

## 31 Group 05 Report to Faith and Order Plenary Commission

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### *The Nature and Mission of the church – Report Group 5*

1. The NMC document is a witness to the progress we make in the quest of unity, because it reveals how much we can say together on the church. It demonstrates also our ability to name our differences honestly and it invites us to continue the discussion on an even deeper level. The NMC document is a sign of hope.

2. A question remains open: what is the aim of NMC? Should it become a study document of F & O or a convergence document as BEM? An answer to that question can hardly be delayed, because it will influence the way of working further on it and improving it.

We suggest that NMC remains a theological document. However in order to make it more accessible to a wider audience some background and explanatory material on the self-understanding of the different church traditions and on regional contextual situations could be useful. That would foster the reception of NMC and favour the ongoing process of reception by all churches engaged in the quest of church unity.

3. The NMC document puts a huge question of ecumenical methodology. The implicit NMC ecclesiology seems shaped by a given implicit methodology. Some members of our group felt that they hardly could come with this implicit methodology, others that they were almost entirely pushed out in the boxes. How to overcome the difficulty? Would it be possible to present to the churches a convergence document that confesses the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church beyond the different and diverse theological traditions? We asked ourselves if a further criterion for improving NMC could be: to what extent each of us can recognize his belonging to Christ Jesus in his church in the future NMC document? How could the studies on “moral discernment” and “Tradition and traditions” further that process?

4. Our group 5 stressed that the theological convergence on the NMC document should rely on the already living Christian unity experienced in many places.

We rejoice on the unity experienced among Christian communities which live under pressure and even under persecution.

We rejoice that Christian communities experience unity by serving together the poorest in their midst and by listening to the voices and insights of the younger generation.

We rejoice on the impact of BEM, which made possible the ongoing and hope-giving dialogue in process on NMC.

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