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***“Nature and Mission of the Church” an Ecumenical perspective”
Proposal for a Study Programme***

***To initiate a Study Programme on:
“The Nature and the Mission of the Church
in Ecumenical perspective”
Proposed jointly by different Churches***

Context:

-The World Council of Churches, through the “Faith and Order Commission “ invited Churches, commissions, theological institutes , ecumenical councils and individuals to reflect on the text:

“The Nature and the Mission of the Church:

A stage on the way to a Common Statement”

“Faith and Order” Paper 198

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/faith-and-order-commission/i-unity-the-church-and-its-mission/the-nature-and-mission-of-the-church-a-stage-on-the-way-to-a-common-statement.html>

-The modern Ecumenical Movement, initiated by the International Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, will celebrate the Centenary in the year 2010.

A Global research proposal is launched by the WCC: “Mission and Visible Unity – Ecclesiology and Mission”.

Purpose of the Study programme:

The Subjects ***“Nature” and “Mission” of the Church”*** are part of the Formation Programmes in our different Churches, being fundamental elements of the study and formation of future Pastors and Missionaries.

This proposal is to promote a joint study programme with collaboration of the theological and Mission department, in an ecumenical perspective. Where the collaboration with Institutes of other Christian Churches is possible, it would be indicated to form an Inter Church team of Formation to initiate this proposal.

The Members of the team in charge will elaborate and collaborate in shared responsibility, to integrate the proposal in the study programme of the Churches. Different modules will be possible, in the most suitable form, for example: as a seminar, a course, or an Inter Institute study week...

The purpose of the study project is to introduce and acquaint the students with the theological reflection on the Church’s Nature and Mission, and the pastoral consequences in the context of the Ecumenical Movement in Africa. The aim is to help them to integrate into their pastoral responsibility for the African Christian Communities belonging to different Christian Denominations, the challenges they will discover together in their study process.

The study is an original project in the Ecumenical field of “Ecclesiology and Mission” in the 21st Ecumenical Movement in the African Churches.

The seminar will invite and accompany the students into the “irrevocable involvement for Unity” (cf. Pope John Paul II) of the Church of Africa (Ecclesia in Africa n°64) required by Jesus’ Prayer (Jn. 17, 21)

Content:

The Theological-Pastoral study of both elements of the proposal include the “Nature and the Mission” of the Church, in the context of the African Ecumenical Movement and discover together the real challenges for the search of unity.

The Catholic study project will be invited to submit the options of the study to the African Churches in connexion with the Second Special Assembly of the Synod “The Church in Africa in service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace”.

Main Bibliography:

Catholic Church Documents:

- “Lumen Gentium” Constitution on the Church. Vat II
- “Ad Gentes”, Mission activity of the Church. Vat II
- “Evangelii Nuntiandi”, Encyclical of Pope Paul VI. 1975;
- “Redemptoris Missio”, Encyclical of Pope John Paul II. 1990
- “Unitatis redintegratio”. Decree on Ecumenism. Vat II
- “Ut Unum sint”, Encyclical of Pope John II. 1995
- PCPCU, Directory for the application of Principles and norms on Ecumenism ‘93

WCC Churches Documents:

- “The Nature and Mission of the Church. A stage on the way to a Common Statement”, “Faith and Order” Paper 198.
- “The Unity of the Church as Koinonia: gift and Calling”, Seventh Assembly of the WCC, Canberra, 1991 (Website)
- “The Unity we seek” WCC Assembly Porto Allegre 2006
- “You are the light of the world”, Statements on Mission by the WCC 1980-2005, Web site: www.mission2005.org, “resources”. “Ecumenical Affirmation” 1982 . (pg 1- 38), “Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today”, 2000. (pg 59 – 89)
- International Review of Mission, World Council of Churches, Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, “Ecclesiology and Mission” I, II, III.

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