue concerning the positions and practices of the two traditions have been guiding principles of the conversations, which include daily prayer services that are led alternatively by Catholics and Disciples of Christ.

The Disciples Co-Chair of the Dialogue is Rev. Dr Newell Williams, Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University [TCU], Fort Worth, TX, USA. The Catholic Co-Chair of the Dialogue is the Most Reverend David L. Ricken, Bishop of Green Bay, WI, USA.

The second session began with two biblical studies: "The Meaning of the Cross in the Gospel of John" prepared by Dr Mary Coloe, PBVM, (Catholic) and "Psalm 22 and the Formation of the Eucharistic Community" presented by Rev. Dr Merryl Blair (Disciples). Papers were prepared by Rev. Michael G. Witzcak, S.L.D. "The Roman Catholic Celebration of the Eucharist" and Rev. Dr David M. Thompson "Formed by the Eucharist: the Weekly Experience of Disciples of Christ". According to the agreed proposal,

the Commission will devote its next session (2015) to “The Significance of Eucharistic Catechesis.”

The members of the Dialogue were pleased to meet in Rome. The participants attended Sunday Mass at the North American College with the Eucharist presided over by Bishop David Ricken. Later they attended the Solemn Vespers presided over by the Right Reverend Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, in San Gregorio al Celio Church. At the General Audience of Pope Francis, on Wednesday morning, the Commission was acknowledged.

At the end of the meeting, Rev. Williams expressed “This week I have been reminded anew that Disciples and Catholics are spiritually formed and nurtured by the Eucharist, which Disciples also refer to as the Lord’s Supper, in ways both similar and distinctive.”

According to Bishop Ricken, “It is a very good experience to be involved in dialogue with brothers and sisters of the Disciples of Christ. Listening to one another and explaining our teaching and practice of one faith in Jesus Christ has given me a fresh understanding of not only the Disciples but also of my own faith and practice and faith experience. At a time when our Church is asking the Holy Spirit for a renewal in the proclamation of the Gospel, among others and for others, dialoguing about discipleship and unity could not be more timely and necessary. May

God continue to move forward this exchange in a way that gives Him glory and makes of the Church a vessel of salvation”.

The members from the Disciples of Christ are: Rev. Dr Newell Williams, Brite Divinity School, TCU, Fort Worth, USA, Co-Chair; Rev. Dr Robert Welsh, Council on Christian Unity, Indianapolis, USA, Co-Secretary; Rev. Dr Thomas Best, Belmont, USA; Rev. Dr Merryl Blair, Stirling Theological College, Melbourne, Australia; Rev. Dr James O. Duke, Brite Divinity School, Fort Worth, USA; Rev. Angel Luis Rivera, Puerto Rico Council of Churches, Puerto Rico; and Rev. Dr David M. Thompson, Cambridge, UK.

The members of the Catholic team are: Most Reverend David L. Ricken, Bishop of Green Bay, WI, USA, Co-Chair; Rev. Msgr. Juan Usma Gómez, Bureau Chief of Western Section, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Vatican City/Colombia, Co-Secretary; Msgr. Michael Clay, D. Min., School of Theology and Religious Studies, The Catholic University of America, USA; Dr Mary Coloe, PBVM, University of Divinity, Australia; Dr Julien Hammond, Ecumenical Officer, Archdiocese of Edmonton, Canada; Rev. Joseph T. Shenosky, S.T.D., Vice-Rector, Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary, Philadelphia, USA; and Rev. Michael G. Witzcak, S.L.D., The Catholic University of America, USA.

IN MEMORIAM

RIGHT REVEREND MICHAEL PUTNEY

Bishop of Townsville (20 June 1946 – 28 March 2014)

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of our esteemed colleague the Rt Rev Michael Putney. Bishop Michael has been an inspiring and dedicated member of this Council for many years and has worked untiringly for the cause of Christian unity at many levels. We have been blessed to have his wise counsel and constant encouragement in fulfilling the ecumenical commitment entrusted to our Church by the Second Vatican Council, a commitment which, in a real sense, was the guiding passion of Bishop Michael’s life and ministry.

As Co-Chairman of the Methodist-Roman Catholic International Commission for many years, Bishop Michael brought to bear his theological expertise, his sensitivity and his great human warmth. The friendships formed in that dialogue were deep and the messages from around the world demonstrate the great affection in which Bishop Michael was held by our ecumenical partners. The current Methodist Co-Chairman, Rev David Chapman, wrote of Bishop Michael, that he was “not only a much-loved co-chair of the dialogue but also a father in God to all of us serving on the commission.”

Diagnosed with stomach cancer in 2012, Bishop Michael continued to serve in his diocese, and described 2013 as “one of the most amazing years of my life” and “my miracle”. His unflagging zeal and infectious optimism touched many with whom he shared this journey, both within his diocese and far beyond.

The day before he was admitted into hospital he attended the book launch of his autobiography, *My Ecumenical Journey*. We have lost a fellow traveller who sustained us and encouraged us with his own extraordinary gifts. However, his prayers will be with us as we continue to journey towards the unity for which Christ prayed.

COMMISSION FOR RELIGIOUS RELATIONS WITH THE JEWS

ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS TO MEMBERS OF
THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

*Consistory Hall
Thursday, 13 February 2014*

Dear friends,

I welcome you here today. Your organization, which on various occasions has met with my venerable Predecessors, maintains good relations with the Holy See and with many representatives of the Catholic world. I am very grateful to you for the distinguished contribution you have made to dialogue and fraternity between Jews and Catholics, and I encourage you to continue on this path.

Next year we will commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of the Second Vatican Council *Nostra Aetate*, which today constitutes for the Church the sure point of reference for relations with our “elder brothers”. From this document, our reflection on the spiritual patrimony which unites us and which is the foundation of our dialogue has developed with renewed vigour. This foundation is theological, and not simply an expression of our desire for reciprocal respect and esteem. Therefore, it is important that our dialogue be always profoundly marked by the awareness of our relationship with God.

In addition to dialogue, it is also important to find ways in which Jews and Christians can cooperate in constructing a more just and fraternal world. In this regard, I call to mind in a particular way our common efforts to serve the poor, the marginalized and those who suffer. Our commitment to this service is anchored in the protection of the poor, widows, orphans, and foreigners as shown in Sacred Scripture (cf. *Ex* 20:20-22). It is a God given duty, one which reflects his holy will and his justice; it is a true religious obligation.

Finally, in order that our efforts may not be fruitless, it is important that we dedicate ourselves to transmitting to new generations the heritage of our mutual knowledge, esteem and friendship which has, thanks to the commitment of associations like yours, grown over these years. It is my hope therefore that the study of relations with Judaism may continue to flourish in seminaries and in centres of formation for lay Catholics, as I am similarly hopeful that a desire for an understanding of Christianity may grow among young Rabbis and the Jewish community.

Dear friends, in a few months I will have the joy of visiting Jerusalem, where – as the Psalm says – we are all born (cf. *Ps* 87:5) and where all peoples will one day

meet (cf. *Is* 25:6-10). Accompany me with your prayers, so that this pilgrimage may bring forth the fruits of communion, hope and peace. Shalom!

ORE, 14 February 2014

COURTESY VISIT TO THE TWO CHIEF RABBIS
OF ISRAEL

*Heichal Shlomo Center (Jerusalem)
Monday, 26 May 2014*

After visiting the Yad Vashem Memorial on Monday, 26 May, the Holy Father was driven to the Hechal Shlomo Centre to meet with the two Chief Rabbis of Israel: Askenazi Rabbi Yona Metzger, and Sephardi Rabbi Shlomo Amar. After a short informal discussion, the two Rabbis gave an address in honour of the Roman Pontiff. Pope Francis then gave an address in Italian, of which the following is the English text.

Distinguished Chief Rabbis of Israel,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am particularly pleased to be here with you today. I am grateful for your warm reception and your kind words of welcome.

As you know, from the time I was Archbishop of Buenos Aires, I have counted many Jews among my friends. Today two friends who are rabbis are here with us. Together we organized rewarding occasions of encounter and dialogue; with them I also experienced significant moments of sharing on a spiritual level. In the first months of my pontificate, I was able to receive various organizations and representatives from the Jewish community worldwide. As was the case with my predecessors, there have been many requests for such meetings. Together with the numerous initiatives taking place on national and local levels, these testify to our mutual desire to know one another better, to listen to each other and to build bonds of true fraternity.

This journey of friendship represents one of the fruits of the Second Vatican Council, and particularly of the Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, which proved so influential and whose fiftieth anniversary we will celebrate next year. I am convinced that the progress which has been made in recent decades in the relationship between Jews and Catholics has been a genuine gift of God, one of those great works for which we are called to bless his holy name: “Give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his love endures

forever; who alone has wrought marvellous works, for his love endures forever” (Ps 135/136:3-4).

A gift of God, yes, but one which would not have come about without the efforts of so many courageous and generous people, Jews and Christians alike. Here I would like to mention in particular the growing importance of the dialogue between the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and the Holy See’s Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews. Inspired by the visit of Pope John Paul II to the Holy Land, this dialogue was inaugurated in 2002 and is already in its twelfth year. I would like to think that, in terms of the Jewish tradition of the *Bar Mitzvah*, it is just coming of age. I am confident that it will continue and have a bright future in years to come.

We need to do more than simply establish reciprocal and respectful relations on a human level: we are also called, as Christians and Jews, to reflect deeply on the spiritual significance of the bond existing between us. It is a bond whose origins are from on high, one which transcends our own plans and projects, and one which remains intact despite all the difficulties which, sadly, have marked our relationship in the past.

On the part of Catholics, there is a clear intention to reflect deeply on the significance of the Jewish roots of our own faith. I trust that, with your help, on the part of Jews too, there will be a continued and even growing interest in knowledge of Christianity, also in this holy land to which Christians trace their origins. This is especially to be hoped for among young people.

Mutual understanding of our spiritual heritage, appreciation for what we have in common and respect in matters on which we disagree: all these can help to guide us to a closer relationship, an intention which we put in God’s hands. Together, we can make a great contribution to the cause of peace; together, we can bear witness, in this rapidly changing world, to the perennial importance of the divine plan of creation; together, we can firmly oppose every form of anti-Semitism and all other forms of discrimination. May the Lord help us to walk with confidence and strength in his ways. *Shalom!*

ORE, 30 May 2014

DOCUMENTATION SUPPLEMENT

JOINT WORKING GROUP BETWEEN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
AND THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Ninth Report 2007-2012

Receiving One Another in the Name of Christ

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FOREWORD BY THE CO-MODERATORS

“Receiving one another in the name of Christ”

We have chosen this motto for the Ninth Report of the Joint Working Group. It reflects the quality of our togetherness as a group and of our relationship as the two co-moderators. On our common journey during this mandate of the Joint Working Group between the 2006 WCC assembly in Porto Alegre (Brazil) and the 2013 assembly in Busan (Republic of Korea) we deepened our friendship and our mutual appreciation, the knowledge, wisdom and leadership of each other. It has been an honour and a privilege for us to lead this instrument of cooperation between the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, a fruit of the Second Vatican Council. And we are grateful for the support that was offered by the representatives of the two parent bodies of the group, the WCC secretariat in Geneva and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity in Rome.

“Receiving one another in the name of Christ” was also chosen because a major piece of our work as a group has been a study on Reception of the results of ecumenical dialogues. We want to share through this study our sense of joy about all that could be achieved in past decades and our respect and gratitude to all who were involved in these endeavours. We hope that it can motivate students and younger scholars to continue this work because it has not been in vain as a faithful response to Christ’s prayer that all may be one (John 17:21). This is not just a task for scholars and experts. There are many ways to nurture and deepen the spiritual roots of ecumenism so that Churches and Christians discover how much they share the same faith in Christ. The group wanted to underline this through another study document that accompanies the text on Reception.

This mandate of the Joint Working Group has now come to an end. The report will be presented to the forthcoming tenth assembly of the WCC. The report shows that one of the major assets of the Joint Working Group is not just the work that is done, but the relationships that are fostered and the many opportunities in both the plenary sessions and the meetings of the smaller executive for dialogue and shared analysis of the changing contexts of ecumenism and the life of the churches. We are grateful to those who created the Joint Working Group almost half a century ago and cherish its existence. We hope and pray that it will continue to strengthen relationships between the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church for the benefit of all who believe in Christ as our Lord and Saviour. In him we are reconciled with God and received as children and citizens of God’s reign to come.

*Metropolitan Nifon
Archdiocese of Targoviste, Romania*

*Archbishop Diarmuid Martin
Archdiocese of Dublin, Ireland*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Joint Working Group (JWG) has been a vital and effective instrument for fostering cooperation between its parent bodies, i.e. the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) and the World Council of Churches (WCC). Following the *Decree on Ecumenism* of the Second Vatican Council (*Unitatis Redintegratio*) in 1964, the JWG was established jointly by the PCPCU (then the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity) and the WCC in 1965. Since then, the JWG has met regularly. It provides the space where the parent bodies discuss important topics affecting their relationships, and where their representatives share the experiences of their churches and talk about their common involvement in the ecumenical movement, as both the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) and the WCC are committed to the goal of the visible unity of the church.

The JWG has functioned as a worldwide working group with regional and local input. For the term from the ninth WCC assembly in 2006 in Porto Alegre, Brazil, to the tenth assembly in 2013 in Busan, Korea, each parent body appointed 18 members to the JWG, selected from different regions of the world, with varied pastoral and ecumenical experiences. The JWG met five times in plenary, led by two co-moderators. The co-moderators, representatives of the parent bodies, co-secretaries, and the Faith and Order director and the RC consultant in the WCC mission team form an executive that meets twice a year. The executive oversees the work of the JWG between its plenary sessions and prepares the agenda and materials for them.

Starting to work only in 2008, the JWG made up for the delay by holding two plenary meetings in Geneva and Rome in 2008. In doing so, the JWG followed the suggestion made at the 40th anniversary in Bossey, that any future JWG should spend some time, particularly at the beginning of its mandate, in familiarizing itself with the structures of the parent bodies and building a sense of teamwork and of shared spiritual commitment.

Moving in the following years from Cordova, Spain (2009), to Saidnaya, Syria (2010) and Rabat, Malta (2011), the JWG undertook an “ecumenical pilgrimage,” encountering the reality of the churches in these countries and their ecumenical initiatives. In Cordova, the group was impressed by inspiring work on ecumenical formation and education, which are crucial for the future of the ecumenical movement. The friendship and hospitality among the three Patriarchs and other church leaders in Saidnaya, and their deep concern for migrants and refugees as well as for youth, left a mark on all JWG members who kept them in their prayers during the difficult times in Syria. In Malta, the group learned firsthand about the work of the churches for migrants and refugees coming across the sea from Northern Africa.

The group wants to express its sincere gratitude for all who hosted these meetings so generously and shared with the group their traditions of faith, their ecumenical experience and challenges, e.g. the Archdiocese of Cordova (Spain), the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East in Damascus (Syria), and the Archdiocese of Malta (Malta). At the invitation of the two co-moderators, the executive group met not only in Rome and Geneva but also in the archdioceses of Dublin (Ireland) and Targoviste (Romania).

Looking at the changing ecclesial landscape at the beginning of the 21st century and the challenges the churches are confronted with in their search for visible unity and a common witness to the world, the JWG realized already at the plenary meeting in 2008 in Geneva that there was a common interest of the parent bodies in deepening the fellowship of churches in the ecumenical movement and in ecumenical formation that builds on the fruits of ecumenical dialogue, engages young people, and is inspired by the presence of migrants who challenge false self-centeredness of communities and local churches. This was reflected in the choice of the themes for study and reflection: the studies on reception and the spiritual roots of ecumenism¹, and reflections on youth. The JWG also discussed the root causes and the impact of migration on the lives of people, communities and the churches.

This report outlines the activities of the JWG during these years and includes the two study documents and reflections on the role of youth. We offer these texts to the parent bodies and hope that they will be received by churches and Christians around the world, inspiring them in their own ecumenical journey. Our pilgrimage together as the JWG has enriched our spirituality and our understanding of ecumenism and further strengthened our conviction that we are called to be one in Christ.

II. GROWING RELATIONSHIPS OF TRUST

The JWG has not only fostered cooperation between the two parent bodies, but also contributed to growing trust and collaboration with other churches and ecumenical partners in the one ecumenical movement.

This is vital in the context of the rapidly changing ecclesial landscape, with the growth of Pentecostal and charismatic churches, the deep geopolitical shifts over recent decades, the devastating consequences of climate change and financial crises, conflicts concerning values and personal ethics, violence within and between different religious communities, and growing need for the accompaniment of Christian communities in conflict situations. These challenges

demand that the churches renew their ecumenical commitment to a common witness and the search for the visible unity of the Church. In all of our efforts as the JWG the unity that Christ wills for his Church has been and will remain central.

Together, the Roman Catholic Church and WCC member churches have fostered relationships with evangelicals, Pentecostal and charismatic churches – not least through cooperation in the Global Christian Forum, but also through many other initiatives, e.g. the Centenary of the Edinburgh World Mission Conference in 2010, participation in the WCC-facilitated Joint Consultative Group with Pentecostals, cooperation in the Conference of the Secretaries of Christian World Communions (CWCs), the Joint Committee between CWCs and WCC, and the publication of the document *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct*² that was presented to the public by the WCC together with the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) and the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA).

The quality of relationships nurtured by the JWG encouraged the WCC to intensify its very valuable cooperation with the CWCs and to offer new spaces for churches and ecumenical partners beyond the WCC membership, both in reflections on ecumenism in the 21st century and in preparations for the forthcoming tenth assembly of the WCC in 2013 in Busan. In both cases, committees were formed that include as full members a broad spectrum of churches beyond WCC membership and ecumenical partners. In doing so, the WCC could build on the excellent cooperation with the RCC and increasingly also with Pentecostals in the Faith and Order Commission (F&O) and the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME).

What could have been a challenge became an opportunity for strengthening relationships: both the PCPCU and the WCC changed leadership during this mandate of the JWG. The Revd Dr Olav Fykse Tveit succeeded The Revd Samuel Kobia as general secretary of the WCC; Cardinal Kurt Koch followed Cardinal Walter Kasper as president of the PCPCU. Soon after he had taken office in Geneva in January 2010, The Revd Olav Fykse Tveit visited Cardinal Walter Kasper in Rome and met with Cardinal Kurt Koch later in the same year in the context of a visit to Rome that included a private audience with His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI. Both Pope Benedict XVI and The Revd Olav Fykse Tveit expressed their common concern for the visible unity of the Church as gift and calling of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ³. Cardinal Kurt Koch

1. Cf. also the two publications by H.E. Cardinal Walter Kasper. (2009) *Harvesting the Fruits: Basic aspects of Christian faith in ecumenical dialogue*. Continuum International Publishing Group, London/New York; (2007; first printing in 2006) *A Handbook of Spiritual Ecumenism*. New City Press, New York.

2. http://www.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/wcc-main/2011pdfs/ChristianWitness_recommendations.pdf

3. <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/news/news-management/eng/a/article/1634/pope-benedict-and-wcc-lea.html>

visited the WCC in May 2011, underlining the irreversible commitment of the Roman Catholic Church to ecumenism⁴.

Major events during this ninth mandate of the JWG offered other opportunities for the deepening of relationships and common witness for the unity of the Church, for mission, and for peace in the world:

- The WCC celebrated its 60th anniversary on February 17, 2008 with a prayer service in Geneva's Saint Pierre Cathedral and a plenary session of the Central Committee of the WCC in the Ecumenical Centre. His All Holiness Bartholomew I, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, reminded those gathered for the service of the "three pillars" of unity, witness, and service on which the WCC was built. The Roman Catholic Church was represented by the secretary of the PCPCU, Bishop Brian Farrell, who brought the greetings of Pope Benedict XVI.
- The 100th anniversary of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (WPCU) in January 2008 became both a powerful sign for the shared commitment for the visible unity of the church and a reminder that ecumenism has its roots in the common prayer of Christians of different traditions as a response to Jesus' own prayer that his disciples may be one so that the world may believe (John 17:21). In recognition of the many years of joint preparations of the WPCU by the PCPCU and the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC, the WCC general secretary, The Revd Samuel Kobia, was invited to participate in the closing ceremony of the WPCU with the celebration of vespers in the ancient Basilica of St. Paul Outside- the-Walls, which was presided over by Pope Benedict XVI⁵. It was a very precious moment of spiritual communion in prayer and worship in which the WCC general secretary addressed Pope Benedict XVI and those gathered for worship. This event and a private audience with Pope Benedict XVI, in which he encouraged a focus on reception, marked the first plenary meeting of the JWG in January 2008 in Rome.
- In the spirit of the 2006 WCC assembly's statement on ecclesiology, "Called to be the One Church", the WCC's Faith and Order Plenary Commission met in the Orthodox Academy of Crete in October 2009. Led by the moderator, His Eminence Metropolitan Vasilios of Constantia, together with guests and consultants, the members of the commission met the bishops, clergy and

faithful of the local Orthodox dioceses, parishes and monastic communities of the Church of Crete. His All Holiness, Bartholomew, Ecumenical Patriarch, graced the first plenary session of the commission with his presence and delivered the opening address. The renewed relationship between Faith and Order and the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism was evident. Working groups addressed the ongoing studies of the commission on the Nature and Mission of the Church, Sources of Authority: Tradition and traditions, and Moral Discernment in the Churches.

- The preparations for the Centenary of the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 2010 were another occasion for cooperation. The preparatory group included a broad spectrum of Christian traditions aiming at building bridges within the mission movement that split after the International Missionary Council joined the WCC in 1961. Both the PCPCU and the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the WCC (CWME) pointed to the necessary link between mission and unity which had been so important for the organizers of the World Missionary Conference in 1910⁶. The 1910 conference often is seen as the beginning of the modern ecumenical movement. It had been the origin not only of the International Missionary Council, but also of the Faith and Order and the Life and Work movements, i.e. of three of the classical streams of the ecumenical movement⁷.
- The WCC sent greetings to the 50th anniversary celebrations of the PCPCU in 2010, which included a symposium with keynote addresses by distinguished church leaders and ecumenists: Cardinal Walter Kasper; the Archbishop of Canterbury, The Most Revd Rowan Williams; and His Eminence Metropolitan John of Pergamon.
- The PCPCU sent a delegation to the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation in 2011 in Kingston/Jamaica (IEPC). The IEPC was the culminating event of the Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV) that began in 2001 as an initiative of the WCC⁸. More than one thousand participants gathered in Kingston for this harvesting festival of the contributions made by churches and ecumenical partners to the DOV; the participants shared experiences of their own engagement for just peace, and encouraged each

4. <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/news/news-management/eng/a/article/1634/cardinal-koch-sounds-a.html>

5. http://www.oikoumene.org/en/news/news-management/eng/a/article/1634/pope-benedict-xvi-and-wcc.html?tx_ttnews%5Bcat%5D=120&cHash=fabdbbc44a322a2288105d0173fce8f

6. It is noteworthy that the new Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization was established in the year of the Edinburgh centennial.

7. <http://www.edinburgh2010.org/>;
<http://edinburgh2010.oikoumene.org/en/news/en/browse/1/article/4645/pope-benedict-xvi-sends-g.html>

8. <http://www.overcomingviolence.org/>

other to renew the churches' and their own commitment to nonviolence, peace and justice.

- In October 2011, the WCC general secretary, The Revd Olav Fykse Tveit, participated in the Assisi World Day of Prayer for Peace at the invitation of Pope Benedict XVI. Together with church leaders and representatives of other religions, The Revd Olav Fykse Tveit called on Christians to pray and to act for peace and reconciliation and not to allow the misuse of religion for the justification of violence.
- The WCC's Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) held a pre-assembly mission event in March 2012 in Manila/Philippines. The theme of the event, "Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes," referred to the title of a new mission-affirmation that was discussed during the event and will provide a new basis for the future work of the CWME.
- The Catholic Church celebrated the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council on 11 October 2012 in the context of the Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization and also marking the beginning of the Year of Faith. The Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I and the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams participated in the celebration of the Mass in St. Peter's square. It was a remarkable moment when both of them went up to the Papal Altar and exchanged the Kiss of Peace with Pope Benedict XVI.

Participation of PCPCU representatives in the Central Committee of the WCC and the Commissions on Faith and Order, World Mission and Evangelism, the Continuation Committee on Ecumenism in the 21st Century and the Assembly Planning Committee proved the mature level of mutual trust and cooperation. The same is true for the regular participation of representatives of the WCC in the Synods of Bishops and other important events in the life of the RCC. Cooperation continued at regional and national levels in similar ways. This became clearly visible during the sharing of JWG members at the beginning of each of the plenary sessions.

Another important dimension in the relationship between the Catholic Church and the WCC, almost on a day to day basis, has been and continues to be through Roman Catholic movements such as the Sant' Egidio Community and the Focolare movement. Both Prof Andrea Riccardi (Sant' Egidio) and Maria Emmaus Voce (Focolare) visited the WCC in 2007 and 2009. The WCC general secretaries participated regularly in the Sant'Egidio International Conferences for Peace together with a WCC president and other delegates. The general secretaries also visited the Focolare movement's headquarters in Rocca di Papa in 2007 and 2010.

III. COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE WCC

A. Faith and Order

The Catholic Church became a member of the F&O Commission (F&O) in 1968. Their excellent cooperation was sustained in the period from 2006-2013. During this period the longstanding PCPCU consultant to the Faith and Order Commission, Monsignor John Radano, took his retirement. Fr Radano was a significant support to the commission and a noted scholar of Faith and Order work. The F&O Commission was pleased to welcome his successor, Fr Gregory Fairbanks, in 2008.

During this period, F&O pursued three main study projects:

1. *Ecclesiology*. The F&O secretariat received more than 80 responses to the study document *The Nature and Mission of the Church* (Faith and Order Paper no 198, 2005). On the basis of the responses a restructured and shortened study text was drafted. The F&O Commission approved the text on *The Church. Towards a Common Vision* as consensus text in 2012 in Penang/Malaysia. It is for the first time since the 1983 text on *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (BEM) that the commission agreed on a consensus document.
2. *Sources of authority*. By looking at how churches use sources of authority, the commission tried to take a new approach to the complex questions concerning scripture and tradition. The study is progressing.
3. *Moral discernment in the churches*. Conducting case studies on controversial issues, the commission explored how churches arrive at their positions on moral issues. The study has raised high expectations given the potentially church-dividing character of moral issues. A draft text was discussed by the commission. The study continues.

The document on *One Baptism. Towards Mutual Recognition* which had been elaborated by a previous standing commission was approved for publication.

The PCPCU representatives to the standing commission continued to make significant contributions to the work of F&O. Fr William Henn has been the principal drafter of the text on *The Church. Towards a Common Vision*. Fr Frans Bouwen gave important leadership as one of the vice-moderators of the commission, as well as the co-moderator of the study project on Moral discernment in the churches. Professor Myriam Wijlens was a member of the sub-committee that proposed a restructuring of the commission. Fr Gregory Fairbanks was an observer at the United and Uniting Churches consultation in November 2008 in Johannesburg. Catholic members of the plenary commission made significant contributions to the 2009 meeting of the Faith and Order plenary commission. One of the keynote speakers was Sister

Ha Fong Maria Ko. Fr Jorge Scampini presented a paper at a panel discussion on ecclesiology.

Roman Catholic participation in the 2008 meeting of the Ninth Forum on Bilateral Dialogues at Breklum, Germany was significant. The bilateral forum is convened by F&O on behalf of the secretaries of the CWCs. Roman Catholic participants were important contributors to the Breklum report, which affirmed visible unity as the primary goal of ecumenical dialogue, but acknowledged that there were differing stages to that goal depending on the ecumenical partners and the maturity of the dialogue. The interaction among different bilateral dialogues and with the multi-lateral level of ecumenical dialogue is acknowledged as a key concern for F&O. The Ninth Forum on Bilateral Dialogues met in 2012 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, at a Roman Catholic retreat centre. The theme of the 2012 meeting, reception in the global South, was much shaped by Roman Catholic input.

B. Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

A significant area of ongoing cooperation between Faith and Order and the PCPCU is the annual production of the material for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (WPCU). During the centenary celebrations of the WPCU in January 2008, which already were highlighted in chapter II of this report, the Commission on Faith and Order and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity jointly received the “Christian Unity Award” from the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement at a ceremony at the Centro Pro Unione in Rome. Faith and Order and PCPCU staff began annual joint staff meetings to review the previous years’ process of preparing the texts for the Week of Prayer, as well as initiating changes and improvements for the future.

Topics of the WPCU for the years 2006-2013 are as follows:

- 2006 *Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them*
(Matt. 18:18-20) – prepared with an ecumenical group in Ireland
- 2007 *He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak*
(Mark 7:37) – prepared with Christian communities in South Africa
- 2008 *Pray without ceasing*
(1 Thess. 5:17) – prepared with churches in the USA
- 2009 *That they may become one in your hand*
(Ezek. 37:17) – prepared with churches in Korea
- 2010 *You are witnesses of these things*
(Luke 24:48) – prepared with churches in Scotland in the context of the Edinburgh centennial
- 2011 *One in the apostles’ teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer*

(Acts 2:42-47) – prepared by Christians in Jerusalem

- 2012 *We will all be changed by the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ*
(cf. 1 Cor. 15:51-58) – prepared by a working group of churches active in Poland
- 2013 *What does God require of us?*
(cf. Micah 6:6-8) – prepared by a group from India

C. Mission and Evangelism

Already the very first official report of the JWG in 1965 states: “There are possibilities of collaboration open to us in the mission field; these need to be analysed with care.”⁹ Various forms of contact and working relationships have developed since then between the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and Vatican offices, dicasteries or the Holy See, and Catholic missionary orders.

The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) has continued to facilitate increasing Catholic collaboration with the work of the WCC’s Mission and Evangelism Programme through the availability of Catholic mission experts as commissioners (one of them is also part of the CWME executive group) and, since 1984, of a full-time consultant based at the WCC in Geneva. During the period under review, this latter post has been occupied until September 2010 by Prof Dr Maria Aranzazu Aguado; at present the consultant is Prof Dr Annemarie Mayer. The role of the consultant includes participation in the CWME executive group and commission meetings as well as liaison with the appointed Catholic commissioners and with leaders of Catholic missionary congregations and missiologists. A series of visits was made by the Catholic consultant to both Catholic and Protestant missionary organizations in order to discuss common witness as practiced at both national and local levels. Under the coordination of the consultant, significant cooperation took place in the field of multicultural ministries, in contact mainly with ENFORMM, formerly INFORMM, the Ecumenical Network for Multicultural Ministry.

The CWME decided to engage in a process of developing a new WCC affirmation on mission and evangelism towards the next WCC’s assembly in Busan (Republic of Korea) 2013. During its plenary meeting in Bangalore (India) in October 2008, CWME organized several working groups: one on “mission and spirituality,” many times referred to as “transformative spirituality and mission”, one on “ecclesiology and mission”, and one on “evangelism.” The three Catholic commissioners in the CWME have been actively

9. Reprint (1966) from *The Ecumenical Review* XVIII No.2, p.5.

involved in the general meetings and in the different working groups organized to carry on the study of specific issues in the mission field and to contribute to a new WCC mission statement. The Catholic consultant, as staff member of the WCC in the field, was in charge of the coordination of the working group on mission and spirituality. This has involved the preparation of a number of studies and encounters as well as the publication of articles in the *International Review of Mission*. The consultant coordinated also the work on mission and ecclesiology. The documents drafted by these working groups constituted the raw material for the new mission statement and were the basis of a pre-assembly mission event held in Manila (Philippines) in March 2012. A Catholic delegation comprising 18 people participated in this pre-assembly mission event. The draft mission statement *Together towards life: Mission and Evangelism in changing landscape*, which was agreed upon by the CWME in Manila, was approved by the WCC's Central Committee in September 2012 in Chania/Greece.

Catholic representatives contributed to the discussion on the necessary link between mission and unity both at Faith and Order and CWME meetings. In March 2009 a common meeting of the Faith and Order ecclesiology working group and CWME's working group on mission and ecclesiology was conducted in Berekfürdő (Hungary), since both working groups, from their specific perspectives and with their different accents, deal with mission/unity and church. The working groups of both commissions also include RC members.

During this official mandate of the JWG the 2010 Edinburgh centenary celebration took place. While in 1910 no RC delegates took part in the mission conference, in 2010 the PCPCU appointed a delegation of 12 members and was among the main organizing bodies of the study process and the conference in Edinburgh. One of the areas worth mentioning is the involvement of the RC consultant in the preparation of the Edinburgh 2010 Mission Conference. She was appointed by the PCPCU as its representative in the Edinburgh 2010 general council, and she was part of the study process monitoring group. Edinburgh 2010 made it possible to document, on all sides involved, the advances in the direction of a missiological rapprochement. The theme of Edinburgh 2010, "Witnessing to Christ Today," replaced the terminology of "evangelization," using instead "witness," a term recognized by Catholics and Protestants, Evangelicals and Pentecostals alike.

2007 marked a renewal of CWME staff visits to Rome. A visit of a PCPCU delegation from Rome to Geneva is scheduled for February 2012. During this visit a consultation on the new mission statement will be held.

D. Ecumenical cooperation among the youth

Ecumenical cooperation among young people of various church traditions beyond WCC member churches and the RCC developed spontaneously over the last three to four years around the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity through electronic networking. Young people shared their creative ideas inspired by the material prepared jointly by the PCPCU and the WCC. These and other observations of similar initiatives motivated the JWG to suggest closer cooperation between the WCC ECHOS youth commission and Catholic Youth Organizations through the International Young Catholic Students (IYCS) that was represented in the JWG membership. The JWG document on *The Church in the Life of Youth and Youth in the Life of the Church* gives an account of this cooperation that culminated in the organization of an ecumenical event at the World Youth Day in 2011 in Madrid, Spain.

E. Ecumenical formation

The PCPCU and the WCC have consistently cooperated in the work of formation of future ecumenists. The RCC was represented on the Commission on Ecumenical Formation and Education and subsequently the Bossey accompanying group. A Catholic professor, Fr. Lawrence Iwuamadi, continues to offer courses in Biblical theology at the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey. Two scholarships for the Ecumenical Graduate School are being financed by PCPCU. Every year the Bossey students and the WCC youth interns visit the Holy See for a week, aiming to experience in person the way the RCC is organized and to learn of its contributions to the one ecumenical movement. The groups usually are taking part in the general audience of the Pope and are visiting a range of dicasteries. They also visit the International Union of Superiors General; the Centro Pro Unione; the Waldensian Faculty of Theology; the Pontifical Universities; the Community of Sant'Egidio; the Focolare movement; and important places in the ancient city of Rome.

The network on Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE) also is cooperating with the Centro Pro Unione and some Catholic theological faculties. It is worthwhile to consider broadening the involvement of Catholic partners. ETE has made important progress in building linkages with Evangelical and Pentecostal partners.

F. Inter-religious dialogue

The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) and the WCC project on Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation can look back on many years of continuing exchange, both through regular visits to Geneva and Rome and through meaningful cooperation in various ways. Because of changes in

leadership and staffing, visits have not been as regular as before, but still good working relationships have been maintained.

The letter titled *A Common Word*, issued by 138 Muslim leaders in October 2007, motivated the WCC together with the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) and representatives of CWCs to gather for an intra-Christian consultation on the Christian self-understanding in relation to Islam. The consultation was held in 2008 in Chavannes de Bogis¹⁰.

In June 2011, Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, the president of the PCID, visited the WCC to launch the document *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct*¹¹ that was issued following a five-year series of consultations among the PCID representing the RCC on the one side, and the WCC and its partner, the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) on the other. It was the first time that these bodies released a common document. The recommendations suggest practical ways of engaging in mission, while showing sincere respect for neighbours of other faiths. This document was distributed widely and sparked an important discussion on the methods of mission.

G. Justice, peace, creation and human rights

WCC projects on poverty, wealth, and ecology, on health and healing, and on peace and human rights, benefit from the expertise, cooperation and support of Caritas Internationalis, Franciscans International and others. There are many more opportunities for cooperation at regional and national levels. The Ecumenical Water Network, for instance, also involves representatives of the Catholic Bishops' Conference in Brazilian, and the Latin American Episcopal Council. The WCC is extremely grateful for the dialogue with the Apostolic Nuncios both in Geneva and New York, which helps to strengthen the voice of the churches in the UN system regarding peace, disarmament and human rights.

A new initiative by the International Labour Organization (ILO) brings the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and the WCC together with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in an interreligious project on the ILO focus on decent work. The process started with conferences in Senegal, Chile and Ethiopia, and the publication of a handbook on convergences between the ILO mandate on social justice, decent work and religious traditions¹².

10. <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/interreligious-dialogue-and-cooperation/christian-identity-in-pluralistic-societies/christian-self-understanding-in-relation-to-islam.html>

11. http://www.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/wcc-main/2011pdfs/ChristianWitness_recommendations.pdf

12. *Convergences: decent work and social justice in religious traditions: a handbook*. (2012) Geneva, ILO;

H. International Ecumenical Peace Convocation

The International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (IEPC) in 2011 in Kingston (Jamaica) was already mentioned as a highlight during this mandate of the JWG. The PCPCU sent an official delegation that was led by Bishop Rodolfo Valenzuela Núñez, the Bishop of Verapaz (Guatemala). Among the thousand participants were many members of Pax Christi groups or Commissions on Justice and Peace. The Sant'Egidio community accepted the invitation to be part of the seminars on just peace. The Focolare movement participated with the Gen Rosso musical "Streetlight," rehearsed and performed with fifty young people from a violence stricken neighbourhood in Kingston – an approach to violence that was developed by Gen Rosso in the project "Strong without violence."¹³

The IEPC was the culminating event of the Decade to Overcome Violence (2001-2011). The event offered the opportunity for the sharing of experiences by many of those who had been contributing to the Decade. The PCPCU and Mennonite World Conference offered a statement, *A Mennonite and Catholic Contribution to the World Council of Churches' Decade to Overcome Violence*¹⁴, based on the 2004 report of the international dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Mennonite World Conference *Called Together to be Peacemakers*.¹⁵ In Kingston, many workshops, seminars and plenary sessions were offered on the different dimensions of peace in the community, in the economy, with the earth and among peoples. The relationships between justice and peace and the proposal to move from just war theory to a shared commitment to just peace were intensely debated during the event. In the follow up to the event, IEPC participants will serve their churches as resource persons for initiatives to overcome violence and for peace.

I. Ecumenism in the 21st century

"The WCC and the Ecumenical Movement in the 21st Century" is both the name of a programme in the current WCC structure and the main concern and challenge this programme is addressing through the work of the Continuation Committee on Ecumenism in the 21st Century. The work involves issues of

http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/pardev/download/relations/ilo_convergences_en.pdf

13. http://www.genrosso.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=0&Itemid=112&lang=en

14. A Mennonite and Roman Catholic Contribution to the WCC's Decade to Overcome Violence, in: WCC (ed), *The Ecumenical Review* 60, Geneva: WCC, 2008, pp 333-344

15. <http://www.overcomingviolence.org/en/resources/documents/declarations-on-just-peace/contributions/from-confessional-bodies-councils/a-mennonite-and-catholic-contribution-to-the-wccs-dov.html>

worship and spiritual life, church and ecumenical relations, women and youth. Taking up the constitutional task of the WCC to uphold the coherence of the ecumenical movement, the WCC has put far greater emphasis on building trust and relationships of mutual accountability and gift sharing between member churches and ecumenical partners.

A very important part of this has been close cooperation with the PCPCU in the context of the Conference of Secretaries of CWCs and the joint committee between WCC and CWCs, which has proven to serve the desired goal. The Catholic Church and CWCs sent representatives as full members to both the Continuation Committee on Ecumenism in the 21st Century and the assembly planning committee. One of the overarching objectives for the assembly is to serve the coherence of the ecumenical movement by being prepared together with WCC partners.

Mutual trust between the WCC, the RCC and CWCs also has been important for the advance of the Global Christian Forum (GCF), a broad platform that includes representatives of all major traditions of worldwide Christianity. During 2007-2012, several regional meetings were held, along with one global gathering in 2011 in Manado (Indonesia). The GCF has been and continues to be a vital and necessary initiative to nurture relationships of mutual trust and recognition, especially with Christians and churches that had been distant from the ecumenical movement.

IV. THE JOINT WORKING GROUP

A. Character and nature of the JWG

The JWG was founded in May 1965 by mutual agreement between the WCC and the RCC as an instrument of collaboration between the two partners. Its purpose, described in 1966, was to interpret the trends in the development of the ecumenical movement and “to explore possibilities of dialogue and collaboration, to study problems jointly, and to report to the competent authorities of either side.” Thus the JWG has an advisory function and serves as an instrument for promoting cooperation between the RCC and the WCC.

The decree *Unitatis Redintegratio* of the Second Vatican Council noted that the call to full visible Christian unity can be fulfilled only by the joint efforts of churches working together. The Joint Working Group has sought to play this role over the years, as well as that of calling the churches to recover and reaffirm the original vision and goal of the ecumenical movement. The JWG “initiates, evaluates and sustains forms of collaboration between the WCC and the RCC, especially between the various organs and

programmes of the WCC and the RCC.”¹⁶ The JWG has among its tasks the functions of initiating and helping to keep alive the discussion in the RCC and the member churches of the WCC of issues facing the ecumenical movement. It also assesses the current trends in the ecumenical movement with a view to offering recommendations to its parent bodies. As such, the JWG functions as a catalyst for ecumenical cooperation between the RCC and WCC member churches at different levels.

The JWG receives its mandate from its parent bodies – the WCC assembly and the PCPCU – every seven years. The structure and style of the JWG is meant to be flexible and adaptable to the changing needs and priorities of the JWG agenda. The JWG thus sets up sub-groups to study specific topics on its agenda. Some topics may require the participation of experts from outside the group who may contribute to the ongoing study. At the end of each mandate, the JWG prepares and submits to its parent bodies a detailed report on its activities. This report is examined by the parent bodies, who in the process of reception offer their observations, agree for its publication and distribution, and give further guidelines for the next mandate.

The 40th anniversary of the JWG was celebrated with a consultation in 2005 in Bossey, Switzerland. The consultation underlined that the very fact of the establishment and continued cooperation between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches for 40 years must be considered one of the significant achievements of the modern ecumenical movement. The slow but persevering establishment of a relationship in which the World Council of Churches and the Catholic Church have found in one another a trusted partner has been perhaps the most enduring achievement of the past four decades. In that sense, the JWG is itself an act and example of reception.

B. The work of the JWG 2007-2012

The “ecumenical pilgrimage” of the group followed during this mandate the footsteps of Saint Paul in Damascus, Malta and Rome. There is no better way to summarize the spirit and the work of this JWG than to refer to Saint Paul’s letter to the Romans 15:7: “Receive one another, therefore, just as Christ has received you....” The time together always was grounded in common prayer, Bible reading, and celebration, consciously strengthening the spiritual roots of ecumenism as a shared basis for common work.

The time for sharing information and experiences by individual JWG members and the parent bodies has

16. Cf. the collection of JWG mandates from 1966, 1975 and 1999 in the Joint Working Group Between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches: Eighth report, Geneva: WCC, 2005, pp.34 ff.

been an important and fruitful element of every meeting. The sharing provided precious spaces to monitor and discern developments concerning the parent bodies and the ecumenical movement at local, regional and international levels. This regular and structured exchange is conducive to building trust; to nurturing a quality of relationships that also allows participants to address difficult issues with mutual respect; and to nurturing common interest in the flourishing of the one ecumenical movement. The smaller JWG executive continued to be a very helpful instrument for the exchange of information, discussion of common concerns and the fostering of cooperation.

The importance of receiving the results of ecumenical dialogue, thus fostering a renewed commitment to ecumenism, surfaced in many ways in the reports of JWG members and of the parent bodies. The meetings of bishops with the PCPCU during their *ad limina* visits to Rome are just one example of important opportunities to draw attention to progress made in the past and to rekindle ecumenical commitment. In similar ways questions of ecumenical formation and the participation of youth continued to be included in the sharing. Migration moved centre stage in the observations of representatives from the Middle East and Asia as well as in reports by the co-moderators. The changing ecclesial landscape and cooperation in the Global Christian Forum were discussed at every meeting. Enriching experiences of interfaith dialogue and cooperation, and the difficult problems of religiously motivated violence, became ever more important in the times of sharing.

Responding to suggestions of the previous JWG presented in the Eighth Report, inspired by the spiritual life of the group and the sharing of its members, this JWG concluded that it should make a specific contribution to the issues of reception and the spiritual roots of ecumenism from the perspective of the unique body that it is. These two texts together are meant to be mutually enriching dimensions of a holistic response to Saint Paul's exhortation in Romans 15:7 which, therefore, was chosen as the motto for this ninth report of the JWG.

Compared to previous JWG mandates, the group introduced a new way of working with two sub-groups that explored opportunities for stimulating cooperation in the areas of migration and youth, two issues which greatly challenge all churches. The discussion on migration needs to continue. The group working on the role of youth in the church contributed a text to this report which is included as Appendix.

C. Study documents

a. Reception: A Key to Ecumenical Progress (Appendix A)

The current Joint Working Group has met during the time when the ecumenical world has celebrated the centenary of the 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary

Conference, the event that gave birth to the modern ecumenical movement, as well as 50 years of the Second Vatican Council. These facts are reflected in the study on ecumenical reception in several ways.

The study is organized in five sections. Section I, entitled "Ecumenical reception: vital for achieving unity," starts first by describing the fundamental importance of reception in the life of the church, giving some theological aspects involved in reception, and then, the meaning of ecumenical reception. It proceeds by inviting churches continually to receive the ecumenical movement and its results, "the achievements of a century of ecumenism," into the life of the churches, and to build on those achievements as the ecumenical journey continues. The final part of this section sets the stage for the discussion to come by recalling that the JWG already has given much attention to ecumenical reception in the past, but asserts that the centenary is a special occasion on which to reflect more deeply on ecumenical reception and on the way a century of ecumenism has made a difference for the churches. All five sections end with "Learning points and recommendations" offered for reflection by the churches.

Section II describes the way ecumenical reception happens in the churches. After opening reflections on processes of reception, the rest of this section gives brief presentations describing the methods of ecumenical reception in fifteen Christian world communions, based on their experience and/or policy. The variety of approaches reflects differences in ecclesiology and illustrates the complexity of ecumenical reception.

Section III, the longest section, is titled "Overcoming the divisions of the past: reception promoting reconciliation." It illustrates the way churches, through ecumenical reception, have taken some major steps toward overcoming those divisions. It starts by commenting on the new ecumenical context developed during the century of ecumenism since Edinburgh 1910, in which long separated Christians have increasingly recognized the degrees of faith they have continued to hold in common, despite centuries of division, and have begun to receive each other as Christians. With this new situation, the churches have been able to engage in dialogue and to face together the causes of separation in the past. It describes ways in which three historic areas of division have been addressed ecumenically, and significant steps towards reconciliation have been taken. The first concerns divisions in the fifth century especially following the Council of Chalcedon (451). The second concerns the schism between eastern and western Christianity following 1054. The third concerns divisions in western Christianity during and since the sixteenth century, not only of the Reformation churches from the Catholic Church, but also between Reformation churches themselves. Detailed presentations of significant steps toward reconciliation and overcoming these divisions

are given, although much more needs to be done to achieve full visible unity. The final part of this section presents ways in which the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity have been agents of reception.

Section IV shows that ecumenical reception also has been a struggle. Just as Part II gave concrete examples of reception processes, part IV shows concrete examples of reasons why reception processes can be a struggle.

Section V presents “Ecumenical formation: a key to ecumenical reception.” The Eighth JWG Report had stated that “greater effort is needed in the field of ecumenical formation” because “a new generation of Christians is sometimes unaware of the way things were and how much has changed in the decades since the founding of the WCC and since the Second Vatican Council.”¹⁷ This present study has documented those changes, showing steps taken towards overcoming the divisions of the past, and the way ecumenical reception has helped foster and promote reconciliation. This section discusses the links between ecumenical formation and ecumenical reception, traces the JWG’s ongoing concern for ecumenical formation, and outlines some general principles of ecumenical formation, as well as programs and guidelines to guide it.

The Conclusion of this study, in Section VI, is “An appeal to the churches” to recognize what has been achieved during a century of ecumenism, to continually support processes of ecumenical reception, and to renew their commitment to the quest for Christian unity.

Members of the JWG who agreed to serve on this study included The Rt Revd Dr Gregory Cameron, Deacon Dr Alexey Dikarev (as of 2010), The Revd Canon Dr John Gibaut, Prof Dr Annemarie Mayer (from October 2010), The Revd Fr Luis Melo, S.M., The Revd Dr George Mulrain, Prof Dr Friederike Nüssel, Msgr John Radano, Dr Teresa Francesca Rossi, Fr Igor Vyzhanov (2006-2010), and The Revd Dr Tom Best (2006-2007). Dr John Gibaut and Msgr John Radano were asked to serve as co-convenors.

b. Be renewed in the Spirit. The Spiritual Roots of Ecumenism (Appendix B)

In response to the prayer of our Lord “that they may all be one...” (John 17:21) and motivated by Christ’s call for renewal of life and conversion of heart, the Joint Working Group initiated a project to reflect anew on the spiritual roots of ecumenism. The goal was twofold: to remind Christians of the spiritual impulse that has driven the ecumenical movement from its

inception, and to consider fresh ways churches can nurture these spiritual roots by offering some practical recommendations.

Following an introduction, the text is divided into eight sections: basic terms, Biblical foundations, implications for prayer and liturgical practice, examples inspired by the saints, the power of transforming encounters, practical opportunities for churches with some recommendations to the parent bodies, a concluding summary, and suggested resources for further reading.

After defining the terms “spirituality” and “ecumenism” (words that popular culture often uses without sufficient clarity), this study explores the theological basis for spiritual ecumenism; considers practices of piety, prayer, and worship that nurture these spiritual roots; highlights how God in Christ through the Holy Spirit breathes new life into Christians through examples among the saints and transforming encounters with Christians of other traditions; and offers some concrete ideas for ways in which this spiritual foundation can be appropriated more fully in local settings.

The section on the theological basis for spiritual ecumenism is developed by using prayer as the chief organizing principle, because prayer is rooted in the Christian’s relationship with the Triune God, and with how Christians understand God and God’s will for unity. The section explores the use of prayer for unity both in personal piety and in liturgy, and it sees unity and diversity as two interconnected gifts that Christ gives the Church. The section concludes by stressing that unity is both gift and task, and that Christians live and work in enduring hope for the final vision of the people of God in harmonious relationship.

The section on implications for prayer and liturgical practice celebrates that Christians regularly pray for each other in a variety of ways, and that this is one of the fruits of the ecumenical movement. It specifically explores the use of ecumenical prayer cycles, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, and the practice of common prayer beginning with the Lord’s Prayer, which Christian churches hold in common.

The text gives examples of the impulse toward unity inspired by martyrs, saints, and living witnesses, and highlights an initiative to explore ways that the witness of martyrs can be a force for unity. This topic was developed jointly in a consultation by the Monastery of Bose and the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC.

In “the power of transforming encounters,” the study explores ways that encounters with Christians from other traditions have been an inspiration that have propelled a deepened commitment to the quest for Christian unity.

The final section of the text offers practical recommendations to churches for ways that the spiritual roots of ecumenism can be manifested more

17. Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches: Eighth report 1999-200.5 (2005) Geneva: WCC Publications, p.29.

fully. The text is grouped into five categories: (1) opportunities to pray together – placing more emphasis on ways participants can engage with each other during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, finding fresh ways to use the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle, encouraging ecumenical Bible study, and focusing on the impact of prayers for unity in liturgical settings; (2) opportunities for ecumenical witness—making use of ecumenical visitations to place a human face on the ecumenical movement, recognizing the power of witnessing by ecumenical leaders, and finding ways to foster ecumenical exposure to the young who have demonstrated some interest in ecumenism; (3) opportunities to offer ecumenical hospitality—on occasions of rites of passage, through attention to preparatory planning to show ecumenical hospitality, and by considering an intentional effort to involve Christians from different traditions in educational travel, focusing on the spiritual roots of ecumenism; (4) opportunities for programmatic engagement—through shared Bible study, careful attention to the ecumenical impulse underlying joint mission projects and other initiatives of community engagement; and (5) opportunities for ecumenical education—encouraging academic staff to draw intentionally and explicitly on the spiritual roots of ecumenism. Of particular note is the JWG recommendation that educational travel should be used as a means to involve Christians from different traditions in encounters dedicated to promoting dialogue and an exchange of spiritual gifts.

Members of the drafting team for this report included Dr Maria Aranzazu Aguado Arrese (co-convenor – until 2010), The Revd Gregory J. Fairbanks, The Most Revd Felix A. Machado, The Revd Fr James Massa, Ms Margaret Naylon, The Revd Dr Kondothra M. George, The Revd Dr Henriette Hutabarat-Lebang, The Revd Diane C. Kessler (co-convenor), The Revd Dr Elisee Musemakweli, and His Eminence Metropolitan John Pelushi.

D. Reflections on youth

The Church in the Life of Youth and Youth in the Life of the Church (Appendix C)

The Church is an important part of young people's lives and their participation in the Church is an essential element of the life of the Church. The absence of youth in church communities threatens the vitality of the Church.

Because young people are one of the most dynamic sectors in every society and are at a crucial time in their lives, the Church has to find appropriate and creative ways to lead them to Jesus Christ. The churches need to stimulate discussions with and among young people in order to understand their experience and the richness of their faith. The contemporary world presents many challenges and at the same time opportunities to young people. They are exposed to the pressures of an increasingly global society. The JWG

invites churches to be aware of the consequences of these pressures and the inevitable frustrations to which they can give rise. Young people live in the midst of the proliferation of information and communication technologies. These have a considerable impact on their lives, sometimes with negative consequences, affecting their relations, interests, priorities, passions and lifestyles. Communications technologies also offer positive opportunities that enable young people to communicate, network, and cooperate, giving a sense of global solidarity and motivation to work for church and society. Moreover, young people search for personal spiritual experiences and a relationship with God.

The challenges young people face have an impact on the way that they participate in the Church. Young people can be active members of parishes and congregations and youth organizations. Some may feel that the Church does not respond to their aspirations and modes of expression and, therefore, they may remain passive observers. This can lead to an uneasiness and sense of distance from the life of the Church. Therefore, the JWG invites churches to understand and respond to the complex reality experienced by youth, and to be open to their needs and expectations as a key to develop, maintain, and nurture their sense of belonging to the Church.

The actions of young people in promoting Christian unity have been noticeable throughout the history of ecumenism. The JWG invites the churches to develop new ways of engaging young people in the work of ecumenism and to reflect on their perceptions of youth. It is necessary to appreciate young people in promoting Christian unity and to move beyond seeing them as passive recipients, but rather, as partners whose input is heard and valued.

For that reason the JWG opened a channel of communication with young people through specific resources that can be used in different places and churches. The three areas explored by the *Resources for Youth* are: 1) Believing (faith); 2) Belonging to the Church (baptism); 3) Living one's faith (discipleship). Each area was dealt with from three different perspectives: the Word of God, the early Christian witnesses, and the Church today. The resource materials were tested among Christian student groups, parish and congregational groups, as well as in schools. The collected responses addressed the role of faith in the lives of young people; explored what it means to belong to the Christian tradition and the role of the Church; and considered interaction with Christians from different traditions. The JWG encourages churches to use that tool as a starting point in young people's reflections on their own Christian traditions. The responses indicated that young people expect the Church to be active and involved in the contemporary world. The feedback shows that young people are open to different Christian traditions but are not aware of the role they could play in promoting Christian unity.

The JWG encourages churches to consider how young people can participate more consciously and actively in ecumenical strategies for collaboration.

Members of the working group on youth included Ms Loucille Alcala (as of 2010), The Very Revd Archimandrite Dr Iosif L. Bosch, Ms Margareta Brosnan (until 2010), Ms Agnieszka Godfrejów Tarnogórska (convenor), and The Revd Msgr Juan Usma Gómez

E. Discussions on Migration

Realizing the mutual belonging to one another is the real calling in the movement and presence of migrants. Belonging to one another goes beyond the diaconal service for people in need; it is about sharing our common humanity and the gift of life that we all have received. Who is my neighbour? The existential context of migration reveals the deeper meaning of community and mutual belonging within a socially, culturally and often also religiously diverse people. Among Christians of different traditions and origins, the fellowship and the quality of the common life in Christ—communion—are at stake. As such, migration requires an ecumenical response.

The most recent statistics indicate that approximately 3% of the world's population are migrants according to the International Organization for Migration¹⁸. There are 214 million international migrants, among them 106 million or 49% Christians.¹⁹ The journey and presence of people from other countries is at the origin of the wide mix of challenges, blessings and responses evoked in public debates on migration: from racist rejection to uncertainty to the full embrace as people sooner or later becoming citizens. Many uncritically held assumptions – including notions of a fixed culture or community – are being challenged by the arrival of migrants.

Both common and biblical history reveal that migration has been part of the life of human communities from the beginning, almost always

involving change both for those moving and for those they join. Increasing globalization and mobility have added new dimensions to the phenomenon of migration. Mobility and plurality of identities are factors that now shape life in communities almost everywhere in the world. When people move, not only their personal identities are tested. Encounter with people of other faiths, convictions, and lifestyles also have a deep impact on the way collective and institutional identities are understood; they affect the individual's sense of community, belonging and loyalty, *paroikia*²⁰ of a parish and church as well as the churches' relationship to the ecumenical movement as a whole. The formation and growth of migrant-led communities is an indicator of the chances and challenges this poses for ecumenical responses by the churches: how can the common service and witness to the one gospel be maintained, despite divergent articulations and versions of Christianity? From this perspective, mobility and the plurality of social, cultural and religious identities are to be addressed with and also beyond the immediate diaconal response to migration.

It is necessary to be attentive to the complexity of the socio-economic and political underpinnings of the public debate on migration, and, at the same time, seeks to broaden the perspective of the reader by increasing the awareness for constructive models of encountering the other. The shared humanity—in the fullness of its promise as in its vulnerability—and common baptism constitute the basis for ecumenical relationships between engagement with all migrants and with communities of Christian migrants and churches in the countries in which they seek acceptance. As members of the same body, they all share a responsibility for the entire body and all its parts. The issue will undoubtedly constitute a priority in ecumenical initiatives across-the-board for years to come. Faithful to each of our own ecclesial traditions, such a response must be open to the new realities.

Addressing the concerns of migrants needs also sensitivity to the effects of a negatively tainted public discourse on migration, also within Christian communities.

Members of the working group on migration included Archbishop Vicken Aykazian,

Dr Youssef Kamal El-Hage, Chorbishop John D. Faris (convenor), The Revd Dr Benebo Fubara Fubara-Manuel, Dr Flaminia Dama Giovanelli, Ms Laurel Namhla Masinga, The Revd Dr Japhet Ndhlovu, and Sister Veronica de Roza, FMM.

18. "Migration" is the movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border, or within a State. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes. It includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants, and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification. (source: International Organisation for Migration - <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/about-migration/key-migration-terms/lang/en#Migrant>). The phrase "international migrants" refers to persons or groups of persons that are living for one year or longer in a country other than the one in which he or she was born.

19. March 2012 according to PEW Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life, *Faith on the Move. The Religious Affiliation of Migrants*, <http://www.pewforum.org/Geography/Religion-Migration.aspx>

20. The word parish derives from the Greek word *paroikia* – dwelling near one another, but also dwelling in a strange land.

V. PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE (2013 – 2020)

The trust that is built through the structured and sustained form of cooperation of the parent bodies through the JWG is an important contribution to the coherence of the one ecumenical movement and the continuing search for the visible unity of the church. The JWG has been a space for open and constructive exchange, facilitating cooperation between different aspects of the life and work of the parent bodies, interpreting developments in both of the parent bodies and the wider ecumenical movement, and addressing common challenges and sensitive issues in an atmosphere of spiritual communion and friendship in Christ. Along with this ongoing cooperation, relationships between different programmatic areas of the WCC and the relevant dicasteries of the Roman Curia developed further during this period.

All these functions should remain central to any future JWG, independent of the size of the group or the duration of its mandate. Preparing for the 2012 WCC Central Committee meeting and the forthcoming assembly, the WCC governance group is reviewing all WCC related commissions and advisory groups regarding size, frequency of meetings and working methodologies, with the tendency to encourage the formation of smaller and at the same time more flexible bodies. The parent bodies will discuss these matters further and come up with a jointly developed proposal for the future.

Grateful for the opportunity of working together during this mandate, the JWG offers the following recommendations:

- Some of the insights of the consultation at the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the JWG have proven to be relevant beyond the present mandate. The next JWG will surely benefit if the first two plenary sessions again are organized in Rome and Geneva. More detailed and better knowledge of the two parent bodies by all members of the group will lead to a clearer understanding both of the tasks and the potential of the group.
- One concrete proposal for follow-up comes from the study group on *The Spiritual Roots of Ecumenism*. The group recommends exploring the possibility of a pilot project with the WCC Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum and the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Itinerant People on pilgrimages to the Holy Land.
- The JWG did not conclude its discussion on migration. The importance of the issue for the churches merits fostering collaboration between the parent bodies on this issue.
- It will be necessary for the next JWG to reflect on new forms of working together, assessing and responding to the continually evolving global and ecclesial context. The JWG needs to feel the pulse of the ecumenical movement continuously, taking

stock of the state of ecumenical relations, identifying strengths and weaknesses in actual ecumenical relations, setting priorities with measurable goals, and monitoring progress to determine whether goals have been seriously and consistently pursued.

- It was underlined that the Joint Working Group should not duplicate the work of the Faith and Order Commission. The Joint Working Group has a role to play in providing reflection on the ecumenical dimension of issues, and must decide whether it can make a particular contribution in a given area, perhaps more often by asking a specialized body to undertake a study than by organizing a study on its own.
- It might be good for the next mandate to explore other creative possibilities in response to the core mandate of the JWG. This might also strengthen the group for “being a challenge to the parent bodies by proposing new steps and programmes.” The following questions build on the work done so far, but also point to other tasks:
 - How could the JWG function more practically as an agent of reception and a promoter of the spiritual rootedness of ecumenism?
 - How can the new presence of diverse Christian communities in a given place as the result of migration become an enriching opportunity for the deepening of ecumenical relations in the context of a changing ecclesial landscape?
 - In which ways can the JWG continue to encourage better and growing ecumenical cooperation and participation of young people, for instance in universities and at occasions like the World Youth Day?
 - What can the parent bodies do together to foster inter-religious dialogue and cooperation?
 - Are there more effective possibilities of strengthening relationships with those Christians who keep a distance from the ecumenical movement?

VI. MEMBERS OF THE JOINT WORKING GROUP (2007 – 2012)

Representatives of the Roman Catholic Church

The Most Revd Diarmuid MARTIN

Co-Moderator

Archbishop of Dublin

Dublin, Ireland

The Most Revd Brian FARRELL

Secretary

Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity

Vatican City

The Revd Msgr Gosbert BYAMUNGU (until December 2011)

Co-Secretary

Official of the PCPCU for relations with the WCC
Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity
Vatican City

Prof Maria Aranzazu Aguado ARRESE (until August 2010)

Roman Catholic Consultant to the World Council of Churches; Commission for World Mission and Evangelism
World Council of Churches
Geneva, Switzerland

Ms Loucille ALCALA (2010 - 2012)

Programme Coordinator
International Young Catholic Students (IYCS)
Paris, France

Ms Margareta BROSNAN (until 2010)

Campaign Coordinator for Caritas Australia
Alexandria, Australia

Sister Veronica DE ROZA, FMM

Franciscan Missionaries of Mary
Singapore

Dr Youssef Kamal EL-HAGE

Associate Professor of Physics
Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences,
Notre Dame University-Louaize
Zouk Mosbeh, Lebanon

The Revd Gregory J. FAIRBANKS (as of 2008)

Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity
Vatican City

Chorbishop John D. FARIS

Eparchy of Saint Maron. Member North American Orthodox and Catholic Dialogue and Oriental Orthodox and Catholic Consultation.
Utica, USA

Dr Flaminia Dama GIOVANELLI

Under-Secretary Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace
Vatican City

The Most Revd Felix A. MACHADO

Archbishop of Vasai
Vasai, India

Mrs Laurel Namhla MASINGA

Laity Association of South Africa
Soweto, South Africa

The Revd Fr James MASSA (2005-2011)

Executive Director
Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
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Prof. Dr Annemarie MAYER (as of October 2010)

Roman Catholic Consultant to the World Council of Churches; Commission World Mission and Evangelism
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The Revd Fr Luis M. MELO, S.M.

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Ms Giovanna RAMON, Administrative Assistant

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Representatives of the World Council of Churches

+Metropolitan NIFON OF TARGOVISTE

Co-Moderator
Metropolitan of Targoviste
Romanian Orthodox Church
Targoviste, Romania

Mr Georges LEMOPOULOS

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APPENDIX A

RECEPTION: A KEY TO ECUMENICAL PROGRESS
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INTRODUCTION

1. Reception is intimately linked with the nature and purpose of the ecumenical movement. The *Eighth Report* of the Joint Working Group (JWG) between the Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches (WCC) expressed the urgency of reception as an ecclesiological issue today:

“Reception” is the process by which the churches make their own the results of all their encounters with one another, and in a particular way the convergences and agreements reached on issues over which they have historically been divided. As the report of the sixth forum on bilateral dialogues notes: “Reception is an integral part of the movement towards that full communion which is realised when ‘all the churches are able to recognise in one another the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church in its fullness.’” Thus reception is far more than the official responses to the dialogue results, although official responses are essential. However, even though they are not concerned with the full range of interchurch relations, the results of international theological dialogues are a crucial aspect of reception, as specific attempts to overcome what divides churches and impedes the expression of unity willed by our Lord.¹

2. This quotation itself reveals the complexity of the concept of reception; it encompasses not only the reception of ecumenical dialogue but the broader process by which churches can receive elements, such as liturgy, spirituality and forms of witness from one another’s traditions, and even the totality of the process by which churches may receive one another in full communion.

3. By engaging in multilateral and bilateral dialogue, and by increasing contacts with one another in many ways, Christian communions long separated have begun to receive one another in fresh ways as brothers and sisters in Christ. The present text sets out to reflect the gifts and challenges of reception to the churches as they receive insights resulting from their ecumenical dialogues with one another. The pages in this report are by no means an exhaustive examination of the full scope of ecumenical achievements and their reception. The report does, however, present diverse experiences and types of reception emerging from the major ecumenical dialogues. With this study document the JWG returns to a theme taken up before and reflects further on reception as an integral part of the ecumenical movement, vital for fostering the goal of visible unity.

1. “The Nature and Purpose of Ecumenical Dialogue.” (2005) *The Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches: Eighth report*. WCC Publications, Geneva. pp.82-83.

4. Section I starts with a brief presentation of the importance of reception in general in the life of the church. This is followed by a discussion of ecumenical reception “by which the churches make their own the results of all their encounters with one another, and in a particular way the convergences and agreements reached on issues over which they have been historically divided.”² It stresses in particular the need of continually receiving the ecumenical movement and its results into the life of the churches. Section II presents descriptions of specific processes used by various Christian world communions especially of receiving ecumenical documents. Section III shows ways in which, through the ecumenical movement, the reception of ecumenical dialogue results and the gradual reception by long separated Christians of each other as brothers and sisters in Christ, has enabled them to take significant steps towards overcoming divisions originating in the fifth, the eleventh, and the sixteenth centuries. At the same time Section IV makes clear that there remain obstacles to unity still to be resolved and therefore challenges to ecumenical reception. In this light Section V discusses the importance of ecumenical formation as a key to ecumenical reception. At the end of each section, learning points and recommendations are offered to assist the churches in receiving from one another and receiving each other. The text concludes with “An Appeal to the Churches” to acknowledge the fact that much progress has been achieved during the century of ecumenism after the 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference, and urges the parent bodies of the JWG to continually foster the ecumenical movement and the reception of its achievements in the life of the churches.

I. ECUMENICAL RECEPTION: VITAL FOR ACHIEVING UNITY

A. Reception in the life of the church: yesterday, today and tomorrow

5. Reception is fundamental to the life of the church. Reception is rooted in the revelation of the mutual interaction and love of the persons of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Biblical vocabulary and witness (*lambanein/apolambanein, dechesthai/apodechesthai* - receive, welcome) provides a rich source of meaning of reception as rooted in revelation.

6. To receive is essential to our experience as Christians. We receive existence and being as creatures from God, we receive salvation as redemption through Jesus Christ, and a new life as anointed ones in the Holy Spirit. We receive God’s word and sacraments as effective signs of the new covenant. We receive the call to mission as disciples with various charisms for the upbuilding of the Church of Christ. As the Father sends the Son and the Holy Spirit to allow human

2. The Nature and Purpose of Ecumenical Dialogue. No.59.

beings to receive the good news of salvation, so too those in Christ are sent so that the world may receive the joy of eternal life.

7. Since reception takes place in the Holy Spirit, it occurs in and through events of communion (*koinonia*). From the reception of the preaching of Jesus and the preaching of the Gospel through the apostles, the Church was born and continues to exist. This inheritance, handed down through the ages, was received with varying degrees of difference in form and manner, reflecting the many circumstances in life of the local churches. Through mutual exchange and reception of various traditions in a visible communion (*koinonia*) the Church is sustained in unity and holiness, true to its apostolic origins and universal mission.

8. Reception necessarily involves an active discernment by the Church regarding the authenticity of what is being received. It assumes that the recognition of what is already known is grounded in the living Word of God. St. Paul reminded the Corinthians that they had already received the gospel, a gospel which he himself received (cf. 1 Cor. 15:1).

9. Reception is more than recognition: it involves appropriation and assimilation of what is received in concrete communities with concrete gestures of communion (*koinonia*). Common celebrations of the eucharist, letters of communion among bishops, profession of a common symbol of the faith (creed) and shared artistic traditions, diptychs in the liturgy, synods and councils, and pulpit exchanges are among the many and varied ways full ecclesial communion has been expressed in the Church. These signs give testimony that the call of St. Paul is lived among Christians: "Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God." (Rom. 15:7).

10. When a receiving community recognizes its own faith, however new its expression, it is effectively transformed and lives ever more deeply its discipleship of Christ. This dynamic of re-receiving and re-affirming the mystery of the faith is a fruit of the creative force of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church. This unexpected or unforeseen aspect of reception sustains the continued vitality of the faith.

11. Reception is often gradual. At times, it is a painful experience associated with great upheaval in the lives of individuals and communities. The securing and handing on of the faith with its ecclesial life and structures, and the protection of the fellowship and unity of local churches, takes place over time, often spanning generations. This is clearly evident, for example, in such formative events in the life of the Church as the development and the establishment of the canon of scripture and the reception of the Council

of Nicaea. The latter took over 50 years and the former took several centuries to achieve universal consensus.³

12. In this manner, reception has been used as a term to describe "the process by which the local churches accept the decision of a council and thereby recognize its authority. This process is a multiplex one and may last for centuries. Even after the formal conclusion of such a process and the canonical reception of a council's doctrinal formula, usually through a new council, the process of reception continues in some way or other as long as the churches are involved in self-examination on the basis of the question whether a particular council has been received and appropriated properly and with justification. In this sense we can say that *in the ecumenical movement the churches find themselves in a process of continuing reception or re-reception of the councils.*"⁴ In this setting, reception "is an effect and a sign of the Spirit's presence; no mere legal category, it is a theological process that is constitutive of the life of the Church."⁵

13. In receiving and in sharing what it receives, the Church is renewed in its life and mission. It is caught up in the dynamic of revelation and tradition that always begins and ends with the living word that is sent, received and sustained in the Church itself, and shared for the life of the world. In the church, God's word is proclaimed in the scriptures and interpreted, celebrated in the liturgy, and by believers committed to living and communicating the depths of gospel in their homes, families and workplaces. In this dynamic, the Church offers itself to the world so that it may come to

3. Richard R. Gaillardetz. "Reception of Doctrine." (2002) in *Authority in the Roman Catholic Church*, ed. Bernard Hoose. Ashgate, Aldershot Hants/Burlington Vt., p.98.

4. *Faith and Order Louvain, 1971, Study Reports and Documents*. (1971). WCC, Geneva, p.29, italics added, and quoted by Anton Houtepen, "Reception," in *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, ed. Lossky et al. (Geneva: WCC, 2nd edition, 2002), [=DEM], pp.959-60. Here could also be documented the work of the World Council of Church with regards to reception. For example: at the New Delhi Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1961, there was a call for Faith and Order to undertake a study on "Councils and the Ecumenical Movement," the result of which was published in 1968. In 1971, the Final Report, "The Importance of the Conciliar Process in the Ancient Church for the Ecumenical Movement" was adopted at the Faith and Order meeting in Louvain. The appropriation of the critical discernment of the traditions according to the "the faith of the church through the ages" was explicitly addressed by Faith and Order through consultations and forums on bilateral dialogues. Three of the forums are cited as the Faith and Order Paper 107, Geneva, 1982 by Johannes Willebrands, "Ecumenical Dialogue and its Reception", *Diakonia* 1-3, (1984/5): 121. This culminated in a new stage in reception when churches were asked to respond to *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982).

5. William G. Rusch. (2007) *Ecumenical Reception: Its challenge and opportunity*. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids. p.7.

know God's salvation in Christ through the Holy Spirit.⁶

B. Ecumenical reception

14. Reception has assumed a new meaning in the modern ecumenical movement which is generally understood to have begun with the 1910 World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh, Scotland. The goal of this movement, visible unity, has been expressed both by the World Council of Churches and the Catholic Church. According to the WCC Constitution the primary purpose of the fellowship of churches in it "is to call one another to visible unity in one faith and in one eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, through witness and service to the world, and to advance towards that unity that the world may believe."⁷ According to Pope John Paul II, the unity we seek is "constituted by the bonds of the profession of faith, the sacraments and hierarchical communion."⁸ The success of the ecumenical movement in achieving its goal depends on the willingness of Christians in all communities to engage in dialogue, to critically evaluate dialogue results, to receive those results into the life of their churches, and to discern ways in which the new insights can be translated into new relationships which go beyond the divisions which have afflicted Christians in the past.

15. In this new context of churches in conversation after a period of significant estrangement, reception involves not only the consideration of results of the dialogue, but also refers to the formal decision of the competent ecclesial authorities to allow these outcomes to shape their own life and mission. The forces of receptivity and receivability are at work in this critical process of reception.⁹ While receivability deals with recognizing the results of dialogue as true and conforming to the rule of faith, receptivity designates the evangelical attitude necessary to allow those results to be adopted in one's own ecclesial tradition. Each church is called to stretch beyond its own experience to recognize and be enriched by that which is of the living word of God in other churches. The acknowledgement that one has something to learn and receive from another ecclesial body and tradition requires not only

openness but also great humility. The divided churches are being called not only to receive from one another, but also to receive one another.¹⁰ Such reception includes a conscious commitment to the spiritual roots of ecumenism.

16. Ecumenical reception involves the active and distinct participation of the entire people of God. According to Cardinal Willebrands speaking from a Catholic perspective:

Reception therefore involves the *kerygma*, the *didaché*, and the *praxis pietatis*. Inasmuch as the entire People of God partakes in the search for and the unfolding of the truth of God's word, all the charisms and services are involved according to their station: the theologians by means of their research activities, the faithful by means of their preserving fidelity and piety, the ecclesial ministries and especially the college of bishops with its function of making binding doctrinal decisions. One can also say that ministry and charism, proclamation and theology, magisterial ministry and sense of faith of the People, all act together in the reception process. The Church and all her members are therefore involved in a learning process that by its very nature is not exclusively concerned with theological documents, but also considers developments in the domains of liturgy, pastoral care, canon law, discipline, forms of piety, etc.¹¹

17. Reception cannot and must not be understood only as a purely technical or instrumental concept or even as just a sociological process in a purely numerical or quantitative manner. Signs in the community confirming that reception has taken place must be evident, not only in words but also in life. The entire Church has the responsibility to be actively engaged as a hermeneutical community that responds to the Holy Spirit fostering unity in its midst for the life of the world. As the ninth forum on bilateral dialogues said in its 2008 Breklum Report:

We believe that it would be profitable to keep in mind right from the beginning of any phase of dialogue the reception of its results. As each dialogue is in some way a "learning process," each needs to consider how this learning process may

6. See John Zizoulas, "The Theological Problem of 'Reception'" in *Bulletin Centro Pro Unione*, No.26 (Fall, 1984):4.

7. Constitution and Rules of the World Council of Churches (as amended by the 9th Assembly, Porto Alegre, Brazil, February 2006), no.III. www.oikoumene.org/en/who-are-we/self.../constitution-rules.html (Accessed April 2, 2012)

8. Pope John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint*, No.9.

9. William Henn, "The Reception of Ecumenical Documents," in *La recepción y la comunión entre las Iglesias*, ed. H. Legrand, J. Manzanera, and A. García y García. (1997) Universidad Pontificia Salamanca, Salamanca, p.484.

10. Especially, "[t]his raises fundamental ecclesiological questions [...] Ecumenically, reception is coming to be seen as a process, guided by the Holy Spirit, in which churches are called to acknowledge elements of sanctification and truth in one another. This implies that they are being called to recognise in one another elements of Christ's Church." See *The Church of the Triune God: The Cyprus statement of the International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue 2006*. (2006) Anglican Consultative Council, London, pp.97-98.

11. Cardinal Johannes Willebrands. (Spring, 1985) "The Ecumenical Dialogue and its Reception," in *Bulletin Centro Pro Unione* No.27: 6.

be shared with the wider membership of the two communities involved. Only an abiding commitment to the ecclesial reception of ecumenical texts can allow these statements of convergence or consensus to have a reconciling and transforming effect in the life of our churches. Each dialogue report might suggest some appropriate actions which could be taken by the leaders and believers of their communities on the basis of the agreements reached. We recommend that communions find a way to mark by public signs their progress in dialogue. We recommend that those churches which have made a declaration of communion between themselves develop structures of unity that provide for common decision-making, teaching, mission and action.¹²

C. Continually receiving the ecumenical movement and its results in the life of the churches

1. Receiving the achievements of a century of ecumenism

18. In the century since Edinburgh 1910, participation in the ecumenical movement has increased dramatically. At Edinburgh, only Protestants and Anglicans were present.¹³ Over the decades they were joined by Orthodox, Roman Catholics, and more recently Pentecostals in efforts of dialogue and cooperation for the sake of unity. Within a century after Edinburgh, there were closer relations among Christians. Dialogue and other contacts have addressed issues which have caused division, and have helped to radically change relationships between many Christian communities long divided from one another.

12. "The Breklum Statement" of the Ninth Forum on Bilateral Dialogue, Recommendation 2, <http://www.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/wcc-main/documents/p2/breklum-statement.pdf>

¹³It is, however, important to note that the Bishop of Cremona, in Italy, Msgr. Geremia Bonomelli, at the invitation of Silas McBee, an Episcopalian, sent a letter of support to the Conference. Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910*. William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K., p.11. Moreover Russian Orthodox Archbishop (now Saint) Nicolai of Japan was consulted; he pointed out the connection between unity in mission and the unity of the church: "I am in friendly, more than that, brotherly relations with all the missionaries of other sections known to me, and so are our Christians with their Christians. So shall we be from our part always, because we know that the first duty of us Christians is to cultivate Christian love to all men, and particularly to our brothers in Christ. But, nevertheless, there is no real and full unity between us and other sections; more than that, we are far from such unity because we are divided in the Christian doctrine." In *World Missionary Conference, 1910, Report of Commission VIII: Cooperation and the promotion of unity*, Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, New York, Chicago and Toronto, p.4.

19. One can cite, for example, the continuing efforts of the World Council of Churches over six decades to relate churches to one another in the quest for unity. The many achievements of the multilateral dialogues in Faith and Order, especially *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (BEM)*, include the highest degree of convergence on these subjects among separated Christians since the sixteenth century Reformation. *BEM* has provided theological support for churches in different parts of the world as they have built new and closer relations between them, such as, among others, the Porvoo and Meissen Agreements.

20. Through recent contacts and dialogue, old conflicts over the Council of Chalcedon's Christological definition, which led to division 1500 years ago, have been faced, and have led to Christological declarations which have helped to resolve these issues. In contrast to nine centuries of separation between Eastern and Western Christians (since 1054), new relationships have developed between them in the twentieth century, and today there are many ways in which they cooperate. In regard to the sixteenth century Reformation, through dialogue a common understanding of the doctrine of justification, the central theological issue in the conflicts of the reformation, has been achieved, as seen especially in the Lutheran-Catholic *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. Anglican and other churches in Asia have formed church unions; Reformed and Lutherans in Europe have entered into altar and pulpit fellowship. These and other important achievements will be discussed in detail in section III below. They have not led yet to full unity among Christians. There are still important issues to be resolved. But collectively, over the century since Edinburgh 1910, the reception by the churches of many dialogue results has created a new ecumenical situation.

2. Building on achievements as the ecumenical journey continues

21. The responsibility now is to receive and build on those achievements. A century ago, when the movement set in motion at Edinburgh first began to unfold, it was not clear what directions it might take. As the second century of the modern ecumenical movement has begun, it has become clear that the movement's achievements are significant. Christians have overcome some of the causes of the historic divisions among them. The ecumenical movement has helped promote healing and reconciliation among Christians.

22. Today, the challenge for Christians is to recognize that achievements such as those just mentioned (cf. nos.19 and 20), have changed relationships among Christians, have allowed them to identify the deep bonds of faith they share with one another, and the real though imperfect *koinonia*/communion that exists between them. It is this new situation in their relations,

fostered by the ecumenical movement, that needs to be received so that a new phase of the ecumenical movement can begin.

23. The question now is, in what ways can the ecumenical achievements of a century, which have taken Christians in many ways beyond the divisions which had long characterized their relationships, be solidified? In what ways can those achievements help fashion steps forward which will promote the unity that is sought, steps forward which will contribute to resolving the theological conflicts which still exist? There are no easy answers to these questions, which continue to challenge all Christians.

D. Ecumenical reception in the reflection of the Joint Working Group

24. The Joint Working Group is in a unique position to serve not only its own parent bodies, but the whole ecumenical movement as well. In different ways, the JWG has already acknowledged the importance of ecumenical reception by giving significant attention to it. It is also in a position to foster reception in the wider ecumenical movement. In some ways the JWG can serve as a gauge of developments in the ecumenical movement and the way in which this movement is being received.

25. The Joint Working Group has reflected on ecumenical reception both directly and indirectly. In the eighth JWG report (2005), each of its three study documents gives attention to ecumenical reception, albeit in different ways. One study document, *The Nature and Purpose of Ecumenical Dialogue*, illustrates the growing significance of ecumenical reception. The first JWG working paper on *Ecumenical Dialogue* (1967) had no treatment of reception, although it hinted at reception when indicating that the aim of dialogue “is to grow together in *koinonia*.”(no.1), and that the results “must be shared with the whole church” (no.3). On the other hand, *The Nature and Purpose of Ecumenical Dialogue* (2005) shows that ecumenical reception is currently acknowledged as an integral aspect of the ecumenical movement. It includes a section on “The reception of ecumenical dialogues”(nos. 58-79), describing its meaning and difficulties associated with it, and giving case studies illustrating positive experiences with reception from both multilateral and bilateral dialogue.

26. A second 2005 study document, *Ecclesiological and Ecumenical Implications of a Common Baptism*, is in many ways an act of reception of the growing understanding of a common baptism resulting from dialogue, especially to reception of the Faith and Order convergence text *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (BEM, 1982). Exploring different aspects of the common understanding of baptism, it illustrates ecumenical implications of this common understanding, and identifies ecclesiological issues, some deep bonds of faith Christians share with one another which enhance

this common understanding of baptism, and others which need further treatment in dialogue in order to resolve differences which still stand in the way of the degree of unity implied in a common baptism.

27. A third study, *Inspired by the Same Vision’: Roman Catholic Participation in National and Regional Councils of Churches*, explores the phenomenon of the growing membership of the Catholic Church in these councils – itself a reception of ideas put forward in the *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms of Ecumenism* (1993).

28. Studies previously published by the JWG have included important aspects of reception. Its sixth report (1990) included two studies, both suggested in the conversation between WCC staff and John Paul II during the Pope’s visit to the WCC in 1984. One, entitled *The Church: Local and Universal*, was undertaken partly in reception of BEM. The introduction to Faith and Order Paper No. 150, in which this study was published, stated that the responses to BEM indicated that ecclesiology must be given further attention in the future, and therefore Faith and Order took initial steps toward a major study of ecclesiology. “An important aspect of an ecumenical understanding of the church is a proper understanding of the meaning and relationship of its universal and local expressions”. Ecumenical dialogue has fostered convergence on this question, and “[t]he present study is a result of such dialogue and a contribution to its further development.”¹⁴

29. The second 1990 study, *The Notion of ‘Hierarchy of Truths’: An Ecumenical Interpretation*, was the first common ecumenical study on this subject. It refers to the expression found in number 11 of Vatican II’s *Unitatis redintegratio* (Decree on Ecumenism). It was seen as a concept which “has aroused ecumenical hopes, but...needs clarification ...of its implications for the ecumenical dialogue.” (no.1). As this concept was already received as important for ecumenism, but not given ecumenical attention, the JWG study set out to study and interpret it. Its report concluded that it “has implications for the relations between churches as they seek full communion with one another through such means as the ecumenical dialogue. It can help to improve mutual understanding and to provide a criterion which would help to distinguish those differences in the understanding of the truths of faith which are areas of conflict from other differences which need not be.” (no.28). It was, in effect, inviting further reception and use of this notion in ecumenical dialogue.

30. This present study document gives examples of some of the significant achievements of the ecumenical movement, showing how new relationships have come about between churches long divided, and steps taken towards overcoming theological conflicts which have

14. *Faith and Order paper No.150*, “Introduction.”. (1990) WCC, Geneva, p.viii.

divided Christians for centuries (Section III below). These examples illustrate creative acts of reception, underlining the interrelationship of the various aspects of the one ecumenical movement. The study document also notes ongoing challenges to ecumenical reception to illustrate the difficulties before us as the movement towards Christian unity continues (Section IV below). Still other creative acts of reception should be considered in the years ahead. Continuing reception of the ecumenical movement and its various expressions in this second century of the movement will be vital for reaching the goal of visible unity.

E. Learning points and recommendations

1. Learning points

To be human is to grow by receiving from others. To be Christian is to receive the grace and the gifts of God. In the ecumenical context to be Christian today involves receiving Christ in one another and through one another. In learning to receive one another we walk together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This is both gift and responsibility.

- If progress is to be made in the ecumenical movement, there must be reception of the achievements already made. This responsibility is essential for the life of the churches in order to be faithful to the will of Christ (cf John 17.21) and to live the mission of the church.
- The costly nature of discipleship teaches us that reception of these achievements takes time, is often difficult, at times painful, but always essential and fruitful. If part of reception is an exchange of gifts, those gifts can be blessings. Now is the time to harvest these fruits and gifts and move forward.

2. Recommendations

For reception to be expressed in the life of the Church and lead to concrete action, we propose the following recommendations:

- take positive steps to inculcate a spirituality of *metanoia* and welcome¹⁵ in their engagement with ecumenical partners so that the inherited barriers may be overcome and a receptivity to Christ in the other be developed;
- remind churches of the rich diversity of elements of Christian life and discipleship which can be shared across the traditions and offered for ecumenical reception;
- actively recognise, especially in the case of dialogue reports, that reception is a multilayered process, and ensure that there is a real engagement

with documents in the arenas of both formal and informal reception in all its stages;

- encourage dialogue commissions to be explicit about the issues related to reception of the document when texts are being drafted and when agreed statements are achieved. This includes, for example, making clear the genre and status of the statement, giving an invitation to reader responses, and indicating that formal responses of the statements depend on the churches which sponsor the dialogue;
- take steps to affirm ecumenical achievements and encourage the churches to receive them with a commitment to implementation.

II. HOW ECUMENICAL RECEPTION HAPPENS: THE EXPERIENCE OF CHRISTIAN WORLD COMMUNIONS

A. The processes of reception

31. Within the broadest understanding of ecumenical reception lies the precise act of a formal action whereby churches receive agreed statements of their ecumenical dialogues. Concerning such a formal action, *The Nature and Purpose of Ecumenical Dialogue* (2005) said the following:

If the agreements reached through ecumenical dialogue are to have an impact on the life and witness of the churches and lead to a new stage of communion, then careful attention needs to be paid to processes for receiving the agreements so that the whole community might be involved in the process of discernment.¹⁶

32. Such a precise act of reception is in and of itself only a moment within broader processes which begin long before a text or statement is formally received, and continue long after such an action has taken place. There seems to be no common process for the reception of ecumenical texts, except that it is multilayered, multifaceted, difficult to identify, at times difficult to discern, and even more difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify a broadly similar pattern of reception operating across international church structures and Christian world communions. Stages of reception can be described as discovery, dialogue, and reflection on the insights of the dialogue; when appropriate, a formal act; and finally, ongoing reception.

33. Reception is born with the discovery of those brothers and sisters in Christ with whom we are called into fellowship. In a sense, the very action of discovery is an act of reception, when we learn to appreciate other churches and traditions and recognize that Christ

15. Cf. 2013 JWG Study Document *The Spiritual Roots of Ecumenism*, "Turning Together to Christ," second paragraph.

16. "The Nature and Purpose of Ecumenical Dialogue," in the *Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches: Eighth report*. (2005). WCC Publications, Geneva-Rome, no.58.

is active and present in their life. The establishment of dialogue is a further act of reception, when we recognize an ecumenical partner as someone whose presence is needed to achieve the full visible unity of the church. The early processes of reception therefore include discovery and dialogue. An essential aspect of the dialogue is the publication of any report or agreed statement, the promotion of its study, and reflection upon it by each of the dialogue partners. Such processes may well include rigorous theological analysis and consultation on a wide basis across the communion in question. Not all dialogues have been taken forward to a formal evaluation of the degree of ecumenical progress which the document represents. The goals of dialogue may vary from a search to lay the foundations of visible unity in one faith with one eucharistic fellowship, to a more general seeking of mutual understanding and cooperation.

34. A formal act of reception can itself take many forms. It may be a declaration by the highest authorities within a world communion, a canonical act¹⁷, or the adoption of the text by motion or resolution at a synodical or conciliar gathering or assembly. A mutual act of formal reception takes place when, after internal study, both partners respectively agree to commit themselves formally to the specific achievements of the dialogue.

35. For the fruits of the dialogue to be received it remains for the theological insights and convergence expressed in the documents to be acknowledged and lived out in the ongoing life of the receiving communions at every level of the church's life.

B. How the processes work

36. The following brief inventory includes descriptions of reception at the global level, drawing on conversations with the general secretaries and ecumenical officers of the Christian world communions. It highlights the way that international church structures, or Christian world communions, deal with the question of and response to the reception of ecumenical statements at the international level. While the list of short descriptions is not exhaustive, it does reflect different Christian traditions which are found around the world. They are listed here in alphabetical order.

37. In the formal process of reception, the interplay between the national and international levels of reception is evident in the *Anglican Communion*, but consultation across a body of autonomous provinces is inevitably slow and can be confusing to ecumenical partners. When reports are offered which need response from the churches of the Anglican

17. In many Anglican Churches, for example, ecumenical agreements will be incorporated into the church law of a province by a church canon or other legal process.

Communion, they are sent to each primate and the respective ecumenical officers by one of the Instruments of Communion (the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Primates Meetings, the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Consultative Council), usually the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC), accompanied by questions for analysis and response. Responses at the provincial level are submitted to an Instrument of Communion, usually the ACC but also the Lambeth Conferences, often depending when the meetings are held. The new Inter-Anglican Standing Committee on Unity, Faith and Order is addressing this question and may bring recommendations for the Anglican Communion.

38. Reception in the *Baptist World Alliance* (BWA) first begins with the Committee on Doctrine and Inter-church Relations. An instance of how the process works in the BWA is in its dialogue with the Anglican Communion, *Conversations Around the World, 2000-2005*. The BWA convened a group of twelve people to assist the Committee on Doctrine and Inter-church Relations, six of whom were ecumenically aware, and six who were not so ecumenically aware, to "test the waters." The final document prepared by the expanded committee was presented to the executive committee, but was commended, rather than voted on. An ongoing process of reception included things such as symposia at annual gatherings for questions and responses.

39. The multileveled and multilayered processes around reception are evident in the *Catholic Church*.¹⁸ When a dialogue has finished its work, the result—an agreed statement or text—is considered at this stage as no more than the property and work of the commission. The first stage of ecclesial reception begins when the text is sent by the dialogue commission to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU), which then studies the text and makes a judgment as to whether or not it leads to closer communion and is open to full visible unity. Then a decision is made by the PCPCU to publish the document together with a theological commentary. This is done in agreement with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF). It is then sent to episcopal conferences. If a document is to receive formal reception by church authorities in both communions sponsoring the dialogue, then, on the

18. The spiritual nature and complex process of reception as understood in Catholic ecclesiology was described by Cardinal J. Willebrands in a speech to the Assembly of the Lutheran Church in America (Toronto, Jul 3, 1984): "In Catholic understanding reception can be outlined as a process by means of which the People of God, in its differentiated structure and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, recognizes and accepts new insights, new witnesses of truth, and their forms of expression, because they are deemed to be in the line of the apostolic tradition and in harmony with the *sensus fidelium*, the sense of faith living in the whole People of God – the Church as a whole."

Catholic side, a joint commission of the PCPCU and the CDF is established to make the text the formal object of study and analysis. At this point, a text may be commended to the attention of the Pope, who is ultimately responsible for formal reception in the Catholic Church. This long process requires a growing agreement on the perceived value of the text; it depends on the perceived value of the text, and on whether the faithful begin to support it. Reception involves movement and reaction within the Church on the part of the bishops and the whole people of God.

40. Within the *Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*, agreed statements of the dialogues are sent to the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council, which in turn publishes the material and sends it to all the member churches. Because the Disciples of Christ have no official doctrine as in many other churches, how ecumenical texts are treated by the churches can vary enormously. Texts are often sent to congregations, ministers and other leaders, as well as to seminaries where they may function as teaching documents. Also, ecumenical texts are made available to local and national bilateral dialogues as resources. The fundamental question for the Disciples is, what does a text mean in life of the churches?

41. In the *Lutheran World Federation (LWF)* reception is a multileveled process, and is identified as a challenge for this Christian world communion. Creating and receiving a text is understood as occurring as a communion in communion. Dialogue reports are sent to the Committee on Ecumenical Affairs, which may give limited approval but not much more. An ecumenical text so approved is then sent to all the LWF member churches for study and comment. In practice, this stage of the reception process does not work well since many of the member churches lack the structures to give a theologically responsible response; the process appears biased towards the churches of the global north. Even in the northern churches this stage is weak, often due to lack of staff or interest. On the other hand, when the issues attract popular attention, such as with Lutheran-Roman Catholic or Lutheran-Mennonite agreed statements, more attention is paid to reception. An identified missing step is allowing dialogue statements to be part of the formation of clergy, and then being appropriated into the lives of congregations. The LWF recognises the need for better structures for ecumenical reception.

42. The process of reception in the *Mennonite World Conference* is evident in the case of the agreed statements from the Roman Catholic-Mennonite dialogue. When the report of this dialogue was completed it was sent to the Mennonite international governing body, which then commended the report to all churches with request for responses. Responses from the local churches, which are occasionally sent to faculties of theology, were then sent back to the General Council. If recommendations for follow-up are accepted, the responses and recommendations are then sent to the

Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity of the Catholic Church.

43. An instance of reception in the *Oriental Orthodox* tradition is seen in the Holy See of Cilicia of the Armenian Apostolic Church. It is the responsibility of the ecumenical officer to provide His Holiness the Catholicos a progress report on a dialogue, or a final agreed statement. Then the text may be sent to the Ecumenical Relations Committee, presided over by the Catholicos. If the text is approved by the Catholicos, it is then sent to the Central Religious Council (equivalent to the Holy Synod of other Orthodox churches) for approval. Because the Armenian Apostolic Church has two jurisdictions - Etchmiadzin and Cilicia - the agreement of one Holy Synod is then forwarded to the other; representatives of the two Holy Synods must meet and agree on the text. The final step is to send the report and joint decision of the two Holy Synods to all the Oriental Orthodox churches for final reception by the family of Oriental Orthodox churches. The process of reception is largely conditioned by the nature of the agreed text or statement.

44. In most of the local autocephalous *Eastern Orthodox* churches, the findings of bi-lateral theological dialogues as well as the documents of ecumenical organizations submitted to churches for action are normally forwarded by the Holy Synod of each church to their respective specialized synodical commission or department. These would assess each document and report back to the Holy Synod. In some cases (i.e. study documents) churches may formulate and offer their own response individually. In other cases (i.e. results of bilateral theological dialogues) there is always an awareness that further consultation and final agreement with other sister Orthodox churches is needed within the framework of the pan-Orthodox conciliar process. A concrete example of coordinated Orthodox efforts aiming at reception is from the Ecumenical Patriarchate. There are cases where the Ecumenical Patriarchate would convene or encourage inter-orthodox consultations (organized, for example, by the WCC) in order to articulate an Orthodox response or offer an Orthodox contribution to major ecumenical processes. Such responses or contributions are normally better known and received. In other cases, the Ecumenical Patriarchate would attempt to assess the level of consensus among Orthodox churches (e.g. in the case of bilateral theological dialogues) either by correspondence with the heads of Orthodox churches or by convening a consultation with the participation of all local churches. Another concrete example of reception within the Orthodox Church is the Russian Orthodox Church, where the appraisal of ecumenical texts is the responsibility of its Department for External Church Relations. Agreed statements are studied by the department, and then sent to the Holy Synod's theological commission for further analysis of the document. If approved, the text is then sent to faculties of theology for further theological study. The

final stage of reception is the bishops' council. The process can be very slow, as is reflected in the agreed statements arising from dialogue with the Oriental Orthodox churches.

45. The *Pentecostal* churches have not yet developed any formal mechanisms to receive texts arising from ecumenical dialogues. While a number of international bilateral and multilateral theological dialogues currently exist (Catholic, World Communion of Reformed Churches, WCC, and Ecumenical Patriarchate) or will soon begin (LWF, Baptist World Alliance), they include both formal and informal participants. Reports are currently published and widely studied by members of the worldwide Pentecostal academic community, and the leadership of the Pentecostal World Fellowship and a number of its participating churches is both aware of and encouraging of these encounters. It is already the case that Pentecostals have begun to reflect on how they might receive the fruits of their ecumenical encounters with others. On the whole, Pentecostals are more comfortable in speaking of a diffuse and Spirit-led process of reception, and indeed, of "receiving one another as Christ has received us." (cf. Rom. 15:7) This is both difficult to define and to recognise, but it does happen.

46. The *Salvation Army* does not make joint declarations, and does not have formal processes for reception. The results of its bilateral dialogues are sent to territorial leaders. They also appear in church publications and are sent to journals.

47. Among *Seventh Day Adventists*, the reception of ecumenical texts is under the auspices of the Council for Interchurch and Interfaith Relations (CIIR). When members of a given dialogue organized or coordinated by the General Conference have reached agreement and are ready to report their findings to the church for response, their dialogue statements are sent to the CIIR. If, in the judgment of the Council, the agreement is of interest to the whole church, it goes to the General Conference's administrative committee, and if accepted it is sent to the regional bodies for study and comment. If the agreement is not accepted at the local and regional levels, it is sent to the General Conference's CIIR for adjustment, which will be done in consultation with the dialogue partner. The Seventh Day Adventists now are engaged in an international bilateral dialogue with the Mennonite World Conference, and a regional bilateral dialogue with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

48. An example of reception in a *United and Uniting Church* is found in the United Reformed Church (URC) in the United Kingdom. The URC makes the distinction between dialogue reports which seek understanding and dialogues which seek action. Reception is an open process that can happen in less formal ways. For example, the reception of the teaching on the eucharist from *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* is seen in newer eucharistic liturgies. Reception of BEM's teaching on baptism is seen in a readiness to

accept believers and infant baptism. Reception of BEM's treatment on ministry has been more problematic, related to the challenges around the mutual recognition of ministry. The experience of the URC suggests that when churches have an open policy concerning reception, with no expectation that official action needs to be taken, informal reception may be much easier for churches than when reception is a more formal and complex process.

49. For the *World Communion of Reformed Churches* (WCRC), reports and agreed statements are first sent to the WCRC for publication. The report is then sent to members of the executive committee, then to the General Council. If the report is accepted by these bodies, the General Secretary of the WCRC then sends it to member churches with a commendation for study and action. In the experience of the WCRC, a number of different kinds of responses are possible, ranging from silence to relatively quick reactions. Often the process of receiving responses from member churches can take up to a decade, e.g. the Leuenberg Agreement of 1973 (Lutheran-Reformed), or the Reformed-Roman Catholic dialogue. Formal reception is experienced as a challenge for the WCRC, with the expressed need for more official feedback and response. On the other hand, informally, agreed statements are received in other ways at various levels of the life of the church.

50. Within the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), responsibility for ecumenical dialogues belongs to the WEA International Council. Agreed statements are committed to this body, and it decides whether it has respect from the WEA side. If a statement merits such respect, it is then sent out to the corresponding bodies in the national Alliance headquarters, and then from there to the grassroots level of local congregations. Churches who share an agreement with the dialogue statement signal so at national meetings.

51. Dialogues at the international level report every five years to the major quinquennial gathering of the *World Methodist Council* (WMC). The ecumenical reports are introduced at the WMC, questions are taken, and they are welcomed or "received" in this manner. In emerging practice, ecumenical texts are sent beforehand to the officers of the Council (now also to a new steering committee) and to the Standing Committee on Ecumenical Relations (formerly "on Ecumenics and Dialogue"), and thence to all delegates of the member churches. The churches are asked to respond to the proposed texts and report their views. At its formal gathering, the WMC is asked to affirm the agreed statements of the theological dialogues; such an affirmation is registered and recorded within the minutes of the Council. The texts are published after authorisation for use by member churches and indeed the wider public. The current test-case for a higher degree of reception is the process around the recent synthesis of the last forty years of Methodist-Roman Catholic dialogue, *Together to Holiness*, which was

presented to the WMC in 2011. The joint report noted those doctrinal topics on which there is consensus; those where there exists a degree of convergence, and those which are acknowledged as being more resistant to such agreement and which are commended to the Commission's future work.

52. In summary, even a preliminary outline of these processes indicates something of the complexity and uncertainty attached to the processes of reception. Moreover, the processes described above can only give some indication of the formal ways in which reports and agreed statements are brought to the point of a formal act of reception. There remains the task of ongoing reception, which is the most vital if a real change is to be brought about in the quality of *koinonia* that a formal act of reception might invite or entail.

53. The most formidable challenge facing the reception of the fruits of ecumenical dialogues must relate to the way in which documents that have received formal approval are permitted to impact the lived experience of the faithful in mission and witness. It is all too possible for a document of convergence to remain on the shelves of an ecumenical office or department without even the fact of its existence becoming widely known and received by the churches at the local level. It is vital in addressing the processes of reception therefore that attention is given to all elements of the process.

C. Learning points and recommendations

1. Learning points

- There is growing awareness of the wide diversity of processes for reception in the life of different churches.
- Reception includes stages of discovery, dialogue, reflection, formal act (when mandated) and ongoing reception in the life of the churches.
- No church structures necessarily guarantee reception. Unless there is a will at all levels to enter the process of reception, it will not occur.
- The process of reception cannot begin until Christians discover Christ at work in one another. Reception is born when space is created to welcome the other in our midst.
- If reception is to be successful the entire people of God must be involved throughout its multifaceted processes.
- When churches enter the dynamic of reception they move from isolation and self-sufficiency towards a deepening *koinonia*. International church structures and Christian world communions in particular facilitate this process. They become instruments of and vehicles for reception.

2. Recommendations

For reception to be concretely expressed in the life of the church, we propose the following recommendations:

- ensure that structures and opportunities exist to assist the entire people of God to discover their brothers and sisters in Christ in other traditions;
- encourage all Christian leaders and the faithful to take responsibility for the ecumenical process by a commitment to concrete action;
- foster openness to a diversity that is not irreconcilable with the gospel, but which may enrich the life of the churches and be an opportunity rather than a problem for *koinonia*;
- encourage those holding authority at any level to act in service of the ecumenical movement by fostering an appropriation of the fruits of ecumenical engagement at all levels;
- commit themselves to the ecumenical formation of the entire people of God in order to guarantee growth in fidelity to discipleship in an ecumenical age.

III. OVERCOMING THE DIVISIONS OF THE PAST: RECEPTION PROMOTING RECONCILIATION

A. The new context fostering reception

54. The twentieth century transformed Christian relationships, as modern means of transport and communication allowed much closer and more frequent contact than in ages past. In the various examples explored below, it was the impact of broader ecumenical contact that created an atmosphere enabling Christians of various traditions to begin to cooperate with each other, first in the great movements coming immediately from the time of Edinburgh 1910 - the Missionary Movement, Faith and Order, Life and Work, co-operation in education and the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This ecumenical movement itself sustained and prompted new initiatives. Christians taking part in these movements began in some degree to receive one another as co-workers in Christ seeking the unity for which he prayed (cf. John 17:21). More specifically, as these movements led to the creation of the World Council of Churches in 1948, the churches themselves, who were now represented together in the WCC, began to receive one another as communities, and gradually to develop common cause for the sake of Christ. Though the Roman Catholic Church was not a member, some of its theologians were in contact with the WCC from the 1950s.

55. During the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church and the WCC began to develop a formal and regular relationship, and from that time, to receive each other as partners in the one ecumenical movement. At Vatican II, through the observers sent by the WCC, the churches and Christian world communions began to

know the Catholic Church and vice versa. In this context, initial steps were taken to receive one another in Christ, which would help them later to take more profound steps towards facing the divisions of the past. They began to recognize together the degree to which they hold the faith in common despite those divisions. The stage was set for addressing the divisive issues of the past.

56. In order to understand the dimensions of ecumenical reception, it will be useful, first, to describe some instances when reception has succeeded. In the twentieth century, reception of ecumenical insights has contributed to overcoming some conflicts that led to the three most significant divisions in the history of Christianity. These divisions took place in the fifth century after the Councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451), in the eleventh century (1054), and in the sixteenth century with the reformation.

B. Towards overcoming fifth century divisions

57. In the fifth century some churches, for various reasons, did not receive certain theological statements of the Councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451). Reactions to the Christological formulations of the Council of Chalcedon led to a separation within Christianity, a division which has lasted until today. Within the modern ecumenical movement, dialogue has led to clarification of issues which contributed, then, to misunderstanding. New contacts and dialogue between Oriental Orthodox churches¹⁹, the churches which “historically inherit a refusal of the Christological teachings of the Council of Chalcedon,”²⁰ and those such as the Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox churches which accepted those teachings, have led to much agreement today on the mystery of Christ.

58. New contacts between Oriental Orthodox churches and the Catholic Church at Vatican II were important for building trust after centuries of separation. New insights and clarifications achieved in dialogue, whether at the Pro Oriente Foundation in Vienna starting in 1971, or in the multilateral dialogue of Faith and Order, or in bilateral dialogue, have helped those involved to formulate Christological statements expressing the same faith in Jesus Christ. These new insights and clarifications have been received and expressed in authoritative common Christological declarations formulated by the Bishops of Rome, especially Paul VI and John Paul II, with Patriarchs of several Oriental Orthodox churches. The Eastern Orthodox-Oriental Orthodox dialogue has also formulated common Christological statements. Dialogues between Oriental Orthodox and significant

19. The Coptic, Syrian, Armenian, Ethiopian, Eritrean, and Indian (Malankara) Orthodox Churches.

20. Ronald G. Roberson, *Oriental Orthodox-Roman Catholic Dialogue*. DEM, pp.862-63.

Western churches have likewise achieved agreed statements on Christology, presented below in paragraph 64.

1. Common Christological declarations

a. Bishops of Rome and Oriental Orthodox Patriarchs.²¹

59. The first of these declarations, between Pope Paul VI and Coptic Orthodox Pope Shenouda III (May 10, 1973), stated: “we confess one faith in the Triune God, the divinity of the Only Begotten Son of God, the second person of the Holy Trinity ... who for us was incarnate, assuming for Himself a real body with a rational soul, and who shared with us our humanity but without sin. We confess that our Lord and God and Saviour and King...Jesus Christ is perfect God with respect to His Divinity, perfect man with respect to his humanity. In Him His divinity is united with his humanity in a real, perfect union without mingling, without commixtion, without confusion, without alteration, without division, without separation. His divinity did not separate from his humanity...not for the twinkling of an eye.”²²

60. Christological language in the same line, confessing Jesus Christ as perfect in his divinity and perfect in his humanity, can be found also in common declarations between: Pope John Paul II and Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Mar Ignatius Zakka I Iwas (June, 1984),²³ John Paul II and Catholicos Karekin I of the Armenian Apostolic See of Etchmiadzin (December, 1996)²⁴ and re-affirmed in the common declaration signed by John Paul II and Catholicos Aram I of the Armenian Apostolic See of Cilicia (January, 1997).²⁵ It is found, too, in the doctrinal agreement on Christology approved by Pope John Paul II and Catholicos Mar Basilius Marthoma Matthews I of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church (June 3, 1990).²⁶

21. The agreements expressed in this section (nos. 59-61) “taken together illustrate the virtual resolution of the Christological controversies, as far as the Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches are concerned, resulting from reactions to the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon in the fifth century.” Edward Idris Cardinal Cassidy and Bishop Pierre Duprey. (1999) “Ecumenical Advances 1960-1999: Towards the New Millennium,” Pontifical Council For Promoting Christian Unity *Information Service* [=IS] 101:157-58, citation 158.

22. “Visit of His Holiness Amba Shenouda III, Common Declaration,” *IS* 22(1973): 9.

23. “Common Declaration of Pope John Paul II and HH Mar Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, *IS* 55(1984):62.

24. “Common Declaration of John Paul II and Catholicos Karekin I,” *IS* 94(1997):30.

25. “Common Declaration of the Pope and the Catholicos,” *IS* 95(1997):80.

26. Statement of the Joint Commission,” *IS* 73(1990): 39.

b. The Bishop of Rome and the Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East

61. In a process with another ancient church, the Assyrian Church of the East, Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV also addressed the conflicts arising from the Council of Ephesus 431. In their common declaration of 11 November 1994, similar to those above, they confessed “our Lord Jesus Christ is true God and true man, perfect in his divinity, perfect in his humanity, consubstantial with the Father and consubstantial with us in all things but sin. His divinity and his humanity are united in one person without confusion or change, without division or separation. In him has been preserved the difference of the natures of the divinity and humanity, with all of their properties, faculties and operations.”²⁷

c. The official dialogue of the Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches

62. This dialogue said: “We have inherited from our Fathers in Christ the one apostolic faith and traditions, though as churches we have been separated from each other for centuries. The Logos, eternally consubstantial with the Father and the Holy Spirit in His Divinity, has in these last days, become incarnate of the Holy Spirit and Blessed Virgin Mary Theotokos, and thus became man, consubstantial with us in His humanity but without sin. He is true God and true Man at the same time, perfect in His Divinity, perfect in His humanity. Because the one she bore in her womb was at the same time fully God as well as fully human we call the Blessed Virgin Theotokos” (First Agreed Statement, 1989).²⁸

63. The consequences of the Christological agreements reached in the dialogue between the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches have not been fully received by the respective constituencies. Eucharistic communion, for instance, has not been restored. Other issues remain, such as lifting the anathemas against one another’s saints, and questions about liturgical and ascetical traditions. Yet there are other signs of rapprochement. For instance, as a result of the Christological agreements, the Coptic Orthodox no longer re-baptize members of the Eastern Orthodox. Within the unique context of Syrian ecumenism, the two Antiochian patriarchates experience the pastoral reality of sacramental communion.

27. “Common Christological Declaration between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East,” *IS* 88(1995):2.

28. Jeffrey Gros, FSC, Harding Meyer, William G. Rusch, eds. (2000) *Growth in Agreement II: Reports and agreed statements of ecumenical conversations on a world level 1982-1998* [=GA II] WCC Publications, Geneva and William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids Michigan/Cambridge, p.192.

d. Christological agreement in other bilateral dialogues

64. Christological agreement is expressed in contacts and dialogues of other churches with the Oriental Orthodox churches. These include the Common Declaration of Pope Shenouda III and Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie (October 1, 1987),²⁹ international dialogue reports such as the *Agreed statement on Christology* of the International Reformed-Oriental Orthodox Dialogue (September 13, 1994),³⁰ and the *Agreed Statement on Christology* of the Anglican-Oriental Orthodox International Commission (November 5-10, 2002).³¹ Agreement on Christology is found also in dialogues between others including the *Agreed Statement on Christology* of the Old Catholic-Orthodox dialogue (1975 and 1977),³² the 1977 Reformed—Catholic International Dialogue report *Presence of Christ in Church and World* (no. 84), and the 1995 Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission report *Authority in and of the Church* (no. 5a).

65. Thus, the dialogues taken together have resulted in widespread agreement on the nature and mystery of Christ. Agreement has been formally received by the Catholic Church and certain Oriental Orthodox churches through common Christological declarations of popes and patriarchs which illustrate, for them, the basic resolution of the fifth century Christological controversies (cf. note 17). Formal reception processes concerning these agreements are not yet complete and continue within other churches. It is clear that other issues also still need to be resolved. Nevertheless the broad Christological agreement seen above will enable the churches to get beyond a particular divisive fifth century conflict, and assist them in confessing together before the world the same faith in Jesus Christ, true God and true man.

C. Towards overcoming the divisions of 1054

66. For more than nine centuries, since the mutual excommunications in 1054 between representatives of the Sees of Rome and Constantinople, and intensified by later events, the relationship between the Orthodox East and the Latin West had been characterized by schism, hostility, and misunderstanding. In the twentieth century, and especially since the Second Vatican Council, Orthodox and Catholics have

29. *GA II*, pp.110-111.

30. *GA II*, pp.292-93.

31. Jeffrey Gros, FSC, Thomas Best, Lorelei F. Fuchs, SA., eds. (2007) *Growth in Agreement III: International dialogue texts and agreed statements, 1998-2005* [=GA III]. WCC Publications, Geneva and William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, pp.35-37.

32. Harding Meyer and Lukas Vischer, eds. (1984) *Growth in Agreement: Reports and agreed statements of ecumenical conversations on a world level* [=GA]. Paulist Press, New York/Ramsey and World Council of Churches, Geneva, pp.396-98.

renewed relationships in a variety of ways. They gradually are coming to recognize and mutually receive one another as “sister churches”, a designation which indicates that they share to a profound degree the same apostolic faith, and participate in the one apostolic succession. Nonetheless, there are still issues to be resolved before full communion is achieved.

67. The public reading of the Common Declaration of Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I and Pope Paul VI on 7 December 1965³³ at the conclusion of Vatican II and simultaneously at St. Peter’s Basilica and at the Phanar, was an important context for this new relationship. Pope and Patriarch, addressing the mutual excommunications levelled at one another in 1054 by the legates of the Roman See and the Patriarch and Synod of Constantinople, expressed their regret for the sad events of that time. They stated that those mutual excommunications brought consequences which “went much further than their authors had intended or expected,” and, most critically, “[t]heir censures were aimed at the persons concerned and not on the Churches; they were not meant to break the ecclesial communion between the Sees of Rome and Constantinople”(no.3). They declared together that they “regret and wish to erase from memory and from the midst of the Church the sentences of excommunication which followed them and consign them to oblivion”(no. 4b). They expressed hope that this action, fostering a healing of bitter memories of the past, would be followed by dialogue leading them to full communion of faith and sacramental life which obtained between them for the first thousand years of the life of the church.

68. Since the early 1960s, ecumenical patriarchs and popes, in addressing one another, have used the designation “sister church” to describe the relationship of Orthodox and Catholic Churches.³⁴ It appears to have been first used by the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I in replying on 12 April 1962 to a letter from Cardinal Augustin Bea.³⁵ In the period between 1962 and 1967, the Ecumenical Patriarch or his representative addressed the Church of Rome as “sister church” seven times.³⁶ Pope Paul VI first used this

33. The “Common Declaration of Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I, 7 December 1965.” Austin Flannery O.P., ed., *Vatican Council II. The Conciliar and Postconciliar Documents*. (1988, Revised edition) Costello Publishing Company, Northport, New York, pp.471-73.

34. In Catholic usage, sister churches are particular churches or groupings of particular churches, for example the Patriarchates or metropolitan provinces among themselves.

35. E.J. Stormon, S.J. Editor and translator. *Towards the Healing of Schism: The Sees of Rome and Constantinople. Public statements and correspondence between the Holy See and the Ecumenical Patriarchate 1958-1984* (1987) Paulist Press, New York Mahwah, Doc 10, p.35.

36. For example, in his statement to the Holy Synod on the death of Pope John XXIII in 1963, Athenagoras said that “in the person of the late venerable leader of our sister Church

designation in his letter (*Anno Ineunte*) of 25 July 1967 to Athenagoras I, describing also its significant theological meaning. Both have received the faith of the apostles, and by baptism are one in Christ. And “in virtue of the apostolic succession, we are united more closely by the priesthood and the Eucharist...In each local Church this mystery of divine love is enacted, and surely this is the ground of the traditional and very beautiful expression ‘sister churches’ which local churches were fond of applying to one another.” “For centuries we lived this life of ‘sister churches’ and together held the Ecumenical Councils which guarded the deposit of faith against all corruption. And now, after a long period of division and mutual misunderstanding, the Lord is enabling us to discover ourselves as ‘sister churches’ once more, in spite of the obstacles which were once raised between us.”³⁷ And in a 1971 letter to Athenagoras, Pope Paul VI expressed his view that between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches “there already exists a communion which is almost complete—though still short of perfection—deriving from our common participation in the mystery of Christ and his Church.”³⁸

69. Their successors, too, have articulated this mutual designation together in common declarations. Pope John Paul II and Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I announced together on 30 November 1979 the beginning of a theological dialogue which envisages “an advance towards the reestablishment of full communion between the Catholic and Orthodox sister Churches...”³⁹ In their common declaration of 29 June 1995, John Paul II and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, reflecting on the results of the dialogue which had affirmed “that our churches recognize one another as sister churches, responsible together for safeguarding the one church of God”, concluded that these affirmations “not only hasten the way to solving the existing difficulties, but henceforth enable Catholics and Orthodox to give a common witness of faith”.⁴⁰

70. Besides the Sees of Rome and Constantinople, this designation has also been used by Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Teoctist of the Orthodox Church of Romania in their common declaration of 12 October 2002. Stating that “[i]n accord with the traditional beautiful expression, the particular churches like to call one another ‘sister churches’,” they point to the implications this recognition has for mission: “[t]o be open to this dimension means collaborating to restore

of Rome we discerned an inspired labourer well able...to train his gaze on those points of the teaching of the Lord and of apostolic tradition which are common to both the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches.”⁴ June 1963, Stormon, pp.44-45. Other usages of this designation can be seen in Stormon pp.51-52, 71, 76, 86, 134.

37. Stormon, 161-162.

38. 8 February 1971, Stormon, 231-232, citation 232.

39. Stormon, p.367.

40. In *GA II*, p.686.

to Europe its deepest ethos and its truly human face.”⁴¹ In some cases, as in the relations between the Church of Rome and the Moscow Patriarchate, there have not been common declarations. But the mutual recognition of sacraments and holy orders, reflecting the theological basis of the designation “sister churches” is known in other ways.⁴²

71. Similarly, this designation has also been used, in at least one instance, between a pope and an Oriental Orthodox patriarch. In their common declaration on 23 June 1984, Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Mar Ignatius Zakka I Iwas of the Syrian Orthodox Church, indicate that if their faithful find access to a priest of their own church materially or morally impossible, “we authorize them in such cases to ask for the sacraments of penance, eucharist and anointing of the sick from lawful priests of either of our two sister churches, when they need them.”⁴³

72. The international Orthodox-Roman Catholic dialogue, too, on the basis of the concept of “sister churches,” proposed a way to resolve an old conflict between them concerning the role of Eastern Catholic churches, which flared up again following the fall of communism in 1989. Its 1993 report, *Uniatism: Method of Union of the Past, and the Present Search for Full Communion*, on the one hand affirms the rights and obligations of Eastern Catholic churches to undertake their mission (cf. no. 16). On the other hand, it indicates that the “uniatism” which developed in events and conflicts of centuries ago can today be interpreted as a form of missionary apostolate against the other (no.12, cf. 10-11) and thus “can no longer be accepted neither as a method to be followed nor as a model of the unity our churches are seeking.” The report argues “that what Christ has entrusted to his church – profession of apostolic faith, participation in the sacraments, above all the one priesthood celebrating the one sacrifice of Christ, the apostolic succession of bishops - cannot be considered the exclusive property of one of our churches....It is in this perspective that the Catholic churches and the Orthodox churches recognize each other as sister churches, responsible together for maintaining the church of God in fidelity....”(nos.13, 14, cf.12).

73. In regard to those same tensions between Orthodox and Catholics after the changes in Eastern Europe, John Paul II in his May 31, 1991 Letter to Bishops of Europe on relations between Catholics and

Orthodox in the new situation of central and eastern Europe, made clear that “with these Churches relations are to be fostered as between sister churches....”⁴⁴

74. Many other developments have fostered this relationship. Although Orthodox and Catholics do not yet share full communion, this gradual mutual reception of each other as sister churches calls attention to the deep bonds of faith they continued to share, even though separated for more than nine centuries, and share more intensely now. Despite continuing areas of divergence between them, much of what has separated them has been overcome.

75. Significant and longstanding theological dialogue has been carried out between the Orthodox churches and other Western churches, such as Anglican-Orthodox dialogue, Lutheran-Orthodox dialogue, Methodist-Orthodox dialogue, Old Catholic-Orthodox dialogue, and Reformed-Orthodox dialogue. Participation by the Orthodox churches in the WCC and the numerous theological dialogues that have been initiated have led to great understanding and co-operation. All these steps bear witness to a greater sense of reconciliation between East and West.

D. Towards overcoming divisions from the sixteenth century

76. Some of the most intense divisions in the history of the Church took place in the sixteenth century. Within the complex ecclesiastical and political situation of that time, reformers from different countries criticized and sought to revise practices inherited from late medieval Christianity within the Catholic Church. Such efforts to reform and renew often led to a break in communion with the See of Rome; other reforms occurred within the Catholic Church. But separated churches, shaped by the Protestant Reformation, were in serious conflict with each other as much as they were with the Catholic Church. Nonetheless, in a variety of ways, recent ecumenical contact and dialogue have helped to resolve some of the issues leading to division in that century. Receiving the results of dialogue has enabled separated Christians to begin to receive one another again. Examples of the way in which different churches have been able to receive each other multiplied in the twentieth century.

1. Early examples of mutual reception

77. a. An early example of this can be found in the Bonn Agreement between the Anglican and Old Catholic churches in 1931. While not resolving a division from the 16th century, this agreement stands perhaps as a strong example of explicit reception in a

41. In *GA III*, pp.180-181.

42. The official attitude of the Church of Russia, among others, “is recognizing and respecting the Holy Orders and full sacramentality of the Roman Catholic Church.” See “Ecclesiological and Ecumenical Implications of a Common Baptism. A JWG Study”, no.62. *Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches: Eighth report*, Geneva-Rome, 2005. (2005) WCC Publications, Geneva, p.59.

43. In *GA II*, pp.692-93.

44. Letter of Pope John Paul II “To Bishops of Europe on Relations Between Catholics and Orthodox in the New Situation of Central and Eastern Europe, May 31, 1991.” *IS* 81(1992): 103.

relatively simple model. The Bonn Agreement is essentially an acknowledgement of reception. The churches of the Anglican Communion and of the Union of Utrecht established full communion. This has not been without its difficulties. Questions still remain about parallel jurisdictions in some European countries, and the traditions remain distinct and separate, not in full organic unity. Nevertheless, the Bonn Agreement institutes full mutual reception of the faith, sacraments and ministry by these two families of churches.

78. b. The South Asian experience of the united churches is also worth recording. Starting in the 1940s churches of the various Protestant and Anglican traditions in North and South India, in Pakistan and Bangladesh, were able to receive one another into a united fellowship and a reconciled ministry. And thus were born the Church of South India (1947), the Church of North India (1970), the Church of Pakistan (1970), and the Church of Bangladesh (1970). The mechanisms of reconciliation varied and were sometimes seen as controversial and partial in their implementation, but one generation later, the churches which participated in the various schemes of unity have now fully received one another and been united into single churches.

79. c. In the same way that Anglicans and Old Catholics have been able to receive one another, so the churches of the Anglican Communion have been able to extend reception to other churches. Sometimes this has meant that churches, such as the Lusitanian Church of Portugal (1963) and the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church (1980), have been welcomed into full membership of the Anglican Communion; in other cases, such as the Independent Church of the Philippines (1960) and the Mar Thoma Church of South India, the faith, sacraments and ministry of churches have been mutually received without formal and organic integration.

80. These processes have sometimes been at work at the regional level as well. The Porvoo Agreement between the Anglican Churches of the British and Irish Isles and the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches involves the full reception of one another's lives as churches, including the reception of one another's members, ministries and sacraments.

81. Further examples could be adduced. What is clear so far is that several examples exist in which mutual reception has been possible and indeed, has resulted. Churches have been able to recognize the fullness of the presence of the Church in one another and have translated that into concrete agreement and action - in some cases leading to full organic unity.

2. More recent examples of successful reception: Leuenberg and Porvoo

82. The 16th century movement of the Reformation was meant to renew the Church in accordance with the

gospel and the ecclesial formation of the early Christian church. Within this Reformation context, however, the understandings of what was needed varied in different places in Europe due to the different political, social and cultural contexts in which theologians and laity experienced church life. Consequently, several strands developed within this broad movement which derived their energy from what was perceived as the rediscovery of the true message of the Gospel. What united them was the common conviction of God's unconditional grace and the justification by faith alone. The reformers understood the Bible as the decisive source for Christian faith and teaching. According to this renewed insight into God's grace and justice, there was broad agreement among the reformers on the major issues that needed to be reformed, such as the praxis of penitence and indulgences.

83. Theological reflection on the understanding of the sacraments and the Christology behind them and on questions of predestination, however, led to conflicting positions, especially among reformers in Wittenberg and in Switzerland. Moreover, different political circumstances allowed for different institutional forms by which the reforms were established, especially with respect to ministry and church order. This is at least part of the reason for the fact that along with the modern ecumenical movement, European churches, in their effort to overcome separation, developed two different models to do so on the grounds of their heritage from the Reformation.

a. The community of Protestant churches in Europe

84. In 1973, Lutheran, Reformed and United churches in Europe together with pre-Reformation churches, the Waldensian Church and the Church of Czech Brethren, were successful in developing the *Leuenberg Concord* (LC), an agreement by which the traditional church dividing issues could be resolved on the grounds of a common understanding of the gospel. In the document itself, historical distance is counted as an advantage. This has made it easier for churches to discern common elements in their teaching despite the former differences.

In the course of four hundred years of history, the churches have been led to new and similar ways of thinking and living; by theological wrestling with the questions of modern times, by advances of biblical research, by the movements of church renewal, and by the rediscovery of the ecumenical horizon. ... In the process they have learned to distinguish between the fundamental witness of the Reformation confessions of faith and their historically-conditioned thought forms. (LC 5)

85. On the grounds of a common understanding of the Gospel proclaiming God's gracious and unconditioned justification as the message of his free grace (LC 7-12), the document offers a common definition of baptism and the Lord's supper (LC 14-

15). While the doctrine of justification was not controversial in the Reformation period and in later confessional development, the mutual condemnations were intimately connected with a Christological difference. Therefore, the heart of the *Leuenberg Concord* is the paragraph on Christology, saying: “In the true man Jesus Christ, the eternal Son, and so God himself, has bestowed himself upon mankind for its salvation. In the word of the promise and in the sacraments, the Holy Spirit, and so God himself, makes the crucified and risen Jesus present to us.” (LC 21) The shaping of church fellowship was possible on the ground of Article VII of the *Augsburg Confession*. In this article reformers confess and teach:

that one holy church is to continue forever. The church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the sacraments are rightly administered. And to the true unity of the church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike.

86. According to this understanding of church unity, churches may on the ground of their shared understanding of the gospel be able to “accord each other fellowship in word and sacrament and strive for the fullest possible co-operation in witness and service to the world.” (LC 29) This “includes the mutual recognition of ordination and the freedom to provide for intercelebration.” (LC 33)

87. The *Leuenberg Concord* has served successfully as an agreement for more than one hundred European churches to be able to declare church fellowship to the present day. The *Leuenberg Concord* has been extended beyond Europe. The declaration of church fellowship, however, is not to be equated with its realization, but it needs a deepening of theological reflection with respect to contemporary challenges in various contexts of the lives of churches. Thus, the realization of church fellowship is bound in with the reception of the gospel and the deepening of its common understanding and co-operation. Only in this process does church fellowship become a reality.

88. The study document *The Church of Jesus Christ*⁴⁵ makes clear that to declare church fellowship is not just an option, but should be understood as an obligation in the light of the Gospel whenever a church or an ecclesial community is recognized to truly proclaim the gospel and adequately administer the sacraments and

thereby to display the marks “of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church”⁴⁶.

b. The Community of British and Irish Anglican Churches and Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches – the Porvoo Communion

89. While the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) adopted the heritage of the Reformation by expounding the constitutive role of the gospel for understanding the unity of the church, in some ways a similar approach was taken by Anglican and Lutheran churches of northern Europe, this time however with a strong focus on the interrelation between the unity, apostolicity and the ministry of the church. By *The Porvoo Common Statement*⁴⁷ (PC) prepared in 1992 and celebrated in Porvoo Cathedral in 1996, these churches were able to mutually “acknowledge one another's churches as churches belonging to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ and truly participating in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God.” (PC 58a) For them this entails acknowledging “that in all our churches the Word of God is authentically preached, and the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist are duly administered” and “that all our churches share in the common confession of the apostolic faith.” (PC 58a)

90. While the Statement includes an agreement in faith, there is no requirement to mutually accept doctrinal formulations characteristic of the distinctive traditions. What is, however, required is “to face and overcome the remaining obstacles to still closer communion.” (PC 33) Furthermore, the agreement does not only include the acknowledgment of one another's ordained ministries and of the personal, collegial and communal dimension of oversight, but also the declaration that “the episcopal office is valued and maintained in all our churches as a visible sign expressing and serving the Church's unity and continuity in apostolic life, mission and ministry.” (PC 58)

91. A special characteristic of the Porvoo Agreement consists in the fact that it conceives of the episcopal office as a visible sign of the apostolicity of the Church in terms of historic episcopal succession and includes the mutual acknowledgment of this sign as part of the church communion. Those churches who did not preserve the sign of historic episcopal succession agree to resume it again on joining the Porvoo Communion. It is important to note that the churches regard the sign of episcopal historic succession as part of their apostolicity and full visible unity but at the same time emphasize that it:

45. *The Church of Jesus Christ: The contribution of the Reformation towards ecumenical dialogue on church unity.* (1995) Edited on behalf of the Executive Committee for the Leuenberg Church Fellowship by Wilhelm Hüffmeier. Leuenberg Texts 11, Frankfurt am Main.

46. The Church of Jesus Christ, p.126.

47. Together in Mission and Ministry: Conversations between the British and Irish Anglican churches and the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches: The Porvoo Common Statement, with essays on church and ministry in Northern Europe. (1993) Church House Publishing, London.

does not by itself guarantee the fidelity of a church to every aspect of the apostolic faith, life and mission. [...] Nor does the sign guarantee the personal faithfulness of the bishop. Nonetheless, the retention of the sign remains a permanent challenge to fidelity and to unity, a summons to witness to, and a commission to realize more fully, the permanent characteristics of the Church of the apostles. (PC 51)

92. It is also important that the mutual acknowledgment of the churches and ministries “is theologically prior to the use of the sign of the laying on of hands in the historic succession. Resumption of the use of the sign does not imply an adverse judgment on the ministries of those churches which did not previously make use of the sign. It is rather a means of making more visible the unity and continuity of the Church at all times and in all places.” (PC 53) Like in the CPCE, the mutual acknowledgment is seen as a step on a way to further growth in communion. Hence, the agreement entails the commitment:

to share a common life in mission and service, to pray for and with one another, and to share resources; ... to encourage consultations of representatives of our churches, and to facilitate learning and exchange of ideas and information in theological and pastoral matters; to establish a contact group to nurture our growth in communion and to co-ordinate the implementation of this agreement.” (PC 58b)

93. While the Porvoo communion conceives the exchange of ministers to be dependent upon the common acknowledgment and use of the sign of historic episcopal succession, within CPCE the mutual acknowledgment and exchange of ordained ministers is not bound to the retention of the sign of historic episcopal succession. This in fact represents a major difference between the two movements. While agreement on the historic episcopal succession is a central aspect of the Porvoo communion, it has no role at all in the CPCE. It will be a task for CPCE and the Porvoo communion to further discuss the issue of full visible unity as they wish to deepen their ecumenical relations, which may be possible by further rethinking the heritage of the Reformation. With respect to the topic of reception, however, they both provide an example of how reception can be ecumenically successful. For in both of these ecumenical ventures churches were able to realize that their common faith in the gospel would allow for mutual acknowledgment and conceive this as a stage on the way towards further growth in communion.

3. The continuing reception of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification

94. After decades of international and national dialogue following Vatican II, Lutherans and Catholics arrived at a consensus in basic truths concerning the

understanding of the doctrine of justification, which was the theological issue at the heart of Luther’s conflict with the authorities of the Church. The signing of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ)* in 1999 by the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church was an important official step towards overcoming a major cause of division in the sixteenth century. The *Joint Declaration* expresses formal agreement on basic truths of the doctrine of justification, indicating that the mutual condemnations of the sixteenth century do not apply to the understanding of justification expressed therein. The JWG Eighth Report’s study document, *The Nature and Purpose of Ecumenical Dialogue* (no. 74), included a case study illustrating factors involving the reception of the *Joint Declaration*. But important developments have taken place since then, leading to the Declaration’s continuing reception in the wider ecumenical world.

95. The LWF and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) have used the important anniversaries of the 1999 signing to celebrate it again together and renew commitment to this agreement - the fifth anniversary in 2004 in a celebration in South Africa and the tenth anniversary in a celebration in Augsburg, Germany, among others.

96. It is very significant that another Christian world communion, the World Methodist Council (WMC), received the *Joint Declaration* by formally associating itself with it in 2006. The historic significance of this is that now two Christian world communions rooted in the Reformation and the Roman Catholic Church together have a formal agreement on this theological issue which was at the heart of conflict between Catholics and Protestants in the sixteenth century.

97. The steps toward this development are themselves examples of ecumenical reception. The remote background is that the mutual understanding, respect and friendship in Methodist-Catholic relations resulting from the forty years of Methodist-Catholic dialogue,⁴⁸ and the many years of collaboration between the LWF and the WMC,⁴⁹ created an atmosphere which fostered this development. More proximately, starting in 1999, the WMC resolved to explore with the LWF and the Catholic Church “the possibility for the WMC and its member churches to become officially associated” with the *JDDJ*. In 2001, the LWF and the Catholic Church together invited the World Methodist Council and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches to a meeting in Columbus, Ohio, to explore the possibility of their associating with the *Joint Declaration*. While both

48. Cf. Address of Cardinal Walter Kasper, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, at the meeting of the World Methodist Council in Seoul, Korea, July, 2006, when the WMC accepted the *JDDJ*. *IS* 122(2006):58.

49. Cf. address of The Revd Dr Ishmael Noko, LWF general secretary at the meeting of the World Methodist Council, 2006, when it accepted the *JDDJ*. *IS* 122(2006):59.

expressed interest, the WMC took steps shortly afterwards to move ahead on this.

98. Such association was an unprecedented step. Different bilateral and multilateral dialogues can and do influence each other. But in this case a third Christian world communion would formally relate itself to - that is, receive - an official agreement achieved by two other world communions as a result of years of intense bilateral dialogue. The WMC had not been involved in that bilateral nor had the Methodist - Catholic dialogue treated the issue of justification to the same extent as had the Lutheran - Catholic dialogue.

99. By what process did the WMC receive the *JDDJ*?⁵⁰ Two major steps were involved in this process. First, extensive consultation among Methodists within the WMC developed and approved a "*Methodist Statement of Association with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*"⁵¹. While doing this, they were in continuing consultation with appropriate bodies of the LWF and the PCPCU. In this *Statement of Association*, WMC churches indicate that the common understanding of justification as outlined in the *JDDJ*'s nos.15-17 "corresponds to Methodist doctrine" (no.2). They "agree also with what Lutherans and Roman Catholics say together about some of the crucial issues in the doctrine of justification which were disputed between them since the time of the Reformation"⁵² and accept the explanations which Lutherans and Catholics respectively give concerning their respective positions on these issues⁵³ and "do not consider these diverse emphases sufficient cause for division between either party and Methodists" (no.3). Besides these affirmations, they also add a number of paragraphs giving a particular Methodist emphasis, for example the deep connection between justification and sanctification that has always been crucial for the Methodist understanding of the biblical doctrine of justification (no. 4.2). In this way, as a third partner associates itself with the *Joint Declaration*, further insights on the meaning of justification than those articulated in the *JDDJ*, but not contradicting the *JDDJ*, are acknowledged as belonging to the common understanding of justification. The WMC meeting in Seoul, Korea in July, 2006 voted unanimously to approve the *Methodist Statement of Association* with the *JDDJ*, and authorized the second step.

100. This second step was the development of an "Official Common Affirmation" of the *Methodist Statement of Association* with the *JDDJ* by the three parties now involved. It states that the WMC and

50. The process and the pertinent related documents are found in "The Affirmation of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* by the World Methodist Council," *IS* 122 (2006):55-60.

51. Hereafter: *Statement of Association*.

52. *JDDJ* paragraphs 19, 22, 25, 28, 31, 34, 37.

53. *JDDJ* paragraphs 20-21, 23-24, 26-27, 29-30, 32-33, 35-36, 38-39.

member churches affirm their fundamental doctrinal agreement with the teaching expressed in the *JDDJ*, and that the original signing partners join together in welcoming the Methodist statement of agreement with the *JDDJ* consensus in basic truths of the doctrine of justification, and then "building on their shared affirmation" the "three parties commit themselves to strive together for the deepening of their common understanding of justification..." The three are now related in their common understanding of justification.

101. Furthermore, a number of elements in this process show that ecumenical reception reveals and enhances the unity of the one ecumenical movement. For example, the *Statement of Association* indicates that the Methodist movement, on the one hand, "has always understood itself as deeply indebted to the biblical teaching on justification as...understood by Luther...other reformers and...the Wesleys," but, on the other hand, "it has also always embraced elements of the doctrine of justification which belong to the catholic tradition of the early church both east and west" (no. 4).⁵⁴

4. Lutheran-Mennonite reconciliation

102. Ecumenical reception today goes beyond the receiving of agreed statements on church-dividing doctrinal issues. A powerful example of a different model of reception comes from recent Lutheran-Mennonite relations. Dialogues established to examine theological differences between these families found their work impeded by the continuing shadow of the violent Reformation-era persecutions which Lutheran forebears had perpetrated against Anabaptists. The ecclesial scars from the experience of such persecution shaped not only Mennonite self-awareness and church life, but also its collective memory. Violent coercion had been theologically defended by Lutheran reformers, but contemporary Lutherans had largely forgotten this aspect of their past. One of the goals of Lutheran-Mennonite dialogue became the healing of such memories. Rigorous historical work allowed a joint study commission to prepare the first common narrative of the painful events of the sixteenth century - itself a reconciling process. But in the end the culmination of the process was not just the text but a powerful event - an act of reconciliation. At the 2010 LWF Assembly in Stuttgart, the LWF's highest governing body formally asked forgiveness "from God and from our Mennonite sisters and brothers" for the initial wrongs and their continuing legacies. The Lutheran assembly knelt to ask this forgiveness; significantly, ecumenical guests also knelt - both in solidarity with the Lutherans and to recognize that this

54. The international dialogue between the Catholic Church and the World Communion of Reformed Churches is currently exploring the possibility of the WCRC also adhering to the *JDDJ*.

moment of reconciliation was healing for the entire church.

103. Mennonites had prepared for this moment through their own practices of decision-making and prayer, knowing that they wanted immediately to assure the Lutherans that the forgiveness was extended. Also acknowledging their own wrongs and rejoicing in the release which this reconciliation offered also to them, Mennonites gave the Lutherans a foot-washing tub, used characteristically in Anabaptist worship, with the prayer that since “today you have heard and honoured our story,” from this time forward “we may serve one another as our Lord and Teacher served us.”

104. While most Lutherans and Mennonites will never read the reports of dialogue commissions, the images and the narratives around the Stuttgart action have been widely received in both communities. In the violent society of Colombia, where the historical wrongs seemed far away, it was this example of peaceful resolution which the churches particularly celebrated together. In the world’s largest refugee camp, where the LWF seeks non-violently to provide civil governance and security, the collaboration of the Mennonite Central Committee has been welcomed with special warmth. Beyond these two families, the example of the LWF in seeking forgiveness has stimulated reflection in other traditions which have their own memories of persecution in need of healing. This is a further receiving of the fruits of Lutheran-Mennonite dialogue.

105. If ecumenical reception is to receive one another as Christ has received us – precisely the hope conveyed in the act of foot-washing - the reception of Lutheran-Mennonite dialogue in visible acts of repentance and reconciliation takes on an iconic role that invites others to do the same.

E. The role of the sponsoring bodies as agents of reception

1. The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity

106. In the description above of the Catholic processes of reception (ch. II no. 40) the prominent role of the PCPCU in regard to reception is already noted. In promoting unity it works to develop contacts with partners, both to work with them in initiating dialogues and also to foster reception of the results of dialogues. In formal reception processes within the Catholic Church the PCPCU works in close relationship especially with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in examining critically the results of ecumenical dialogue, and in contributing to official texts such as the joint statements with partners intended to be published. The culminating moment of formal reception lies in the approval of the Pope. In some way these factors have been in the background of the development of significant statements seen in this chapter (see nos. 61-63, 68-72) and the 1999 Lutheran-

Catholic Joint Declaration on Justification (nos. 95-99 above).

107. Another way in which the PCPCU promotes reception is seen in the recent PCPCU project published by Cardinal Walter Kasper under the title *Harvesting the Fruits* (2009: Continuum). It seeks to promote reception of the results of four international dialogues that began after Vatican II involving the Catholic Church with the Lutheran World Federation, the World Methodist Council, the Anglican Communion and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. In this project the PCPCU studied the 36 reports published by these four dialogues. It analyzed the findings of these four dialogues in regard to four questions: (a) fundamentals of the faith, the Trinity and Christ; (b) salvation, justification, sanctification; (c) the church; (d) baptism and the eucharist. It brought together the results of the four dialogues on those issues, showing the great degree of convergence/consensus on them in the four dialogues, noting as well the differences. It also offered preliminary conclusions that could be drawn from the findings and some directions and issues that could be taken up in the future. The implications of these reports were discussed further with representatives of the four partners in dialogue. All of this was aimed at fostering the reception of the results of these reports in the life of the churches.

2. The World Council of Churches

108. “The WCC is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scripture and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father Son and Holy Spirit” (WCC Constitution). This “common calling” impels the churches to seek together convergence and greater consensus on the issues that yet divide them. As a fellowship of churches, the World Council of Churches (WCC) includes as members and ecumenical partners, virtually all of the churches mentioned in this present text. It has had its own unique opportunities to promote unity, and there have been recent examples of ecumenical reception relating to the WCC as well.

a. An example of ecumenical reception within the WCC itself

109. At the core of the life of the World Council of Churches is a degree of reception by the churches of one another in a collegial life in which they explore and implement together their common vocation to foster the unity which Christ wills. How this process works has itself become the subject of reflection and reception in the work of the Special Commission on the Participation of the Orthodox Churches. The Orthodox concerns about the WCC provoked a series of conversations between 1999 and 2005. These marked the first phase of an ongoing reassessment of

the working structures of the WCC. The Orthodox Churches had become uneasy with the parliamentary models of debate and majority decision that were more familiar in the assembly models of Christian world communions of the Western Protestant traditions. The Special Commission was tasked with finding ways by which the authentic life and decision making of the different churches could be offered and received, and a model of consensus decision making introduced. This model allows the WCC to take into account the spectrum of reactions to any proposal, and to be more alive to the concerns of all the traditions which contribute to the work of the Council. The Special Commission made other recommendations concerning, for example, ecclesiological and theological criteria for membership. Some of its recommendations led to changes in the WCC constitution and rules. These changes help make the life of the WCC more receptive to the whole fellowship of churches, and therefore make the WCC more representative of its whole membership. This enables better reception of one another by the member churches of the WCC, and in turn enhances the WCC's ability to serve the ecumenical movement.

b. An example of the WCC receiving the results of a bilateral dialogue report

110. The WCC's office of the Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV) made a general request to the Christian world to contribute suggestions concerning the shape and content of the proposed International Ecumenical Peace Convocation with which the DOV would culminate in 2011. Responding, in 2007 the Mennonite World Conference and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity invited the WCC DOV office to a two day consultation to reflect together on whether themes discussed in the Mennonite-Catholic international dialogue report *Called Together to be Peacemakers* could contribute to this process of preparation. This consultation resulted in a report giving precise suggestions of themes relating to a theology of peace based on *Called Together to be Peacemakers*, which was then received by the DOV office as a contribution, among many others, to its reflection for the 2011 event. This illustrates a method of finding ways to integrate bilateral and multilateral dialogues, by offering for possible reception by a multilateral process, the results of a bilateral dialogue.

c. Forum on Bilateral Dialogues

111. The Forum on Bilateral Dialogues is regularly constituted by the Conference of Secretaries of the Christian world communions, and convened by the World Council of Churches' Commission on Faith and Order. Its mandate is to be a forum where representatives of the international dialogues are both able to share information with one another concerning the content, developments and achievements of the

bilateral dialogues, and also to bring coherence to these conversations. The bilateral and multilateral dialogues often receive insights from one another and build on each other's convergences. Thus, the Forum provides a unique platform for the mutual exchange of information on topics, methods, challenges, solutions and aims of these different dialogues. The reports of the Forum record the shifting realities in the international dialogues, such as new participants, and the developments in ecumenical relations. The conversations in the Forum have brought fresh perspectives into the dialogues. By promoting a dialogue between the dialogues, the Forum on Bilateral Dialogue has thus become an effective instrument of reception, although at a step removed from reception by the churches. Moreover, the Forum has engaged in four distinctive reflections on the nature and processes of reception of the theological dialogues. As already noted in this text, the 2008 Ninth Forum meeting in Breklum, Germany, has said to the churches: "As each dialogue is in some way a 'learning process,' each needs to consider how this learning process may be shared with the wider membership of the two communities involved. Only an abiding commitment to the ecclesial reception of ecumenical texts can allow these statements of convergence to have a reconciling and transforming effect in the life of our churches."

d. The continuing reception of Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry

112. The World Council of Churches' Faith and Order convergence text, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (BEM), 1982, remains an influential part of ecumenical history. Aspects of some of the agreements mentioned above, e.g. the Meissen agreement (1988) and the Porvoo agreement (1996) were influenced by BEM. One of the documents of the Joint Working Group's Eighth Report, *The Nature and Purpose of Ecumenical Dialogue: A Study Document*, contained a significant treatment of the reception of dialogue results (nos. 58-79). This included "a multilateral case study" focusing on BEM.

113. That case study gives many insights into the development of the text, by describing the way in which reception processes encouraged discussion of emerging drafts of BEM by the churches. These discussions played an important role in the process leading to the final form in which BEM was published in 1982, and the fact that once published, more than 186 churches replied to Faith and Order's request for official responses to it "at the highest level of authority." This was an unprecedented response to an ecumenical text. The case study also illustrates the fact that BEM helped some churches in different parts of the world to enter into new relationships with one another. These are important expressions of the reception of BEM.

114. There are four additional ways in which reception of BEM has been experienced. The first is that BEM

has been important for deepening relationships between the World Council of Churches and the Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church was among those who submitted an official response. Its extensive response was the result of a five year process in which the Holy See sought reflection and comment on *BEM* from Catholic Churches around the world, as well as involving its normal processes of study in appropriate offices of the Roman Curia. Many Catholics came to know the WCC better because of *BEM*. Furthermore, *BEM* has entered into documents of the papal magisterium. Pope John Paul II's interest in *BEM* is illustrated by his positive references to it in a number of addresses during the 1980s, often speaking of it as an important sign of ecumenical progress, and his mention of *BEM* and its significance in four places in the 1995 encyclical *Ut unum sint* (no.17, note 28; no.42, note 71; no.45, note 76; no.87, note 144). There has been significant reception of *BEM* in the Catholic Church.

115. A second way in which reception of *BEM* has been experienced can be seen in the current Faith and Order study of the church. Over the last several decades, it has become clear that the nature of the Church is perhaps the central ecumenical issue today. *BEM* has helped to provoke deeper study of the church. A number of churches responding to *BEM*, including the Catholic Church, called for further reflection on the Church as a way of deepening the convergences found in *BEM*. After the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order (1993) called for a study on the church, the first result of this Faith and Order study was a volume entitled *The Nature and Purpose of the Church: a stage on the way to a common statement* (1998). It stated that "in the style of *BEM*, this document seeks to evolve into what could be called a convergence text."(no. 4) After receiving critical evaluation of this text from churches and other sources, Faith and Order produced a second volume *The Nature and Mission of the Church: a stage on the way to a common statement* (2005) which indicated that "the experience of the *BEM* process and an increasing interest in ecclesiology in many churches provide fresh insights into how many Christians understand being the Church" (no. 3). Faith and Order is currently continuing its study, refining the text. But the current Faith and Order study of the Church in a true sense has benefitted from the reception of *BEM*, and continues the heritage of *BEM*.

116. There is a third way in which reception of *BEM* has been experienced, not unrelated to the second. *BEM*'s contribution specifically to a common understanding of baptism as a basic bond of unity among Christians has provoked ecumenical reflection on the deeper implications of this important insight. A prime example of this reflection is the text found in the Joint Working Group's Eighth Report entitled *Ecclesiological and Ecumenical Implications of a Common Baptism: A JWG Study* (2005). The influence of *BEM* on

this text is seen from its first paragraphs, and throughout the text. Examining a number of themes relating to a common baptism, the study draws out ecclesiological implications, some of which are issues which should be pursued further in dialogue in order to remove obstacles to unity which still exist, or others which give insights that help to appreciate even more the degree of unity that exists now because of a common baptism. The study also lists a series of ecumenical implications of a common baptism, many of a more pastoral character, suggesting ways to deepen ecumenical relations which are rooted in common baptism. That study, therefore, suggests additional ways in which *BEM* can be received.

117. A fourth way has to do with the impact of *BEM* on local ecumenism and the life of the churches. In addition to formal agreements which acknowledge the influence of *BEM*, the text (which has sold more copies than any other book published by the WCC) became a teaching tool, and a vehicle for ecumenical conversations in community settings around the world, in some cases initiated by ecumenical entities such as councils of churches and clergy associations, in others spontaneously initiated. In this case, reception flowed from the value of the text itself, meeting a need, indeed a hunger, for accessible yet substantial information about essential aspects of Christian faith and life. *BEM* inspired some churches to consider the possibility of developing a common baptismal certificate. It influenced those responsible for preparing baptismal rites, and was crucial – in the light of debates about inclusive language – in maintaining the classical baptismal formula in those texts.

F. Learning points and recommendations

1. Learning points

- Exploring the issues considered above in relation to the three historical periods highlights the fact that, despite centuries of divisions, many basic Christian convictions and bonds of faith also were shared in common. The new atmosphere created by the ecumenical movement, especially in dialogue through which separated Christians came to know one another and cleared away misunderstandings about each other's traditions, allowed them to recognize that truth, which had not been realized before.
- The fact that long standing church-dividing issues are being addressed and resolved gives hope that other issues can be resolved in the long term. Patience and prayer are needed if immediate results are not achieved.
- The evolution of the social sciences, philosophical thought, hermeneutics and other spheres of learning, have enhanced the appreciation of the context in which previous divisions took place. Consequently new ways of thinking have emerged, fostering an understanding of some of the reasons

for divisions and helping the churches to move beyond them.

- The achievements of dialogue have shown that it is possible to express common faith while respecting the traditions and terminologies of each partner.
- Even after achieving agreement on an issue over which there had been conflict, new questions may arise that are potentially divisive and liable to cause difficulty. Even when old conflicts are resolved, long periods of separation make the healing of the bitter historical memories related to them a lengthy and continuing process.
- Where the results of dialogues are expressed by formal acts and symbolic actions the impact of the progress made might be greatly enhanced.

2. Recommendations

In order for reception to take root in the life of the churches we propose the following recommendations:

- that personal contacts be nurtured and encouraged since they foster relationships that assist in mutual understanding and lead to the resolution of conflicts. For example, we commend the example of the presence of observers from other Christian communions at the Second Vatican Council. Ongoing meetings of church leaders constitute an impact that set free the impulses for ecumenical dialogue and new ecumenical initiatives.
- that the work done by one bilateral or multilateral dialogue should be considered more widely and used to inform other dialogues as well as becoming a resource in education and formation;
- that after agreement on doctrinal questions there should be a process to ensure that continuing study of these issues is undertaken, and the implications of agreement lived out in the life of the churches;
- that churches be aware of the effects of particular bilateral relations and agreements on their wider bilateral and multilateral ecumenical relationships. The presence of ecumenical observers on bilateral dialogues may alert such dialogues to the ecumenical consequences of their agreements.

IV. WHEN ECUMENICAL RECEPTION IS A STRUGGLE

A. Challenges to reception

118. Although ecumenical accomplishments have been cited, it must be acknowledged that reception often involves a struggle in so far as relationships between persons and ecclesial communities are concerned. The reality being faced today is that questions are being raised concerning the value and goals of dialogue in the face of perceived divergences of beliefs and practices.

These can arise out of bitter memories of the past and reactions to developments in the life of some Christian traditions. Ongoing issues such as the ordination of women and new conflicting approaches to questions related to marriage and family, sexual ethics, bioethics and economic ethics have had an adverse impact on some relationships and therefore on reception.

119. Much discussion and debate continues to take place among members *within* the church traditions on the varying interpretations of their beliefs and practices. Relationships among Christian traditions are influenced by the intensity of the discussions and the extent to which each one is prepared, out of a sense of respect and in humility, to be receptive to different viewpoints. Reception in this sense can serve as a means of each one benefiting from valuable spiritual insights that are not one's own. In dialogue, participants must present the truth understood in their own tradition, while being attentive to the truth presented by the other, and seek as much common ground as possible, while being honest about the differences. A willingness to listen will go a long way in arriving at a position of mutual respect and cordiality between Christian communities.

120. It is relatively straightforward to cite instances when reception has been positive or when a reception process has been initiated. It is more difficult when reception is a struggle. While some ecumenical texts are truly received by the churches, others are received to a limited degree or not at all. The challenges to reception are many and varied: some are external, relating to the situation within particular churches or in the broader ecumenical movement; others are internal, relating directly to the text in question, or to the process by which it was created or by which it may be responded to. Examples of the struggles of reception are illustrated in the accounts of two dialogues: one a bilateral - reports from the Old Catholic-Eastern Orthodox international dialogue; the other a multilateral - *The Nature and Mission of the Church: A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement* from the WCC's Faith and Order Commission.

121. As is seen in the case of the Old Catholic-Eastern Orthodox international bilateral dialogue, the context of ecclesial relationships has serious effects on reception. Between 1975 and 1987 the joint commission of Old Catholic and Orthodox theologians held several dialogues touching on such fundamental issues as the doctrine of God, Christology, ecclesiology, soteriology, the sacraments, eschatology and ecclesial communion. In each case the commission affirmed that the text produced "represents the teaching of the Orthodox and Old Catholic churches". From 1987, however, relations between the two bodies became more difficult. The ordination of women in some Old Catholic churches from 1996 led to Old Catholic-Orthodox consultations held in that year with indecisive results. More recently differences have arisen on other issues related to gender and sexuality. Differences also have arisen over the participation of

Old Catholic bishops in consecrations of Anglican bishops, which also have included Lutheran bishops. For the Orthodox, such participation implies a state of full communion between Old Catholic and Lutheran churches, whereas Old Catholics insist that it reflects only the full communion they have shared with the Anglican Communion since 1931. These various tensions militated against reception of the dialogues, however fruitful and positive they may have been. This illustrates that reception does not depend solely on the quality of the texts produced, since reception takes place within the context of the overall relationship between the churches concerned. A permanent Old Catholic-Orthodox committee “for reflection and exchange” was established in 2004 to develop joint theological and pastoral projects, and it is hoped that this eventually will enable the reception of the dialogue results so far achieved.

122. Different lessons may be learned from the more recent multilateral experience of the Faith and Order Commission. *The Nature and Mission of the Church* (2005) by all accounts did not receive the widespread attention it deserved. Following the methodology of *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, *The Nature and Mission of the Church* is the second in a series of texts on ecclesiology sent to the churches for study and response, to enable the churches to begin to recognise a convergence that has emerged. The responses to *The Nature and Mission of the Church*, like its predecessor, the 1998 *The Nature and Purpose of the Church*, were intended to be integral to the process of discerning such a multilateral convergence. By 2010 eighty responses had been received by Faith and Order, yet only twenty-seven came from the churches. Although the text was sent with the specific request that the churches respond, clearly this was a text that appealed primarily to theological specialists and students. The year after *The Nature and Mission of the Church* was published, the 2006 WCC assembly accepted *Called to be the One Church*, an ecclesiology text likewise produced by Faith and Order. This text also was sent to the churches for response; since 2006 a mere handful of responses have been received by Faith and Order. In effect, two ecclesiological texts from the WCC were in circulation at the same time, each requesting study and response from the churches.

123. Anecdotal evidence suggests that it is no exaggeration to speak of an ecumenical overload of texts and response processes – and this at a time when many churches face declining resources, both human and financial, with which to support their ecumenical engagement. This suggests perhaps that fewer such texts should be produced; that they should be clear and accessible to their intended audience; that if multiple texts must be sent to the churches, they should be sent in a coordinated way; that pacing is crucial. Furthermore, it is vital that clear expectations, including specific suggestions for reflection and action, be laid upon the churches in asking for their response.

124. The processes as outlined by the general secretaries or other representatives of the Christian world communions (cf. chapter II) need to be seen alongside the difficulties outlined by those responsible for overseeing the process of reception at the international, regional and local levels.

125. Again, anecdotal evidence suggests that ecumenical officers and theological commissions can exhibit a lack of confidence about the length and quality of response that is asked of them. Many reported that the churches simply do not have adequate instruments to assess a theological document arising from bilateral or multilateral dialogues, and to engage in the processes of ecclesial reception. Sometimes the level of response being requested is unclear – i.e., is a short response sufficient, or is a complex and detailed theological assessment being looked for? Is it better to offer no response than one that is too brief or simple? Is a shorter text of less worth than a longer one? Will churches feel embarrassed by a shorter response?

126. In addition, the sponsors of dialogues often lack clarity and communication both about timelines and about what precisely is being requested in a formal response to an agreed statement. Often the questions posed to the churches are unclear and too demanding. For example, what is meant by terms such as “common,” “convergence,” or even “agreement” is not always clear.

127. Others report that the sort of responses requested by a parent body or a dialogue do not seem to fit comfortably with the pressing concerns of some national or local churches. Sometimes the topics addressed are perceived to belong to an earlier period of history or to a different context and continent, and not to relate to current global realities. The kinds of questions dealt with by a dialogue may appear to be not those of the churches but of specialists or those only of the dialogue partner. How much dialogue relates to the context of European historical divisions rather than to current mission imperatives in the developing world? The remark was made that local churches are more responsive to life and work issues than a Faith and Order theological text. These comments suggest an environment of resistance to the processes of reception. In response to these comments, it is clear that it is necessary to demonstrate the ways that the historical conflicts which led to divisions continue to impinge upon church relations today.

128. We also need to keep in mind that there are many non-theological factors that can have a bearing on the issues addressed in dialogue. These, too, can interfere with the processes of reception. The theological conflicts of the past, and the way in which they unfolded in exclusion and persecution, may have left many longstanding and bitter memories that remain unhealed and that can affect responses in the present. Sociological factors such as class and racial conflict, cultural differences and imperial history bring radically different perspectives to the questions under

consideration and can affect even the will to engage in dialogue. The fear of surrendering power can be as potent a factor in continuing church divisions as can problems with doctrine. All of this requires patient acknowledgment and engagement to build mutual confidence as a context for effective dialogue and reception.

B. Learning points and recommendations

1. Learning points

- All dialogue reports, when they are published, are intended for general reception. This includes discussion, criticism and evaluation in theological institutions, in congregations and parishes and by church authorities with the hope of bringing new insights.
- Reception processes have demonstrated substantial unevenness. While some ecumenical texts have received significant attention, others, though substantial, have not received such extensive study. Careful consideration of how to support the dissemination, study and response to a text will bear significant fruit.
- Issues at the root of conflicts between Christians that arose in particular historical contexts can have a continuing impact on the churches and can be difficult to resolve even after intense theological dialogue.
- Since *episcopé* involves being an instrument for the *koινωνia* of the whole church, it necessarily includes care and responsibility for reception.

2. Recommendations

In order to assist in the effectiveness of the reception of the fruits of dialogue, we propose the following recommendations to those responsible for ecumenical dialogue, specifically, that church leaders:

- make clear whether a formal process of reception is intended when sponsoring dialogue, and specify the nature of the responses required;
- give consideration to issues like context, timing and pacing when texts are ready for dissemination;
- encourage authorities at different levels to appoint and support ecumenical officers, coordinators or commissions who are tasked to ensure that there is an awareness of these reports among their constituencies.

V. ECUMENICAL FORMATION: A KEY TO ECUMENICAL RECEPTION

A. Formation and reception

129. Ecumenical formation is in itself a way of consolidating reception. As people listen to the history of the ecumenical movement and receive the fruits of ecumenical dialogue, they themselves are deepening

their formation as disciples of Christ. The multiplex process of reception requires a process of education and formation which embraces both the intellectual and theological dimensions of being trained in ecumenical dialogue and the existential and spiritual dimensions of receiving and recognizing one another in the name of Christ. Ecumenical formation and reception, therefore, are intrinsically intertwined.

130. The primary goals of ecumenical formation are to awaken the hearts and souls of Christians to the ecumenical imperative; to acknowledge the results of the ecumenical movement in all its levels and expressions; and to form persons of dialogue now, especially in order to pave the way for the education of future generations who are committed to the quest for unity.

131. The JWG has always been concerned about ecumenical formation as a fundamental dimension on the path towards the unity among Christians. The JWG *Fifth Report* (1983) stated:

Another crucial area is that of theological education and particularly the education of pastors, perhaps the most influential point in ecumenical sensitization. There is a great range of possibilities but even where there are joint or collaborative faculties and programs, more could be done to draw out their potential with the support and guidance of those responsible in the various churches.⁵⁵

132. The present JWG acknowledges the successful work done in the last decades by previous JWGs. Important steps have been taken in focusing on the need for ecumenical formation as a priority in the ecumenical agenda, as well as in providing the parent bodies with meaningful and fruitful tools to reflect and to act upon it.

133. In recent decades, however, ecumenical formation has gained more and more interest and centrality as a key factor in the search for visible unity, and it is still a priority to be addressed. The 1993 JWG document on *Ecumenical Formation* has been – and still is – a valuable instrument to foster ecumenical reception, and needs to be brought again to the attention of the churches. *Ecumenical Formation* reminds Christians that ecumenical formation pertains to the whole people of God, each one having a responsibility in the search for unity and in the building up of communion. It is a process in which individuals and communities must be engaged, and it is an imperative to which churches, educational agencies, academic institutions and ecumenical organizations must respond.

134. The 2005 *Eighth Report* of the JWG indicates that ecumenical formation is a fundamental goal calling for recommitment in the future mandate of the JWG: “The JWG has over the years expressed concern for

55. JWG, *Fifth Report*, IV, 4.

ecumenical formation and education as fundamental to the search for the unity of the church.”⁵⁶ Further on the report adds:

We likewise agree that greater effort is needed in the field of ecumenical formation. Both parent bodies need to be concerned about laity and clergy who need ecumenical formation. A new generation of Christians is sometimes unaware of the way things were and how much things have changed in the decades since the founding of the WCC and since the Second Vatican Council. In this respect much is being done, but we advocate an effort to improve the coordination of such formation through a more effective sharing of information and resources, and by providing greater opportunities for participation in each other’s life.⁵⁷

135. This specific mandate has been ratified by the ninth assembly of the WCC in Porto Alegre in 2006. Both the *General Secretary’s Report* and the *Policy Reference Committee Report* explicitly emphasize the need for ecumenical formation, confirming the relevance of this issue in the contemporary scene.⁵⁸

B. Tracing the history of ecumenical formation in the JWG context

136. The concern for cooperation in the field of formation has been an issue raised from the very beginning of the JWG.⁵⁹ This concern later developed into a process of regular information dissemination and the sharing of documents and initiatives, joint consultations, and study projects within the parent bodies.⁶⁰ The *Fifth Report* of the JWG in 1985 addressed extensively, as a priority, the need for a common concern about ecumenical formation. The report recognized its value as a complementary aspect of ecumenical dialogue and joint action, and sought to ensure that formation would have a renewed place in the life of the churches in both dialogue and action.⁶¹

56. JWG Eighth Report, III, no.3.

57. JWG, *Eighth Report*, V, no.2. Important achievements and future potentials of the JWG mandate which can constitute a wider framework to address the issue of ecumenical formation have been pointed out during the *40th anniversary consultation about the mandate of the JWG between the RCC and the WCC*, held in November 2005 at Bossey, Switzerland.

58. Cfr. WCC, *Official Report of the Ninth Assembly: Official report, resolutions*, “Statements and reports adopted by the Assembly. Program Guidelines committee,” nos.14, 18-20, 26.

59. Cfr. JWG, Common statement on the relationships between the WCC and the RCC, no.7; JWG, Second Report, 3.c).

60. Cfr. JWG, Future Joint Activities of the JWG, 1973, I, E.

61. “The JWG insists on the present urgency of the task of ecumenical formation. It stresses that the improved relations between still separated Christians are not enough. The scandal of Christian divisions and their deleterious effect on

137. In the following years, the JWG kept ecumenical formation on its agenda.⁶² It worked towards the realization of important goals, such as the drafting of the 1998 document *Ecumenical Formation: Ecumenical Reflections and Suggestions*,⁶³ while remaining committed to encouraging and supporting initiatives taken by the parent bodies on the issue. Some significant steps taken in the last 20 years within the WCC are: the publication of the document *Alive Together* (1989)⁶⁴ and the International Consultation on Ecumenical Formation (Oslo, 1996),⁶⁵ both sponsored by the Ecumenical Theological Education Program (ETE) of the WCC. Some significant steps taken in the last 20 years within the Roman Catholic Church are: the publication by the PCPCU of the most complete document on ecumenical formation and reception, Chapters II and III of the new *Directory for the Application of the Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, 1993,⁶⁶ which was followed and integrated into a detailed document on contents and methods of ecumenical theological formation published in 1997.⁶⁷

138. In recent times, the programme on ETE has published the *Magna Charta*⁶⁸ of ecumenical formation as well as the document *14 Reasons for Global Theological Education*,⁶⁹ while supporting and cooperating with other associations such as World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI), and the Conference of European Churches (CEC), and on the organization of regional consultations.⁷⁰ The Catholic Church has committed herself in a process of verification and evaluation of the level of ecumenical formation in Catholic institutions and of the way that

Christian witness continues to obscure the saving power of God’s grace.” JWG, *Fifth Report*, IV, 4. Cfr. also III, B, no.5; IV, no.4.

62. Cfr. JWG, *Sixth Report*, III, A, no.2; III, B, no.8; JWG, *Seventh Report*, III, C; V; JWG, *Eighth Report*, III, no.3; V, no.2.

63. JWG, *Seventh Report*. Appendix D: Ecumenical formation; ecumenical reflection and suggestions, 1993.

64. *Alive Together*, Ecumenical Theological Education Program of the World Council of Churches, 1989.

65. ETE/WCC, *Towards a Viable Theological Education: Ecumenical imperative, catalyst of renewal*, Oslo, Norway 1996. (1997) J. Pobe, ed. WCC Publications, Geneva.

66. PCPCU, *Directory for the Applications of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, 1993, Chapter III.

67. PCPCU, *The Ecumenical Dimension in the Formation of those Engaged in Pastoral Work*, 1995.

68. ETE/WCC, *Magna Charta on Ecumenical Theological Education in the 21st century*. ETE/WCC - Reference document for use in Associations of Theological Schools and Colleges, WOCATI and in the Edinburgh 2010 Process, 2008.

69. ETE/WCC, *14 Reasons for Global Solidarity in Ecumenical Theological Education: communication initiative for the WCC program on ETE*.

70. ETE/WCC - CEC, *International Seminar on the Future of Ecumenical Theological Education in Eastern and Central Europe*, Sambada de Sus, Romania, 2008. (2009) V. Ionita - D. Werner, eds. CEC - WCC, Geneva.

the guidelines given in the *Directory* have been put into practice.

C. Articulating ecumenical formation

1. General principles

140. Ecumenical formation implies first and foremost a life-long learning process for all members of the church. Ecumenical formation implies moving towards God, in the sense that it has to be understood primarily as an expression of the spiritual dimension of the ecumenical imperative: Christian spirituality “readies Christians and their churches to respond to God’s initiatives - to what the Triune God is doing in and through us according to the gospel. It involves discerning God’s activity in people, in churches, in the world. Theology and spirituality are inextricably intertwined because both deal with God and God’s relationship with humanity through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.”⁷¹

141. In this perspective ecumenical formation is a process which includes: (1) discerning and enjoying the riches of God’s gifts to his people by learning the standpoints, doctrines and praxis of the different Christian traditions; (2) turning to Him in repentance and hope by acknowledging the need for conversion and welcoming in our hearts and minds our brothers and sisters in Christ; (3) deepening the sense of Christian identity and the baptismal vocation by discovering convergences among the various confessions; and (4) living out the mission of the Church as witness of His love and care for human beings by fostering a common reflection and working on common projects.

142. In the perspective of the process of reception, the following five aspects of theological reflection and church action seem to be particularly relevant and, therefore, need to be emphasized in ecumenical formation: (1) the call to receive the mandate of our Lord Jesus Christ to be one and therefore to orient our lives as Christians in the will to strive for full visible unity in the one apostolic faith among those who are called by His name. The whole ecumenical movement, in fact, is a movement of reception as it aims at fulfilling the ecumenical imperative received from Christ, the gift of unity received from the Father, and the living out of the variety of charisms received from the Holy Spirit. (2) a renewed reflection on the Church and a common understanding of the Church, its nature, mission and witness to the world, as the churches seek to receive one another, to receive the *koinonia* they share, and therefore to receive ecumenical events, dialogues, documents and efforts as part of the process of receiving one another in the name of Christ; (3) the process of dispelling prejudices and stereotypes so to be able to receive others in the spirit of the “exchange

71. JWG, *Spiritual Roots of Ecumenism*, par 9.

of gifts”.⁷² (4) an opportunity to be engaged in the process of the healing and reconciliation of memories among Christians; to reflect upon what has been achieved in decades of ecumenical theological dialogue; and what have been and are the chances of joint effort for a more authentic Christian witness to the world; and (5) a chance for a mutual appreciation of structures and programs offered by various confessional traditions to foster ecumenical formation.

143. These principles have universal application, but it is particularly within the context of university education, and especially in seminary education, that ecumenical formation should be addressed in two ways: (1) a specific course on ecumenism with a detailed curriculum; and (2) the articulation of the ecumenical dimension in each field of theology. Both are part of ecumenical formation, so that ecumenism is not seen as an isolated speciality, but exists as a living component in all theological discourse. Ecumenical formation must be an essential element for candidates for ordained ministry.

2. Programs and guidelines

144. In the last decade both the Catholic Church and the WCC, building on past efforts, have developed programs and projects to promote ecumenical formation and facilitate reception of ecumenical goals and achievements, needs and priorities.

145. The WCC Programme on Education and Ecumenical Formation is well articulated and structured. It includes three elements: the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey (Geneva, Switzerland), which offers courses and programmes in theology and ecumenism for future church leaders, pastors and theologians at graduate and postgraduate levels; the ecumenical lay formation and faith nurture project, which is aimed at creating networks to engage faith formation practitioners in a fruitful exchange of ideas and initiatives; and the ecumenical theological education project, which targets ecumenical and theological educators to share principles and contents concerning ecumenical formation and to create concrete possibilities dealing with ecumenical theological education.

146. The PCPCU’s *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms of Ecumenism* (1993) reflects on the urgency of providing ways and methods of growth in ecumenical formation, by creating a network of ecumenical concern as well as by setting rules of ecumenical formation.⁷³ The *Directory* presents ecumenical formation as a concern for all the faithful in whatever status or situation they may be, and therefore

72. John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint*, no.28.

73. The Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana* had already introduced ecumenical formation as an obligatory subject in the theological curriculum in 1979.

develops a map of structures at the service of Christian unity which include every level of church life (parishes, dioceses, lay groups and associations, religious and secular orders, episcopal conferences and synods and councils of Eastern churches, families, schools, mass-media, educational agencies) whose aim is to sensitize to ecumenism and dialogue according to their specific mandates and tasks. All the pastoral and catechetical tools (preaching, Bible studies, catechism, mission) should become an instrument of ecumenical learning.⁷⁴

147. The Joint Working Group, together with the parent bodies, rejoices in the mutual appreciation and in the growing cooperation in the field of formation among churches in the past decades. In many parts of the world churches cooperate in the field of ecumenical formation through joint projects, academic institutions and research centres. Inviting scholars and theologians of different Christian traditions, for example, to lecture and to teach in interconfessional settings is almost a consolidated praxis in some contexts, as well as a growing reality in others. Moreover, students are often encouraged to engage themselves in a formation program which includes interconfessional exposure (either in selecting the topics for doctoral dissertations or in attending one or two semesters in an institution of a different confession).

D. Learning points and recommendations

1. Learning points

- Ecumenical formation is an essential key to ensuring the continuity and forward movement of the ecumenical quest. Every generation needs to be reminded of what already has been received in the ecumenical process.
- Ecumenical formation is an integrated process which includes affective, spiritual and intellectual dimensions.
- Ecumenical formation is not the preserve of any particular section of the church, but the opportunity must consciously be given for all to participate. The fullness of *koinonia* only can be assured by giving the whole people of God the opportunity for ecumenical formation.
- Since *episcopé* involves being an instrument for the *koinonia* of the whole people of God, it necessarily includes care and responsibility for fostering the unity of Christians, and therefore for the ecumenical formation of the people of God.
- Ecumenical studies not only is a distinct discipline, but also is an all pervading orientation. Forming people ecumenically involves an outlook and methodology which should influence all aspects of theological reflection and action.

74. Cfr. PCPCU, Directory for the Application., II and III.

2. Recommendations

In order to ensure that ecumenical formation becomes an integral part of the life of the churches, the JWG recommends that the PCPCU and the WCC:

- foster further joint reflection on ecumenical formation, even exploring a possible follow-up to the 1993 JWG document on the same topic;
- promote the integral dimension of ecumenical formation as a spiritual as well as an intellectual process, highlighting particularly the spiritual roots of ecumenism as a fundamental dimension of it;
- continue to encourage cooperation with various ecumenical regional/international and confessional/interconfessional bodies, thus sharing the variety of styles and methods they use. A concrete goal could be the realization of a common curriculum for ecumenical formation.
- support the sharing and, wherever possible, the publication and use of common texts, and the realization of formative initiatives of common witness. The formation of young people has to be strongly encouraged both by developing ecumenically oriented projects already existing, and by creating new ecumenical formative initiatives targeting young people.
- encourage and facilitate interaction between the various experiences of formation on the local level, and connect them to the ecumenical and ecclesial bodies dealing with ecumenical formation.

VI. CONCLUSION

An appeal to the churches

148. During this ninth period of the Joint Working Group between the Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches, the JWG has had the opportunity to study the notion of ecumenical reception during the last seven years. This study has given the JWG an opportunity to review some of the major achievements of the modern ecumenical movement in the century since the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland. It has helped us to recognize that in arriving at these achievements, the churches had been able to receive insights resulting from ecumenical dialogue and to implement them. But more deeply than this, it is clear that by engaging in dialogue and by increasing contacts with one another in many ways, Christian communions long separated have begun to receive one another as brothers and sisters in Christ, and to receive from one another. Getting beyond historic divisions of the past, Christians have begun to shape a new future in which they are better able to witness together before the world to the healing message of the Gospel, free from some of the conflicts, misunderstandings and prejudices of the past.

149. Thus, the JWG appeals to the PCPCU and the WCC to challenge the churches to call each other:

- to renew their commitment to serve in the quest for Christian unity, and to intensify ecumenical engagement at all levels;
- to appreciate with gratitude the considerable ecumenical advances that have taken place over the last century, and to build on these with new energy;
- to ensure that the fruits of ecumenical dialogue and co-operation are well-known and accessible, supported by study guides and carrying their approbation;
- to take every opportunity to promote unity and to make use of the reports of dialogues, which convey new perspectives on disputed questions and new insights about other churches;
- to experience and understand the Christian life and worship of other traditions, and in turn, as much as possible, to offer hospitality to other Christians in their own life;
- to endorse the message of the Eighth Forum on Bilateral Dialogue, which occurred in 2008 during the present mandate of this JWG. It said: “We believe that it would be profitable to keep in mind right from the beginning of any phase of dialogue the reception of its results. As each dialogue is in some way a ‘learning process,’ each needs to consider how this learning process may be shared with the wider membership of the two communities involved. Only an abiding commitment to the ecclesial reception of ecumenical texts can allow these statements of convergence or consensus to have a reconciling and transforming effect in the life of our churches.”⁷⁵

150. In this light the JWG makes this appeal to the PCPCU and the WCC, based on the conviction that the movement toward Christian unity is a response to the will of Christ and to his prayer for the unity of his disciples. It is rooted in the conviction that unity and mission go hand in hand. Christ prayed for the unity of his disciples “so that the world may believe” (John 17:21).

75. “The Breklum Statement” of the Ninth Forum on Bilateral Dialogue, Recommendation 2, <http://www.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/wcc-main/documents/p2/breklum-statement.pdf>

APPENDIX B

BE RENEWED IN THE SPIRIT. THE SPIRITUAL ROOTS OF ECUMENISM

INTRODUCTION

I. BASIC TERMS

II. BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

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- B. Our calling to repentance and conversion as a basis for unity
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III. SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR PRAYER AND LITURGICAL PRACTICE

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- A. Opportunities to pray together
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- D. Opportunities for programmatic engagement
- E. Opportunities in ecumenical education

VII. SOME RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

“Be renewed in the spirit of your minds...”
(Eph. 4:23)¹

1. In response to the prayer of our Lord “that they may all be one...” (John 17:21) and motivated by Christ’s call for renewal of life and conversion of heart, the Joint Working Group (JWG), responsible for fostering the relationship between the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Roman Catholic Church (RCC), initiated a project to reflect anew on the spiritual roots of ecumenism. In doing so, the goal is to get back to basics—to remind Christians of the spiritual impulse that has driven the ecumenical movement from its inception, and to consider fresh ways that churches can nurture these spiritual roots on the ground by offering some practical recommendations. Thus, after explaining the use of the terms “spirituality” and “ecumenism” (words that popular culture often uses without sufficient clarity), this study will explore briefly the theological basis for spiritual ecumenism; will consider practices of piety, prayer, and worship that nurture these spiritual roots; will highlight how God in Christ through the Holy Spirit breathes new life into Christians through examples among the saints and transforming encounters with the other; and will offer some practical ways to appropriate this foundation more fully in local settings. The members of the JWG do so

of cultural contexts and many stressful situations in which churches find themselves, while seeking to be faithful to the Gospel in the twenty-first century.

2. In the face of all sorts of tensions and conflicts, local and international, among churches and in the world, the members of the JWG are keenly aware of how essential is a reconciling witness. We are conscious both of the continuing divisions among Christian churches and of the perception that many are content with the status quo. Some are openly critical of the ecumenical movement because they fear that it will compromise doctrine and ethical teachings as they understand them. Yet as the Vatican II *Decree on Ecumenism* declared, division “openly contradicts the will of Christ, provides a stumbling block to the world and inflicts damage on the most holy cause of proclaiming the good news to every creature.”² People who live in a reconciling spirit are powerful witnesses to the essence of the Christian faith.

3. Long before the twentieth century, whenever divisions among Christians occurred, the impulse toward unity also was evident. The modern ecumenical movement, however, began with certain markers—the

1. All biblical citations are from *The New Revised Standard Version*. (1989, 1995) The Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

2. Unitatis Redintegratio (1966). *The Documents of Vatican II*. The American Press, U.S.A., Par. 1.

World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, 1910; the Conference on Life and Work in Stockholm, 1925; the World Conference on Faith and Order in Lausanne, 1927. Resolution (9) of the Lambeth Conference of 1920 on the reunion of Christendom was saying “We believe that the Holy Spirit has called us in a very solemn and special manner to associate ourselves in penitence and prayer with all those who deplore the divisions of Christian people, and are inspired by the vision and hope of a visible unity of the whole Church.”³ An encyclical from the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1920, addressed “unto all the churches of Christ, everywhere,” was another cornerstone in the ecumenical foundation being laid at the beginning of the twentieth century.⁴ Much has been written about these initiatives. They have borne good fruit.

4. After the World Council of Churches was formed in 1948, member churches identified certain assumptions about the basis of their relationship. Among these was a commitment by the member churches to “enter into spiritual relationships through which they seek to learn from that the life of the churches may be renewed.”⁵ Sixteen years later, the *Decree on Ecumenism (Unitatis Redintegratio-UR)* of the Roman Catholic Church resonated with a similar spirit. In what was the culmination of a long process of “return to the sources” in scriptural, liturgical and theological studies, the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) formally and irrevocably committed the Catholic Church to the search for Christian unity. In the chapter on *The Practice of Ecumenism*, the *Decree* asserted that “There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change of heart. For it is from renewal of the inner life of our minds, (cf. Eph. 4:23), from self-denial and an unstinted love that desires of unity take their rise and develop in a mature way.”⁶

5. Although the contemporary ecumenical movement takes various institutional forms—councils of churches, bi- and multi-lateral dialogues, initiatives of the Christian world communions, the student Christian movement, world missionary conferences, united and uniting churches, encyclicals from Orthodox and Catholic religious leaders—all these institutional forms have a spiritual foundation.

3. Cf the Lambeth Conference official website: <http://www.lambethconference.org/resolutions/1920/1920-9.cfm>

4. Cf Bishop John (Kallos) of Amorion. *A Historical Sketch of the Ecumenical Movement*.

http://www.orthodoxresearchinstitute.org/articles/ecumenical/john_thermon_history_ecumenism.htm; Fr. Peter Alban Heers. *The Missionary Origins of Modern Ecumenism*. <http://orthodoxinfo.com/ecumenism/heers-themissionaryrootsofmodernecumenism.pdf>

5. *Toronto Statement*. (1950) World Council of Churches Central Committee. IV.8.

6. Unitatis Redintegratio, Par. 7.

6. The members of the JWG rejoice in the many successes that have taken place in the last century. While the communion of our churches remains incomplete, Christians neither should dwell on the negatives nor overly exult about the positives, but always return to the reason for engaging in the quest for Christian unity. Christians do this work to be faithful to the Gospel, believing it will bear good fruit in God's good time.

7. Followers of Christ are called to incorporate "a broad spirituality of openness to the other in light of the imperative of Christian unity, directed by the Holy Spirit."⁷ At the heart of the Christian faith is the idea of a reconciled community of people who treat each other with the same compassionate, loving, reconciling spirit that God has shown and continues to show through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. The very nature of the Godhead is one of community. God created human beings to share in this sacred friendship. As friends of God, each one of us realizes our own unique gifts in community with others and in solidarity with all whom God loves, indeed, with all creation. The sharing of these gifts in community leads to change and growth.

8. Only God's grace and the work of the Holy Spirit can truly bring Christians together with all the riches which God has sown in each of the churches and in all peoples. As growth in communion ecumenism is a powerful witness to the gospel that all Christians can bear before a fragmented and divided world. The more Christians remain rooted in Jesus Christ, the self-revelation of God, the more credible will be their witness to the world at large. The ecumenical movement regularly highlights this understanding. As the Apostle Paul asserts, "...we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us;" (2 Cor. 5: 20) Fresh focus on the spiritual roots of ecumenism is an appropriate response to contemporary challenges among churches and within the world.

I. BASIC TERMS

"So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!"
(2 Cor. 5:17)

9. The words "ecumenism" and "spirituality" tend to be used in a variety of ways. The JWG will be using terms in the following ways:

10. Christian spirituality is the living and sharing in God's love because, in the words of the Apostle Paul, "...God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us." (Romans 5:5) It enables Christians and their churches to respond to God's initiatives - to what the triune God is doing in and through us. Theology and spirituality are inextricably intertwined, because both deal with God

and God's relationship with humanity through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. It involves discerning God's activity in people, in churches, in the world. By the grace of God, Christians seek to grow in understanding God's will, and to follow that will in themselves, in the community of the church, and in society. Spirituality is a holistic discipline. It is personal (not individualistic); at the same time, it flourishes in community. It grows from our human capacity as conscious, free beings in relationship to others and in relationship to the ground and source of our being, the triune God. It is meaning-seeking and a power of transformation. Spirituality moves toward authenticity and encounters truth, fulfilling our life, restoring our true dimension, and enabling us to have a fuller understanding, real dialogue, and communion. It shapes our horizons. Christians have relied on a variety of personal and communal ways, chief among them prayer and worship, to understand and follow the will of God.

11. Ecumenism is a response to Christ's prayer for unity for the sake of the world (John 17:21). The term comes from the Greek word, *oikoumene*, which means "the whole inhabited earth." In the twentieth century, the word "ecumenism" came to be applied to efforts to heal divisions among Christian churches for the sake of the world. The WCC Constitution articulates elements of this vision: "The primary purpose of the fellowship of churches in the World Council of Churches is to call one another to visible unity in one faith and in one eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, through witness and service to the world, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe."⁸ This quest is important because it is an essential dimension of the gospel. As the WCC founding Amsterdam assembly message affirmed, "Christ has made us His own, and He is not divided."⁹ Churches help one another to be faithful to the Gospel mandate of reconciliation, and call one another to mutual accountability as together, they seek to know the mind of Christ. Because Christ's call is for the salvation of the whole inhabited earth, the quest for Christian unity is not for its sake alone.

12. The unity Christian churches seek is not a call for uniformity. Nor does it entail compromises of doctrine or conscience as churches address differences in perspectives about basic Christian tenets. Unity allows for legitimate diversity in theological expression, spirituality, rite, reflections on faith, and inculturation. Rather, legitimate diversity aims to enrich the whole body of Christ. "The dynamic of the ecumenical movement is rooted in the tension between the churches as they are and the true *koinonia* with the

7. *The Nature and Purpose of Ecumenical Dialogue*. A Joint Working Group Study: Eighth Report, Par. 37.

8. *Constitution and Rules of the World Council of Churches* (as amended by the 9th Assembly, Porto Alegre, Brazil, February 2006), III Purposes and Functions.

9. Ruth Rouse and Stephen Charles Neill. (1986) *A History of the Ecumenical Movement: Volume I, 1517-1948, third edition*. World Council of Churches, Geneva. p.720.

triune God and among one another which is their calling and God's gift."¹⁰ The living force of this ecumenical quest is the Holy Spirit, who bestows the fruit of "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." (Gal. 5:22)

13. In the twentieth century, the word "ecumenism" began to refer specifically to Christians working toward "visible unity in one faith and one Eucharistic fellowship." While we affirm the essential value of promoting positive relationships among all peoples of faith, the intra-Christian understanding of the term "ecumenism" is how the word will be used in this text.

14. Ecumenical dialogue and interreligious dialogue are related to each other. Christians need to bear common witness in so far as it is possible with people of other religions. *The Directory for the Application of the Principles and Norms of Ecumenism* takes notice of this fact. It states:

There are increasing contacts in today's world between Christians and persons of other religions. These contacts differ radically from the contacts between the church and ecclesial communities, which have for their object the restoration of the unity Christ willed among all his disciples, and are properly called ecumenical. But in practice they are deeply influenced by, and in turn influence ecumenical relationships. Through them, Christians can deepen the level of communion existing among themselves, and so they are to be considered an important part of ecumenical cooperation.¹¹

15. The spiritual roots of ecumenism combine efforts of Christians to discern God's will and to be receptive to the Holy Spirit, with particular attention to "the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18) which has been entrusted to us through Christ for the sake of the world—indeed, for all creation, "in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay..." (Rom. 8:21). This is the common hope for all human beings and a source of the ecumenical mandate. Division "openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalizes the world, and damages the holy cause of preaching the Gospel to every creature."¹² In response to the reality of divisions among Christians, at the 50th anniversary of its founding, the WCC member churches recommitted themselves to nurture "the ability to pray, live, act and grow together in community—sometimes through struggle and conflict—with churches from differing backgrounds

and traditions."¹³ In this project, the members of the Joint Working Group have been attentive to the variety of writings within and among Christian traditions that particularly inform this ecumenical mandate.

16. The quest for Christian unity is not something new in the life of the churches. It is rooted in the tradition of the Church from the earliest centuries, and is embedded in liturgy. Furthermore, it is part of the fundamental nature of the church. As Pope John Paul II said in his encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*, the unity

which the Lord has bestowed on his church and in which he wishes to embrace all people, is not something added on, but stands at the very heart of Christ's mission. Nor is it some secondary attribute of the community of his disciples. Rather, it belongs to the very essence of this community. God wills the church because he wills unity, and unity is an expression of the whole depth of his agape.¹⁴

In other words, the spiritual roots of ecumenism are at the very heart of the quest for Christian unity: that is, they entail conversion and renewal, holiness of life in accordance with the Gospel, personal and communal prayer. At the same time that the response to God's will for unity is grounded in the scripture and tradition that Christians share, the forms of that response are open to fresh winds of the Holy Spirit in ways still to be made known.

17. The members of the JWG have chosen to use the metaphor of "spiritual roots" because roots are a common source of nourishment. As with all metaphors, it is evocative and provides a good visual image for the fundamentals undergirding the ecumenical movement. Roots are dependent on the same life-giving sources of soil and water. These sources often are hidden, yet they quietly sustain. All roots intermingle, sometimes in complex ways not visible to the human eye. They have the potential to bear good fruit. So it is with the spiritual roots of ecumenism. The common source nourishing Christians is the triune God. Christians are reborn and nourished in the waters of baptism, through which we share a real though incomplete communion. Our distinct traditions are inter-dependent. We turn to the same life-giving channels of scripture and tradition discerned through human experience to guide, sustain, and bear the fruit of reconciliation. The ecumenical movement, itself, has been a fruit of the Holy Spirit, refreshing our commitment and inspiring Christians to engage with each other as we reach toward full *koινωνia* – "visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship."¹⁵

10. Towards a Common Understanding and Vision of the World Council of Churches. [CUV] 2.8.1.

11. The Directory for the Application of the Principles and Norms of Ecumenism. Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. n. 210.

12. Unitatis Redintegratio. Par. 1.

13. *Towards A Common Understanding and Vision of the World Council of Churches*. (Sept. 1997). A policy statement adopted by the WCC Central Committee. Par. 3.7.1.

14. *Ut Unum Sint*. No.9.

15. WCC Constitution. Par. 3.

II. BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

“I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” (John 17:20-21)

18. Because prayer is rooted in a relationship with the triune God, the JWG has chosen prayer as an organizing principle to explore the theological foundations of spiritual ecumenism. Prayer rooted in the prayer of Jesus leads the believer to confront his or her sins that contribute to division within the community, and also the sins committed by members of the church in previous ages which have led to schism and fracture in ecclesial communion. By praying with Christ, believers undergo interior conversion and become instruments of healing who remove obstacles to communion, but also witnesses to the diversity of the Holy Spirit’s gifts that make true unity possible. Finally, as Christians who look to Christ as the principal agent of reconciliation, we also cultivate a patience that recognizes the perfection of unity as the final gift of the Lord when he returns in glory. As has been stated in section I (Basic terms), prayer is only one dimension of the spiritual life.

A. The prayer of Jesus as a basis for unity

19. The Gospel of John places Jesus’ prayer for unity at the climax of his farewell address to the disciples on the night before his death. In what is often called the high priestly prayer (John 17), Jesus asks the Father to give his disciples, those who belong to him in the time of his death on the cross, as well as those who have yet to believe in him, a share in their communion of life and love. The prayer for unity is first a prayer to “abide” (μένειν) in Jesus and in the love that he has for the Father (15:7-10) and for his disciples (13:34). Like branches of the vine (15:5), his disciples will bear fruit if they obey the Father’s commandments and love one another as Jesus himself has loved them. To lay down one’s life for a brother or sister is the most supreme expression of unity precisely because it imitates the sacrificial love of Jesus revealed on the cross (13:1; 15:13).

20. Unity in the love of Jesus is first an I-Thou relationship which builds communion between individuals and Christ as the ground from which unity between communities emerges. The disciples derive their unity with one another from Christ who shows how to love and how to find the way to the Father (John 8:12; 14:7). It is his love that gives rise to the desire for unity, even in those who have never been aware of the need for it. Saint Cyril of Alexandria writes that Christ wishes his disciples

to be kept in a state of unity by maintaining a like-mindedness and an identity of will, being mingled together as it were in soul and spirit and in the law of peace and love for one another. He wishes them to be bound together tightly with an

unbreakable bond of love, that they may advance to such a degree of unity that is conceived to exist between the Father and the Son.¹⁶

The early Christian community, as depicted in the Book of Acts, realizes this harmony of minds and hearts as its members “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” as well as to the sharing of wealth for the benefit of one another (Acts 2:41, 44-45).

21. All loving action, all fruitfulness of life in communion among Christians flows from hearing the word of Christ and receiving it in faith. The word that Jesus speaks comes from the Father, and is expressed through a variety of teachings and powerful signs. But all of the words and deeds of Christ are, at the same time, concentrated in the one word that is the divine name shared by both Jesus and the Father. “I AM” is the powerful name of God revealed first through Moses to the people of Israel (Exodus 3:14), and now to all peoples through the exaltation of Christ on the cross (John 18ff). Within the high priestly prayer, Jesus acknowledges that he has revealed the Father’s ineffable name to his disciples (John 17:6), the name that saves human beings because it elicits faith from them. Wherever two or three gather to invoke Jesus’ name, he is present in the midst of them (Matt.18:20).

22. In the Gospel of Matthew the divine name is similarly invoked in the distinctive prayer that Jesus teaches to his disciples: “Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name...” The Lord’s Prayer sanctifies the divine name because it petitions the Father for the means to live within the heavenly kingdom, where sins are forgiven and all are reconciled to one another in Christ. This very prayer that Christians of differing confessional allegiances often recite in common today is the prayer for unity *par excellence*. As St. Cyprian noted about the Lord’s Prayer, “we say not ‘My Father, which art in heaven,’ nor ‘Give me this day my daily bread’...When we pray [the Lord’s Prayer] we pray not for one but for the whole people, because we the whole people are one.”¹⁷

23. The prayer for unity, the prayer of Jesus and his disciples, achieves its desired object only through the power of the Holy Spirit. Earlier in his farewell address, Jesus promises another Advocate in whom the disciples will abide and in whom his memory will be preserved in all truth (John 14:16-17, 25-26). The same Spirit that helps us in our weakness, intercedes for us when we do not know how to pray (Rom. 8:26-27), and

16. Joel C. Elowsky and Thomas C. Oden, eds. (2007) *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: John 11-21*. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL; *Commentary on the Gospel of John 11.9*, p.245.

17. St. Cyprian. Treatise IV, *On the Lord’s Prayer*. No.8; <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf05.iv.v.iv.html> (Accessed March 15, 2010).

enables us to proclaim that “Jesus is Lord” (1 Cor. 12:3)—that same Spirit draws the first Christians into the unity of the richly endowed church at Pentecost. Sent by the Father through the Son, the life-giving Spirit (Nicene Constantinopolitane Creed) accompanies the church throughout the pilgrimage of history, preserving believers in the truth and enabling them to witness boldly to the gospel. In the process of praying, working and struggling for unity, the Holy Spirit also “comforts us in pain, disturbs us when we are satisfied to remain in our division, leads us to repentance and grants us joy when our communion flourishes.”¹⁸

24. Finally, the unity for which Christ and his followers pray achieves its fulfillment only when the rest of humanity finds its place within creation’s worship of the triune God (Phil. 2:10-11). Jesus prays that we may be one “so that the world may believe” that he is the one sent by the Father—a realization that marks the beginning of eternal life (John 17:3). Thus communion among Christians fosters mission, which includes both the proclamation of the word as well as action on behalf of justice, peace and care for God’s creation. It is in this spirit that John Calvin offered a prayer saying “Save us, Lord, from being self-centered in our prayers; teach us to remember to pray for others. May we be so caught up in love for those for whom we pray, that we may feel their needs as keenly as our own, and pray for them with imagination, sensitivity, and knowledge.”¹⁹ Christians today who pray for unity stand within the modern ecumenical movement, which began more than one hundred years ago with the realization that the mission of announcing the good news of Jesus Christ is impeded by the discordant witness of Christian communities in competition with or indifferent to one another. Such a contradiction becomes an obstacle for those who hear the message and who might otherwise place their faith in Christ.

B. Our calling to repentance and conversion as a basis for unity

25. The dialogue of *metanoia* which comprises repentance and conversion is also a dialogue of unity among Christians.²⁰ From the beginning of history, sin has led either to a break or a wound in humanity’s communion with God, which has resulted in conflicts between individuals and their communities. God’s solution to the catastrophic consequences of human rebellion is to restore the relationship by means of a

covenant. Through the prophets of Israel, the people are further educated in the bond between worship and justice, sacrifices and merciful deeds (e.g. Hos. 6:6).

26. With the coming of Jesus Christ, the new Adam who renews all of humanity through his incarnation and life-giving death on the cross (cf. 1 Cor. 15:47), believers receive the definitive plan for communion and unity. By the grace that comes through faith in Christ Jesus, believers who are baptized into him have the means of overcoming their sins and evil in the world and of being transformed into holy instruments of God’s new creation (Gal. 3:27).

27. Christians rejoice in the ways that the Lord equips them to be ambassadors of reconciliation (cf. 2 Cor. 5:19) and announcers of a gospel that promises renewed friendship with God (cf. John 15:15). “Humanity is one, organically one by its divine structure; it is the church’s mission to reveal to men that pristine unity that they have lost, to restore and complete it,” said St. Hilary of Poitiers.²¹ The vocation of service to unity is, therefore, an inherent part of the call to discipleship.

28. In our worship, the community makes a confession of sin in order to remove the obstacles to communion with God and fellowship with one another. Sometimes the confession takes the form of a communal prayer. At other times it is a litany that repeats the words of penitents in the Gospel: “Lord, have mercy”/*Kyrie eleison* (cf. Mark 10:48; Luke 18:13, 38). In confessing our sins together as part of communal worship, we turn together to Christ whose blood pays the debt of our sins (cf. Rom. 5:16) and calls out for mercy and reconciliation among believers and within the wider human family (cf. Heb. 12:24; Col. 1:20).

29. The community of believers that carries the message and presence of Christ into the world begins its life at Pentecost with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, whom the Lord had promised to send (Acts 1:8; cf. John 14:16). What had been a Jewish feast of God’s gift of the covenant at Sinai becomes for the followers of Jesus the beginning of a new phase in the history of salvation, in which all the earth’s peoples are represented (Acts 2:1-11). Through the outpouring of the Spirit, Christ undoes the damage wrought by Babel (cf. Gen. 11:1-9) and enables human beings to reunite in the language of faith in the one whose blood dissolves the walls of division (Eph. 2:14-15). Christ makes himself the head of this new body (Col. 1:18), but animates it by the Spirit who is the bearer of God’s love (Rom. 5:5)—a love that casts out fear (1 John 14).

30. The church is the place where humanity rediscovers its unity in communion with God. In the images of the early church Fathers, the church is the

18. *The Unity of the Church: Gift and Calling—The Canberra statement.* (1991) World Council of Churches. No.4.1; <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/faith-and-order-commission-unity-the-church-and-its-mission/the-unity-of-the-church-gift-and-calling-the-canberra-statement.html> (Accessed March 15, 2010)

19. Dorothy Stewart, compiler. (2002) *The Westminster Collection of Christian Prayers.* WJK, Louisville, KY. p.314.

20. *Ut Unum Sint.* No.35.

21. Henri de Lubac. (1988) *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man.* Ignatius Press, San Francisco. pp.45, 48, 53.

ark which “in the full sail of the Lord's cross, by the breath of the Holy Spirit, navigates safely in this world,” and through which human beings are “saved from the flood” as in the days of Noah.²²

31. At its ninth assembly in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 2006, the World Council of Churches affirmed in its statement on ecclesiology, *Called to Be the One Church*, that the Church is the sign and instrument of what God intends for the salvation of the world. “The kingdom of God can be perceived in a reconciled and reconciling community called to holiness: a community that strives to overcome the discriminations expressed in sinful social structures, and to work for the healing of divisions in its own life and for healing and unity in the human community.”²³

32. Conversion to Christ and prayer for unity lead to the healing of those memories of intolerance, hatred and even violence perpetrated by Christians against other Christians in the name of religion. As Pope John Paul II said in his encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*: “With the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Lord's disciples, inspired by love, by the power of the truth and by a sincere desire for mutual forgiveness and reconciliation, are called to re-examine together their painful past and the hurt which that past regrettably continues to provoke even today.”²⁴ With similar dedication, they are to affirm and renew “the image of God in all humanity” and to work “alongside all those whose human dignity has been denied by economic, political, and social marginalization.”²⁵ Joined to Christ the reconciler, Christians do not hesitate to engage in works that promote healing and unity in the broader society, even while recognizing with Paul that such good work appropriately begins in the household of faith (cf. Gal. 6:10).

C. The gifts of the Spirit in a dialogue with cultures as a basis for unity

33. Spiritual ecumenism values unity and diversity as two interpenetrating gifts that Christ in his Spirit bestows upon the church. Already in the New Testament, the new people of God reveals itself as a unity rich in diversity when the Word and the Spirit appear together in moments of God's creative acts. In his spiritual interpretation of the baptism of Jesus and the day of Pentecost, Augustine of Hippo points out

22. St. Augustine. *Sermon. 96,7,9*: PL 38,588; St. Ambrose, *De virg. 18 118*: PL 16,297B; cf. already 1 Pet. 3:20-21.

23. WCC. (2006) *Called to Be One Church – Porto Alegre statement*. No.10; <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/porto-alegre-2006/1-statements-documents-adopted/christian-unity-and-message-to-the-churches/called-to-be-the-one-church-as-adopted.html> (Accessed March 15, 2010) bibliography

24. Pope John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint*, No.2.

25. WCC. (2006) *Called to Be One Church – Porto Alegre statement*. No.10.

that it is the same Holy Spirit who reveals himself in both events as the source of the new creation (cf. Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21–22; John 1:29–34; Acts 2:4). The two manifestations of the Spirit represent, according to Augustine, the diversity of gifts and the unity of faith in the one church. At Pentecost, Augustine writes, “there is a diversity of tongues, but the diversity of tongues does not imply schisms. Do not be afraid of the separation in the cloven tongues, but in the dove recognize unity.”²⁶ In the hovering of the Spirit over Jesus, at the moment the Father pronounces his Son “beloved,” the unity of all those who would be baptized in Christ and made children of the one God, also is manifested. For Augustine, incorporation into Christ at baptism and the gathering into the church at Pentecost are two aspects of God's single response to the chaos provoked by sin.

34. Unity in diversity is found throughout the life of the church, in every stage of its existence. Given the mandate of the church to proclaim the gospel and baptize people of all nations (Matt. 28:19-20), the church enters into dialogue with disparate cultures. Each new culture and ethnic community that receives the Gospel and allows the church to take root on its soil, contributes its own gifts to the life of the body of believers. Worship, theology, and witness find new and enriching expressions because the dialogue of church and culture continues in every age. Christians on the ecumenical journey agree with Paul that the Holy Spirit bestows a rich variety of theological and pastoral gifts for the up-building of the one church (cf. Eph. 4:1-16).

35. Yet the principle of diversity of gifts is qualified by the ecclesial purpose to which they are always directed: “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (1 Cor. 12:4-7). The churches recognize the important work of theological dialogues that aim to identify doctrinal convergences across confessional divides. Christians today can gratefully acknowledge that sometimes another tradition comes nearer than one's own to a full appreciation of some aspects of a mystery of revelation, or has expressed them to better advantage. “In such cases, these various theological expressions are to be considered often as mutually complementary rather than conflicting.”²⁷

36. While affirming the life-giving effects of the gifts of the Spirit, we also recognize the limits of diversity. Diversity is integral to the nature of ecclesial communion. There is, however, also a diversity of cultures which can undermine communion when it renders impossible the common profession of faith in

26. St. Augustine. *Tractates on the Gospel of John 6:3*. ACCS: Acts, p.22.

27. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, No.17; http://www.vatican.va/archives/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/va-ii_decree_19641121_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html (Accessed March 15, 2010)

Christ as God and Savior the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8); or when doubt is cast upon “salvation and the final destiny of humanity as proclaimed in Holy Scripture and preached by the apostolic community.”²⁸ When diversity gives way to a profound divergence in the way the gospel is proclaimed by people, or when it breaks apart fellowships of Christians because of profound differences in understanding the moral life, then it no longer accords with the mind of Christ or with the movement of his Spirit in the church. Those on the ecumenical journey can say with Origen of Alexandria (185-254): “Wherever there are sins, there are also divisions, schisms, heresies, and disputes.” By the same token, wherever there are virtues like patience and humility borne of the Spirit “there is also harmony and unity, from which arise the one heart and one soul of all believers.”²⁹

37. Unity in diversity finds its perfect expression in the absolute oneness and distinction of persons in the Holy Trinity. God, the Father Almighty, God the only begotten Son, and God the Holy Spirit who is Lord and giver of life, are one God, as professed in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (381). Each Person (*hypostasis*) is distinct in his identity, co-equally sharing in the one divine essence (*ousia*). The church as the people of God, the body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit mirrors—albeit in a creaturely and imperfect way—the “oneness in rich diversity” of the living God. The prayer and spiritual works for Christian unity are therefore aimed at the growth of ecclesial communion into the Trinitarian communion of self-giving love, from which it derives its life.³⁰

38. Christians on the ecumenical journey understand the importance of hospitality as a virtue that helps to overcome the barriers between historically divided churches. Over the last hundred years, we have learned to welcome into our communities the stranger who later was discovered to be our sister or brother in Christ. One of the great ecumenical challenges today is to cultivate a Trinitarian spirituality that fosters within our communities an attitude of welcome toward believers from churches other than our own. Like Abraham and Sarah who entertain the “divine friends” unaware of their identity, we too may find a blessing in receiving the holy other into our tents, and also the rich

spiritual gifts that he or she bears (Gen. 18:1-19; cf. Heb. 13:2).³¹

D. Enduring hope as a basis for unity

39. As believers in Jesus Christ, Christians desire what the Lord desires; and he desires unity, peace and friendship for his disciples. Yet this unity for which we labor must be acknowledged as a gift of the Lord before it ever becomes the task of his disciples. Unity accompanies the Holy Spirit whom the Father sends through the Son on the day of Pentecost as a permanent endowment. Whenever the Lord’s followers fall into division, we contradict ourselves as members of his body. Discord and fracture within the church always call for deeper prayer, repentance, and remembrance of the original gift of the Spirit.

40. The final vision of the people of God is one of harmonious worship and fruitful life in the kingdom of God. All divisions will fall by the wayside, and all of creation will become a song of praise (Rev. 5:11-14). Christians wait in joyful hope for the return of the Lord who will gather his elect into perfect communion. In the meantime, we look for signs and opportunities to heal the body of Christ of all its divisions. Yet we also seek to find some purpose even in our disunity, knowing that God’s grace is more powerful than our sins of division. Saint Paul understood that the divisions unsettling the church in Corinth helped to expose genuine Christian belief and practice from its false opposites (1 Cor. 11:19). Commenting on this same text, Saint Augustine argued that even divisions over false teachings render the truths of faith more luminous.³²

41. While recognizing that diversity can contribute to the fulfillment of God’s plan, Christians know that God’s call is to be together as ambassadors of reconciliation and agents of peace. Mindful of this call, the delegates to the first assembly of the World Council of Churches, held in Amsterdam, said in their message, “God has broken the power of evil once and for all, and opened for everyone the gate into freedom and joy in the Holy Spirit.”³³ Appreciative of the Spirit’s rich

28. Faith and Order Commission. (1991), *The Unity of the Church: Gift and calling - the Canberra statement, World Council of Churches*, no.2.2; <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/faith-and-order-commission/i-unity-the-church-and-its-mission/the-unity-of-the-church-gift-and-calling-the-canberra-statement.html> (Accessed March 15, 2010).

29. Origen, Hom. In Ezech. 9,1: PG 13, 732.

30. WCC, *Called to be One Church*. No.3.

31. See Pope John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint*, no.28: “Dialogue is not simply an exchange of ideas. In some way it is always an ‘exchange of gifts.’” Cf. No.57: “Communion is made fruitful by the exchange of gifts between the Churches insofar as they complement each other.”

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25051995_ut-unum-sint_en.html (Accessed March 15, 2010)

32. Augustine, *Confessions* Book 7, chap 19: “For the disapproval of heretics makes the tenets of Your Church and sound doctrine to stand out boldly. For there must be also heresies, that the approved may be made manifest among the weak.”

33. *The Message of the Assembly*. The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches: The Official Report. (1949) W.A. Visser’t Hooft, General Secretary of the World Council

variety of gifts, we fulfill our calling and anticipate the coming of God's heavenly reign.

III. SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR PRAYER AND LITURGICAL PRACTICE

*"Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive."
(Matt. 21:22)*

42. Prayer has long been recognized as the soul of the ecumenical movement. As was noted in the previous section, the prayer for unity is always an extension and participation in the prayer of Christ who desires that we be one as he and the Father are one (John 17:21). This prayer is for the followers of Christ. In prayer, Christians are invited to respond to this appeal, and to become fully that for which our Lord prayed. Prayer is the spiritual taproot of ecumenism—the main root from which all else springs.

43. The biblical principle, "apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5) applies to the work of removing obstacles to full communion among the Christian people. Through prayer, Christian believers invite Christ to shape unity as he wills it—to let go of any notions or habits that are not consistent with his will. By praying with Christ and in Christ the believer is united with all believers in a symphony of prayer that orients minds and hearts to the service of building unity within the one church.

44. Christians regularly pray for each other in a variety of ways. This is one of the fruits of the ecumenical movement—a fruit that is in continuity with the traditions of the church. Many churches include prayers for unity (collects) in their liturgies. Some are a regular part of worship, others are for occasional or particular use during certain seasons or on particular days. For example, many Lutheran worship services include petitions for peace ("give peace to your church..."³⁴) which address the need for reconciliation among peoples, and for the church ("where it is divided, reunite it..."³⁵). The historic Anglican eucharistic prayers and intercessions usually include prayer for the unity of the church, and the following phrase represents a classic formulation: "beseeching thee to inspire continually the universal church with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord..."³⁶ In the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom during the great litany, the priest invites the people to pray "For peace in the whole world, for the stability of the holy churches of

God, and for the unity of all..."³⁷ At the dismissal, the priest prays "Grant peace to Your world, to Your churches..."³⁸ In the Roman Catholic Church, when the priest invites members of the congregation to offer each other a sign of peace, he begins by saying: "Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your apostles, peace I leave you, my peace I give you, look not on our sins, but on the faith of your church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will. Who live and reign for ever and ever."³⁹

45. Christians also pray with each other in ecumenical gatherings. As the report of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the World Council of Churches observed:

Common prayer in ecumenical settings makes it possible for Christians from divided ecclesial traditions to praise God together and offer prayer for Christian unity. Prayer lies at the centre of our identity as Christians, both in our separate communions and in the conciliar ecumenical movement. The very fact that we are able to pray together both as individuals and as representatives of our churches is a sign of the progress that has been made. Yet our common prayer is also a sign of those things that are still to be achieved. Many of our divisions become apparent precisely in our common prayer.⁴⁰

The report concluded: "Our divisions will not be resolved solely with theological dialogue and common service to the world. We must also pray together if we are to stay together, for common prayer is at the very heart of our Christian life, both in our own communities and as we work together for Christian unity."⁴¹

46. Some intentional communities have been inspired and shaped by the ecumenical vision, and have used it as an organizing principle in their life together. It has shaped their prayer life and informed the spirit of hospitality with which they receive Christians into their life. Among these are the Chemin Neuf Community, the Focolare Movement, the Community of Grandchamp, the Iona Community, the Ecumenical Community of Taizé, and the Monastic Community of Bose.

of Churches, ed. Harper & Brothers, New York. 10. This publication is Volume V of the series *Man's Disorder and God's Design*. Also available at <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/assembly/ejubilee/8-piece8.htm>

34. *Evangelical Lutheran Worship, Pew Edition*. (2006) Augsburg Fortress, Minneapolis, Minn. p.73.

35. *Ibid.*, p.76.

36. From the prayer "for the whole state of Christ's Church militant here in earth" in the Service of Holy Communion in the *Book of Common Prayer 1662*.

37. *The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*. (1985) Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Brookline, MA. p.1.

38. *Ibid.*, p.35.

39. *The Roman Missal*. The Communion Rite, "Sign of Peace."

40. *Final report of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC*. (February 14, 2006). Appendix A, "A framework for Common Prayer at WCC Gatherings," par. 1. Pdf version: <http://wcc.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/assembly/porto-alegre-2006/3-preparatory-and-background-documents/final-report-of-the-Special-Commission-on-Orthodox-Participation-in-the-WCC.html>.

41. *Ibid.*, Conclusion. Par. 43.

47. Some churches observe an ecumenical prayer cycle in which they systematically pray for Christian churches around the world. Some pray especially for churches in times of threat and for churches under the cross. At the 50th anniversary assembly of the World Council of Churches in Harare, Nelson Mandela thanked the churches, saying “Your support exemplified in the most concrete way the contribution that religion has made to our liberation...”⁴² Prayer was an essential part of this support. Some have special companion relationships with Christians in other parts of the world for whom they pray. Some support a fruitful outcome of ecumenical events through prayer.

48. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (WPCU), now observed among churches around the world for over a century, helps the faithful focus intensely on Christian unity. This “week,” observed from 18-25 January (or in some places, during Pentecost or in the southern hemisphere, in July), has been called “one of the oldest and most enduring institutionalized expressions of ‘spiritual ecumenism’...”⁴³ Suggested materials for a common WPCU text now are prepared by the commission on Faith and Order of the WCC and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, and distributed widely by churches, bishops conferences, councils of churches, and other ecumenical organizations. It has served as a catalyst for connection among young adults, and is among the most visited sections on the WCC’s website. That churches offer these prayers is a sign of a real though incomplete communion which already exist among them.

49. The Joint Working Group study on *The Nature and Purpose of Ecumenical Dialogue*, observes that “Our common commitment to Christian unity requires not only prayers for one another but a life of common prayer.”⁴⁴ In other words, Christians not only should be praying for each other, but also with each other. When this happens, as Pope John Paul II observed in *Ut Unum Sint*, “the goal of unity seems closer. The long history of Christians marked by many divisions seems to converge once more because it tends toward that Source of its unity which is Jesus Christ.”⁴⁵ It is worth noting that this section on *The Primacy of Prayer* precedes the section on *Ecumenical Dialogue*, and that prayer is considered “the basis and support” for dialogue.⁴⁶

42. Diane Kessler, ed. (1999) *Together on the Way*: Official report of the eighth assembly of the World Council of Churches. WCC Publications, Geneva. p.8.

43. Nicholas Lossky et al. (2002) *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*. WCC Publications, Geneva. “Week of Prayer for Christian Unity,” by Thomas F. Best. P.1203.

44. *The Nature and Purpose of Ecumenical Dialogue*. (2005) Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches, Eighth Report. WCC Publications, Geneva. p.80, par. 42.

45. *Ut Unum Sint*, no.22.

46. *Ut Unum Sint*, no.28.

Thus, every gathering of Christians from different traditions should be enveloped by prayer.

50. Where to begin? Christian churches hold the Lord’s Prayer in common. It is used both for private devotion and public worship. When Christians from various traditions gather in ecumenical settings, the experience of praying the Lord’s Prayer together, each in his or her own language, is an especially powerful reminder of the unity already shared through our baptism. In so doing, we follow our Lord’s counsel to “Pray then in this way...” (Matt. 6:9a) This is the ultimate rule of prayer that establishes unity in communion, however partial.

51. Churches are learning and receiving from one another’s patterns of worship. The liturgical movement is a genuine source of the spiritual roots of ecumenism, especially in its ecumenical recovery of shapes of liturgical rites that predate the major divisions of the church. For instance, in the Western churches, hymns, canticles and other musical resources are shared ecumenically. Music from the Taizé community has had a profound ecumenical influence. Styles of worship in Charismatic and Pentecostal churches, especially the use of hymns and spiritual songs, are being integrated in the liturgy of some historic churches. Increasingly, the services of daily prayer in many of the Protestant traditions share much in common with the Anglican, Catholic and Orthodox traditions. These services of daily prayer are steeped in the Psalms, which are a unifying element among the churches in prayer and liturgical life.

52. The liturgical movement fostered renewal in the eucharistic services of the Protestant, Anglican, and Roman Catholic churches. These liturgies share common roots in the ancient structure of the eucharist which always has been part of the living tradition of the Eastern and Oriental and Orthodox. A significant sign in the recovery of a common understanding of the eucharistic theology which accompanied the renewal of Western liturgy is the 1982 convergence text on *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*⁴⁷ from the commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches. This convergence has been recognized and honoured when structuring opportunities for shared prayer in ecumenical settings.

53. All churches face the challenge of helping the faithful live out that for which they pray. Christians trust that God hears these prayers for unity, but God also invites us to cooperate in their fulfillment. Even as prayer deepens faith, it also is in the service of unity and mission. The challenge faced by all worship leaders is to find ways to help members of the congregation be attentive to the full import of these prayers for unity—in their own lives, in the life of their churches, and in their communities.

47. *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. Faith and Order Paper No.111. (1982) World Council of Churches, Geneva.

IV. EXAMPLES INSPIRED BY THE SAINTS

“[Since] we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith...” (Heb. 12:1-2a)

54. As Christians become more familiar with the spiritual gifts of each other's traditions, they are reclaiming those gifts in ways that bring them and their churches closer together to inform and guide them into unity. They are inspired by writings from all Christian spiritual traditions; they are enriched by stories of singular commitment and devotion; and despite the diversity in devotional practices, they are enlivened by persons who have been exemplary examples of holy living and dying. Martyrs, saints, and living witnesses—these sources of inspiration provide a unity in the diversity of the spiritual life of Christians. These holy men and women, not just of the past but also of our own times, nurture and inform our relationships in church and society. They are icons of Christ in ways that have attracted us to God, and through God, to the reconciling spirit at the heart of the Gospel and the core of the ecumenical mandate. All have the potential to refresh and rededicate us to be witnesses “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

55. Beginning with Christ himself, the scriptures provide abundant reminders of the power of holiness. Jesus said “unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.” (John 12:24-25; Heb. 12:1-2a)

56. The influence of Christian martyrs transcends the categories that sometimes bind and separate. In fact, martyrdom remains a powerful witness among the churches of our day—an eloquent defence of conscience where Christians are a persecuted minority. These witnesses nurture all Christians in the faith. And in this way, they are reminders of the real though incomplete communion shared through baptism—a communion, that as John Calvin observed, is united through a common heavenly Father, with Christ as the head, so that the faithful “cannot but be united in brotherly love, and mutually impart their blessings to each other.”⁴⁸ When Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I and Pope Paul VI met in Rome in 1967, they voiced this link between the witness of martyrs and the ecumenical mandate.

We hear...the cry of the blood of the apostles Peter and Paul, and the voice of the church of the catacombs and of the martyrs of the Colosseum, inviting us to use every possible means to bring to completion the work we have begun—that of the perfect healing of Christ's divided church—not

only that the will of the Lord should be accomplished, but that the world may see shining forth what is, according to our creed, the primary property of the church—its unity.⁴⁹

57. Among the many examples, we mention the following: In 1968 Pope Paul VI journeyed to Uganda to dedicate the site for a shrine to honour forty-five Anglican and Catholic faithful who had been martyred at the direction of King Mwanga II. This visit was followed in 1984 with a pilgrimage by Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie. In Romania the church and the state annually celebrate “The Day of Heroes” on the Feast of the Ascension to honour all martyrs of the country including those of communist persecution, and those killed in the 1989 uprising-revolution.

58. Pope John Paul II gave fresh impetus to the ecumenical potential of martyrs in *Ut Unum Sint*. The second paragraph of the encyclical calls attention to the witness of martyrs as a force for unity. The text asserts that:

The courageous witness of so many martyrs of our century, including members of churches and ecclesial communities not in full communion with the Catholic Church, gives new vigor to the [Second Vatican] council's call and reminds us of our duty to listen to and put into practice its exhortation. These brothers and sisters of ours, united in the selfless offering of their lives for the kingdom of God, are the most powerful proof that every factor of division can be transcended and overcome in the total gift of self for the sake of the Gospel.⁵⁰

59. In an effort to give visible witness to this idea, on May 7 in the Jubilee Year 2000 the Pope held an “Ecumenical Commemoration of Witnesses to the Faith in the Twentieth Century” in the Colosseum, a site of martyrdom in the early Church of Rome.⁵¹ Representatives of other churches and ecclesial communities from a variety of nations were invited to participate in the service of evening prayer marking the occasion. These initiatives offer great promise. While particular churches may have a process for recognizing saints and martyrs for their own members, the churches still need a means of providing ecumenical recognition where Christian martyrs of different traditions are honoured together, as a fruit of the ecumenical movement and a means of fostering unity.

60. A significant initiative to explore ways that the witness of martyrs can be a force for unity was a gathering sponsored jointly by the Monastery of Bose and the Faith and Order Commission of the World

49. Nicholas Lossky et al. (1991) *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*. WCC Publications, Geneva. “Martyrdom,” p.661.

50. *Ut Unum Sint*, no.1.

51. See “Ecumenical Commemoration of Witnesses to the Faith in the Twentieth Century,” Press Conference, www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/documents.

48. John Calvin. *Institutes of Christian Religion*, Book IV, 1, 2-3.

Council of Churches, held in the autumn of 2008. The setting was especially appropriate because the Community of Bose already had published *Il libro dei testimoni*—an ecumenical martyrology offering daily stories with short prayers and Bible readings about witnesses, drawn from various Christian traditions. The Feast of All Saints occurred during the symposium. According to the message of the meeting:

The aims behind this project were: to recognize each other's witnesses of faith, when this is not mutually exclusive; to find ways of commemorating witnesses from various traditions at ecumenical meetings; to develop or recover the commemoration of witnesses in churches that do not have such a practice; to work towards a common ecumenical martyrology.⁵²

61. As the participants in the Bose meeting recognized, when one wades into the history of Christian martyrdom, one quickly realizes that the circumstances of martyrdom in some situations have an underside that must be surfaced and addressed as a step towards reconciliation among churches. Over the centuries, many Christians have been martyred in inter-confessional acts of violence, thus fueling the flames of acrimony between Christians. *Ut Unum Sint* acknowledges the need for a “purification of past memories.”⁵³ A common exploration of painful memories offers Christians an opportunity to acknowledge past wrongs, repent for sins committed, seek forgiveness, and transcend the past in keeping with the reconciling spirit of the Gospel.

62. This process is not easy. It requires “speaking the truth in love,” so that “we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.” (Eph. 4:15-16) In this way, an exploration of a common martyrology offers the possibility for churches to grow together through costly obedience to the reconciling essence of the gospel.

63. The Bose symposium acknowledged that churches continue to differ in particular matters as, for instance, “the intercession of the saints, canonization, veneration of saintly relics, and the practice of indulgences.” (Par. 4.1). It observed that “churches differ in the ways they commemorate the great witnesses. Many churches do so through story telling, religious instruction, publications, and artistic expression. Some also commemorate witnesses as part of their daily liturgical life.” (par. 4.2) Yet Christians are united in being

attracted to examples of holy living from all our traditions, and are doing so in a variety of ways—through “ecclesiastical calendars, liturgies, books, catechetical materials, memorials, pilgrimages and celebrations.” (par. 4.3) These saints are accessible because of the way that they have evidenced holiness in their very humanity. Their appropriation by all traditions helps break out of defining ourselves over against the other.

64. A popular hymn written in the nineteenth century is titled “For All the Saints.” The fourth verse reads, “O Blest communion, fellowship divine! We feebly struggle, they in glory shine; Yet all are one in thee, for all are thine. Alleluia!”⁵⁴ In this sense, all are called to holiness through baptism. The saints show us the way. Their holiness in imitation of Christ shines through especially clearly, inviting emulation in an ongoing conversion of heart.

65. One concrete way that the reconciling potential of examples among the saints is being realized is through the creation of ecumenical chapels of martyrs and similar memorials. The spirit of these chapels is one of unity. The chapels provide a welcoming space for all Christians to pray and reflect in the company of women and men who suffered and died as witnesses to their faith. The martyrs come from different continents, cultures, and Christian traditions. Some have been recognized officially. Others live in the collective memory of the faithful.

66. Another example of this growing convergence is the creation of “A Resource for Worship and Personal Devotion” titled *Walking with the Saints*⁵⁵, developed by Beeson Divinity School—an interdenominational evangelical seminary in the United States. The text begins with Patrick (c. 390-461), “Bishop and Missionary to Ireland,” and concludes with Bill Wallace (1908-1950), “Baptist Surgeon and Missionary.” Invoking the ecumenical martyrs, including those in the twentieth century who died by working for justice (e.g. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Oscar Romero) can be a powerful means of joint prayer and study.

67. These are visible signs of a growing convergence in understanding Christian martyrs as belonging to the whole people of God. They draw the faithful to Christ, and through Christ, toward each other.

52. Tamara Grdzeldze and Guido Dotti (eds). (2009) *A Cloud of Witnesses: Opportunities for ecumenical commemoration*. Faith and Order Paper No.209. WCC Publications, Geneva. “A Cloud of Witnesses: a message to the churches from a symposium at the Monastery of Bose. Par. 1.2.
53. *Ut Unum Sint*, no.2.

54. *For All the Saints*. No.306. (1931, 1935, 1958) *Pilgrim Hymnal*. The Pilgrim Press, Boston.

55. *Walking with the Saints: A resource for worship and personal devotion*, 2007-2008. (2007) Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama.

V. THE POWER OF TRANSFORMING ENCOUNTERS

There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.” (1 Cor. 12:4-6)

68. Each of us can think of people in living memory whose lives were transformed by experiences or encounters with Christians of other traditions and who, as a result, became converts to the reconciling aims embodied in the ecumenical movement. When people in the ecumenical movement are asked about how they became actively involved, or about what keeps them going when challenges arise, they often tell stories of their own transforming encounters. “When I became involved with Christians from other traditions, my life was changed. I never will be the same. My faith has been enriched, and that has been a great blessing of God.” Over and over again, Christians offer similar testimonies that speak of a deepening faith and commitment to Christ through such encounters. These human exchanges may occur when Christians from different traditions are thrust together in difficult circumstances, such as being prisoners of war, persecuted minorities, or survivors of natural disasters. They may be brief and providential, or the result of deepening relationships with mentors or friends.

69. When Christians seek to discern God’s will in their life and in the life of their churches, they are drawn to Christ’s prayer “that they may all be one.” (John 17:21) This prayer leads believers to confront the sins which contribute to division within and among members of the community, and to become receptive to the working of the Holy Spirit who draws Christians into ever deepening fellowship. In this place of openness and vulnerability, and in conversation with the Triune God, a dialogue of conversion begins. Fears are acknowledged and confronted. Trust increases. Minds and hearts are changed from an exclusive to an inclusive spirit. Through the grace of God, this transformation of persons also contributes to the healing of divisions among churches for the sake of the world. Then the churches, themselves, become increasingly effective witnesses to the reconciling power of the Gospel, whether they are calling for more compassionate responses to persons affected by HIV and AIDS, or banding together to support Millennium Development Goals.

70. This conversion to become a reconciling witness in the midst of division may happen when Christ uses a single revelatory encounter. More often, however, such a conversion is a process of engaging in progressively deepening relationships with Christians of other traditions. The believer learns to listen, experiences the pain of past wrongs, the distress of separation. Fear and anxiety ebb; curiosity and interest increase. Understanding and appreciation of the other develop to the point that he or she has become a friend in

Christ. Believers begin to share both the gifts and tasks of mission. Faith matures, deepens, and is enriched.

71. In this way, Christians long to make visible the unity that Christ bestows and which our relationships with one another have intimated, and we are led to a renewed responsibility to cooperate with God and other Christians in the process of reconciliation. The status quo of division is no longer acceptable. We discover that what can be done together far surpasses what can be done separately. Reaching this conclusion itself is a revelation.

72. The Scriptures are full of stories of people who have been transformed and whose vision of the other has been radically changed—either through an encounter with Christ himself, or through the working of the Holy Spirit in human interactions. For example, when the Samaritan woman met Jesus at a well where she came to draw water, the conversation she had with him changed her life and influenced many from her village. At the same time, it opened the eyes of Christ’s disciples to see Samaritans, who had been considered aliens, as brother and sisters. (John 4:7-42) When the disciples were inclined to push children to the periphery, Jesus brought them into the circle, saying that “it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.” (Matt. 19: 14) In another parable, Jesus responds to the question, “Who is my neighbour?” by using the improbable example of the Good Samaritan. (Luke 10: 29-37). And in giving his disciples the great commandment to “love one another as I have loved you,” he uses the language of friendship to describe the relationship of those who emulate his love and bear good fruit that will last (John 15:12-17).

73. Jesus’ followers in the early church continued to learn about the nature of *koινωνia*—of true communion – through transforming encounters with the risen Christ and with each other. When Peter was challenged by the question of why he was going to uncircumcised and eating with them, he responded “Who was I, that I could hinder God?...Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life.” (cf. Acts 11: 17-18) When Paul and Barnabas returned to Jerusalem for a consultation about whether there should be distinctions between Jews and Gentile converts, they “met together to consider” the matter with the apostles and the elders. They had “much debate,” and concluded that circumcision and keeping the law of Moses would not be necessary, because “we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.” (Acts. 15: 11) This was a great “ecumenical act” which established an ideal of shared responsibility in the spirit of Christ.

74. This commitment is not without risk and fear, both for individuals and for institutions. The following are examples of fears that surface when people engage in ecumenical relationships: people may be afraid that they do not know their own faith well enough to explain it or, if necessary, to defend it. If Christians come from a tradition that has not always practiced

Bible reading among the laity, they may feel intimidated by those who come from traditions that historically have encouraged such a practice. They may fear the unfamiliar, because it pulls them out of their comfort zone. They simply might fear change, and the anxiety that accompanies growth and development. They may be afraid of losing or betraying their confessional identity by considering teachings not their own. They may fear being swallowed up. They may have to relinquish an identity which has been formed by differentiation from the other.

75. The common denominator among all these anxieties is fear. But Christians believe that “[p]erfect love casts out fear” (1 Jn. 4:18). For example, Mother Teresa, fearless in reaching out to people of all backgrounds, once observed: “by blood, I am Albanian; my citizenship is Indian; in my heart, I belong to Christ.” What gives Christians their security is the conviction that their essential identity is rooted in the God known through Christ in the Holy Spirit.

76. Persons who have been challenged and blessed by ecumenical encounters speak about the ways that their prayer life has been enhanced, enlivened, and enriched. They talk about feeling comfortable in a variety of liturgical settings, even though they have one particular tradition which they call home. They know that “to sing hymns is to pray twice,” and they sing with gusto hymns from many traditions. They claim as friends people from various traditions, cultures, races, and places. As a result, they are attentive to the needs of the world with a sense of compassion and justice that has been informed by dialogue with many Christians. They benefit from the teachings and writings of all Christian scholars. They are influenced by all Christian spiritual traditions. In these ways, Christians testify to the power of transforming encounters with brothers and sisters in faith, whether across the road or around the world.

VI. PRACTICAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHURCHES—SOME RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE PARENT BODIES

“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation;”
(cf. 2 Cor. 5:16-21)

77. The Joint Working Group makes the following practical recommendations to the WCC and PCPCU, and through them, to all the churches, for ways to reclaim and reinforce the spiritual roots of ecumenism. This list is intended to stimulate further creative ideas and actions within and among churches.

A. Opportunities to pray together

- The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity has fostered prayer for unity among Christians for over a century. The JWG commends this practice, and affirms initiatives by the international planning committee to offer some materials that meet the needs of children, youth, and young

adults. The JWG also recommends that the regional and local organizers continue to take a fresh look at the preparatory materials, and to place more emphasis on ways that participants can engage with each other both in prayer and in conversation.⁵⁶ This could include offering a simple question to stimulate dialogue before or after the service of prayer; shared Bible study; or the possibility that participants could be given an architectural tour of the church building in which the service is being held. These are only examples of possibilities, but they point to the aim of finding ways to link prayer and ecumenical encounter. Churches need to create more spaces to help people share their faith experiences and traditions with each other.

- Churches should find fresh ways to promote regular use of the Ecumenical Prayer cycle, initiated by WCC Faith and Order in Bangalore, 1978. The communications offices of denominations may be helpful in circulating and promoting this initiative.
- Because Christians share a deep love of the Holy Scriptures, the gathering together of Christians from different traditions offers a particular opportunity for the prayerful hearing and studying the word of God. Thus, it should be encouraged. This may occur either during scheduled gatherings, or at particular times during the liturgical year when Christians are brought together for the explicit purpose of shared Bible study, perhaps using a classical method such as *lectio divina*. One occasion that might be particularly appropriate is Good Friday, when a procession of the way of the cross (*Via Crucis*) could be ecumenical in nature, such as occasionally has occurred when the Pope has invited representatives from other Christian traditions to offer meditations on the sufferings of Jesus, and has invited others to participate in the procession. This presents great opportunities for local collaboration.
- The churches at all levels should be encouraged to take every opportunity to place on the agenda at ecumenical events an exploration of whether prayers for unity are a regular part of worship; the degree to which the faithful are conscious of the ecumenical intentions and implications of these prayers; and how the representatives at these meetings could contribute to a deepening awareness of the practice of prayer for unity in their own settings.
- A growing practice among Christians in many places, which could be emulated, is that of combining prayer with fasting. This is not confined to the Lenten period, when we

56. Walter Cardinal Kasper. (2007) *A Handbook for Spiritual Ecumenism*. New City Press, Hyde Park, N.Y.

commemorate Jesus' forty days of prayer and fasting in the wilderness. It follows, rather, the tendency within the early church to spend considerable time in prayer and fasting before jointly undertaking some significant assignment in mission.

B. Opportunities for ecumenical witness

- One of the customs of the twentieth century ecumenical movement has been to send small delegations of Christians representing a variety of traditions to visits to brothers and sisters in Christ to express solidarity, share in particular events, and learn from each other. Hospitality on these occasions is given and received. By placing a human face on the ecumenical movement, Christians are led by the Holy Spirit to understand each other in fresh ways, and to communicate that understanding to their home church and community. The JWG recommends that this custom be commended to the churches for more widespread use in a variety of local and national, as well as international settings. The Roman Catholic custom of holding World Youth Days offers an opportunity to extend this practice to ecumenical youth delegations. The ecumenical rationale for this practice should be made explicit to maximize the value of the visits.
- All persons who have experienced the transforming power of ecumenical encounters should be encouraged to see themselves as witnesses, and should be prepared to offer testimony to the ways in which their experiences with other Christians have been blessings that have deepened their own spiritual roots. Ecumenical leaders often have heard the claim, "You are never the same after you attend an ecumenical gathering." Thus, at the conclusion of such meetings, the organizers should be encouraged to invite people to share this good news in their own contexts.

C. Opportunities to offer ecumenical hospitality

- Although existing divisions among churches pose obstacles for couples in inter-church marriages, and for their families, clergy have an opportunity—particularly on occasions such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals—to demonstrate and model hospitality in ways that are consistent with their tradition and do not scandalize the faithful. Theological educators should be attentive to this need as they educate candidates for ministry. Continuing education events for clergy also offer opportunities to help clergy in particular contexts address with compassion the concrete pastoral issues arising from inter-church marriages.

- Another way to pray together and learn about each other is to attend services in the liturgical tradition of ecumenical partners, and thus, to experience how the other prays. To maximize the ecumenical benefits of such experiences, however, preparatory planning by the partnering congregations should occur. In this way, the sending delegation will feel welcomed and can be recognized by the receiving congregation; the purpose of the visit can be presented through an ecumenical lens; adequate support can be provided so the visitors understand and can participate as fully as possible in worship; and post-worship conversation can be offered, so the visitors have an opportunity to engage in dialogue about what they have experienced. Such a format would be appropriate both for youth and adults.
- Increasing numbers of people of all ages, especially but not only from the developed world, are engaging in pilgrimages and educational travel, often in groups. Many are curious about other places, people, cultures, and religious traditions. They are eager to learn. When they return home, they are eager to share their experiences with others. In some cases, Christians respond to invitations from church-related institutions to make visitations—pilgrimages to particular holy sites, such as those in the Holy Land. (In this and similar situations where churches are under the cross, it might be particularly helpful to offer preparatory briefings about the context and situations they will experience.) These sites often are part of our shared spiritual heritage. In this field, the ecumenical movement has an opportunity to focus on the spiritual roots of ecumenism. Several components would be necessary to achieve this aim: an intentional effort to involve Christians from different traditions in the travel experience; ecumenically informed and culturally sensitive travel guides; a carefully developed and structured program; and the specific aim to encounter Christians in the setting they are visiting in ways that promote dialogue and an exchange of spiritual gifts in the Biblical sense that Christians are called to "Receive one another as Christ has received you for the glory of God" (Rom. 15:7). The JWG recommends exploring the possibility of a pilot project with the WCC Palestine Israel Forum and the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Itinerant People on pilgrimages to the Holy Land.

D. Opportunities for programmatic engagement

- Because the Bible is the authoritative text that Christians hold in common, it provides a mutually enriching basis for shared study, dialogue, reflection, and prayer. This practice is common in ecumenical contexts. Thus, the JWG commends and encourages such practices in a variety of

settings. We recognize that churches use different translations. These variations, themselves, can provide opportunities to stimulate fresh insights into the significance of particular texts and the context in which those texts were written, as all churches seek to be faithful to the word of God. The use of the Bible for faith-sharing and prayer as a basis for the practice of piety lends itself to spontaneous, locally initiated encounters.

- All Christians, but particularly those for whom encountering Christians from other churches is a new or courageous experience, may find the opportunity to work together in response to community problems or in joint mission, such as programs supporting “justice, peace, , and creation,” to provide an opening to appreciate the other through shared work and common aims. All too often, however, the potential ecumenical benefit of such encounters is lost unless the sponsoring organizations make a particular effort to help participants understand the religious motivation for their initiatives, and the underlying unity in Christ that they share and that motivates their work. Thus, the JWG encourages organizations to be attentive to opportunities for ecumenical initiatives, and to be intentional about using appropriate occasions.

E. Opportunities in ecumenical education

- Religious leaders are encouraged to be attentive to clergy and lay leaders, particularly the young who have some potential or demonstrated interest in ecumenism, so they can foster their ecumenical exposure. This can be done by including them in ecumenical delegations and by enabling their participation in ecumenical studies at centres like the World Council of Churches’ Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, the Tantur Institute for Ecumenical Studies, the Centro Pro Unione, the Corrymeela Community, and the Irish School of Ecumenics. Existing youth organizations could be helpful in identifying appropriate candidates. Some of these entities include the World Council of Churches’ “youth body” ECHOS, the World Student Christian Federation, Syndesmos—the World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth, and Catholic Youth Organizations.
- In the same way that Christian scholars share research and perspectives through ecumenical professional organizations, churches also should encourage academic staff to draw intentionally and explicitly on the spiritual roots of ecumenism for their students, and to focus on the importance of the purification of memories. This may be done in a variety of ways: through the study of all Christian spiritual traditions; through promoting participation in ecumenical observances such as the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity; through enabling students to take advantage of scholarship

opportunities for ecumenical education at various institutes; through discussions and study days on ecumenical issues; through joint retreats for students; through cross-registration for courses at theological schools; and through the exchange of teachers among seminaries and theological faculties of different traditions.

78. Much thoughtful attention has been given to the spiritual roots of ecumenism among contemporary theologians. Some highlights of this work are listed in the bibliography which follows this text. The Joint Working Group commends them for study and reflection.

VII. SOME RESOURCES

This list is intended to be suggestive and illustrative, rather than exhaustive. The selections include reference works, some materials on the topic from key consultations, and a sampling of writings from some key figures in the ecumenical movement.

Anastasios (Yannoulatos), Archbishop. *Facing the World: Orthodox Christian essays on global concerns*. New York, St. Vladimir’s Press, 2003. Provides persuasive reasons why Orthodox Christians should be engaged in ecumenical dialogue.

Bartholomew, Ecumenical Patriarch. “Remarks of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew on the quest for unity of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches.” In *Speaking the Truth in Love—Theological and spiritual exhortations of ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*. Rev. Dr John Chryssavgis, ed., with foreword by Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury. New York, Fordham University Press, Orthodox Christianity and Contemporary Thought, 2010. Contains three paragraphs on elements contributing to reconciliation: “fervent prayer for unity,” “countless acts of love, forgiveness and mutual respect,” and “theological dialogue...;[through which] we seek the guidance of the Spirit who will lead us in all truth.”

Bria, Ion and Dagmar Heller, eds. *Ecumenical Pilgrims: Profiles of pioneers in Christian reconciliation*. Geneva, WCC Publications, 1995. Offers profiles of fifty twentieth century ecumenical witnesses.

Canadian Council of Churches, Faith and Witness Commission. *Liturgies for Christian Unity: The first hundred years, 1908-2008*. Ottawa, Les Editions Novalis, 2007. Offers a wide variety of liturgical resources focussing on the quest to heal divisions among Christian churches.

“Ecumenical Spirituality,” in *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Gordon S. Wakefield. Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1983, pp. 125-127. Despite the phrase “ecumenical spirituality,” the actual text offers a brief, yet comprehensive description of the field. It includes Biblical warrants, theological basis (“God is the agent of reconciliation; Christ is the means.”), understanding of the church, implications for life together

(“conversion or change of heart towards Christians of other churches”), place of renewal, reconciliation, and hope, significance of Christian friendship.

Evangelization, Proselytism and Common Witness. The report from the fourth phase of the international dialogue 1990-1997 between the Roman Catholic Church and some classical Pentecostal churches and Leaders. <http://www.pctii.org/cyberj/cyberj4/rcpent97.html>. See Chapter 5, Nos. 105-109. The section titled “Resolving conflicts in the quest for unity” speaks about the “mutual respect” and the “deeper understanding of the meaning of faith in Christ” which participants in the twenty-five year old dialogue have gained through their relationship with each other.

Final Report of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC. Feb. 14, 2006, pdf version: www.oikoumene.org/.../final-report-of-the-special-commission-on-orthodox-participation-in-the-wcc.html. See especially section V on common prayer and Appendix A: “A framework for common prayer at WCC gatherings”.

Grzelidze, Tamara & Guido Dotti, eds. *A Cloud of Witnesses: Opportunities for ecumenical commemoration.* Geneva, WCC Publications, 2009. Presents results from an international symposium exploring the growing awareness that contemporary witnesses to the faith are a source of inspiration for all churches.

In God's Hands: The ecumenical prayer cycle, in book and website. Produced by the World Council of Churches. www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/prayer-cycle.html. Contains aids for intercessory prayers, “prayers on behalf of and in solidarity with others.”

John Paul II. *Ut Unum Sint* (That All May Be One). Origins, CNS Documentary Service, Vol. 25: No. 4, June 8, 1995. Encyclical “On Commitment to Ecumenism.” See especially the section on “Renewal and Conversion,” paragraphs 15-17. Par. 15 calls attention to “new horizons for which the Triune God calls us to give thanks...” and to “an increased sense of the need for repentance...”

Kasper, Walter Cardinal. *A Handbook of Spiritual Ecumenism.* Hyde Park, NY, New City Press, 2007. A brief book, suitable for laity and clergy, giving an overview of the fundamentals of spiritual ecumenism.

The Paschal Homily of St. John Chrysostom. <http://www.orthodoxchristian.info/pages/sermon.htm>. Read aloud in every Orthodox parish on the morning of the Great and Holy Pascha Jesus Christ. Noted for its exemplary Christian compassion and spirit of charity.

The Patriarchal and Synodal Encyclical of 1920, “Unto All the Churches Wheresoever They Be.” Published in *Guidelines for Orthodox Christians in Ecumenical Relations*, The Rev. Robert G. Stephanopoulos, General Secretary, S.C.O.B.A.. The Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in America, 1973. Generally acknowledged as the formal basis of Orthodox participation in the ecumenical movement.

Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism.* Vatican City, March 25, 1993. Paragraph 25 observes that “...ecumenism...reaches into the depths of Christian spirituality.”

“Prayer in the Ecumenical Movement,” “Spiritual Ecumenism,” and “Spirituality in the Ecumenical Movement,” in *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement, 2nd Edition.* Nicholas Lossky, et al., eds. Geneva, WCC Publications, 2002. pp.925-928, 1069-1070, 1070-1073. Builds on the concept of discipleship. Defines spirituality as follows: “Spirituality...is the way people take to be Christian, to fulfill their Christian vocation. It embraces ministry and service, relationships, life-style, prayer and response to the political and social environment.” Includes sections on definition, historical context, marks of the church (one, holy, catholic and apostolic), and “implications and new explorations.”

“Prayer and Worship: Towards Conversion of the Heart,” in *The Ecumenical Movement: An anthology of key texts and voices.* Michael Kinnamon and Brian C. Cope, eds. Geneva, WCC Publications, 1997. pp.497-525. Contains excerpts from individual writings (Paul Couturier, Roger Schutz, Lukas Vischer, Desmond Tutu), prayers used in ecumenical contexts (student Christian movements, WCC assembly worship books, Lima liturgy), material from ecumenical gatherings (Fourth and Fifth World Conferences on Faith and Order), and John Paul II’s ecumenical encyclical, *Ut Unum Sint*.

The Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas. *Pastoral Letter on the Occasion of the Third Christian Millennium.* http://www.scoba.us/resources/third_christian_millennium.html. See paragraphs 115-124, “A Community of Healing and Reconciliation,” which says “The involvement of the Orthodox Church in the quest for reconciliation of Christians and the restoration of the visible unity of the churches is an expression of our faithfulness to the Lord and His Gospel. By seeking the reconciliation of divided Christians, we are in fact sharing in our Lord’s ministry of reconciliation.”

Unitatis Redintegratio, Vatican II Decree on Ecumenism, Chapter II, “The Practice of Ecumenism.” Provides the basis for the Vatican II understanding of the spiritual roots of ecumenism. A frequently quoted text: “There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change of heart.” Also worthy of note: “Christ summons the Church, as she goes her pilgrim way, to that continual reformation of which she always has need, insofar as she is an institution of men here on earth.” And “Let all Christ’s faithful remember that the more purely they strive to live according to the gospel, the more they are fostering and even practicing Christian unity.”

APPENDIX C

THE CHURCH IN THE LIFE OF YOUTH AND YOUTH IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

I. BELONGING TO THE CHURCH

II. WHO ARE THE YOUTH?

III. THE REALITY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY

IV. YOUTH IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH AND CHURCH IN THE LIFE OF YOUTH

V. YOUTH AND CHRISTIAN UNITY

VI. DIALOGUING WITH YOUTH

- A. *Resources for youth*: exploring a new methodology
- B. Feedback from youth on the resource materials
- C. The role of faith in the life of youth
- D. The role of the Church
- E. Ecumenical awareness of youth

VII. WORKING WITH YOUTH—RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Collaboration
- B. Formation
- C. Participation
- D. Advocacy

As part of its ninth mandate, the Joint Working Group (JWG) has sought to reflect more deeply about the reality of young people as part of the body of Christ, the Church. Our approach has been to seek to understand more fully how youth respond to the call of Christ and how youth belong, or discover the need to belong, to the church family.

I. BELONGING TO THE CHURCH

Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. (1 Tim. 4:12)

1. Inspired by the words of the Apostle Paul to the young Timothy, the JWG recognizes that the Church is called to play an essential role in the life of young people, while the role and contribution of youth in the life of the Church must also be recognized and encouraged as an essential part of our Christian identity. Young people are one of the most dynamic sections of any society, and are at a fascinating stage of life. It is also a stage when nurtured development, guidance and formation are important, and even necessary. It is essential, as an integral part of the mission of the Church, to find suitable and creative ways to lead young people to Jesus Christ, the only One who has words of eternal life (cf. John 6:68).

2. The JWG agrees with Pope John Paul II when he affirmed:

What is needed today is a church which knows how to respond to the expectations of young people. Jesus wants to enter into dialogue with them and, through his body, which is the Church, to propose the possibility of a choice, which will require a commitment of their lives. As Jesus with the disciples of Emmaus, so the Church must become the traveling companion of young people. (Pope John Paul II, World Youth Day 1995, Philippines)

3. We also understand that youth are fully part of the body of Christ, the Church, and have a significant role to play in today's world:

We need the vision and the courage of young people for the necessary changes. We see how young people lead processes of democratization and peace in many countries today. The young people of today are witnesses and agents for peace even when they become victims of violence and terror like in Norway this summer. We have to acknowledge that we have not always been good at honoring and fostering the contributions young people can make in our religious communities. We elders standing here need to work together for peace between generations and to give young people throughout the world real hope for the future. (Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, WCC General Secretary, Day of Reflection, Dialogue and Prayer for Peace and Justice in the World, 27 October 2011, Assisi).

4. All the churches are faced with the same reality: if young people are absent, the vitality of the Church is at stake. Yet our churches face vastly different experiences in youth participation, from parts of the developed world, where young people have often become disassociated from the life of the institutional church, to other regions where young people form an increasingly large part of the church family. Indeed, young people comprise a significant presence in the contemporary church, and globally are one of the largest demographic groups among Christians.

5. Accordingly, we wish to stimulate discussion on how the Church can configure its life to appeal to young people, and to ensure that there are opportunities for them to experience and understand the richness of the Christian faith. While it is frequently (and correctly) said that young people are the church of tomorrow, we also wish to affirm and reflect upon their place and role in today's church.

II. WHO ARE THE YOUTH?

6. For statistical purposes, the United Nations defines "youth" as individuals between the ages of 15 and 24. Young people, according to this definition, currently number 1.2 billion, accounting for approximately 18 per cent of the global population¹, a substantial demographic group. Such an age range, however, covers a period of enormous growth in physical development and maturity, and it is helpful to distinguish between teenagers (13-19) and young adults (20-24), since the sociological, psychological and physical contexts that they face differ substantially. For many churches, however, those regarded as youth cannot be determined by a uniform reference to their age, but rather by their dynamic contribution in particular cultural contexts. What constitutes youth in one culture may be significantly different in another. Most youth ministries across different churches worldwide therefore also differ, although it is common to cater to youth in general across the ages of 18-35 years.

III. THE REALITY FACING YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY

"...test everything; hold fast to what is good;" (1 Thess. 5:21)

7. All would agree that the contemporary world presents many challenges to young people. The JWG wishes to suggest, however, that these very challenges also can be seen as opportunities to relate to youth, and to speak to them of the value and advantages of a life of faith in fidelity to Christ.

8. The first challenge is the pressure of an increasingly global society, which places high

1. <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/wyr10/Brief%20demographic.pdf>

expectations on young people, which demands high levels of skill, efficiency and competitiveness, and in which education is fundamental. The pressure towards academic achievement that is linked to employment prospects has become a serious concern for many young people, while many others are struggling even to have access to education - a struggle made more difficult by poverty, political instability, violence and conflict.

9. Second, the very diversity of human culture, with its global accessibility, brings along with it the risk of feeding an individualistic approach to life. This may be aggravated by a lack of appropriate role models and sources of authority, and even an abundance of negative examples. The family is not always able to provide the appropriate support and guidance which are so essential to young people in their discernment as they mature.

10. The JWG invites the churches to be aware of the consequences of these pressures, and the inevitable frustrations to which they can give rise. As youth are influenced by patterns of living that challenge older generations, youth also fear that their voice is not valued or is not being heard.

11. Another reality that must be acknowledged is the social context affecting contemporary youth. It is important to take serious note of the proliferation of information and communication technologies that have had a considerable impact on the lives of young people. These technologies especially have affected their interests, priorities, passions and lifestyles. For example, new social networking technologies have changed the perspective and understanding of young persons on many issues, but especially with respect to human relationships, even to the extent that personal and direct relationships are at times replaced by virtual contacts.

12. Nevertheless, the JWG invites the churches to reflect on positive opportunities provided by these new technologies. If given the opportunity, young people often exhibit great interest in contributing to society and to the life of the Church. With their vast knowledge of information technologies, they have the means to harness the potential inherent in those media. Many young people have developed remarkable, creative communication skills, enabling them to link up, network and collaborate. This means that there is an impressive sense of global solidarity among young people today, and a passion for empowering themselves to mobilize into action. Youth is dynamic; its preference is for participatory and action-oriented programs and events. They aspire to put their acquired learning and training into practice, especially at the service of the poor and voiceless.

13. Moreover, the contemporary world encourages young people to develop a sense of independent action. Young people dare to make decisions on their own, they yearn to get the most out of life, and they are open

to new experiences. Importantly - and surprisingly for some observers - a great number of young people continue to search for personal spiritual experiences. They have a deep longing for a personal relationship with God. The JWG challenges the churches to ask whether they truly give young people an opportunity to cultivate their relationship with God and personal spiritual development, as well as community experience and involvement.

IV. YOUTH IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH AND CHURCH IN THE LIFE OF YOUTH

"...so we, who are many, are one body in Christ..."
(1Cor.12: 5a)

14. The JWG suggest that the challenges outlined above also have an impact on the way that youth participate in the Church.

Their heightened influence in society demands of them [young people] a proportionately active apostolate. Happily, their natural qualities fit them for this activity. As they become more conscious of their own personality, they are impelled by a zest for life and abounding energies to assume their own responsibility, and they yearn to play their part in social and cultural life. If this zeal is imbued with the spirit of Christ and is inspired by obedience to and love for the shepherds of the Church, it can be expected to be very fruitful. They themselves ought to become the prime and direct apostles of youth, exercising the apostolate among themselves and through themselves and reckoning with the social environment in which they live. (Second Vatican Council, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, N-B 12)

15. A number of young people continue to engage in the life of the church through worship and liturgy, parochial/congregational activity, and participation in various youth organizations and movements. Many others, however, remain passive or cease to involve themselves in any church-related activities. Both groups can feel that the church lives in a culture that is unresponsive to their aspirations and modes of expression. This can lead to an uneasiness and sense of distance from the life of the Church.

16. We should neither ignore nor avoid addressing this increasing uneasiness, isolation, and indeed frustration with the church that is sometimes expressed by young people. The church may seem irrelevant to them and may appear unable to inspire trust. The churches sometimes fail to demonstrate how young people can play a tangible role in their lives,- a role that young people expect to be offered if they are invited to participate. One of the most important issues for churches to reflect on is how to avoid the perception that the contribution of young people is undervalued. For many young people, the difficult realities of the world in which they live - where injustice, conflict, unemployment and so many other issues seem to

prevail – challenge their belonging to the church. If the Church is seen as a catalyst for change, a hope for justice and peace expressed in the good news of God’s kingdom, then such realities can be considered an opportunity to strengthen the faith of young people.

17. Thus, we invite the churches to seek to understand and respond to the complex reality experienced by youth, to be open to their needs and expectations as a key for developing, maintaining and nurturing their belonging to the Church. We also invite the churches to give young people the opportunity to identify substantial contributions, roles and responsibilities within the church that will enable them to gain confidence and to feel trusted.

18. In creating these opportunities, the churches must bear in mind the dynamic of the Church as described by the Apostle Paul, who points to the importance of every member in it. “For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us:” (Rom. 12:4-6a). While young persons in the church have their own particular and important function, they must also be helped to recognize that other members also have their own contributions to make. Undoubtedly, “we do not want to create for the youth a special separate division in the church, since they are part of the one family of the church” (His Beatitude Patriarch Ignatius IV, 4th JWG Plenary Session, Saidnaya, Syria, October 2010).

19. It is helpful to acknowledge that, in the history of the church, there have been young people who have been good examples, and whose impact has been widely recognized for their outstanding contribution to the church. We think, for example, of Saint Francis of Assisi, who, we read,

was a young man when he surrendered his life to God. His passion for the goodness of creation and example of radical daring for peace show the significance of faith and the courage of young people. What Francis accomplished as a young man in his twenties is a salutary reminder to us of the important role that young people need to and can play both in the faith communities and in wider society.²

20. In the early church of the second century, Bishop Eleutherios was 22 years of age when he was martyred in Valona Illyria, today Albania. St. Therese of Lisieux, who was canonized by the Catholic Church and officially named as ‘Doctor of the Church’, was only 24 years old when she died in 1897. These and others are models who demonstrate how the contributions of youth to the Church can be real and substantial.

2. Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, WCC General Secretary. October 27, 2011. *Day of Reflection, Dialogue and Prayer for Peace and Justice in the World*. Assisi.

V. YOUTH AND CHRISTIAN UNITY

“...that they may all be one...” (John 17:21)

21. In reflecting on the role of youth in promoting Christian unity, the JWG also invites the churches to develop new ways of engaging young people in the work of ecumenism.

22. As disciples of Christ themselves, youth share in the church’s mission. Young people have played a crucial role in shaping the development of the modern ecumenical movement, and they continue to play a role in the search for the unity willed by Christ for the church in the third millennium.

23. Among the earliest ecumenical institutions, the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) and the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) emerged in the mid- nineteenth century, and gathered young men and women together across the lines of the divided churches. The World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), founded in 1895, and the local Student Christian Movement (SCM) similarly gathered university students together. For generations, these organizations provided the training ground for future ecumenical leadership. Under the leadership of John Mott, one of the early pioneers of ecumenism, the WSCF and the English SCM were pivotal in shaping the direction of the 1910 Edinburgh missionary conference into something more ecclesial in nature, which in turn ignited the modern ecumenical movement.

24. In recent years, the Ecumenical Global Gathering for Students and Youth in 1993 sought to continue the role of young people in promoting ecumenism. In early 2000, the Ecumenical Asia Students and Youth Network (EASY Net) was formed to strengthen the ecumenical network and initiatives in the region. On the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, global Christian youth organizations were involved in common action with other Christian student and youth organizations at regional and local levels. The World Youth Days, started in 1985 with John Paul II’s invitation to Catholic youth “to announce to everyone that only in the death and resurrection of Christ we can find salvation and redemption,” also recognizes the role of youth in promoting ecumenism.

25. Today, undeniably, there is increasing interest in and desire to increase youth participation in the life of the Church and the ecumenical movement. Yet at the same time, there may be a growing sense of frustration about the way that churches engage with young people. Thus, we challenge churches to reflect on their perceptions of youth. The way that we understand youth involvement and engagement can reveal a generational gap. At times young people are even seen to be a problem, and they can feel ignored within their churches. At times, they perceive that they are treated with condescension, as an audience, as passive recipients, or as targets, rather than as potential

partners. We invite the churches to respond to the call by The Revd Samuel Kobia, former WCC general secretary, to establish a positive perspective on youth:

The time has come, when we must not only open opportunities to young people for their ecumenical growth and leadership, but where we must learn from the innovative and dynamic models of ecumenical relationships that youth can teach us. As an ecumenical and intergenerational family, we need to humble ourselves and to listen to young people. It was with young people that the ecumenical movement was born. It is young people's passion and insight today that will ensure the relevance and vitality of it. Without young people our ecumenical family is incomplete. At this time we need to nurture meaningful relationships and shared leadership between the generations. Young people need to know that they are important partners and that we are open to learning from their ecumenical experience. (The Rev. Samuel Kobia, ninth WCC assembly, Porto Alegre, 2006)

26. The WCC-ECHOS Commission on Youth was created in 2007 to encourage young adults to become more active in the life of the churches and the ecumenical movement. We call upon our member churches to consider how, in a similar way, their ecumenical engagement can offer young people the sense that their contribution is heard and valued, and that their ideas and enthusiasms are making a real difference in the work of Christian unity.

VI. DIALOGUING WITH YOUTH

A. *Resources for youth*: exploring a new methodology

27. Bearing in mind that the topics of ecumenical reception and the spiritual roots of ecumenism have been the focus of the JWG's ninth mandate, the study about youth has explored ways to seek a deep connection with these wider issues. Our aim has not been to compose a document solely about youth, but also to open a channel of communication with young people through specific resources that can be used in different places and churches.

28. As a starting point, the JWG prepared a six page document titled *Resources for Youth*, to be tested among young people on a worldwide level³. The growing awareness of decreasing youth participation in church life in the developed world was an important factor in developing the materials. Youth's believing without belonging is one of the biggest challenges for all churches. The intention of the document was not to carry out a theoretical analysis of the reasons behind

this situation, but rather to encourage a dialogue with young people themselves.

29. The three areas explored by the *Resources for Youth* are: 1) believing (faith); 2) belonging to the Church (baptism); and 3) living one's faith (discipleship). Each area was dealt with from three different perspectives: the word of God, the early Christian witnesses, and the church today. There was no intention to create a new catechism, but rather to provide a template that might be used by different churches in various contexts. The resources were prepared with the intention to test them in group encounters or sessions focusing on the three areas. While each encounter would have a formal structure, creativity and fresh insights were encouraged. Different methodologies were put forward (including bibliodrama, brainstorming, story-telling, picture analysis, and film). An evaluation form was provided to obtain feedback.

30. The resource materials were tested among Christian students' groups, parish and congregational groups, as well as in schools. Members of the ECHOS Commission and young leaders from different parts of the world, including America, Asia, Europe and Oceania, also reviewed and tested the materials. The JWG is very grateful for the generous and honest responses received.

B. Feedback from youth on the resource materials

31. The responses we received addressed a number of issues: the role of faith in the lives of young people; explored what it means to belong to the Christian tradition; considered the role of the Church; and examined the interaction with Christians from different traditions. Even though there was little familiarity with the Church Fathers, the use of these texts did not prove to be a real obstacle. While no particular concern was expressed regarding the content, some respondents, however, expressed difficulty in identifying with certain aspects of different ecclesial traditions.

32. It is important, however, to underline that *Resources for Youth* is intended as a starting point, and that the JWG encourages churches which may like to use this material to develop suitable reflections and emphases suitable for their own Christian traditions. Nevertheless, the youth involved in the consultation considered the resource materials to be useful and interesting tools.

33. While the *Resources for Youth* treated issues, such as faith, conversion and discipleship, that are not commonly associated with young people, the feedback shows a surprising interest in and readiness to speak out about these topics. Naturally, opinions and experiences differed.

3. The resource is available on the website of the WCC:
<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/programmes/the-wcc-and-the-ecumenical-movement-in-the-21st-century/youth-in-the-ecumenical-movement.html>

C. The role of faith in the life of youth

34. The feedback contained important insights about the significant role that faith plays in the life of young people, and the way that faith provides spiritual support to their overall well-being. The responses we received affirmed that young people find that faith helps them to distinguish between good and evil, gives them guidance in their solitude, and enables them to experience the existence of God. Some young people responded that it would not be possible to exist without faith because it gives them a sense of meaning and purpose, and helps them to overcome obstacles in their lives. Faith was seen by the majority of youth responding as a source of direction, strength, and courage. It was also described as giving a sense of solidarity, confidence, rest and space for protest, compassion and love, comfort, and a way of dealing with life. Some young people believe that they are led to faith by everyday problems and trials; others by Sunday worship, their relationship with other Christian believers or moments of prayer. Some youth feel challenged by how to put faith into practice and wonder whether it is possible to live a Christian life in the professional workplace.

D. The role of the church

35. While faith was identified as a very important issue in many young people's lives, the question of the relevance of church membership for youth provides much thought for reflection. For many of our respondents, the recognition of the importance of faith did not entail automatically becoming active in a church. Some young people expressed eagerness to be part of the Christian tradition, while others felt they could live their Christian faith without the church.

36. While some young people do not believe that the church has a significant role to play in nurturing their faith, others appreciated the pastoral care offered by the church at various levels. Some expressed regret that they do not receive enough support from the Christian community. Nonetheless, the church appears to be a constant reminder of questions of faith even to those who do not practice their faith regularly.

37. In a relativistic world, it can be difficult for youth to understand where truth lies, not only in matters of ethics and universal values, but also in other matters of faith and beliefs. This is particularly complicated in the pluralistic setting in which all our churches live. Some question the authority and the moral teaching of church leaders. The responses we received generally affirmed, however, that the church is called upon and expected to play an active role in modern society.

E. Ecumenical awareness of youth

38. The feedback shows that while young people are very open to interaction with the various Christian traditions, in general there is little awareness of

ecumenism in the wider life of the church, or of the role that young people can play in this area. Therefore, the JWG believes it is important for churches to consider how they can involve young people more in their ecumenical strategies, so that they move from a merely peaceful coexistence with other Christians to a conscious effort to promote Christian unity.

VII. WORKING WITH YOUTH – RECOMMENDATIONS

39. We recognize that each new generation of Christians inherits the burden of past divisions. We invite our parent bodies to promote initiatives seeking to build cooperation and exchange among young people from different churches. The JWG wishes to highlight four areas in particular in which the parent bodies might wish to concentrate their efforts and pursue common initiatives to encourage youth involvement in the ecumenical movement: collaboration, formation, participation and advocacy.

A. Collaboration

- We invite churches to develop clearly directed and purposeful cooperation with existing Christian youth networks on a regular basis. Although institutional support for specific events is much appreciated, it is just as important to establish partnerships with existing bodies for ecumenical work.
- We commend the ECHOS commission on youth as a useful instrument for developing ecumenism in the 21st century. In doing so, we are aware that ECHOS must include representation of regional and international ecumenical youth networks.
- We encourage an emphasis on the ecumenical dimension in the context of youth events. International youth gatherings also could provide a fruitful opportunity for a common ecumenical commitment. In this context, it is worth mentioning the ecumenical event that was jointly organized by the International Young Catholic Students (IYCS) in collaboration with ECHOS during the World Youth Day (WYD) in Madrid, 2011. It also is important to repeat such experiences at a local level.

B. Formation

- We encourage churches to provide suitable ecumenical educators and to develop resource materials for the ecumenical formation of young people.
- We recommend prayerful reading of the sacred scriptures in common as well as the opportunity to discover afresh the Christian witness of the first centuries, helping young people to develop a sense of belonging to the body of Christ.

- We call the churches to evaluate and renew themselves through the lens of the critique offered by young people.

C. Participation

- We recommend that churches invite Christian youth networks to adapt, plan and implement the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity at the local level on a regular basis. In the area of spiritual ecumenism, in particular, the challenge is to make use of the creativity and contribution of new generations.
- We encourage opportunities for networking between Christian movements at all levels, from the grassroots to the global, and for building friendships with Christians of other traditions.

D. Advocacy

- We urge parent bodies to exercise common advocacy on youth issues such as education and employment; and to enable youth to be agents of peace and justice

40. We entrust this reflection to the churches in their efforts to promote Christian unity. It is an ardent appeal that reflects the aspiration of the young people of our churches, who long for meaning in their lives. We are convinced that a personal encounter with Jesus Christ will enable them to say: "Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life." (John 6:68)

DOCUMENTATION SUPPLEMENT

LETTER OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN UNITY TO THE ECUMENICAL COMMISSIONS OF THE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES AND OF THE SYNODS OF THE ORIENTAL CATHOLIC CHURCHES

On behalf of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, I am pleased to send you the enclosed resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2015. These materials have been prepared by an international committee comprising representatives from the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, working from material provided by an ecumenical group representing Christians in Brazil.

The biblical theme which provides the focus for the material is Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well, and in particular his request, "Give me to drink," (John 4: 1-42). Jesus and the woman come from different religious traditions who regarded one another with suspicion and hostility. Their conversation represents an overcoming of convention and division.

The Brazilian Christians found much in this passage that resonated with the complexity of their own situation in Brazil where, too often, ecumenical cooperation between Christians is hindered by a logic of competition, a phenomenon that Pope Francis has called, "spiritual worldliness [that] leads some Christians to war with other Christians" (*Evangelii Gaudium* #98). Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman is a call to conversion, and a healing of our relationships with other Christians. Through this conversion we come to recognise our Christian brothers and sisters as the holders of spiritual gifts and resources from which we can receive and learn if we have the grace to ask, "Give me to drink."

The materials include an introduction to the theme, an ecumenical worship service, a selection of readings and reflections for the eight days of the Week

of Prayer octave, and an account of the ecumenical context in Brazil. The resources can be drawn upon in many ways, and are intended for use not only during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, but throughout the year 2015. The materials are also available online, and in translation, at:

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/sub-index/index_weeks-prayer.htm.

The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity requests that you bring these resources to the attention of those responsible for coordinating Prayer for Christian Unity events. We strongly encourage the regional or local adaptation of the material, so that it may effectively address the local social and cultural context. It is also hoped that the material will be adapted and made available to young people, youth groups and associations. This process will provide a further valuable opportunity for collaboration between Christians at the local level.

With every good wish, and in appreciation of your efforts for the cause of Christian Unity, I remain

Yours sincerely in Christ,

✠ Brian Farrell
Secretary

ATTENTION!

THE FOLLOWING IS THE INTERNATIONAL VERSION OF THE TEXT FOR THE YEAR 2015

Kindly contact your local Bishops' Conference or Synod of your Church
to obtain an adaptation of this text for your local context.

Resources for
THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY
and throughout the year

Jesus said to her:
“Give me to drink”

*(John 4:7)**

Jointly prepared and published by
The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity
The Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches

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TO THOSE ORGANIZING THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

THE SEARCH FOR UNITY: THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

The traditional period in the northern hemisphere for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is 18-25 January. Those dates were proposed in 1908 by Paul Wattson to cover the days between the feasts of St Peter and St Paul, and therefore have a symbolic significance. In the southern hemisphere where January is a vacation time churches often find other days to celebrate the week of prayer, for example around Pentecost (suggested by the Faith and Order movement in 1926), which is also a symbolic date for the unity of the Church.

Mindful of the need for flexibility, we invite you to use this material throughout the whole year to express the degree of communion which the churches have already reached, and to pray together for that full unity which is Christ's will.

ADAPTING THE TEXT

This material is offered with the understanding that, whenever possible, it will be adapted for use in local situations. Account should be taken of local liturgical and devotional practice, and of the whole social and cultural context. Such adaptation should ideally take place ecumenically. In some places ecumenical structures are already set up for adapting the material; in other places, we hope that the need to adapt it will be a stimulus to creating such structures.

USING THE WEEK OF PRAYER MATERIAL

- For churches and Christian communities which observe the week of prayer together through a single common service, an order for an ecumenical worship service is provided.
- Churches and Christian communities may also incorporate material from the week of prayer into their own services. Prayers from the ecumenical worship service, the 'eight days', and the selection of additional prayers can be used as appropriate in their own setting.
- Communities which observe the week of prayer in their worship for each day during the week may draw material for these services from the 'eight days'.
- Those wishing to do bible studies on the week of prayer theme can use as a basis the biblical texts and reflections given in the eight days. Each day the discussions can lead to a closing period of intercessory prayer.

- Those who wish to pray privately may find the material helpful for focusing their prayer intentions. They can be mindful that they are in communion with others praying all around the world for the greater visible unity of Christ's Church.

BIBLICAL TEXT FOR 2015

John 4:1-42

Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard, "Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John"— although it was not Jesus himself but his disciples who baptized— he left Judea and started back to Galilee. But he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink". (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink", you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he

comes, he will proclaim all things to us.” Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking to you.”

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, “What do you want?” or, “Why are you speaking with her?” Then the woman left her water-jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?” They left the city and were on their way to him.

Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, “Rabbi, eat something.” But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” So the disciples said to one another, “Surely no one has brought him something to eat?” Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, ‘Four months more, then comes the harvest?’ But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.”

Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I have ever done.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there for two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world.”

INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME FOR THE YEAR 2015

Jesus said to her: “Give me to drink”
(*John 4:7*)

1. Who drinks of this water...

Journey, scorching sun, tiredness, thirst ... “Give me to drink.” This is a demand of all human beings. God, who becomes human in Christ (Jn 1:14) and empties himself to share our humanity (Phil 2:6-7) is capable of asking the Samaritan woman: “Give me to drink” (Jn 4:7). At the same time, this God who comes to encounter us, offers the living water: “The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (Jn 4:14).

The encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman invites us to try water from a different well and also to offer a little of our own. In diversity, we enrich each other. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is a privileged moment for prayer, encounter and dialogue. It is an opportunity to recognize the richness and value

that are present in the other, the different, and to ask God for the gift of unity.

“Whoever drinks of this water keeps coming back,” says a Brazilian proverb, always used when a visitor leaves. A refreshing glass of water, *chimarrão*,¹ coffee, *tereré*,² are trademarks of acceptance, dialogue and coexistence. The biblical gesture of offering water to whomever arrives (Mt 10:42), as a way of welcoming and sharing, is something that is repeated in all regions of Brazil.

The proposed study and meditation on this text during the Week of Prayer is to help people and communities to realize the dialogical dimension of the project of Jesus, which we call the Kingdom of God.

The text affirms the importance of a person knowing and understanding her/his own self-identity so that the identity of the other is not seen as a threat. If we do not feel threatened, we will be able to experience the complementarity of the other: alone, a person or culture is not enough! Therefore, the image emerging from the words “give me to drink” is an image speaking of complementarity: to drink water from someone else’s well is the first step towards experiencing another’s way of being. This leads to an exchange of gifts that enriches. Where the gifts of the other are refused much damage is done to society and to the Church.

In the text of John 4, Jesus is a foreigner who arrives tired and thirsty. He needs help and asks for water. The woman is in her own land; the well belongs to her people, to her tradition. She owns the bucket and she is the one who has access to the water. But she is also thirsty. They meet and that encounter offers an unexpected opportunity for both of them. Jesus does not cease to be Jewish because he drank from the water offered by the Samaritan woman. The Samaritan remains who she is while embracing Jesus’ way. When we recognize that we do have reciprocal needs, complementarity takes place in our lives in a more enriching way. “Give me to drink” presupposes that both Jesus and the Samaritan ask for what they need from each other. “Give me to drink” compels us to recognize that persons, communities, cultures, religions and ethnicities need each other.

“Give me to drink” implies an ethical action that recognises the need for one another in living out the Church’s mission. It compels us to change our attitude, to commit ourselves to seek unity in the midst of our diversity, through our openness to a variety of forms of prayer and Christian spirituality.

1. *Chimarrão* is a traditional infuse drink in the South of Brazil; it is prepared from steeping dried leaves of yerba mate. Drinking together with friends or family is the common practice.

2. The principle is similar to *Chimarrão*, but instead of boiling water, *tereré* uses cold water.

2. The ecclesial and religious context of Brazil

Brazil can be considered a very religious country. It is traditionally known as a country where a certain “cordiality” characterizes relations between social classes and ethnic groups. However, Brazil is living through a time of growing intolerance made manifest in high levels of violence, especially against minorities and the vulnerable: black people, the young, homosexual people, people practicing Afro-Brazilian religion, women, and indigenous people. This intolerance was hidden for a long time. It became more explicit and revealed a different Brazil when, on October 12 1995, the feast of Our Lady Aparecida, the patron of the country, one of the bishops of a Neo-Pentecostal church kicked a statue of Our Lady Aparecida during a national TV broadcast. Ever since there have been other instances of Christian based religious intolerance. There have also been similar incidents of Christian intolerance towards other religions, particularly Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous traditions.

The logic that undergirds this kind of behaviour is competition for the religious market. Increasingly, in Brazil, some Christian groups adopt a competitive attitude towards one another: a competition for a place on mass media, and a competition for new members and public funds for major events. Pope Francis points to this very phenomenon when he writes, “Spiritual worldliness leads some Christians to war with other Christians who stand in the way of their quest for power, prestige, pleasure and economic security” (*Evangelii Gaudium* #98).

This situation of religious competition has affected the life of traditional Christian confessions, which have experienced a reduction or stagnation in the number of their members. It has encouraged the idea that a strong and dynamic church is a church that has a high number of members. As a result, there is a tendency among significant sectors of traditional churches to distance themselves from the search for the visible unity of the Christian Church.

This market-driven Christianity is investing in party politics, and, in some cases, creating its own political parties. It is allying itself with specific interest groups such as big landowners, agro-business and the financial markets. Some observers go as far as speaking of the confessionalisation of political life, which threatens the separation between state and religion. Thus the ecumenical logic of breaking down the walls of division is replaced by a “corporatist” logic and the protection of denominational interests.

Although the 2010 official Census shows that 86.8% of the Brazilian population identify themselves as Christian, this country has very high rates of violence. Thus a high rate of Christian affiliation does not seem to translate into non-violent attitudes and respect for human dignity. This statement can be illustrated with the following data:

Violence against women: between 2000 and 2010, 43,700 women were murdered in Brazil. Forty one per cent of these women who suffer violence, are violated in their own homes.

Violence against indigenous people: violence against the indigenous population is often related to large hydroelectric developments and the expansion of agro-business. These two projects express the model of development prevailing in the country today. They contribute significantly to the slow demarcation and recognition of indigenous territories. In 2011, the report “Violence against Indigenous Peoples in Brazil” of the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT), an organism connected with the Roman Catholic Conference of Bishops of Brazil, identified 450 developments underway on indigenous lands in Brazil. These developments take place without proper consultation with indigenous peoples as envisaged in the Convention 169 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). CPT’s report denounces the murder of 500 indigenous people between 2003 and 2011; 62.7% of these are in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul. The annual murder average is 55.8 natives.

Overcoming intolerance in its various forms should be dealt with in a positive way: respecting legitimate diversity and promoting dialogue as a permanent path of reconciliation and peace in fidelity to the gospel.

3. Hermeneutical choice

The methodology adopted by CEBI, and widely practiced across Latin America, is called the Contextual Reading of the Bible. This is both an academic and a popular approach to the biblical text.

In this methodology, the starting point for any biblical theology and interpretation is daily life. We adopt the approach of Jesus on the road to Emmaus (cf. Lk 24:13-24): What is going on? What are you talking about? From the context we move to the Biblical text. In this methodological journey the Bible is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Ps 119:105). We take the Bible as a flashlight to illuminate the path of our lives. The biblical text teaches us and transforms us so that we may bear testimony to God’s will in the context in which we live.

4. The journey through the days

The journey we are proposing for the coming eight days starts with proclamation, which leads to denunciation, renunciation, and witness. The week starts with the proclamation of a God who has created us in his own image, that is the image of the Triune God, unity in diversity. Diversity is part of God’s design. Next, some situations of sin which introduce unjust discrimination are denounced. Thirdly, the renunciation of those sinful attitudes which exclude marks a step towards the unity of God’s Kingdom. Lastly, we bear witness to the graciousness of God who is always willing to welcome us despite our

imperfection, and whose Holy Spirit impels us towards reconciliation and unity. Thus we experience Pentecost, the many gifts of the Spirit that lead to the realisation of God's Kingdom.

THE PREPARATION OF THE MATERIAL FOR THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2015

The two bodies that co-sponsor the Week of Prayer invited the National Council of Christian Churches of Brazil (CONIC) to prepare the resources for the week of prayer 2015. CONIC appointed a working group formed by representatives from its member churches and affiliated ecumenical organisations to produce the material. The working group met in February and in April 2012, and completed its work in July.

The International Committee appointed by the two co-sponsor bodies met September 22-27 in São Paulo, Brazil, to finalize the preparation of the material. The meeting was held at Hotel e Centro de Convenções Santa Mônica, situated in a rather poor area at the outskirts of São Paulo. Maintained by the order of the Augustinians, the Santa Monica Hotel and its conference centre generate resources for several social projects sponsored by Augustinians in its neighbourhood.

Apart from the editorial work on the text proposed by CONIC, the International Committee paid a visit to the Ecumenical Centre for Service to Popular Education and Evangelization (CESEP), where its members met with the CESEP director and students. The International Committee also dedicated one session to the contribution of the ecumenical movement (and particularly the World Council of Churches) to the clarification of violations to human rights committed during the years of military dictatorship in Brazil (1964-1985).

The International Committee expresses its gratitude to Fr. José Oscar Beozzo and to CESEP's team and students; as well as to Mr Anivaldo Padilha and to Prof. Dr Magali do Nascimento Cunha for the often moving ways whereby they helped the members of the International Committee to better understand the social and ecclesial background of the 2015 theme and prayer resources.

The International Committee particularly wishes to thank:

National Council of Christian Churches of Brazil

Bishop Manoel João Francisco – President (Roman Catholic)

Elder Elinete W. Paes Miller – second Vice-president (Presbyterian)

Rev. Romi Márcia Bencke – General Secretary (Lutheran)

Thanks to Bishop Francisco de Assis (Anglican), CONIC's first Vice-president, for mediating the initial contact between CONIC and the WCC in relation to the 2015 Week of Prayer.

Brazilian Regional Office of the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI)

Elder Darli Alves – General Secretary (Presbyterian)

Ecumenical Centre for Bible Study (CEBI)

Rev. Odja Barros – Member of the Board (Baptist)

Mr Edmilson Schinelo – Executive Secretary (Roman Catholic)

Dr Paulo Ueti – Advisor (Anglican)

Ecumenical Centre for Advise and Formation

Mr. Cláudio Becker – Advisor (Lutheran)

Special thanks go to Rev. Lusmarina Campos Garcia (Lutheran) and Rev. Donald Nelson for the English translation of the manuscript.

The **National Council of Christian Churches of Brazil (CONIC)** was constituted in 1982 and comprises the following Churches: Roman Catholic Church, Evangelical Church of Lutheran Confession in Brazil (IECLB), Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil, United Presbyterian Church and Syrian Orthodox Church from Antioquia. CONIC's mission is *to work for the unity of Christian Churches while accompanying Brazilian reality and confronting it to the Gospel and the requirements of God's Realm*. Therefore, it is CONIC's commitment to strive for human dignity and for people's rights and duties as a way to express their fidelity to the message of the Gospel.

CONIC's goals refer to promoting and encouraging ecumenical relations amongst Christian Churches and strengthening their common witness in favor of Human Rights.

Besides the member-churches mentioned above, main ecumenical groups are fraternal-members affiliated to CONIC. They are:

Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI). Created in 1982, CLAI aims to facilitate dialogue and cooperation amongst Churches and ecumenical bodies while creating space for dialogue between religions as a means to search for unity, witness and service.

Bible Studies Centre (CEBI). CEBI was formed in 1979 and it is devoted to the deepening and consolidation of popular reading of the Bible. It aims to strengthen the articulation and organization of people's groups through the methodology of popular reading of the Bible. It also foments a spirituality focused on the promotion of life, especially to the most excluded social groups of the country.

ECUMENICAL WORSHIP SERVICE

INTRODUCTION TO THE WORSHIP

This outline for the ecumenical worship may be used for the opening of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity or for another appropriate moment chosen by the local communities.

Jesus deliberately chose to cross Samaria on his way to Judea in Galilee. His route passed by the well of the Samaritan woman who came there to draw water. The Brazilian ecumenical group that prepared the celebration invites us to use these two symbols of the route and water as images of the visible Christian unity for which we pray. The local group invites us to reflect

on these initial questions that give shape to the celebration:

Which is the path of unity, the route we should take, so that the world may drink from the source of life, Jesus Christ?

Which is the path of unity that gives proper respect to our diversity?

On this path of unity, there is a well filled with water: both the water sought by Jesus, tired on the way, and also the water given by him, springing up to eternal life. The water drawn by the Samaritan woman in her daily task is the water that quenches thirst, the water that makes the desert bloom. The water that Jesus gives is the water over which the Spirit of God hovered, the living water in which we were baptized.

The passage from John 4:1-42 is at the heart of this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This long Gospel passage may be read by several voices or by a dramatization.

For the meditation after the Gospel, there are several options depending on the size of the celebrating group:

- a sharing based on the initial questions in small groups, followed by returning to the assembly;
- a homily or sermon that will focus on the gospel and take into account the initial questions.

The path and the well

A path can be arranged with candles, flowers, colourful pieces of cloth... on the floor of the central aisle of the place of celebration, leading to the front of the assembly. In the center of the path, a large basin is placed and jugs of water nearby. These pitchers could be different from one another to represent the diversity of the assembly.

The celebrants may enter in procession along this path. Passing near the “well”, each representative of a participating church will slowly pour the water from a jug into the bowl. This water, from different sources, is a symbol of our unity, already present though incomplete and hidden from our eyes. This gesture should be introduced at the beginning of the celebration and may be commented upon in the preaching.

The path may be used in the preparation of the confession of sins. People come from different parts of the assembly on the way to express petitions for forgiveness.

After the blessing, participants can exchange a sign of peace and fellowship, as they leave the assembly and move towards a convivial place to end the service in a communal way.

Structure of the Celebration

NB: Particular attention should be given to include those with impaired hearing and people with disabilities so that they can fully participate in the celebration.

The celebration has five parts.

- I. Prelude/Preparation
 - II. Opening
 - Welcome and Introduction to the Week of Prayer – Theme
 - Confession of Sins and Kyrie
 - III. Gospel Proclamation
 - IV. We Respond in Faith and Unity
 - Affirmation of Faith
(The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, the Apostles' Creed or another affirmation of faith may be used, for example a renewal of baptismal promises.)
 - Intercessory Prayer
 - Offering
 - The Lord's Prayer *(said or sung)*
 - V. Benediction, Peace and Sending Forth
- Postlude

ORDER OF SERVICE

C: Celebrant
L: Lector
A: All

I. PRELUDE/PREPARATION

The candles are to be lit as the service starts.

Welcome and Introduction to the Week of Prayer – Theme

A commentator welcomes people to the celebration introducing the theme of the prayer.

L: Please stand and join in singing the opening hymn as the celebrants enter in procession along the path. Passing near the “well”, each representative of a participating church will slowly pour the water from a jug into the bowl. This water, from different sources, is a symbol of our unity which is real, though still incomplete.

When the celebrating group is small, if possible, invite people to say their names and to which church they belong.

II. OPENING

A água

(The Water/ L'eau / Die Wasser / El Agua)

Simeí Monteiro, Brasil

Albete Correia, Brasil

Leader, then All

A - qui che - gan - do, Se - ñhor, que po - de - re - mos te dar?
 Ar - ri - ving here oh, dear God! What can we of - fer to you?
 Nous ar - ri - vons, ô Sei - gneur, que pour - rons - nous te don - ner?
 Gott, wie sind hier, hier vor dir, Gott, wir ru - fen zu dir.
 A - qui lle - ga - mos, Se - ñor. ¿Qué te po - de - mos tra - er?

Um sim - ples co - ra - ção e u - ma von - ta - de de can - tar.
 A sim - ple heart and deep - est wish to sing a joy - ful song.
 un hum - ble coeur et dans la joie l'en - vie de te chan - ter.
 In uns - er Sehn - such nach dir, sin - gen, sin - ger wir ein Lied.
 Un sim - ple co - ra - zón y nues - tras ga - nas de can - tar.

Re - ce - be nos - so lou - vor e tu - a paz vem nos dar.
 Sei - ceive our best gifts of praise and may your peace be with us.
 Sei - gneur re - çois nos lou - anges et viciis nous don - ner ta paix.
 Lass dei - nen Frie - den mit uns, lass dei - nen Frie - den mit uns sein.
 Re - ci - be nues - tro lo - or y da - nos tu ple - na paz.

A lu - a gra - ça, Se - ñhor, me - ñhor que a vi - dá, se - rá.
 Your faith - ful mer - cy and grace will be much bet - ter than life.
 Sei - gneur, ta fi - dé - li - té, no - tre vie trans - for - me - ra.
 Bring dei - ne Gma - de, du Gott, in - un - ser Le - ben hin - ein.
 For - que tu gra - çia, Se - ñor, vi - da - bum - dan - te tra - e - rá.

E o teu a - mor, em nós, se - rá ma - nan - ci - al
 And in the de - sert of our lives a ri - ver flows
 Dans les dé - serts de no - tre vie: u - ne ri - vière,
 Und al - le Wüs - ten uns - res Le - bens blü - hen auf,
 Y tu a - mor se - rá cual fuen - te sin i - gual

de a - gua bo - a a jor - rar pra nos - sa se - des - tun - car.
 a pure wa - ter for growth; re - fresh ing, heal - ing our land.
 vi - ve ton eau - le - ri - cou pour re - ver - dir no - tre terre,
 wenn dein Se - gen uns triff! und uns er - neu - ert und heilt.
 de a - gua pu - ran rau - dal que to - da sed cal - ma - rá.

Music: Albete Correia, Portuguese & English: Simeí Monteiro, French: David Fines, Spanish: Gerardo Oberman © 2011 WCC-COE, P.O. Box 2100, CH-1211 Geneva 2.
German: Fritz Bahrawoit © 2013 ind-Verlag, Düsseldorf Germany. For non-profit use only.

Señor, ten piedad de nosotros

Traditional

Clara Ajo and Pedro Triana, Cuba
(from "Misa Cubana")

Se - ñor, ten pie - dad de no - so - tros. Cris - to,
 Se - ñhor, tem pie - da - de de nós. Cris - to,
 Sei - gneur, aie pi - tié de nous. Christ,
 O Lord, have mer - cy u - pon us. Christ,
 Oh Herr, er - bar - me dich. Chris - tus,

ten pie - dad de no - so - tros. Se - ñor, ten pie - dad de no -
 tem pie - da - de de nós. Se - ñhor, tem pie - da - de de
 aie pi - tié de nous. Sei - gneur, aie pi - tié de
 have mer - cy u - pon us. O Lord, have mer - cy u -
 er - bar - me dich. Oh Herr, er - bar - me

so - tros. Sí, ten pie - dad de no - so - tros.
 nós. Sim, tem pie - da - de de nós.
 nous. Oui, aie pi - tié de nous.
 pon us. Yes, have mer - cy u - pon us.
 dich. Ja, er - bar - me dich.

Text adapt. Spanish, Portuguese and Music: © Clara Ajo and Pedro Triana, Matanzas, Cuba.
Adapted text in English, German and French: © WCC-COE, P.O. Box 2100, CH-1211 Geneva 2. For non-profit use only.

L: Merciful Lord, your Spirit hovered over the waters where diversity sprouted and flourished. We confess our difficulty to live with legitimate differences. Forgive us those attitudes of mind, words and actions that do violence to unity in diversity.

A: **O Lord, have mercy upon us...** (*sung*)

L: Merciful Christ, grace and joy of the multitude, listener and teacher, you give birth to new visions of hope and heal the wounds of mind and body. We confess that we have failed to listen to voices different from our own, failed to say words that bring healing and hope, and we have perpetuated exclusive attitudes to those who cry out for solidarity and fellowship.

A: **O Lord, have mercy upon us...** (*sung*)

L: Merciful Lord, you are the source of all creation, the Eternal and life-giving Word. We confess that we do not listen to your creation that groans and cries out for liberation and renewal. Help us to walk together and to hear your voice in all living things that suffer and yearn for healing and care.

C: O God, fountain of mercy and grace, pour over us your pardon. May your love transform us into a source of living waters to restore the strength of your people. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord.

A: **Amen.**

Invitation to prayer³

C: Almighty God, breathe into us the wind of unity that recognizes our diversity,

A: **Breathe into us tolerance that welcomes and makes us community,**

C: Breathe into us fire that unites what is torn apart and heals what is ill,

A: **Breathe into us grace that overcomes hatred and frees us from violence,**

C: Breathe into us life that faces down and defeats death,

A: **Blessed be the God of mercy, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and makes all things new. Amen!**

Confession of Sin and Kyrie

C: In humility, as children of God and sisters and brothers in Christ, we receive God's mercy and respond to God's call to make new all relationships.

3. Adapted from the prayer written by Inês de França Bento in: Rubem Alves (Org), *Culto.Arte, Celebrando a Vida, Pentecostes*, Ed. Vozes, Petrópolis, RJ 2002, p.21.

Vem, Santo Espírito

Simeí Monteiro, Brasil

Simeí Monteiro, Brasil

Lento

1. Vem, ó Tu que fa - zes no - vos, os sis - te - mas de pen - sar, que às
 1. Ven, oh Tu que ha - ces nue - vos los sis - te - mas de pen - sar, que a las
 1. Come, O come, cre - at - ing Spir - it, You can change our way of thought; to the
 1. Es - prit Saint qui re - nou - vel - le nos pen - sées et nos es - prits, viens ou -
 1. Kom - me zu uns als Er - neu - rer, än - dre uns - re Den - kungs - art, gib im

le - tras das sen - ti - do e am - pli - as nos - so, o - lhar! Vem, e
 le - tras das sen - ti - do y que, am - pli - as el mi - rar. Ven y
 writ - ten word give mean - ing, wi - der vi - sion You have brought. Touch our
 vrit - nos yeux, nos lê - vres, et fais lui - re nos é - crits. Viens et
 Han - deln uns die Stüt - ze dei - ner sich - ren Ge - gen - wart. Komm be -

to - ca nos - so mun - do: ter - ra á - ri - da de dor. Nes - te
 to - ca nues - tro mun - do: tie - rra lle - na de, a - fli - ción. A. es - tos
 earth dried out with sor - row, touch our world of ar - id death. On the
 tou - che no - tre mon - de, souf - fle vie et vé - ri - té sur les
 rüh - re un - ser Da - sein, die - ses dir - re Land der Qual, lass den

va - le de, os - sos se - cos so - pra vi - da e a - mor! A - es - tos
 hue - sos se - cos so - pla nue - va vi - da y a - mor! A. es - tos
 dry bones of this val - ley blow Your lov - ing, liv - ing breath. Hear us,
 plaies les plus pro - fon - des, les os se - ments des - sé - chés. Hear our
 Le - bens - quell der Lie - be strö - men in dies trock - ne Tal. Hear our

Original text and music © Simeí Monteiro. Spanish © Juan Gattinoni. English © Shirley Erena Murray.
 French © Marc Chambron. German © Reinhold Renner. Used by permission.

III. GOSPEL PROCLAMATION

Aleluia

(from *Missa da Terra sem Males*)

Don Pedro Casaldáliga
 Pedro Tierra

Martin Coplas
 Arr. Pery A. Alves de Souza

Refrain $\text{♩} = 132$

A - le - lu - ia, a - le - lu - ia, a - le - lu - ia! A - le - ia!
 Al - le - lu, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - ia!

To - dos os po - vos da ter - ra, da Ter - ra sem Ma - les lou - vem ao Pai.
 Come, all you lands, join the prais - es, the Land with - out E - vil of - fers to God.

Portuguese: Don Pedro Casaldáliga, Brasil e Pedro Tierra, Paraguai. Music: Martin Coplas, Argentina
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Proclamation or dramatization of the Gospel of John 4:1-42

Meditation or Sermon

IV. WE RESPOND IN FAITH AND UNITY

Affirmation of Faith

(The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, the Apostles' Creed or another affirmation of faith may be used for example the renewal of baptismal promises.)

Intercessory Prayer

The Congregation may sing the following Indigenous melody Guaicuru Kyrie or choose another.

Ouve, Deus de Amor

(Hear us, God of love)

Simeí Monteiro

Melodia Guaicuru adap. Simeí Monteiro

Ou - ve, Deus de a - mor nos - so cla - mor! Ou - ve, Deus de a - mor
 Hear us, God of love! Hear this our cry! Hear us, God of love!

nos - so cla - mor! Ou - ve Deus de a - mor, Ou - ve Deus de a - mor,
 hear this our cry! Hear us, God of love! Hear... this our cry!

Ou - ve, Deus de a - mor, Ou - ve, Deus de a - mor, o nos - so cla - mor, o nos -
 Hear us, God of love! Hear... this our cry! Hear our cry, we pray Hear our

so cla - mor. Ou - ve, Deus de a - mor nos - so cla - mor!
 cry, we pray! Hear us, God of love! Hear this our cry!

Text by Simeí Monteiro. Music from Guaicuru People © 2000 General Board of Global Ministries, GBGMusik. 475, Riverside Dr, New York, NY, 10115

L: God of eternal compassion, as individuals and as community, we ask for light, so we may become more welcoming and understanding towards others and reduce the suffering in our world.

A: **Hear us, God of love! Hear this our cry!... (sung)**

L: God of eternal compassion, teach your children that charity, hospitality and unity are expressions of your revelation and will for humanity.

A: **Hear us, God of love! Hear this our cry!... (sung)**

L: God of eternal compassion, we beseech you, grant us peace; teach us and guide us to be builders of a tolerant and non-violent world.

A: **Hear us, God of love! Hear this our cry!... (sung)**

L: God of eternal compassion, who spoke to us through creation, then through the prophets and then through your Son Jesus Christ, grant us wisdom to listen to your voice that calls us to unity in our diversity.

A: **Hear us, God of love! Hear this our cry!... (sung)**

L: God of eternal compassion, in the name of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord who as a stranger asked for a drink from a Samaritan woman, give us living water, springing up unto eternal life.

A: **Hear us, God of love! Hear this our cry!... (sung)**

The local community may add other prayers.

Offering

C: We learn from Jesus to offer our lives as a sign of love and compassion. God, may we become living offerings dedicated to the ministry of your Word and grace.

Offerings are presented to the community.

C: God, who are with us and walk in our midst, grant us this day the grace of your light and Spirit so that we may continue our mission and remain faithful to welcoming and listening to all, even those who are different from ourselves. Take away the violence that is in our hearts and the discriminating attitudes that exclude and devalue the human dignity of others. Enable our churches to be welcoming spaces where feast and forgiveness, joy and tenderness, strength and faith become our daily practice, our daily food, our daily movement forward in Jesus Christ.

A: **Amen.**

Note: Local communities are invited to organize the offerings according to local tradition. We suggest that offerings be brought and placed on top of the colorful cloth before the altar. While the offertory takes place, a song is sung, chosen by the local organizing team.

The Lord's Prayer (said or sung)

V. BENEDICTION, PEACE AND SENDING FORTH

Benediction

C: May the Lord God,
bless you and protect you,
fill your heart with tenderness and your soul with joy,
your ears with music and your nostrils with perfume,
your tongue with song giving face to hope.

May Jesus Christ the living water be
behind you to protect you,
before you to guide you,
by your side to accompany you,
within you to console you,
above you to bless you.

May the life-giving Spirit
breathe into you that your thoughts may be holy,
act in you so that your work is holy,
draw your heart so that you love what is holy,
strengthen you that you will defend what is holy.
May he make his home in your heart,
water its dryness, and melt its coldness,
kindle in your innermost soul the fire of his love
and bestow upon you a true faith, and firm hope,
and a sincere and perfect love.

A: **Amen.**

Sharing Peace

C: May God, who teaches us to welcome each other and calls us to practice hospitality, grant us peace and serenity as we move forward on the path of Christian Unity.

As we go in the peace of Christ let us share with each other the sign of peace.

Postlude

BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS AND PRAYERS FOR THE EIGHT DAYS

DAY 1

PROCLAMATION

It is necessary to go through Samaria (John 4:4)

Gen 24:10-33 Abraham and Rebekah at the well
Ps 42 The deer that longs for running streams
2 Cor 8:1-7 The generosity of the churches of Macedonia
Jn 4:1-4 He had to go through Samaria

Commentary

Jesus and his disciples travelled from Judea to Galilee. Samaria is between these two areas. There was a certain prejudice against Samaria and the Samaritans. The negative reputation of Samaria came from its mix of races and religions. It was not uncommon to use alternative routes to avoid stepping into Samaritan territory.

What does the Gospel of John mean, then, when saying, "it is necessary to go through Samaria"? More than a geographical issue, it is a choice of Jesus: "going through Samaria" means that it is necessary to meet the other, the different, the one who is often seen as a threat.

The conflict between Jews and Samaritans was old. Samaritan predecessors had broken with the monarchy of the south which required the centralization of the worship in Jerusalem (1 Kings 12). Later, when the Assyrians invaded Samaria deporting many of the local population, they brought to the territory a number of foreign peoples, each with their own gods or deities (2 Kings 17:24-34). For Jews, Samaritans became a people "mixed and impure". Later in John's Gospel, the Jews, wanting to discredit Jesus, accuse him saying, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?" (Jn 8:48).

Samaritans in their turn, also had difficulty accepting Jews (Jn 4:8). The hurt of the past became even greater when, around 128 BC, the Jewish leader, John Hyrcanus, destroyed the temple built by Samaritans as their place of worship on Mount Gerizin. On at least one occasion, reported in Luke's Gospel,

Jesus was not received in a Samaritan city simply because he was on his way to Judea (Lk 9:52). So resistance to dialogue came from the two sides.

John makes it clear that “going through Samaria” is a choice Jesus is making; he is reaching beyond his own people. In this he is showing us that isolating ourselves from those who are different and relating only to people like ourselves is a self-inflicted impoverishment. It is the dialogue with those who are different that makes us grow.

Questions

1. What does it mean for me and for my community of faith “to have to go through Samaria?”
2. What are the steps that my church has made to meet other churches and what have the churches learnt from each other?

Prayer

God of all peoples,
teach us to go through Samaria to meet our brothers and sisters from other churches.
Allow us to go there with an open heart
so we may learn from every church and culture.
We confess that you are the source of unity.
Grant us the unity that Christ wills for us.
Amen.

DAY 2 DENUNCIATION I

Tired of the journey, Jesus sat down facing the well (John 4:6)

Gen 29:1-14	Jacob and Rachel at the well
Ps 137	How can we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land?
1 Cor 1:10-18	Each one of you says, “I am for Paul,” or “I am for Apollos”
Jn 4:5-6	Jesus was tired out by his journey

Commentary

Jesus had been in Judea before his encounter with the Samaritan woman. The Pharisees had begun to spread the word that Jesus baptized more disciples than John. Perhaps this rumour has caused some tension and discomfort. Perhaps it is the reason behind Jesus’ decision to leave.

Arriving at the well, Jesus decides to stop. He was tired from his journey. His fatigue could also be related to the rumours. While he was resting, a Samaritan woman came near the well to fetch water. This meeting took place at Jacob’s well: a symbolic place in the life and spirituality of the people of the Bible.

A dialogue begins between the Samaritan woman and Jesus about the place of worship. “Is it on this mountain or in Jerusalem?” asks the Samaritan woman. Jesus answers, “neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem... the true worshippers will worship the

Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him” (Jn 4: 21- 24).

It still happens that instead of a common search for unity, competition and dispute mark the relations between the churches. This has been the experience of Brazil in recent years. Communities extol their own virtues and the benefits that accrue to their adherents in order to attract new members. Some think that the bigger the church, the larger its number of members, the greater its power, the closer they are to God, presenting themselves as the only true worshippers. As a result there has been violence and disrespect to other religions and traditions. This type of competitive marketing creates both distrust between the churches and a lack of credibility in society towards Christianity as a whole. As competition grows the “other” community becomes the enemy.

Who are the true worshippers? True worshippers do not allow the logic of competition – who is better and who is worse – to infect faith. We need “wells” to lean upon, to rest and let go of disputes, competition and violence, places where we can learn that true worshippers worship “in Spirit and in Truth.”

Questions

1. What are the main reasons for competition among our churches?
2. Are we able to identify a common “well” upon which we can lean, and rest from our disputes and competitions?

Prayer

Gracious God,
Often our churches are led to choose the logic of competition.
Forgive our sin of presumption.
We are weary from this need to be first. Allow us to rest at the well.
Refresh us with the water of unity drawn from our common prayer.
May your Spirit who hovered over the waters of chaos bring unity from our diversity.
Amen.

DAY 3 DENUNCIATION II “I have no husband” (John 4:17)

2 Kgs 17:24-34	Samaria conquered by Assyria
Ps 139:1-12	“O Lord, you have searched me and you know me”
Rom 7:1-4	“You have died to the law through the body of Christ”
Jn 4:16-19	“I have no husband”

Commentary

The Samaritan woman answers Jesus, "I have no husband." The topic of conversation is now about the married life of the woman. There is a shift in terms of the content of their dialogue – from water to husband. "Go, call your husband and come back" (Jn 4:16), but Jesus knows the woman has had five husbands, and the man she has now is not her husband.

What is this woman's situation? Did her husbands ask for divorce? Was she a widow? Did she have children? These questions arise naturally when dealing with this narrative. However, it seems that Jesus was interested in another dimension of the woman's situation, he acknowledges the woman's life but remains open to her, to encounter her. Jesus does not insist on a moral interpretation of her answer but seems to want to lead her beyond. And as a result the woman's attitude towards Jesus changes. At this point, the obstacles of cultural and religious differences fade into the background in order to give space to something much more important: an encounter in trust. Jesus' behaviour in this moment allows us to open new windows and raise further questions: questions that challenge the attitudes that denigrate and marginalize women; and questions about the differences which we allow to stand in the way of the unity we seek and for which we pray.

Questions

1. What are the sinful structures that we can identify in our own communities?
2. What is the place and the role of women in our churches?
3. What can our churches do to prevent violence and to overcome violence directed against women and girls?

Prayer

O you who are beyond all things,
how could we call you by any other name?
What song could be sung for you?
No word can express you.
What Spirit can perceive you?
No intelligence can comprehend you.
You alone are inexpressible;
all that is said has come from you.
You alone are unknowable;
all that is thought has come from you.
All creatures proclaim you,
those who speak and those who are dumb.
Every one desires you, everyone sighs and aspires after you.
All that exists prays to you,
and every being that can contemplate your universe
raises to you a silent hymn.
Have pity on us, you who are beyond all things.
How could we call you by any other name?
Amen.

Attributed to Gregory of Nazianzus

DAY 4

RENUNCIATION

Then the woman left her water jar (John 4:28)

- Gen 11:31-12:4 God promises to make Abram a great nation and a blessing
Ps 23 The Lord is my shepherd
Acts 10:9-20 "What God has made clean, you must not call profane"
Jn 4:25-28 Then the woman left her water jar

Commentary

The encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman shows that dialogue with the different, the stranger, the unfamiliar, can be life-giving. If the woman had followed the rules of her culture, she would have left when she saw Jesus approaching the well. That day, for some reason, she did not follow the established rules. Both she and Jesus broke with conventional patterns of behaviour. Through this breaking forth they showed us again that it is possible to build new relationships.

As Jesus completes the work of the Father, the Samaritan woman, for her part, leaves her water jar, meaning that she could go further in her life; she was not confined to the role society imposed on her. In John's Gospel she is the first person to proclaim Jesus as the Messiah. "Breaking forth" is a necessity for those who desire to grow stronger and wiser in their faith.

That the Samaritan woman leaves behind her water jar signals that she has found a greater gift, a greater good than the water she came for, and a better place to be within her community. She recognizes the greater gift that this Jewish stranger, Jesus, is offering her.

It is difficult for us to find value, to recognize as good, or even holy, that which is unknown to us and that which belongs to another. However, recognizing the gifts that belong to the other as good and as holy is a necessary step towards the visible unity we seek.

Questions

1. Meeting Jesus demands that we leave behind our water jars, what are those water jars for us?
2. What are the main difficulties that prevent us from doing so?

Prayer

Loving God,
help us to learn from Jesus and the Samaritan
that the encounter with the other opens for us new
horizons of grace.
Help us to break through our limits and embrace new
challenges.
Help us to go beyond fear in following the call of your
Son.
In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

DAY 5 ANNUNCIATION

You have no bucket and the well is deep (John 4:11)

Gen 46:1-7	God tells Jacob not to be afraid of going down to Egypt
Ps 133	How good it is when kindred live together in unity
Acts 2:1-11	The day of Pentecost
John 4:7-15	“You have no bucket and the well is deep”

Commentary

Jesus needed help. After a long walk, fatigue strikes. Exhausted in the heat of noon, he feels hungry and thirsty (Jn 4:6). Furthermore, Jesus is a stranger; it is he who is in a foreign territory and the well belongs to the woman's people. Jesus is thirsty and, as the Samaritan woman points out, he has no bucket to draw water. He needs water, he needs her help: everybody needs help!

Many Christians believe that they alone have all the answers and they need no help from anyone else. We lose a lot if we maintain this perspective. None of us can reach the depths of the well of the divine and yet faith demands that we delve deeper into the mystery. We cannot do this in isolation. We need the help of our Christian brothers and sisters. Only then can we reach into the depths of the mystery of God.

A common point in our faith, regardless of the church to which we belong, is that God is mystery beyond our comprehension. The search for Christian unity brings us to the recognition that no community has all the means to reach into the deep waters of the divine. We need water, we need help: everybody needs help! The more we grow in unity, share our buckets and join the pieces of our ropes, the deeper we delve into the well of the divine.

Brazilian indigenous traditions teach us to learn from the wisdom of the elderly, and at the same time, from the curiosity and innocence of infants. When we are ready to accept that we do need each other, we become like children, open to learn. And that's how God's Kingdom opens for us (Mt 18:3). We must do as Jesus did. We must take the initiative to enter into a foreign land, where we become a stranger, and cultivate the desire to learn from that which is different.

Questions

1. Do you remember situations in which your church has helped another church or has been helped by another church?
2. Are there reservations from the part of your church to accept help from another church? How can these reservations be overcome?

Prayer

God, spring of the Living water, help us to understand that the more we join together the pieces of our ropes, the more deeply our buckets reach into your divine waters!

Awaken us to the truth that the gifts of the other, are an expression of your unfathomable mystery. And make us sit at the well together to drink from your water which gathers us in unity and peace. We ask this in the name of your son Jesus Christ, who asked the Samaritan woman to give him water for his thirst. Amen.

DAY 6 TESTIMONY

Jesus said : “The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (John 4:14)

Ex 2:15-22	Moses at the well of Midian
Ps 91	The song of those who take refuge in the Lord
1 Jn 4:16-21	Perfect love casts out fear
Jn 4:11-15	“A spring of water welling up to eternal life”

Commentary

The dialogue that begins with Jesus asking for water becomes a dialogue in which Jesus promises water. Later in this same gospel Jesus will again ask for a drink. “I thirst,” he says from the cross, and from the cross Jesus becomes the promised fountain of water which flows from his pierced side. We receive this water, this life from Jesus, in baptism, and it becomes a water, a life that wells up within us to be given and shared with others.

Here is the witness of a Brazilian woman who has drunk from this water and in whom this water becomes a spring:

Sister Romi, a nurse from Campo Grande, was a pastor in the Pentecostal tradition. One Sunday night, all alone in a shack, in Romi's neighbourhood a sixteen year old indigenous girl called Semei gave birth to a baby boy. She was found lying on the floor and bleeding. Sister Romi took her to the hospital. Enquiries were made – where was Semei's family? They were found, but they did not want to know. Semei and her child had no home to go to. Sister Romi took them into her own modest home. She did not know Semei, and prejudice towards indigenous people is great in Campo Grande. Semei continued to have health problems, but Sister Romi's great generosity brought forth further generosity from her neighbours. Another new mother, a Catholic called Veronica, breastfed Semei's child as she was unable to do so. Semei named her son Luke Nathaniel and in time they were able to move away from the city to a farm, but she did not forget the kindness of Sister Romi and her neighbours.

The water that Jesus gives, the water that Sister Romi received in baptism, became in her a spring of water and an offer of life to Semei and her child. Prompted by her witness, this same baptismal water

became a spring, a fountain, in the lives of Romi's neighbours. The water of baptism springing into life becomes an ecumenical witness of Christian love in action, a foretaste of the eternal life which Jesus promises.

Concrete gestures like these practiced by ordinary people are what we need in order to grow in fellowship. They give witness to the Gospel and relevance to ecumenical relations.

Questions

1. How do you interpret Jesus' words that through him we may become "a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14)?
2. Where do you see Christian people being springs of living water for you and for others?
3. Which are the situations in public life to which the churches should speak with a single voice in order to be springs of living water?

Prayer

Triune God,
following the example of Jesus,
make us witnesses to your love.
Grant us to become instruments of justice,
peace and solidarity.
May your Spirit move us towards concrete actions
that lead to unity.
May walls be transformed into bridges.
This we pray in the name of Jesus Christ in the
unity of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

DAY 7

TESTIMONY

"Give me to drink" (John 4:7)

Num 20:1-11 The Israelites at Meribah
Ps 119:10-20 "I will not forget your word"
Rom 15:2-7 "May God grant you to live in
harmony with one another"
Jn 4:7-15 "Give me to drink"

Commentary

Christians should be confident that encountering and exchanging experiences with the other, even other religious traditions, can change us and help us to reach into the depths of the well. Approaching those who are strangers to us with the desire to drink from their well, opens to us the "wonders of God" that we proclaim.

In the wilderness God's people were without water and God sent Moses and Aaron to bring water forth from the rock. In the same way God often meets our needs through others. As we call upon the Lord in our need, like the Samaritan asking Jesus, "Sir, give me this water," perhaps the Lord has already answered our prayers by putting into the hands of our neighbours that for which we ask. And so we need to turn also to them, and ask, "Give me to drink."

Sometimes the answer to our need is already in the life and goodwill of the people around us. From the Guarany people of Brazil we learn that in their language there is no equivalent word for the term "religion" as separate from the rest of life. The expression usually used literally means "our good way of being" ("*ñande reko katu*"). This expression refers to the whole cultural system, which includes religion. Religion, therefore, is part of the Guarany cultural system, as well as their way of thinking and being (*teko*). It relates to all that improves and develops the community and leads to its "good way of being" (*teko katu*). The Guarany people remind us that Christianity was first called "The Way" (Acts 9:2). "The Way," or "our good way of being" is God's way of bringing harmony to all parts of our lives.

Questions

1. How has your understanding and experience of God been enriched by the encounter with other Christians?
2. What can Christian communities learn from indigenous wisdom and other religious traditions in your region?

Prayer

God of life, who cares for all creation,
and calls us to justice and peace,
may our security not come from arms,
but from respect.
May our force not be of violence, but of love.
May our wealth not be in money, but in sharing.
May our path not be of ambition, but of justice.
May our victory not be from vengeance,
but in forgiveness.
May our unity not be in the quest of power,
but in vulnerable witness to do your will.
Open and confident, may we defend the dignity of all
creation, sharing, today and forever,
the bread of solidarity, justice and peace.
This we ask in the name of Jesus, your holy Son, our
brother, who, as victim of our violence, even from the
heights of the cross, gave forgiveness to us all.
Amen.

(Adapted from a prayer from an ecumenical conference in Brazil, calling for an end to poverty as the first step on the path to peace through justice)

DAY 8

WITNESS

Many believed because of the woman's testimony (John 4:39)

Ex 3:13-15 Moses at the Burning Bush
Ps 30 The Lord restores us to life
Rom 10:14-17 "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"
Jn 4:27-30,39-40 Many believed because of the woman's testimony

Commentary

With her heart transformed, the Samaritan woman goes out in mission. She announces to her people that she has found the Messiah. Many believed in Jesus “because of the woman’s witness” (John 4:39). The force of her witness stems from the transformation of her life caused by her encounter with Jesus. Thanks to her attitude of openness, she recognised in that stranger “a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (Jn 4:14)

Mission is a key element of Christian faith. Every Christian is called to announce the name of the Lord. Pope Francis told missionaries, “wherever you may go, it would do you well to think that the Spirit of God always gets there ahead of us”. Mission is not proselytism. Those who truly announce Jesus approach others in loving dialogue, open to mutual learning, and respecting difference. Our mission requires us to learn to drink from the living water without taking hold of the well. The well does not belong to us. Rather, we draw life from the well, the well of living water which is given by Christ.

Our mission must be a work both of word and witness. We seek to live out what we proclaim. The late Brazilian Archbishop Helder Camara, once said that many have become atheists because they have become disillusioned by people of faith who do not practice what they preach. The witness of the woman led her community to believe in Jesus because her brothers and sisters saw coherence between her words and her own transformation.

If our word and witness is authentic, the world will hear and believe. “How are they to believe if they have not heard?” (Rom 10:14).

Questions

1. What is the relationship between unity and mission?
2. Do you know people in your community whose life story is a witness to unity?

Prayer

God, spring of living water,
Make of us witnesses of unity through both our words
and our lives.
Help us to understand that we are not the owners of
the well,
And give us the wisdom to welcome the same grace in
one another.
Transform our hearts and our lives
So that we might be genuine bearers of the Good
News.
And lead us always to the encounter with the other,
As an encounter with you.
We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus Christ,
In the unity of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

THE ECUMENICAL SITUATION IN BRAZIL

The ecumenical movement in Brazil has roots in the experience of interdenominational cooperation between different Protestant missionary agencies operating in the country since the 19th century. Encouraged by pan-protestant cooperation, in 1903 the Presbyterian Pastor Erasmo Braga pioneered the organization of the Evangelical Alliance and Christian Effort. Both institutions aimed at promoting unity among different Protestant groups and cooperation in evangelism and education. These organizations also committed themselves to uphold the republican principle of religious equality.

The 1916 Congress of Panama,⁴ dedicated to interdenominational missionary cooperation in Latin America, significantly strengthened these initiatives. Following the Panama Congress, the Brazilian Cooperation Committee was established. It brought together nineteen ecclesial communities, including churches, missionary societies and other evangelical organizations.

In 1934, the Evangelical Confederation of Brazil (CEB) was created in order to promote the ecumenical movement. The CEB later played an important role in promoting the ideals of the World Council of Churches. The churches that participated in the creation of CEB were the Methodist, Episcopal, Presbyterian churches of Brazil and the Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil. They were joined by the Evangelical Church of Lutheran Confession in Brazil in 1959, by the Foursquare Gospel Church in 1963, and by the Pentecostal Church Brazil for Christ in 1968.

Mission was an important topic for CEB. This led to the creation of the Council of Interchurch Relations, which had the task of coordinating the missionary work undertaken by different mission bodies so as to avoid the duplication of efforts and competition among different agencies and churches.

Another well-known dimension of CEB’s work⁵ was its circular letters that addressed social issues in

4. The Congress of Panama was held in protest of the International Missionary Conference in Edinburgh (1910), which did not invite mission agencies active in Latin America, as some where proselytizing other Christians in the region. Among the many reviews of this Congress, that of Hans-Jürgen Prien noted that the Congress of Panama marked the end of the most enthusiastic of the Protestant missions in Latin America and propelled a critical reflection of the Protestant mission in an environment which was mostly Roman Catholic (TIEL, 1998, p.43). From this Congress there were several regional conferences to discuss missionary cooperation in Latin America.

5. The CEB participated in the Latin American Evangelical Conferences (CELA), of which the most important was the CELA II, held in Lima, 1961. This conference brought together 220 representatives from 34 Latin American denominations. From the Lima Conference Committee were

Brazil such as the need for land reform, improving education, literacy courses and campaigns in emergencies.

Youth church movements played an important role in this attempt to reflect on the church's social responsibility within the Brazilian context. An important event that helped to strengthen these initiatives was the World Conference of Christian Youth, which occurred in the late 1940s, in Oslo. In that Conference, the young Brazilians had access to new biblical and theological perspectives from Europe and the United States.

The greater involvement of young Brazilians with international Christian youth movements such as the Universal Federation of Student Christian Movements (WSCF) was an important factor in the development of a theology of the Social Gospel and the gradual organization of reading groups and contextualized biblical interpretations, capable of establishing dialogue with the social reality. The churches were forced to confront the issues of social and economic conflict which continued to emerge in these groups.

The context of fermentation was intensified by the influence of the American theologian Richard Shaull, a pioneer in the formulation of a theology of Revolution. Another important influence was the example of French Catholic priests who sought to live alongside the poor and who became an inspiration for many young Christians in Brazil. The challenge was to foster a theology that incorporated both Brazilian culture and the problems of Brazilian society in its reflection.

This experience deepened in 1953, with the creation of the Division of Social Responsibility of the Church in the CEB. The objective of the new division was to study the implications of faith at a national level and to evaluate social work and evangelization with regard to the social and political contexts. As a result, four national conferences were organized to understand the reality of the country and identify prospects from a Protestant perspective.

The topics covered in these four conferences were: Social Responsibility of the Church (1955), Study on the Social Responsibility of the Church (1955), The Church's presence in the Evolution of Nationality (1960) and Jesus Christ and the Brazilian Revolutionary Process (1962). By the third and fourth conferences one begins to see an openness to dialogue with Roman Catholics, who were also meeting to discuss the social and political problems of the country.

The development of the ecumenical movement in the 1950s and 1960s was marked by its critical perspective of the prevailing models of economic development. The concepts of "progress" and

"industrialization" were invoked to justify the accumulation of wealth by a few while a many of the population were denied access to either the goods produced or the wealth created. Inspired by the four conferences, the ecumenical focus on mission and social change also reverberated in the Roman Catholic Church. One of its journals published some of the results. The theological reflection on the social responsibility of the Church contributed to the unfolding of the ecumenical movement as a project of unity between the churches which held together evangelism and social engagement.

In the years following the 1964 military coup, the CEB was progressively dismantled. However, the ecumenical work which the Confederation promoted did not entirely disappear. As a result of Vatican II, the Roman Catholic Church in Brazil increasingly opened to dialogue with other Christians and was increasingly aware of the social responsibility of the Church. In the face of political repression, the doctrinal differences which separated the churches were of secondary importance to the pressing social problems faced by the Brazilian people, and this contributed to the reinvigoration of the ecumenical movement.

In the context of military dictatorship, ecumenical groups of Protestants and Roman Catholics, and which also included some non-Christians, started to promote human rights, denounce torture, and to pursue democratic openness. These ecumenical coalitions strengthened other groups and projects that had as their goal the promotion of social values related to human rights. This is the background of the Project *Brasil Nunca Mais* (Brazil Never Again) jointly developed by the World Council of Churches and the Archdiocese of Sao Paulo in the 1980s. Coordinated by Presbyterian Pastor Jaime Wright and the Archbishop of São Paulo, Dom Paulo Evaristo Cardinal Arns, the project sought to prevent legal papers for political crimes from being destroyed at the end of the military dictatorship, and to gather information about torture practiced by the political repression. It was hoped that the disclosure of violations of human rights committed by the military would fulfil an educational role within Brazilian society.

Particular situations of oppression and human rights issues have remained at the centre of the ecumenical movement in Brazil. In this sense, it is important to highlight the contribution made by theologians from different churches who were identified with the ecumenical movement. For example ecumenical collaboration in Biblical studies has prompted the discussion about the situation of women both in society and in the Church.

Since 1975, the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church, the Evangelical Church of Lutheran Confession in Brazil, the Episcopal Anglican Church, and the Methodist Church began to envisage together the establishment of a National Council of Churches. Their vision became a reality in 1982, when CONIC

established the Latin American Evangelical Christian Education Commission (CELADEC) and the Church and Society in Latin America Commission (ISAL), especially the latter was very important to boost ecumenism in Brazil.

was created. For the whole ecumenical movement in Brazil, the National Council of Churches represents the institutional character of ecumenism, which seeks to promote an organic relationship between its member churches. It has, among its many tasks, the challenge of urging the churches to assume an ecumenical dimension in all areas of their pastoral activity.

In the rather complex Brazilian religious context, CONIC seeks to foster dialogue between churches and other religions. Amidst growing religious intolerance, CONIC is involved in several discussion forums that seek to minimize the impact of religious fundamentalism. It has taken a leading role in the debate on the relationship between Church and Society, discussing, in particular, the need for regulation of the relationship between civil society organizations and the State. In relationships and at times in conflict between religious groups and movements identified with the struggle for human rights, CONIC has worked with a view to promote theological reflection on different perspectives and perceptions in society.

One of CONIC's most important activities is the annual celebration of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. It has also supported three Lenten campaigns sponsored by the Catholic Bishops' Conference, which were held ecumenically in the years 2000, 2005 and 2010. The fourth ecumenical Lent Campaign will take place in 2016.

It is important to highlight that the Brazilian ecumenical movement includes a wide number of groups and organizations such as the Brazilian section of the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI), the Centre for Bible Studies (CEBI), the Ecumenical Centre of Service to Evangelization and Popular Education (CESEP), as well as agencies such as the Ecumenical Coordination of Services (CESE) and Koinonia – Ecumenical Presence and Service. These agencies also meet as Act Forum-Brazil, where the main strategies of the national ecumenical movement are discussed and decided. There is also a movement of the Fraternity of Christian Churches (the House of Reconciliation) that promotes meetings and study courses between churches, publishing houses and universities. The testimony of our unity is realized in different experiences in which we seek to transform the structures that cause violence and distance us from the Kingdom of God, a kingdom of justice and peace (Rom 14:17).

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

THEMES 1968-2015

In 1968, materials jointly prepared by the WCC Faith and Order Commission and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity were first used.

- 1968 To the praise of his glory (Ephesians 1:14)
Pour la louange de sa gloire
- 1969 Called to freedom (Galatians 5:13)
Appelés à la liberté
(Preparatory meeting held in Rome, Italy)
- 1970 We are fellow workers for God (1 Cor 3:9)
Nous sommes les coopérateurs de Dieu
(Preparatory meeting held at the Monastery of Niederaltaich, Federal Republic of Germany)
- 1971 ...and the communion of the Holy Spirit
(2 Corinthians 13:13)
...et la communion du Saint-Esprit
- 1972 I give you a new commandment (John 13:34)
Je vous donne un commandement nouveau
(Preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)
- 1973 Lord, teach us to pray (Luke 11:1)
Seigneur, apprends-nous à prier
(Preparatory meeting held at the Abbey of Montserrat, Spain)
- 1974 That every tongue confess: Jesus Christ is Lord
(Philippians 2:1-13)
Que tous confessent : Jésus-Christ est Seigneur
(Preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)
- 1975 God's purpose: all things in Christ (Ephesians 1:3-10)
La volonté du Père : Tout réunir sous un seul chef, le Christ
(Material from an Australian group.
Preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)
- 1976 We shall be like him (1 John 3:2) or, Called to become what we are
Appelés à devenir ce que nous sommes
(Material from Caribbean Conference of Churches.
Preparatory meeting held in Rome, Italy)
- 1977 Enduring together in hope (Romans 5:1-5)
L'espérance ne déçoit pas
(Material from Lebanon, in the midst of a civil war.
Preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)

- 1978 No longer strangers (Ephesians 2:13-22)
Vous n'êtes plus des étrangers
(Material from an ecumenical team in Manchester, England)
- 1979 Serve one another to the glory of God (1 Peter 4:7-11)
Soyez au service les uns des autres pour la gloire de Dieu
(Material from Argentina - preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)
- 1980 Your kingdom come (Matthew 6:10)
Que ton règne vienne!
(Material from an ecumenical group in Berlin, German Democratic Republic -preparatory meeting held in Milan, Italy)
- 1981 One Spirit - many gifts - one body (1 Corinthians 12:3b-13)
Un seul esprit - des dons divers - un seul corps
(Material from Graymoor Fathers, USA – preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)
- 1982 May all find their home in you, O Lord (Psalm 84)
Que tous trouvent leur demeure en Toi, Seigneur
(Material from Kenya - preparatory meeting held in Milan, Italy)
- 1983 Jesus Christ - the Life of the World (1 John 1:1-4)
Jesus Christ - La Vie du Monde
(Material from an ecumenical group in Ireland - preparatory meeting held in Céligny (Bossey), Switzerland)
- 1984 Called to be one through the cross of our Lord (1 Cor 2:2 and Col 1:20)
Appelés à l'unité par la croix de notre Seigneur
(Preparatory meeting held in Venice, Italy)
- 1985 From death to life with Christ (Eph 2:4-7)
De la mort à la vie avec le Christ
(Material from Jamaica - preparatory meeting held in Grandchamp, Switzerland)
- 1986 You shall be my witnesses (Acts 1:6-8)
Vous serez mes témoins
(Material from Yugoslavia (Slovenia), preparatory meeting held in Yugoslavia)
- 1987 United in Christ - a New Creation (2 Corinthians 5:17-6:4a)
Unis dans le Christ - une nouvelle création
(Material from England, preparatory meeting held in Taizé, France)
- 1988 The love of God casts out fear (1 John 4:18)
L'Amour de Dieu bannit la Crainte
(Material from Italy - preparatory meeting held in Pinerolo, Italy)
- 1989 Building community: one body in Christ (Romans 12:5-6a)
Bâtir la communauté : Un seul corps en Christ
(Material from Canada - preparatory meeting held in Whaley Bridge, England)
- 1990 That they all may be one...That the world may believe (John 17)
Que tous soient un... Afin que le monde croie
(Material from Spain - preparatory meeting held in Madrid, Spain)
- 1991 Praise the Lord, all you nations! (Psalm 117 and Romans 15:5-13)
Nations, louez toutes le Seigneur
(Material from Germany - preparatory meeting held in Rotenburg an der Fulda, Federal Republic of Germany)
- 1992 I am with you always... Go, therefore (Matthew 28:16-20)
Je suis avec vous... allez donc
(Material from Belgium - preparatory meeting held in Bruges, Belgium)
- 1993 Bearing the fruit of the Spirit for Christian unity (Galatians 5:22-23)
Pour l'unité : laisser mûrir en nous les fruits de l'Esprit
(Material from Zaire - preparatory meeting held near Zurich, Switzerland)
- 1994 The household of God: called to be one in heart and mind (Acts 4:23-37)
La maison de Dieu : Appelés à être un dans le cœur et dans l'esprit
(Material from Ireland - preparatory meeting held in Dublin, Republic of Ireland)
- 1995 Koinonia: communion in God and with one another (John 15:1-17)
La koinonia : communion en Dieu et les uns avec les autres
(Material from Faith and Order, preparatory meeting held in Bristol, England)
- 1996 Behold, I stand at the door and knock (Revelation 3:14-22)
Je me tiens à la porte et je frappe
(Preparatory material from Portugal, meeting held in Lisbon, Portugal)
- 1997 We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:20)
Au nom du Christ, laissez-vous réconcilier avec Dieu
(Material from Nordic Ecumenical Council, preparatory meeting held in Stockholm, Sweden)

- 1998 The Spirit helps us in our weakness (Romans 8:14-27)
L'Esprit aussi vient en aide à notre faiblesse
(Preparatory material from France, meeting held in Paris, France)
- 1999 He will dwell with them as their God, they will be his peoples (Revelation 21:1-7)
Dieu demeurera avec eux. Ils seront ses peuples et lui sera le Dieu qui est avec eux
(Preparatory material from Malaysia, meeting held in Monastery of Bose, Italy)
- 2000 Blessed be God who has blessed us in Christ (Ephesians 1:3-14)
Béni soit Dieu, qui nous a bénis en Christ
(Preparatory material from the Middle East Council of Churches, meeting held La Verna, Italy)
- 2001 I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life (John 14:1-6)
Je suis le chemin, et la vérité et la vie
(Preparatory material from Romania, meeting held at Vulcan, Romania)
- 2002 For with you is the fountain of life (Psalm 36:5-9)
Car chez toi est la fontaine de la vie
(Preparatory material CEEC and CEC, meeting near Augsburg, Germany)
- 2003 We have this treasure in clay jars (2 Corinthians 4:4-18)
Car nous avons ce trésor dans des vases d'argile
(Preparatory material churches in Argentina, meeting at Los Rubios, Spain)
- 2004 My peace I give to you (John 14:23-31; John 14:27)
Je vous donne ma paix
(Preparatory material from Aleppo, Syria - meeting in Palermo, Sicily, Italy)
- 2005 Christ, the one foundation of the church (1 Corinthians 3:1-23)
Le Christ, unique fondement de l'Eglise
(Preparatory material from Slovakia - meeting in Piestaň, Slovakia)
- 2006 Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them (Matthew 18:18-20)
Là où deux ou trois se trouvent réunis en mon nom, je suis au milieu d'eux.
(Preparatory material from Ireland - meeting held in Prosperous, Co. Kildare, Ireland)
- 2007 He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak (Mark 7:31-37)
Il fait entendre les sourds et parler les muets
(Preparatory material from South Africa – meeting held in Faverges, France)
- 2008 Pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:(12a) 13b-18)
Priez sans cesse
(Preparatory material from USA – meeting held in Graymoor, Garrison, USA)
- 2009 That they may become one in your hand (Ezekiel 37:15-28)
Ils seront unis dans ta main
(Preparatory material from Korea – meeting held in Marseilles, France)
- 2010 You are witnesses of these things (Luke 24:48)
...de tout cela, c'est vous qui êtes les témoins
(Preparatory material from Scotland – meeting held in Glasgow, Scotland)
- 2011 One in the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer (cf. Acts 2:42)
Unis dans l'enseignement des apôtres, la communion fraternelle, la fraction du pain et la prière
(Preparatory material from Jerusalem – meeting held in Saydnaya, Syria)
- 2012 We will all be Changed by the Victory of our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Cor 15:51-58)
Tous, nous serons transformés par la victoire de notre Seigneur Jésus Christ
(Preparatory material from Poland – meeting held in Warsaw, Poland)
- 2013 What does God require of us? (cf. Mi 6, 6-8)
Que nous demande le Seigneur ?
(Preparatory material from India – meeting held in Bangalore, India)
- 2014 Has Christ been divided ? (1 Cor 1:1-17)
Le Christ est-il divisé ?
(Preparatory material from Canada – meeting held in Montréal, Canada)
- 2015 Jesus said to her: Give me to drink (John 4, 7)
Jésus lui dit : Donne-moi à boire
(Preparatory material from Brazil – meeting held in São Paulo, Brazil)

KEY DATES IN THE HISTORY OF THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

- c.1740 In Scotland a Pentecostal movement arose, with North American links, whose revivalist message included prayers for and with all churches.
- 1820 The Rev. James Haldane Stewart publishes “Hints for the General Union of Christians for the Outpouring of the Spirit”.
- 1840 The Rev. Ignatius Spencer, a convert to Roman Catholicism, suggests a “Union of Prayer for Unity”.

- 1867 The First Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops emphasizes prayer for unity in the Preamble to its Resolutions.
- 1894 Pope Leo XIII encourages the practice of a Prayer Octave for Unity in the context of Pentecost.
- 1908 First observance of the “Church Unity Octave” initiated by the Rev. Paul Wattson.
- 1926 The Faith and Order movement begins publishing “Suggestions for an Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity”.
- 1935 Abbé Paul Couturier of France advocates the “Universal Week of Prayer for Christian Unity” on the inclusive basis of prayer for “the unity Christ wills by the means he wills”.
- 1958 Unité Chrétienne (Lyons, France) and the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches begin co-operative preparation of materials for the Week of Prayer.
- 1964 In Jerusalem, Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I prayed together Jesus’ prayer “that they all may be one” (John 17).
- 1964 The Decree on Ecumenism of Vatican II emphasizes that prayer is the soul of the ecumenical movement and encourages observance of the Week of Prayer.
- 1966 The Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity [now known as the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity] begin official joint preparation of the Week of Prayer material.
- 1968 First official use of Week of Prayer material prepared jointly by Faith and Order and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (now known as the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity).
- 1975 First use of Week of Prayer material based on a draft text prepared by a local ecumenical group. An Australian group was the first to take up this plan in preparing the 1975 initial draft.
- 1988 Week of Prayer materials were used in the inaugural worship for The Christian Federation of Malaysia, which links the major Christian groupings in that country.
- 1994 International group preparing text for 1996 included representatives from YMCA and YWCA.
- 2004 Agreement reached that resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity be jointly published and produced in the same format by Faith and Order (WCC) and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (Catholic Church).
- 2008 Commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. (Its predecessor, the Church Unity Octave, was first observed in 1908).