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Some reflections on The Nature and Mission of the Church. A stage on the Way to a Common Statement

a. From the perspective of Eastern Christianity, the high minded declarations of the Faith and Order Movement, striving to attain 'life together in visible unity' has severely been undermined by the selfish attitude of many churches in the west. The process on 'Towards a Common Understanding and Vision of the World Council of Churches', and the call to search for visible unity is being undermined willfully by individual churches taking decisions on local level, without any regard for the 'Church as the ONE Body of Christ. In the past centuries Ecumenical Council would be called to decide on particular issues concerning the church. This practice has been totally displaced.

- b. 1. The inclusion of and ordination of gay bishops
2. Ordination of women into the priesthood
3. The elevation of women priests to the order of bishops
4. The decision to tolerate same sex marriages
5. The decision on abortion
6. The willingness of the church to allow pro-creation outside the sacrament of marriage by external medical intervention
7. The timidity of the church by condoning the human atrocities in Israel, Darfur, Iraq.
8. The compromised status of the western Christian states in their demonising of Islam and conduct of war against terrorism

these activities cannot be described as 'credible witness to unity in diversity'.

c. While it is true that each particular church has the obligation to serve first and foremost its own flock, but in matters that are fundamental to the Christian creed, Christian ethics, and moral expression of faith, these must not be sacrificed for the satisfaction of small minorities (birth, abortion, ordination, marriage, war).

d. If there is to be an 'emerging convergence on the nature and mission of the Church', actions taken on the above fundamental issues, the universal church should be *consulted before the decision is taken and not after*. Convergence needs more than just moral obligation to inform.

e. The WCC Churches and the Faith and Order Commission have failed visibly in their duty of Christian mission and care to the emerging Christian communities emerging from the shadow of the Soviet era. The WCC has not intervened, or assisted the national churches in the post Soviet era. The multiplication of western sects, the centres of evangelisation and mission set up in the Orthodox churches freed from Communist, has not helped the national churches to reestablish themselves after 75 years of intolerance towards the Christian faith. The WCC of Churches has failed miserably in its mission to support the revitalisation of Christianity in the former Republics.

Yours sincerely,

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