



Original

Document No. **GEN/PRO 02**
English

FOR INFORMATION

**Reports of Consultative Bodies
for consideration by the Programme Committee**

1. Summary report of the **Commission on World Mission and Evangelism**, 20 – 26 April 2007, Chavannes-de-Bogis, Switzerland (pages 2-5), and excerpts from the report of the **CWME executive group**, 15 – 17 November 2007, Chavannes-de-Bogis, Geneva, Switzerland (pages 6-7)
2. Report of the **Joint Consultative Commission between the World Council of Churches and Christian World Communions** held on 10 May 2007, Geneva, Switzerland (pages 8-11)
3. Summary report of the **Faith and Order Commission**, 12 – 18 June 2007, Crans-Montana, Switzerland (pages 12-17)
4. Report of the **Commission on Education and Ecumenical Formation**, 27 – 30 June 2007 in Bossey, Geneva (pages 18-25)
5. Report of the **Commission of the Churches on International Affairs**, 11 – 13 September 2007, Geneva, Switzerland (pages 26-29)
6. Report of the **Decade to Overcome Violence Reference Group**, 8 – 12 December 2006, Dublin, Ireland, and 4 – 7 October 2007 Geneva, Switzerland (pages 30-31)
7. Report on the meeting of the **Joint Consultative Group between the World Council of Churches and Pentecostals** held from 4 – 9 October 2007 in Baar, Switzerland (page 32)
8. Report of the **Plenary Meeting of the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches**, 20 – 27 January 2008, Rome, Italy (*The report will be available after the meeting*)

Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME)

20 – 26 April 2007

Chavannes-de-Bogis, Switzerland

(Summary report)

Prioritization and guidance

The commission prioritized the work of the WCC that falls strongly within its mandated purview. At the broadest level, the most important themes for the work (not listed here in any order) are:

1. “Church and Mission” and “Spirituality”, including topics of Spirit and mission, secularization, search for new spirituality, spiritual formation, consumerism, creation, non-denominational worship, and collaboration with Faith and Order such as input on *The Nature and Mission of the Church*;
2. “Evangelism” and “Christian Identity and Plurality”, including work on the meaning and theology of evangelism, collaboration concerning a code of conduct on conversion, and attention to religious and cultural plurality, and;
3. “Inclusive Communities”, including Project 204 and issues of migration and multi-cultural approaches, theological reflection, power and respect, marginalization, racism, poverty, just treatment, and collaboration with the Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN).

In addition to work to be done in programme 2, commissioners prioritized collaboration with the WCC projects on "health and healing" and on the AGAPE process. They expressed a desire to request the hiring of an additional staff person responsible for evangelism to contribute to the work in the first two areas listed above. They affirmed publications and worldwide web work as key methodologies, the desirability of continuing the letter on evangelism, and some offered to assist with the *International Review of Mission*.

Events and plans

In relation to its own substantive impact on the Edinburgh 2010 centenary process and event, the commission reviewed the nine study themes proposed by the process's initial organizers and prioritized Theme Five, “Forms of missionary engagement,” and Theme Eight, “Mission and unity – ecclesiology and mission”. The methodology will adopt an accessible and popular style allowing interaction with local communities and missionary agencies and the participation of young people and marginalised groups.

In addition the commission decided to design and sponsor the next WCC Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, drafted a proposal concerning the conference for the WCC central committee review (see appendix 1), and referred that draft to the CWME executive group for further development (see appendix 2). The hope is that the next CWME will take place in late 2011 somewhere in the “global south”. It will focus on Mission, Evangelism and Unity and include sub-themes shaped by the prioritization and guidance provided by the commission (see above), and it will have a strong involvement of youth. The proposal seeks authorization to form a planning committee and hire staff as appropriate.

Leadership, governance and membership

The commission developed its leadership team by choosing Kirsteen Kim as its vice-moderator, asking that Jacques Matthey continue serving as the CWME Secretary until his retirement, and adding to the executive group commissioners Maria Koutatzi, Anna Ljung, Jennifer Martin and Tito Paredes. A list of functions for the executive group was agreed upon, and Clara Mino Muthuka was named an alternate in case a member of the executive group cannot serve.

The commission chose a delegate to the General Committee governing the Towards Edinburgh 2010 process and event. Nayiri Baljian agreed to serve in this way, with Anastasia Vassiliadou as alternate. The commission will communicate a request that its General Committee delegate also sit on the 2010 executive committee.

The commission is recommending the formation of a reference group¹ to accompany and guide WCC staff working in the areas of evangelism, church and unity.

The WCC staff expected to be present to resource meetings of the commission were named, as were staff who might be brought in occasionally because of special programmatic affinities. The commission also determined that it will be the advisory body for the staff of Project 204 in the new WCC configuration², and that it should have a way to be represented on the advisory body for the WCC work on health and healing.

The process of revising the by-laws of the commission was launched. Before the next meeting of the commission, all affiliated bodies will be able to comment on proposed changes during a six-month period. Through this process the commission wishes to: clarify the current meaning of out-dated language referring to programme and staff structures; correct the current situation of a time lapse between functioning commissions; formalize the practice of nominating its own moderator, and; make it possible to set up ad hoc groups without waiting for programme committee approval.

The commission approved the application of the UEM – the United Evangelical Mission Communion of Churches in Three Continents – for affiliation to the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism.

Group formation

The commissioners affirmed that at this first meeting they had become a group that worships, is productive, and shows real care for and enjoyment of each other. Common prayer and Bible study times were edifying. Ad hoc working groups were good venues for going into depth and producing concrete proposals. Social times were delightful, including a hilarious evening of games and songs at the hotel and a gracious evening at Bossey.

Future meetings and suggestions

During an evaluation session, commissioners enthusiastically affirmed this first meeting, and offered advice and requests about their next meetings. Two ideas that received assent were that the executive group study how to reduce the number of days needed for future meetings, and that meetings begin with a stimulating presentation on some areas of mission and missiology. The next meeting of the commission will take place in India during the first ten days of October, 2008, with some of those days providing an optional opportunity to experience India.

Appendix 1: original proposal for a CWME conference in 2011 as agreed by consensus at the commission meeting.

Appendix 2: excerpts from the minutes of the CWME executive group which met in November 2007 following the debate on CWME's conference proposal at WCC executive committee meeting in Armenia. It contains the summary of the discussions during the CWME EG on plans for 2010 and 2011 and the modified CWME decisions resulting from the meeting.

¹ Not necessarily to be taken in the strict WCC terminology (ed.)

² The commission can't decide on this – it expressed a strong intention (ed.).

Appendix 1

Proposal for a Conference on World Mission and Evangelism*(Appendix to the minutes of the CWME Commission Meeting**20-26 April 2007, Chavannes-de-Bogis)***The Commission on World Mission and Evangelism proposes to hold a Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in late 2011.****Why hold a World Mission and Evangelism Conference?**

- The CWME is mandated in its by-laws to organise a Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, and considers this mandate a privilege, as ecumenically inclusive conferences that specifically focus on mission and evangelism have a significant impact in the global church.
- The proposed conference specifically offers opportunities to follow up on the previous CWME conference in Athens, to use the Edinburgh 2010 process and event as important input in setting the mission agenda, to mark the end of the Decade to Overcome Violence as well as the 50th anniversary of the merging of the WCC and the IMC, and to bring mission and evangelism implications to the WCC assembly in 2013 to help the assembly address mission in the 21st century in a forward-looking and integral manner.
- A special feature of a CWME conference at this time is its potential to impact the wide constituency of CWME.
- The need for the conference relates to the global church's need for a missiological landmark at this time in its history. It is also important at this historical juncture to recognise and explore ways in which young people are and can be missionaries.

Thematic area*Mission, Evangelism, and Unity: What is God's mission amongst us together?*

The priority of this theme emerges naturally from the assembly in Porto Alegre and should be understood to refer also to evangelism whenever we speak of mission. As planning proceeds, we propose to find ways to weave together most of the following themes, in every case using a missiological focus:

- Unity in Mission and Unity and Mission
- Conversion, and evangelism in unity
- Power and Mission – missiological support for overcoming violence
- Contextualisation of holistic health and healing
- Mission in religiously pluralistic and globalizing society
- Mission and the growing search for spirituality
- Ecology and the Creation in relation to mission

Process and methodology

- Preparation: We will emphasize pre-conference preparation at all levels to guarantee ownership and impact of the event.
- Building on input: We will use inputs from other processes and events, notably from Edinburgh 2010.
- Emphasis on the youth: We dream of having a 50% participation of young people. We envisage a conference that will welcome young people as leaders but we also anticipate intergenerational leadership and dialogue.
- Participation: We look to create a spirit of encounter and participation through home groups, workshops, participatory methodologies even in plenaries, and the best use of technology to include people who are not physically present. We want to offer ways to go deeper into issues.

To these ends, we look for a relatively small number of registrants but wish also to establish an inclusive participant's profile which doesn't marginalise any group.

- Worship and Bible studies: Within WCC guidelines for worship, we hope to include common prayer and some opportunities for regionally organised prayers with simultaneous events in the respective continent.
- Outcomes: Among other outcomes, documents will be produced that help meet the goals of being a missiological landmark and of broad ownership.
- Evaluation and Follow-up: organise an evaluation of all stakeholders (including participants); ensure a follow-up mechanism for results to have an impact on the CWME constituency and on the WCC 2013 assembly.

Venue

- The preference is for a location in the "global South", though not in Latin America where some recent ecumenical events have taken place.
- The place will be selected to connect to the conference's theme.
- We will take into account the local ecumenical community, practical issues of mobility and budget, and will seek to avoid duplicating the next assembly's venue.

Timing

- We anticipate that the best time in relation to other WCC events is late autumn in 2011, and we would appreciate being able to push the date out even further if the central committee can see fit to schedule the next assembly for late in 2013.

Proposals submitted to the central committee through its programme committee:

The CWME Commission recommends the holding of a Conference on World Mission and Evangelism before the next WCC assembly according to the CWME by-laws and following the guidelines suggested in this text.

The CWME Commission asks the programme committee to allow it to form a CWME Conference Planning Group.

The CWME Commission proposes to hire a full-time consultant with administrative assistant to provide the necessary staff support for the preparation and organisation of the Conference.

Appendix 2

CWME Executive Group (EG)
 15 – 17 November 2007
 Chavannes-de-Bogis, Geneva, Switzerland
(Excerpts from the report)

CWME in the years 2010 - 2011

The EG based its deliberations on the status of the matter as summarised in document 07 – 04 and oral comments from staff following discussions within WCC and at the WCC executive committee. This provoked a long discussion during two or three full sessions. Only a few points are mentioned below:

- Need for developing an ecumenical strategy for the coming years.
- Find ways to support what's going on (e.g. International Ecumenical Peace Conference (IEPC)) from CWME's side and provide input.
- Need and importance to bring results to the 2013 assembly - i.e. a renewed ecumenical understanding of mission.
- Independently of the decisions for 2010-11, there is a need to redefine the role of commissioners, and find ways to involve them in a more creative manner.
- How much is the debate on whether CWME should or should not organise a "conference" or an "enlarged meeting of the commission", or a "missiology consultation" a semantic problem?
- If no world mission conference is held between two assemblies (the 2006 and 2013 ones), it would be the first time since 1961 that this happens.
- Difficult not to follow the mandate given in the by-laws to prepare a conference.
- Concern for the use of CWME's resources, both in terms of finances and staff time.
- Unique contribution a world mission conference can make to the ecumenical debate.
- Strong wish to have a significant contribution from CWME to the next assembly and visibility for mission at the assembly.
- Why should the end of the DOV and a IEPC as well as the Faith and Order plenary have so much more importance for WCC than a CWME conference coming one year after the Edinburgh "global-forum-type" event?
- The "WCC representatives" at the 2010 conference should include the wide constituency of CWME, not just the WCC member churches.
- Wide, varied and strong participation at world mission conferences is particularly important for the Roman Catholic Church, as happened at Athens.
- If Edinburgh concentrates on celebrating and looking to the past, CWME will want to look to the future.
- Organise the best way to match the expectations of the "main achievements" formulated for WCC's programme work.

The EG could not come to an easy conclusion between its wish to hold on the proposal coming from the commission to organise a CWME conference, the need to take WCC executive committee's positions into account and the forecast of staff's involvement and tasks both for CWME and the WCC as a whole (contributions to IEPC and the assembly).

There was however **agreement** on the following points:

- CWME wants to have a meaningful event held in the "global South" (a definition including China)
- CWME aims at a smaller meeting than the last two world mission conferences

Decisions

In reference to the scenarios mentioned in its preparatory document, the EG reworked and modified the decision taken in April by the full commission - while keeping its thrust - and decided to plan its work in the coming years on the basis of the following guidelines. As such the EG acts on behalf of the commission.

1. The 2010 meeting of the commission shall take place following the Edinburgh conference, from Monday June 7 to Thursday June 10, in Edinburgh, but preferably in another place than the big meeting.

It is envisaged to organise a "caucus" during the Edinburgh event for all those interested in the question "what is the mission task of the WCC 100 years after Edinburgh?". But the EG does not plan to ask all WCC delegates to stay on after the Edinburgh centennial event.

2. The CWME EG accepts the recommendation from the WCC executive committee that the CWME Commission shall bear itself the responsibility for formulating the new ecumenical convictions on mission to be presented to the WCC assembly (as main achievement). It accepts to withdraw the original proposal to organise a world mission conference in 2011.

It requests the programme committee to allow it to set up working groups dedicated to this task, within budget limits.

3. In November 2011, the regular CWME Commission meeting will mark the 50th anniversary since the integration of IMC and WCC at New Delhi. This could be either through an enlarged meeting of the commission, or through a sequence of commission and a missiological consultation, organised within normal budget and programme plans.
4. CWME sees it as imperative to plan a "mission pre-assembly event" in 2012, to see whether its work resonates with the views of the WCC mission constituency, and in order to prepare a significant input on ecumenical perspectives on mission for the next assembly.

The timing in 2012 will avoid the overstretched years 2010 and 2011, and provide sufficient time for taking stock of the Edinburgh and the IEPC results. As an assembly pre-event, it will not add unduly to staff's burden, since it would be part of the overall assembly planning.

This pre-assembly event would be financed by CWME's own budget, but its shape and theme would have to be co-ordinated with the thematic and methodological plans for the assembly.

The pre-assembly event shall be in the "global South" and involve a significant participation of young people.

In accepting thus to submit to the recommendation coming from the WCC executive committee, the EG reminds the WCC that CWME had decided very early on to refrain from declaring the centennial celebration as a classical WCC world mission conference. CWME had also decided early on not to organise another mission conference of its own in 2010, as many other organisations will do. But CWME has difficulty to accept that there would not be a CWME world mission conference between the assemblies and so requests at least a clear, significant and well-prepared place for mission matters at the 2013 assembly.

**Joint Consultative Commission
between the World Council of Churches
and Christian World Communions**

10 May 2007
Geneva, Switzerland

1. Introduction

The 17 persons appointed to the Joint Consultative Commission between the World Council of Churches and Christian World Communions (JCC) met in Geneva on 10 May 2007. This was the first meeting of a new and unique commission.

The establishment of such a commission represents decades of work on the part of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and many Christian World Communions (CWCs) to create a relationship of trust and partnership between conciliar and confessional ecumenical actors. It also represents the explicit request for more visible cooperation from churches having strong links to both the WCC and their respective communion.

The commission considered the feasibility of providing space for CWCs in an expanded assembly and expressed its commitment to mapping deeper programmatic cooperation and identifying potential synergies between and among the WCC and CWCs.

2. Opening the commission

Following prayers in the Ecumenical Centre chapel, Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia, WCC general secretary, who welcomed participants and expressed his joy at seeing this new commission come to life, opened the meeting. He emphasized the foundation of the commission as one body gathering representatives of the CWCs and the WCC together in dialogue.

H.G. Bishop Nareg Amezian (Armenian Apostolic Church, Holy See Cilicia), moderator of the Joint Consultative Commission, after thanking the general secretary, offered a reflection on the topic "From CUV to JCC Mandate", in which he surveyed the growing interest of WCC member churches to pursue visible unity through increased collaboration between confessional and conciliar ecumenical instruments (cf. appendix 1). He also referred to the working mandate of the JCC provided by the WCC Porto Alegre assembly (cf. appendix 2).

Dr Robert K. Welsh (Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council), moderator of the Conference of Secretaries of Christian World Communions (CWCs), offered a reflection on the annual informal dialogue among CWCs that led the Conference of Secretaries to propose the formation of a Joint Consultative Commission with the WCC. He referred to the importance of claiming together and nurturing the oneness of the ecumenical movement (cf. appendix 3).

The participants expressed great appreciation for both presentations, which aptly described how two paths converged to form one commission. Participants expressed a sense of urgency to move forward in practical and meaningful ways. The relevance of the JCC in the context of ongoing reflection on 'ecumenism in the 21st century' was also highlighted.

3. Future assemblies

Mr Douglas L. Chial, WCC programme executive for church and ecumenical relations, recalled the previous day's related discussion with the steering committee of the Conference of Secretaries of CWCs then referred to the letter sent by the WCC general secretary to all WCC constituents requesting feedback on the feasibility of a WCC assembly to gather all churches and offer expanded space to partner ecumenical organisations. He drew attention to the commitment of the WCC general secretary to procure a mandate from the next central committee to move forward or to not move forward with such an event so as to inform an inclusive planning process from the beginning.

He emphasized this meeting as the specific opportunity to discuss “the feasibility of a structure for WCC assemblies that would provide expanded space for Christian World Communions and confessional families to meet for the purpose of deliberation and/or overall agenda” and proposed as examples some of the ideas that have emerged thus far (cf. appendix 4).

When reflecting on the Porto Alegre assembly, all communion representatives agreed that more time to meet as participants from the same church family would be welcomed.

The integral relationship between the Porto Alegre vision of an “ecumenical assembly”, continuing dialogue on ‘ecumenism in the 21st century’ and the Global Christian Forum was mentioned by many.

Discussion drew attention to the continued potential for confusion based on the variety of models previously discussed, i.e. joint, common, ecumenical and now an expanded WCC assembly.

Some participants expressed concern that the Porto Alegre vision of an “ecumenical assembly” was not limited to the exclusive context of a WCC assembly as was put forward in the WCC general secretary’s letter requesting feedback on the ‘next WCC assembly’. Other participants considered it necessary for the WCC to retain neutral ownership of such an event as primarily a WCC assembly.

Some commission members expressed the desire to see more signs from the WCC, expressing openness to change – to transform the *status quo* – so as to do something new and not simply restructure the existing model of a WCC assembly.

Reflecting ecclesial variety and relative forms of governance, there was varied feedback from each communion representative on how such a space could be used by respective communions. There was stronger support from LWF and WARC. Both interest and hesitations were noted by Anglican, Roman Catholic, Orthodox and historic peace church participants.

The discussion affirmed the following:

- Need to continue creative dialogue on the possible formats that would allow different communions to take advantage of expanded space. This discussion brought to the table new ideas about Anglican participation (Anglican Communion Congress in 2013); historic peace church participation (bringing together Brethren, Friends and Mennonites for consultation); and mission trip opportunities (e.g. during time given to others church families for communion exclusive business).
- Need to define, the nature, style, participation and theological grounding of such an event.
- Need to attend equally to the desire to both deepen and expand existing ecumenical relationships through such an event, which was seen as somewhat non-compatible, e.g. an expanded WCC assembly might seem more inclusive, but poses the risk to become exclusive – either of communions that do not take advantage of expanded space or of churches that would not attend a WCC-sponsored event.
- Need to establish criteria for such an event, i.e.:
 - To enhance the role of the WCC as a fellowship of churches;
 - To enhance the role of the WCC in nurturing the one ecumenical movement;
 - To rely on the Basis of the WCC to determine participation.
- Strong desire of the JCC to be part of the planning process.
- Hesitations were noted about the varying forms of communion governance, competing formats, the manageability of such an event and the need to further resolve the operative vision of ‘common’ versus ‘expanded’ assembly.

4. Programmatic cooperation

Mr Georges Lemopoulos, WCC deputy general secretary, and Dr Aruna Gnanadason, WCC executive director for planning and integration, presented the new WCC programme structure,

drawing attention to the three-fold vision for transformation and the anticipated achievements. They mentioned existing collaboration with CWCs and plans to develop programme-specific relational strategies.

Discussion among participants highlighted the need to recognize in each others planning documents (CWC documents as well as WCC documents) the ways in which the WCC and CWCs are working or could work in collaboration and the need to recognize the advantages of achievements between CWCs as significant contribution to the multilateral ecumenism.

It was agreed a two-day meeting in 2008 is a good opportunity to more closely evaluate the collaborative work being done and to see how deeper programmatic cooperation can be facilitated.

5. Nature of the commission

Participants continued their reflection on the initial mandate of the JCC and its continuing work. The differing natures of the annual Conference of Secretaries of CWCs and the participation of CWCs in the JCC were discussed.

It was affirmed that this body does not simply strengthen the work of the WCC and CWCs, but actually strengthens the churches in their confessional and ecumenical commitments. The need to focus future discussions on programmatic cooperation was highlighted, i.e. mapping existing collaboration and potential synergies. The need to attend to the initial mandate to consider the significance and implications of overlap of membership was also mentioned.

It was suggested that the mandate of the commission might be reformulated in the future so as not to be exclusively determined by an assembly of the WCC.

6. Future meetings

- **10 to 12 November 2007**, Conference of Secretaries of CWCs annual meeting, Nairobi. JCC members present in Nairobi will meet to consider developments towards an expanded assembly. Logistics by John Graz.
- **14 and 15 May 2008**, Joint Consultative Commission, Geneva. Logistics by Doug Chial. Reservations confirmed at John Knox. Preceded by CS CWC steering committee, 13 May.
- **21 to 24 October 2008**, Conference of Secretaries of CWCs annual meeting, Geneva. Logistics by Doug Chial. Reservations confirmed at John Knox.

7. Closing the commission

Bishop Nareg Amezian thanked the participants for their dedication. The moderator thanked Robert Welsh for providing leadership. He also thanked Doug Chial and Luzia Wehrle for their assistance in preparing the meeting.

Bishop Brian Farrell (Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity) closed the meeting in prayer, offering thanks for our unity in Christ, confessing our divisions as churches, recognizing our differences as Christians and asking God to help us carry each other.

8. Participants

The participants in the JCC meeting, included the following:

- H.G. Bishop Nareg Amezian, Armenian Apostolic Church (Holy See of Cilicia), JCC moderator
- Rev. Canon Gregory Kenneth Cameron, Anglican Consultative Council
- Mr Douglas L. Chial, World Council of Churches
- Bishop Brian Farrell, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity
- Father Mikhail Goundiaev, Russian Orthodox Church
- Dr Aruna Gnanadason, World Council of Churches
- Dr John Graz, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

- Very Rev. Archimandrite Benedict Ioannou, Ecumenical Patriarchate
- Nancy Irving, Friends World Committee for Consultation
- Dr Odair Pedroso Mateus, World Council of Churches
- Dr Larry Miller, Mennonite World Conference
- Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, Lutheran World Federation
- Rev. Dr Setri Nyomi, World Alliance of Reformed Churches
- Rev. Dr Larry Pickens, United Methodist Church, representing Bishop Sally Dyck
- Monsignor John A. Radano, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity
- Rev. Dr Martin W.H. Robra, World Council of Churches
- Dr Robert K. Welsh, Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council

9. **Appendices** (available upon request)

- Appendix 1 – Opening presentation by HG Bishop Nareg Alemezian
- Appendix 2 – JCC working mandate
- Appendix 3 – Opening presentation by Rev. Dr Robert K. Welsh
- Appendix 4 – Assembly presentation by Doug Chial

Faith and Order Standing Commission Meeting

12 – 18 June 2007

Crans-Montana, Switzerland

(The full report can be found in the minutes of the commission)

I. Introduction

The Faith and Order Standing Commission met from 12 – 18 June 2007 at the Villa Notre Dame, Crans-Montana, Switzerland. Standing commission heard reports on work done and planned, and made further plans for further work in the various programme areas; established a list of names to complete plenary commission, to be presented to WCC executive committee in September 2007; arranged for the next meeting of standing commission in June, 2008; and began planning for a meeting of plenary commission in October 2009. The 25th anniversary of the publication and sending of BEM to the churches was observed in one of the morning services of the word.

Standing commission heard from Thomas Wipf, President of the Swiss Federation of Protestant Churches (FEPS), and his colleagues Martin Hirzel and Martin Sallmann about the work of FEPS and the ecumenical situation; Martin Hoegger brought the 75th Anniversary of the 1st Faith and Order Conference in Lausanne (2002) again to life, and introduced vividly the local ecumenical situation in that city.

II. Actions

The following reports and actions were agreed by consensus.

A. Study programmes

1. Ecclesiology

In light of the decision of standing commission to focus the next plenary commission meeting on church unity, the ecclesiology group sees a natural intersection with the work that has been planned by this group. We would like to work with the plenary planning committee to use the plenary commission meeting as a consultation to talk about the central topic of our working group and to consider any responses to *The Nature and Mission of the Church* that we may have received by that time.

We have identified seven areas of reflection that could be developed into specific programmes for the plenary commission meeting, and they can also be continued areas of study beyond the meeting in Argentina. The major topics and possible subtopics are:

- 1) Church unity (local, universal, koinonia)
- 2) God's action and unity of the church (revelation, witness, Holy Spirit, the work of God and the work of humans, models of the action of God in theology)
- 3) Visible unity (different understandings and models)
- 4) Mutual recognition (sacramental ministry)
- 5) Character of difference (legitimate and illegitimate)
- 6) Authority and mutual accountability (reception of ecumenical results, conciliar statements)
- 7) Mission (apostolicity), unity, and history of the development of the understanding of unity (in light of the 2010 anniversary of the meeting in Edinburgh)

Some of the topics listed above have natural connections with each other, and as specific programmes develop, they may be combined. Topic 6 would be an opportunity to connect our work on ecclesiology with the other study groups of Faith and Order. Topic 7 also has a natural connection with CWME,

and we will explore the possibility of having a consultation with them in mid-November 2008 that could serve to help plan for the plenary commission meeting. In light of our meeting in Crans-Montana with Hans Ucko, we are aware that mission is an area in which the fact of a multi-religious world must be kept in mind.

We offer these themes to the plenary planning committee, and we are willing to work closely with that committee to develop concrete programmes.

As we develop the programme for this term, we want to be mindful of what has been achieved already in ecumenical work, but we also want to allow new voices to reflect on the previous work. The programme for the plenary commission meeting should intentionally include perspectives of people outside the normal “ecumenical” circles (theologians of the south, feminist theologians, etc.). Their insights may allow us to see old problems in fresh ways.

The ongoing work of this group after the 2009 plenary commission meeting will include the following: encouraging responses from the churches to *The Nature and Mission of the Church*, monitoring and discussing those responses and using the results of the plenary commission meeting for further reflection on the topics of that meeting. It is likely that one or two consultations may follow from the plenary commission meeting, but the contents, dates, and places of these are yet to be determined.

A working group has been formed consisting of the following persons: Birmelé, Gennadios, Henn, Hind, Hovhanissian, Ionita (co-moderator), Kaulule, Klukach, Lancaster (co-moderator), Link-Wieczorek, Robeck.

2. Moral discernment in the churches

We propose that the working title of our project be “Moral Discernment in the Churches”. This project will explore the various ways churches make decisions about moral issues. Through this study, we hope to identify principles and practices of moral discernment we hold in common as churches and to discover where we diverge. Our goals are to claim the common ground we share, to help us understand how and why we often come to different conclusions, and to search together for ways to prevent our principled differences from becoming church dividing.

We are not yet clear what the end result of our study will be; but we propose that we begin the process with a consultation in New York City, March 27-31, 2008. We envision a conference of 15-20 participants, including members of our committee, appropriate WCC staff, members of plenary commission who have relevant expertise, and other scholars as necessary. Dagmar Heller and the co-moderators will finalize the list of invited persons.

The conference will have a twofold purpose: to “harvest” and reflect on work that has already been done on the issue in bilateral and multilateral documents, within the academy, and within WCC; and to test and refine the case study method we will employ in subsequent consultations. Rebecca Todd Peters will present a case study on economic globalization and poverty, with formal responses from invited participants. Consultation participants will refine the methodology presented by Peters and we anticipate using this methodology in relation to a series of case study consultations (3-4) over the remainder of this working period. We then anticipate engaging in a meta-analysis of these case studies to try to glean insight into how moral discernment in the churches works in light of these specific issues.

Questions we will ask about our practices of moral discernment include the following:

- How far do we and can we go together?
- When do we differ in our approach, and why?
- What are our authorities?

- How do we read and engage Scripture?
- What informs our decision making?

At next year's meeting in Cairo the working group will make specific recommendations about methodology and possible case studies for future consultations, and make a proposal about our contribution to the 2009 plenary in Buenos Aires.

A working group has been formed consisting of the following persons: Bouwen (co-moderator), Koukoura, Lowery, Oshitelu, Peristeris, Peters (co-moderator), Schmidt-Streck, Shastri, Tausi.

3. Tradition and traditions: Sources of authority for the church

Two consultations under this general title are foreseen.

*1. A consultation on *The Teachers and Witnesses of the Early Church; a Common Source of Authority, Variouslly Received?**

We would explore, from our different confessions and traditions, how the teachers and witnesses of the early church are sources of authority for us. The consultation would include the presentation of papers from different confessions about how the teachers and witnesses of the early church function authoritatively for them and responses and reflections from others to these presentations.

There would be a keynote paper on "How the Fathers read the Scriptures". Then papers from Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican and two (Lutheran, Pentecostal) Protestant churches. In each case there will be two responses, one from the same tradition or family and one from another tradition or family (including, at this point, Methodist and Reformed voices). We would hope that among these papers and responses would be represented the voices of those who, though speaking from within a confessional tradition, bring the insights of, for example, feminism, historical scholarship, the experience of the poor and others.

There would follow discussion in mixed groups, panel discussion and in plenary. We would also invite two theological listeners, one of whom would listen for what is held in common and the other for difference. And we would aim to produce papers and reflections which would merit publication.

We have had an invitation to Westminster College, Cambridge, UK in September 2008 and would hope to meet for five days.

*2. A second consultation (possibly in 2010): *Sources and Forms of Authority for the Churches**

In this consultation we would begin our reflection from where we are now, rather than, as in the first consultation, from the early Christian era.

We would invite a wide range of people to reflect on the sources of authority from which they draw in their churches today. It would range across confessional, contextual and experiential categories to engage in critical and thoughtful reflection upon the ways in which the different churches draw on both common and different sources of authority, ancient and contemporary.

A working group has been formed consisting of the following persons: Andinach, Anyambod, Athavale, Bishoy, Durber (co-moderator), Eriksson, Hilarion (co-moderator), (Kordochkin, proxy for Hilarion at Crans-Montana), Treloar, Vasilios, Roman Catholic commissioner.

4. Baptism

A group with a limited mandate has been formed in order to revise the text *“One Baptism: Towards Mutual Recognition”* for final review at the next standing commission meeting. The revisions should maintain the present character of the text as a study document, while addressing the issues raised by the groups during this meeting, some of which are:

We believe this paper is *not* too academic. It is fine for its purpose as a study guide for the churches. It is very much based on biblical reflections. Perhaps it needs to emphasize more clearly its main strategy; to place the liturgical expression of baptism (the water rite) within the life-long journey of Christian faith. Does it need to be clearer that it is *not* a consensus document – or convergence document, but a study guide?

There should be a footnote near the beginning to explain to any reader that he/she will be reading about “baptism” through the lens of his/her own tradition and experience.

It is important that the document does not stay with traditional themes/issues/divides – but tackles this theme in a new way so that readers can see new things.

A theological problem that is not faced through the questions, but must be tackled:

- Some recognize a Christian from another tradition as a baptised person, but do not recognize the baptism of [this person’s] church.
- Yet we are always baptised not only into Christ, but also into a particular church.
- If you recognize the baptism of a Lutheran (e.g.), do you not also recognize the baptism of the Lutheran Church, and do you not then also recognize the Lutheran Church?

Examples of documents which form the basis of existing acts of mutual recognition could be given in the report – e.g. the Lutheran/Orthodox agreement.

The discussion in the commission’s plenary had suggested four issues to be taken up in the small groups: 1) editorial work in the questions in Section V of the baptism text; 2) suggestions for distribution of the text; 3) suggestions about reducing the number of questions; and 4) views on whether the text should be presented to another plenary before being sent to the churches.

The group consists of the following persons: Andiñach, Bouwen, Gennadios (co-moderator), Kaulule (co-moderator), Klukach, Shastri, Vasilios.

B. Other and relational activities

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Standing commission receives the report and materials on work on the Week of Prayer; strongly affirms its continuing collaboration on the Week of Prayer with the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity; notes the special significance of the 100th anniversary of the Week of Prayer to be celebrated in 2008, and encourages local observances of this important anniversary; and affirms preparation of the materials for 2009 (using draft materials provided by the National Council of Churches in Korea and the Catholic Bishops Conference, with the international preparatory meeting held in Marseilles, France, in September 2007).

Bilateral Forum

Standing commission receives the report on planning for the 9th Bilateral Forum (10-15 March 2008, Germany) as affirmed at Faverges 2006; affirms continued work towards the Forum; notes with appreciation the involvement of standing commissioners André Birmelé, William Henn, and Viorel

Ionita as expert resources for the Forum; notes the need for special attention to the documents *Nature and Mission of the Church* and “Called to be the One Church”; and looks forward to its results as a contribution to work on the understanding of unity today.

United Churches

Standing commission receives the report on planning for the 8th International Consultation of United Churches (8-15 October 2008, South Africa); affirms continued work towards the consultation; and looks forward to its results as a contribution to work on the understanding of unity today.

Cloud of Witnesses

Standing commission receives the report on work in the “Cloud of Witnesses” project centred in the Monastery of Bose; affirms Faith and Order collaboration towards the consultation to be held at Bose in October 2008; and notes the request for persons to be considered as major speakers at the consultation.

Collaboration with Inter-Religious Dialogue

Standing commission affirms the exploration of possibilities for further cooperative work with Inter-Religious Dialogue and CWME.

C. Plenary commission meeting

The plenary commission meeting should have one dominant theme, church unity, with two subsidiary concerns, e.g. information on standing commission programmes in progress, and “any other business”.

The following plan of meetings during this working mandate is proposed:

- 2008 Standing commission (Cairo, Egypt) 16-22 June
- 2009 Plenary commission with linked standing commission (Buenos Aires, Argentina)
5-12 October (Monday - Monday, standing commission to arrive on 4th)
- 2010 Standing commission (hosted by PCPCU?), place to be determined, around June
- 2011 Standing commission (Cameroon?) This could be a joint meeting with CWME
- 2012 Standing commission (Sweden?)
- 2013 WCC assembly

(Suggested venues are subject to confirmation.)

A planning committee for the plenary commission meeting has been formed consisting of the following persons: Anyambod, Birmelé, Bouwen, Gennadios, Ionita, Link-Wieczorek, Peters, Schmidt-Streck, Shastri.

IV. Nominations and personnel matters

Standing commission agreed the name proposed by the Faith and Order nominations committee for director of Faith and Order. This name will be communicated to the WCC general secretary, who is charged with proposing a name to WCC executive committee in September 2007.

Standing commission agreed the slate of names proposed by the Faith and Order nominations committee for the plenary commission. These names will be communicated to the WCC executive committee in September, 2007. Several concerns were raised about the nominations process, especially

in respect of the numerous categories and requirements which had to be honoured. These concerns will be communicated to the appropriate governing bodies of the WCC.

Standing commission expressed the strong need for continuity in staff positions. This concern will be communicated to the WCC general secretary.

V. Thanks

Standing commission expresses thanks to Thomas Wipf, President of the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches (FEPS), and to FEPS staff members Martin Hirzel and Martin Sallmann, for their presence among us; for their explanation of their work and the ecumenical situation in Switzerland; and for their comments on the Faith and Order text-in-progress "One Baptism: Towards Mutual Recognition".

Standing commission expresses thanks to Martin Hoegger for his presence among us; for his evocation of memories of the 75th anniversary celebration held in the Lausanne Cathedral in 2002 of the first Faith and Order World Conference; and for his informative, challenging and inspiring presentation on the Council of Churches and ecumenical situation in Lausanne.

Standing commission expresses thanks to Jacques Matthey, director of WCC programme unit 2, for his presence throughout our meeting; his explanations of the new WCC structure; his contributions to our general discussion; and his contributions to our reflection on the relation between ecclesiology and mission and on Faith and Order work with CWME.

Standing commission expresses thanks to Hans Ucko, WCC programme executive for Inter-Religious Dialogue, for his presence at our meeting; his survey of the current situation in this field; his overview of WCC work in this field; and his specific suggestions for further Faith and Order collaboration.

Standing commission expresses thanks to the director and staff of the Faith and Order secretariat for their work in preparing and supporting this standing commission meeting, and for all their work over the past year.

Thanks are expressed specifically to all standing commissioners who had served as group moderators and reporters, and had supported the meeting in other ways, and generally to all commissioners, and their churches, for their ongoing engagement with, and support of, the life and work of Faith and Order.

Thanks are expressed to standing commissioners and staff who had prepared and led the introductory worship and daily services of the word.

Standing commission and staff express warm thanks to the moderator and vice-moderators for their leadership and support during the standing commission meeting, and throughout the year.

Standing commission expresses thanks to the Villa Notre Dame, Crans-Montana, Switzerland, for its hospitality and very professional support for the consultation.

Commission on Education and Ecumenical Formation

27 – 30 June 2007

Bossey, Geneva

The commission and its role

1. This was the first meeting of the newly constituted commission, the remit of which now covers both the former EEF work and the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey. All but six of the thirty members were present, together with consultants and staff.
2. The commission was given clear direction on its role:
 - a) It was to understand that its role was advisory. Through the programme committee it advises the central committee on policy and supports the staff as they carry out the policy central committee sets. It monitors the work of staff on behalf of the central committee, but it does not manage the staff; that is the role of the general secretary. It has power to make decisions only on matters affecting its own life, and then only if it keeps within its own budget.
 - b) It was to focus on integrating what had been separate strands, ensuring that the work of ecumenical formation – a work the assembly had designated as of prime importance – happens in a coherent manner within a single strategic plan.
 - c) It was to see itself as advising on developing the educational and formative potential of all the programmes of the WCC, not only those in the six areas of work under its purview.

Stimulating the commission's thinking and understanding

3. The commission took time to form a broad understanding of the work it was inheriting. First, the director provided a full briefing on the six areas of work:
 - *The Ecumenical Institute*, which now had a new staff team and a new range of programmes up to doctoral level, and was exploring how to extend its reach well beyond Bossey.
 - *Scholarships*, supporting around 150 students a year and providing a crucial means of ecumenical relationship-building.
 - *Ecumenical Theological Education*, building the capacity of theological institutes and TEE in the South and providing a global network for developing partnerships and exchanging ideas and information. He noted that only one of the four regional posts would not soon be vacant.
 - *Lay Formation and Faith Nurture*, supporting the development of educational experiences for children, young people and adults, with an emphasis on community-building and participation in the ecumenical movement. At present there was no staff person for this area of work, but the post had been advertised.
 - *Library and Archives*, resourcing the work at both Bossey and the Ecumenical Centre and keen to find ways of supporting the full range of programmes and developing a more global reach.
 - *The Guest House at Bossey*, providing accommodation for a broad range of conferences, both religious and secular, and for individual guests, and earning income to keep the other programmes financially viable.

Then the commission took note of the emphases of the previous EEF Commission, noting in particular its focus on Holistic Education and its concern to ensure that it modelled in its own life and process the best educational and formational practice.

4. Three people were invited to address the commission in order to kick-start its thinking about the future.
 - Asked to address the question of a global vision for theological education in the 21st Century, Professor Isabel Apawo Phiri stressed the continuing importance of some themes from the past. Contextualisation should remain the key concept, and while there were examples of good

contextual practice from around the world it was still not as firmly grounded or broadly spread as it should be. Within that broad approach, it remained necessary to continue to stress authenticity in content, creativity in educational approach, viability of undertakings and the need for regional associations of theological educators and institutions. It was necessary to think locally and act globally. New challenges arose from the growth of denominationalism and fundamentalism and the difficulty faced by marginal groups in accessing scholarships and other routes into theological education. Opportunities arose from the spread of new technology and from the processes leading up to the 2010 centenary of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference. The key role of the commission was to ensure space was provided – space for exchange, space for encounter and space for challenge.

- Asked a similar question about lay formation, Dr David Goodbourn offered his personal criteria for good lay formation – it was holistic, transformative, community rather than individual-focused and open in approach and outcome – but went on to say that although many others may share these criteria he was increasingly aware that they were important to him in some cases because he was reacting against his own Western culture and in some cases because he was shaped by it. Each was open to criticism from those whose cultures and contexts differed. He, too, therefore stressed the need to be contextual not only in practice but also in understanding, and he too stressed the need for a local focus with global awareness. He suggested the commission's role might include: fostering the education of the educators (perhaps using new technology to do so); using the commission's travels as a focus for local engagement and provision; being aware of the issues of power and asking always "whose interests are being served?"; using commission meetings to model then share more widely honest critique of one another's practice; and focusing on the sharing of stories.
 - Coming as spokesperson for the WCC's new youth body, ECHOS, Diana Fernandes dos Santos read a letter from that body addressed to all WCC committees and advisory groups. She went on to note that few of the programmes under the commission's purview made any distinctive mention of, or provision for, young people, but the ecumenical formation of the young was a pressing need. Young people often learned best in learning communities; what the Ecumenical Institute offered in Bossey needed to be created in different ways and other forms for young people elsewhere.
5. Members of the commission worked on their own initial thinking, in response both to the presentations and to the experience and insights they had brought. The result was:
- A proposal to develop a clear conceptual statement on our understanding of ecumenical formation – what it is, what goals and objectives the WCC has in identifying it as a key area of work, what different target groups it addresses, what theology undergirds it, what forms it might take and what examples there are of best practice.
 - A recognition that the commission will itself be a piece of ecumenical formation and that its members need forming even as they reflect on the forming of others.
 - A plea for the use of good pedagogical and androgogical research, not least in exploring the most effective strategies for transformational learning.
 - An acknowledgement of the work staff have done to integrate the various programmes, coupled with both a recognition that there is still a long way to go and a determination not to let any one programme area dominate the others.
6. The general secretary briefed the commission on his own thinking. He stressed the centrality of ecumenical formation to the life of the WCC, and spoke of three recent examples when in his visits he had heard calls for help with ecumenical formation. From the Middle East had come the call for help in working with young people to counter the bleeding away of the Christian population through emigration. From the Baltic had come a desperate need to support young people in finding a soul for themselves and their nations as they were increasingly influenced by West European post-modernity. From China had come the call to provide ecumenical formation that would resist any tendency for the post-denominational Church to sink back into denominationalism. The general secretary challenged the commission to think through how the WCC could and should

respond to such approaches. He also asked it to note that the call from the churches was very often for help in working with young people, not infrequently in the face of challenges mainstream churches were increasingly facing from creeping post-modernism and rampant fundamentalism; even in the South mainstream churches were beginning to lose their young.

The commission's plans for the future

7. Faced with this range of views, challenges and possibilities, the commission sought to set itself a realistic programme of work for the future. It looked in turn at how each of the programme areas could best express and embody directions appropriate to the challenges it had received.

8. Lay Formation and Faith Nurture

8.1 The commission was impressed by the range of ideas and needs for ecumenical formation bubbling up around the world, and felt that at this stage in its life it needed to capture those needs and develop some conceptual clarity about ecumenical formation. Accordingly it **decided**:

- a) That its own members should engage together in a listening and visioning process, involving each in his or her own context and shaping the form of much of the commission's next meeting. Commissioners are encouraged to engage with a small number of local congregations, communities and organizations, primarily in their immediate local context but also drawing on wider national or regional networks, to listen to their needs, stories and perceptions. Each will also ensure they include those working with children, youth and adults, whether separately or inter-generationally. The next meeting will be structured to bring these findings together in a creative way and use them as we move towards developing a clearer statement and understanding.
- b) To draw from the work of the Ecumenical Institute resources for a theological undergirding for ecumenical formation and present these in a way which makes them accessible to the commission meeting, so that the next meeting may take the form of a careful process of theological reflection on ecumenical formation's nature and priorities, setting in dialogue the results of the listening process and the resources of the Christian tradition.
- c) That at the next commission meeting the commission will consider whether to repeat the process, this time testing the ideas that have emerged from the commission's reflection and giving them concrete form.
- d) That wherever the next meeting is held, the programme should include space for encounter with local grass-roots communities and practitioners of ecumenical formation.

8.2 The commission believed that this process would be deepened if it could be coupled to the work of the staff and the Ecumenical Institute. It therefore **recommended to the director**:

- a) That the new staff person for lay formation be tasked with undertaking a share of the listening process, taking particular care to listen to marginal groups and to interests outside the commission members' circle of contacts. It was imperative that the person appointed had strong communication and networking skills.
- b) That the staff create an on-line space where the stories and ideas and materials commission members collected could be lodged for all members to see, so we could reap one another's findings as we went along, not just when the commission next met.
- c) That programme 5 in planning its activities for 18 months time considers arranging seminars or other events in the locality where the commission will meet, resourced mutually by members of the commission and local people.

To enhance the take-up of seminars, whether held in Bossey or elsewhere, the commission further recommended:

- d) That the programme team explore the possibility of offering a diploma, on the basis of credit accumulation, for lay people who attended a number of Institute seminars. This could serve as an incentive to attract a larger group of lay persons to attend.

8.3 The commission believed that the effectiveness of the listening and reflective process could be further deepened with the allocation of limited additional financial resources. It therefore invited the director to allocate funds – if possible from the current budget cycle, but if that was not possible then from the next, in order to:

- a) Enable commission members where possible to group in twos or threes, breaking their travel to the next commission meeting (using natural stopovers when possible) to act as living letters consulting with people in further locations and regions.
- b) Meet the expenses of a number of commission members participating, in partnership with people in the region, as resource people in seminars and courses associated with the commission meeting as examples of “Bossey-on-the-Road.”

8.4 The commission agreed to outline its intended overall listening and reflection process in the moderator’s **letter to the general secretary** as the commission’s response to the challenge he offered.

9. *Scholarships*

9.1 Desiring to give fuller effect to WCC policy on accessible and equal opportunities, the commission decided:

- a) To require national correspondents to submit equal numbers of applications from men and women.
- b) To require national correspondents to submit 15% of applications from people with disabilities.

9.2 Concerned that only 20% of scholarships are for theological study, the commission recommended that:

The central committee redress the disparity between funding for theological scholarships and non-theological scholarships by encouraging donor agencies to allocate funds for theological scholarships.

9.3 The commission made the following *recommendations to the Director*:

- a) Churches should be encouraged to take up the opportunity for group training scholarships.
- b) When the scholarships programme holds regional consultations for National Correspondents, it would be good to invite an EEF commissioner from the region to attend the meeting to encourage links etc.

10. *Ecumenical Institute*

10.1 The Working Group on the Ecumenical Institute had the following *recommendations for the general secretary*:

- a) Retain the services of a full-time librarian and a part-time assistant to make the library an effective part of the Ecumenical Institute.
- b) Assign an intern for the Library to assist the staff in clearing the backlog of their work.
- c) Undertake a fund-raising project specifically for the upgrading of the functioning of the Library.

10.2 The commission *recommended that the director*:

- a) Find ways to utilise the internet to offer Ecumenical Institute courses and seminars to a wider learning group. This would significantly enlarge the number of people who could benefit from the expertise available at Bossey.
- b) Look into creating a student exchange programme with other ecumenical institutions and offer the provision of transferring credits taken for courses at Bossey to the university/college where s/he was registered.
- c) With regard to the courses themselves, ensure that contextualisation is factored into the teaching, since this was an emphasis underscored by the presentations made to the plenary sessions of the commission.
- d) Prepare by the end of 2007 a collection of key resources on ecumenical education and formation to prepare commission members for their EEF work, as well as a pamphlet on the present decision-making process of the WCC.

11. *Ecumenical Theological Education*

11.1 The commission noted the ETE programme's long history, 2008 being its Golden Jubilee; ETE's fundamental and strategic importance for the ecumenical movement should not be neglected. Therefore it made the following *recommendations to the general secretary*:

- a) Renew or continue the appointment and/or joint working contract for the three regional consultants, namely Latin American/Caribbean, Asia/Pacific and Central/Eastern Europe.
- b) Appoint consultants for Africa and the Middle East.

11.2 In the same spirit the commission *recommended that the director*:

- a) To cooperate with experts in regions of North America and Western Europe where no regional consultants had so far been appointed but appropriate people could easily be identified in existing networks and institutions of theological education.
- b) To prioritise the growth of lay theological education, with special focus on youth and women.

11.3 More generally the commission identified the need for staff to be aware of the following:

- a) General objectives
 - to continue support for faculty development programmes and to facilitate accreditation mechanism regionally and worldwide;
 - to continue and broaden library development programmes regionally and worldwide;
 - to deepen, inspire and nurture contextualization of theological education, theological curricula and theologies;
 - to explore and to promote international fundraising for theological education regionally and globally;
 - to strengthen ecumenical networks and ecumenically owned institutions of theological education;
 - to organize interregional exchanges between theological students, educators and professors;
 - to facilitate intercontextual exchanges between various associations of theological schools and research networks in missiology, ecumenics and interreligious dialogue;
 - to continue schemes of empowerment for women, indigenous people and people with disabilities in theological education; and
 - to strengthen the ecumenical theological education of the laity.

b) Key themes

- to explore possible common grounds and build living bridges with leading networks from evangelical and Pentecostal/charismatic institutions of theological education worldwide;
- to maintain HIV/AIDS and persons with disabilities curriculum as key components for theological educators and for curriculum revision worldwide;
- to include peace education as a key component for theological formation (in the light of the Churches Peace Convocation 2011);
- to promote hope-generating engagement with marginalized women, indigenous people, children, persons with disabilities, migrant workers, etc.;
- to generate new theological thinking on the issues of poverty, wealth creation, adverse effects of economic globalisation, environmental sustainability, migrant issues, etc.;
- to focus on international aspects for the future of fundraising for theological education and financial viability for theological institutions worldwide;
- to re-root theological education in a broad and ecumenical understanding of the mission of the church (as part of the Edinburgh 2010 process);
- to explore and deepening new models of theological education (TEE, distant learning courses, internet-based systems of theological training and education, open university-systems);
- to deepen strategic partnerships with existing ecumenical theology networks (like IAMS, networks of religious educators);
- to explore more deeply the interconnection between theological formation schemes, lay formation and religious education;
- to develop new pedagogy and a holistic approach to theological education, including arts, music, drama and visual symbols;
- to develop an interregional, inter-religious, inter-cultural exchange of models for spiritual formation and nurturing of future ministers;
- to bring together key models of theological education on interfaith issues from different contexts, particularly on Christian-Muslim relations worldwide.

c) Project suggestions

- To compile concise analytical surveys on the actual situation, contemporary challenges, shortcomings and major trends in ecumenical theological education for the six different world regions to be presented as part of the Edinburgh 2010 process (to be worked out based on the insights of regional consultants and additional experts);
- to initiate and to be part of the Edinburgh 2010 process by contributing to number six area/theme on the list of proposed major study processes leading towards Edinburgh 2010 (the future of ecumenical theological education worldwide);
- to work out a major new reference document on the understanding of ecumenical theological education in the 21st century (Charta Oecumenica on Theological Education in the 21st century) to be made available for the Edinburgh 2010 process as well as beyond for the forthcoming world missions conference;
- to highlight the 50th anniversary of the founding of TEF, the predecessor of ETE, in the year 2008 and to mark it by a major conference and/or publication;
- to look again at the common understanding and implications of ecumenical theological education between the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, and the WCC (reference to the former common document);
- to gather and disseminate the promising examples for a successful integration Pentecostal traditions and themes into ecumenical settings of theological education;
- to explore new models of transparent and accountable (not one-sided) partnership between institutions of theological education in different contexts.

Managing the commission's life

12. The commission engaged in a lively debate concerning how to structure its life. It was faced with the difficulty that some areas of work, primarily the Ecumenical Institute and Scholarships, operated on an annual cycle that would be ill-served by meetings only every eighteen months. Those involved in Ecumenical Theological Education also felt a meeting only every eighteen months inadequate. There was therefore a strong tendency towards establishing a number of working groups for specific programme areas, countered by an equally strong conviction that this would not prove acceptable to central committee. By a process of consensus it:

- a) Regretted that the programme committee's initial recommendation that the commission meet annually, even if to do so meant it having fewer members, had not been accepted.
- b) Concluded that it would be unhealthy for some areas of work to have separate working groups and others not.
- c) Concluded that the budget did not permit the formation of more than one working group.
- d) Concluded that the emphasis on integration would be ill-served if the Ecumenical Institute had a group of its own while others did not.
- e) Concluded reluctantly that the only workable solution was to create an executive group to deal with issues from any programme area that required attention between meetings of the commission.

It was then agreed to appoint an executive group of six people – three officers plus three commissioners – to meet as and when required, such meetings to take place in Geneva with advisers/partners present as required by the agenda. The executive group should deal only with matters which cannot be left until the full commission meeting. In reaching this decision the commission noted:

- a) That the decision did not rule out members of the commission accompanying particular areas of work where they have specific expertise through e-contact.
- b) That the arrangement implied a greater degree of delegation to staff than might previously have applied, with the commission focusing on policy rather than operational matters.

The following were appointed to the executive group:

- The Moderator
- Vice-Moderator: Bishop Ioannis Sakellariou (EI)
- Director
- Jing Zhang(ETE)
- Maire Pihaatae (Scholarships)
- Diana Fernandes dos Santos (Lay formation)

The following were appointed as consultants for the areas of work indicated after each name, with the understanding that they attend only those meetings or parts of meetings where they have an expert contribution to make:

- i) Vatican: Gosbert Byamungu (Ecumenical Institute)
- ii) CWM/EED/CEVAA: Andrew Williams (Ecumenical Institute)
- iii) University of Geneva: Prof. Shafique Keshavjee (Ecumenical Institute)
- iv) Dr Wesley Arriarajah (Ecumenical Institute)
- v) EMW: Verena Grueter (ETE)
- vi) FTESEA: to be appointed (ETE)
- vii) Diakonisches Werk der EKD, Germany (Scholarships)
- viii) Entraide Protestante Suisse (EPER), Switzerland (Scholarships)
- ix) Churches Commission for International Students (CCIS), UK (Scholarships)
- x) National Correspondent USA, Church World Service, USA (Scholarships)

The commission proceeded to adopt a draft set of by-laws, which the central committee would be invited to approve.

Next meeting

13. The commission agreed to meet next on 12-18 January 2009, perhaps in South Africa, the 12th being the arrival date and the 18th departure.

Annex A

Recommendations to the general secretary

1. Retain the services of a full-time librarian and a part-time assistant to make the library an effective part of the Ecumenical Institute.
2. Assign an intern for the Library to assist the staff in clearing the backlog of their work.
3. Undertake a fund-raising project specifically for the upgrading of the functioning of the Library.
4. Renew or continue the appointment and/or joint working contract for the three regional consultants, namely Latin American/Caribbean, Asia/Pacific and Central/Eastern Europe.
5. Appoint consultants for Africa and Middle East.

Annex B

Recommendations to central committee via the programme committee

1. To approve the proposed by-laws for the commission.
2. To redress the disparity between funding for theological scholarships and non-theological scholarships by encouraging donor agencies to allocate funds for theological scholarships.

Commission of the Churches on International Affairs

11-13 September 2007

Geneva, Switzerland

(Final report)

At its inaugural meeting, the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) affirmed the new integrative mandate to amalgamate the concerns of three programmes (P3, P4 and P6). In response to the Porte Alegre assembly, the commission reviewed the three programmes and examined the projects under each. As a result, the commission offers the following recommendations to the programme committee of the central committee concerning strategies and priorities for the work of the CCIA programmes:

P3 – Public Witness: Addressing Power, Affirming Peace

The WCC is uniquely placed through its public voice and prophetic witness to confront power and affirm peace in response to the urgent concerns of the churches in relationship to peace, security, poverty and justice. These challenges and actions are an integral dimension of the WCC's mission as a global fellowship of churches called to heed God's summons to advocate for fullness of life for all God's people and all of creation.

Strategies:

Build on what has already been done (draw upon institutional memory, especially in relation to the work on human rights) and exchange best practices already existing in the ecumenical family.

Develop a means to sharpen the focus and priorities of human rights work to include particular regions or countries of concern.

Emphasize the strong interconnection between P303 and other programme units dealing with theological reflection on human dignity.

WCC has a particular role in supporting regional capacity building institutions in their work with member churches and NCCs on human rights.

Strengthen the link between P306 and P1, P2 and P4 because of the importance of the spiritual dimensions of the work on poverty, wealth and ecology.

Encourage US churches to get more involved in supporting and participating in EAPPI or find other effective ways to accompany the churches in the Middle East and advocate for them in the US.

Identify practical ways of mobilizing the collective voice of our 550 million members worldwide in global ecumenical advocacy.

In public advocacy the WCC is in a good position to take leadership in the exploration and development of clearer mechanisms for consultation and improved strategies for cooperation and collaboration among NGOs or specialized ministries and all ecumenical actors involved in advocacy and with member churches.

More fully expose and involve member churches in the possibility of ecumenical advocacy at the UN level.

Widen communication networks so as to receive reliable information regularly on human rights violations.

Priorities:

P3 includes two time-limited projects (P301 - DOV and P305 - EAPPI) and contains priorities recently reaffirmed by the central committee (P302 and P304). Furthermore, poverty, wealth, ecology, human rights and dignity (P306 and P303) cross-cut most WCC programmes. The commission reaffirms the programmatic priorities set in the area P3.

P4 – Justice, Diakonia, Responsibility for Creation

The Justice, Diakonia and Responsibility for Creation programme builds on the ecumenical commitment to justice in enhancing the potential and power of the people to transform their own lives and livelihoods. Bringing the WCC's work on justice and diakonia together in one programme has strengthened the WCC's ability to impact on the churches' engagement in meeting immediate human needs and in addressing the structural roots of injustice. The WCC is uniquely placed to facilitate expressions of ecumenical solidarity, reflect theologically on issues of accountability, support the churches' healing ministries, and strengthen the churches' reflections and actions on ecological and bioethical issues. The power of structural injustice and violence threatens to destroy the web of life, and this is accelerated by the capacities of new technologies, if misused – hence the urgency for the project on faith, science and technology.

Strategies:

Work should be focused in order to holistically and comprehensively highlight the interconnectivity of various P4 programmes.

Make best use of the added value of churches which is present in nearly every community. This would require the WCC to consult the local churches, provide leadership, raise awareness and recommend how communities can take concrete actions on issues such as climate change, HIV/AIDS, etc.

Make the best use of the unique position of churches by creating spaces and opportunities to exchange best practices already existing in the ecumenical family. Identify which member churches, ecumenical organizations and networks are particularly competent and support them in taking the lead in organizing exchanges.

Regularly and systematically discuss with staff teams ways to include other actors (such as Regional Ecumenical Organizations, ACT International and ACT Development) as part of the key constituency. Continue to question who can best act in different spheres and how to assure that all programmes are done with coherence, acting with different instruments and strengths to serve the same aims by dividing labour and seeking synergies.

At the same time, the WCC should strive to serve the ecumenical movement by identifying new challenges not yet noticed/explored by the churches worldwide.

Priorities:

The priorities within the P4 programme should be HIV/AIDS, climate change, migration (including refugees and internally displaced persons), and ecumenical solidarity and regional relations.

With regard to HIV/AIDS, there is a continuing need to raise awareness and assure prevention in all countries. We should strive for inclusion and involvement of all member churches. The programmatic

approach of EHIA should be expanded to other regions. Asia is particularly critical in this matter and organizations such as the Christian Conference of Asia should be encouraged to participate in such efforts.

Climate change is particularly critical as it is linked with water, food security and migration. There is a need to give more attention to a dialogue with science that has been neglected by the WCC in the past. Migration is a priority as it is linked with poverty, war and human rights violations. There should be support given to congregations and churches in their pastoral and diaconal work with migrants/refugees/IDPs. Children are particularly affected by migration and their care, security and nurturing requires special attention. Work to change the negative image of migrants and dispel misinformation about the impact of migration. Build bridges of networks between areas of origin and the places where migrants end up.

In the current context, the imperatives of ecumenical solidarity and accompanying the regional expressions of the ecumenical movement are more urgent than ever.

P6 – Inter-religious Dialogue and Cooperation

At its heart, Christianity is a dialogue in the Spirit between the Incarnate Word and the World. This means inter-religious dialogue is not peripheral or incidental but essential to authentic Christian identity and ethos.

The council is well-positioned to become a more effective voice in inter-religious dialogue.

Strategies:

Develop and distribute important inter-faith documents in relevant languages (e.g. Arabic).

While attention should be given to dialogue with all religions, Christian-Muslim dialogue should be prioritized. There should be more engagement of Muslims living in contexts in which they are a minority population, particularly around issues of minority rights.

The results of the work on the Code of Conduct on Conversion should be taken into account in future inter-faith work.

Deepen and disseminate the theological findings on inter-religious dialogue, taking into account initiatives and the best practices of member churches as well as difficult experiences in inter-religious dialogue.

Explore what inter-religious marriage implies in different countries and contexts, including positive models.

Move beyond *Coexistence* to *Celebration* of life together as the highest aim of inter-religious relationships.

Create an effective mechanism for monitoring the success and effectiveness of particular dialogues, events or processes in conflict management. Articulate and communicate success stories in inter-religious dialogue (e.g. Kaduna, Nigeria).

Explore greater networking options (with other churches' and organizations' efforts in inter-religious dialogue).

Encourage and support theological cooperation between Christians and Muslims with regard to issues of life and death like HIV/AIDS, conflicts, climate change, etc.

Put more emphasis on the concrete needs of congregations in defining the level and contents of inter-faith dialogue and serve the congregations with the kind of reflection and arguments they need.

Lobby the concept and legitimacy of inter-faith dialogue as against fundamentalist Christian concepts of “missions”.

Priorities:

The WCC should orchestrate and encourage the collaboration of inter-faith efforts of different church groups.

Recognizing that so-called Christian Zionism adversely affects Christian self-understanding amid many religions, we recommend undertaking a critical study of its implications for inter-religious dialogue and hope that programmes such as P302 and P304 also deal with this issue.

Encourage living letters to Arab Christians, especially to Palestinian and Iraqi Christians.

There should be a deeper focus on youth and women in inter-faith activities.

Work on developing inter-faith competence at the middle level (e.g. clergy, professionals).

Engage in inter-religious dialogue and cooperation to unite concerns and efforts of P3 and P4, engaging issues of daily life, such as climate change, human rights, citizenship, etc.

Monitor and respond to the areas of acute inter-religious tension and persecution of adherents of *all* religions.

Redefine a theology of dialogue in relation to a theology of mission in collaboration with P2 (Unity, Mission, Evangelism and Spirituality).

Commitment

The WCC desires and strives to root its ideology and activity in the gospel of Jesus Christ as it is revealed in Holy Scripture, and that Christian ethical principles and spirituality guide, inform and shape its programmes and projects.

Other Decisions

The commission elected Noemi Espinoza Vice Moderator of the CCIA. The commission established four working groups: Inter-religious Cooperation; Social Justice and Common Goods; Global Advocacy; and Human Dignity, Security and Rights.

The commission also appointed a small working group to consider changes to the CCIA by-laws if necessary.

Decade to Overcome Violence Reference Group Meetings

8 – 12 December 2006, Dublin, Ireland and

4 – 7 October 2007, Geneva, Switzerland

The WCC 9th assembly in Porto Alegre took some far-reaching decisions:

1. The assembly called for an **International Ecumenical Peace Convocation** (IEPC) to mark the end of the Decade.
2. It also decided that an **Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace** be elaborated and brought to the IEPC for final consideration and action.
3. It recommended that team visits, also called **“Living Letters”**, be sent to member churches, as a way to intensify links of solidarity between them and the WCC.

The DOV Reference Group, which consists of ten people and is moderated by Rev. Dr Fernando Enns, met twice since then: in December 2006 in Geneva, to begin setting the stage and preparing for the IEPC, and in October 2007 in Dublin, Ireland. As usual with DOV Reference Group meetings, the Dublin meeting took place within the context of the DOV Annual Focus, which in 2007 was on Europe. However, both meetings were marked by intensive deliberation and planning towards implementation of the mandates given by the 9th assembly. The Geneva meeting worked out a basic design for the IEPC. The Dublin meeting took place in conjunction with an expert consultation on the Healing of Memories, as part of the consultative process.

The Reference Group recommended that the WCC general secretary send a letter to member churches, introducing the IEPC and the process leading up to it. That letter went out in early November 2007 and it summarizes well the outcomes of the work and recommendations of the DOV Reference Group:

The International Ecumenical Peace Convocation is scheduled to take place on **4-11 May 2011**. According to our present plans we hope to bring together some 2,000 persons representing a wide range of expertise and experience. A decision on the **venue** will be taken by the WCC central committee when it meets in February 2008.

What we intend to develop is a substantial theology, spirituality and ethics of peace capable of comprehending and accentuating the urgent call for justice among the world's peoples as well as the dire need for a clear response to the increasing threats of climate change. The direction we need to take is expressed by the motto of the IEPC:

GLORY TO GOD AND PEACE ON EARTH

It is God's peace that sustains each of us and all of creation. God's glory expresses itself in God's peace. Hence, our ways to glorify God are inseparable from our commitment to serve God's peace, in our hearts, in our homes, in the streets, the markets and stock exchanges, in our search for peace among nations and, not least, with the earth itself.

The enclosed leaflet gives you a brief elaboration of this approach. More information can be found on the internet (<http://overcomingviolence.org/en/iepc/objectives-and-concepts.html>). It also mentions some ways in which you may wish to participate. However, let me mention here **three ways to deepen our common commitment:**

1. In some of our churches, local parishes and Bible study groups have begun to write their own “peace declarations”. In a comparable manner seminaries and theological faculties are being approached to engage students in efforts to formulate their understanding of peace. In all these cases the goal is to encourage Christians in their varying contexts to identify what God’s peace requires of them and thus to create a broad participatory process towards a truly ecumenical commitment.

Parallel to these efforts a drafting group has been set up to elaborate a first draft of an Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace. **It will be shared with you by the end of 2008.** We expect that it will

- clearly affirm what we can say together,
- identify areas requiring further debate and clarification,
- recommend successful examples of non-violence at work,
- promote new forms of ecumenical peace ministries.

It would be helpful if you were already now to **reserve some time in 2009 to work out your response** so that a second draft can be developed in 2010 which would then be submitted to the IEPC in 2011.

2. During recent months two “Living Letters” consisting of five to six persons with wide ecumenical experience have spent a full week with churches in Sri Lanka and parts of the United States. For each of the coming three years **we hope to send up to fifteen such “Living Letters” to member churches.** Their aim is to listen to Christians at all levels of the churches’ life as they try to deal with the violent conditions around them and to engage them in our common search for alternatives of peace. We can think of no better way to nurture our relationships. Therefore, please indicate to us whether you would like to host such a team or make available delegates as members of such teams. Since financing these team visits is always a challenge, please consider whether your church can “adopt” or sponsor one or several of them.
3. We have begun to organize a series of **expert consultations on specific aspects of peace.** We draw on experts in key areas such as theology, health and healing, economics, environmental questions and politics. You can find the results on the WCC website and in specific publications. We would also encourage you to **use your synod meetings, general assemblies and comparable gatherings to take up related concerns** and share their results with us.

We need to join all our energies to stem the rising tide of violence in our time. I urge you to intensify your work towards peace and to cooperate with sister churches and other faith communities as fully as possible. Please begin to set aside some funds for the IEPC and for your representatives. This great plan cannot be realized without additional funds from you all.

Let us be firmly united in our common vocation to witness to God whose peace transcends our understanding and keeps our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4.7).

Based on further recommendations from the Reference Group, a theological consultation will be held in conjunction with the first meeting of the Drafting Group and the Reference Group, in Suva, Fiji, within the context of the Annual Focus on the Pacific 2008.

The Reference Group also had recommended for the Annual Foci 2009 and 2010 to be on the Caribbean and on Africa respectively and plans are under way. The International Day of Prayer for Peace on September 21 each year goes under the Annual Focus theme with prayers and resources from the respective region, and it generates increased interest and observation every year. Furthermore, networking on a global level on issues related to violence prevention (WHO), small arms/disarmament (ENSA and Global Priorities Campaign), and peace education received strong affirmation from the DOV Reference Group.

Joint Consultative Group
between the World Council of Churches
and Pentecostals
4 – 9 October 2007
Baar, Switzerland

The second round of formal conversations between the WCC and Pentecostals was inaugurated.

Agenda and discussion

Daily prayer, Bible study and personal testimonies helped to promote sharing and to build community. There were presentations on the following topics to promote conversation:

- Work of the previous group
- Overview of Pentecostal bilateral dialogues
- Charisms, led by a Pentecostal
- Sacraments, led by a Protestant and an Orthodox

Participants

The fact that all of the 5 Pentecostals and 3 of the WCC members participated in the previous group helped considerably. The two teams were not balanced – there were 5 Pentecostals and 12 WCC members. The Pentecostal team will grow to 10 or 12 and will include women and more regions (the WCC team expressed the desire for youth representation as well). Staff attending were Doug Chial, Jacques Matthey, Luzia Wehrle, Martin Robra (2 days).

Future agendas

The group reviewed the recommendations of the first JCG and considered the need to flesh out an agenda for 5 years of dialogue (2007-2011), a meeting to prepare a report to the assembly (2012), promoting Pentecostal participation in the assembly (2013), recommending Pentecostal participation on WCC commissions and the future membership of a third JCG (2012-2014).

The mandate to deepen understanding and build trust between the WCC and Pentecostal was re-affirmed as the primary mandate of the group. The 2008 meeting will study ecclesiology, according to the marks of the church:

- Oneness
- Holiness
- Catholicity
- Apostolicity

The use of Faith and Order texts, as well Called to be the One Church, to contribute to this will be considered.

The 2009 meeting will study mission, evangelism and proselytism. The group agreed to continue its dialogue on hermeneutics through Bible study, rather than a specific dialogue on the nature of Scripture.