

Ecumenism in the 21st Century

Report of the Consultation
Convened by the
World Council of Churches

Chavannes-de-Bogis, Switzerland

30 November to 3 December 2004

World Council of Churches

Geneva

This is a working document, which has been produced within a tight deadline. It has therefore not been possible to devote time to additional editing, style, etc.

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Ecumenism in the 21st Century: Background to the Consultation

Over the past 50 years, churches throughout the world have established many different ecumenical organisations at the national, regional and global levels in a quest to discover Christian unity and also to assist the churches to respond to the needs of the world. In recent years, questions have been increasingly raised regarding the relationships between these various organisations their financial sustainability and whether a reconfiguration of ecumenical life is necessary in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

The General Secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC) raised this issue in his reports to the Central Committee in 2002 and 2003. The WCC then convened a consultation in Antelias, Lebanon in November 2003, which brought together a diverse group of theologians, church leaders, social scientists, ecumenists and others to explore the question of 'reconfiguration of the ecumenical movement'. This consultation affirmed the urgency of the issues and called for further discussions to "re-vitalize the ecumenical movement and to ensure that our structures and our actions respond to the changing global realities." The consultation also noted that 'reconfiguration' can be understood differently; one understanding referring to 'broadening the ecumenical movement' ensuring greater participation of all churches throughout the world, the second referring to the process of 'deepening the fellowship' between churches and the third addressing the question of how relationships can be strengthened between existing ecumenical actors to ensure greater coherence and effectiveness in our work. While noting that all three were interrelated, the participants at the Antelias consultation recommended that in further discussions on reconfiguration, emphasis be placed on the third understanding. The meeting concluded by calling for a broad participatory process in which all those committed to ecumenism would be invited to give their input and share their reflections on the future and shape of ecumenism in the 21st century.

During 2004, WCC undertook two pieces of preparatory work on reconfiguration; a study of current ecumenical structures and relationships (Mapping the Oikoumene) and a collection of writings from around the world, (Reflections on Ecumenism in the 21st Century). Churches were also invited to respond to the report of the Antelias meeting and these responses were collated.

Ecumenism in the 21st Century

The WCC invited a group of 106 representatives from churches, agencies/specialised ministries, regional and national ecumenical councils, Christian World Communions, international ecumenical organisations, ecumenical communities, staff and officers of the WCC to a consultation on "Ecumenism in the 21st Century" at Chavannes-de-Bogis, Switzerland from 30 November to 3 December 2004. The purpose of the consultation was to explore:

- 1: What is our vision for ecumenism in the 21st century?
- 2: What changes are needed in our current structures so that this vision becomes a reality?

Morning prayer and biblical reflection at the consultation was led by Dr Wesley Ariarajah. A Steering Committee, comprising Marion Best, Omega Bula, Setri Nyomi, Bishop Serapion, Motoe Yamada, Yorgo Lemopoulos and Jill Hawkey shared the facilitation of the meeting and a drafting group comprising Dagmar Heller, Katerina Karkala-Zorbas, Aaro Rytönen, Hermen Shastri and Beth Ferris developed the final statement.

Final Statement from the Consultation

Ecumenism in the 21st Century

Introduction

For the peace of the whole world,
 the stability of the Holy Churches of God
 and for the Union of All,
 Let us pray to the Lord. (St. John Chrysostom)

1. In the spirit of this prayer, the World Council of Churches invited a group of 106 representatives from churches, agencies/specialised ministries, regional and national councils of churches, Christian World Communions and international ecumenical organisations to a consultation on "Ecumenism in the 21st Century," held at Chavannes-de-Bogis, Switzerland from 30 November to 3 December 2004.
2. The need for such a consultation comes from the fact that Christians face new challenges in the world and that new and effective ways of working together are required in order to respond to the demands of the world from the perspective of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Ecumenical Movement

3. There is a rich history of ecumenical traditions and achievements which served as the starting point for these discussions. The term 'ecumenical' embraces the quest for visible Christian unity, which is undertaken in theological study, in common witness in the world-wide task of mission and evangelism as well as in diakonia and the promotion of justice and peace.¹
4. Participation in the ecumenical movement follows from and leads toward shared faith in the Triune God and common Christian values. Before his crucifixion Jesus Christ prayed for his disciples and all Christians: "that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:21). Thus Christian unity is related to the unity of the Triune God. We are therefore urgently called to transform our self-centred mentality into selfless love for the other and the society of which we are a part. As Christ is one with

his father we too as Christians have the vocation to be one. We have the duty to make evident that Christianity is a unity in which the many form a unique whole. Their belonging together is based on the unity of the work of God the Father through the Son and the Holy Spirit. Accordingly the renewal of the ecumenical movement is an invitation to all involved to go beyond the present boundaries, to interact with each other and with society. "It is a call to bear witness to unity by making an optimum use of the abilities, history, experience, commitment and spiritual tradition of everyone involved. This includes submission to one another and the search to understand the will of the Lord in a spirit of repentance and reconciliation."²

5. The ecumenical movement today is carried out at different levels by churches acting through conciliar bodies (e.g. WCC, regional ecumenical organizations, sub-regional fellowships and national councils of churches) Christian World Communions, ecumenical communities, mission agencies, theological colleges and associations, ecumenical academies and lay training centres as well as agencies/specialized ministries, international ecumenical organizations and many other ecumenical bodies. It is obvious that the ecumenical movement is far wider than any one institution and includes all those who yearn for unity and all those who dream of a common Christian voice on the burning issues of the day.

A Time of Change

6. The ecumenical movement is living and operating in a world which is constantly changing. The political constellation is very different from what it was during the 20th century. The world today is dominated by a concentration of extreme power and wealth. As people seek to affirm their identities in the light of globalizing forces, increasingly many are identifying themselves in terms of their religion.
7. It is a world of brilliant new technologies and a world in which millions of people suffer from hunger and die from rampant violence. The environment is threatened with destruction because of disrespect for creation.
8. People in many regions are increasingly embracing the view that another world is possible. They are seeking a world undergirded by a deep sense of spiritual discernment. The growth of civil society is transforming communities and nations. Those who have traditionally been marginalized and excluded are struggling to make a more just and peaceful world possible.
9. These changes are also affecting the churches. Declining membership in some European and North American churches will have consequences for the material resourcing of ecumenical bodies in the

future, while at the same time prompting new relationships of genuine partnership between churches of the North and those of the South. The proliferation of non-governmental organizations has created a more competitive environment in which churches and their related organizations sometimes struggle for survival, but also opens up new possibilities of partnerships and coalitions in the cause of peace, justice and the care of creation.

10. This has changed the ecumenical life of the churches. There are important new ecumenical actors who are not formally included in the existing structures and there are some in the ecumenical family who do not feel valued by others. Many new ecumenical organizations have been created, giving rise to fears that all of these ecumenical bodies cannot be sustained. Churches complain that there are too many levels of "belonging." Insufficient programme co-ordination by confessional and ecumenical bodies may represent duplication of efforts. There are questions around membership and around funding of the ecumenical movement.
11. The primary structures of the ecumenical movement were established decades ago, when both the world and the churches were in a very different place. Today the world challenges us in ways that we have not known before.

Ecumenism in the 21st Century

12. In recent years, discussions about the effects of the changing world on the ecumenical movement have taken place in different fora. In November 2003, a consultation on "Reconfiguration of the Ecumenical Movement" in Antelias/Lebanon affirmed the urgency of the issues and called for further discussions to "re-vitalize the ecumenical movement and to ensure that our structures and our actions respond to the changing global realities." In this line, the meeting in Chavannes-de-Bogis continued the work and looked into the question of how to find a new configuration or re-shaping which strengthens ecumenical relationships and structures in face of the new challenges mentioned above. The new study of current ecumenical structures and relationships (Mapping the Oikoumene), the Reflections on Ecumenism in the 21st century, both published by the WCC (2004) and the reactions from the churches to the report of the Antelias Consultation (2003) provided insightful resources in the deliberations of this consultation.
Recognizing that any discussion of structures must be guided by the values and vision of the ecumenical movement, the following vision was identified:
13. We hope that the ecumenical movement in the 21st century will be a special space:

- where more and more Christians are involved in the work of Christian unity, and the fellowship among the churches is strengthened
 - where open and ecumenically-minded culture is fostered in the everyday lives of people in their own contexts and where ecumenical formation is a central focus at all levels of church life, from the local to the global
 - where spirituality is the basis of the life of Christians together and where, as individuals, churches and organizations, Christians can pray together and can encourage each other to discern God's will for their lives
 - where all, including the marginalized and excluded, are welcomed into inclusive and loving communities
 - where relationships, built on mutual trust, are strengthened between all parts of the ecumenical family
 - where each Christian can be supported in practising responsible stewardship and where churches and Christian organizations can be mutually accountable to each other
 - where diversity of cultures and traditions is recognized as a source of creativity
 - where hospitality is manifest towards those of different faiths and where dialogue is encouraged
 - where young people are encouraged to join in and to lead
 - where women's visions of being church are shared
 - where the ministry of healing is carried out in shared actions
 - where the healing of memories leads to reconciliation
 - where, together, we are enabled to be prophetic in confronting the injustices and violence of the world and to take risks in our commitment to justice and peace when Christ calls us to do so.
14. We recognize that there are still many issues that divide us which need to be overcome. But we still hope that the Holy Spirit leads us to the end that one day we can celebrate the Eucharist together as the sign of our unity.
15. The process of moving towards a new configuration of the ecumenical movement is urgent. Financial difficulties in many churches put pressure on the ecumenical movement to reconsider how it works. But the needs coming from a changing world also ask for a common agenda which harnesses collective energies to work together for the healing of the world. Moreover, a need is felt for more effective instruments in the quest for Christian unity given the changing landscape of Christianity.
16. A new configuration of the ecumenical movement will require change from our churches and our organizations. Structures are needed which are less rigid, more flexible, and which lead us to develop

more collaborative initiatives with each other. Beyond structures, we seek to change the way we work and to find more creative and innovative opportunities for working together.

17. Participants expressed their hopes that the Global Christian Forum would provide an opportunity for broadening the ecumenical movement. Cooperation in the area of diakonia and mission was considered as a way to strengthen relationships between Pentecostal and other churches.
18. With any new configuration, WCC has a leading role to play in facilitating, networking, coordinating and challenging churches and organisations within the ecumenical movement.
19. The following section presents specific recommendations to the churches, the WCC, the REOs and NCCs, the Christian World Communions, the international ecumenical organizations, and the agencies/ specialised ministries.

Recommendations

Participants celebrated the fact that this diverse group of representatives from the broader ecumenical movement had come together at Chavannes-de-Bogis to reflect together on a new configuration of the ecumenical movement. This was a special event and participants expressed their joy at being together. In fact, some felt that WCC's role in facilitating such a gathering is a model for its future work in creating ecumenical space. While the recommendations below focus largely on issues of structures and relationships, participants affirmed the need for renewal, for "re-freshing" the ecumenical movement in a way which focuses less on institutional interests and more on fostering a spirit of collaboration. The need to develop more effective ways of working in order to witness to the world - in areas such as justice, reconciliation, and inter-faith dialogue - is a strong motivation for grappling with many and diverse structural issues.

Working groups during the meeting made many recommendations on specific issues which are incorporated into the summary report of this meeting. These provide broad and important suggestions for the work of the churches and other participants in the ecumenical movement. In particular participants recognized the essential role of ecumenical formation for the future ecumenical movement and urged all churches and organizations to make this a priority, for example in religious education and in selecting representatives to ecumenical events. Churches are encouraged to ensure that their members who have ecumenical experiences are able to share these experiences with their Church.

The recommendations presented below focus on only a few concrete steps which can be taken in the immediate future. At the same time, it was recognized that the process of developing a new configuration of the ecumenical

movement is a long-term one which will require discussion and reflection by the churches and indeed by confessional and ecumenical bodies.

1. A Reaffirmation of the Theological Basis of the Ecumenical Movement

We affirm that theological dialogue about the nature of unity and the church is a priority for all ecumenical work and should be re-vitalized. The WCC's Faith and Order has a central role to play in shaping the multilateral dialogue on issues (both theological and social) uniting and dividing the churches today, and in monitoring and mapping the many bilateral dialogues on church unity. A statement on the church as local/universal, living in unity/diversity is now being prepared for the 2006 WCC Assembly.

We strongly recommend that the WCC and its member churches continue theological reflection on the nature of the church, particularly on the biblical understandings and different theological interpretations of the church.

2. Mapping of Programmatic Work

WCC is asked to facilitate a mapping study of existing programmatic work of ecumenical and denominational bodies, identifying who is doing what in which area of work and the financial resources which support these programmes. This is intended to serve as a tool for avoiding duplication and fostering cooperation and could build on the annual WCC Ecumenical Partner Survey. Such a mapping exercise could also provide opportunities for mutual learning. As this is a substantial task, it may be necessary to limit the scope of the study.

This mapping could be supplemented by case studies by appropriate bodies, in which a small group of people analyze and learn from specific examples of programmatic collaboration or overlap.

3. Clarifying the Respective Roles of WCC, REOs, and NCCs

We see a need for the WCC, the regional ecumenical organizations (REOs), and national councils of churches (NCCs) to clarify their programmatic roles, to discuss and formulate a common agenda and to stimulate collaborative action in order to achieve greater ecumenical coherence.

WCC is asked to work with REOs and NCCs to develop an appropriate process for furthering these discussions, by building on work carried out through the Common Understanding and Vision process.

The principle of subsidiarity - ensuring that decisions are made closest to the people affected - may be helpful in delineating roles. Greater coherence could also be fostered by:

- Linking governing bodies (for example, the REOs could organize joint meetings in each region)

- Clearer accountability of representatives participating in ecumenical bodies to the churches they represent
- Clearly formulated agendas for regular meetings between WCC, REOs and NCCs
- Organizing meetings between REOs and Christian World Communions

REOs and NCCs also have a responsibility to encourage ecumenical formation among their constituencies and they are asked to work with theological institutions in their regions to organize seminars on ecumenical formation.

4. Clarifying the Role and Space of Agencies/Specialized ministries within the Ecumenical Movement

As diakonia is an essential part of being church, and as agencies/specialized ministries are recognized as an integral and indispensable part of the ecumenical movement, **the consultation agreed to ask:**

- **WCC to invite the agencies/specialized ministries to discuss together the shape and form of their institutional space**
- **WCC to include agencies/specialized ministries in its strategic planning and on-going work in the field of diakonia and development, relief and advocacy**
- **Similarly, agencies/specialized ministries to share their plans with WCC which in turn will seek to share them more broadly with ecumenical partners.**

5. Towards Enhanced Collaboration with Christian World Communions

WCC is asked to facilitate a consultative process to explore the nature and form of a common Assembly or process that will draw the Christian World Communions, international ecumenical organizations, REOs and the WCC into a common ecumenical agenda. The possibility can also be explored of working with WCC's Faith and Order Plenary Commission and the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism in planning future meetings.

Further work is also needed to discuss ways in which Christian World Communions can more effectively participate in the work and life of WCC.

6. Exploring Possibilities for Greater Financial Stability

In light of the financial difficulties being faced by many ecumenical organisations, WCC is asked to facilitate a task force in which representatives from different ecumenical bodies, including from agencies/specialized ministries, can explore together additional and new ways of

funding ecumenical work. Collaboration between churches, NCCs, REOs and WCC is needed in the regions to increase possibilities of raising funds for the common ecumenical movement. The Consultation stressed that building relationships is essential to efforts to increase financial support for ecumenical work.

7. The Role of WCC

Participants affirmed that WCC is a privileged instrument, entrusted with ensuring the coherence of the ecumenical movement. As a fellowship of churches it has an important prophetic role.

All organisations within the ecumenical movement, including WCC, need to change to address the challenges of today. **The consultation recommends that in setting its priorities, WCC includes the following:**

- **Providing space for the ecumenical movement to formulate a common ecumenical vision for the 21st century**
- **Considering comprehensively the results and significance of bilateral theological dialogue at national, regional and international levels**
- **Facilitating a common theological understanding of diakonia among churches and agencies/specialized ministries**
- **Providing a forum for exchange of information and common advocacy against injustice, perhaps through coordinating advocacy vis-à-vis the UN**
- **Facilitating constructive cooperation and accountability between different partners in the ecumenical movement**
- **Facilitating a process of bringing the specialised staff of ecumenical organisations into regular and systematic conversation and information-sharing in order to develop common work plans.**

In terms of structures it is recommended that WCC consider a balance between permanent tasks and time-limited, urgent projects.

8. Establishment of a Continuation Group

In order to continue this process, **a continuation group will be established as soon as possible and will be composed of 15 representatives of different constituencies, as follows:**

- 5 representatives of member churches (to be selected by the WCC Executive Committee);**
- 1 representative of the Roman Catholic church;**
- 1 representative of Pentecostal churches;**
- 2 representatives from ecumenical youth organizations;**
- 1 each from REOs, CWCs, NCCs, agencies/specialized ministries, international ecumenical organizations and ecumenical renewal communities.**

Each of these constituencies will name their own representatives by 14 February 2005 and the names will be shared with the WCC Central Committee for information.

WCC will convene this group and a first meeting will take place in the first half of 2005.

Terms of reference for the Continuation Group:

- Review the recommendations from this meeting, establish timelines and monitor their implementation to determine which can be implemented in the short and long term
- Set priorities among the recommendations
- Decide and accompany the process of working towards a new configuration of the ecumenical movement. This may include, at some point in time, another consultation.

9. The Need for Inclusive Participation

The continuing process of developing a new configuration of the ecumenical movement must include the increased participation by women and youth and priority should be given to participation from the South.

10. Going Forth

As only 106 representatives participated in this consultation, Ecumenism in the 21st Century, participants agreed to discuss the issue of a new ecumenical configuration with their churches and constituencies and to refer relevant measures to their respective governing bodies. The continuation group is asked to provide regular updates on this process to participants in this consultation as well as to the broader ecumenical constituency.

NOTES

¹ cf. World Council of Churches, *Towards a Common Understanding and Vision of the World Council of Churches, Policy Statement*, Geneva, WCC, 1998.

² World Council of Churches, *Report of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the World Council of Churches* (August 2002).

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION PROCEEDINGS

TUESDAY 30 NOVEMBER 2004

The meeting opened with morning prayer and Bible Study based on Acts 15: 1-21.³

Welcome and Presentation⁴

Rev Dr Samuel Kobia, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches

Samuel Kobia welcomed participants and briefly reviewed the background to the meeting. He noted the proliferation of new organisations in the past decade and the burden this can place on churches. As much of the funding comes from a few organisations, he questioned whether they are all financially sustainable. He outlined the current global context of increasing fear, growing questions of identity and of relationships between faith traditions, and noted that the centre of gravity for Christianity is moving from the North to the South. He also noted the changes to the global economy with increasing global activity in India and China, increased mobility of people either from choice or as a result of poverty and conflict and highlighted the conflict between the West and the Arab world, including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the war in Iraq. But he also noted signs of hope, particularly as people in all regions of the world are increasingly embracing the view that 'another world is possible.' He concluded by raising 6 questions:

- what is the vision of the ecumenical movement?
- do we share a similar commitment to be accountable to each other?
- as this is not a meeting about re-structuring the WCC, are we all willing to change?
- who sets the agenda for the 21st century?
- how can the ecumenical movement ensure that spirituality is at the centre of our life together?
- how can the ecumenical movement ensure constant renewal and how can young people be brought in?

He emphasized that WCC's role in this consultation is to facilitate, and that participants together will decide on the process to carry it forward.

Ecumenism in Process of Transformation: Problems, challenges and prospects

His Holiness Aram I, Moderator of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches

HH Aram I introduced his presentation by noting that he prefers to refer to this process as the ecumenical movement in transformation as it is called to renew and redefine its nature, goals and vision in response to the global changes and challenges. Over the last 50 years the ecumenical spirit and vision were almost suffocated by an aggressive institutionalism and yet a vision demands a programme to articulate itself; a movement requires structure to survive; and a fellowship needs a conciliar framework to grow. What is therefore needed is a holistic, balanced and interactive approach that will preserve the movement character of ecumenism and give due consideration to its institutional expression.

The question is not merely one of coherence and collaboration between ecumenical actors and actions but rather whether we have oneness in our understanding of ecumenism. By ecumenism we mean different things and there are increasing incompatibilities, inconsistencies and incoherence between the ecumenical goals.

HH Aram I argued that true ecumenism aims at fellowship building where interdependence and mutual accountability are created among the churches and diversities are preserved and enhanced. But ecumenism must be both fellowship oriented and movement oriented as they strengthen, challenge and complement each other.

Changes within the global church means changing the nature of the ecumenical partnership. While the time may not yet be mature for the Roman Catholic Church to enter into fellowship-based ecumenism on the global level and the Pentecostal and Evangelical churches have their own perspectives of ecumenism, closer collaboration with these churches is essential. A strong partnership with ecumenical specialised ministries is also essential to ensure the oneness and vitality of the ecumenical movement.

There has also been the emergence of people-centred ecumenism as expressed through spiritual movements, networking, advocacy groups and the global ecumenical forum. The ecumenical movement belongs to the whole people of God which is larger than simply the institutional expression of the church. HH Aram I hopes that an integrated ecumenical strategy and vision is promoted which is based on a holistic and people-centred perception of the church and the ecumenical movement.

A responsive and prophetic ecumenical vision is needed to embrace the challenges posed by globalisation, fragmentation and the current ecumenical dichotomies (e.g: institution-people, lay-clergy, local-global etc). There is a

need for a new ecumenical culture that is accessible, relevant and attractive. Dialogue with other living faiths is essential. A clearer articulation of what 'being church' means will remain an essential ecumenical concern.

HH Aram I concluded by stating that these emerging concerns touch the nature and vision of the ecumenical movement and any attempt to reconfigure ecumenism must take them seriously. The aim of this process must be to give a comprehensive and coherent articulation to the ecumenical vision for the 21st century. Reconfiguration is only one part of this process.

Ecumenism and Pentecostals: A Latin America Perspective

Dr Oscar Corvalán-Vásquez

Oscar Corvalán-Vásquez noted that Christians are now organized in 39,000 denominations with the largest ecclesiastical megablocs being Roman Catholics (1.19 billion), Independents (427 million), Protestants (376 million), Orthodox (220 million) and Anglicans (80 million). The fastest growth is found in the category of independents and in churches of the South.

In relation to the vision and values of the ecumenical movement, Corvalán-Vásquez welcomed the present open attitude of the ecumenical movement to Evangelicals and Pentecostals, noting it was an opportunity to enlarge its vision and liberate it from institutional ecumenism. He reminded us that the Pentecostal movement represents, to a greater or lesser extent, people who have been socially, politically and religiously discriminated against and noted the importance of mission and service going hand in hand. Pentecostal churches tend to be more 'social movements' and have weak institutional structures which need to be considered when exploring alternative organisational models for the ecumenical movement. One possible model may revolve around the concept of a network of autonomous communities having a similar vision of mission and diaconal work.

Corvalán-Vásquez highlighted the difference between Latin American Evangelicals/Pentecostals formed as a result of missionary work of US Evangelicals/Pentecostals (who tend to renounce active social and political participation due to the version of the Gospel they have received) and those coming out of the revival movements. Indigenous Pentecostal movements are more complex, as they combine elements of socio-political discrimination with religious discrimination on the part of the Roman Catholic Church. For those seeking to dialogue with Pentecostals it is important to understand both their reluctance to engage in the ecumenical movement and the values held by Pentecostals. The actual process of building trust is as important as the expected results. The process of engaging Pentecostals in the reconfiguration process may run parallel at the global, regional, national and local levels.

Given the Latin America context of a predominant Roman Catholic Church, the current 'tripartite' approach of bringing Pentecostals and Roman Catholics to the same dialogue table is difficult as there are profound differences in ecclesiology, doctrine and definitions of mission and service. To date, WCC has privileged its relationship with the established institutionalized churches but there is a need for making a first road together with those whom share a similar doctrinal basis, welcome eucharistic hospitality and are ready to work together in diaconal work.

On a personal note, Chilean Pentecostals became involved in the ecumenical movement through the patient dialogue with Swiss theologian Theo Tschuy who was charged during the second half of the fifties by the WCC to establish long term diaconal work with Pentecostal participation in Chile. The founding Bishop of the Pentecostal Church in Chile understood that the only way to have continuous ecumenical relationships was by working with the WCC. Also during the 17 years of Pinochet's dictatorship, the WCC and ecumenical organisations played an important role in supporting the defence of human rights in Chile.

Visions and Dreams of Ecumenism in the 21st Century

Dr Musimbi Kanyoro

Dr Musimbi Kanyoro, Director of the World YWCA reflected on Joseph, who when he shared his dreams was sold into slavery!

1. The unfinished dimensions of the ecumenical movement

Having read the background material and heard the other speakers, Kanyoro asked what are the real issues stated in simple language so that all can understand? We cannot reconfigure the ecumenical movement for ourselves. It has to be for those not in the room and those not yet born, so our language needs to be accessible to all.

How do we define the ecumenical movement? Is it by membership or by practice or by living out ecumenism? Is membership in the WCC the definition for participation in ecumenism (a question the Roman Catholic Church has continually refuted)?

Is the real issue facing us financial? Perhaps the issue is not how we reform the ecumenical movement but how we open our eyes to see the new ecumenism that is growing out of today's needs. Diversity is crying out to be recognised. The majority of Christians in the South do not have emotional and historical church traditions which mean so much to the western and eastern Christianity. How will this shape who we invite to meetings?

2. Deepening contradictions

There are some burning contradictions that are nightmares rather than dreams. When we talk about participation as a justice issue but then feel that representation by gender and age deny space to legitimate church leadership, we are contradicting ourselves. The contradictions we face in discussing ecumenism seem minor compared to the contradictions of affluence, poverty, death from AIDS and lack of peace and security in the world. These may be the issues that gather new people in the newly configured ecumenical movement. What would it mean to begin our theological and ecumenical questions from a social point of view where realities bring people together searching for God. Disasters seem to immediately call for ecumenical and interfaith worship (e.g: after September 11).

Another grey area is funding with money available for churches and the ecumenical movement diminishing. Agencies are changing their policies, going for fewer or more credible partners-- and some churches are changing their vision using funding as their sole criteria. Kanyoro's vision is that church-related funding agencies would not forget their history and should identify closely with the churches. Abandoning the funding of churches in preference for secular organisations because they act quickly and do not have bureaucracy of church leadership seems a contradiction.

Some of the great achievements of the ecumenical movement include representation and participation of diverse people including by gender, generation, geography, race etc. These landmarks should not be seen as burdens to the ecumenical movement but rather models of good practice.

3. Forward with Vision

Kanyoro's dream is for an ecumenical space where people encounter each other and where God meets each one in their journey of faith. An ecumenical space can have many round tables so that people need not fight for space but rather they can seek to discover which table God is inviting them to join. Churches may come together motivated by burning issues of the day such as in the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance. Kanyoro dreams of an ecumenical space where voices, opinions and contradictions can hear one another without fear and censorship; a space which is conscious of the changing times in communication and embraces communication as a method to tell its story to those who can join the space and those who will not or need not join; a space where variety and diversity are assets rather than liabilities; and a table where faith and scriptures are taught.

Like the Pharaoh in Joseph's time, she is troubled by her dreams. They need interpretation. What kind of leadership is needed for these tables? How will tables relate to each other? The WCC has called all of us to share our dreams. But 'who' will interpret them?

Do We Share a Common Vision?

Table groups were then invited to consider their visions and hopes for ecumenism in the future. Having reported back, these visions and hopes were then given to the drafting group to formulate into a vision statement.

Ecumenism from Different Perspectives

Five people were asked to reflect on the questions 'What are your visions of ecumenism in the 21st century and what kind of structures are needed?'

Bishop Mvume Dandala, General Secretary, All Africa Conference of Churches, outlined six points:

1. Churches at its Assembly have given AACC the mandate to concentrate on finding ways to contribute to the healing of Africa. The ecumenical movement from its roots was never meant to be an organization which brought churches together to scratch each other's backs, but rather was to look at what the world should become. But this won't be achieved unless the ecumenical movement becomes more coherent with the work of REOs, NCCs and sub-regional fellowships becoming complementary to one another. This also involves giving the ecumenical movement back to the churches as their instrument as the AACC is not a separate NGO.

2. AACC is conscious that the ecumenical movement is perceived as being driven by the partners who support them with resources. While that partnership is important, we need to ensure that priorities resonate with what the grass-roots consider needs to be done in Africa.

3. The ecumenical movement must facilitate partnerships for the rebuilding of Africa, including partnerships with governments, civil society and ecumenical partners.

4. While people say that Christianity is growing in Africa, Christianity is being fractured in Africa every day. History demonstrates that denominationalism has led to the social fracturing of Africa. For example, the government in Burundi said 'If the churches in Burundi could speak with one voice, the war in Burundi could stop in one day'.

5. We want to see an ecumenical movement marked by 'quality patience' with each other. So many projects are abandoned half way because relationships become strained and people walk away.

6. The ecumenical movement cannot ignore the question of inter-faith relationships. When in other parts of the world, people can talk about their differences, in Africa it gets entangled with other problems that turn it into violent conflict.

Rev. Sven Oppegaard, Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Affairs, Lutheran World Federation, outlined three distinctive features of Christian World Communions (CWCs).

1. They represent different ways in which the Christian faith has been interpreted and taken shape in the course of history.

2. Their forms of worship and their expression of faith and life of service do not necessarily stand in contradiction with the ways practiced by other communions.

3. They are committed to Christian unity, even if some are not in partnership with the WCC and find the term 'ecumenical movement' difficult.

CWCs have their own constituency and the nature and purpose of a CWC as a global body is entirely bound up with the nature and purpose of its constituency. CWCs are global instruments of unity and common life for their constituencies, living and struggling within various contexts. Many of our member churches are too small to be members of WCC but through LWF they participate in the ecumenical movement globally. To be part of a confessional tradition does not mean support for 'confessionalism,' just as to engage in bilateral ecumenical relations does not mean support for 'bilateralism.' In the area of unity, CWCs contribute in different ways to ecclesial fellowship and cooperation and to the prevention of splintering. Much time is spent in CWCs to assist churches in the daily task of living together and living with differences. We can therefore rightly speak of 'internal ecumenism' which supplements and contributes to the 'external ecumenism' in the search for unity globally.

There are three dimensions to church life which belong together; worship, proclamation and diakonia. If this is a reality for churches, it is also a reality for CWCs at a global level. It is in this perspective that we must consider the issue of programme duplication. The fact that several CWCs are working on the same issues does not necessarily mean duplication. Duplication occurs when the same services are offered to the same people without coordination and cooperation. We need to be clear about the complementarity of work being carried out by different partners.

While different CWCs will see the future of the ecumenical movement differently, some of the challenges are:

1. for CWCs to move closer together in order to strengthen ecumenical relations

2. ecumenical developments, internationally and regionally being continuously studied and analysed (with WCC's Faith and Order programme playing a major role)

3. greater programmatic cooperation and coordination among all ecumenical partners including specialised ministries/ agencies

4. stronger relations between CWCs and WCC

5. streamlining of relations and cooperation between REOs and WCC

6. giving attention to the future role of WCC assemblies exploring how they might develop into broader conciliar gatherings for the many partners in the ecumenical movement and therefore making other large church gatherings unnecessary.

Anne Glynn-Mackoul, member of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the World Council of Churches, asked participants to keep in mind the WCC policy statement Towards a Common Understanding and Vision of the World Council of Churches as well as the changes resulting from the Special Commission as we look ahead to reconfiguration. The Special Commission was authorised by the WCC Assembly in Harare to address long-simmering issues that had strained the relationship between Orthodox churches and the WCC. Participants recognised that it would be insufficient to look just at structural issues but that deeper changes were needed in the style and ethos of the Council's work and life. After three years of work, the report of the Special Commission was presented to WCC's Central Committee in 2002 and the following decisions were made:

- To move towards a consensus method of decision making
- To set up a committee to continue the mandate and work of the Special Commission
- To receive the Framework for Common Prayer at WCC Gatherings and to commend it to those preparing such common prayer
- To introduce a new mode of relating to the work of the WCC and to add theological criteria to the criteria for membership.

The Special Commission and Common Understanding and Vision both emphasise that the member churches are the primary actors in the work of the WCC, not the institution. Churches represented in the Special Commission affirmed their intent to stay together and the 'necessity to witness together to their Christian faith, to unity in Christ, and to a community with no other limits than the whole human race.' The Commission envisages a Council that will hold churches together in an ecumenical space

- 'where trust can be built
- where churches can test and develop their readings of the world, their own social practices and their liturgical and doctrinal traditions while facing each other and deepening their encounter with each other
- where churches freely will create networks for advocacy and diaconal services and make their material resources available to each other
- where churches through dialogue continue to break down the barriers that prevent them from recognising each other as churches that confess the one faith, celebrate one baptism and administer the one Eucharist, in order that they⁵ may move to a communion in faith, sacramental life and witness'.

Perhaps this vision for the Council also holds significance for the wider ecumenical movement, where trust, cooperation and respect might not always characterise encounters between ecumenical partners. As the dialogue about reconfiguring the ecumenical movement is undertaken, the following questions could be asked

- Is our primary purpose a structural/ institutional ecumenism or a relational ecumenism?
- Is our primary purpose the delivery of programmes or the strengthening of the relationships between churches witnessing to the world and serving together the manifold needs of humankind?
- What is the 'ecclesial space' in reconfiguration thinking?
- Does reflection on reconfiguration assist the churches and ecumenical institutions in addressing the built-in tensions between and among 'agency priorities' and 'ecclesial priorities' and 'ecumenical priorities'?
- How does the ecumenical movement rethink itself so that the churches themselves become the chief ecumenical actors?
- How is the impact of ecumenical reflection and work brought into the churches, building up the credibility of the ecumenical commitment among 'ordinary' Christians?
- How can new forms of ecumenical collaboration contribute to an ecumenical movement that is not only a means of transforming the world, but that effects the renewal of the churches themselves, in order that they might be more effective signs and instruments of God's design for the world?

Rev Bert Boer, Director of Kerkinactie Global Ministries, Protestant Church in the Netherlands, highlighted that ecumenical and church-based agencies in both the north and the south want to be part of the ecumenical family for 3 reasons: mandate (it is the churches who brought them into being), their own convictions and policies (made in dialogue with partners in both the north and south) and their contacts with partners. But at times there has been suspicion or a 'love-hate' relationship with agencies because they are seen as having the money and the power. There was a difficult time between agencies and the WCC but the regular roundtable meetings mean the air is coming clear.

As the Mapping Study highlights, the specialised ministries/ agencies have an extensive network and there is huge potential if they are able to work together in a more coordinated way. While there is great diversity between them, most work in the area of poverty eradication, emergency response and advocacy. Most want to work in a holistic way. For example, Kerkinactie Global Ministries brings together mission and development in one organisation and the two don't bite each other- but rather together, they bite better into

the denial of human rights. This morning Musimbi Kanyoro talked about a rights-based approach and she is right that it is not enough; we also need to be articulating what God's justice or God's kingdom means.

Specialised ministries also connect people with people; while supporting programmatic work, we are also accountable to the local communities where our funds come from. We gain our legitimisation through being rooted in local faith communities.

Specialised ministries have a mission to work for all God's people on earth; not just churches or Christians. Churches therefore need to be professional instruments with appropriate structures and organisations to serve people. It is the ambition of agencies to work with all people of goodwill and to make the best use of their funding instruments. Having strong alliances is essential for doing this.

Linda Hartke, Coordinator of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA) gave an overview of the lessons learnt during the first four years of the Alliance. EAA works as a global network of 85 churches and related organisations from Roman Catholic, Evangelical, Pentecostal and 'mainline' traditions. It focuses on advocating in two areas: HIV and AIDS and global trade. It has a paid staff of 1.5 people and two full-time interns and the WCC acts as its parent, legal host, participant and convenor of its Board. The lessons learnt include

- Having a very clear focus on what they do and don't do.
- The participating organisations own the agenda with those who can work together on an issue doing so. All can contribute- irrespective of size.
- The decision making mechanism is not heavy and there is a lot of communication so people feel engaged.
- The brand name, logo and even the institution aren't so important. What is important is what they do and whether they make a difference.
- The Secretariat can't DO the advocacy, but rather it facilitates or coordinates others to act.
- EAA has participants, rather than members so people can 'opt in' as they choose.
- The participating organisations want from the EAA: the opportunity to act together, to network, to share resources and ideas, and to develop materials where there are gaps (often in the area of liturgy/theology/action ideas for use at parish level).

Hartke's vision for the ecumenical movement is for global themes and actions to consume the ecumenical movement. We should never be comfortable or satisfied with the status quo. It is for us to live out our Christian unity through action; the world is hungry to hear from the ecumenical movement.

Christian unity is not best demonstrated to a world that longs to see and hear us by meetings, statements, papers, consultations and committees.

She stated that we need to engage those who are not members of the WCC but see themselves as part of the ecumenical movement. There needs to be a broader process of interfaith dialogue and discovery, and young people must be in the centre and in leadership roles in the movement.

Structures are needed that do not become monolithic. The ecumenical movement should be one body with many parts - not one structure with many departments! Organisations can have specialised roles with some taking the lead role on behalf of many. Ecumenical structures need to be lighter with more flexible governance where participation is valued as well as membership. Our organisations need to have clearer focus and aims. The role of coordination and facilitation is of crucial importance and is the life blood of our work together. Sharing of resources is of great importance and means much more than the sharing of money.

The WCC, NCCs, EAA, and other ecumenical structures - these are not the *raison d'être* or point of ecumenism. They are not the beginning, or the end or the centre of the ecumenical movement. Sometimes structures are called to follow and sometimes to lead, to be servant and story-teller, to be a weaver of relationships and faithful stewards. Hartke hopes that the test of our ecumenical structures *faithfulness* will be:

- do they inspire ecumenical engagement, rather than enforce ecumenical discipline?

- do our ecumenical structures throw open the front gate, the doors, and every window in the family home to allow the spirit to blow around and through us in ways we cannot reconfigure - rather than simply rearranging the furniture in the house and putting some of it out on the curb to be taken away?

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 1

Morning prayer and Bible reflection was based on Exodus 3: 7-12, the call of Moses.

The drafting group then presented an initial draft of a vision statement and were given feedback.

The Ecumenical Map

Jill Hawkey gave a powerpoint presentation on Mapping the Oikoumene, the study based on 65 interviews with people from various churches and organizations within the ecumenical movement. Having laid out a 'map' including a significant number of actors within the movement, she then highlighted some of the issues arising out of this complex picture including:

- whether we are able to develop a common vision for the whole of the ecumenical movement which is relevant for the 21st century.
- whether churches are committed to working together. Participants in the study perceived that churches are focusing more on their confessional family rather than working ecumenically and they felt that there was a lack of ownership of ecumenical structures.
- issues around participation and membership, noting that the broadest level of participation is at the national level with few churches engaged at the regional level and even fewer in global ecumenical structures. In general, less than half of the members of Christian World Communions are members of the World Council of Churches leading to questions as to how to engage all churches in regional and global ecumenical work.
- the pressure being felt particularly by smaller churches in belonging to so many different ecumenical bodies at the local, national, sub-regional, regional and the global levels.
- the current lack of coherence between national, regional and global ecumenical councils.
- some of the difficulties and tensions in the relationship between the WCC and CWCs.
- duplication between many ecumenical organisations who are working on the same issues (in particular, HIV/AIDS, globalisation, inter-faith issues, violence against women), often without reference to each other.
- the need to overcome competition within the movement.
- funding difficulties and the reality that a small number of development and relief agencies provide most of the funding to the work of the ecumenical movement.
- the important role of the WCC in this broad and complex movement.

Table groups then met to discuss what they considered the most important issues identified in the mapping study, what changes are needed in the present structures to meet the needs of ecumenism in the 21st century and the priority areas needing attention. Following reporting back in plenary, the Steering Group then met to synthesise these priority issues for further work in small groups the following day.

THURSDAY 2 DECEMBER 2004

Morning prayer and Bible study explored Philippians 3: 12-16.

The Steering Group presented the major issues that had arisen from small group discussion on Wednesday and participants divided themselves into 7 working groups.

- Group 1: Unity and inclusiveness
 Group 2: Division of roles and tasks, in particular coherence between NCCs, REOs and the WCC
 Group 3: Structural relationships including between agencies and the WCC and Christian World Communions and the WCC
 Group 4: Finances and funding of ecumenical priorities
 Group 5: The role of the WCC
 Group 6: Ecumenical formation
 Group 7: Local to Global, including how we can engage the local churches in regional and global issues and how to ensure that the regional/global level hears from the grassroots.

Groups were asked to consider the current situation, to analyse what is currently working well and what is not, to make some concrete recommendations and to identify immediate next steps.

Recommendations from the Working Groups

Group 1: Unity and Inclusiveness

We recommend:

- *to all the Churches, Church organisations and ecumenical bodies; to deepen, further explore and live out the already existing unity, i.e: our faith in the Holy Trinity and the salvation accomplished by the Incarnate Word of God at various levels of Church life; the theological level; in social work and diaconal ministries; the level of mission and the level of spirituality of everybody in his/her own context*
- *to local Churches essentially, to use our basic Trinitarian and Christological faith to encourage our Churches to work together, rather than to exclude each other*
- *to ecumenical bodies, to stand with tenderness in accepting new members acknowledging the tension between two attitudes: to receive only new members that accept the already existing agreements and to become more flexible in order to welcome new members that wish to join the ecumenical movement.*

Group 2: Division of roles and tasks, in particular coherence between NCCs, REOs and the WCC

Recommendations

Towards coherence

- For an agreed set of values to be stated that will make for ecumenical coherence e.g.: accountability, cooperation, transparency, trust, power-sharing
- To ensure that representation and programmatic work is always at the service of the churches and the whole people of God

- For a coherent structure
 - (a) which seeks a means to connect governing bodies (e.g. explore possibility of WCC presidents in each region chairing the REOs);
 - (b) where decisions are taken closest to the people affected by them (ie: subsidiarity);
 - (c) which ensures the representatives of the governing bodies remain people who have a clear line of accountability to the church they represent;
 - (d) where consideration is given to the whole area of Assemblies e.g. frequency, level, representation
- For a memorandum of understanding to be developed between WCC and REOs
- For meetings between the WCC, REOs and NCCs to have a more clearly formulated agenda which can lead to cohesion in action
- For a strengthening of the REOs as key to the WCC having a strong connection to the rest of the structure
- For attention to be paid to conciliarity as the cornerstone of the ecumenical movement and the process which builds fellowship, establishes trust and ensures the effectiveness of the other values
- For NCCs and REOs to discover and share new models of ecumenism and ecumenical fellowship for sharing on a global level.

Ecumenical Formation

- For ecumenical formation be strengthened through theological institutes and other structures that bring people together e.g. WSCF, YMCA etc.
- For ecumenical formation to have 3 foci: young people, the current leadership of the churches, women

Group 3: Structural Relationships, including between agencies and the WCC and Christian World Communions and the WCC

1: Ecumenical Space

Recommendation to participants in the reconfiguration process and the WCC as facilitator

We recommend that the role of the WCC should include, as a priority, the creation of an enduring space for ecumenical conversation between all ecumenical actors on both general and specific levels

- we commend the way in which WCC has facilitated the current conversations on the reconfiguration of the ecumenical movement and believe that this offers a model for future conversations and action on matters of a general and specific nature. For example, this process could be used in formulating a common ecumenical vision for the

21st century, to facilitate a common understanding of diakonia among specialised ministries, and to consolidate the results of bilateral theological dialogues

- the diversity of participants in such a process is part of its inherent strength, encouraging mutual accountability
- some legitimate constituencies, such as specialised ministries and Christian World Communions, require specialised space for dialogue within the general ecumenical space
- the consultative process might be strengthened by the establishment of a reference group representing participating constituencies.

2: Common Assembly or Process

Recommendation to CWCs, REOs and the WCC

We recommend that a consultative process be facilitated by the WCC to explore the nature and form of a common assembly or process that will draw the Christian World Communions, Regional Ecumenical Organisations and the WCC into a common ecumenical agenda

- we see such an assembly or process as part of the creation of ecumenical space for cooperation, coordination and dialogue
- we encourage the creation of an understanding of interdependence across the ecumenical movement.

3: Competition and Complementarity in Programmatic Work

Recommendation to global and regional organisations and the WCC

We recommend that the consultative process be expanded by the WCC to review the programme work of global and regional organisations and agencies in order to ensure friendly cooperation, coordination and sharing of responsibilities within the ecumenical family

- we value the ecumenical partners' survey and see this as a very good first step and model.

4: Relationships at a Staff Level

Recommendation to staff leadership of ecumenical organisations

We recommend that the WCC facilitate a process of bringing the specialised staff of ecumenical organisations into regular and systematic conversation and information sharing in order to develop common work plans.

5: Representation at the WCC

Recommendation to the WCC

We recommend that consideration be given to the way in which Christian World Communions and families of smaller churches can be given a more participatory and representative voice in WCC decision making.

Group 4: Finances and funding of ecumenical priorities

The basic question is how can we fund our ecumenical agenda? For example, 80% of the budget of the WCC is financed by the agencies and 20% by the churches. The mechanism for raising money for diakonia is well developed but the mechanisms for raising funds for other ecumenical priorities e.g: leadership training, relationship building are not very well developed.

Recommendations

1. that the WCC convene a task force of people from different parts of the ecumenical movement to find the most successful practices and examples of raising funds
2. that WCC work together with churches, NCCs and REOs in their geographical areas to explore the possibilities of raising funds for core capacities
3. that we all, including the WCC, invest heavily in relationships as money and trust go together and you have to know and trust one another.

Group 5: The role of the WCC

Recommendations:

1. With a view towards facilitating the reconfiguring of the ecumenical movement which is deemed to be urgent and a priority by the ecumenical fellowship, and with a view towards affirming the coherence and diversity of the ecumenical movement, the WCC should be proactive and take the lead in the reconfiguration process. This reconfiguration should include WCC itself. Such an active role by the WCC will facilitate a much needed reconfiguration in several major ecumenical organisations. It is further recommended that a reference group be appointed to follow up the process of reconfiguration with membership drawn not only from within the WCC constituency but also other representatives who participated in the Consultation, *Ecumenism in the 21st Century*.
2. The WCC Central Committee should authorise the mapping of existing ecumenical programmatic work identifying both the key actors and the financial resources which support these programmes.
3. The WCC Porto Alegre Assembly Programme Guidelines Committee should take into account the recommendations from this consultation in its task of making recommendations to the Assembly about future WCC programmatic activities. These activities should reflect the new and potential role of the WCC in an ecumenical movement that is being reconfigured.
4. The role of the WCC in the context of 21st century ecumenism should include:
 - speaking prophetically to the world as a voice of the churches and a voice of the marginalised and the oppressed.
 - listening and learning from the churches in mutual accountability and love

- being a space for the churches to give expression for their commitment to ecumenical multilateralism amongst multiple layers of relationships within the churches and specialised ministries.
- facilitating the churches to work together as they witness to the world a holistic picture of their common commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ
- initiating and coordinating the response of the ecumenical fellowship to the urgent issues of the time such as expressing our common faith, interfaith and inter-religious dialogue and issues of justice, peace and reconciliation
- reflecting in the language of faith the collective experience of the life and witness of the churches to give expression to the unity of the church and the unity of humankind
- collecting the issues, experience and work of the Specialised Ministries and reflecting them as one diaconal expression of the fellowship of churches

5. In the performance of these roles, the WCC structure should make use of modern technology, be flexible and responsive in approach while employing various methodologies. WCC should also terminate programmes which have been taken up by other ecumenical actors. It is necessary that communicating effectively about its work be integrated into the routine of WCC's work. The WCC staff should possess multiple competencies and expertise in facilitating, networking, interpretation and knowledge of issues as well as being sensitive to the needs of the ecumenical fellowship.

Group 6: Ecumenical Formation

The group reflected on the definition, dimensions and methods of ecumenical formation, realising that there is no agreed ecumenical description of what ecumenical formation is. However, all agreed that ecumenical formation is about the renewal of a person. It is a change of heart that makes us share in Christ's desire for the Church to be one. They also noted that not only persons but also structures should be formed ecumenically.

Recommendations:

For churches:

- ensure that the 'multiplication' of ecumenical experience and knowledge takes place in the churches. Take seriously and 'make use' of people (especially young people) who are engaged ecumenically. Accommodate and benefit from the gifts of ecumenical theologians, members of ecumenical organisations, participants of ecumenical encounters
- develop and give importance to the 'theology of neighbour' which opens the church to other members of local communities and gives way to ecumenical formation through encounter and life experience

- introduce intentional programmes of ecumenical formation in Sunday schools, confirmation classes etc
- increase ecumenical education in theological institutions with teachers who are not the 'enemies of the ecumenical movement'
- hold the leadership of the churches accountable for who is sent to ecumenical meetings
- provide for opportunities of ecumenical formation for the leadership of the churches.

For churches and ecumenical organisations:

- make sure that full and reliable information on the ecumenical movement is available in accessible language, especially in the places where the ecumenical movement is disliked and distrusted most.

For WCC

- bearing in mind the value and power of interpersonal ecumenical experience we strongly recommend the WCC sustain and develop the ecumenical laboratory in Bossey Institute.

For NCCs and REOs

- create and support regional centres of encounter, education and debate similar to Bossey Institute.

For all

- look into structures and channels of communication on different levels through which ecumenical experiences and information flow or should flow. The key question is 'how to carry forward to many the ecumenical enthusiasm and experience shared by few.'

Group 7: Local to Global

Recommendations

To Churches

Considering the need for joint actions to achieve effective, concrete results in different local contexts, churches including WCC member churches should improve their working relationships between and amongst themselves.

To churches, WCC, colleges, universities, seminaries

Due to the lack of ecumenical formation and training and the lack of awareness about ecumenical work such as reports of multilateral and bilateral dialogues or the document on Baptist, Eucharist and Ministry, WCC programme activities, agreements treating core Christian values and so on, we recommend that:

- intentional training courses on ecumenism be organised and introduced to colleges, universities, seminaries of the member churches and other communions where they are not presently found
- study and analysis of the above- mentioned reports and agreements take place in seminaries and churches
- continuing support be given to the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey and other different ecumenical institutes.

To WCC Faith and Order

A statement on church local/universal, unity/diversity is now being prepared for the Porto Alegre Assembly in 2006. In this regard, we strongly recommend that the WCC and its member churches

- continue theological reflections on the theme of the church, specifically the notion of church local and universal, unity/diversity for these are key ecclesiological themes which need to be studied ecumenically
- deepen the biblical, theological understanding of church

To WCC

Given the limited representation on the governing bodies or committees of ecumenical organisations and in order to facilitate proper representation and the possibility of reporting back to their constituency, we recommend that

- the status of 'ex-officio' be granted to a particular representative of one church or constituency by other partner constituencies they also represent on a regional level

Having noted that the internet, while very good, is not the best tool of communication worldwide because not all have access to it, we strongly recommend that

- special attention be given so that all means of communication be used and applied effectively and appropriately on a case by case basis
- WCC help NCCs and REOs to develop their own network of communication
- WCC member churches establish media relations offices to promote ecumenical work

Women's Group

Women met together informally over the lunch-time meal and following discussions, formulated the additional recommendation:

To all responsible for the planning and implementation of the reconfiguration process:

- recognising the great contribution brought to the ecumenical movement by the Decade of the Church's Solidarity with Women (1988-98)

- and recognising the need for ecumenical formation so that young people can fully participate and be leaders now and in the future; and
- wishing to safeguard and to strengthen these contributions;

We recommend that:

- Special attention be given to the unique opportunity (kairos) which offers the present reconfiguration process to assure a growing diversity of participants with their respective agendas, priorities and working styles.

Table Group Discussions

Having heard all the reports, participants discussed the issues at their tables. Table groups then reported back to the whole meeting. Some similar themes emerged from these reports including:

- a concern that we are basically re-affirming the present structures and are not going far enough in discussing major needed changes
- the need to stress the financial crisis which many ecumenical bodies are facing
- a concern that the process for involving young people in these discussions needs urgent attention
- the need to concentrate more on the 'agenda' for the 21st century: what are the main challenges to us as a Christian community today
- the need to highlight the important work being undertaken by the Global Christian Forum
- the need to ensure that these conversations continue (perhaps establishing a core group from the various constituencies to continue the work)
- the recognition that change is needed from many parts of the ecumenical movement, and not just from WCC
- the need to reaffirm fellowship in the ecumenical movement.

The drafting group was asked to take the many recommendations and synthesise them into a coherent document.

Report from Drafting Group

The drafting group presented the first part of the statement from the Consultation and received feedback.

FRIDAY 3 DECEMBER 2004

Morning prayer and Bible study focused on Hebrews Chapter 11.

The drafting group then presented the recommendations to be included in the final statement. Following discussion, the general concept of each recommendation was agreed by all participants, recognising that some changes in

wording would be undertaken by the drafting group to ensure a coherent statement.

The consultation concluded with an evaluation of the four days together followed by closing prayer.

NOTES

³ Notes of each day's Bible Studies are included in the appendices of this report.

⁴ The full texts of the five major presentations on the first and second days are included in the appendices of this report.

⁵ Final Report of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC, Geneva, August-September 2002.

APPENDIX I:

Opening Remarks

by Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia
General Secretary, World Council of Churches

Karibu! Bienvenue! Welcome to this Consultation on Ecumenism in the 21st century. This is an important meeting which brings together a wide range of representatives of the ecumenical movement to discuss an issue of vital concern to us all. I would like to begin by briefly reviewing the origins of these discussions, with an emphasis on last year's meeting on reconfiguration in Antelias. I will then mention some of the changes in the global context which give an urgency to these discussions and then suggest some of the challenges for this meeting.

The road to Antelias

Discussions about a possible new configuration of the ecumenical movement have taken place for the past seven years in meetings of various groupings of ecumenical partners, such as the Regional Ecumenical Organizations (REOs), National Councils of Churches (NCCs), Christian World Communions (CWCs), ecumenical agencies/specialized ministries, and partners such as the Roman Catholic Church and Evangelical and Pentecostal communities. At its meetings in 2002 and 2003, the WCC Central Committee encouraged continuing discussions and suggested a timeframe.

In November 2003, a consultation on re-configuration of the ecumenical movement was organized by the World Council of Churches. A diverse group of 36 people participated in the consultation in their individual capacities. The meeting, held in Antelias, hosted by our Moderator Catholicos Aram I, was preceded by a consultation of young people on the same issue. The report of that meeting, which many of you have read (and which is available for those who have not received it), underscored the importance of the issue of reconfiguration, identified a number of questions which need to be considered, and asked WCC to convene a meeting of a representative group of ecumenical actors to carry the process forward. This is what we have done in convening this meeting.

The statement from Antelias notes that the term "reconfiguration" is interpreted in different ways. I mention at least three ways. One understanding refers to "broadening the ecumenical movement" by reaching out to churches such as the Roman Catholic Church, and Pentecostal and Evangelical churches and seeking ways of greater engagement with them. The Global Christian Forum, which was created after the 1998 Harare Assembly is an on-

going process of gathering representatives from all the main Christian traditions. At the national level, Roman Catholic and Evangelical churches have joined a number of national and regional councils of churches. A second understanding of reconfiguration refers to the process of "deepening the fellowship" between churches. This emphasis on relationships between churches is central to the ecumenical movement, but is also taking place through bilateral dialogues between churches. A third understanding addresses the question of how relationships can be strengthened between existing ecumenical actors to ensure greater coherence and effectiveness in our work. This refers to questions about the relationships between our structures and the extent to which our actions complement one another's. The Antelias consultation recommended that further discussions are particularly needed on this third dimension as there are already processes underway to address the first two dimensions.

Clearly these three understandings of reconfiguration are related. We are suggesting here that we focus on this third dimension - on strengthening relationships and improved means of cooperation within the ecumenical family - but within the context of efforts to both broaden and deepen the fellowship. Clearly too, it is impossible to talk about any of these three dimensions without considering the values and visions which lie at the core of the ecumenical movement. For this reason, we are now calling this process "the future of ecumenism in the 21st century". We must begin by looking at our common vision for ecumenical work in this century.

What is at stake?

Ecumenical organizations and structures have proliferated in the past decade. I think for example, of the creation of ACT, the establishment of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, and Ecumenical News International at the global level. I think on the regional level of the emergence of sub-regional fellowships in Africa and on the national level of the movement to create Christian Churches Together in the USA. And of course, there are many examples of other new ecumenical bodies. This proliferation puts a burden on churches which are the main constituency of all of these new institutions. For example, the Church of Kiribati in the Pacific, which has 40,000 members, is a member of 10 ecumenical/confessional bodies, pays subscription fees to 8 of these bodies and is asked to send representatives to meetings of all 10 organizations.

Moreover, much of the work of the ecumenical movement, whether carried out by WCC or the World Alliance of YMCAs or the regional ecumenical organizations is financed by the same funding partners, giving rise to questions about how much longer this can be sustained.

We believe, as do many of you, that these questions are urgent. If ecumenical organizations are going to be relevant and effective, we need to

address issues of proliferation, duplication and overlap of work, and our relationships with each other.

In preparation for this consultation and in following up one of the recommendations from Antelias, a mapping study was carried out by a consultant, Jill Hawkey. You have received the report of this study and will hear more from Jill tomorrow about the results of the mapping study. I also wrote to all WCC member churches, inviting their reflections on the issue of ecumenism in the 21st century; you have received copies of their reflections. Finally, we also asked a number of individuals from different regions and different parts of the ecumenical family to reflect on two questions: what are your visions for the ecumenical movement in the 21st century and what structures are needed to carry those visions forward. You have received a compilation of the reflections received. These are all intended as inputs into the discussion.

A word about context

In the past year, I have traveled extensively, talking with churches in almost all regions (and I will visit the remaining two regions, the Caribbean and the Middle East, early in 2005.) Let me share with you some of the insights I have learned through these travels.

1. People in all regions are insecure, fearful, and anxious. Today's world is a frightening and unsettled one. It is a broken and fractured world. People are increasingly afraid of the United States, the sole superpower today. On their part, the majority of the US citizens are afraid of the rest of the world; they are afraid of terrorism and think the rest of the world hates them. Rather than respecting US leadership in the world, people are afraid of US arrogance and domination. Many people shudder at the thought of a nuclear race and the possibility of access to nuclear weapons by non-state actors. At the same time, generalized violence is a source of growing concern.

2. Questions of identity are becoming more important in a globalizing world. As people seek to understand their identity, they are increasingly seeing their identity in terms of religion. This leads to the question of how faiths relate to one another. A dialogue of identities is necessary and inter-faith dialogue, at the grassroots level, is sorely needed.

3. Christianity is shifting its center of gravity from the North to the South. By the middle of this century, the global South and particularly Africa, will be the center of Christianity. But there are questions about what kind of Christianity this will be. The "informal sector" is becoming more important as evidenced by the proliferation of mega-churches and non-denominational congregations. And in Northern countries, there seems to be an increased interest in spirituality which is often sought outside of religious structures.

4. A large proportion of the global economy is shifting to the South. China and India together have more than one third of the world's population and the world cannot ignore this huge market. With Japan as the second largest econ-

omy in the world and other emerging economies in that region, over half of the global market is in Asia. Added to their economic power is the reality that China and India are both nuclear powers. The political and military implications of these shifts toward the South are also important and raise many questions. Is the North prepared to live as equals with the South? Will there be a 21st century equivalent of the cold war?

5. The mobility of human beings is assuming new dimensions. While more people are moving freely for business or pleasure, increasingly people are forced to move because of conflicts and poverty. This group of people faces increasing restrictions by governments through tighter border controls and visa requirements. They also face hostility, xenophobia, and racism. Out of desperation, many migrants are turning to traffickers. These new migration trends lead us to put a priority on protecting the most vulnerable in society.

6. The confrontation between the West and the Arab world is another global trend which is expressed in different ways, including the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the war in Iraq. What we are seeing in Israel-Palestine is the sustained humiliation of a people which cannot continue. We are all also aware that military solutions to Iraq are not the answer.

7. There are also signs of hope. Many people in many regions are increasingly embracing the view that "another world is possible" (A new heaven and a new earth!) - not just a world where to be is to consume, but one undergirded by a deep sense of spiritual discernment; one where life with dignity in participatory and sustainable communities is the guiding vision. What is more, the traditionally marginalized and excluded are actively struggling to transform our communities and institutions to make such a world indeed possible. In all the regions a spirituality of resistance and hope is growing among many Christians and in some churches.

Dr Oscar Corvalán will talk to us later this morning about changes in the "demographics" of Christianity and the growth of Pentecostalism and the rise of the South. The decrease in membership of mainline Protestant churches, which have been the pillars of the ecumenical movement is a source of concern, as is evidence of increasing denominationalism.

I believe that these changes compel us to look creatively at how to strengthen the ways we work and I hope that this Consultation will make concrete suggestions which will move us forward.

The questions

Let me spell out some of the questions and issues which need to be addressed.

1. What is the vision of the ecumenical movement? Can the vision that has guided the ecumenical movement through its history be re-affirmed, or do we need to re-articulate it in the new context? What are the marks of a common understanding of the ecumenical movement for the 21st century? Which are

the fundamental core values that should shape the common witness of the churches through the ecumenical movement?

2. Do we share a similar commitment to being accountable to one another? How can we balance "broadening the fellowship" - which implies bringing together a broader range of actors into a "forum" type model - with the need for mutual accountability to each other? How do we balance the need to be prophetic - to take common stands on difficult issues - with our desire to broaden the fellowship by including churches from different traditions and backgrounds?

3. I want to stress that the question of the future of ecumenism in the 21st century is a much broader issue than how WCC should be reorganized. This is not a consultation about re-structuring WCC. That being said, I believe that in order for the ecumenical movement to better respond to future challenges, we must all be willing to change. I believe WCC is willing to change, but I want to put the question to all of you as well. How far are you willing to change the way you work for the good of the greater ecumenical movement?

4. Who sets the agenda for ecumenism in the 21st century? In particular, are we prepared for the South to set the agenda? Youth? Marginalized groups? How can ecumenism in the 21st century reflect the rise of Pentecostalism and Evangelicals, the growth of megachurches and non-denominational churches? To what extent are we willing to change the ways we work for a more inclusive fellowship?

5. How can the ecumenical movement ensure that spirituality is at the center of our life together? For many of us, the ecumenical movement has always been about spirituality, but for many, particularly young people, the search for spiritual growth is being sought outside the institutional church.

6. Finally, how can the ecumenical movement ensure constant renewal? How can young people be brought in? How can ecumenical formation ensure the next generation of ecumenical leaders?

These are some of the questions that come to my mind as I think about ecumenism in the 21st century. I'm sure that each of you has additional questions and issues to be raised. I want to close by affirming that WCC's role in this consultation is that of facilitating this first representative meeting on ecumenism in the 21st century. As you know, one of WCC's roles, as outlined in our constitution, is ensuring the coherence of the ecumenical movement. But it is this consultation itself which will decide on how the process will be carried forward (processes, tasks, timelines, etc). Each of us has our own constituencies, mandates, and governing structures which need to be consulted.

These are important issues which need serious reflection, creative thinking and commitment. As His Holiness Aram I said at the Antelias consultation, "The ecumenical movement is in the hands of God; we are called, in obedient response to God's call, to protect and enrich it." We have much to do in these four days. We pray that the Holy Spirit will guide our work.

APPENDIX II:

Ecumenism in Process of Transformation: Problems, Challenges and Prospects

His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of Cilicia
Moderator of the Central Committee of the World Council of
Churches

The repercussions on the ecumenical movement brought about by the radically changing circumstances of the world and the rapidly changing picture of world Christianity have prompted the WCC leadership to engage in a process of reflection aimed at discerning the future course of the ecumenical movement. The consultation held in Antelias, Lebanon, 17-21 November, 2003, was the first common attempt to set the process and prepare the context to involve, at a later stage, the churches and the ecumenical partners and organizations in this challenging venture.

This common attempt was defined at its initial stage as a "reconfiguration of the ecumenical movement". It is now also referred to as "ecumenism in the 21st century". The perceptions and approaches implied by these definitions are indeed legitimate. However, the challenges posed to the ecumenical movement are far deeper and more complex. I prefer to describe the process as the "ecumenical movement in transformation". This approach takes us beyond merely mapping the Oikoumene and shaping its future configuration "to discern[ing] the promises and challenges of a new century" (CUV), to identifying the core issues, hard realities and critical problems of the ecumenical landscape and to articulating a common ecumenical vision for the 21st century.

In all its aspects, dimensions and expressions, ecumenism is being transformed; and out of this transformation, a new image of the ecumenical movement is being formed. The ecumenical movement is called to renew and redefine its nature, its goals and vision through a self-critical approach and in response to the global changes and challenges. If this is not done, the ecumenical movement may soon find itself stalemated.

My intention is to share with you, at the beginning of this consultation, a few basic concerns and perspectives, which I hope will help us to read clearly the "ecumenical signs" of new times and to move forward realistically.

A Balanced Approach to "Movement" and "Institution"

The ecumenical movement is a movement by its inception and nature. Any attempt to compromise this unique character of the ecumenical movement would be simply the end of it. In the last 50 years the ecumenical spir-

it and vision were almost suffocated by an aggressive institutionalism. Restructuring, evaluation, financial crises and management-related concerns forced the World Council of Churches and ecumenical organizations to deal mainly with the institutional aspects of ecumenism and to look for immediate solutions.

- The de-institutionalization of Christianity, a phenomenon affecting many churches and regions, is giving a speedy pace to the de-institutionalization of the ecumenical movement. People are tired of institutional ecumenism. They are looking for new ways of expressing their ecumenical commitment. They are challenging the ecumenical movement to liberate itself from the narrow confines of institutions and to reaffirm itself as a future-oriented movement.
- As a movement that deals with human response to God's call in Jesus Christ in a given time and in a given place, the ecumenical movement is in a continuous process of self-expression and self-realization. This implies constant change and renewal. We must keep this understanding of ecumenism close to mind as we endeavour to scrutinise the present ecumenical situation.

We must not ignore the fact that the ecumenical vision was given concrete manifestation through institutional ecumenism, which played a pivotal role in promoting inter-relatedness among the churches, by calling them to grow together through a common life and witness. A vision demands a programme to articulate itself; a movement requires structure to survive; and a fellowship needs conciliar framework to grow. We must revitalize and sharpen the ecumenical movement. Yet, we must somehow keep our impatience and criticism concerning the institutional ecumenism under control. A total and uncritical shift from institutional to non-institutional ecumenism might well polarize members of the movement. In my judgment, what is needed is a holistic, balanced and interactive approach, one that will enable us both to preserve the movement character of ecumenism and give due consideration to its institutional expression.

Is the "Oneness" of the Ecumenical Movement in Jeopardy?

The churches constantly remind themselves of the "oneness" of the ecumenical movement. The question is: how can this essential oneness of the ecumenical movement be ensured, safeguarded and manifested?

- The present ecumenical picture clearly indicates that the gap between the theory and praxis, the approach and vision is widening.
- The multiplication and diversification of bilateral theological dialogues undoubtedly gave a new dynamism to ecumenical life. But if these dialogues do not converge towards a reception-oriented process, they may, sooner or later, endanger the integrity and oneness of the ecumenical movement. Trends towards proliferation and multi-centredness, which acquired a focal attention in the last

decade, are indeed positive. They may significantly help to ensure diversity and wholeness by generating creative interaction between the local and the global, the bilateral and the multilateral. Yet, they may also become a potential source of polarization if they are not given a clear orientation and are not underpinned by a common vision.

The Harare Assembly revised Article II of the WCC Constitution by spelling out clearly that the WCC serves and strengthens the one ecumenical movement. The question is not merely one of coherence and collaboration between ecumenical actors and actions. It is far beyond that. The danger lies in the increasing incompatibilities, inconsistencies and incoherence between the ecumenical goals. The "oneness" of the ecumenical movement has become loose and ambiguous. By ecumenism we mean different things. It has different connotations and implications in different confessional and regional contexts. Do we have a common understanding of ecumenism? How must the "oneness" of the ecumenical movement be articulated? The CUV defines the oneness of the ecumenical movement as a "'common calling', ultimately assured by the power of the Holy Spirit working in and through the manifold manifestations of the moment". (CUV 2.10) This interpretation deserves our serious attention.

Fellowship-Oriented Ecumenism Facing Challenges

The de-institutionalization of the ecumenical movement is already having negative repercussions on the fellowship character of ecumenism. Some feel that identifying ecumenism with fellowship distorts its nature as a movement. Others feel that the fellowship concept of the ecumenical movement has failed to lead the churches to take concrete steps towards visible unity; hence, they are seeking different alternatives. And, there are those who do not want to associate themselves with any institutional form of fellowship.

What are the reasons behind these approaches? Let me single out some of them.

- Fears arising from globalization have led many churches and communions to strongly affirm their identity. For these churches and communions, multilateral ecumenism is seen as a potential source of danger.
- An increasing number of churches are reluctant to respond to the moral, financial and, in a sense, ecclesiological implications of membership in a fellowship. They are attracted to an easy, non-committal type of ecumenism.
- Some churches find the ecumenical fellowship insecure ground because, in the ecumenical fellowship, the agenda priorities, conditioned by missiological and ecclesiological self-understandings, often clash rather than interact.

- "Conciliar ecumenism", as a concrete expression of the multilateral ecumenism that has marked our ecumenical life in the last fifty years, is losing ground in many church and ecumenical circles. "Ecumenism of negotiation", strengthened by the increasing pace of theological dialogues, is affirming its predominance both on global and regional levels.
- Confessional ecumenism is also gaining ground. The churches feel themselves more secure within their confessional boundaries.

Is the ecumenical movement only a "space" where the churches meet for mutual consultation, dialogue and collaboration, or is it a fellowship that must be deepened and broadened? In my view, true ecumenism aims at fellowship building. Through fellowship, interdependence and mutual accountability are created among the churches and diversities are preserved and enhanced. What kind of ecumenical vision should we develop for the 21st century, one that is fellowship-oriented or one that is movement-oriented? My answer would be both. They are closely interconnected and they enrich, strengthen and complement each other. If a movement-oriented vision of ecumenism is not sustained by a fellowship-building ecumenism, the ecumenical movement will lose its ecclesial nature and marginalise the centrality of unity. On the other hand, if a fellowship-based ecumenism remains totally conditioned and overwhelmed by its institutional expressions and does not open itself to larger spaces and broader horizons, then it becomes self-centred and static.

Broadening the Ecumenical Partnership Is a Must

The churches played a significant role in shaping and expanding institutional ecumenism. For many years ecclesio-centric ecumenism, dominated by euro-centrism, impacted all aspects and domains of ecumenical life and witness. However, the churches' claim that they owned the ecumenical movement was not matched by a firm commitment to its goals. Moves to broaden the scope of the ecumenical agenda and partnership were often encountered by church resistance.

The ecumenical landscape is undergoing major changes. Christianity is changing its image and locality. In the north, Christianity is declining; the center of Christianity is shifting to the south. Mainline Christianity is giving way to a more non-institutional expression of Christianity. The Orthodox Churches are becoming self-contained and nation-oriented in spite of their global presence, and the Roman Catholic Church is becoming more sensitive to the growing charismatic movements within its fold.

It is evident that broadening the sphere and changing the nature of the ecumenical partnership has become imperative, particularly for the following reasons:

- The decline of institutional Christianity and the growth of the Pentecostal-charismatic form of Christianity and resurgence of religious movements has had, and will certainly continue to have, far-reaching consequences, a direct bearing on the future course of the ecumenical movement.
- The continuing transformation of the ecumenical movement, expressed mainly by the steady move from global to regional, from multilateral to bilateral, from inter-confessional to confessional and from euro-centred to multi-centred ecumenism, calls us to review the existing ecumenical paradigms and perspectives.
- With their professionalism and large financial resources, the ecumenical agencies, specialized ministries and Christian NGOs are moving from the periphery to the centre stage of the ecumenical movement, and the ecumenical interests and commitment of institutional churches are declining.

Probably the time is not yet mature for the Roman Catholic Church, which is deeply engaged in ecumenism on national and regional levels, to enter into a fellowship-based ecumenism on the global level. As for Pentecostal and Evangelical churches, they have their own perceptions of ecumenism. However, closer collaboration with these churches, expressed through joint initiatives and actions in specific areas, is crucial for the future of the ecumenical movement. A strong partnership with ecumenical actors is also imperative, not only for professional and financial reasons, but also to ensure the oneness and vitality of the ecumenical movement and to make it more participatory and inclusive. Because of their different nature, institutional interests and priorities, it is often difficult for the churches and ecumenical stakeholders to have a coherent and organized working relationship. We must develop a new perception and vision of partnership, which, first, does not marginalize the centrality of fellowship, second, considers ecumenical actors an essential part of the common ecumenical witness, and third, challenges the ecumenical partners to work to strengthen both the multi-centredness and integrity of the ecumenical movement. Indeed, broadening the ecumenical partnership and deepening the ecumenical fellowship must go together. They are interrelated dimensions of one ecumenical vision.

Towards People's Ecumenism: Strategy and Vision

Particularly in the last decade, parallel to and sometimes over against the ecumenism of institutional churches, we have been witnessing the emergence of the ecumenism of people, which is more spontaneous and attractive than institutional ecumenism. Indeed, the ecumenical movement is shifting from ecclesio-centric to people-centered paradigms within and outside the churches. Clergy-based ecclesiastical ecumenism is fading away, and the new expressions of ecumenism, such as spiritual movements, networking, advo-

cacy groups and the global ecumenical forum, are moving to the fore of ecumenical life. The very ethos of the ecumenical movement is rapidly changing. What are the major thrusts and characteristic features of people-based ecumenism?

- It takes the ecumenical movement beyond the narrow boundaries of institutional churches and seeks dynamic models, forms and ways of articulating the ecumenical vision.
- With its holistic vision it promotes multi-centredness in ecumenical life, and encourages inclusiveness in ecumenical reflection and action.
- It creates interaction and interdependence between local, regional and global ecumenical expressions, concerns and priorities.
- It takes us beyond reception and consensus-oriented models and methodologies to fellowship-building strategies, particularly on the local level, by generating mutual trust among people at the grass-roots.
- It grows from the bottom to the top and calls to accountability the ecumenism that is imposed from the top to the bottom.

As the gift of the Holy Spirit, the ecumenical movement belongs to the whole church. By the whole church I mean the whole people of God, a larger ecclesiological reality than simply the institutional expression of the church. Institutional ecumenism and people's ecumenism should not be opposed; they belong to and strengthen each other. Because they also contain the seeds of potential conflict, I hope that, through a critical process of mutual challenging and accountability, we will promote an integrated ecumenical strategy and vision based on a holistic and people-centred perception of the church and the ecumenical movement.

A Responsive and Prophetic Ecumenical Vision

Tensions and uncertainties are integral to the nature of any movement; the ecumenical movement is no exception. The concerns and values that have motivated the formation of the ecumenical movement are being replaced by new perspectives and priorities. The movement must remain alert to the changes in its context and time and must constantly transform its vision and action. We are facing a new ecumenical situation, one that calls us to a new vision, a prophetic vision that is responsive and relevant to the new concerns and expectations.

An ecumenical vision for the 21st century must be Gospel-centered and mission-oriented, and it must take into consideration the following factors and imperatives:

- The ecumenical movement is caught in a world where fragmentation and polarization, on the one hand, and interdependence and integration, on the other hand, are in continuous tension. The ecumenical

vision must be able to provide creative alternatives to globalization by entering into critical dialogue with it and challenging its values.

- The ecumenical movement displays a wide range of dichotomies: unity-mission, institution-people, ordained-lay, man-woman, local-global, etc. How can the ecumenical vision overcome these dualities and polarities? "Coherence" and the "integrated approach" that the WCC has been working toward in the last decade must be given due consideration in this context.
- The ecumenical agenda requires a critical scrutiny. Ecumenism and globalization have qualitatively different visions of the world. The ecumenical agenda must be determined by a life-centred, faith-sustained and future-oriented ecumenical vision. This agenda should be pro-active, realistic and prophetic, and should focus on people rather than on institutional interests and should invest in issues rather than in programmes. Such an agenda would significantly help to ensure the specificity, vitality and credibility of the ecumenical movement.
- The churches and Christians are tired of ecumenical clichés. They are looking for a new language, a new look, a new culture, and even for new people. They are seeking ways of doing ecumenism that are more accessible, relevant and attractive.
- Dialogue with other living faiths has become an existential concern for the ecumenical movement. We cannot ignore its urgency nor underestimate its complexity. We must seriously address the challenges posed by pluralism and the vision of "wider community" and consider their strong impact on our ecclesiological and missiological self-understanding.

A responsive ecumenical vision with a prophetic vocation must be able to embrace all these tensions and challenges as a source of strength.

"Being Church": A Central Ecumenical Issue

The question of "being church", which the WCC identified after the Harare Assembly (1998) as one of the foci of the ecumenical agenda, in my view, will continue to remain a major ecumenical concern for the coming period. What kind of church do we want to have for the 21st century: a church that lives within its established walls, self-contained and self-content, or a church engaged in the daily struggle of its people, in critical and creative interaction with the society, and bold enough to face the challenges of new times? We cannot separate the vision of the church from the ecumenical vision; "being church" and "being ecumenical" are closely interconnected.

- The forces of globalization and secularism are strongly impacting the life and witness of churches. Christian values, which have shaped our identity and sustained our societies and cultures, are disappearing from our families, organizations and communities. In the midst of growing ambiguities, uncertainties and meaninglessness, the church-

es are challenged to articulate clearly what "being church" means.

- The increasing tensions within the same churches, new developments in church-state and church-society relations are forming new models for "being church".
- The forceful entry of religion into the public life and growing concern for "broader community" are raising fundamental questions.

These developments call the churches and the actors in the ecumenical movement to reconsider the ecclesiological perceptions that have defined the churches' doctrinal positions and their attitudes towards each other and towards the society at large. In fact, new ways of "being church" will help us to discover new ways of working together ecumenically, and vice versa. The ecumenical movement must constantly grapple with these issues and assist the churches in their struggle of "being church" in a new world context.

These emerging concerns, briefly outlined, touch the very nature and vision, as well as the future course, of the ecumenical movement. Any attempt to reconfigure ecumenism or redefine the ecumenical vision must take these realities very seriously, and we must avoid easy answers and short-term solutions. The issues pertaining to this process must be addressed in a broader perspective, with an interactive approach and on the basis of a long-term strategy. In my opinion, the aim of this process must be to give a comprehensive and coherent articulation to the ecumenical vision for the 21st century. Reconfiguration is only one important part of it.

APPENDIX III:

**Ecumenism and Pentecostals:
A Latin American Perspective**

Oscar Corvalán-Vásquez, Ph.D. (Toronto),
Pentecostal Church of Chile, Talca, Chile, November 2004

Introduction

Statistical data show that the axis of Christianity is moving south and that some responsibility in this global trend is related to the role of the so called Independent churches. In this context, Pentecostal churches are rapidly growing and may be held partially responsible for displacing the center of Christianity toward the Southern hemisphere.

While past secularization processes have often been held responsible for massive groups of Christians deserting their churches in the Northern hemisphere, it seems that despite present globalization, Pentecostal Christians are not only increasing their membership in the North but are particularly active in the South.

At the global level, it is inevitable to ask whether the supposed self-marginalization of Pentecostals is not the consequence of the perception that the ecumenical movement has rather directed its efforts to build relations with the Roman Catholic Church. At the same time the latter has privileged relations with Orthodox Churches instead of Pentecostals. In the Latin American scenario, the Roman Catholic churches have limited their ecumenical involvement to countries in which they are not a heavy majority or in cases in which the Pentecostal churches have little to say in the NCC. The local Protestant churches have not made enough efforts to play a mediation role in such a situation. The underdeveloped joint testimony in mission and diaconal work between Roman Catholic and Protestant churches in Latin America reflects a sort of bureaucratic ecumenism in which Pentecostals are not interested at all.

No doubt, it is much easier for ecumenical organizations to address an invitation to hold an ecumenical dialogue to well established institutions whose permanent secretariat is reachable by a phone call, instead of engaging in the hard work at the grass roots level required to understand Pentecostals and to establish trust as the basis of dialogue with a socio-religious movement which for the most part lacks permanent organizational structures and official representatives.

Focus of the presentation

After briefly examining some statistical data on trends in global Christianity, I would like to invite you all to reflect on the following questions:

- Why have the ecumenical movement and the Pentecostal movement been divorced for such a long time?
- What are the major elements which may explain the state of separatism observed between the Pentecostals and main stream Protestant Churches?
- Given the Latin American context of a predominant Roman Catholic Church, can we reasonably expect Evangelicals and Pentecostals to feel comfortable in an ecumenical movement which often has privileged its relationship with the Roman Catholic Church constituency?
- Has the Pentecostal movement suffered discrimination or presented an attitude of arrogance vis-à-vis Protestants and Roman Catholics?, and finally,
- What can be done to create the conditions for full participation of the one fourth of Christians represented by Pentecostal churches in a people-centered inclusive ecumenical movement?

What follows is a simplified personal reflection on a very complex picture of Pentecostal participation in the global and local ecumenical movement. I hope that these comments will provide some light in our common search for a joint testimony at a time when the prevailing conditions in the world and in the churches challenge the very meaning of our faith.

Some basic data

Estimated figures for mid-2005 indicate the size, diversity, and vitality of global Christianity. According to the World Christian Encyclopedia, Christians now form 39,000 denominations ranging in size from millions to less than 100 members. They are listed for each of the world's 238 countries in the World Christian Database.

The 6 major ecclesiastical megablocs are:

Roman Catholics	1,119 million
Independents	427 million
Protestants	376 million
Orthodox	220 million
Anglicans	80 million
Marginal	34 million
Total	2,256 million

Source: World Christian Database

The fastest growth is found among the category of Independents, which includes a huge new Christian megabloc of Pentecostals and Evangelicals; the Independents/Post-denominationalists, are growing rapidly and number 20% of all Christians not only in Latin America, but also in China.⁶

In 1900 81% of all Christians were White. But by 2005 this will drop to 43%. Trends indicate that there are:

<i>Southern Christianities</i>	<i>Northern Christianities</i>
22,500 denominations	11,300 denominations
6,000 peoples	3,000 peoples
10,000 languages	3,500 languages

Source: World Christian Database

Where is the main growth of Christianity located? It is certainly in the southern hemisphere.

A long term projection is a risky business. However, if we look at the 10 largest Christian countries today, data projections indicate that while the number of Christians in the USA will increase by 43 million during the next 20 years, Mexico and Brazil alone will increase by 47 million. Latin American growth of Christianity will be double that expected in the USA and Canada during the next 20 years. In Europe, it is expected that the number of Christians in Russia will remain stable but in the year 2025, Germany will no longer be one of the 10 largest Christian countries.

Also, during the next 20 years it is expected that the number of Christians in Africa will increase by more than a hundred million; in Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) alone they will increase by 72 million. But the most surprising growth of Christianity is likely to occur in Asia. Just in China, India and the Philippines, Christians will increase by 124 million.

Data Projections for the 10 largest Christian countries indicate the following:

<i>2005</i>	<i>Christians millions</i>	<i>2025</i>	<i>Millions</i>	<i>2050</i>	<i>Millions</i>
USA	252	USA	295	USA	329
Brazil	167	Brazil	193	China	218
Mexico	102	China	173	Brazil	202
China	111	Mexico	123	DRC	145
Russia	85	India	107	India	137
Philippines	74	Phil	97	Mexico	131
India	68	Nigeria	95	Nigeria	130
Germany	62	DRC	91	Phil	112
Nigeria	61	Russia	85	Ethiopia	104
DRC	53	Ethiopia	67	Uganda	95

Source: World Christian Database

These trends clearly indicate that there is a new role for Northern Christians in the future of global Christianity, both at home as well as in relation to Southern Christians. While major topics at home may include how to reach postmodern youth with an appropriate dialogical approach, dealing with Southern Christians is no less challenging with the need to address a whole array of new topics, such as critical realism, epistemological humility, generous orthodoxy and faithful uncertainty. Openness to dialogue with and learning from other cultures remain as basic principles.

In contrast to the ethos of Northern Christians, Southern Christians privilege a desire for community. They feel comfortable with greater degrees of uncertainty and doubt, because they do not feel that they are required to have

all the answers; they rather value feeling at home in a Christian community, a sense of belonging, a strong social identity and trusting God in a simple manner.

In relation to Vision and Values of the Ecumenical Movement, we welcome the present open attitude of the ecumenical movement. In our view, its re-configuration process represents an extraordinary opportunity to invite full participation of the one fourth of Christians represented by Evangelicals and Pentecostals.

Whether because of financial considerations, low attendance in traditional chapels, present members' disengagement or any other factors leading to the present reflection process, these may also be considered in a positive way. These trends make room for recognizing that not all the members of the large Christian fellowship face the same challenges. In this sense, the present situation probably represents an opportunity to enlarge the vision of the ecumenical movement and to liberate it from institutional ecumenism.

In this regard, the so called crisis of the ecumenical movement is not comparable to the one experienced by the large secular international bodies. The crisis of the latter represents the crisis in the political sphere of countries, in which the lack of appropriate ways for peoples' participation is partially responsible for the present situation of injustice and violence that prevail in the world. However, we cannot conclude that we share the same problems. We are supposed to respond in front of God whether we have done all in our power to overcome violence and injustice, as well as to indicate new forms of conviviality by building new relations between the North and the South.

Regarding Pentecostal participation, it should be kept in mind that this movement represents to a greater or lesser extent, people who have been socially, politically and religiously discriminated against. Nonetheless, Pentecostals should not claim a priority in gaining access to resources, government structures or any other form of visibility in the world. On the contrary, precisely because the Pentecostals are too aware of past discrimination, they cannot claim any form of privilege when they participate in the ecumenical movement, nor discriminate against those with whom they have some difficulties to understand.

On the other hand, because of the dominant character of being a religious movement rather than a fully institutionalized church, Pentecostals should not support the idea of concentrating the decision making process in hands of the churches' hierarchies and thus excluding relevant actors of Christendom such as educators and brothers and sisters devoted to diaconal activities.

As a consequence, if we are going to be faithful to the Gospel and accept the idea that mission and service go hand in hand, we can hardly accept the idea that WCC's religious structure should provide the vision while agencies would do the practical work on the ground. Such an approach may either lead to the agencies hiding their intentions to the general public and funding gov-

ernments, or to assisting the dismantlement of welfare States by enabling the churches to compensate. It seems to us that both situations are unacceptable. No matter how competitive the marketplace is for raising economic resources, the amount of collected money to fight suffering should never be the parameter to judge our efficacy. To collect less money probably gives us an opportunity to look for other resources.

Consequences of choosing a vision for an organizational approach

To the extent that we conceive the ecumenical movement as a sort of federation of relatively independent entities representing most expressions of ecumenism and ecumenical organizations, it will be difficult to grasp the social movement character of many Pentecostal churches. This is not only because of the weak institutional structures of the Pentecostals, but also because of the institutional relationships to be set up between varieties of different entities. The major concern of such a variety of groups may not be conducive to establishing a particular organizational structure based on traditional forms of institutional government.

It seems to me that an alternative organizational model for the ecumenical movement is suggested by Konrad Raiser in *To Be the Church*. We should, therefore, study the implications of the five elements presented last year in *Antelias*: the vision of life, of shalom and sustainable community, of reconciliation, of sufficiency, and of the catholicity of the church.

One possible organizational model may revolve around the concept of a network of autonomous communities having a similar vision of mission and diaconal work. A vision of the ecumenical movement expressed in cooperation between different partners through accountability, mutual trust and partnership does not necessarily require a sort of "International Court of Justice" to supervise each community's activities. It requires the building of trust and working hand in hand in face of the multiple demands produced by injustice and violence around the world.

Such an organizational model emphasizes building mutual trust on the basis of living and working together by expanding the presence of Pentecostals in the Commission of World Mission and Evangelism to other areas in which they feel comfortable, in a continuous process of dialogue about how to face diaconal work together. The personal relational approach is a core value among Pentecostals. Thus, the challenge is to expand such an approach and extend it to several areas of reflection in a highly demanding world.

While re-engineering may be difficult to apply to institutional structures of ecumenical institutions, it seems to me that one can imagine a reconfiguration of the ecumenical movement to be more inclusive of the many facets of the Pentecostal movement. To the extent that one becomes more institutionalized than the other, more tensions may appear that might produce

increasingly divergent views. We cannot prevent all the problems that may arise, but we can surely trust that honest people working together in building up and extending the Kingdom of God will benefit from His support.

A reflection on how to approach and work together with the marginalized and excluded Christians and non-Christians should be at the heart of a new strategy of the ecumenical movement. Probably so far the concern for discriminated non-Christians prevented ecumenical churches to look around the house and see the misunderstanding and exclusion of brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ.

There is a sense of urgency

While some work has been done by the WCC in issuing invitations to a larger forum of Christians, there is a sense of urgency in deepening the dialogue with Evangelicals and Pentecostals due to their frequent manipulation by the political powers in place. It is necessary to realize that there is a profound difference between the Latin American Evangelical/Pentecostals formed as a result of missionary work of U.S. Evangelicals/Pentecostals and those coming out of revival movements or traditional Protestant churches or by multiple splitting of Pentecostal movements. Typically, the first groups have consciously renounced active social and political participation due to the fact that the version of the Gospel that they have received was emptied of any social and political considerations.

The case of indigenous Pentecostal movements is more complex. Usually they combine elements of the traditional socio-political discrimination of Latin American societies with religious discrimination on the part of the Roman Catholic Church and a rather defensive isolationist attitude to build up intra-community trust before challenging prevailing competing values.

Recent news indicates that a majority of US Evangelical-Pentecostal churches supported President Bush's re-election. For some people such a sociological phenomenon may be a surprise. But if we look at a culture of marginalized groups in which some important political figure tells them how important they are, then it may be understood that after a period of political moratoria, persons are permeable to a message that seems to relate to their values and views.

In other words, the challenge for every person who feels part of the ecumenical movement is to actively seek an honest dialogue with Pentecostals to try to understand why are they so shy about present public ecumenical actors, what kind of mutual prejudices remain in each other's minds and what can be done immediately to bring some relief to spiritual suffering as well as to socio-economic and political conditions which produce violence and poverty.

In dialoguing with Pentecostals, one should not minimize the importance of establishing an appropriate hierarchy of values. First of all, for

Pentecostals the Gospel is at the center of the Christian mission. The values of Spirituality, Fellowship and People's participation are at the core of the Pentecostal mission.

Secondly, the loose organizations of Pentecostals are based upon values of Sufficiency, Equity and Vulnerability, since the majority of such churches remain part of the most marginalized social groups in Latin America.

Thirdly, multiculturalism implies a respect for difference, which is not only to be tolerated but also implies that Western values, Protestant organizational models and Northern participants do not continue to have a privileged place.

Fourth, the new ecumenism should continue to stress service and full cooperation among all partners; the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity are expected to prevail over privileged relationships among members of particular fellowships.

Of course, no matter how different the typical Pentecostal and ecumenical organizations may look, the principle of mutual accountability remains a core value which ensures trusted relationships and long term commitments.

Finally, while Tradition and Unity represent two necessary elements in ecumenism, they need to be subject to scrutiny to be ensure that they do not just represent another version of Western values organizing the ecumenical movement in accordance with particular ecclesiological views which limit participation to those who are not organized the way we are.

Few other partners may challenge the ecumenical movement to rethink its present vision than Pentecostal full participation. Few other partners may question in a radical way its self-confidence based on present organizational, economic, theological and ecclesiological factors.

The pedagogical process of building trust between ecumenical and Pentecostal churches is as important as the expected results. Probably the strategy here would be two-fold: first, to make an important effort to challenge the present member churches of the ecumenical movement to become involved in true partnership with Evangelicals and Pentecostals. Here some support from Christian agencies devoted to joint training and diaconal work may be necessary. Then, as mutual trust is gained, additional partners may be invited, including the Roman Catholic Church.

If the ecumenical movement will become more inclusive it should invite both minority churches, indigenous Evangelicals and Pentecostal local churches to participate in the re-configuration process. Such a process might run parallel at the global, regional, national and local levels. This is to say, Christian communities, in understanding the importance of ecumenism both for churches and societies, could include as a permanent item in their agenda working together with Evangelicals and Pentecostals in whichever activities are part of their mission and service. To check how the process improves, a series of meetings at the regional and local levels should be set up. To the

extent that Protestant churches in Latin America realize that joining mission and service efforts with Pentecostals is part of their own mission, then, a major change in churches relationships may be expected.

While some Pentecostal participation in the Global Christian Forum together with Evangelicals and Roman Catholics will continue as a desirable platform for dialogue, it may take a long time before they become truly ecumenical partners. The organizational model proposed supposes a light structure which does not necessarily means diminished or light commitment. On the contrary, to preserve the characteristics of a movement, the ecumenical partners covenant stresses trusted relations more than bureaucratic formulae to bring about a plan of activities dealing with properly felt needs.

In addition to setting up a global strategy, bilateral initiatives to deepen the ecumenical fellowship through bilateral discussions between churches are to be put in the context of the global ecumenical movement and should expand in view of strengthening the global ecumenical movement.

One of the major elements which may explain the state of separatism observed between Pentecostals and mainstream Protestant Churches is the insistence of the latter in bringing to the same dialogue table both Pentecostals and Roman Catholics. Not only ecclesiological and doctrinal matters produce a profound separation among these Churches, but also their definition of mission and service. After decades of dialogue through the Joint Working Group, few agreements have been produced that have lead either to a joint testimony of service among the non-Christian populations or to a "rapprochement" in terms of Eucharistic matters. So, why insist on an immediate tripartite dialogue when the strategy followed so far has not yielded the expected results?

In most Latin American countries the Roman Catholic Church has showed no interest in joining the NCC and in those cases in which participation at the top level materialized, it was done at the expense of alienating the Pentecostal movement. But such Roman Catholic participation at the top level of the NCC has not been conducive to grassroots ecumenical participation. In most cases, top level officers remain happy with the production of press releases affirming their will to remain together with no social or theological impact on the membership of the churches.

Given the Latin American context of a predominant Roman Catholic Church, we cannot reasonably expect that in a first phase of the ecumenical movement reconfiguration at the global and local level, Evangelicals and Pentecostals will feel comfortable. We should rather acknowledge that as an organization, WCC to date has privileged its relationship with the established institutionalized churches. There is a need for making first a road together with those with whom we share a similar doctrinal basis, welcome Eucharistic hospitality and are ready to present a joint testimony in diaconal work. Then, God may grant us the Spirit of reconciliation as we learn more

and better understand the reasons and difficulties some churches have in recognizing other Christians as full members of Christianity.

According to some Roman Catholic authors, the Pentecostal movement suffered discrimination from Roman Catholics. Some Roman Catholics have recognized such a mistake.⁷

Also, sometimes Pentecostals have presented attitudes of arrogance in responding to discrimination and adopting an isolationist attitude. We need to review such tensions and attitudes in order to be cured of past wounds. Their success in growing numbers has also probably led some Pentecostals to adopt an arrogant attitude which may have a number of negative consequences for the movement.

First of all, Pentecostal isolation may be an error by "not feeling responsible for my brother". This means that, to the extent that we believe God is supporting us, we should be ready to share such support with others who may be in trouble.

Second, there is a need for coherence between the goal of trying to reach the entire society, while excluding those in power or business people because they are too near temptation. This means that the analysis of moral dilemma needs to be included as part of our Christian education.

Third, it is much easier to criticize than to hold responsibility for Christian unity. Thus, whatever concept of Christian unity Pentecostals have, it needs to be explicit in order to reach agreement with other Christians.

Concluding remarks and a personal note

This presentation sought to offer a personal view of ecumenism in relation to the Pentecostal movement in Latin America and particularly in relation to trends in Chile and South America. It was prepared as a personal reflection of a participant-observer in the global and local ecumenical scene. Analyzing how our own Pentecostal church of Chile got involved with the ecumenical movement may help in providing some clues to a better approach to Pentecostals. It is not possible to limit us to support the intent of developing an international fellowship. It is rather an open attitude of local churches which consider being fully concerned with the ecumenical movement that may help in bridging the gap.

Despite the fact that participation of our church as a full member of the WCC began in 1961, conditions have not been conducive to act as a local representative of a multinational organization or to benefit from a recurrent flow of resources to sustain the work done through half a century by our Pentecostal communities in shanty towns and rural areas. Not one of us has served on the WCC staff or been supported through projects that were continuously submitted for further funding. We have been afraid that such a procedure would limit our freedom in facing other Pentecostal churches critical of vested interests in WCC involvement. Not being a member of a Christian

World Communion or having a parent church has also implied a lack of foreign recourses and has led us mainly to rely on vulnerability as a central value in developing our evangelism, diaconal work and ecumenical activities.

But, how did we get involved with the ecumenical movement?

Please allow me to pay a tribute to patient dialogue with Chilean Pentecostals carried out by the Swiss theologian Theo Schuy, who was charged during the second half of the 1950s by the WCC to establish a long term diaconal work with Pentecostal participation in Chile. The founder of the Pentecostal church of Chile, Bishop Enrique Chavez Campos, understood that for an indigenous church like ours, the only way to have access to continuous ecumenical relationships was by working in connection with the WCC. Since its inception in 1947, our church has not been part of a particular institutional fellowship which would have provided some kind of support or global visibility. It was thanks to the patiently built relationship of trust between Theo Schuy and late Bishop Chavez that our church had access and some understanding of the issues discussed in the ecumenical movement.

We must also remember that during the 17 years of Pinochet's dictatorship, the WCC and ecumenical organizations played an important role in supporting the defense of human rights in my country. The extreme vulnerability of Pentecostal churches precluded them from playing a highly visible role in supporting the victims. But, they did take care of abandoned children and women. Also, as a democratic political system has been reinstalled in Chile since 1990, there are more hopes that the Pentecostal movement will continue to expand its role in civilian society.

To conclude this personal note, I should also mention that the study on Chilean Pentecostals carried out under the auspices of the WCC by Christian Lalive d'Epinay during the 1960s allowed some of us to become conscious of the precarious social insertion of Pentecostals in Chile and to actively seek ways to counteract the so called anomic state of our communities. While it is impossible to claim a radical change so far, we have gained access to a better understanding of the socio-political and religious role of Pentecostals. Nonetheless, it is possible to claim that as the democratization process of Chilean socio-political institutions continues, more Pentecostals will gain access to government and civil society positions which require ecumenical support, especially in the field of training for a more complete understanding of the role of Christians in the Latin American societies of the 21st century.

As a professor in a public university, inevitably I have tended to follow the model of the Pentecostal pastor and full time public servant who was my father, a municipal worker, and thus using our spare time in serving God through the Pentecostal Church of Chile.

NOTES

⁶ For Asian data, see: Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing*, Brother Yun, *The Heavenly Man*, Hattaway, *Back to Jerusalem*, Hofer, *Churchless Christianity*, Bharati, *Living Water and Indian Bowl*, Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*. Also, see Johnson and Chung, “Mapping the Southern Trajectory of Global Christianity”, in *International Review of Mission*, April 2004 issue.

⁷ “I confess the sin of arrogance with which Catholics have treated Pentecostals, leading to intolerance, discrimination, and exclusion. We have employed methods of evangelization not in keeping with the Gospel, using the state to harass and oppress Pentecostals. When we were in the majority, we deprived Pentecostals of their civil rights; when we were in the minority, we demanded our full rights as citizens. In this way the dignity of the human person was violated, and the rights of those who believe in Christ have been trampled on. I confess that many Catholics have identified all Pentecostal churches as ‘sects’, thus demeaning them. Vatican II, speaking of other Christian churches and communities, decreed ‘that some, even many, of the most significant elements or endowments which go to build up the Catholic Church’, adding that these other churches ‘can truly engender a life of grace’ (*Decree on Ecumenism*, 3). Many Catholics have failed to recognize the true ecclesial and sanctifying elements in Pentecostal churches. We have labeled them ‘enthusiasts’ and have not received with gratitude the gifts and spirituality they offer. According to the principle ‘truth is defended only with truth itself’ (*Decree on Religious Liberty*, 1), I confess that Catholics have lived in culpable ignorance of what Pentecostals believe, and have misrepresented them, promoting Pentecostal stereotypes”.

This statement was given by Kilian McDonnell, of St. John’s Abbey, Collegeville MN, at the Society for Pentecostal Studies held in Kirkland WA, March 16-18, 2000.

APPENDIX IV:

Dreams and Visions: Living the Deepening Contradictions of Ecumenism in the 21st Century

Dr. Musimbi Kanyoro (General Secretary, World YWCA)

Introduction

I have been invited by the WCC to contribute to the topic "Visions and Dreams of the Ecumenism in the 21st Century." Some of you will be aware that I love to use stories from the Bible as a stepping-stone to understanding how ordinary people react to extraordinary events in life.

This time I looked for stories of dreams and visions and my model character on this subject is Joseph, the favorite son of Jacob and Rachel. Joseph's interesting story takes many chapters of the book of Genesis in the Old Testament. You are familiar with it.

As a young man, Joseph was a dreamer. Do you know what happened to Joseph when he shared his dreams with his brothers? The Bible says Joseph had a dream and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him and then they conspired and sold him into slavery (Genesis 37: 5).

There is a lesson here, which says, caution! Be careful of sharing your dreams with your brothers and sisters!!

So I will be cautious but courageous to share my dreams. I was in Antelias and I have read the background materials provided by the WCC and listened to those who have spoken this morning. I now believe that my dreams and visions are our dreams and visions. I resonated with so many things said by others and I am thankful for that because dreaming in unison may be a sign of security. What if Joseph's brothers had dreams similar to those which he had? They would perhaps have decided to reflect on those dreams together.

I want to use my time then to begin to dig deeper into our dreams by asking some questions, maybe in a different way. On the way, I may also ask some new questions with the hope that looking at our dreams from many different angles will give a better reality to the shape of the proverbial elephant fable and thus deepen our reflections for ecumenism in the 21st century. I have planned my remarks in three parts.

First I will review what I see as the "unfinished dimensions" of the ecumenical movement. Here the questions relate to the ways we experience the current ecumenical space.

Secondly, I want to look at the "deepening contradictions" that we face now as we have moved into the 21st century. Here the questions are primari-

ly about the shift in society and changing views of religious dialogue.

Finally I want to share some of my own dreams and visions as partial suggestions of how we could move forward into the future with a reconfiguration process. The questions for this last section have to do with how we celebrate our past and use the lessons learned to shape our future.

1. The unfinished dimensions

I have very much appreciated the depth and breadth of the input in the background research and this morning's speeches. Together, we have more input than we can deal with. The input so far has been theological, sociological and has also raised issues of governance and funding. The general secretary of the WCC Rev. Dr. Kobia has responded to some concerns by giving the context from which to interpret where we have come from and the reasons why we are all discussing reconfiguration or ecumenism in the 21st century. His Holiness Aram I, Moderator of the WCC has forced us to dive into deep waters by asking not only theological but also philosophical questions that touch our very being. But I ask, have these inputs really clarified things or made them more complicated? What do we want to do? What are the real issues said in simple language so that everyone in this room understands the same thing about the issues and process? I think this is still an unfinished dimension of our discussions. The more we talk, the more we entangle into a maze of words and there is a lack of clarity of needed actions and strategies to achieve what we want.

From this whole morning, the question posed by His Holiness, when he asked us to think of an ecumenical movement without us remains deeply embedded in my mind. Ladies and gentlemen, we are here today as those lead churches and organizations. How would this room look without us? Who would be here? That is a very troubling question. But it requires attention if we have to think of the future. We cannot reconfigure the ecumenical movement for ourselves. It has to be for those who are not in this room and even not yet born.

If I was not here, then I would like to picture my son and daughter and their friends in this room, at least for a start. I assure you they would attend one meeting and never come back again if they had a choice. The language we use is not only hard, but almost unintelligible to the people I represent. Women, lay persons, young people and non professional ecumenists have no exposure to fixed terminologies acquired in theological schools or developed in frequent ecumenical gatherings. So if we were not here, what kind of language would be spoken here? We have not even started this discussion yet.

Three decades of exposure have opened doors for me to peep into different rooms in the ecumenical house. I began my life in the Christian unions, World Christian Fellowship as a young person. My professional career with the United Bible Societies, Lutheran World Federation and now the World

YWCA keep me a perpetual student of ecumenism. Years of involvement in the WCC committees and working groups have added lots of vocabulary to my theological studies. This long-term involvement in ecumenical circles makes me agree that we have a movement, but I cannot find words to capture the reality of the ecumenical movement.

Because we speak a jargon of our own, we assume that there is such a movement. However questions still linger in the minds and hearts of many: is there one ecumenical movement or are there many? How do we define it? Is it by membership or by practice or by living out ecumenism? There is much controversy over the question of movements/institutions. There is wariness about 'institutionalism'. We should be clear that there is no way of being a movement without some institutional elements.

Then there are other questions once we affirm some form of institutionalization. Who belongs and who does not to the ecumenical movement? I fear that this question does not build but divides the movement. Much is said about the Roman Catholic Church being outside the ecumenical movement because it does not have membership in the WCC.

I serve on the Global Christian Forum together with members from the Catholic Church, Pentecostal churches, Evangelical churches and churches of the Reformation. I have heard again and again, Monsignor John Radano refute the statement that the ecumenical movement is not complete without the Catholic Church joining the WCC. Is the WCC the hallmark of ecumenism? Is membership in the WCC the definition for participation in ecumenism?

If we get trapped in difficulties of defining the ecumenical movement, we will be forced to ask whether it can then be configured? There are other unresolved matters. Some feel that an essential part for reconfiguration or reviewing ecumenism in the 21st century has to do with funding needs. If this is the case why not concentrate all the efforts in addressing questions of funding? Perhaps the issue before us is not how we reform the ecumenical movement but how we open our eyes to see the new ecumenism that is growing out of today's needs. These needs take place where diversity cries to be recognized. They take place when laypersons claim a place at the table together with ordained persons. They take place when young people look for new ways of telling the story of faith so that its gist is not archived in tradition but rather applied in meaningful ways to meet the realities of people longing for security, peace and meaning in life.

We generously use statistics to illustrate the shift of the church from the North to the South. If we had disaggregated data, I believe this would prove that a majority of those Christians in the South do not have emotional and historical fixed church traditions, which mean so much to western and eastern Christianity. How does this information influence the nature and content of ecumenical dialogues? If they are women would we ask different ques-

tions about leadership? Would we allow those questions to determine who is present here in this room of invited participants to the forum? How do we use the information we learn to shape the future?

This is still an untouched dimension of our ecumenical discussion.

2. Deepening contradictions

Let me briefly point out some of the burning contradictions, which are more like nightmares to me than dreams. Contradictions have to do with learning to perceive the inconsistencies and uncertainties between the way we experience our social reality and the way to act in taking steps with others to change those inconsistencies. But this involves a continuing struggle, not only to open up our church structures for more participation but also to face the contradictions between what we say and what we feel. When we talk about participation as a justice issue but then feel that representation by gender and age deny space to legitimate church leadership, then we are contradicting ourselves. Living out justice requires generosity in sharing the space and the story. If we can indeed imagine an ecumenical movement without us, then let us imagine it with people who do not look and act like us. Where is one to find such people who do not look like us?

The contradictions we face in discussing ecumenism seem minor compared to the contradictions of affluence, poverty, death from AIDS and lack of peace and security in our world, the privilege of few and the vulnerabilities of the majority of the world's people. These issues are very real and they may be the ones that can become the "bell" that gathers new people in the newly configured ecumenical movement. People are not interested in dialogue unless you are interested in their needs and their pain. Spirituality and inter-religious dialogue go together with an imperative for justice and food. Social issues urgently call for breaking down barriers of difference, and acting together in coalitions for solutions. What would it mean to begin our theological and ecumenical questions from a social point of view where realities bring together people searching for God? What kind of ecumenism happens at the tables of ECLOF, OIKO credit and other such instruments of the churches' witness? Disasters seem to immediately call for ecumenical and interfaith worship. We saw this after September 11. What can we learn from "natural" or unplanned ecumenical forums? What have we learned from church related humanitarian instruments?

Richard Howell is our Indian colleague on the Global Christian Forum and in our last meeting in Rome, Rev. Howell told us that in India, there are good ecumenical relationships and work is going on towards a United National Christian Forum. In Delhi (Richard lives in Delhi), the United Forum is already established and it includes various denominations. The Bishops and other senior people of each denomination are co-presidents. 'Encountering Christ' has become a bridge among the different groups, pro-

viding the common factor, which draws people beyond their particular institutions.

Rev. Howell told us that India has increasing numbers of people who have 'encountered Christ' but have no experience with traditional church structures and so do not relate to the 2,000-year Christian heritage. This is referred to as the 'emerging church'. It is emerging especially in the urban areas of Northern India. Rev. Howell spoke of the emerging church where people often meet in homes and pray together and share testimonies. They know their scriptures and have a variety of interpretations. The Church in India is not in a great rush to institutionalize this emerging church since this might slow down growth and so forth (which institutionalization tends to do).

I could tell similar stories of Africa. But one experience close to my heart is that of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians. This is a group of academic women from all Christian denominations including Protestant, Pentecostal, Catholic and Orthodox who have created a space to "do" theology together and who invited Muslim, Jewish and Hindu Africans to share the same space. Since 1989, this group has held local, national, regional, and pan African meetings to reflect on how religion and culture impact the lives of women and girls in Africa. Forty published books record the ecumenism of the women who call themselves the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians. Is this Ecumenism of the 21st century? The discrete nature of ecumenism and inter-faith dialogue are not always reflected in church unity discussions.

Throughout the world, the vast majority of God's poor symbolize their struggle for liberation in the idiom of non-Christian religions and cultures. Therefore, an ecumenism that does not speak to or speak through this non-Christian people is a luxury of a Christian minority.

Another big area that has many grey areas around it is about funding the church and ecumenical work. I think there are some issues here, which require dialogue. Although world resources may not have diminished, the money for work done in Churches and the ecumenical movement seems to be diminishing and in some cases disappearing. The most painful words for anyone to hear are that they are no longer a priority area or issue for the funding agency. Agencies have been changing their policies, going for fewer partners, or stronger partners or credible partners. Some churches are not ready to be weaned and they change their vision purely by using funding as criteria. A stronger future will require asking questions of the implications now rather than later.

I feel vibrations in the thinking of specifically Protestant ecumenical funding agencies. I cannot name whether the discomfort is that of youth becoming of age and wanting some freedom from their parent to develop or whether the agencies are the parent pushing their children (churches and church organizations) to grow and move out of the house. Something is going on and

my curiosity would be asking what is happening in the churches that are not members of the WCC in regards to funding?

My vision is that church-related funding agencies would not forget their history and would identify closely with the churches. They should listen to churches and seek to see the added value of advocacy and development as done through ecumenism. For example, while I fully support the human rights framework for doing and funding development work in churches, I do not think churches can stop at human rights. Churches must go to the next step of reconciliation and forgiveness and rebuilding the bridges. Therefore funding for the churches should have more than human rights criteria. In order to develop this, ecumenical-funding agencies must take time to hear the cries of churches and to notice that sometimes the so-called inefficiency and bureaucracy in churches and church-related bodies may be overloaded systems. Abandoning the funding of churches in preference for secular organizations because they are fast and do not have bureaucracy of church leadership seems to me a contradiction.

Some of the great achievements of the ecumenical movement include representation and participation of diverse people including by gender, generation, geography, race, etc. These landmarks should not be seen as burdens to the ecumenical movement but rather models of good practice. The feeling that the wrong people are in the right places or the right people in the wrong places needs to be addressed rather than shelved. Some feel that ecumenical leadership is weak because it does not reflect decision-making structures of the membership and it leaves the elected leadership unhappy. Again we may need to be looking at why the ecumenical tables look the way they do and maybe we can do some constructive things to stop this dilemma.

What about issues of heavy structures and slow decision-making? We seem to be having nightmares over large consultative structures, which are slow and bogged down by formalities and rules. A lot of our dreams are wrapped around unhappiness of ecumenical decision-making processes. There is fear that so-called democratic decision-making does not allow for minority voices to be heard. There are complaints over considerations of participatory representation. Bigger member want a bigger share of the cake rather than spreading it around so that more people each have a small piece.

3. Forward with vision

My dream is for an ecumenical space where people come to encounter each other and there, God meets each one in their journey of faith. It should be a space where different people might sit at different round tables, some for a longer time, and others for as short as their objective defines. Round tables give the impression of equal distance so that every voice is heard. They do not prevent people from bringing their hierarchical title to the table, but they allow those without rank and title to shine in their humanness and the result

is dignity for all. Round tables allow new people to join and are cozy even when they are crowded.

An ecumenical space can have many round tables. This means that people need not fight over space but rather they should seek to discover which table God is inviting them to join. In such a space the questions might not be whether the Catholic Church joins the WCC but whether ACT and CARITAS can share their strategies, their outreach, and even their resources so that the Christian witness may be seen to be one.

Churches may come together motivated by burning issues of the day such as we are doing in the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA). I have been serving on the Executive Committee of the EAA for three years and I have seen how far our voices and outreach can go when we work together on issues such HIV and AIDS and trade. In unprecedented common ecumenical witness, faith-based groups went a step further to present a common voice during the World International Aids Conference that gathered 20,000 people in Bangkok, Thailand in July 2004. Through the EAA, churches spoke together, investing in our common witness instead of capitalizing on our differences. The call for the unity of the church should not be tied only to dogmatic and faith articles but also in those human qualities, which define us as God's creations.

I dream of an ecumenical space where voices, opinions and contradictions can hear one another without fear and censorship. This space need not be one decision-making space. Rather decisions can be made at different tables within the space but what keeps the unity should be our faith and hope in what God can do through us and is able to do with us. Some tables in that space may spend much time discussing how we hear and celebrate God, but others can have the permission to just believe and get on with some tasks.

I dream of an ecumenical space with many round tables where people can dialogue over issues, but they do not have to be permanently constrained to only those issues or those tables. The theme of the round table should be hospitality to one another and to honor God. We must communicate what goes on around these tables. Therefore looking after communications instruments such as WACC, ENI etc is our mandate.

I dream of an ecumenical space which is conscious of the changing times in communication and embraces communication as a method to tell its story to those who can join the space and those who will not or need not join. What keeps the ecumenical space going is the faithfulness and credibility of its story. Structures to support it must remain simple and small so that its story can grow and multiply.

I dream of an ecumenical space where variety and diversity are assets rather than liabilities. They may come in the form of Christian World Communions; national, regional and global ecumenical bodies; interfaith networks; specialized agencies; one-issue groups, etc. The function and need has

to determine what kind of ecumenical table is prepared. Guests are a blessing to the table. The ecumenical table must live in today's pluralistic world.

I dream of an ecumenical table where faith and scriptures are taught. At such a space God speaks to the people of today: the young, the old, families, teenaged mothers, battered women, people living with HIV and AIDS, the poor and so on.

In my dreams, I see the WCC as one of the round tables in the ecumenical space and it is a big table. At the moment it is a crowded table and may indeed require sub-dividing into smaller tables for ease of communication, funding and hospitality.

Like the Pharaoh in Joseph's time, I am deeply troubled by my dreams. My dreams need an interpretation. What kind of leadership for these tables? Will they be like one orchestra where different instruments can practice at their tables and then come together to make good music? Who will be the conductor? Or all tables are independent and they meet at the music festival where tables bring different kinds of music, each in its own class and with its own leadership? I really don't know. The WCC has called all of us to share our dreams. But, 'who' will interpret our dreams?

"And Pharaoh woke and behold it was a dream. And so in the morning he was troubled and sent for the magicians of Egypt and all the wise men and Pharaoh told them his dream and there was no one who could interpret it?"(Gen. 41:7-8)

I have shared my dreams with you my sisters and brothers. Is there among you a Joseph to give them an interpretation? Who will interpret our dreams?

Thank you.

APPENDIX V:

Mapping the Oikoumene: A Study of Current Ecumenical Structures and Relationships

Presentation⁸ by Jill Hawkey, Consultant to the WCC

For the past 5 months, I have been working as a consultant for the World Council of Churches on various projects regarding reconfiguration. Now in Aotearoa New Zealand where I come from, we know about consultants. People tell the story of the old high country farmer, sitting up in the hills with his sheep all around him, when suddenly a helicopter lands close by. A very expensively dressed man jumps out, clutching a state of the art lap top computer.

'Good-day' says the young man to the farmer. 'I'm here to help. If you like, I can tell you exactly how many sheep you have. I will use the latest satellite technology to calculate this and in return, all you have to do is give me one sheep'.

'Alright then' says the bemused farmer. So the man sets up his computer, types in furiously looking around the hills at the thousands of sheep. After a few minutes, he says 'Okay. I'll just put my payment in the helicopter - and then I'll tell you the findings'.

He comes back and says 'Okay then - you've got 12,892 sheep'.

'That's amazing' says the farmer. 'Absolutely right. Now, if I tell you what your job is, can I have my sheep back?'

'Okay then' says the man smugly 'What's my job?'

'You're a consultant' says the farmer.

The man looks amazed. 'How do you know that?'

'Easy' says the farmer. 'I didn't ask you to come here, you've told me something I already know and that's my dog - not a sheep - you've just put in your helicopter!'

I am very conscious in making this presentation today, that I am one of those consultants who will be telling many of you what you already know! I will be talking about your organisations- and you know them so much better than I do. So at the outset, I will ask your forgiveness if my presentation seems somewhat simplistic. However, one of the things I have learnt in this study is that while we know our corner of the ecumenical movement well, we don't necessarily have an understanding of the whole complex picture with all its different players. I am also aware that while some have years of experience in the ecumenical movement, others of us are relatively new to it- so it is important that we take time to lay out a basic ecumenical map.

What I aim to do is build up a picture of some of the major organisations in the ecumenical movement. While it will cover a significant number of ecumenical organisations, it won't be inclusive of all those existing today which claim an ecumenical identity and agenda. I will then look at the relationships between the different organisations and highlight some of the issues that arise out of this complex picture. That will take about 45 minutes which will then leave plenty of time for plenary discussion.

Let me say something briefly about the Study. It is based on 65 interviews, mostly by telephone, with people from around the world in which I asked questions about their own organisation, who they relate to, what they consider some of the difficulties in the current configuration of the ecumenical movement and what they see as their own role within the movement. I am extremely grateful to those people, many whom are here today, for sharing their knowledge and experience with me.

So, who are the various ecumenical actors?

At the base of the ecumenical movement is the estimated 2 billion Christian people in the world today. It is estimated that half of the Christian population is Roman Catholic. The World Council of Churches - or WCC as it is known - is considered the most comprehensive and representative church body bringing together another 550 million people who belong to the 342 member churches or denominations in 120 countries. While the Roman Catholic Church is not a member of the WCC, it is a member of the Council's Faith and Order Commission.

The remaining quarter is made up of a diverse group of churches. Many may belong to a confessional family such as the Lutheran World Federation or Baptist World Alliance but not to WCC because they may be too small or for other reasons such as perceiving WCC as being too liberal theologically. Others will be churches which we refer to as Evangelical or Pentecostal. Some may have links to a global body such as the World Evangelical Alliance whereas others will be independent, individual churches with no formal ties to any other body.

Irrespective of the type of church, Christianity is growing faster in the South than the North - as we heard yesterday.

The Christian family is a long way from finding unity, however. If we look at the national level, almost every country in the world has a myriad of churches of various denominations. The 'World Christian Database' states that the USA has 635 different denominations and even the small Pacific island of Niue with a population of 1300 has 7 different denominations.

NCCs

Despite this, churches have come together in over 100 countries to form a National Council of Churches or National Christian Council - what we com-

monly call NCCs. These Councils were formed mostly in the 1940s and 1950s with encouragement from the WCC. While the founding members were usually churches of the Anglican or Reformed tradition, Orthodox churches joined in later. Following the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, the Roman Catholic church also joined a number of NCCs.

In some countries, Roman Catholic membership has been accompanied by a radical restructuring of the ecumenical body- usually with a greater emphasis on it being a 'council of churches' that only speaks if there is consensus amongst all churches rather than it being a separate ecumenical organisation with a life of its own.

While the programmatic work of the NCC differs from country to country, most have a Unity programme (some call it Faith and Order) and a programme that focuses on Church and Society. Programmes focusing on women, youth and capacity building are also common.

It is also worth noting that in some countries, especially in Latin America, there is more than one national ecumenical body; there is often one for historical churches and one for Evangelical or Pentecostal churches. In the Middle East, there aren't any NCCs.

In many countries there are a range of other specialist ecumenical organisations besides the NCC. Many churches have created agencies or organisations which focus on a particular area- and these may range from broadcasting to refugees. Each of you can probably list the 5, 10 or 20 organisations like this that have developed in your country over the last 50 years- all undertaking work on behalf of the churches and in most cases, being governed by representatives from the churches. There are organisations like the YMCA/YWCA or Bible Society which predate the formation of the NCC and in some cases these bodies are associate members or related bodies of the NCC.

In many countries both North and South, relief and development agencies have been established, many at the end of World War 2. In the north, some are ecumenical such as Bread for the World in Germany or Norwegian Church Aid while others are departments of a single national church for example, Presbyterian World Service and Development in Canada. Some refer to themselves as specialised ministries while others call themselves agencies, For the sake of brevity- but in fear of offending my ex-colleagues, I simply refer to them here as agencies. While there are differences between them, each has a mandate to respond to human suffering around the world, including through development programmes, emergency relief, and advocacy work.

These agencies are particularly significant in that together, they fund a large proportion of the diaconal work undertaken in the ecumenical movement and many of the ecumenical organisations. Alongside the WCC, they probably have the strongest network of relationships with other actors in the

ecumenical movement. 17 of the agencies who responded to a recent survey had in 2002, a combined budget of US\$747 million which is larger than the annual budget of the International Committee of the Red Cross (US\$600 million) and World Vision (US\$527 million).

While these agencies work with partners in many countries of the world, they are 'national organisations' - with most of their support coming from either private donations or their national government, their governance structures usually comprising representatives from member churches, and part of their role being to enable churches in their country to respond to global poverty and injustice.

In the South, ecumenical development and relief agencies have been established, many by National Councils of Churches. For example, CASA in India, CCD in Honduras, Christian Care Zimbabwe. They all differ in the structural and legal relationship they have with their member churches - but all see themselves as working closely with and through local churches.

Regional

So that's the national level. If we move onto the regional level, we find the

Regional Ecumenical Organisations (or what we call REOs): Today there are 7 REOs;

All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC)

Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC)

Christian Conference of Asia (CCA)

Conference of European Churches (CEC)

Latin America Council of Churches (CLAI)

Middle East Council of Churches (MECC)

Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC)

The first REO was established at the end of the 1950s and the others were founded over the next 25 years. Membership differs between REOs; some have both churches and NCCs as members - others have just churches. The Roman Catholic Church is a member of 3 of the REOs. Membership of the Middle East Council of Churches is quite different from other REOs - membership comes through the 4 main church families (Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox and Evangelical).

REOs greatly differ in size from the Pacific Conference of Churches which has 7 staff to the Middle East Council of Churches which has 83 (excluding the Dept of Service to Palestinian refugees). Again their programmatic work tends to be divided into 3 main areas:

- Faith and Order (or Unity) - which often includes relating to people of other faiths as well as encouraging theological articulation from the context of Asia, Africa, the Pacific and so on.
- Church and Society - covering issues such as conflict, HIV/AIDS, globalisation, poverty, climate change

- Gender, youth and culture.

In recent years, a number of the REOs have undergone significant changes in the way they deliver their programmes. For example, the REO for Latin America, CLAI, has decentralised its programme and is now working through member churches. The Pacific Conference of Churches has recently abolished its programme desks and now implements programmes at the national level through NCCs. They have found this much more effective for engaging people ecumenically at the grass-roots level.

Alongside these REOs sit other ecumenical bodies - some established by the REOs, others pre-dating them. These include Associations of Theological Institutes or other theological bodies as well as groups focusing on human rights, women, the environment and so on.

Sub-Regional Bodies

There is another group of ecumenical actors that fits between the national and the regional ecumenical organisations called the sub-regional fellowships. They are one of the newest actors on the ecumenical scene. There are 4 within Africa:

FOCCISA (Southern Africa)

FECCLAHA (Great Lakes region and Horn of Africa)

COFCEAC (Central Africa (French-speaking))

FECCIWA (West Africa)

Two were interviewed as part of the study - FECCLAHA and FECCIWA. Both started in the 1990s as a response to conflict in their region and their membership comprises mostly National Councils of Churches. They work primarily in the areas of peace making and peace building, good governance and capacity building.

Global Bodies

Moving onto the global level, Christian World Communions were included in this mapping study. While not strictly ecumenical bodies, they none-the-less play an important role in the ecumenical movement. Christian World Communions are global bodies of a certain denomination, such as the Lutheran World Federation or the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council, who generally have the task of strengthening the unity of that tradition and relating to other Christian communions. There is a huge difference between the Christian World Communions. The three largest, the LWF, Anglican Communion and WARC each represent about 65-75 million Christians whereas the Church of the Brethren and the Friends World Committee for Consultation have less than 500,000 members. While most Christian World Communions have less than 15 staff, LWF has a staff of 70 in Geneva and its Department for World Service employs more than 5,000 workers in 31 countries around the world. Not all Christian World

Communities undertake programmatic work, but there are some common themes amongst those that do including:

- Theology
- Mission
- Working with people of other faiths
- Human relationships/ relationships between men and women
- Human rights
- Economic justice
- HIV/AIDS
- Global sharing

A major part of their work is the bilateral dialogues happening between them- these are dialogues which deal with issues and matters of faith which have led to conflict and division in the past. So for example, the Pontifical Council has engaged in 18 different dialogues.

World Evangelical Alliance

Another global body is the World Evangelical Alliance which has its roots in the mid 19th century and is a network of 7 regional and 123 national evangelical alliances and over 100 special ministries. The WEA aims to foster unity and provide a worldwide identity and voice to evangelical churches and Christians. The relationship between national or regional alliances to the NCCs or regional ecumenical organisations differs greatly from context to context. For example, there is a close relationship between them in Latin America. The World Evangelical Alliance has a staff of 5 and much of its work occurs through its 6 Commissions:

- Women
- International Council for Evangelical Theological Education
- Mission
- Religious Liberty Commission
- Theological Commission
- Youth Commission

International Ecumenical Organisations

We then have a number of organisations loosely defined as 'international ecumenical organisations'. Some, such as the YMCA and the YWCA date back to the 19th century- whereas others such as Ecumenical News International, ACT International and the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance are less than 10 years old.

Youth

In the report, I deal with the youth organisations separately. The 4 interviewed, YMCA, WSCF, Syndesmos and Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe are all very different but they do have a number of common features.

They include:

- extensive networks of young people at the grassroots level
- three of the four are working with young people on issues that are on the agenda of other ecumenical agencies e.g: HIV/AIDS, conflict resolution, inter-faith relations, globalisation and sexuality
- some of the organisations are struggling with diverse membership regarding issues like the war on Iraq or sexuality
- and then funding is a major concern for them all.

Other

The other 5 international ecumenical agencies interviewed were:

ACT International

Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance

The Ecumenical News International (ENI)

World Association for Christian Communication (WACC)

Ecumenical Church Loan Fund (ECLOF)

While again, each of these organisations is different, all (with the exception of ACT) intentionally work with a wide network of churches and/or church related organisations including Roman Catholic, Evangelical and Pentecostal churches.

I also interviewed one global mission body, the Council for World Mission, which was founded in 1977 and grew out of 3 major mission societies.

World Council of Churches

Finally, I look at the WCC with its programmes relating to the 5 'historic themes':

Faith and order

Mission and ecumenical formation

Justice, peace and creation

International affairs, peace and human security

Diakonia and solidarity

WCC has a staff of approximately 170 people with most based in Geneva.

A major piece of work recently undertaken by the WCC has been the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation. This is leading to some significant changes in the way WCC works, with the introduction of consensus decision making, changes being made to common prayer at WCC gatherings and a new criteria for membership.

While it may not have felt like it for you, that was an extremely quick overview of some of the ecumenical actors on the global scene. As I said at the beginning, I am aware that we could build in many other players - lay theological training institutes, base Christian communities... the list is endless.

But this existing map highlights quite enough issues for us to be going on with.

In this next section, I want to outline some of the issues that I identified in the study although I am sure that you will want to add to this list this afternoon.

1: Vision

The first issue, vision, we have already explored together. What struck me was that there is a huge number of organisations sharing a very similar vision of a united church working together for the healing of the world. As has been the case for the last 60 years, some organisations place their emphasis on unity, and others place it on the healing of the world - and while this results in some tension, many people voiced a real desire to develop a common vision for the whole of the ecumenical movement which is relevant for the 21st century.

2: Are the churches committed to working together?

However, one of the questions raised by people in every corner of the globe is whether churches - at the local, national, regional and global level are really committed to working together. Some churches are very clear about their ecumenical commitment; for example, some state that they will not undertake any work on their own that could be done ecumenically. But the perception of most of the people from ecumenical organisations I interviewed was different. There are a number of inter-related issues I have highlighted:

1: First, there is a perception that churches are focusing on their Confessional family rather than working ecumenically. A number of people commented that people seemed more interested in preserving and enhancing the identity of their own confessional body. The part that finances play in this is something that could be explored further. For example, one person commented that because the ecumenical movement has less funds available than in the past, churches are now focusing on their own confessional families from where they can get funds.

2: Second, closely associated with this is the question of ownership- how much do the churches own the ecumenical structures. I thought one of the most telling quotes came from Botswana:

When things get difficult, the staff becomes the *Botswana Christian Council* rather than the churches.

Churches and organisations are responding differently to the question of ownership. A common response is for church leadership to have a far greater role in the governance of ecumenical organisations. One of the downsides of this is that most church leaders are male - so the governance structures of the ecumenical movement then become predominantly male.

3: Issues Around Structural Relationships

Next I want to look at some of the structural relationships between the various actors in the ecumenical movement.

1. *Participation and membership*

In the study, I outline three issues regarding participation and membership

(a) Member of an organisation or participant in a movement?

There seems to be a lack of clarity over terms with a number of people equating 'the ecumenical movement' with the WCC. A number of people say that we can't talk about ecumenism because the Roman Catholic Church or the Pentecostal Churches aren't part of the ecumenical movement. Yet the Pontifical Council will say very clearly 'we are part of the ecumenical movement - despite not being a member of the WCC' - and this is evidenced by their membership in many NCCs and REOs. Overall however, there is a real desire amongst many of the people interviewed for greater participation of the Roman Catholic and Pentecostal churches in ecumenical structures including the World Council of Churches. When asked about the positive changes occurring in the ecumenical movement, one of the most common responses was the proposed Global Christian Forum which will bring together WCC member churches with the Roman Catholic Church and Pentecostal and Evangelical churches.

However it is also worth noting that there is some concern about the impact of greater participation and whether ecumenical organisations will become less able to take on a prophetic role if they are only able to speak out on issues where there is consensus amongst a large, diverse membership.

(b) The drop-off factor

Another important issue regarding participation and membership is what could be called the 'drop-off' factor. The study highlighted that the broadest level of ecumenical participation is at the national level- but only approximately half of those churches were members of the REOs and the percentage who were members of the WCC was even smaller. While insufficient research was undertaken in this study to have an exact figure, I estimate that no more than 25% of churches who are members of NCCs are also members of WCC. I think it raises some very interesting questions including:

- i. Is there a way that membership in the national council of churches could lead onto membership- or at least participation in regional and global ecumenical organisations?
- ii. How can NCCs engage their entire membership in the regional and global issues being addressed by REOs, the WCC and other organisations?

- iii. Are global ecumenical bodies such as WCC (but also others such as ACT and EAA) relating to NCCs in such a way as to promote participation by all the members and not just members of WCC?

A very similar issue exists in relation to Christian World Communions. In general, less than half the members of Christian World Communions are members of WCC. How can ecumenical organisations at the regional and global level work with Christian World Communions so that their concerns reach a far greater audience. And what more can Christian World Communions be doing to promote ecumenism amongst their membership?

(c) The numerous levels of belonging

Most ecumenical organisations have national churches as their members - and this is placing some real pressure on some of these churches. Let me give an example of a church I know reasonably well - the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. They belong to the national ecumenical body, CCANZ, are members of the ecumenical development agency, Christian World Service as well as being part of other national ecumenical initiatives. They then belong to both the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) and the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) at the regional level - and at the global level are members of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the World Council of Churches, Council for World Mission and the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance. Needless to say, as a church with a membership of 45-50,000, they are finding it difficult on a number of levels: to absorb the programmes of these various organisations into the life of their church, to participate in the life of these organisations, and to fund them.

For the larger churches I interviewed, this did not seem to be such a problem, but smaller churches are finding it a real struggle.

2. Relationships between organisations

Now I want to turn and look at some of the structural relationships between organisations.

(a) Conciliar bodies

First the relationship between conciliar bodies. NCCs, REOs and the WCC all have their own members, governance structures, policies and work programmes and while there are various liaison meetings, there are few formal structural relationships between these various levels. This leads to a number of problems:

- i. lack of consistent reflection and analysis from national to regional to global levels
- ii. people on governing bodies of WCC may not be closely involved in national or regional ecumenical bodies- so there is a lack of consistency

- iii. there is potential for conflict and competition between REOs and the WCC, particularly around the role of area desks. The example of the Pacific desk is highlighted in the study.
- iv. the result is that these bodies end up competing for funding

In the report I note some of the work that is being undertaken by both the All Africa Conference of Churches and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland to address similar kinds of problems. I am not going to repeat it here-but I think these two examples highlight some of the creative thinking that is taking place to address some of the structural issues, to clarify roles and to ensure greater cooperation and effectiveness while reducing pressure on member churches.

(b) Christian World Communions

The study also highlights some of the difficulties in the relationship between Christian World Communions and the WCC. Some of these difficulties or tensions actually go back to the formation of the WCC when it was decided that national churches rather than confessional bodies would be members. A number of people talked about the perception Christian World Communions and the WCC have of each other. A quote that perhaps sums it up came from one of the Christian World Communion General Secretaries:

'From the WCC side, there is the feeling that Christian World Communions aren't promoting unity and are only promoting their own identity. On the Christian World Communion side, there is the feeling that WCC doesn't understand their realities...'

When participants were asked if they saw any duplication within the ecumenical movement, a number mentioned duplication between the WCC and the larger Christian World Communions, in particular the Lutheran World Federation. Now there is some debate as to whether two organisations working on the same issue is duplication or specificity with Christian World Communions producing material that is particularly tailored for their constituency. Whatever your response to that debate, there remains the question of how much cooperation and coordination there is between these different programmes.

It is also worth exploring at what stage cooperation takes place. Often, an organisation sees a need, sets it as a priority, develops a programme, allocates funding, employs staff- and then if they are collaboratively minded, the new staff person thinks 'let's see who else is working on this same issue'. But this type of cooperation is too late. It would be far more effective if the organisation explores who else is working in this area before any new programme is developed, and considers from the beginning the possibility of undertaking joint work.

3. *Other areas of duplication*

Duplication is not only an issue between the WCC, REOs and Christian World Communions. Many organisations throughout the ecumenical movement are working on similar themes, often without any reference to each other and therefore duplicating effort. Priorities that were mentioned time and time again include:

HIV/AIDS

Globalisation

Inter-faith issues

Violence against women

The question is how can we work together more effectively on these issues.

4. *Overcoming the barriers that divide us*

In the interviews, I was struck by the number of people who felt that their organisation's contribution to the ecumenical movement wasn't being recognised or affirmed. One person commented

I see it as very territorial. There is not a lot of recognising different roles and not a lot of mutual respect. There is more a spirit of competition than cooperation.

Konrad Raiser noted this in his report to Central Committee in 2002. He stated

The ethos of competition and logic of the corporate world are beginning to make inroads into the field of ecumenical organisations.

So how do we move beyond competition? How can we come to have a greater understanding and appreciation of each other's work? Are we prepared to be accountable to one another?

One possibility that was mentioned is to place greater emphasis on ecumenical formation so that people are able to see beyond the mandate and programmes of their own organisation to the wider vision and work of the ecumenical movement. Bringing together staff from the various organisations throughout the movement for ecumenical formation allows for personal relationships to be developed- it is far more difficult to be competitive if the person in the other organisation is your friend.

5. *Who can fund the ecumenical movement?*

A major question to be addressed is funding. While many NCCs are funded from sources within their own country, a large proportion of the ecumenical movement receives a significant amount of their funding from a relatively small number of ecumenical development and relief agencies from Europe and North America. Regional ecumenical organisations, sub-regional fellowships, the World Council of Churches, many of the international ecumenical organisations such as ACT, ECLOF, the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance,

World Student Christian Federation- are all reliant on these agencies. This leads to a number of issues:

a. Influencing priorities

Many of these agencies have mandates that are limited to the work of diakonia- or the healing of the world- and they are therefore not able to fund areas such as Faith and Order and theological education. This is even more so for those agencies which receive a significant amount of funding from their national government. Because certain parts of the ecumenical movement get funding while others don't, all kinds of accusations have arisen about the agencies trying to set the agenda of ecumenical organisations such as the WCC. The agencies I interviewed said they have no desire to be doing this.

However, a quote from one of the church participants in the study who is a member of the World Council of Churches Central Committee sums up this problem well:

Every time we have tried to adjust priorities, it fails to make any difference because the bulk of the funding comes from the agencies. This has more influence than all of the Consultations because agencies can only fund certain things. We look at areas that are important for the Council- such as the Global Christian Forum, interfaith work and the understanding of mission work in faith and order, but if you look at the money they are constantly marginalised.

b. Mistrust of agencies

This has led to what I call a 'mistrust or a suspicion of agencies'. A number of people commented that the agencies aren't really part of the church- and yet at the national level, church participants told me they were proud of the work agencies are undertaking on their behalf and the agencies themselves identify themselves as being a church-based organisation with representatives of churches sitting on their Board.

It seems that this is another area where we need to break down some of the stereotypes we have of each other, formalise our structural relationships and work to promote a greater understanding of the role of agencies.

6. *The Role of the WCC*

The final question I asked participants was what they saw as the role of the WCC. While it was not the purpose of the Mapping Study to focus on the WCC, it seemed important to gain an understanding of what people see as the Council's role in this vast array of ecumenical organisations.

While there was a huge range of responses given to the question, there were some common themes. What was particularly interesting is that everybody felt the WCC still has a vital role to play in the ecumenical movement;

no one was suggesting that WCC should close its doors and cease to function. I attempted to group the responses under a number of themes:

- 1: People see the WCC as giving expression to the reality that the body of Christ cannot be divided. Participants talked about the importance of its symbolic role
- 2: Many people talked about WCC as a 'fellowship of churches'
- 3: Others saw it as the place which holds together the work of diakonia, mission, ecclesiology and unity
- 4: Agencies in particular considered WCC to have an important role in enabling a common value system
- 5: Others appreciated its role in global analysis and action- and wanted WCC to be the voice of the Christian world
- 6: WCC's facilitation role was seen as very important. A number of people talked about WCC focusing too much on their own programmes rather than facilitating the various players within the ecumenical family.

There is little doubt that the expectations on WCC are unrealistic for an organisation that has only half the number of staff that it had 10 years ago. People within the ecumenical movement do recognise this and ask that WCC clarify its own role, focusing particularly on those things which only it can do and in particular, taking a greater facilitation role.

Conclusion

I want to finish by outlining the 6 most important questions which arise for me out of this Mapping Study. I am sure you will have others to add:

1. Can we develop an ecumenical vision which is owned and acted upon by all the actors in the ecumenical movement including the churches?
2. What tasks need to be undertaken to achieve this vision:
 - are they best undertaken at the national, regional or global level?
 - which tasks are best undertaken ecumenically and where can
 - confessional bodies add extra value?
3. What type of organisations do we need and how should the tasks be divided between them?
4. What mechanisms can be put in place to ensure
 - coordinated planning and work so that duplication is avoided
 - coherence between ecumenical organisations at the national, regional and global level
 - churches are not overwhelmed by their involvement in, and financial commitment to, many different organisations.
5. How can funds available to the ecumenical movement be used most effectively? How can the funding base be broadened?

And the final point, which could have come further up the list but seems relevant for all the points above:

6. What will be the values and principles that underpin the way in which we work together?

These are just some of the questions we can begin to consider. This Mapping Study has not made specific recommendations as to how to deal with each of these issues. That is our task together over the next 2 days. There is little doubt however, that our current division, lack of coordination and competition impede our witness as the body of Christ and undermine our effectiveness in working towards the healing of the human community and the earth. If the ecumenical movement is going to be relevant and effective in this century, some changes are essential. Thank you.

APPENDIX VI:

Bible Studies

led by Rev. Wesley Ariarajah

Tuesday 30 November**Acts 15: 1-21**

Jesus and his disciples were from the Jewish community. While they met people from other traditions, by and large, their ministry was confined to their own community. But trouble began with Peter when he was called to Cornelius's house. While he was preaching, the Holy Spirit fell upon him and Peter baptised Cornelius and all of his people. When Peter returned to Jerusalem, he was criticised for baptising Gentiles without referring the matter to the church. This was however accepted as an isolated incident. Later, Paul went to Asia Minor to talk to the Jews in Diaspora and at the synagogue, he met God-fearing Greeks who were responding to the Christian message. The church was then faced with a crisis- what should be done about the Gentiles? If Christianity is part of Judaism, do they have to become Jews first and then Christians? How should they deal with diversity that has come from the mission of the Church? It was a new situation calling for a reconfiguration of the Church.

Some talk of the experience in Acts 15 as the first ecumenical experience. Everyone came together- Paul, Peter, Barnabas and the conservative group who thought you could not be saved without first being circumcised. The process of the meeting is important:

First, there was a listening process when everyone had a chance to say what they wanted. Then there was strong debate and disagreement between positions which seemed almost irreconcilable. This was followed by an attempt to discern together before the final decision making process. The challenge was three-fold:

1. Is it legitimate to change the boundaries of the Church? Each of them had thoughts about where the boundaries of the Church are.

2. Some of the things that appeared so central had to be given up e.g. circumcision and the keeping of the law.

3. What does it mean to be Church? The Church of Paul's time didn't suddenly decide to reconfigure. The challenge was laid upon them from outside. What does it mean to be Church in our time?

What was the outcome?

1. On the one hand, they recognized that it was the very mission of the church that was calling for a fundamental reconfiguration of its constituency.

On the other, they saw the importance of preserving the communion of the Church. So a decision was made that the Jews did not have to change; they did not have to give up circumcision and the keeping of the law to become Christians and they should not be burdened by such expectations to be like others.

2. In order to have table fellowship, the Gentiles were also expected to make sacrifices (not eating meat with blood or food that is ritually unclean because it has been offered to idols, keeping themselves from sexual immorality etc - vs. 20)

At the heart of this passage is an attempt to reconfigure the nature and life of the church which involved sacrifices on the part of all concerned, the determination to maintain the unity and communion of the church, and an attempt to discern together where God is leading the church at a given time.

What does this attempt on the part of the early church to 'reconfigure' its life and ministry tell us about our own attempt to respond to the realities of our day?

Wednesday December 1

Exodus 3

The focus of the Exodus reading is the 'call' of Moses. In the Bible anyone who is a servant of God is called; there is no place for volunteers. As churches, we shouldn't do anything unless we believe that we are being called to do so. What is the nature of our calling today?

In Genesis 12 we hear of God's call to Abraham to leave the place where he was. There was no real reason why he should move at that time as they were living on very fertile land beside the river. But the Biblical writers say that God was calling him to move. The question for us is 'are we too settled?' We are known as a movement so we don't want to settle down too much. We are a pilgrim people.

Exodus 3 tells of the calling of Moses when he is asked to go and deliver God's people from the misery they are suffering under the Egyptians. But Moses replies 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?' But God calls Moses because he has seen the suffering and misery of God's people - not because of Moses himself. So Moses has to reconfigure his life because God was concerned for the suffering of others.

Jesus' call is the most troubling kind of call, which can be characterized as an 'incarnation call.' He was not called to go and deliver anyone, but rather he became part of the community and in doing so, challenged the religious status quo of the time. He didn't go out and do a ministry but rather was called to be part of the community, standing in solidarity with those who were suffering. Jesus' prayer was 'let this cup pass from me,' because he did not want

to take on this role, but he was prepared to 'walk his talk' in obedience to God wherever it would take him—even to the cross.

Does our calling today have to do with standing in solidarity with those in the world who are oppressed? Jesus had to reconfigure his ministry every day so he could 'walk the talk' of love, and it finally took him to the cross.

Thursday December 2

Philippians 3: 3-16

In this passage Paul explores the issue of tradition. He does not reject tradition; he outlines that he was 'circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless' (vs. 5-6). While tradition is important to him, he states that far more important is his desire to 'know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his suffering by becoming like him in his death' (vs.10).

The challenge for us is that we are part of our own tradition; it grounds us and gives us identity. Our tradition is where we have been called from. But Paul is prepared to even 'set aside' the constraints of the tradition in order to explore the 'fellowship of his suffering' and the 'glory of his resurrection,' two phrases that summarise, for Paul, the meaning and ministry of his Christian vocation. He says 'not that I have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own' (vs.12). Grounded in our tradition, we are called to 'press on' identifying what is the imperative of the gospel today and what does it mean to participate in today's world.

Friday December 3

Hebrews 11.1 -12.2

In this chapter the writer of the Book of Hebrews outlines the faith of Israel's ancestors including Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Joseph. Behind the description of events is the author's understanding of God as the 'God of history.' In biblical understanding God is God of both space and time. God is thus not only the God of the cosmos but also of its history. The Bible understands history as the story of God with humankind. In this view we do not create history, but participate with God in it.

It is significant that from the beginning the ecumenical movement is understood as the 'Movement of the Spirit.' Nobody 'owns' the ecumenical movement; all of us are 'participants' in a movement in which we are not the final arbiters. In history, Israel, Abraham and Sarah are seen as people of great faith because when they felt God was calling them to do something, they were prepared to move on. Great tribute is given to Abraham and Sarah

for the courage they had to begin a people who were on a pilgrimage: "God was not ashamed to be called their God." Abraham was not trying to build a city of his own, but rather was looking for and was moving towards a city with firm foundations, whose 'architect and builder' is God.

In the latter part of the chapter we have a list of enormous sacrifices made by people whose names are not mentioned. The author recognizes the countless number of people who had participated in history whose ministry is the foundation of what we do today and whose ministry would not be fruitful without our own faithfulness in our day. In other words, we are part of a long process, represented by the author as a relay race, where one generation hands over its faithfulness to the next. The ecumenical movement is a movement of so many people all over the world, both inside and outside the churches, whose names are not always known. It is not a movement that we begin, but rather is something we join.

The author says that since we are surrounded by such a cloud of witnesses, we should also run the race that is set before us with patience, laying aside all the weight that holds us back and sin that clings so closely, looking unto Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

He identifies three disciplines for those who wish to join this race:

1. recognising that this is God's movement; a movement with a cloud of witnesses who have gone before us.
2. identifying and setting aside the sin that holds us back from participating in this movement
3. focusing on Jesus, the founder and pioneer of our faith.

In this passage there is no demand that those who participate in history with God be successful, but rather that they be faithful.