

**THE STANDING COMMISSION
ON
FAITH AND ORDER**

meeting in

Etchmiadzin, Armenia

M I N U T E S

**COMMISSION ON FAITH AND ORDER
WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES**

Faith and Order Paper No. 211

MINUTES

of

THE STANDING COMMISSION ON FAITH AND ORDER

meeting at the Mother See
of Holy Etchmiadzin, Armenia

21 – 25 June 2010

THE COMMISSION ON FAITH AND ORDER

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

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Preface

As anyone who has perused the published minutes of the meetings of the Commission on Faith and Order can attest, every meeting is unique in its own way. The 2010 meeting of the Standing Commission was shaped by particular factors: it was the first after the 2009 Plenary Commission meeting, and the Commission needed time to digest the findings and reporting from Plenary Commission. At the 2010 meeting the Commission turned its attention towards the 2013 WCC Assembly and brought the work committed to the present mandate to its conclusion. And, the 2010 meeting took place in Armenia; the life and history of the Church in that country, and the kind hospitality of its people had a momentous impact on the work of the Commission.

Because of the need to dedicate significant time for the consideration of the results of the Plenary Commission, and to discern the consequent next steps in the various Faith and Order studies, the decision was made to dedicate most of the time for the working groups. Other aspects of a Standing Commission meeting were reduced, such as reporting and governance, or were eliminated, such as the Moderator's and the Director's Reports. And so this meeting was dominated by the theological work of the Commission's three studies.

The three commission study projects – *The Nature and Mission of the Church*, Moral Discernment in the Churches, and Sources of Authority: Tradition and traditions – were brought to new levels of maturity in three days of working group sessions. The Ecclesiology Working Group began the task of discerning the direction given by the churches and others regarding the next stage towards a common statement on the Church. The other two commission study groups worked well towards the preparation of publications along the same time-line. Because particular attention was paid in all three study projects to the findings of the October 2009 Plenary Commission, this Standing Commission clearly took up the work given to it by the Plenary Commission.

After many years of set-backs, the final version of the long awaited study document *One Baptism: Towards Mutual Recognition* was approved by the Standing Commission. The acceptance of the text by the Commission was greeted with applause, and relief.

The Standing Commission engaged in two decisive discussions on the restructuring of the Faith and Order Commission. While gratitude was expressed for the present structures (Officers, Standing Commission and Plenary Commission), there was a realization that more effective and more cost effective structures are needed to enhance the historic mission and visibility of Faith and Order.

A noteworthy part of the meeting was its context: the Armenian Apostolic Church in its spiritual centre at Holy Etchmiadzin. The Commission gathered with the local community for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, and attended a memorial for the late Karekin I, Catholicos of All Armenians, who died on 29 June 1999. The Commission also attended a presentation of local dance and music performed by young people at a local youth centre. There was also a visit to the Armenian Genocide Memorial and Museum. The Commission was welcomed by significant Armenian churches and monasteries. These visits were important for the Commission because of the context they created for our work. There were also important encounters between the WCC and the local church.

The invitation to Armenia came from Standing Commission member, HG Bishop Nathan Ohanisyian, with the full support of His Holiness, Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians. The Commission is grateful for the kindness and generosity of the hospitality of His Holiness. Particular thanks go to the ecumenical officer of the Armenian Apostolic Church, HG Bishop Hovakim and his team of lay people, priests and deacons who facilitated every aspect of our time in Armenia with kindness and efficiency, both in the context of the many sessions of the Standing Commission, and in our encounters with the local community.

Finally, I would like to proffer words of thanks to those whose hard work made this meeting possible. To the Moderator of the Commission on Faith and Order, Metropolitan Vasilios, so many thanks for his strong, gentle and wise leadership, especially for ensuring that the commission was able to complete "One Baptism". To my colleagues in the Secretariat, Tamara Grdzeldze, Dagmar Heller, and Odair Pedroso Mateus, many thanks for their work in preparing the meeting with me, but also for their theological and administrative support of the work of the study groups which were so productive. And particular thanks to the programme assistant of Faith and Order, Alexander Freeman, whose work is largely unseen, but whose careful labours were behind so much of the process of the Standing Commission from the initial notice of the meeting all the way through to the final production of these minutes. And lastly, our thanks to Canon Peter Fisher, a member of the Plenary Commission on Faith and Order and our ongoing recording secretary for his pastoral presence amongst us in our deliberations, and for his careful and elegant documentation of our work.

The Armenian context, a high level of commitment to the tasks with corresponding hard work and preparation by Faith and Order members and staff, with a remarkable degree of collegiality within the commission, resulted in a productive and successful meeting of the Standing Commission on Faith and Order, to which these minutes bear witness.

Canon John Gibaut,
Director of Faith and Order

**Meeting of the
Standing Commission on Faith and Order
21-25 June 2010
Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, Armenia**

Roll Call

Moderator:

H.E. Metropolitan Dr Vasilios of
Constantias-Ammochostos

Vice-Moderators:

Rev. Fr Frans Bouwen
Mrs Sarah Kaulule
Professor Dr Valburga Schmiedt Streck

Members:

Rev. Professor Dr David Abiodun
Adesanya
Rev. Professor Dr Pablo Andiñach
Rev. Professor Dr Emmanuel Anya
Anyambod
Rev. Dr Mabel Athavale
Rev. Professor Dr André Birmelé
H.E. Metropolitan Bishop of Damietta
Rev. Professor Dr William Henn, OFM
cap
H. G. Bishop Nathan Ohanisyan
The Very Revd Professor Dr Viorel Ionita
Professor Dr Dimitra Koukoura
Ms Natasha Klukach
Rev. Professor Dr Sarah Lancaster
Professor Dr Ulrike Link-Wieczorek
Rev. Dr Richard Lowery
Rev. Professor Dr Rebecca Todd Peters
Rev. Dr Kitiona Tausi
Professor Dr Myriam Wijlens

Consultants:

Rev. Professor Dr Cecil (Mel) Robeck
(Plenary Commission member)

Recording Secretary:

Rev. Canon Peter Fisher (Plenary
Commission member)

Apologies:

Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina
Rev. Neville Callam
Rev. Dr Susan Durber
Rev. Dr Anne-Louise Eriksson
Rev. Dr Gregory Fairbanks (PCPCU
Consultant)
H.E. Metropolitan Professor Dr Gennadios
of Sassima
H.E. Metropolitan Dr Hilarion of
Volokolamsk
The Right Revd Dr John Hind
Rev. Dr Martin Robra (Director of
Programme 2)
Rev. Dr Hermen Shastri
Rev. Dr Richard Treloar

Proxies:

Rev. Professor Dr George Dragas
(Archbishop Aristarchos)
Rev. Professor Dr Glenroy Lalor (Rev.
Neville Callam)
Rev. Fredrik Hollertz (Plenary
Commission member; Rev. Dr Anne-
Louise Eriksson)
The Very Revd Dr Cyril Hovorun (Plenary
Commission member; Metropolitan
Hilarion of Volokolamsk)

Guests:

Rev. Dr Shahe Ananyan (Plenary
Commission member)
H.G. Bishop Hovakim Manukyan

Faith and Order Secretariat:

Rev. Canon Dr John Gibaut (Director)
Dr Tamara Grdzeldidze
Rev. Dr Dagmar Heller
Rev. Dr Odair Pedroso Mateus
Mr Alexander Freeman

[Monday 21 June]

OPENING ACTIONS

The Moderator welcomed the members of the Commission and emphasized the special importance of this meeting. He expressed gratitude to the Armenian Apostolic Church for its generous hospitality.

The Director continued with introductory matters. Invited by the Director, the proxies introduced themselves.

The Director spoke about the nature of this Standing Commission meeting. It was to be a meeting with a difference, the bulk of it (the central three days) being dedicated for work in the study groups. There would also be the traditional engagement with the local church, through various visits. Reviewing the revised agenda, he noted that the Standing Commission would be called on to consider what had been learned from the Plenary Commission meeting in Crete, to consider how to reinvigorate the study project “One Baptism: Towards Mutual Recognition“, and to discuss the restructuring of Faith and Order as part of the restructuring of the WCC as a whole. After the conclusion of study group work, there would be time on Friday to continue with any unfinished items.

The Director then invited His Grace, Bishop Hovakim Manukyan, on behalf of our hosts, the Armenian Apostolic Church, to introduce arrangements for visits and social events prepared for the Commission.

Brief mention was then made of outstanding ecumenical events experienced by Commission members, including the centenary Edinburgh Mission Conference.

The Moderator asked that the minutes of the brief meetings of the Standing Commission which took place at the beginning and end of the Plenary Meeting in Crete be accepted. This was done.

The Director then reported on a special meeting of Officers and study group co-moderators which had considered the changed – in certain respects enhanced – position of Faith and Order within the WCC. The Officers had begun a conversation about the restructuring of the Commission on Faith and Order. A work plan was set out for the commission from 2010 to 2012, just before the work from 2006 would be presented to the Central Committee in August 2012, before the 2013 WCC Assembly.

The Director went on to raise the question, “What did we learn from the Plenary Commission meeting in Crete?” He stressed the high level of interest that had been aroused by the event and the way it had improved the visibility of Faith and Order. Staff and Commission members then spoke of their impressions, generally affirming the positive qualities of the meeting. Was this indeed, it was asked, a watershed moment, one of rapprochement between divided wings of the ecumenical movement, leading to significant changes in the approach to existing work? Was there a difference between the experience of those directly involved – who felt they had been able to contribute seriously – and those ‘back home’? Some had wished for more opportunity for plenary discussion of the group work. Had more opportunity been given for training of group leaders, the group work might have been even more productive. There being no further comments, the Moderator drew this item to a conclusion.

SESSION 2

The Commission was then honoured to be received in an audience by His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Catholicos of All Armenians. His Holiness gave generously of his time to the Commission. He prayed for God's blessing on its meeting, spoke about the current situation of the church and its ecumenical relations, and responded to a number of questions from members.

SESSION 3

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The Director reported on the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. In practical terms, the process had been stream-lined, but there was no substantive change in the nature of the texts. The material for 2010 had been prepared by Action by Churches Together in Scotland around the themes of Edinburgh 2010. The material produced for 2011 was prepared by the churches in Jerusalem around the themes of the IEPC. Questions were raised as to whether the WCC should take greater responsibility for discerning how the material is being used among the churches. Tribute was paid to the importance of this work and the widespread use of the material – whether in January or at Pentecost. The use of the material in ecumenical gatherings at other times was also commended.

Forum on Bilateral Dialogues

Rev. Dr Odair Pedroso Mateus reported on plans for the next Forum on Bilateral Dialogue: at the suggestion of Faith and Order staff, the Christian World Communions had agreed that the Forum meet more frequently. Preparations were now in hand for the next Forum to take place in 2012, focusing on the theme of Reception. It was suggested that this item deserved further attention at some stage, given the importance of this work within the context of Faith and Order work in general; Faith and Order is in a favourable position to provide a framework and resources to help particular ecumenical dialogues, by encouraging a synoptic view of ecumenical theological progress. Fr Bouwen spoke about the valuable “harvesting” process undertaken by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity of the Roman Catholic Church: could Faith and Order not undertake a similar task, garnering the cumulative fruits of many conversations and texts?

United and Uniting Churches consultation

Dr Mateus reported on the consultation of United and Uniting Churches, which had last met in 2008 in Johannesburg; the continuation committee was now taking more active responsibility for the shared concerns of these churches, given the reduced availability of funding from other agencies, managing this by “virtual” meetings. In response to questions, he made clear that Faith and Order accepts responsibility for seeing that the papers coming from consultations reached publication.

Cloud of Witnesses

Dr Tamara Grdzeldze spoke about the delayed publication of the book *A Cloud of Witnesses: Opportunities for Ecumenical Commemoration*, the product of the project on the ecumenical

commemoration of outstanding witnesses to Christian faith. The publication was now confidently awaited.

The Director spoke about continuing efforts to improve the effectiveness of WCC Publications and there was some discussion about the current cost of *The Ecumenical Review*.

One Baptism: Towards Mutual Recognition

The Moderator invited the Commission to consider the future of the text “One Baptism: Towards Mutual Recognition”. The Director recalled the minutes of the 2008 Cairo Standing Commission meeting relative to this subject. Questions were raised as to whether we should now consider the issues at stake when at least one of those most vocal participants in previous discussion was not present and whether the Commission could clarify the initial causes of unease so as to attend to them. Professor Birmelé, a member of the study group concerned, spoke in favour of changing paragraph 59 in the document: it was pointed out that the Cairo discussion had already included the suggestion that this paragraph be omitted. Professor Ionita summarized three options: that the text be published as it stands, with the authority only of the authors; secondly, that further discussion focus on the adoption of this text which the Commission as a whole would have to own; thirdly the text could be modified for presentation to the Assembly in 2013 (though the length of the text might rule this out). In his view there was much of value in the document and a small group should be constituted to review it and consider how to prepare it for publication as a study text.

Returning to the discussion, Professor Birmelé emphasized that the text at large was very good, going well beyond BEM, but the issue that must be dealt with was that of the mutual recognition of baptism and of churches; the references relating to this in paragraphs 59 and 87 must simply be taken out. The Director expressed appreciation of the foregoing discussion in which the nature of the most contentious issue had been clarified and a clear way forward suggested: he proposed that a group including those originally nominated at Crans-Montana should meet to consider appropriate changes during the current meeting. He also proposed that the Orthodox members of the Commission review the proposed changes prior to their being presented to the Commission as a whole. Those present from the previously nominated group, with the addition of Professor Dragas, agreed to meet at the first available opportunity. They would report back to the whole Commission on Friday; this was agreed.

SESSION 4

Governance and restructuring of Faith and Order

The Moderator reported on proposals which had been made about the governing regulations of Faith and Order, initially and unexpectedly raised at the February 2010 meeting of the Executive Committee of the WCC. He and the Director had already expressed their concerns about the visibility of Faith and Order within the Council’s work and publicity. One aspect of the context for restructuring was the continuing financial crisis both in the wider world and in the Council. After these introductory remarks he gave the floor to the Director.

The Director drew a distinction between the two issues: visibility and restructuring. The former had constituted a genuine problem, but there were positive signs for the future. First, the election of Dr Olav Fykse Tveit as General Secretary has given increased visibility to

Faith and Order. Within the WCC's refocusing process initiated by Dr Fykse Tveit, the question is posed about what does the WCC do that no one else can do? In this respect, Faith and Order is well placed, because its work on multilateral theological dialogue is unique in the international arena. Such recognition ensures Faith and Order's viability and visibility within the WCC. All WCC commissions will experience some restructuring. The Director encouraged the commission to initiate its own restructuring; the fear is that the WCC through the Programme Committee of the Central Committee would make its own proposals, which may or may not assist the Commission's work. He saw possibilities for positive outcomes from this process, challenging though the constraints might be. By way of example, he noted the issue of the formal authority to appraise Faith and Order work which once belonged to the Plenary Commission, was removed from the by-laws after the 1999 revisions. Currently, the lines of accountability rest with the Programme Committee of WCC Central Committee – with the consequence that non-WCC member churches represented on Faith and Order (such as the Roman Catholic Church) did not participate in the ultimate accountability for texts. Restoring an evaluative authority to Faith and Order for its own work would be an instance of restructuring. He asked what a smaller Faith and Order Commission would look like. What would be, for instance, the consequences of not retaining the Plenary Commission?

In the ensuing discussion the following points emerged. The actual cost-effectiveness of specific cuts must be calibrated; it was imperative that contact with the churches be maintained and, if possible, enhanced by any changes.

The Moderator and Director were thanked for the way in which they had brought these issues to the Commission; the opportunity was here to re-consider how to realize the fundamental aims of Faith and Order by innovative and adventurous means. Restructuring, it was remarked, has always been with us; the key was to consider precisely what contribution Faith and Order now has to make to the life of the churches, remaining faithful to its mandate “to call the churches to the goal of visible unity in one faith and in one eucharistic fellowship” (Faith and Order by-laws, 3.1) and its vital service to the churches in encouraging and facilitating their ecumenical engagement with one another. This concept was drawn out by another speaker, suggesting that there is a valuable task of reviewing and co-ordinating the ecumenical work going on in many different churches and places.

Attention was drawn to the need for Faith and Order, within the WCC, to reflect the global character of the fellowship of churches, and to aim for comprehensiveness in its scope. At stake was not only a structure of involvement but also a culture of involvement: both needed to be maintained through any process of restructuring. Was there opportunity, another speaker asked, to delegate work to consultants, without taking away from the task and authority of the Standing Commission? Could a smaller commission, focused on the roles of co-ordinating and encouraging the ecumenical engagement of the churches, require the involvement of different kinds of commissioners from the churches – perhaps with a stronger sense of delegation from the churches? The task of seeking and encouraging consensus among the widest range of Christian communities remained vital: the churches needed to be recalled to the original vision of Faith and Order within the ecumenical movement

The Moderator proposed that the discussion about restructuring should, in the first instance, set aside financial considerations and should be considered in its own right. Following on from this point, the Director quoted the architect's maxim that “form follows function”. This discussion had precisely involved clarification of the “function” of Faith and Order; in due course attention would need to be given to appropriate “forms”.

Another commissioner spoke of the need for the members of the Faith and Order Commission to communicate and relate the work to local contexts, as well as to formulate good texts, and the need to have much greater involvement from the southern hemisphere in its work; new people with appropriate formation need to be identified and brought into the work of the Commission.

Remarking that this had been a rich and constructive conversation, the Moderator called this stage of a continuing discussion to a conclusion.

Arrangements for the meetings of the study groups were then outlined.

SESSIONS 5-13 were occupied by work in Study Groups.

SESSION 14

REPORTS ON THE STUDIES

With Fr Frans Bouwen in the Chair, reports were invited from the working groups.

Sources of Authority: Tradition and traditions

Dr Pablo Andiñach gave the report on Sources of Authority: Tradition and Traditions (see Appendix 1).

Fr Cyril Hovorun added a report on a proposed “Guide to Discern Ecumenically Biblical Interpretations with the Early Teachers of the Church” (see appendix 1b). Dr Glenroy Lalor spoke about the structure and methodology of this manual. The point of convergence across the denominations was the Scriptures, therefore, the first stage would be to hear the Scriptures, then to hear the interpretations of the early teachers then to interrogate the early teachers, then to discuss what was to be learned from them, and finally to discuss the participants’ own views.

Fr William Henn commended this enterprise.

In response to a question about the appropriate terminology for referring to the “Fathers” of the Church, Fr Hovorun responded that it had been decided to refer to the “witnesses and early teachers” of the Church.

He went on to offer more information about the structure of the book and its editors. There would be (1) an introduction concerning who are the Fathers/Mothers of the Church, and what qualifies someone to be considered as such; (2) select passages of early teachers interpreting Scripture with commentary by relevant scholars; (3) an analytical study of the methods of interpretation used by the early teachers and the relation between these methods and those of the present day.

It was asked whether the Councils of the Church would also be included. Also the study of the hermeneutics of the early teachers of the faith was a complex and advancing area of

scholarship. In response, it was pointed out that there is an existing Faith and Order study of the Councils.

The Director called attention to the fact that the definition of the boundaries of this work were agreed at the Crans-Montana meeting in 2007, where the expression “teachers and witnesses of the early Church” was agreed upon.

Attention was drawn to the need to make the text accessible and of interest to those for whom this was not a natural area of interest. It was also urged that attention be given to questions that arise because of the differences between the contemporary world and the world of the early Church.

Dr Andriñach and Dr Grzelidze clarified the part that this second consultation to be held in Moscow in 2011 would take in the whole work of the study group. It was possible that the manual being proposed, if successful, would be the first in a series dealing with different sources of authority in the churches.

Moral Discernment in the churches

Dr Rebecca Todd Peters was invited to present the report of the study group on Moral Discernment in the Churches (see Appendix 2).

Metropolitan Bishoy observed that some Orthodox were unhappy about discussing any difficult moral issues in Faith and Order. He recalled, however, the consensus model of decision making that emerged from the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC, which included the possibility of a minority report where it was not possible to achieve consensus. Accordingly, this meant that the Commission on Faith and Order is free to discuss any issue. His second remark related to the second paragraph under “Section 2”; some people do not realize how profound are the divisions that arise in relation to sensitive moral issues. The statement was not helpful. In response it was pointed out that the work of the Group was not concerned with judging or engaging particular moral issues, but with an examination of the methodologies used by different churches. Dr Peters went on to welcome the Metropolitan’s comments, acknowledging that differences were often felt very deeply: there was no intent to minimise the divisive nature of the issues, but it was intended to help the churches to understand these divisions and their causes more profoundly.

The next speaker was happy to see how the Group had responded to the discussions in Crete. The project was focused on the response of the churches, not of individuals in the wider society, to moral issues. Dr Peters now understood the work more fully and welcomed it.

The question was raised about the precise audience for this work.

Dr Peters responded that this had been given some thought: the document must speak to people within the churches; it would not be written in highly theoretical language. Many diverse groups within the churches would be involved in the study process, so the written materials must be accessible to them while remaining stringent in method.

Fr Bouwen, one of the co-moderator of the Moral Discernment study group, pointed out that the project was open-ended and was expected to continue beyond the life of the current participants. Was this something the Group was entitled to expect?

There was an affirmative response to this question.

Dr Dagmar Heller clarified questions around the timeline of the group's work. At its next meeting in 2011, there should be a draft presented to the Standing Commission, however, this might need further modification and the final document might need to be brought to the 2012 Standing Commission.

SESSION 15

Reports on studies, (continued)

The Ecclesiology Working Group

Dr Valburga Schmiedt Streck, moderating this session, called on Fr William Henn to present the Report of the Ecclesiology Study Group (see Appendix 3).

The present work of the group is twofold. The first is to study and reflect upon the responses to *The Nature and Mission of the Church*. Second, in the light of the responses, the group will begin the process of preparing a third text on ecclesiology that will be presented at the 2013 WCC Assembly.

It was noted that *The Nature and Mission of the Church* will not be replaced, just as the 1998 *The Nature and Purpose of the Church* was not replaced. Both are numbered Faith and Order Papers, and represent significant moments in the commission's reflection on ecclesiology.

There was discussion about the issue of contextualization arising from the Plenary Commission meeting. It was suggested that there be reference within the text to the need for ongoing work on this topic.

How did the working group intend, the next speaker queried, to deal with the relation of the Church to the Kingdom and the relation of the Church to Salvation? How do we view the mission of the Church in relation to soteriology and the unity of the Church?

Fr Henn responded, pointing out that these themes are woven into the existing text and would carry over into the new text. Professor Ionita added that there had not yet been opportunity for much discussion about the theological content of the document. His hope was this text could be seen as a further stage in a developing process regarding ecumenical consensus on ecclesiology.

The direction which the Group was taking was very strongly affirmed, with the value of this emerging work to the churches: the member speaking could take this back with enthusiasm to his own church.

Concern was expressed, once again, on the question about contextuality: there had been a call at Crete to approach the text by a contextual theology method, now it seemed that the document would acknowledge this call but still work with a systematic theology method.

The Director responded that the call from Crete required a fuller response than could be managed within the time frame, but the change in the “architecture” of the text would point in the right direction.

There were three further comments in support of the concern for a justice voice in the text. A full address to the question of contextual theology would require some kind of partnership or participation - perhaps involving CWME – which might well continue after the 2013 Assembly. But how might new, further work on this front be initiated?

The Director responded that this would fall under the responsibility of the new Commission after the 2013 Assembly which might be planned to include new members with an expertise in contextual theology.

Nominations Committee Report

The Director reported that Rev. Dr Glenroy Lalor had been nominated by the Jamaica Baptist Union to succeed Rev. Neville Callam and this nomination had been welcomed and accepted by the nominations committee. The Commission welcomed this announcement.

One Baptism: Towards Mutual Recognition (continued)

Mrs Kaulule reported on behalf of the group charged with modifying the text on “One Baptism: Towards Mutual Recognition.” A modified text of the Report was tabled. In this, paragraph 59 had been omitted from the text, in the light of many critical comments and of the fact that the content of this paragraph was largely duplicated in paragraph 87 (now paragraph 86). The wording of 87(86) had been slightly modified. The form of the text as tabled did not include a proposed change in the opening words of 87(86), by which it now was proposed to read, “Some churches recognize a person...”

The first two subsections of the Introduction (Subsections A and B) had also been reversed to improve the flow of the document. The Director added that the proposed change in the ordering of the opening sections also helped to make clear from the outset what this text was and what it was not.

Some unease was expressed regarding paragraph 87(86). The Director responded that this paragraph was intended to be simply descriptive of the actual situation.

One speaker suggested that if the paragraph could not be clarified it should be omitted.

Next, the question was raised as to whether the text touched on the understanding that Baptism was essential to salvation. Also, where was the emphasis on the “one faith” alongside “one Baptism”?

Mrs Kaulule asked for guidance on the question of paragraph 87(now paragraph 86). The Moderator, Metropolitan Vasilios, clarified the meaning of the paragraph and argued that it was important for it to remain in place. Some suggestions were forthcoming for verbal changes, but given that none of these commended themselves, the Moderator of the session suggested that some members might meet over lunch to make a further proposal.

SESSION 16

One Baptism: Towards Mutual Recognition (continued)

Fr Bouwen moderating the session, asked Mrs Kaulule to reintroduce the discussion about the Baptism text. She understood that the Commission wished paragraph 87(86) to remain but wished the wording to be clarified. Fr Bouwen proposed the following wording to replace the first sentence of paragraph 87(86):

On certain conditions some churches recognise a person as a baptised Christian, without, however, recognising either the baptism as it is exercised in that church or the ecclesial character of that church itself. With this in mind, the following question is asked: How far does recognition of a person as a baptised Christian imply some recognition of the baptism which they received, and of the church in which it was performed?

This wording was accepted and, with the changes outlined above, the study text "One Baptism: Towards Mutual Recognition" was accepted as a study text of the Commission on Faith and Order.

Governance and restructuring of Faith and Order (continued)

Mrs Kaulule resumed the chair for further consideration of the question of the restructuring of Faith and Order. The Director gave a résumé of the present situation. Fr Bouwen asked whether the Director could clarify the relative situation of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism. In doing this, the Director emphasized that the CWME Commission was advisory to the staff; he noted, however, that he could not recommend this to the Commission on Faith and Order because it would diminish the ecclesial character of the commission, which is one of its vital strengths.

The Director went on to clarify the point at issue. Staff posts were not necessarily under threat, given that the department was currently under-staffed. The primary question at issue here concerned the restructuring of the Standing and Plenary Commissions, with the possibility of the loss of the Plenary Commission. But, is a Standing Commission of thirty members adequate to represent the breadth of the fellowship of the churches?

To the first speaker who responded to this question it was self-evident that Standing Commission was not adequate. The Plenary Commission remained vital, but the present mode of selection was not effective.

The Moderator of the Commission said that he would himself regret the elimination of the Plenary Commission, it was important to carry on working to strengthen the witness of Faith and Order.

Concern was then expressed about two points. One was the efficiency of Faith and Order, the other was the relationship of Faith and Order to the churches. There was a major distinction between Faith and Order and CWME; there was nothing in relation to Faith and Order comparable to the network of Mission agencies behind the work of the CWME. As regards re-structuring, the word normally meant cutting back. The speaker's fear was that, if there was only a single Commission of thirty, it would greatly weaken the relationship of Faith and Order to the churches. He would continue to argue in favour of maintaining the *status quo* unless and until the demands are unavoidable.

By way of comment on these remarks, the next speaker feared that simply arguing for sustaining of the *status quo* would rob the Commission of the opportunity to think imaginatively about how to fulfil in new ways the needs that were currently met by the Plenary Commission.

Linking the comments of both previous speakers, it was suggested that, while the common intent was to keep the Plenary Commission unless required to end it, it was important that, in the meantime, other ways of undertaking the work should be looked for. Perhaps a single Commission could be envisioned of fifty to sixty members; from time to time a much larger gathering could take place within a World Conference on Faith and Order?

Whatever the future arrangements, it was then emphasized, there must be face-to-face engagement, and that a network which works only by email was not adequate.

Following a proposal from the March 2010 Faith and Order Officers' meeting, a small subcommittee was established to report back to the next meeting of the Standing Commission: The Moderator, the Director, Professor Myriam Wijlens (Standing Commission), Professor Mel Robeck (Plenary Commission), Mr Yorgo Lemopoulos (WCC Deputy-General Secretary, and liaison with the WCC restructuring process).

The Director supported the possibility of thinking of a World Conference when the timing was right, and there was support for such a gathering from the churches and other partners, as opposed to the current Plenary Commission which is mandated to meet once between WCC assemblies, whether there was a perceived need or not. Such a proposal would give visibility to the convening role of the WCC within the ecumenical movement.

Subsequent speakers invited clarification of the financial cuts which were intended and suggested the exploration of project-orientated thinking, which could include the consideration of the use of experts under the guidance of the staff and commission.

Mrs Kaulule, moderating, thanked members for a constructive debate. There were many points which the group appointed to look at structures would be able to carry forward.

This concluded the item.

The Moderator invited discussion of the date of the next Commission meeting.

After some discussion, it was agreed to propose dates in July 2011: 17–20 (16 and 21 travel days). July appeared to be acceptable to those present.

Mrs Kaulule handed over the chair to the Moderator.

The Moderator made his concluding remarks to the Commission. He gave thanks to God that the Commission had met in Holy Etchmiadzin and for guiding its work to a conclusion. He asked that gratitude be expressed to His Holiness Catholicos Karekin II for his kindness and support. The Moderator extended thanks to Bishop Nathan and Bishop Hovakim for all they had done in arranging such excellent hospitality to the Commission. Bishop Hovakim and Bishop Nathan both returned their thanks and offered their prayers for the wellbeing of the members and staff of the Commission and for their churches. The meeting of the Commission ended at 16:40 with prayer.

APPENDIX 1 A

Report on the working group on Sources of Authority: Tradition and traditions

Dr Pablo Andiñach, Dr Mabel Athavale, Metropolitan Bishoy, Fr Cyril Hovorun (proxy for Metropolitan Hilarion), Dr Glenroy Lalor, Dr David Adesanya, Rev. Fredrik Hollertz (proxy for Dr Anne-Louise Eriksson), Fr Shahe Ananyan

Apologies: Dr Susan Durber, Dr Richard Treloar, Dr Emmanuel Anyambod.

Dr Pablo Andiñach reported on the work of the Group in preparing for a second consultation on Tradition and traditions: Sources of Authority for the Church in the framework of the study on hermeneutics planned in Crans-Montana in 2007.

The first one had been hosted by a co-moderator Dr Susan Durber, the second one was to be hosted by a co-moderator Metropolitan Hilarion.

27 June – 2 July, 2011, Moscow

The consultation would include 18 speakers, two staff persons, and, if finances permit, the co-moderators and staff from Moral Discernment in the Churches working group.

Focus:

Sources of Authority in our churches at the present; reflections from where we are now.

Methodology:

Two papers from each (or similar) traditions, both of the same length, one is an initial input, the other is a reflective response which deals with the first paper, but also may offer another perspective on the sources of authority in one's own tradition.

The proposed topics, presenters and respondents are:

Metropolitan Hilarion from the Orthodox tradition will speak on the theme of Church Hierarchy as a Source of Authority (hierarchy as theological and church-canonical concept). An Orthodox respondent will be named.

Dr Susan Durber from the Reformed tradition will speak about the authority of (personal) experience in her church. Dr Pablo Andiñach will respond.

Metropolitan Bishoy will speak about the authority of Liturgical Texts: the respondent will Fr Shahe Ananyan (Plenary Commission member), Armenia.

Dr David Adesanya, African Instituted Churches, will speak on the authority of the Holy Spirit; to respond.

Dr Glenroy Lalor, Baptist, will speak about the authority of the congregation and we will invite Rev. Dr Ruth Gouldbourne (Plenary Commission member), United Kingdom, to respond.

Dr Anne-Louise Eriksson, Lutheran, either on Democratic Discernment as the Authority in the Church or on the role of the Science in decision-making in the church, responded by Rev. Iára Muller (Plenary Commission member), Brazil.

Dr Richard Treloar, Anglican, will speak about the proposed Anglican Covenant as it treats authority; Dr Mabel Athavale will respond and speak about the authority of the Covenant in the United Church of North India.

Dom Michel Van Parys, Roman Catholic, will speak about Magisterium as a source of authority; Dr Wolfgang Thönissen (Plenary Commission member) to respond.

A special interest in terms of referring to the source of authority will be invitation of two Indigenous theologians, from Taiwan and Nagaland, North India.

Ideally, we wish to have co-moderators of the Moral Discernment Group with us but it depends on finances. The proxy of Metropolitan Hilarion, Fr Cyril Hovorun, who contributed significantly to the present shape of the planning, is expected to be with us.

Timetable for the papers: first papers on 1 March, second papers on 1 June.

APPENDIX 1 B

Guide to Discern Ecumenically Biblical interpretations through Teachers of the Early Church (up to 451 A.D.)

Aim:

The goal is to prepare a guidebook which proposes a methodology for reading of teachers and witnesses of the early church in an ecumenical context.

Purpose:

This guidebook will help many churches around the globe to re-connect to each other through a re-reading and re-discovering of the common origins.

An ecumenical reading of the Bible through the early teachers is a way to connect to each other through our common heritage; to understand different methodologies of reading the Bible; to rediscover early teachers as spiritual guides; *to facilitate a common learning and engagement with the early teachers and witnesses.*

As far as we know, there is no common ecumenical reading of the early teachers of the Church. They were primarily pastors, preachers and biblical theologians rather than systematic theologians. It is a challenge to provide an ecumenical perspective - how to look at the early witnesses together and this is a task of Faith and Order which strives to work out a common standpoint transcending denominational boundaries. It will present the common language and grammar in understanding of the hermeneutics of the early teachers.

Audience:

This guide is for ecumenical groups. These are individuals who within their own traditional contexts wish to go beyond in understanding other traditions.

Also, according to the members of the group who are engaged in teaching such a guide will be helpful to apply to ecumenical studies. Thus, the proposed guidebook provides material to be used also in ecumenical educational institutions or those confessional institutions that are willing to be ecumenical.

Material provided:

Various interpretations of biblical passages with commentaries.

Printed and digitalised version for internet.

A scheme of a guidebook:

Introduction: Who are the early teachers? How are the early teachers designated as such? What were their methods of interpreting the Scriptures? How are they linked with the emerging canon of Scripture?.

Main body: Four biblical passages and corresponding excerpts from the teachers and additional commentaries.

Methodology: Reading the biblical passage (at the moment we propose only New Testament passages), listening to the teachers by reading their commentaries (defining context of each author, historical and intellectual environment they lived and worked in), interrogating and

analysing patristic passages, applying lessons from the teachers to our respective situations, learning from one another.

The issue of languages:

In some places local ecumenical councils will provide such a translation; in other cases, translations can be done by educational institutions.

Who will execute the work?

There will be two parallel groups engaged with the creation of the guidebook. First, there will be one large group including all members of the study group on : Sources of Authority: Tradition and traditions, and those involved in the process. This group we tentatively called *Editorial Board*.¹ Members of this group will take a thorough look at the work done by a small *drafting group*, provide comments and approve the final draft before it is printed.

Second, there will be smaller group which will write the actual guide will be small comprised of the co-moderators of the study group, and others invited by them.

Time-table:

We expect the guidebook to be out before the end of 2011.

Funding:

Faith and Order does not have budget for this study. Moderators (and some members of the Study Group) volunteer to find funds for the guide.

It will involve a co-ordination by a staff person.

Potential passages from the Gospels suggested by the Study Group:

Beatitudes - Mtt. 5: 1-12; Parable of the Kingdom - Mtt. 25: 14-30; Spirit of the Lord - Luke 4: 16-20; Parable of Sheep and Goats Mtt. 25: 31-46; Parable of the Sower - Mtt. 13: 1-9

The Prodigal Son Luke - 15: 11-32; Jesus tells to Pray Luke 18:1-8; Wicked Tenants - Mark 12: 1-12; Good Shepherd - John 10: 1-21; Jesus the true Vine – John 15: 1-11; Wedding in Cana – John 2: 1- 11; The Sisters of Lazarus – John 11: 1-16; Resurrection story – John 20: 1-19; Women with Jesus – Luke 24:10; Women from Galilee – Luke 8: 1-3; Calling the Apostles – Mtt. 4: 18-22; Baptism – John 3: 1-21; Resurrection of the poor – Luke 7: 11-17

Disciples desert Jesus – John 6: 60-70; Healing – John 5: 1-18.

¹ Revd Dr Pablo Andifiach, Revd Dr Mabel Athavale, Metropolitan Bishop of Damietta, Revd Dr Cyril Hovorun (Plenary Commission), Revd Dr Glenroy Lalor, Revd Prof. David Adesanya, Revd Fredrik Hollertz (Plenary Commission), Revd Dr Anne-Louise Eriksson, Revd Dr Shahe Ananyan (Plenary Commission), Revd Dr Susan Durber, Revd Dr Richard Treloar, Revd Dr Emmanuel Anyambod, Dom Michel Van Parys (Plenary Commission; Catholic, Belgium), Very Revd Dr Elpidophoros Lambriniadis (Plenary Commission; Ecumenical Patriarchate, Turkey), Dr Keelan Downton (Plenary Commission; National Community Church, USA), Ofelia Alvarez Coleman (Plenary Commission; Moravian Church in Nicaragua) and participants in the 2008 Cambridge Consultation.

APPENDIX 2

Moral Discernment in the Churches

Our working group began by discussing three reports analyzing the small group work on MDC from the Crete Plenary Commission meeting. These reports were prepared by Perry Hamalis, Faith and Order consultant; Dagmar Heller, Faith and Order staff; Rebecca Todd Peters, Faith and Order member. Myriam Wijlens led us in a discussion of the Joint Working Group's document "Ecumenical Dialogue on Moral Issues". In our meetings we discussed what learnings we could identify from the Plenary Commission meeting in Crete in 2009 and what our next steps as a Working Group should be as we continue with the MDC process.

Our proposal for next steps follows:

In our work we were asked to address two particular tasks. The first is to help people understand why and how moral issues are church-dividing. The second task is to offer recommendations/guidelines to help churches think about how to have more constructive conversations around divisive moral issues. Our work in Crete helped us begin the work of clarifying our response to these tasks. The working group has developed a second stage of the study process that will invite churches and ecumenical bodies to participate in this process.

It is our intention to develop a draft study document to present to the Standing Commission at the 2011 meeting. For this purpose we plan a drafting meeting in early 2011. This study document will form the foundation of the second phase of our work.

STUDY DOCUMENT

The document is structured as follows: Sections 1-3 of the study document present initial findings of our response to the first task and section 4 outlines our proposal for the next phase of this study.

Introduction

This section will include background of Faith and Order work leading up to this study, including Ecclesiology and Ethics studies and Christian Perspectives on Theological Anthropology study.

Section 1 - overview of process

This section will explain an overview of the study process so far that includes information about why we chose to use a case study methodology; an introduction to the purpose and methodology of case studies (not to study the particular issues, but rather to examine their methodologies); criteria for the choice of the case studies; and a description of how these case studies were used at the Plenary Commission meeting in Crete.

Section 2 - findings of Crete

This section will elaborate on our findings from Crete with particular attention to the causative factors of our disagreements. One of our most important findings is the necessity of first understanding how we argue in order to become aware of where our points of disagreement lie. The bulk of this section will work to develop and discuss specific areas of methodological divergence including: an examination of how hermeneutical traditions shape the ways in which sources are used differently when making ethical arguments; articulation of the ways that different churches/traditions go about making moral decisions on an

institutional level; discussion of the ways in which shared principles or values may be applied differently in the same situation; exploration of what happens when competing principles come into conflict in a given situation; and attention to the ways in which different contexts and cultures influence moral perspectives.

In Crete we discovered that some of the divisions that separate us may not be as great as people might think. We found that often we share common values (such as the valuing of life) but that we apply these values differently in situations of moral conflict. This section will conclude with summaries of the common ground that we share as Christians in processes of moral discernment.

Section 3 – how this work relates to previous ecumenical work.

It is important for our study to relate to previous ecumenical work. In this section we will discuss ways in which this study process relates to existing ecumenical documents on moral discernment, paying particular attention to bi-lateral and multi-lateral work [e.g. Ecumenical Dialogue on Moral Issues by the Joint Working Group between the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church (1995), Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission's *Life in Christ: Morals, Communion and the Church* (1993)].

Section 4 – next phase of the study process (where do we go from here)

In order to answer the second task of our study—to offer recommendations/guidelines to help churches think about how to have more constructive conversations around divisive moral issues—we will invite groups from a variety of confessional, regional, and ecumenical settings that represent the diversity of the ecumenical movement to engage in a study process that will generate discussion and feedback to the working group about strategies for improving discussions/dialogues about difficult church-dividing moral issues.

The content of this chapter will include a detailed outline of the study process itself along with a clear study guide (including specific questions and suggestions for group process).

This study process includes the following steps:

1 – To study the first three sections of this report as a way to cultivate an awareness of different lines of argument

2- Invite groups to study one of our prepared case studies as a way of analyzing and discussing the forms and methods of moral discernment

3 – Identify and engage in a discussion of a significant potentially church-dividing local issue in the area of moral discernment in order to try to practice mutual understanding as a way of trying to improve relationships

4 - Reflect on the process –What helped to make the dialogue more productive? Offer feedback to working group to help the working group to develop guidelines for emerging ecumenical praxis that would help us reflect on moral issues (guidelines around how we have these conversations)

Drafting process

Introduction (Dagmar)

Section 1 - overview of process (Dagmar)

Section 2 - findings of Crete (Toddie will coordinate with the help of several consultants who bring expertise in ethics and moral theology (e.g. Perry Hamalis; a Catholic moral theologian/ethicist from global south, to be named)

Section 3 – how this work relates to previous ecumenical work (Dagmar)

Section 4 – next phase of the study process (Toddie)

Given the complexity of section 2 and the need to incorporate additional expertise we suggest the possibility of bringing together the writers of section 2 to meet in the fall of 2010.

Draft texts from all authors are due Feb. 1 and will be distributed to working group members before the March meeting. The Working group will meet for a drafting meeting February 25-March 1. Additional consultants to include an expert in group process/facilitation and additional ethicist/moral theologians from the drafting group of section 2.

PILOT PROJECT

While the study document invites any group to participate in the next phase of our study process, the Working Group will identify 12-15 groups to participate in a pilot project that would offer feedback to the WG to help shape our response to the second task of developing guidelines around how we have difficult conversations. These groups will be identified from a variety of locations that might be drawn from: : universities and theological institutions, national councils (perhaps one from each region), ecclesial groups in particular contexts, professional societies (confessional and ecumenical), Christian world communions, regional ecumenical organizations (KEK, etc), programs of the WCC, virtual communities (global ethics forum, etc.), (look carefully at the members of the plenary commission to help in identifying participants in the study process). We also envisage the possibility of holding a group session in the framework of the *mutirao/padare* at the next WCC Assembly in 2013.

The Working Group would invite these 12-15 groups to participate in the process by committing to holding a study in their local venue. Each group would identify one person (group facilitator) who has specific training/skills (ethics, moral theology/facilitation) to attend a consultation to prepare them to lead the study in their context to be held in the beginning of 2012. Each group facilitator would lead the process in their local setting and send written feedback to the Standing Commission by January 1, 2014.

TIMELINE

2010 – Fall meeting of consultants to draft section 2

2011 – Working Group drafting meeting in Feb/March

June - standing commission meeting approve the draft

2012 – Training consultation (early in year)

2013 - Assembly

APPENDIX 3

Ecclesiology Group Report

The group consisted of the two co-moderators of the ecclesiology project – Viorel Ionita and Sarah Lancaster – along with Metropolitan Vasilios, vice-moderator Sarah Kaulule, André Birmelé, William Henn, Natasha Klukach, Ulrike Link-Wieczorek, Bishop Nathan Ohanisyian, Peter Fisher and Cecil Robeck, with John Gibaut and Odair Pedroso Mateus of the Faith and Order staff. The process benefitted from a well prepared agenda that had been worked out by the two ecclesiology group moderators together with the Faith and Order staff in early March. The work on ecclesiology at Etchmiadzin unfolded in three phases.

Phase One. First, three of the sessions on Tuesday, June 22, focused on the following issues:

1. **Responses.** General comments were made about the responses so-far received to *The Nature and Mission of the Church*, which numbered 82: 25 from churches, 1 from a bilateral dialogue between churches; 12 short reports from the groups of plenary commissioners produced during its meeting in Crete last October; 9 from councils of churches; 5 from mission organizations, especially including that of the WCC's CWME; 10 from academic seminars; 1 from an academic institute [Boston Theological Institute]; 18 from individuals; and 1 from the programme for Just and Inclusive Communities of the WCC. These had been made available to the members of the Standing Commission via internet since mid-April. They varied in length and quality and were incomplete; for example, we lack an Orthodox response, though such has been promised for the months ahead. In light of an expectation noted by the director John Gibaut that a text be presented at the next general assembly of the WCC in 2013, we decided to proceed with our work immediately, taking into consideration any additional responses as they become available to us.

It was proposed that perhaps a theological summary of these responses be made instead of using them to revise the current text. Another suggestion proposed revising the boxes of NMC in light of the responses. As they currently stand, the boxes seem to present diversity in a negative light, rather than as a constitutive part of unity. At the same time, our FO work seeks to uncover what we have in common and to overcome church-dividing disagreements. All of this led to our second topic: what kind of text are we thinking of producing?

2. **Kind of text.** Three options quickly surfaced: 1) a twenty page summary of the theological content of the responses, without further work on NMC; 2) a re-writing of NMC in light of the responses; 3) a new and much shorter text, the length of which would much less than NMC but substantially longer than the statement "Called to be One Church" adopted by the Porto Alegre general assembly. This new shorter text could incorporate something of the more dynamic language of "Called to be One Church." Options 1 and 3 could both be undertaken. If a shorter text is written (option 3), it could be accompanied by a longer commentary. It was noted that the type of text one produces is to some degree determined by the audience for which it is intended. This led to the third theme taken up in this first phase of our discussion:
3. **Audience.** One of the reactions to NMC expressed in some of the responses of the churches and in many of the group reports at the plenary meeting in Crete (2009) was

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that the current text is not very accessible. Should our ecclesiology work be directed primarily to churches and their leaders, to theologians or to church members without significant theological training? Several of our group recalled the powerful talk of Mar George during the plenary on the "church of the poor" and the request by many groups for greater a greater integration of contextuality in the ecclesiology work.

Phase Two: With these points in mind, we turned to more intense work on the responses themselves, hoping that a return to the responses might help us to answer the questions raised above. We broke into three groups: Mel, Ulrike and Bill working on the responses to Chapter I, "The Church of the Triune God"; Viorel, HG Nathan, Sarah K and Peter on those to Chapter II, "The Church in History"; and Natasha, HE Vasilios, Sarah L and André working of those to Chapters III and IV, "The Life of Communion" and "In and For the World." This work took place during the fourth session on Tuesday and the two sessions on Wednesday.

Phase Three: For the three sessions of Thursday, the entire ecclesiology group reconvened. First, each subcommittee reported on its findings. Subcommittee I on Chapter I found that many responses welcomed the increased attention to the topic of mission in NMC, as compared with *The Nature and Purpose of the Church* (1998). Perhaps a revised text could begin with Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom of God and with the mission of the Church, under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, to continue Jesus' mission. This could give a more dynamic, inductive and contextual opening to a discussion of the Church. Some early reference to sin in the world and in the Church could provide a more concrete, human and less abstract or triumphalistic vision of the Church. The presence and action of the Holy Spirit and the imparting of grace should run throughout the text to a greater degree. The theme of grace might allow for more explicit consideration of the universal salvific will of God and the relation of the Church to world religions. Worship, as an essential dimension to the life of the Christian community, should enter more explicitly throughout the text. Subcommittee II on Chapter II listed a number of specific recommendations for each of the sections of that chapter. Two general recommendations also were given: that this material be redistributed into chapters one and three; as it stands the text seems to separate "historicity" from the Church of the Triune God in Chapter I. Secondly, the mystery of the incarnation could provide theological grounding for a more positive assessment of the Church's history. It would be mistaken to conceptualize the history of the Christian community as an unfortunate and deficient actualization of the positive New Testament picture of the Church that runs through much of Chapter I. Subcommittee III on Chapters III and IV first listed specific recommendations regarding the series of themes treated in the third chapter: faith, baptism, eucharist, ministry, authority, etc. It found that a number of responses failed to comment at all on Chapter IV and that those commenting usually were particularly negative, stating that the chapter lacked theological depth and seemed to be simply added on without much relation to what had gone before.

The discussion of this more attentive review of the responses gradually produced an agreement that the audience we should aim for is the same as that for other ecumenical texts, a somewhat mid-level audience which could be understood by a reasonably well informed member of a congregation but which had enough theological weight to speak to theologians and to sketch out the fundamental common ecclesiological ground among the Churches. It should be an instrument to aid the progress toward unity. The responses, moreover, clearly envisioned some re-writing of NMC, given the many criticisms and suggestions that were addressed directly to the text and to its improvement. Therefore, our work should be squarely based on the present text. However, the strong call to have a more contextual, accessible and attractive text led us to hope that we could shorten NMC by about 20 % and make it more

dynamic. To help envision such a revision, we reflected on what we called the “architecture” of the present NMC, as a step toward imagining a new “architecture” to guide our work. The new “architecture” could be described as follows: we would begin with a short chapter on the Kingdom and the Church’s mission to promote it under the impulse of the Holy Spirit. This chapter would also explain why the unity of the Church is essential to this mission. It could make use of some of the material that now appears in Chapter II, “The Church in History” and Chapter IV, “In and For the World.” A second Chapter could integrate the first two chapters of NMC, and seek to present the Church as known through revelation and lived out in history. That would avoid the impression that history is not part of the very nature of the Church. A third chapter, drawing largely on the third chapter of NMC, would be a harvest of the discussion of ecclesiology in FO and in ecumenical dialogue in general. It would explore the elements present in the unity statements of the general assemblies of the WCC (New Delhi, Nairobi, Canberra, Porto Alegre), alluding to BEM, *Confessing the One Faith* and other relevant multilateral or bilateral texts. Finally, chapter four would return to the activity of the Church in the world, serving Christ and the Spirit in the work of inaugurating the Kingdom. Perhaps this chapter could thus serve as an “inclusion,” picking up the eschatological (kingdom) theme with which the text began. Thus a rough outline of this revised, shortened version might look like this:

Chapter I: The Church’s mission to proclaim the Kingdom and the need for unity to serve this mission

Chapter II: The Church as Communion revealed and established by Christ and the Spirit and lived out in History

Chapter III: Harvesting Ecumenical Dialogue on Life in Communion

Chapter IV: Working for the Kingdom in Today’s World

A small drafting group was assigned to begin immediate work toward the realization of such a revision, comprised of the two moderators – Viorel Ionita and Sarah Lancaster – assisted by Ulrike Link-Wieczorek and Bill Henn. They will meet in Geneva with staff from October 21-24, 2010, to review the work done by that time and to set further revision goals. Hopefully by mid-February their further revisions can be forwarded to the entire Ecclesiology Working Group, which will meet from March 16-20, 2011, hosted by Sarah Lancaster in Ohio, USA. The full EWG will further revise the text at that time and set goals for any further revisions, to be completed by the end of May, 2011, so that they may be forwarded to the entire Standing Commission for study in preparation for its next meeting in mid-July of 2011. At that time, the entire Standing commission will evaluate the work thus far and set directions for how the project is to be taken forward from that point.

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By-laws of Faith and Order²

1. Meanings

- 1.1. Faith and Order means the standing commission and the plenary commission hereinafter defined.
- 1.2. The standing commission means the Standing Commission on Faith and Order of the Council³.
- 1.3. The plenary commission means the Plenary Commission on Faith and Order of the Council.
- 1.4. The officers means the moderator and vice-moderators of the standing commission and the plenary commission, the director of the Cluster: Issues and Themes⁴ and the director of the secretariat of Faith and Order.
- 1.5. The secretariat means the secretariat of Faith and Order.

2. Introduction

Faith and Order represents an historic, founding movement of the Council. There is a need for it to have a continuing, identifiable visibility and structure in order to maintain its ability to incorporate the participation of the Roman Catholic Church and other non-member churches of the Council in the organizing and staffing of its activities within the overall framework of the Council.

3. Aim and Functions

- 3.1. The aim of Faith and Order is to proclaim the oneness of the church of Jesus Christ and to call the churches to the goal of visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and in common life in Christ, in order that the world may believe.
- 3.2. The functions of the standing commission and plenary commission are:
 - a) to study such questions of faith, order and worship as bear on this aim and to examine such social, cultural, political, racial and other factors as affect the unity of the church;

² As approved by WCC Central Committee, August/September 1999, see *Minutes of the Fiftieth Meeting*, WCC Central Committee, 1999, Geneva, WCC, pp. 9-10, 81.

³ The Council means the World Council of Churches

⁴ The 'Cluster' no longer exists but is superseded by Programme II, Unity, Mission, Worship and Spirituality.

- b) to study the theological implications of the existence and development of the ecumenical movement and to keep prominently before the Council the obligation to work towards unity;
- c) to promote prayer for unity;
- d) to study matters in the present relationship of the churches to one another which cause difficulties or which particularly require theological clarification;
- e) to study the steps being taken by the churches towards closer unity with one another and to provide information concerning such steps;
- f) to bring to the attention of the churches, by the best means available, reports of Faith & Order meetings and studies;
- g) to provide opportunities for consultation among those whose churches are engaged in union negotiations or other specific efforts towards unity.

In pursuing these functions the following principles shall be observed:

- i.* Faith and Order, in seeking to draw the churches into conversation and study, shall recognize that only the churches themselves are competent to initiate steps towards union by entering into negotiations with one another. The work of Faith and Order is to act, on their invitation, as helper and adviser.
- ii.* It shall conduct its work in such a way that all are invited to share reciprocally in giving and receiving and no one shall be asked to be disloyal to his or her convictions nor to compromise them. Differences are to be clarified and recorded as honestly as agreements.

4. Organization

- 4.1. The Faith and Order Standing Commission and Plenary Commission are constitutionally responsible to Central Committee through the programme committee.
- 4.2. The standing commission will be responsible for initiating, implementing and laying down general guidelines of the programme of Faith and Order, in consultation with Programme Committee, within the framework of the policies of the World Council of Churches as established by Central Committee. It will guide the staff in the development of the Faith and Order programme, and supervise the ongoing work. It shall report annually to Central Committee through Programme Committee. In exceptional circumstances Standing Commission, in consultation with the officers of the WCC, shall be permitted to place an issue on the agenda of Central Committee.
- 4.3. The plenary commission shall provide a broader frame of reference for the activities of the standing commission and in particular provide a forum for theological debate and a source of membership for participation in study groups and consultations. The members of the plenary commission will share in communicating the programme of Faith and Order to the churches.

- 4.4. The standing commission shall consist of not more than 30 members (including the officers).
- 4.5. The plenary commission shall consist of not more than 120 members (including the officers and other members of the standing commission).
- 4.6. The standing commission, before each assembly⁵, shall appoint a nominations committee to prepare a list of names for the election of the new standing commission by Central Committee at its first meeting after the assembly. The members will hold office until the next assembly.
- 4.7. The standing commission, at its last meeting before each assembly, shall propose a person as moderator of Faith and Order for election by the central committee at its first meeting after the assembly. The moderator will hold office until the next assembly.
- 4.8. At its first meeting after the assembly, the standing commission shall elect not more than five vice-moderators from among its members. The vice-moderators will hold office until the next assembly.
- 4.9. At its first meeting after the assembly the standing commission shall prepare a list of names additional to the moderator and members of the standing commission, for the election of the new plenary commission by the central committee at its next meeting. The commissioners will hold office until the next assembly.
- 4.10. Vacancies on the standing commission and plenary commission shall be filled by Central Committee on the nomination of the standing commission.
- 4.11. Since the size of the standing commission and the plenary commission and the provisions of by-law 4.12 preclude full representation of all member churches of the Council, appointment shall be made on the basis of personal capacity to serve the purposes of Faith and Order. At the same time, care shall be taken to secure a reasonable geographical and confessional representation of churches on the standing commission, the plenary commission and among the officers and secretariat. The membership of the plenary commission shall include a sufficient number of women, young and lay persons.
- 4.12. Persons who are members of churches which do not belong to the Council, but which confess Jesus Christ as God and Saviour are eligible for membership of the standing commission and the plenary commission.
- 4.13. Before any candidate is nominated for appointment by the central committee, steps shall be taken to ensure that his or her name is acceptable to the church to which he or she belongs. A member should be willing to accept some responsibility for communication between Faith and Order and his or her church and ecumenical bodies in his or her country.

⁵ Means assembly of the World Council of Churches

5. The Secretariat

- 5.1. The Faith and Order Secretariat shall be the members of the staff of the World Council of Churches who are assigned to the work of Faith and Order. For all external relationships and purposes the Coordinator of the Faith and Order Team in the Cluster: Issues and Themes⁶ will hold the title of “Director of the Secretariat of Faith and Order”.
- 5.2. The staff will be appointed in accordance with the normal procedure for appointment of council staff. The general secretary shall, after due consultation with the officers of Faith and Order, nominate for appointment or re-appointment members of the executive staff of the secretariat by the central committee or the executive committee of the Council. In the case of the Director of the Secretariat of Faith and Order, no nominations will be submitted to Central Committee or Executive Committee against the advice of the Standing Commission on Faith and Order.
- 5.3. The secretariat shall be responsible for ensuring the continuation of the work of Faith and Order in accordance with the decisions agreed by Standing Commission, approved in accordance with the policy of Central Committee. The secretariat will keep in regular contact with the officers and members of the Faith and Order Commission.

6. World Conferences

- 6.1. World conferences on Faith and Order may be held when, on the recommendation of Standing Commission, Central Committee so decides.
- 6.2. The invitation to take part in such conferences shall be addressed to the churches throughout the world which confess Jesus Christ as God and Saviour.
- 6.3. Such conferences shall consist primarily of delegates appointed by the churches to represent them. Youth delegates, special advisers and observers may also be invited.
- 6.4. Careful attention shall be given to the communication of the reports and recommendations of the world conferences to the churches.

7. Faith and Order Meetings

- 7.1. The standing commission shall meet at least every 18 months, but may be convened at any time by the moderator in consultation with the other officers of Faith and Order or at the request of not less than one third of the members of Standing Commission.
- 7.2. Plenary Commission shall normally meet once between assemblies, but may be convened at any time by the standing commission with the approval of the Executive Committee of the Council.

⁶ ibid

- 7.3. The secretariat shall be responsible for giving due notice of meetings of both the standing commission and the plenary commission, for keeping its minutes and other records and, in consultation with the moderator, for preparing its agenda.
- 7.4. A member of the standing commission may name a person to represent him or her at any meeting at which the member is unable to be present, but such a person may not vote.
- 7.5. A member of the plenary commission, by advance notice in writing, signed by both the commission member and the appropriate representative of the member's church, to the secretariat may name a proxy to represent the member at any meeting at which the member is unable to be present.
- 7.6. Other persons may be invited to be present and to speak, if the moderator so rules, but not to vote. In particular, in order to secure representation of its study groups, members of these may be invited to attend either body as consultants.
- 7.7. In the absence of the moderator, one of the vice-moderators shall preside at such meetings. In the absence of any of these officers, the meeting shall elect one of its members to take the chair. One third of the total membership (including proxies) shall constitute a quorum.
- 7.8. Faith and Order shall normally conduct its business according to the rule of procedure of Central Committee. Questions arising about procedure shall be decided by a majority vote of those present and voting.
- 7.9. If, at any time when it is inconvenient to hold a meeting of the standing commission, the moderator and secretariat shall decide that there is business requiring immediate action by the standing commission, it shall be permissible for them to obtain by post, or fax the opinions of its members and the majority opinion thus ascertained shall be treated as equivalent to the decision of a duly convened meeting.

8. Faith and Order Studies

- 8.1. The standing commission shall formulate and carry through the study programme.
- 8.2. The secretariat, as authorised by Standing Commission, shall invite persons to serve on the study groups and consultations. They shall pay particular regard to the need to involve members of both Standing Commission and Plenary Commission in the study programme, whether by membership of a study group, consultations or by written consultation. Due regard shall be paid to special competence in the fields of study concerned and to the need for the representation of a variety of ecclesiastical traditions and theological viewpoints.
- 8.3. Study groups shall normally include both those who are and those who are not members of the standing commission or plenary commission. They may also include persons who do not belong to members churches of the Council.

- 8.4. In planning such studies all possible contacts shall be sought or maintained with allied work already in progress under such auspices as those of regional or national councils or of individual churches or of ecumenical institutes and theological faculties or departments.
- 8.5. Study groups shall prepare reports, as requested, for discussion in Standing Commission and Plenary Commission, at world conferences on Faith and Order or at assemblies. Any such report should bear a clear indication of its status.
- 8.6. The publication of such reports and of other Faith and Order papers shall be the responsibility of the secretariat, provided that adequate financial resources are available.

9. Finance

- 9.1. The financing of the work of Faith and Order will be undertaken in the normal way as part of the work of the Cluster: Issues and Themes. The secretariat, in close consultation with the standing commission, shall be responsible for working with the director and finance officer of the [Cluster] preparing a budget for the activities of Faith and Order.
- 9.2. Standing Commission will receive reports on the budget and funding of the work of Faith and Order and will provide oversight of the detailed planning and policy in relation to the funding of programmatic activities (e.g. studies) and projects of Faith and Order within the overall policies and budget of the Cluster: Issues and Themes approved by the Central Committee.
- 9.3. Standing Commission will assist in developing the financial resources available for the work of Faith and Order.

10. Communication with the Churches

The standing commission and the plenary commission shall be concerned to facilitate communication with the churches. They shall make generally available results of studies where such studies are formally communicated to the churches through the Central Committee. In certain studies the churches may be invited to make a formal response.

11. Revision of the By-Laws

Proposals for the amendment of these by-laws may be made by the standing commission or by Central Committee in consultation with Standing Commission and the programme committee. Any proposed amendment must be circulated in writing to the members of Plenary Commission not less than three months before the meeting of Standing Commission at which it is to be considered for adoption. A proposed amendment requires the approval of two-thirds of the members of the standing commission present and voting, before final approval by Central Committee.

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