Final Report of the Special Commission
on Orthodox Participation in the Wcc

The report of the Special Commission was submitted to the central committee at its meeting in September 2002. The meeting received the report and recommended a series of actions. Subsequently, in following up the work of the Special Commission, the central committee took concrete actions on decision-making and membership matters in its meeting in February 2005. As a result of the work of the Special Commission, the assembly will have to take action on article II of the constitution and rule I (see pp. 40 and 44).

Guide to the report
The report is presented in three sections:
- ***Section A** sketches the context in which the Special Commission has undertaken its work, demonstrating that it has also sought to relate its work to the implementation of the CUV.*
- ***Section B** provides exposition of the five special themes with which it has been engaged.*
- ***Section C** concerns the limited number of finite actions which the Commission recommends.*

Certain matters have to be spelt out in more detail and therefore attached to the report are four appendices.
- ***Appendix A** offers "A Framework for Common Prayer at WCC Gatherings".*
- ***Appendix B** provides further information on decision-making by consensus.*
- ***Appendix C** contains a "Proposal for Changes to the Rules of the World Council of Churches", identifying especially the new theological criteria for churches applying for membership in the fellowship of the WCC.*
- ***Appendix D** lists the membership of the Special Commission and its steering committee.*

A

I.   History and process

1. The 60-member Special Commission was created by the WCC's eighth assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1998. Behind the assembly decision to create the Commission were increasingly vocal expressions of concerns about the WCC among Orthodox churches. These had culminated in a meeting of Eastern Orthodox churches in Thessaloniki, Greece, in May 1998. Central Orthodox concerns, as summarized by that meeting, included some activities of the WCC itself, "certain developments within some Protestant members of the Council that are reflected in the debates of the WCC", lack of progress in ecumenical theological

discussions, and the perception that the present structure of the WCC makes meaningful Orthodox participation increasingly difficult and even for some impossible. In its action approving the creation of the Special Commission, the Harare assembly noted that "other churches and ecclesial families" have concerns similar to those expressed by the Orthodox.

2. The Commission has been unique in World Council history in being composed of an equal number of representatives appointed by Eastern and Oriental Orthodox churches and representatives from the other churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC appointed by the central committee. Its co-moderators were Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Ephesus (Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople) and Bishop Rolf Koppe (Evangelical Church in Germany).

3. In presentations to the opening session of the Commission, the moderator of the WCC central committee, Catholicos Aram I of the Armenian Apostolic Church (Cilicia), underscored that "the Orthodox presence in the WCC has enlarged the scope of the Council's life and witness" and that the Orthodox churches in turn "have been enriched by their ecumenical involvement" whilst the general secretary of the WCC, Konrad Raiser, noted that this Commission marked the first time the WCC has created an official body "with equal participation from the Orthodox churches and from the other member churches in the WCC". He suggested that "never before in its fifty years of history has the WCC taken its Orthodox member churches as seriously as with this decision".

4. The Commission has met in plenary on four occasions, in Morges, Switzerland (December 1999), in Cairo, Egypt, as guests of Pope Shenouda III and the Coptic Orthodox Church (October 2000), in Berekfürdö, Hungary, at the invitation of Bishop Gustav Bölcskei and the Reformed Church in Hungary (November 2001), and in Helsinki, Finland, hosted by Bishop Voitto Huotari and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (May 2002) where representatives of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem were present for the first time. Observers from the Georgian Orthodox Church were present at the meetings in Morges and Cairo. Sub-committee meetings had also been hosted by the St Ephrem Theological Seminary in Damascus, Syria, the Orthodox Academy of Vilemov, Czech Republic, and the Orthodox Academy of Crete, Greece.

5. The Commission has sought diligently to fulfil the twofold task assigned to it by the Harare assembly. Thus it has sought "to study and analyze the whole spectrum of issues related to Orthodox participation in the WCC" and "to make proposals [to the WCC central committee] concerning the necessary changes in structure, style and ethos of the Council". In so doing, members have had access to a dossier of background materials, including statements and reports from all key conferences regarding Orthodox participation in the WCC throughout its history, various proposals for the future working of the WCC, as well as to the contents of the October 1999 issue of *The Ecumenical Review,* devoted to the theme "Orthodox Participation in the Ecumenical Movement". A double issue of *The Ecumenical Review*, published in April 2002, contained many papers concerning worship, baptism and ecclesiology, some of which were based on presentations made to the Special Commission. The Commission has been provided with further collections of papers as the needs of its work have demanded, most of which are now available on the Council's website.

6. The Commission, experiencing a genuine spirit of fellowship, has had the courage, on occasion, "to speak the truth in love", as strongly held convictions have been vigorously defended. However, the whole engagement has been characterized by a deep respect for one another's spiritualities and a genuine desire to understand and to accommodate differences of confessional outlook, enabling the Commission successfully to achieve its work.

II. What kind of Council do member churches want in the light of the acceptance by Harare of the CUV documentation?

7. More than fifty years of being together should not be lost but fed into future proposals for the ecumenical movement. Much had been learned in these years and the churches enriched by sharing together in the common journey towards Christian unity. Appreciation of this fellowship underlined an intention to stay together and work more intensively for fulfilling the common calling.

8. At times it seems as if the Council had become a prisoner of certain bureaucratic ways of proceeding, notwithstanding the revision of article III of the constitution which, after Harare, refers to the churches calling *each other* to the goal of visible unity.

9. Whilst the Council has a critical role to play in helping churches in fellowship with it to work together to fulfil their common calling, the following affirmations should be kept in mind:

- Member churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC are the subject of the quest for visible unity, not the Council.
- Member churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC teach and make doctrinal and ethical decisions, not the Council.
- Member churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC proclaim doctrinal consensus, not the Council.
- Member churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC commit themselves to pray for unity and to engage in an encounter that aims at finding language for resonances of the common Christian faith in other church traditions.
- Member churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC are responsible for developing and nurturing the sensitivities and the

language that will allow them to sustain a dialogue with each
other.

10. In a brutally divided world, churches have developed different
ecclesial cultures, but by accepting the disciplines of the fellowship
of the World Council of Churches they are called to acknowledge 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.

11. The Commission envisions 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 recognizing each other as churches that confess
the one faith, celebrate one baptism and administer the one eucharist,
in order that they may move to a communion in faith, sacramental life
and witness.

B

In its work the Commission identified five areas for specific study which
were intensively investigated in sub-committees and plenary.

III. Ecclesiology

12. Ecclesiological issues embrace all of the matters under the
consideration of the Special Commission: response to social and
ethical issues, common prayer at WCC gatherings, matters of
membership and representation, as well as how decisions are made
together.

13. Joining a World Council of Churches entails accepting the challenge
to give an account to each other of what it means to be church; to
articulate what is meant by "the visible unity of the church"; and
how the member churches understand the nature of the life and witness
they share together now through their membership in the WCC. This is
the question of how the church relates to the churches.

14. There are ecclesiological presuppositions lying behind both the basis
and constitution of the WCC. How do churches belonging to the
fellowship of the WCC currently understand the commitment they make
to the trinitarian faith in the basis? How do they understand the
intention expressed in the constitution "to call one another to the
goal of visible unity in one faith and in one eucharistic fellowship,
expressed in worship and common life in Christ, through witness and
service to the world and to advance towards this unity so that the
world may believe"?

15. The response to these questions is influenced by the existence of two basic ecclesiological self-understandings, namely of those churches (such as the Orthodox) which *identify* themselves with the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church, and those which see themselves as *parts* of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. These two ecclesiological positions affect whether or not churches recognize each other's baptism as well as their ability or inability to recognize one another as churches. They also affect the way churches understand the goal of the ecumenical movement, its instruments – including the WCC – and its foundational documents.

16. Within the two basic ecclesiological starting points there is in fact a certain range of views on the relation of the church to the churches. This existing range invites us to pose to one another the following questions. To the Orthodox: "Is there space for other churches in Orthodox ecclesiology? How would this space and its limits be described?" To the churches within the tradition of the Reformation: "How does your church understand, maintain and express your belonging to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church?"

17. Exploring these questions would lead to a greater clarity of how churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC relate to each other and to the World Council. It would also invite them to reflect on the implications of including baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as a criterion for membership in the Council.

18. To continue the discussion begun in the Special Commission on ecclesiology, the following issues will need to be explored further:

a) how the churches understand "visible unity", "unity and diversity", and the commitment they make to "call one another to the goal of visible unity";

b) whether baptism should be included within the basis of the WCC;

c) the role of the WCC in encouraging the churches to respect each other's baptism and to move towards mutual recognition of baptism;

d) the nature of the shared life experienced within the WCC: what is the meaning of the word "fellowship" (koinonia) used in this context?

In exploring these ecclesiological issues there is need to clarify the theological meaning of terms (e.g. ecclesial, ecclesiastical, church, churches, koinonia, et al.) in order to avoid unnecessary confusion and misunderstanding.

19. Future discussions can build upon work already done together over many years, including the Toronto statement; the New Delhi statement together with the Orthodox response; the Canberra statement; the Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC; *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* and the church responses. It is important to take account of work already done on ecclesiology. The leadership of the WCC is asked to promote that work both within the structures of the WCC and by encouraging churches to continue in a process of reflection and response to that work.

20. Some of the issues identified will be addressed within the developing programmes of Faith and Order on ecclesiology and baptism. Faith and Order is asked, within the development of the convergence text on *The Nature and Purpose of the Church,* to explore the specific issue of

the relation of the church to the churches, ensuring the engagement of the major streams of the Christian tradition in that exploration.

21. It is also recommended that the issues of ecclesiology which have been identified by the Special Commission form an important part of the next assembly of the WCC.

IV.   Social and ethical issues

22. At the beginning of the 21st century people all over the globe are confronted with unprecedented challenges: economic globalization, wars and ethnic cleansing, massive numbers of refugees, mounting xenophobia, threats to the environment, violation of basic human rights, racism, and the new possibilities of technology with the threats they pose.

23. Faced with the need to develop Christian ethics that respond to current problems and struggles, it is the responsibility of each church to shape its own moral teaching. At the same time, the Special Commission recognizes the WCC as a vital forum for raising and reflecting together on moral issues facing churches and society.

24. Many Christians all over the world give thanks to God for the role the WCC has played as an advocate for human rights, and as a participant in people's struggles to combat racism, economic misery, unjust territorial occupation, and the politics of brute force. Underlying all of these themes has been a commitment to a "theology of life". Churches have been helped to care for the refugees of war, the hungry and the poor, and the socially marginalized victims of bigotry and political oppression.

25. Nevertheless, the Special Commission was created in part because of dissatisfactions raised by Orthodox and others with the ways in which certain social and ethical issues have reached the agenda of the WCC, and the ways in which they have been treated. Specifically, there has been a perception that churches are coerced into treating issues they deem as either foreign to their life or inappropriate for a worldwide forum. There has also been a perception that the WCC has on occasion sought to "preach" to the churches rather than be the instrument of their common reflection. The following observations and recommendations are an attempt to address these dissatisfactions.

26. Taking into account insights acquired from social and political analysis, the Commission affirms that the formation of moral judgments on social and ethical issues must be a continuing discernment of the will of God rooted in scripture and Tradition, liturgical life, theological reflection, all seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

27. The Council cannot speak for, nor require, the churches to adopt particular positions. It can, however, continue to provide opportunities for all churches to consult with one another and, wherever possible, for them to speak together.

28. By the same token, member churches should understand that not all matters discussed within their own fora can be imposed on the WCC agenda. Skill and sensitivity are needed on all sides to perceive which matters should remain within the counsels of particular churches and which can profitably be discussed together.

29. It is critical that the result of such dialogue and cooperation be clearly shown to be coming from a distinctively Christian perspective, embracing the values of the gospel. The churches take on a "prophetic role" when they truthfully describe and react to situations in the world precisely in the light of the gospel. More reflection is required on what it means for churches in fellowship to engage in this way. A prophetic voice can never be divorced from the pastoral role, which includes building up, encouraging and comforting (1 Cor. 14:3).

30. The Council is a necessary and helpful instrument in facing social and ethical issues when it enables the churches to:

   a) reaffirm that they are bound together in fellowship by their common confession of Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, to the glory of the One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit;

   b) renew the commitment to stay together in order to foster love for each other, for love is essential to dialogue in freedom and trust;

   c) recognize that differences arising out of churches' responses to moral issues, stemming from churches witnessing to the gospel in varying contexts, need not be insurmountable;

   d) recognize that dialogue on social and ethical matters presupposes that they are not content simply to "agree to disagree" on their own moral teachings, but are willing to confront honestly their differences by exploring them in the light of doctrine, liturgical life, and holy scripture.

31. New and unprecedented issues constantly arise for which directly applicable models for ethical judgments are not to be found within the churches' own traditions, insights and ethical formulations. This holds true particularly within the bio-ethical and bio-technical sphere. Churches are challenged to articulate a Christian ethical approach, e.g. to cloning, in-vitro fertilization and genetic research. The experiences and reflections of others in the wider ecumenical fellowship provide a valuable and often indispensable resource.

32. The way in which a church (or churches together) orders and structures its own decision-making on moral matters is in itself a prime ethical issue. *Who* decides *what* and *by which means*? The forms of decision-making and communication already embody a social ethic, and influence moral teaching and practice. Structures, offices and roles express moral values. Ways of exercising power, governance and access have moral dimensions. To ignore this is to fail to understand why moral issues can be so divisive.

33. The WCC needs constantly to monitor procedures for dealing with social and ethical issues proposed for common deliberation. For example, how should it be determined that a given matter is directed to the WCC for discussion by a genuine "church" request, rather than by pressure-group advocacy?

34. Moreover, procedures for discussing such issues need constantly to be refined in a way that enables the Council to perform its role of enabling the formation of a common mind among the churches, and avoid causing or deepening divisions. The consensus method should determine the whole process of exploration at every level: governing bodies,

staff, participants (cf. Appendix B, section II). It should not simply be reserved for the end of the process.

35. It is the expectation of the Special Commission that the use of consensus decision-making, with an increase in mutual trust, will make it easier for all to participate fully in the discussion of any burning ethical and social issue.

V.   Common prayer

36. In the beginning of the new millennium humanity is confronted with new realities, new obstacles and new challenges. It is commonly admitted that we live today in a world of tensions, antagonisms, conflicts, wars, and rumors of wars (Matt. 24:6). Within such a situation isolation or destruction in no way can constitute paths to be followed by Christian churches. The continuation and strengthening of the existing dialogue and cooperation between Christian churches is an urgent duty. Isolation and disunity are anomalies which can only be understood as the result of sin and evil. In the biblical and ecclesiastical tradition sin and evil have been described as dismemberment, disorganization and dissolution of the unity created by God. This disunity leads to selfishness and a sectarian understanding of the Christian gospel.

37. The contemporary Christian commitment to visible unity — by its range, its depth, and its instruments — is a new reality in church history. Equally, the possibility of praying together in ecumenical settings is also a new challenge with specific and particular mission to accompany and strengthen Christians in their journey towards unity. In order to make progress in dialogue with one another, Christians need to plead together for divine assistance.

38. The Christian way is always based on and connected with prayer. Therefore at the very heart of every effort towards Christian unity and collaboration is also the reality of prayer. Before every important stage of his salvific work, our common Lord Jesus Christ prayed to the Father, teaching us that we have the task of pleading with God in order to overcome all painful divisions and to offer a common testimony to the Christian gospel. Christ's prayer for unity is striking and challenging - "I ask not only on behalf of these but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:20-21).

39. Decades of experience of common prayer and spiritual sharing within the WCC constitute a heritage which cannot easily be ignored. Many Christians have the same experience in local situations; the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is one of the most widespread examples of such experience. Some churches today would easily affirm that they do not worship in the same manner they did fifty years ago. While they have been challenged initially, they have been enriched by their experience of common prayer. They have received with gratitude many gifts from other Christian traditions. During these decades, through their common prayer, dialogue and shared witness, churches have experienced progress towards unity, and some have even reached agreements leading to "full communion".

40. Praying together has also revealed many of the challenges along the

way towards unity. This is in part because of confessional and cultural backgrounds leading churches to worship in different ways. In addition, common prayer as it has developed in the World Council of Churches has caused difficulties for some churches. Indeed, it is in common prayer that the pain of Christian division is most acutely experienced.

41. The Special Commission has dealt with some of these difficulties, by identifying matters of ecclesiology, theology, eucharistic practice and other sensitive issues. While these difficulties are not to be minimized, the call to pray together continues to be a primary importance. A way forward is needed which will allow all to pray together with integrity, on the way towards visible unity. In that spirit, the Special Commission has prepared the attached framework for common prayer at WCC gatherings (Appendix A).

42. Towards that end, a clear distinction is proposed between "confessional" and "interconfessional" common prayer at WCC gatherings.[1] "Confessional common prayer" is the prayer of a confession, a communion, or a denomination within a confession. Its ecclesial identity is clear. It is offered as a gift to the gathered community by a particular delegation of the participants, even as it invites all to enter into the spirit of prayer. It is conducted and presided over in accordance with its own understanding and practice. "Interconfessional common prayer" is usually prepared for specific ecumenical events. It is an opportunity to celebrate together drawing from the resources of a variety of traditions. Such prayer is rooted in the past experience of the ecumenical community as well as in the gifts of the member churches to each other. But it does not claim to be the worship of any given member church, or of any kind of a hybrid church or super-church. Properly understood and applied, this distinction can free the traditions to express themselves either in their own integrity or in combination, all the while being true to the fact that Christians do not yet experience full unity together, and that the ecumenical bodies in which they participate are not themselves churches (see Appendix A, §§15-18)

43. Thus, the goals of the attached considerations are twofold. One is to clarify that "interconfessional common prayer" at WCC gatherings is not the worship of an ecclesial body. The other is to make practical recommendations for common prayer at WCC gatherings on how to use language, symbols, imagery and rites in ways which would not cause theological, ecclesiological or spiritual offence. To the extent that one can satisfy these goals, common prayer can become something in which all traditions may participate in good conscience, and with theological and spiritual integrity. While it is the hope of the Special Commission that this work will facilitate progress, it is recognized that for some churches, prayer with Christians outside their own tradition is not only uncomfortable, but also considered to be impossible (see Appendix A, §§8-10).

44. Eucharistic worship at ecumenical events has been a difficult issue for the fellowship of churches in the World Council of Churches. Not all can receive from the same table and there exists a range of views and disciplines among churches belonging to the fellowship of the World Council of Churches on the offering and receiving of the eucharist. Whatever one's views on the eucharist and how it may or may not be shared, the pain of not being able all to receive at the same

---

1 The words "confession", "confessional" and "interconfessional" are used as technical terms, recognizing that they are imperfect. Not all churches would define themselves in terms of confessions.

table is felt by all. Following the pattern of distinguishing between confessional and interconfessional common prayer, confessional celebrations of the eucharist at assemblies and other major events can be accommodated. The hosting church (or group of churches which are able to host together) should be clearly identified. While it should be very clear that the WCC is not "hosting" a eucharist, these confessional eucharistic services, though not part of the official programme, may be publicly announced, with an invitation to all to attend (see Appendix A, §§36-39).

45. Exercising care for each other within the context of the WCC often means raising awareness about the ways in which we might unintentionally offend each other. In this spirit, these considerations seek to make planners of common prayer more aware of potential areas of concern. But these considerations are not comprehensive, and must be met by the sincere intention to develop opportunities for all participants to pray with integrity. As this framework makes clear, common prayer at WCC gatherings should be the result of serious and sensitive planning, and is not a task to be undertaken casually (see Appendix A, §41).

VI.   Consensus model of decision-making

46. The Special Commission early came to the conclusion that a change in decision-making procedures in the governing bodies of the WCC would:

  a) enhance the participation of all members in the various meetings;
  b) preserve the rights of all churches, regions and groupings, especially those which hold a minority opinion;
  c) provide a more collaborative and harmonious context for the making of decisions;
  d) enable representatives to have more "space" to discern the will of God for the churches, the WCC and the wider human family.

47. Having examined some models, the Special Commission believes that the Council should move to the consensus method as described in Appendix B to this report.

48. The reasons for change are elaborated in paragraphs 1-7 of Appendix B. The recommended consensus model is described in paragraphs 8-20. Some possible difficulties with consensus decision-making are outlined in paragraphs 25-32, and responses are made to these possible difficulties.

49. The following definition of the consensus method has been adopted by the Special Commission:

  a) The consensus method is a process for seeking the common mind of a meeting without deciding issues by means of voting. A consensus is reached when one of the following occurs:

    i)   all are in agreement (unanimity);
    ii) most are in agreement and those who disagree are content that the discussion has been both full and fair and that the proposal expresses the general "mind of the meeting"; the minority therefore gives consent;
    iii) the meeting acknowledges that there are various opinions, and it is agreed that these be recorded in the body of the

               proposal (not just in the minutes);
iv)   it is agreed that the matter be postponed;
v)   it is agreed that no decision can be reached.

b) Therefore, consensus procedures allow any family or other group of churches, through a spokesperson, to have their objections to any proposal addressed and satisfied prior to the adoption of the proposal. This implies that the family or group of churches can stop any proposal from passing until they are satisfied that their concerns have been fully addressed.

c) Since consensus does not always involve unanimity, and since there will be rare cases when consensus procedures are tried and do not succeed, a mechanism will operate which allows the meeting to move forward to a decision. The revised rules of the WCC will need to specify how this mechanism works and to ensure that the consensus procedures are not weakened. This process of revision should include consultation with the Standing Committee (see §51 below).

d) Within a consensus model, minorities have a right for their reasoned opposition to a policy to be recorded, whether in the minutes, in reports of the meeting, or both, if they so request.

50. Some matters will be better resolved by a voting procedure, even when consensus procedure has become the dominant model of decision-making. These matters include some financial and budget matters and some administrative decisions. Elections will need to be conducted according to rules which are specific to the particular election. While these rules may include elements of the consensus model, they may also include a process of voting at some points. Appointment of programme staff will normally be by consensus. As these rules are being reviewed and revised, consultation with the Standing Committee on Orthodox Participation (described below) should take place.

51. A major part of the discussion on decision-making has centred on the idea of "parity" between Orthodox representatives and other representatives. The Special Commission argues for the establishment of a standing committee in the following terms:

a) Upon the completion of the work of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC, the central committee will establish a new body, to be called the standing committee on Orthodox participation in the WCC. In August 2002, the central committee will appoint the steering committee of the present Special Commission to fulfil that role until the next assembly of the WCC.

b) Following the next assembly, the new central committee will appoint the standing committee to consist of 14 members, of whom half will be Orthodox; of the overall membership at least half will be members of the WCC executive committee.

c) The Orthodox members of the central committee will appoint the seven Orthodox members, and the other members of the central committee will appoint the remaining seven. All members of the standing committee will normally be drawn from the member churches of the WCC. Proxies may substitute for absent members. In keeping with the practice of the Special Commission, observers (rules III.6.c) from non-member churches, or on occasion from churches in association with the WCC, can be invited by the standing committee.

d) Two co-moderators will be appointed from the membership of the standing committee, one appointed by the Orthodox members of the central committee, and one by the other members of the central committee.

   e) The standing committee will have responsibility for:

    (i)   continuing the authority, mandate, concerns and dynamic of the Special Commission;
    (ii) giving advice in order to reach consensus on items proposed for the agenda of the WCC;
    (iii) giving attention to matters of ecclesiology.

   f) The standing committee will give advice and make recommendations to governing bodies of the WCC, including issues of improved participation of the Orthodox in the entire life and work of the Council.
   g) The standing committee will report to the central committee and the executive committee.

52. The principle of parity led the Special Commission to discuss the idea of having two moderators in the governing bodies of the WCC (one Orthodox and one from another tradition) and two vice-moderators (again, one from each). A considerable number of commission members proposed that this idea be referred to the central committee. Other suggestions, such as the rotation of Orthodox and "non-Orthodox" in the office of moderator, were also proposed.

When working towards a consensus, the role of the person in the chair is crucial. He or she must regularly test the mind of the meeting as the discussion develops, must be careful to respect the rights of all, and help the meeting formulate its ultimate decision. Moderators need particular skills, and these skills will be enhanced if a process of preparation is entered into, before undertaking this task.

VII. Membership and representation

53. Subsequent to the establishment of the Special Commission the executive committee of the WCC set up a separate study group to investigate matters of membership and representation and to make recommendations. This membership study group is composed of both members of the central committee and the Special Commission with parity between Orthodox and participants from the other member churches. It has already made interim reports to the executive committee and shared these with the Special Commission at its plenary meetings. It will present its final report to the executive committee for submission to the central committee meeting scheduled for August 2002.

54. All reports of the membership study group have been made available to all members of the Special Commission. The meetings of the membership study group purposely have been scheduled to alternate with the meetings of the Special Commission so that at every stage of the development of the work of the Special Commission, the Commission has been informed of the work of the membership study group and at every stage of the work of the membership study group, the group has had the benefit of the comments, discussion and advice of the Special Commission.

55. With the encouragement of the Special Commission, major focuses of the membership study group's work were (a) listing theological criteria required of those seeking admission as members of the WCC, (b) formulating new ways of grouping churches for purposes of their representation and participation in the Council, (c) exploring new

models of membership including the family model and regional membership, and (d) evaluating new modes of relating to the Council.

56. The Commission proposes to the membership study group that the membership study group include in its recommendations to the executive committee two possibilities for churches wanting to relate to the WCC: (a) member churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC, (b) churches in association with the WCC.

   Member churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC are churches that agree with the basis of the WCC, confirm their commitment to the purposes and functions of the Council, and conform to the theological and organizational criteria.

   Churches in association with the WCC are churches that agree with the basis of the Council and are accepted for such status. Such churches can send representatives to the assembly and the central committee who can speak with the permission of the chair, but have no right to vote. Such churches can be invited to participate in the work of commissions, advisory groups, and other consultative bodies of the Council as consultants or advisers. Churches applying to be in association with the WCC should state in writing their reasons for requesting this relationship, which reasons must be approved by the central committee.

   The Commission encourages the membership study group to offer in its final report additional specific language spelling out more particularly the relationship entailed for churches in association with the Council consistent with the plenary discussion of the Special Commission in Järvenpää.

57. The Commission and the membership study group recommend that the existing category of associate member church under rule I.5.a.2 be eliminated in favour of the new category of relationship with the World Council of Churches entitled "churches in association with the World Council of Churches". The Commission and the membership study group recommend that the current category of "associate membership" by virtue of size under rule I.5.a.1 ("small churches") be incorporated into the description of member churches belonging to the fellowship of the World Council of Churches, retaining however the restrictions on participation by small churches (see attached Appendix C).

58. The Commission and the membership study group propose that new member churches be received at meetings of the central committee and not the assembly. The application for joining the WCC would be presented to one central committee meeting, with an intervening period of participation in the work of the Council and interaction with the local fellowship of member churches, and the decision taken on the application at the next subsequent meeting of the central committee. *This change in procedure will require a revision of article II of the constitution.*

59. Exploring the question of membership, the Commission and the membership study group considered alternatives of either confessional or regional membership, but rejected both as leading to a diminished sense of the constituency's owning the work of the Council. However, the study group and the Commission urge the churches to come together locally or confessionally for purposes of membership in the WCC.

60. The Commission and the membership study group propose that churches

join in groupings, e.g. geographically, confessionally, or according to other models, in order to make nominations for the central committee. Such persons, if elected, would be expected to develop a greater sense of responsibility/accountability to those who nominated them.

61. The Special Commission takes note of the work undertaken by the membership study group and reported to it in interim reports and commends its work, and particularly expresses its agreement with the proposed changes to the rules, including the theological criteria proposed by the membership study group, acknowledging the rules and the constitution may require further modifications. These proposed changes to the rules are attached to this report as Appendix B.

C

Some of the proposals listed below may require changes to the rules and to the constitution of the WCC, if adopted by the central committee and the assembly.

The Special Commission :

1. **Proposes** that the Council moves to a consensus method of decision-making as defined in paragraph 48, noting that a limited number of matters will still need to be decided by vote, as described in paragraph 49, and the need for a transition process leading to the use of the new procedures.

2. **Proposes** that a parity committee with the title of "The Standing Committee on Orthodox Participation in the WCC" be established, consisting of 14 members half of whom will be Orthodox (see §51b and c). Until the next assembly it is proposed that the present steering committee of the current Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC fulfil this role. The terms of reference of this committee are set out in paragraph 50.e, f and g.

3. **Requests** the Council to ensure that the consensus method be used at every stage in addressing social and ethical matters (see §26) and to facilitate the exchange and discussion of information and the sharing of expertise in the area of social and ethical decision-making, not least in relation to the issues mentioned in paragraph 31.

4. **Encourages** Faith and Order:
   a) to continue its studies on ecclesiology with special reference to the issues identified in paragraph 18, including: (i) visible unity and diversity; (ii) baptism and ecclesial fellowship;
   b) to explore the specific issue of the relation of the church to the churches, ensuring the engagement of the major streams of Christian traditions in that exploration (see §20);
   c) to undertake a presentation of the issues of ecclesiology which have been identified by the Special Commission at the next assembly (see §21).

5. **Receives** the document entitled "A Framework for Common Prayer at WCC Gatherings" (Appendix A) and commends it to those preparing common prayer at WCC gatherings.

6. **Asks** the Standing Committee on Orthodox Participation to consider how best the following points identified by the sub-committee on common prayer can be handled within the programmatic structures of the Council.

   a) consideration of the ecclesial nature of common prayer;
   b) consideration of sensitive issues as they continue to arise in common prayer at WCC gatherings;
   c) ongoing development of the life of common prayer in the fellowship of the WCC;
   d) use of the attached framework in planning common prayer at WCC gatherings, reflection in light of that experience, and further refinement of the framework as necessary.

7. **Recommends** in accordance with the proposals of the membership study group, as described in paragraphs 56-57, that in the future there be two ways of relating to the WCC:
   a) member churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC;
   b) churches in association with the WCC.

8. **Welcomes** the proposal of the membership study group for revisions to the Rules of the WCC regarding membership and in particular endorses the addition of theological criteria for member churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC as specifically formulated in appendix C, criteria, I.3a.

9. **Recommends** that churches be accepted to join the fellowship of the WCC at meetings of the central committee and not at the assembly. The application for joining the WCC would be presented to one central committee meeting, with an intervening period of participation in the work of the Council and interaction with the local fellowship of member churches, and the decision taken on the application at the subsequent meeting of the central committee.

Appendix A

A Framework for Common Prayer at WCC Gatherings[1]

Introduction

1. Common prayer in ecumenical settings makes it possible for Christians from divided ecclesial traditions to praise God together and offer prayer for Christian unity. Prayer lies at the centre of our identity as Christians, both in our separate communions and in the conciliar ecumenical movement. The very fact that we are able to pray together — both as individuals and as representatives of our churches — is a sign of the progress that has been made. Yet our common prayer is also a sign of those things that are still to be achieved. Many of our divisions become apparent precisely in our common prayer. [2]

---

2. Because of the complexities associated with common prayer at WCC gatherings, this document has been produced to identify a framework that may allow further progress. To help clarify some of the concerns and ambiguities raised by common prayer at WCC gatherings, it has been found useful to distinguish between "confessional common prayer" and "interconfessional common prayer".[3] The term "ecumenical worship" has caused confusion about the ecclesial character of such worship, the ecclesiological status of the WCC, and the degree of unity that has in fact been achieved. For these reasons, the phrase "ecumenical worship" will not be used.

3. The considerations offered here are not intended to be comprehensive. Rather, the document highlights particularly sensitive issues that have surfaced in recent years. The categories of "confessional" and "interconfessional" common prayer are set out with suggestions for the implementation of such prayers. But it cannot be expected that all the challenges of common prayer can be removed, or that all unease will disappear. The hope is to address several of the sensitivities involved, and to achieve as much clarity as possible as to the nature, status and purpose of our common prayer.

4. The considerations here presented are meant to address the current situation of the churches in the fellowship of the WCC, and are not to be construed as permanent or unchanging. Ongoing progress towards unity will require the occasional revisitation of this topic. Additionally, this framework should not be understood as universally applicable within the ecumenical movement at all levels and in all places. Rather, it is specific to the World Council of Churches and its various meetings.

Common prayer at WCC gatherings

5. The ecumenical movement calls its participants to a respectful and humble state of the heart. At the core of our journey together is a respect for each other's self-understanding, different as it may be from our own. We do not wish to judge each other. Neither do we wish to put a stumbling block before each other. It is in a spirit of generosity and care for one another that we enter this discussion of common prayer at WCC gatherings.

6. Christians from divided ecclesial traditions offer prayer together because of our shared belief in the Holy Trinity and in Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, and because of our common commitment to the quest for Christian unity. Our common prayer is both inviting and expectant. It is addressed to God, and is an opportunity to listen to God speaking to us. It is a time to plead together for unity, to witness to one another, and to receive God's gift of reconciliation. Our common prayer rightly entails adoration, confession, supplication,

---

1 These considerations were produced by a working group at the request of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the World Council of Churches. Working group members included an equal number of representatives from the Orthodox churches and from the other member churches of the WCC, as well as WCC staff. They were revised and approved by the common prayer sub-committee of the Special Commission, and by the Special Commission plenary. The Commission attached the document to its final report to the central committee.

2 During the course of the Special Commission's discussions on worship, a distinction has been made between the words "worship" and "common prayer." This distinction was introduced for understandable reasons, since "worship", as translated in a number of languages, carries the implication of eucharist. Yet the substitution of "common prayer" for "worship" is also somewhat complicated, since prayer can be misunderstood in a narrow way as private individual prayer. For the purpose of this paper, we use the term "common prayer", recognizing that this is an imperfect solution.

33 We use the words "confession", "confessional" and "interconfessional" as technical terms, recognizing that they are imperfect. Not all churches would define themselves in terms of confessions.

thanksgiving, listening to scripture, and intercession for others. As we pray together we give gifts to and receive gifts from each other. Most fundamentally, we offer ourselves to God in all our brokenness, and receive God's offer to heal, teach and lead us.

7. Unfortunately, one of the factors which divides Christians is the matter of worship itself. It is in common prayer, perhaps more than in any other ecumenical work, that we encounter both the promise of God's reconciliation, and the pain of our divisions. Because our unity is both gift and calling, both realized and hoped for, our common prayer must also stand in that risky place. The experience of praying together is not always a comfortable one, nor should it be, for we approach God together before we have been fully reconciled with each other.

8. Indeed, for some, prayer with Christians outside one's own tradition is not only uncomfortable, but considered to be impossible. For example, Orthodox Christians must take into account canons which may be interpreted as forbidding such prayer, although there is no consensus on how to apply these canons today. Historically, many Protestants have also faced obstacles to common prayer.

9. Yet common prayer in an ecumenical context can be understood as *a time for confession and reconciliation, on the way* to a full unity that would be expressed ultimately by sharing the Lord's supper at a common table.

> So if you are offering your gifts at the altar, and there remember that your brother [or sister] has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother [or sister], and then come and offer your gift. (Matt. 5:23-24)

10. The goals of these considerations are twofold. One is to clarify that interconfessional common prayer at WCC gatherings is not the worship of an ecclesial body. The other is to make practical recommendations for common prayer at WCC gatherings on how to use language, symbols, imagery and rites in ways which would not cause theological, ecclesiological, or spiritual offence. To the extent that we can satisfy these goals, common prayer can become something in which all traditions may participate, in good conscience, and with theological and spiritual integrity.

Challenges of common prayer in ecumenical settings

11. Common prayer at ecumenical events, particularly when combining elements from different traditions, is a source of joy and encouragement to many. It also poses challenges. The challenges have to do in part with issues of unfamiliarity, of adaptation to different worship styles, and even with a different "spiritual ethos". But the challenges of such common prayer go beyond issues of unfamiliarity; they are ecclesiological and theological as well.

Ecclesiological
12. Just as the World Council of Churches does not constitute "the church" or an ecclesial body itself, the common prayer of Christians from the different member churches is not the prayer of a church or "the church". When we gather together in prayer, we testify to a common

belief in and reliance upon God. Christ himself is among us, as he promised to be among the "two or three who are gathered" in his name (Matt. 18:19). Yet the prayer of Christians from divided ecclesial traditions, particularly prayer which seeks to combine traditions, sometimes delivers mixed signals as to ecclesial identity. Such confusion can result from the way in which a service is organized, presided over, and celebrated, as well as in its content – such as when the gathering is referred to as "church".

Theological

13. There is an inherent and deep connection between theology and prayer. The ancient dictum *lex orandi est lex credendi* says that we pray that which we believe. The doctrine of a church is expressed in its worship life. This connection creates potential problems when prayers prepared for ecumenical events can imply or explicitly convey theology that is in disagreement with that of some of the gathered members, or when these prayers presume a greater unity than that which is in fact realized between the churches.

14. Several factors, such as those mentioned above, make the endeavour of prayer in ecumenical settings challenging. But they do not detract from the necessity of such prayer, nor do they make it impossible. In the conviction that the problems posed by common prayer are not insurmountable, these considerations seek to offer advice for the preparation and conduct of common prayer at WCC gatherings, in order to allow the gathered community to pray together with integrity and devotion.

Confessional and interconfessional common prayer

15. When we gather to pray together at WCC events, there are occasions when the prayer has been identified with one confession or church within a confessional tradition; hence the term "confessional common prayer". More often, common prayer in ecumenical settings is prepared from a combination of traditions. Such common prayer has often been called "ecumenical worship", but this term can be imprecise and misleading, and therefore should not be used. Instead, a more precise term would be "interconfessional common prayer". Distinguishing between confessional and interconfessional common prayer, along the lines drawn below, may provide a greater clarity – both spiritually and ecclesiologically – to the prayer life of WCC events.

- Confessional common prayer is the prayer of a confession, a communion, or a denomination within a confession. It has a particular ecclesial identity. Examples would include the service of the word of a Lutheran church, such as the ELCA; or the healing rite of a united church, such as the United Church of Canada or the Uniting Church in Australia. It could be a Roman Catholic vespers service, or an Orthodox matins service.

- Interconfessional common prayer is usually prepared for specific ecumenical events. It does not emerge out of a single ecclesial tradition, or one church. It may represent patterns that churches have in common (service of the word, daily office), but it is not the established liturgy of one confession. It has no ecclesial standing; it is normally designed by an ad hoc committee.

16. The distinction between confessional and interconfessional is not always clear. For example, some confessional worship traditions may be

increasingly hard to distinguish from one another. This reality, which stems in part from a liturgical renewal which touches many traditions at once, is to be celebrated. Indeed, the experience of common prayer in local ecumenical contexts is an important feature of ecumenical progress, and these considerations should not be understood as discouraging this sharing. Another example is the distinct and living worship traditions of communities such as Iona and Taizé. These communities have spawned new and creative worship traditions which are not readily identifiable with any single church.

17. In spite of these realities, preserving the distinction between confessional and interconfessional common prayer at WCC gatherings, and making it explicit (i.e., identifying each event accordingly), can be useful in addressing many of the ambiguities and tensions associated with common prayer. Properly understood and applied, this distinction can free the traditions to express themselves either in their own integrity or in combination, all the while being true to the fact that Christians do not yet experience full unity together, and that the ecumenical bodies in which they participate are not themselves churches.

- Confessional common prayer expresses the integrity of a given tradition. Its ecclesial identity is clear. It is offered as a gift to the gathered community by a particular delegation of the participants, even as it invites all to enter into the spirit of prayer. It is conducted and presided over in accordance with its own understanding and practice.

- Interconfessional common prayer is an opportunity to celebrate together drawing from the resources of a variety of traditions. Such prayer is rooted in the past experience of the ecumenical community as well as in the gifts of the member churches to each other. But it does not claim to be the worship of any given member church, or of any kind of a hybrid church or super-church. It is not (or ought not be) celebrated or presided over in such a way that would associate it with any one church, or imply that it has an ecclesial status.

18. Both confessional and interconfessional common prayer offer fruitful models for prayer at WCC gatherings. The present text makes no attempt to prejudge where either confessional or interconfessional services are the most appropriate style of prayer, and events which incorporate multiple services can easily use both models in turn. However, services ought to be identified clearly as to which form they take, and, if confessional, with which tradition or church they are identified. What follows are considerations for preparation of common prayer at WCC gatherings.

Considerations for preparation of common prayer at WCC gatherings

Confessional common prayer

19. Confessional common prayer arises from the living worship experience of a particular tradition within the fellowship of the WCC. It will normally by planned by an individual or group from within that tradition, who will discern carefully how best to present the distinctive character of their worship within an ecumenical context. Confessional common prayer is a way of offering the spirituality of one group to others, and therefore should be representative of that group, although the prayer of one group may not be easily distinguished from some others (e.g. Methodist and Reformed). What is

offered should not be primarily experimental in character. Although confessional common prayer does not aspire to be universally accepted, planners should be sensitive to elements in their tradition which might cause difficulty for those present, and be ready to make occasional adjustments to their usual practice. Confessional common prayer should be designed and carried out in such a way that it is comprehensible to all those who are present, so that they may move beyond being observers. Planners should also take full account of the considerations below on use of language and on responsible approaches to sensitive issues.

Interconfessional common prayer

20. All participants enjoy equal status in interconfessional common prayer. As participants in the fellowship of the WCC, we share a belief in God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – and a common commitment to Christian unity. Whether clergy or lay, male or female, whatever our confessional background – as fellow pilgrims in the ecumenical journey, we participate as equals in interconfessional common prayer.

21. Interconfessional common prayer should avoid giving the impression of being the worship of a church. Different churches express the marks of ecclesial identity in different ways, which makes the application of this principle challenging. For example, for some member churches, ecclesial signs might include vestments, hierarchical leadership, clerical blessings, and the use of standard liturgical texts. Among other member churches, there is a variety of perspectives.[4]

22. Interconfessional common prayer in an ecumenical context is an opportunity to express together those things which we have in common, and to rejoice that "what unites us is stronger than what divides us". We can experience the variety of cultural forms with which Christian faith is expressed. However, interconfessional common prayer should take care not to prejudge, implicitly or explicitly, those theological points on which the churches are still divided.

23. Interconfessional common prayer at WCC gatherings would be well served by the use of a structure or *ordo*, based on the ancient Christian patterns. In developing the *ordo*, the planning committee might draw, for example, on the daily offices or on the service of the word. Common prayer should strive for a coherence which integrates the various elements into a unified purpose. Committees might consult the work of the worship committee for the 1998 assembly in Harare in regard to the application of an *ordo* in interconfessional common prayer. In discerning how to enact an *ordo* in a particular ecumenical context, committees should make use of elements which have been "ecumenically tested" by prior use and reception, as well as provide opportunity to receive fresh offerings from the worship life of the churches. The balance between new and familiar elements must be carefully discerned.

24. Interconfessional common prayer at WCC gatherings will normally be planned by a committee which is composed of representatives from multiple confessions and regions. This committee should consider carefully how to structure common prayer in order to avoid conveying the impression that the World Council of Churches is a church. They should also take full account of the considerations below on use of language and on responsible approaches to sensitive issues.

---

4 Further work might profitably be undertaken on the ecclesial nature of common prayer.

Considerations on responsible approaches to some sensitive issues

25. All planners of common prayer should attempt to be sensitive to those issues which might cause difficulty for some participants, and to strive to avoid offence wherever possible. The following considerations can help raise awareness to potential difficulties. These same considerations would apply to all common prayer at WCC gatherings, whether using confessional or interconfessional form. In its confessional form, common prayer normally follows the discipline of that confession, and all other attenders enter into the devotion according to their conscience. Even so, those planning confessional common prayer should discern carefully how best to present their tradition in an ecumenical gathering. While it is not always possible completely to avoid offence, planners should make every sincere effort to pursue that aim.

26. The following is not intended to be a comprehensive list of potentially sensitive issues, but rather reflects the particular matters which have arisen in the discussions of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the World Council of Churches.

27. *Use of symbols and symbolic action:* Symbols and symbolic actions chosen for prayer in ecumenical settings ought to be readily understood by a culturally and confessionally diverse ecumenical gathering. When using elements which are particular to one tradition, these should be presented in a way that honours the integrity of that tradition and is meaningful in ecumenical usage. Some symbols may not translate well between particular cultures and ecumenical settings, and some may be too contrived to be useful for common prayer. At ecumenical gatherings such as WCC events, we should expect to experience a variety of symbols, some of which are unfamiliar to some participants. Such symbols will require explanation.

28. The use of some rites and symbols can be challenging. Sometimes what is "inculturation" to some can be understood as "syncretism" to others, and vice versa. This is an impossible line to define with precision, and someone who is not grounded in the cultural context from which the symbol arises should be hesitant to make such a judgment. Yet those who are planning common prayer should be sensitive to cultural expressions which are likely to be misunderstood. The anticipated work in Faith and Order on the hermeneutics of symbols may prove useful in relation to these issues.

29. *Use of space:* Planners should be sensitive to the disposition of the space in which the common prayer is being held, and if it is in a church building, also to the protocols of liturgical space of that community.

30. *Leadership of women:* When common prayer is being offered in a confessional form, the practice of that confession in regard to leadership of women should normally apply. For interconfessional common prayer, a decentralized leadership and equality of participation allow for any participant – male or female, clergy or lay – to take any role. In an ecumenical context, we come together with a range of positions on the question of ordination of women, both between and sometimes within our churches, and we are not yet ready to reconcile these differences. Thus, planners should refrain from taking a confrontational stance on the question of ordination of women by implying that the current practice of a particular church is the only possible Christian position on the issue.

31. *Unfamiliarity:* Care should be taken that our common prayer invites participants into particular contexts and symbols rather than asking them to watch it done as a cultural display. For major events (and especially for first time attenders), this will probably entail an orientation to the experience, explaining what will happen and what it means. The question of how to make common prayer accessible for those who are not familiar with the form is equally relevant for both confessional and interconfessional common prayer. Each individual enters into the experience according to his or her own conscience, yet we should strive to allow participants to move beyond being simply spectators of unfamiliar rites. The elements of common prayer should not themselves become the focus of common prayer, but rather should serve to facilitate the genuine prayers of the community.

32. *Social and political themes:* Our common prayer rightly entails elements of moral formation and prophetic proclamation. We are called to pray for justice and peace, yet we can distinguish between thematic prayer and prayer used to divide us further on social and political issues over which we have deep disagreement. Our common prayer is addressed to God, and is an invitation to listen to what God is trying to teach us.

Use of language

33. Language matters. What we say in worship *(lex orandi)* is important because it represents a shared commitment of faith *(lex credendi).* In view of the profound connection between theology and prayer, issues of gender in language need careful consideration. The term "inclusive language" is sometimes used broadly and imprecisely. In fact, there are several separate issues involved.

34. We can make a clear distinction between language referring to God and language referring to human beings, and affirm that language for humans should always be inclusive of women and men. Language referring to the entire human community should also be sensitive to matters of race, class, and other potential categories of exclusion.

35. Scripture and Tradition offer a variety of metaphors and images for God. These metaphors and images can be used in common prayer to describe God and God's activity in history. However, we make a distinction between an image of God and the name of God.[5] We call upon

---

5 The Faith and Order paper *Confessing the One Faith: An Ecumenical Explication of the Apostolic Faith* is helpful with these issues:

"50. We may not surrender the language of Father for it is the way in which Jesus addressed, and spoke of, God and how Jesus taught his disciples to address God. It is in relation to the use of Father by Christ Jesus himself that the church came to believe in Jesus as the Son of God. The language of Father and Son links the Christian community through the ages and binds it in a communion of faith. Moreover, it is the language which expresses the personal relationships within the Trinity, and in our own relations with God.

51. Nevertheless, the church must make clear that this language neither attributes biological maleness to God nor implies that what we call masculine qualities, assigned only to men, are the only characteristics belonging to God. Jesus uses only some of the characteristics of human fatherhood in speaking of God. He also uses other characteristics than those of human fatherhood. Indeed, God embraces, fulfills and transcends all that we know concerning human persons, both male and female, and human characteristics whether masculine or feminine. However, Father is not simply one amongst a number of metaphors and images used to describe God. It is the distinctive term addressed by Jesus himself to God.

52. We may not surrender the names Father and Son. They are rooted in Jesus' intimate relation to the God whom he proclaimed, though he also used other characteristics than those relating to human nature. Beyond his own language, however, Christian

God using many metaphors, for example Lamb of God and Rock of Ages. However, at WCC gatherings, the revealed and biblical names for God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – should be used when naming God in common prayer. This trinitarian formulation is central to the WCC basis and is therefore commonly held in all member churches.

Eucharistic practice at WCC gatherings

36. Eucharistic worship at ecumenical events has been a difficult issue for the fellowship of churches in the World Council of Churches. We cannot all receive from the same table and there exists a range of views and disciplines among member churches on the offering and receiving of the eucharist. Whatever one's views on the eucharist and how it may or may not be shared, the pain of not being able all to receive at the same table is felt by all.

37. From an Orthodox perspective, the eucharist can only be celebrated by the church and shared by those in sacramental communion. For some Protestants, the eucharist is not only a sign of visible unity to be worked for, but also one of our greatest spiritual resources for the journey towards unity. For the latter, it is therefore appropriate to share it now. Some churches have an "open table" for all who love the Lord. Others offer hospitality at ecumenical occasions or in other clearly defined circumstances. It is important to understand and be sensitive to the different views held by the member churches and also to welcome the convergence in understanding the eucharist that is registered in *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* and in some bilateral dialogues.

38. The common prayer life of the ecumenical movement must have truthfulness and integrity. We cannot pray in a way which pretends we are something different from what we are, or that we are at a further stage in the quest for Christian unity than we actually are. The Lima liturgy is sometimes thought to be an ecumenically approved form for intercommunion between Roman Catholics, Protestants and Orthodox, thus creating the possibility that we might celebrate the eucharist together. This is not the case. While some bilateral agreements for intercommunion have made use of the Lima liturgy, this text has no official standing within the fellowship of the WCC.

39. Nevertheless, following the pattern of distinguishing between confessional and interconfessional common prayer, we can accommodate confessional celebrations of the eucharist at assemblies and other major events. The hosting church (or group of churches which are able to host together) should be clearly identified. While it should be very clear that the WCC is not "hosting" a eucharist, these confessional eucharistic services, though not part of the official programme, may be publicly announced, with an invitation to all to attend. Participants should be advised of the practice of the host church regarding who may receive communion, and should respect that advice.

Conclusion

---

language about God also draws from the resources of the whole biblical tradition. There we find feminine images too in talking about God. We must become more attentive to these. This will affect our understanding of the relationships between men and women created in God's image and the ordering and working of the structures of the church and society called to bear witness to wholeness."

40. Worship lies at the centre of our Christian identity. Yet in worship we also discover our brokenness. In an ecumenical context, common prayer can be a source of both joy and sorrow. When the pain of our disunity is compounded by an insensitivity to a particular ethos, a further deepening of division may result. As brothers and sisters committed to the quest for Christian unity, we seek not to offend but to encourage each other. We are called to approach common prayer with a spirit of generosity and love for one another.

41. Exercising care for each other in the context of the WCC often means raising awareness about the ways in which we might unintentionally offend each other. In this spirit, these considerations seek to make planners of common prayer more aware of potential areas of concern. But these considerations are not comprehensive, and must be met by the sincere intention to develop opportunities for all participants to pray with integrity. As this framework makes clear, common prayer at WCC gatherings should be the result of serious and sensitive planning, and is not a task to be undertaken casually.

42. This framework uses the terms "confessional common prayer" and "interconfessional common prayer" to identify two distinct forms of common prayer at WCC gatherings, and recommends no longer using the term "ecumenical worship". With this distinction, participants may enter the experience of common prayer with a clear understanding of the ecclesial status (or lack thereof) of each service, and thus feel free to pray with integrity.

43. Yet we continue on our ecumenical quest. Our divisions will not be resolved solely with theological dialogue and common service to the world. We must also pray together if we are to stay together, for common prayer is at the very heart of our Christian life, both in our own communities and as we work together for Christian unity. Thus the distinctions we make in this document are provisional, making space for common prayer before we have been fully reconciled with each other. We look forward to the day when our divisions will be overcome, and we can all stand united before the throne of God, singing praises together with one voice.

Appendix B

Consensus Decision-Making

Foreword to the Appendix

This appendix has its own history. In its original form it was a background paper to assist the discussion of the Special Commission on the issue of decision-making. In this form, it argued the case for change to existing decision-making processes and described the consensus model– or, to be more precise, one form of the consensus model - as an alternative process.

As the Special Commission has continued its work, many comments have been made on the paper, and the Special Commission has made decisions which have now become recommendations to the central committee of the WCC. The paper has therefore been revised and expanded considerably. However, it still bears the marks of its original purpose, namely as background material. In its revised form – as an appendix to the final report of the Special Commission – it serves as rationale, description and elaboration not only of the reasons for change but of the character of the proposed methods of decision-making. If the proposals are accepted by the central committee, the next step would be (1) to redraft the relevant portions of the rules of the WCC, and (2) to institute a transition process, whereby moderators and members of governing bodies can be helped to enter into the new procedures confidently and effectively.

I.   Why change decision-making procedures?

1. When the World Council of Churches was founded in 1948 the great majority of member churches were located in Europe and North America. The procedures for decision-making were, not unnaturally, based on the procedures customarily used in church councils – and secular bodies such as parliaments – in those continents.

2. In the intervening years more and more churches have become members. For many of the churches, especially Orthodox, these procedures do not resonate with the procedures of their own churches, or even, in some cases, with the cultures from which they come. There are differences, for example, between North and South. So the question is raised as to whether the current procedures should continue in their present form.

3. A second issue is the adversarial nature of the procedures. Proposals are debated "for and against". While amendments are possible – and frequent – speakers are encouraged to argue in favour or against, rather than to explore. On many issues there are of course three or four different viewpoints, not just two. While there is provision for questions concerning any proposals, the adversarial nature of the process is still apparent. In some cultures this adversarial approach, which can even be confrontational, is something to be avoided. Further, it is arguable that the church, being the body of Christ, is true to its inner nature when it is exploratory, seeking the mind of Christ and striving after a consensus which can declare: "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us..." (Acts 15:28). Rather than striving to succeed in debate, our aim should be a mutual submission, seeking to "understand what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17).

4. A third issue is the method of voting. In the present system a majority of 50 percent plus one is sufficient for a proposal to carry, unless some special provision is made for a different percentage. Many

matters are not closely related to doctrine or ecclesiology, and on these the voting will not usually follow denominational or cultural or geographical lines. But on other matters there has been, especially in recent years, a difference of approach between Orthodox on one hand and Protestants, Anglicans and Old Catholics on the other. Other combinations are of course possible, but with the present system of representation and membership (which is addressed elsewhere in the Special Commission's report) the Orthodox are a minority in the governing bodies of the WCC and in certain cases have been outvoted. The proliferation of small member churches also affects the nature of the Council. The question of reform of "voting power" may be part of the solution, but in this part of our report the issue is the voice of minorities and how that voice can best be reflected in the decisions that are made. Not only Orthodox participants in the WCC but other churches as well experience frustration at their inability to influence decisions sufficiently.

5. The fourth in this list of reasons is the rigidity of meeting procedures, not only in the WCC but in many church bodies. The system of motions, amendments, further amendments, points of order and so on, while it can certainly work well with some matters and on some occasions, often seems inappropriate to the complex questions of true Christian obedience, of proper ecumenical relations, and of a Christian approach to historical, social and global change. Procedures which allow more room for consultation, exploration, questioning and prayerful reflection would be likely to promote the purposes of the WCC better than the formal and often rigid procedures that are currently used. Even when it is doing its "business", the church should seek to express that faith which is "made effective through love" (Gal. 5:6). This is not to say that the WCC should attempt to do without rules: on the contrary, rules that are fair, readily understood and workable are essential. The question is the style, content and application of such rules.

6. In 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 St Paul speaks of parts of the body needing each other. A fully functioning body integrates the abilities and contributions of all the members. So it is in the church. A set of procedures which makes the best possible use of the abilities, the history, the experience, the commitment and the spiritual tradition of all the member churches should be the aim of the WCC.

7. If changes are made, they should be formulated after wide consultation. And once introduced, they may still be modified in the light of further experience. The Orthodox principle of *oikonomia* would suggest that the ecumenical movement can accommodate change and development as the issues and circumstances change. While the principle of *oikonomia* has been applied, historically, mainly to the sacraments, it can also refer to right judgment in other ecclesial matters – always, of course, in the light of faith. To respect the *oikonomia* is to be open to various expressions of faith and life while remaining true to the "faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 3). The experience of all traditions represented in the WCC is valuable and should be utilized, as and where practical, in the common life, the functioning and the programmes of the Council.

II   What sort of change? A possible direction

8. A method of decision-making based on consensus may well overcome most of the difficulties identified above. This document explores consensus decision-making with the hope that it can be adopted by the WCC for

all levels of governance. The consensus method is a means of arriving at decisions without voting. It is more conciliar than parliamentary, and more inclusive than adversarial. Some Orthodox churches use a similar procedure, also some other churches such as the Religious Society of Friends and the Uniting Church in Australia. The experience of these churches is reflected in the following summary. However, no particular model can be simply transferred from a denominational context to the ecumenical context of the WCC: adaptations will be needed.

9. It should be noted, first, that consensus is not the same as unanimity (see §14 below). For example, a minority may agree to let a proposal go forward which has convinced the majority but not the minority, i.e. the minority accepts that the proposal represents the general "mind of the meeting". This becomes possible when a minority feels that its concerns have been heard, understood and respected.

10. It is possible, too, to include, within the WCC rules, a provision that some matters will be decided by majority vote, either a simple majority or a greater number. In other words, consensus would be the normal procedure but not the invariable procedure. At the beginning of a session, the moderator would indicate clearly the procedures that operate in that session. The rules would determine those items of business which will be determined by vote.

11. How then does consensus procedure work? Typically a proposal, not always in complete or final form, is put forward, following which open discussion rather than "debate" begins. Usually the proposal has already been refined by a committee (see end of this section). The discussion may include questions. Members of the meeting may speak more than once. It is up to the moderator to ensure that all who wish to speak can do so and that no individual or small group dominates the discussion to the exclusion of others. It is important that all relevant views are brought forward at this exploratory stage.

12. As discussion continues, anyone may propose a change to the proposal without having to move an amendment. The moderator should test the response of the meeting to any such idea or modification by calling for an expression of opinion (sometimes called a "straw vote"). As the proposal continues to be discussed, the moderator needs to sense when the meeting is close to agreement. She or he may need to allow extra time for various denominational or cultural views to be expressed, but at an appropriate time the moderator should ask the meeting: "Are we agreed on this matter?" Or (similarly): "How many of you could accept this proposal in its current form?" This frequent testing of the mind of the meeting is central to the development of a consensus.

13. The assembly or committee may send a proposal to a drafting group or it may divide the whole meeting into sub-groups for a short or longer time, the purpose being to generate further refinements of the ideas and thereby move the meeting closer to consensus. "Table groups" or other groupings are also useful in clearing up misunderstandings. A weighty matter would typically be considered over several sessions, with time in between for a committee to incorporate comments and concerns from the discussion.

14.a. A consensus is reached, then, when any *one* of the following occurs:

1) all are in agreement (unanimity);
2) most are in agreement and those who disagree are content that the

discussion has been both full and fair and that the proposal expresses the general "mind of the meeting;" the minority therefore gives consent;

3) the meeting acknowledges that there are various opinions, and it is agreed that these be recorded in the body of the proposal (not just in the minutes);

4) it is agreed that the matter be postponed;

5) it is agreed that no decision can be reached.

  b. Therefore, consensus procedures allow any family or other group of churches, through a spokesperson, to have their objections to any proposal addressed and satisfied prior to the adoption of the proposal. This implies that the family or group of churches can stop any proposal from passing until they are satisfied that their concerns have been fully addressed.

15.a. If consensus *cannot* be reached, certain questions should be asked, such as:

(i) "Must a decision on this matter be made today?" If not, the matter should be deferred to a later session (tomorrow, next week, or some other time). Further seasoning by a committee and informal discussion among those with strong views will often bring the meeting to a different level of agreement at a later session. If yes (and this is quite rare), the attention of the meeting must shift from approving or not approving the proposal at hand to finding other ways of meeting the pressing or time-critical need. Interim solutions can sometimes be found while the meeting searches for consensus on the original question.

(ii) "Can this proposal be acted upon, on the understanding that some members (or member churches) cannot support it?" If no, the proposal should be deferred for further work, as above. If yes, the effect is that those persons, or member churches, or parts of the Council, being of a dissenting opinion, nevertheless allow a policy or programme to go forward without endorsing it. This is sometimes called "standing aside". In social and political issues it may sometimes be appropriate for some member churches or some committee or agency of the WCC to speak without committing the Council as a whole to one point of view (cf. the group in the Special Commission dealing with methodology in social and political matters).

(iii) "Have we asked the right question?" When agreement on the issue, as posed, is not possible, this should not be regarded as failure. Sometimes a different question will yield a consensus. Sometimes it is helpful to ask, "What can we say together?" The meeting may not be of one mind on a particular statement on a difficult issue, but may find great value in articulating its various perspectives and the fruits of its discussion. There may be foundational principles on which we all agree. A clear articulation of these, followed by a description of the diverse conclusions that Christians of good conscience have reached, can be a powerful product of a discussion.

15.b.   In rare situations, if the consensus procedures have been tried and have not succeeded, a mechanism will be needed to remove the blockage. The rules should specify how this emergency provision operates, ensuring that the emergency provision does not weaken the consensus procedures themselves. When drawing up this rule, consultation with the proposed standing committee (§21) should take place.

16. In all cases in which consensus proves elusive, it is incumbent on

those with concerns to work closely with those who initiated the item of business so as to find creative ways of moving forward. A major purpose of the WCC is for churches to learn from each other, to deepen their fellowship and to be better equipped for their mission. This means that there will be occasions when the churches accept a situation of disagreement while continuing to help and support each other.

17. It can be gauged from the above description that effective chairing is essential to the success of consensus procedures. The moderator must be fair, sensitive and experienced. She or he must be able to sense the trend of a discussion and help the meeting to crystallize its thinking. Misunderstandings can be avoided if the moderator "checks" frequently the development of the mind of the meeting. This can be done, for example, by the use of coloured cards (say, orange for a positive opinion, blue for a negative). Such opinion can be sought on a part of a proposal, even a small part. The moderator can help the meeting by asking a "blue card holder" to explain what it is that prevents him or her from giving assent to the ideas being put forward. In this way objections can be aired, and possibly dealt with, as the discussion evolves. The aim is for the meeting as a whole to participate in developing the final decision, i.e. not only those who are particularly adept in debate, or those who use the official languages easily, or those who put the proposal forward in the first place. The rules should specify the role of moderators. While flexibility is important, it is also necessary to give guidelines for chairing meetings.

18. Between sittings the moderator may use a moderatorial group or reference group to provide advice. A business committee may perform the same function.

19. It is advisable, in an extended meeting, to specify the type of procedure for each particular session, e.g. a "voting" session; a "consensus" discussion; an "information" session. Such clear delineation may help members, especially the newer ones, or those working in their second, third or fourth language, to participate more easily. If the procedure is changed *during* a session, this should be done with care and with full explanation. If a complex or contentious issue is to be dealt with, prior notice is important. Prior to the actual discussion, i.e. at an earlier session, it can be helpful to give a "preview" of the issue so as to help members in their discussion at a later time.

20. The above principles, outlined only briefly here, need converting into rules. When these rules have been adopted and put into practice, experience over the months and years will indicate where further modifications need to be made. There is no single or pure form of the consensus method: the aim should be to develop a specific form for the specific needs of the WCC and to adjust the procedures in the light of experience. The Orthodox principle of *oikonomia* is relevant here. If the purposes of the WCC and of its programmes and policies are clear, the means by which these purposes, programmes and policies are achieved can be reviewed whenever it is desirable to do so.

21. In the work of the Special Commission, further suggestions which do not belong exactly to the consensus principles have been made. The first of these is the establishment of a standing committee on Orthodox participation. The detailed proposal is in the final report of the Special Commission. The principle of parity is important here.

22. The second is that if modifications to particular proposals have been prepared before a meeting sits, these should be notified – even circulated before the meeting begins – so as to allow adequate time for reflection. This would especially help those who are new or those who are working in a language which is not their first language. This provision implies that sudden changes to proposals (in the older terminology "late amendments") should be permitted only when there is adequate time for explanation and discussion.

23. A third suggestion is that business committees should prepare for a plenary session in such a way as to avoid unnecessary polarizing of opinion. Such committees may also be called between sessions of a meeting to advise on procedure and to interpret the progress of the meeting. The concerns of minorities can sometimes be conveyed through members of a group such as this. When sensitive issues of ecclesiology or of a moral or political nature are proposed for discussion, the preparation by such a committee can help to ensure justice for all parties and also help avoid divisive debate. The rules of the WCC already describe the work of business committees, and these rules may need review. A business committee should where possible follow consensus procedures.

24. The keeping of minutes is an important task. The meeting needs to understand what it is agreeing to, so the text of all decisions should be read or displayed during the meeting. Major contributions to any discussion should also be recorded and this should include a summary of differing viewpoints. The right for a minority to have its dissent recorded in the minutes and/or in any report of the meeting should be preserved, although in consensus procedures it is rare for such a right to be exercised. Sometimes it will be helpful for a small group to review the minutes before they are issued.

III. Possible difficulties with the consensus procedure

25. It has been suggested that the consensus procedure can be cumbersome and slow. For example, a published chart which outlines the Uniting Church in Australia's version of the procedure looks quite complicated. There are numerous steps to take on the way to declaring a consensus.

26. However, the experience of churches which use the consensus method indicates that this fear is probably exaggerated. Because people are working in a system which is less adversarial and less rigid than the older procedures, participants seem more prepared to listen to alternative views and to accept differences of opinion. It is not the case that the procedures, in normal circumstances, retard the making of decisions. Some discussions may be slow-moving, certainly, but this may be desirable if the topic requires detailed exploration or if there is a divergence of viewpoint. Generally there is an increased sense of cooperation simply because of the flexible and collaborative nature of the process. It should be admitted that, under consensus procedures, fewer decisions may sometimes flow from a particular meeting, the reason being that careful consultation takes time.

27. A second possible difficulty is that minorities – even one or two individuals – can stand in the way of forward-looking or innovative proposals. In other words, the desire for full participation and for consensus could open the door to unnecessary delay or even obstruction in the consideration of new ideas.

28. The response to this is twofold. First, consensus is not the same as unanimity. While everyone in a meeting can contribute to discussion, there is usually no voting. Objectors (we could call them "blue card holders") can state their objections but the moderator will seek their concurrence with the wishes of a clear majority of the meeting. In this way no one's conscience is compromised, and decisions can still be made in an orderly way.

29. The other response is about the psychology of consensus procedure. While blue card holders have the right for their dissent to be recorded in the minutes and/or in any report of the meeting, experience shows that they rarely insist on this. The reason is that the discussion allows for many contributions and the moderator is responsible for seeing that the discussion has been both fair and as detailed as it needs to be. Because minorities are not "squashed", their response is normally to allow the meeting to move ahead to a decision.

30. Third, it has been suggested that the "prophetic voice" of the WCC could be muted by the checks and balances of the consensus model. Again there are two points to be made in response. First, the encouragement of open discussion actually allows a diversity of views to be expressed. Second, the care taken in reaching decisions promotes the "owning" by all members of a meeting and therefore the solidarity of the ecumenical fellowship. Where decisions are not unanimous, and even where consensus proves to be unreachable, there is a process of reflection and enrichment which strengthens the voice of the Council. A document which honestly explores the diversity of opinion within the ecumenical community can be a profoundly "prophetic" expression. To face differences squarely, and to accept each other in Christian love, is important in any ecumenical body.

31. A fourth possible difficulty is the amount of power given to the moderator. She or he must guide the discussion, sum up from time to time, and perceive when a consensus is developing. This responsibility is great, and (as in any procedures) mistakes can be made. But the flexible nature of the procedures is an effective balance to this heavy responsibility of the chair, i.e. any member of the meeting, without having to move "dissent from the ruling of the chair" (or some similar motion) can make a suggestion at any time concerning the guiding of the meeting. A good moderator (as in any procedures) will be open to suggestions. As soon as any member is dissatisfied with the handling of the business, a remedy is at hand. Some examples of such remedies have been given above. A reference group or business committee could also advise the moderator regarding the efficient handling of the business (see §23).

32. It has been suggested that a process of equipping moderators for their new role may be advisable. This is because the change of procedure to a consensus model is more than a technical matter or a change of rules. Members of a meeting, as well as moderators, need to adopt a different attitude towards decision-making. A "transition plan" should be developed, and perhaps a handbook issued.

IV.   Conclusion

33. The above paper gives a description of how consensus procedures work, and the benefits that can be gained. To convert the principles into rules is a further step. It is important to reach agreement (even a consensus!) about the aims and principles first, and then to translate the principles into actual procedures suitable to the needs of the

WCC.

34. The principles described above are an attempt to implement the
    accepted ecumenical aim of enabling all representatives and member
    churches to be heard within a committed fellowship which accepts
    differences of theology, culture and ecclesial tradition. Minorities
    may express their mind on any issue, and should, in consensus
    procedures, be allowed more than one attempt, if needed, to explain
    the basis of their views. At the same time the WCC can still (as it
    must) make the decisions about policy and programmes which are
    essential to its life.

35. All churches believe in the centrality of holy scripture in their life
    and doctrine. A significant image of the church in the New Testament
    is the image of the body of Christ, diverse and yet one. In the life
    of the WCC, with its fundamental aim of promoting the unity of all
    Christians, there must similarly be respect for diversity and
    difference. The rules and procedures which govern the working of the
    Council should enshrine this respect. While ecclesiologies in the WCC
    differ considerably from one tradition to another, the life of the
    Council should as far as possible be a mirror of the essential nature
    of the church. The consensus procedures offer an opportunity for the
    Council to put into practice a model of unity, a respect for diversity
    and the making of decisions in a way that is careful, flexible, frank
    and unifying.

Appendix C

**Proposal for Changes to the Rules
of the World Council of Churches**

I.   Membership in the fellowship of the World Council of Churches

The World Council of Churches is comprised of churches which have
constituted the Council or which have been admitted into membership and
which continue to belong to the fellowship of the World Council of
Churches. The term "church" as used in this article could also include an
association, convention or federation of autonomous churches. A group of
churches within a country or region, or within the same confession, may
determine to participate in the World Council of Churches as one church.
Churches within the same country or region or within the same confession
may apply to belong to the fellowship of the Council, in order to respond
to their common calling, to strengthen their joint participation and/or
to satisfy the requirement of minimum size (proposed rule I, 3.b.3). Such
groupings of churches are encouraged by the World Council of Churches;
each individual church within the grouping must satisfy the criteria for
membership in the <u>fellowship of the</u> World Council of Churches, except the
requirements of size.

The general secretary shall maintain the official lists of member
churches that have been accepted to belong to the fellowship of the World
Council of Churches, noting any special arrangement accepted by the
assembly or central committee. Separate lists shall be maintained of
voting and non-voting member churches belonging to the fellowship of the
WCC. *The general secretary shall also maintain* a list of churches in
association with the Council.

1. Application
A church that wishes to join the World Council of Churches shall apply in
writing to the general secretary.

2. *Processing*
The general secretary shall submit all such applications to the central
committee (see art. II of the constitution) together with such
information as he or she considers necessary to enable the central
committee to make a decision on the application.

3. *Criteria*
Churches applying to join the World Council of Churches ("applicant
churches") are required first to express agreement with the basis on
which the Council is founded and confirm their commitment to the purposes
and functions of the Council as defined in articles I and III of the
constitution. The basis states: "The World Council of Churches is a
fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and
Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill
together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son
and Holy Spirit."

Applicant churches also should understand themselves as conforming to the
following criteria, and be ready to give an account of their faith and
witness in relationship to these terms.

a) Theological

1. In its life and witness, the church professes faith in the triune God as expressed in the scriptures and in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.

2. The church maintains a ministry of proclaiming the gospel and celebrating the sacraments.

3. The church baptizes in the name of the "Father, Son and Holy Spirit" and acknowledges the need to move towards the recognition of the baptism of other churches.

4. The church recognizes the presence and activity of Christ and the Holy Spirit outside its own boundaries and prays for the wisdom of all in the awareness that other member churches also believe in the Holy Trinity and the saving grace of God.

5. The church recognizes in the other member churches of the WCC elements of the true church, even if it does not regard them as churches in the true and full sense of the word.

b) Organizational

1. The church must produce evidence of sustained autonomous life and organization.

2. The church must be able to take the decision to apply for formal membership in the WCC and continue to belong to the fellowship of the WCC without obtaining the permission of any other body or person.

3. An applicant church must ordinarily have at least 50,000 members. The central committee may decide for exceptional reasons to accept a church that does not fulfill the criterion of size.

4. An applicant church with fewer than 50,000 members but more than 10,000 members which has not been granted a size exception, but otherwise is eligible for membership, can be accepted subject to the following provisions: (a) they shall not have the right to vote in the assembly, and (b) they may participate with other such churches in selecting five representatives to the central committee in accordance with section III.4.b.3 of the rules. In all other respects, such churches shall be referred to as member churches in fellowship with the WCC.

5. Churches must recognize the essential interdependence of the member churches belonging to the fellowship of the WCC, particularly those of the same confession, and should make every effort to practise constructive ecumenical relations with other churches within their country or region. This will normally mean that the church is a member of the national council of churches or similar body and of the regional/subregional ecumenical organization.

Other changes to the rules and to the constitution may be required if proposals of the Special Commission and the membership study group are adopted by the central committee.

Appendix D

Membership of the Special Comomission
* Members of the Steering Committee
May 2002

Dr Anna Marie Aagaard *
Evangelical Lutheran Church
in Denmark

Dr Agnes Abuom
Anglican Church of Kenya

Bishop Nareg Alemezian *
Armenian Apostolic Church
(Cilicia)

Prof. Dr Walter Altmann
Evangelical Church of Lutheran
Confession in Brazil

H.E. Metr. Ambrosius of Helsinki
Orthodox Church of Finland

H.E. Metr. Ambrosius of Kalavryta
Church of Greece

Archbishop Aristarchos
of Constantine
Greek Orthodox Patriarchate
of Jerusalem

Mr Ramez Atallah
Synod of the Nile
of the Evangelical Church

Rev. Canon Naim Ateek
Episcopal Church in Jerusalem
and the Middle East

H.E. Metr. Athanasios Papas
Ecumenical Patriarchate
of Constantinople

Archbishop Aghan Baliozian
Armenian Apostolic Church
(Etchmiadzin)

H.E. Metr. Anba Bishoy
of Damiette *
Coptic Orthodox Church

Bishop Gustáv Bölcskei
Reformed Church in Hungary

Ms Manoushag Boyadjian

Armenian Apostolic Church
(Cilicia)

Prof. John Briggs
Baptist Union of Great Britain

Dr Thelma Chambers-Young
Progessive National Baptist
Convention, Inc.

H.E. Metr. Chrysostomos
of Ephesus *
Ecumenical Patriarchate
of Constantinople
Co-moderator

H.E. Metr. Chrysostomos
of Peristerion *
Church of Greece

Archbishop Chrystophor
Orthodox Church in Czech Lands
and Slovakia

Rev. Yadessa Daba
Ethiopian Evangelical Church
Mekane Yesus

Mr Jean Fischer
Swiss Protestant Church
Federation

Prof. George Galitis
Greek Orthodox Patriarchate
of Jerusalem

Rev. Gao Ying
China Christian Council

Rev. Fr Dr Kondothra M. George
Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church

Bishop Hans Gerny
Old Catholic Church of
Switzerland

Ms Anne Glynn-Mackoul
Greek Orthodox Patriarchate
of Antioch and All the East

Eden Grace

Religious Society of Friends

Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson *
Reformed Church in America

H.E. Mar Gregorios Yohanna
Ibrahim
Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch

Fr Mikhail Gundyaev
Russian Orthodox Church

Mr Gabriel Habib
Greek Orthodox Patriarchate
of Antioch and All the East

Bishop Dr Hilarion of Kerch *
Russian Orthodox Church

Bishop Dr Thomas L. Hoyt Jr
Christian Methodist Episcopal
Church

Bishop Voitto Huotari
Evangelical Lutheran Church
of Finland

Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Ica, Jr
Romanian Orthodox Church

H.E. Ignatije of Branicevo
Serbian Orthodox Church

H.E. Irenej of Novi Sad
and Bachka
Serbian Orthodox Church

H.E. Archbishop Jeremiasz
of Wroclaw
Autocephalous Orthodox Church
in Poland

H.G. Bishop Basilios Karayiannis
of Trimithus
Church of Cyprus

Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky *
Orthodox Church in America

Bishop Dr Christoph Klein
Evangelical Church of the A.C.
in Romania

Bishop Dr Rolf Koppe *
Evangelical Church in Germany
Co-moderator

Ms Jana Krajcirikova
Czechoslovak Hussite Church

Dr John Lappas
Orthodox Autocephalous Church
of Albania

Dr Janice Love
United Methodist Church

Archbishop Makarios
Greek Orthodox Patriarchate
of Alexandria and All Africa

Most Rev. W.P. Khotso Makhulu
Anglican Church

H.G. Abune Mekarios
Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo
Church

Dr Soritua Nababan
Huria Kristen Batak Protestan

H.E. Archbishop Dr Nifon
of Targoviste *
Romanian Orthodox Church

Dr Mercy A. Oduyoye *
Methodist Church Ghana

Rev. Ofelia Ortega
Presbyterian Reformed Church
in Cuba

Rev. Dr John-Wha Park
Presbyterian Church in the
Republic of Korea

Archbishop Michael Peers *
Anglican Church of Canada

H.E. Metr. John Pelushi
Orthodox Autocephalous Church
of Albania

Rev. John Phiri
Reformed Church in Zambia

Ms Despina Prassas
Ecumenical Patriarchate
of Constantinople

Ms Najla Qassab
The National Evangelical Synod
of Syria and Lebanon

Prof. Constantine Scouteris
Greek Orthodox Patriarchate
of Alexandria and All Africa

Dr Mary Tanner *
Church of England

Bishop Dr Zacharias M.
Theophilus*
Mar Thoma Syrian Church

of Malabar

Rev. Robina Winbush
Presbyterian Church (USA)

Rev. Dr D'Arcy Wood
Uniting Church in Australia

Note:

In the course of the three-year mandate of the Special Commission some changes in its membership have occurred. The following persons have been members and participated in sub-committee and plenary meetings:

- Very Rev. Dr Georges Tsetsis
  Ecumenical Patriarchate
  of Constantinople
- Rev. Dr Eugene Turner
  Presbyterian Church (USA)