



Saksbehandler: Sven Oppegaard

Saksdokument:  
Brev fra LVF av May 2007

## Saker fra de økumeniske organisasjonene

### **Det lutherske verdensforbund (LVF)**

#### **Vedtak av Rådet i Det lutherske verdensforbund**

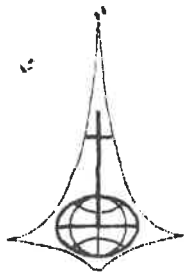
Et sammendrag av vedtakene fra LVFs rådsmøte i Lund i mars d.å. kom før sommeren. Rådet anmodes om å se gjennom denne oversikten, og eventuelt komme med kommentarer der det måtte være aktuelt.

#### **Forslag til vedtak**

Sakene tas til orientering.



07/4767



# THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

A COMMUNION OF CHURCHES – EINE KIRCHENGEMEINSCHAFT – UNA COMUNIÓN DE IGLESIAS – UNE COMMUNION D'ÉGLISES  
LUTHERISCHER WELTBUND – FEDERACIÓN LUTERANA MUNDIAL – FÉDÉRATION LUTHÉRIENNE MONDIALE

Office of the General Secretary

To: LWF Member Churches  
National Committees  
Ecumenical Partners  
Related and Mission Agencies

May 2007

Dear Friends,

It is nearly two months ago since the LWF Council and Church Leaders met in Lund the historic home of the LWF. The celebration of the LWF's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the Lund Cathedral was a memorable event. We are grateful to our host church, the Church of Sweden, and the Diocese of Lund for their generous contribution, which made this Council meeting such a special event.

Today I am sending you a compendium of actions taken by the Council. I request you to review these resolutions with the appropriate staff person in your offices and the National Committee. Needless to say these resolutions have an impact on our common work and mission.

I have already sent separate letters to you on the Resolution on the Middle East, the letter adopted by participants in the theological seminar: "Fundamentals for a Lutheran Communion in the Face of Fundamentalisms" and the book "The Apostolicity of the Church", a study document of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity.

I will soon be addressing separate letters to you on the following:

1. The report of the task force on Marriage, Family and Sexuality (being translated)
2. Issue of Poverty, the Responsibility of Governments and the Mission of the Church, and on other actions taken by the Council.
3. The Lund Statement on "Episcopal Ministry within the Apostolicity of the Church".(being translated)
4. Common Statement on "The Holy Eucharist in the life of the Church", of the Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission, 2006.

You can access some of these documents on the LWF website on: <http://www.lutheranworld.org/>

May God bless you in your work and life.

Yours sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noko  
General Secretary

Cc: LWF President, LWF Cabinet  
Cc: Council members, Advisers

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## MEETING OF THE LWF COUNCIL 2007

### RESOLUTIONS and ACTIONS

#### **ELECTIONS**

##### **Election of replacement for the Rev. Dr Walter Altmann**

The Council voted to elect Dr Carlos Gilberto Bock from the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil to replace the Rev. Dr Walter Altmann; and to appoint him chairperson of the Program Committee for Mission and Development and a member of the Executive Committee.

##### **Election of replacement for the Rev. Chandran Paul Martin**

It was voted to elect the Rev. Augustine Jeyakumar of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India to replace the Rev. Chandran Paul Martin; and to appoint him a member of the Program Committee for Communication Services.

##### **Replacement of members of the Project Committee**

It was voted to elect Bishop em. Dr Julius Filo to replace Archbishop Anders Wejryd as chairperson of the Project Committee; the Rev. Rainer Kiefer to replace Oberkirchenrat Martin Schindehütte; and Mr Robert Granke to replace Ms Ruth E. Jensen.

##### **Replacement of a member of the Standing Committee for World Service**

It was voted to elect Mr Christer Åkesson to replace Ms Carin Gardbring.

#### **REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY**

It was voted to receive the report of the General Secretary with appreciation and with the exclusion of item 3.4.2 and refer it to the regional meetings for discussion.

#### **RENEWAL COMMITTEE**

It was voted to receive the Report of the Renewal Committee with appreciation and refer it to the regional meetings for discussion.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE SECRETARIAT, 2007 -2011**

It was voted to ask the General Secretary to bring to the June 2008 meeting of the Council a proposal for the necessary organizational changes to the Secretariat in order to facilitate a timely realignment in 2009 and to receive the Strategic Plan document with appreciation and refer it to the General Secretary for implementation with the Operational Plan.

## **TASK FORCE ON MARRIAGE, FAMILY AND SEXUALITY**

It was voted to receive the final report of the Task Force on Marriage, Family and Sexuality; and to adopt the Guidelines for processes and dialogue and commend them to member churches.

## **ASSEMBLY PLANNING COMMITTEE**

It was voted to approve the following general and specific additional purposes for the Eleventh Assembly:

### **General purposes:**

- a) to witness to the faith and to worship together;
- b) to confer with one another;
- c) to speak together on fundamental concerns of the whole church;
- d) to express their unity as part of the one, universal, new community in Christ; and
- e) to reflect more deeply on the shift from federation to communio.

### **Specific additional purposes:**

- a) to explore ways to be God's instruments for healing, justice and reconciliation in the midst of brokenness in church and society;
- b) to deepen the understanding and experience of the Lutheran communion by addressing differences and disparities, and by sharing gifts;
- c) to commit to closer and deeper cooperation within the ecumenical movement and to life in communion as given in Christ by deepening a vision of communion of communions;
- d) to discern the challenges posed to Lutheran churches in today's multicultural and multifaith contexts; and
- e) to address spiritual, social and environmental challenges provoked especially by economic globalization, the struggle against poverty, HIV/AIDS, water and food security.

- to hold the Eleventh Assembly from 20-27 July 2010;
- to approve the categories of participants outlined in Agenda Exhibit 11.1;
- to approve the following key for the nomination of delegates:

| Church Membership | No. Delegates |
|-------------------|---------------|
|-------------------|---------------|

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| up to 25,000 | 1 |
|--------------|---|

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| 25,001 -150,000 | 2 |
|-----------------|---|

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| 150,001 -350,000 | 3 |
|------------------|---|

+1 additional delegate for every 400,000 members or fraction thereof;

- to approve additional regional delegates as follows: 4 for Africa, 10 for Asia, 5 for Europe, 6 for Latin America and 1 for North America;
- to ask member churches with more than one delegate to strive to have a balance between clergy and laity in their delegation.
- to adopt "Give Us Today Our Daily Bread" as the theme of the Eleventh Assembly;
- to ask the General Secretary to:
  - a) encourage the non-paying member churches to pay their assembly fees;
  - b) find ways to raise USD 2.3 million for the assembly; and
  - c) report back to the Assembly Planning Committee on the development of the assembly finances;
- to request the General Secretary to ensure that planning costs are based on assured income; and
- to ask the general secretary to negotiate an assembly logistics arrangement between the Evangelical Church in Württemberg and the LWF Geneva Secretariat.

## **THEOLOGY AND STUDIES**

### **The Diaconal Ministry in Lutheran Churches**

It was voted to affirm and commend the following to member churches for their attention:

- Changing historical and contextual conditions call for adapting the ordered public ministry of the church. In the sixteenth century, the Lutheran Reformers had solid reasons for focusing on the ministry of preaching of the gospel because of how it had become distorted in the church of that day. Today, the survival of the world is threatened perhaps more so than ever before and it is in desperate need of healing, as emphasized by the 2003 Tenth Assembly of the LWF. In this context, the diaconal ministry is an embodied witness to God's power of healing at the fault lines of God's broken creation. This ministry is carried out in the awareness that it is God who will finally heal and bring creation to fulfillment.
- In light of the great variety of ways in which diaconal ministry is institutionalized in our churches, we call upon our member churches to consider strengthening and, where applicable,

establishing the diaconal ministry along with the pastoral ministry as part of the holistic public ministry of the church (CA V and CA XIV). Doing so would imply ensuring a kind of formation and training for diaconal ministers that adequately equips and qualifies them for this ministry.

### **Fundamentals for a Lutheran Communion in the Face of Fundamentalisms**

It was voted to forward the attached letter to member churches and related theological institutions and urge them to engage in further discussion and action on fundamentals for a Lutheran communion in the face of fundamentalism.

### **Theological Reflection on Urgent Environmental Challenges**

It was voted to explore possibilities for theological, spiritual and ethical reflection on urgent environmental challenges, especially with regard to climate change; and to draw upon the realities and perspectives of member churches and field programs (through DMD and DWS) and of indigenous communities; and to collaborate with OIAHR, the WCC, other ecumenical partners, theologians and others who are working in this area.

It was voted to receive the Report of the Program Committee for Theology and Studies with appreciation.

## **MISSION AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **LWF Project Committee**

It was voted to receive the Report of the LWF Project Committee with appreciation.

### **Strategic Plan**

It was voted to ensure that full participation of youth be more fully integrated into the strategic plan and that concerns related to gender, including the full participation of women be named specifically as part of what it means to be an inclusive communion and according to existing LWF policies.

### **Youth in Church and Society (YICAS) Evaluation**

It was voted to change from Youth in Church and Society (YICAS) to LWF Youth, and that more importance shall be given to the advocacy role of the desk.

## **WORLD SERVICE**

### **LWF Strategic Plan for the LWF Secretariat for 2007-2011**

It was voted to take into consideration the observations of the PCWS as the strategy is implemented.

### **Communication Audit**

It was voted to receive the Communication Audit with appreciation and accept as presented.

### **ACT Development (PEAD)**

It was voted to endorse the LWF participation in ACT Development and ask the Secretariat to continue its active involvement, and to furthermore encourage LWF member churches and development organizations to take part and actively engage in ACT Development.

### **Report of Standing Committee for World Service**

It was voted to amend the mandate of the Standing Committee for World Service by adding to the major functions and duties of this Committee as follows:

to agree that the SCWS shall receive financial reports from DWS and advise DWS on all major financial issues, and

to agree that the SCWS shall be consulted by the General Secretary in the nomination of the Director for World Service.

It was voted to receive the proposal for a unified governing structure for DWS as outlined in Appendix 3 of Exhibit 14.1 be submitted to the Renewal Committee for further discussion and future consideration.

## **FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

### **Assembly Fees**

It was voted to strongly encourage all member churches to establish a schedule for payment of their full fair Assembly fees before the Assembly in 2010.

### **Financial Results of 2005**

It was voted to receive the report of the Auditors on the Consolidated Financial Statements for the year ended December 31, 2005; and



to receive and adopt the Consolidated Financial Statements 2005, and the Financial Statements of the General Secretariat, the Department for Theology and Studies, the Department for Mission and Development, and the Department for World Service.

### **Appointment of LWF Auditor**

It was voted to extend the term of PricewaterhouseCoopers as the auditors of the LWF for the year 2007.

### **Geneva Coordination Budget 2007**

It was voted to approve the LWF Geneva Coordination Budget for 2007 with expenditure of CHF 13,303,603 as presented in Exhibit 15.3, currently showing a surplus of CHF 107,157, and including a cost-of-living adjustment of 0.5% and step increases in salaries where applicable.

### **Summary of Needs 2008 – 2010 (SoN)**

It was voted to approve the programs and projects listed in the Summary of Needs for 2008 amounting to USD 77,609,577; and to forward the Summary of Needs 2008-2010 to the member churches, national committees, related agencies and mission agencies, commending requests for support through undesignated and designated contributions.

### **LWF Endowment Fund**

It was voted to receive the Report of the Board of the Endowment Fund with thanks and appreciation.

### **Supplementary request for 2007 for the Office for International Affairs and Human Rights (OIAHR)**

It was voted to approve the supplementary request of USD 54,100 for 2007 for the program "Global Ecumenical Conference on Dalit Liberation".

## **COMMUNICATION SERVICES**

### **Strategic Plan for the LWF Secretariat 2007-2011**

It was voted to ask the General Secretary to intensify efforts to get clear commitments from member churches for translation pilot projects; and

to ask the General Secretary to ensure that all communication material of the LWF respect the

inclusive language policy.

### **Communication Audit**

It was voted to receive the Communication Audit Summary in its entirety; to implement the report's recommendations:

Item 1: Audience Identification and Targeting;

Item 3: Investment in Technical and Visual Improvement of the Web Sites;

Item 4: Centralization of Decision-Making;

Item 5: Regional Involvement in Production and Distribution;

within the financial limits; and

to include item 2.: Development and Consistent Use of a Corporate Graphic Identity in the task of the Renewal Committee; and

to ask the General Secretary to undertake a financial evaluation of the expenditure for all communication material in the LWF including DWS field offices.

## **INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

### **Public Statement on Zimbabwe**

It was voted to adopt the following public statement on the situation in Zimbabwe:

In the midst of the celebrations of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Lund, Sweden, the LWF Council laments the deteriorating situation in Zimbabwe. The beacon of freedom that Zimbabwe once represented has been almost extinguished by the present suffering of its people and the intransigence of its government.

The LWF Council expresses its strong support for the initiatives taken by churches in Zimbabwe to open a 'sacred space' for national dialogue towards a resolution of the current crisis, and particularly affirms the Ecumenical Peace Initiative and its document "The Zimbabwe We Want: 'Towards A National Vision For Zimbabwe'".

The Council also endorses the call made by the LWF General Secretary in his letter of 15 March 2007 for the African Union to take a stronger role in promoting positive change in Zimbabwe.

We call on all LWF member churches to uphold the people and churches of Zimbabwe in their thoughts and prayers, and to act in solidarity with those who suffer from injustice, oppression, violence and poverty in that country.

We call for the international community to respond to the suffering of the people of Zimbabwe, to act to restore hope, and to promote peace.

## **Resolution on Poverty, the Responsibility of Governments and the Mission of the Church**

It was voted to affirm that in a world of plenty, the persistence of poverty - especially extreme poverty - is a scandal and an outrage.

To declare that the first and most fundamental responsibility of governments is to assure the basic welfare and protect the God-given human dignity of their citizens and of all persons under their authority.

To commend the new program in the Department of Theology and Studies on "Holding Governments Accountable: A Responsibility of the Churches with Civil Society", and express the hope that this program will assist the churches in holding governments accountable to this fundamental responsibility.

To welcome the outcome of the LWF consultation on Poverty and the Mission of the Church in Africa, held in Arusha, Tanzania, 4-8 September 2006, and encourage LWF member churches in Africa (and their partners around the world) in the implementation of the Arusha Action Plan defined at that consultation.

To express support for the initiatives of all member churches to address poverty in their own contexts.

To recognize especially the work of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN) in the coalition to promote the establishment of a 'Basic Income Grant' in Namibia, and commend this initiative to all LWF member churches for consideration of its potential relevance to their own contexts.

To note the potential for synergy between the work of the ELCRN with regard to the 'Basic Income Grant', the work of the LWF-supported program on illegitimate debt, and the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance's global trade campaign (in which the LWF and a number of its member churches participate), and encourage liaison and possible cooperation among them.

## **Resolution on the Philippines**

It was voted to express grave concern at the many reports of extrajudicial killings, disappearances and other serious human rights violations in the Philippines, including the recent report issued by the National Council of Churches in the Philippines ("Let the Stones Cry Out: An Ecumenical Report on Human Rights in the Philippines and a Call to Action", March 2007).

To ask the General Secretary to write to the Government of the Philippines to give serious consideration to the issues identified in the NCCP report and to call upon them to respond to the concerns raised and to provide information on how they are protecting and promoting human rights in the Philippines.

To call upon LWF member churches to pray for and act in solidarity with the people and the churches of the Philippines and to support and empower the Lutheran Church of the Philippines in its essential ministry to enhance human dignity.

### **Resolution on the Middle East**

It was voted to affirm that the core problem in the Middle East is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which, if not solved, is a threat to peace not only in the Middle East but throughout the world.

To note the planned ecumenical commemorations, under the leadership of the heads of the local churches in Jerusalem, in June 2007 on the occasion of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the occupation of the Palestinian Territories.

To call for actions by the international community to end to the illegal occupation and for the LWF member churches to join ecumenical coalitions for that purpose, such as the WCC-initiated international week of action to end the occupation 3-9 June 2007.

To welcome the initiative to create an inter-faith Council of Religious Institutions in the Holy Land, as a sign of shared commitment to building mutual trust and understanding among the faith communities and their peoples, and call for this Council of Religious Institutions in the Holy Land to work to build peace among the two nations and that it become a reference group for Palestinian and Israeli negotiators in any future negotiations.

To commend to LWF member churches "The Jerusalem Declaration on Christian Zionism" issued by the heads of churches in Jerusalem in August 2006.

To welcome the fact that a Palestinian government of national unity has been established, and to stress the LWF Council's expectation that the new government will respect all previous agreements concerning or relevant to the search for peace in the region.

To call on the international community to co-operate with the new Palestinian government and to end the international economic blockade in order to restore the health, education and welfare situation of the Palestinian people and the infrastructure of the Territories.

To call upon the State of Israel to comply with international humanitarian law and United Nations resolutions concerning the occupation of the Palestinian Territories.

To call for an international conference to be convened to resolve the long-standing issues between the parties, such as the status of Jerusalem, the return of refugees, settlements, borders and water resources.

To express deep concern about the continued emigration of Christians from Palestine and the entire Middle East, and call on the LWF member churches to pray on Maundy Thursday for Christians in the Middle East and for their continued presence and ministry in the region in accordance with the call from the Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches (FMEEC).

To continue to support the LWF member church - the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land - in its struggle to be a witness for peace and justice in the region through its educational, ecumenical and inter-faith activities.

### **Resolution on Dafur**

It was voted to call the attention of the LWF member churches to the LWF statements that have been made on the situation in Darfur as an expression of our concern for and commitment to a just and lasting solution to the crisis and as a contribution to peace and justice in the region.

### **Public Statements, Letters and Documentation**

It was voted to receive for information the compilation of public statements, letters and documentation issued from July 2005 to December 2006.

## **ECUMENICAL AFFAIRS**

### **Episcopal Ministry within the Apostolicity**

It was voted to thank the member churches for their cooperation in the process leading to the text "Episcopal Ministry within the Apostolicity of the Church – The Lund Statement by the Lutheran World Federation – A Communion of Churches – March 2007"

to express appreciation to the drafting group for its substantial involvement in the development of the text,

to affirm the text as an appropriate current expression of the Lutheran understanding of the ministry of oversight,

to receive the text as a statement by the LWF, and

to ask the General Secretary to submit the text to the member churches for study and appropriation in their different contexts.

### **Interconfessional Research, Strasbourg**

It was voted to receive the Report of the Chairperson of the Board of the Lutheran Foundation for Interconfessional Research with appreciation;

to thank the Institute for Ecumenical Research, Strasbourg, and its staff for its assistance to the LWF Office for Ecumenical Affairs,

to express appreciation for the continued support by the Institute, especially in times of transition in the Office for Ecumenical Affairs, and for the bilateral dialogues and for its substantial contributions to these dialogues.

### **Lutheran-Orthodox Relations**

It was voted to approve the publication of a collective volume (in English, French, German, Greek and Russian) of all the statements adopted in this dialogue from 1981 to 2006, under the condition that full funding is available, and

to ask the General Secretary to send the Statement on the Eucharist from the 2006 meeting of the Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission to the member churches for careful study.

### **Lutheran Roman Catholic Relations**

#### ***A. Publication of the Book "The Apostolicity of the Church" – A study document of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity.***

It was voted to ask the General Secretary to convey thanks to Cardinal Walter Kasper, President of the PCPCU, for ten years of fruitful dialogue on the important topic of the church's apostolicity,

to thank the members and consultants of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity for their lasting commitment and valuable contributions over many years to the exploration of this topic,

to thank particularly the group of drafters who have given very generously of their time to this work,

to ask the General Secretary to send the study document (the book) to the member churches for study and response, and

to establish a working group to process the responses received and provide a report to the Council.

#### ***B. Next phase of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission***

It was voted to ask the General Secretary by means of the Joint Staff Meeting between the LWF and the PCPCU to develop a theme for the next phase of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity, and

to submit the proposal for the theme, the Lutheran composition of the commission, and a program plan to the next meeting of the Council.

#### ***C. Symposium of Biblical Scholars***

It was voted to approve the plan for a Study Commission on the Broader Biblical Basis for the Doctrine of Justification,

to approve the composition of this International Study Commission, i.e. 4 Lutherans, 4 Roman Catholics, 2 Reformed and 2 Methodists (12 participants),

to approve that Lutheran membership be consistent with the LWF commitment to gender and global South percentages regarding inclusivity, and that other communions be encouraged to do likewise, and

to ask the LWF General Secretary and the President of the PCPCU to invite the Reformed and the Methodists.

### **Lutheran-Reformed Relations**

It was voted to continue the common efforts of cooperation between the LWF and WARC and other Christian World Communions.

### **Global Christian Forum**

It was voted to approve the contribution in 2007 by the LWF to the Secretariat of the Global Christian Forum, and

to approve the requested participation of 10 Lutherans in the meeting of the Global Christian Forum to be held in Nairobi, Kenya, in November 2007.

### **LWF and the future of the ecumenical movement**

It was voted to express appreciation for the follow-up of the 2005 Council decisions and the involvement of the LWF in the discussion of the future of the ecumenical movement and future assemblies, and

to ask the General Secretary to continue the common efforts of co-operation and to actively pursue the LWF's involvement in this important area.

## **CONSTITUTION**

It was voted to amend the first sentence of Article 7.1 to read as follows:

The Executive Committee shall normally meet semi-annually, with one meeting in conjunction with the Council meeting.

to decide on the appointment of Cabinet members by email ballot, should the need arise between now and the next Council meeting; and

to defer a decision regarding a possible amendment to the first sentence of Article 7.2 of the Bylaws to the next meeting of the Council.

### **CELEBRATION 2017 WITTENBERG**

It was voted that the Lutheran World Federation participate in the international ecumenical celebrations of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation to take place on 31 October 2017 in Wittenberg, Germany.

### **REGIONAL MEETINGS**

It was voted to urge the Lutheran World Federation and the Executive Committee to honour the Budapest Assembly resolution (“to request the LWF Executive Committee [now the Council] to increase the number of women employed as programmatic and supervisory staff until at least 50 per cent of the persons serving in such responsibilities are women.”) in employment conditions, in positions of power, and in dialogues, and to study a timetable to achieve this goal in both “A” and “B” budget allocations.

### **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

It was voted to hold the next meetings of the Council on  
24 June-1 July 2008 (venue to be confirmed)  
22 – 27 October 2009  
18 – 20 July 2010.





**THIRD EUROPEAN ECUMENICAL  
ASSEMBLY**  
Sibiu, Romania  
4 – 9 September 2007

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**Assembly Message – Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup> September 2007**

**The light of Christ shines upon all!**

*We, Christian pilgrims from all over Europe and beyond, witness to the transforming power of this light, which is stronger than darkness, and we proclaim it as all-embracing hope for our Churches, for all of Europe and for the entire world.*

In the name of our Triune God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we have assembled in the city of Sibiu, Romania (4<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> September 2007). This third European Ecumenical Assembly was marked especially by the richness of Orthodox spirituality and tradition. We recall and renew the serious commitments we already made in Basel and Graz and we regret that, up to now, we have failed to fulfil some of them. However, our confidence in the transforming energy of the light of Christ is stronger than the darkness of resignation, fatalism, fear and indifference.

Our third European Ecumenical Assembly began in 2006 in Rome and continued in 2007 in Wittenberg. This ecumenical pilgrimage involved many regional meetings and those of Orthodox Churches in Rhodes and young people in St. Maurice. We welcome with joy the young people's commitment and the contribution they made to the Assembly. Assisted and motivated by the *Charta Oecumenica*, our Assembly pursued the work started in earlier assemblies and has been an occasion for an exchange of gifts and of mutual enrichment.

We are not alone on this pilgrimage. Christ is with us and within the cloud of witnesses (*Heb 12:1*), the contemporary martyrs accompany us: the witness of their life and death inspires us individually and corporately. In communion with them, we commit ourselves to let the light of the transfigured Christ shine through our own witness deeply rooted in prayer and love. This is our humble response to the sacrifice of their lives.

## The light of Christ in the Church

The light of Christ leads us to live for others and in communion with one another. Our witness to hope and unity for Europe and for the world will be credible only if we continue our journey towards visible unity. Unity is not uniformity. There is enormous value in experiencing afresh that *koinonia* and exchanging those spiritual gifts that energised the ecumenical movement from its beginning.

In Sibiu we again felt the painful wound of division between our Churches. This even concerns our understanding of the Church and its unity. The distinct historical and cultural developments in Eastern and Western Christianity have contributed to these differences, and understanding them requires our urgent attention and ongoing dialogue.

We are convinced that the wider Christian family has to deal with doctrinal questions, and it must also seek a broad consensus about moral values derived from the Gospel and a credible Christian lifestyle that joyfully witnesses to the light of Christ in our challenging modern secular world, in private as well as in public life.

Our Christian spirituality is a precious treasure: once opened, it reveals the variety of its riches and opens our hearts to the beauty of the face of Jesus and to the strength of prayer. Only if we are closer to our Lord Jesus Christ, can we become closer to one another and experience true *koinonia*. We cannot but share these riches with all men and women who are seeking light in this continent. Spiritual men and women begin with their own conversion and this leads to the transformation of the world. Our witness to the light of Christ is a faithful commitment to listen, live and share our stories of life and hope, which have shaped us as followers of Christ.

**Recommendation One:** We recommend renewing our mission as individual believers and as Churches to proclaim Christ as the Light and the Saviour of the world;

**Recommendation Two:** We recommend continuing the discussion on mutual recognition of baptism, taking into account the important achievements on this topic in several countries and being aware that the question is deeply linked to an understanding of eucharist, ministry and ecclesiology in general;

**Recommendation Three:** We recommend finding ways of experiencing the activities which can unite us: prayer for each other and for unity, ecumenical pilgrimages, theological formation and study in common, social and diaconal initiatives, cultural projects, supporting society life based on Christian values;

**Recommendation Four:** We recommend the full participation of the whole people of God and, at this Assembly in particular, note the appeal of young people, the elderly, ethnic minorities, and disabled people.

## The light of Christ for Europe

We consider that every human being is created in the image and likeness of God (*Gen 1:27*) and deserves the same degree of respect and love, despite differences of belief, culture, age, gender, or ethnic origin. Being aware that our common roots lie much deeper than our divisions, while looking for renewal and unity and the role of the Churches in today's European society, we focussed on our encounter with people of other religions. Aware in particular of our unique relationship with the Jewish peoples as people of the Covenant, we reject all forms of contemporary anti-Semitism and, with them, will foster Europe as a continent free of every form of violence. There have been periods in our European history of harsh conflicts but there have also been periods of peaceful co-existence among people of all religions. In our day there is no alternative to dialogue: not compromise, but a dialogue of life where we can speak the truth in love. We all need to learn more about all religions, and the recommendations of *Charta Oecumenica* should be developed further. We appeal to our fellow Christians and all who believe in God to respect other people's right to religious freedom, and express our solidarity with Christian communities who live in the Middle East, Iraq, and elsewhere in the world as religious minorities and feel that their very existence is under threat.

As we meet Christ in our needy sisters and brothers (*Mt 25:44-45*), together enlightened by the Light of Christ, we Christians, according to biblical injunctions to the unity of humanity (*Gen 1.26-27*), commit ourselves to repent for the sin of exclusion; deepen our understanding of 'otherness'; defend the dignity and rights of every human being, and ensure protection to those in need of it; share the light of Christ which others bring to Europe; call upon European states to stop illegal administrative detention of migrants, make every effort to ensure regular immigration, the integration of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, uphold the value of family unity and combat trafficking in human beings and exploitation of trafficked persons. We call on Churches to increase their pastoral care of vulnerable immigrants.

***Recommendation Five:*** We recommend that our Churches should recognise that Christian immigrants are not just the recipients of religious care but that they can play a full and active role in the life of the Church and of society; offer better pastoral care for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees; and promote the rights of ethnic minorities in Europe, particularly the Roma people.

Many of us are thankful that we have experienced profound changes in Europe in recent decades. Europe is more than the European Union. As Christians we share the responsibility for shaping Europe as a continent of peace, solidarity, participation and sustainability. We appreciate the commitment of the European Institutions, including the EU, Council of Europe, and the OSCE, to an open, transparent and regular dialogue with the Churches of Europe. Europe's highest political representatives honoured us with their presence and thus expressed

strong interest in our work. We have to face the challenge to bring spiritual strengths into this dialogue. Europe was initially a political project to secure peace and it now needs to become a Europe of the peoples, more than an economic space.

**Recommendation Six:** We recommend developing the *Charta Oecumenica* as a stimulating guideline for our ecumenical journey in Europe.

### **The light of Christ for the whole world**

The Word of God disquiets us and our European culture: those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again! Christians must be free from fear and insatiable avarice that make us live for ourselves, powerless, narrow-minded and closed. The Word of God invites us to avoid squandering the precious heritage of those who for the last sixty years have worked for peace and unity in Europe. Peace is an extraordinary and precious gift. Entire countries aspire to peace. Entire peoples are waiting to be delivered from violence and terror. We urgently commit ourselves to renewed efforts towards these ends. We reject war as a tool for resolving conflict, promote non-violent means for conflict resolution, and are concerned about military re-armament. Violence and terrorism in the name of religion are a denial of religion.

The Light of Christ shines on the term 'justice', linking it to divine mercy. Thus enlightened it escapes any ambiguous pretence. Throughout the world and even in Europe the current process of radical market globalisation is deepening the division of human society between winners and losers, harms the value of countless people, has catastrophic ecological implications and precisely in view of climate change is not compatible with sustaining the future of our planet.

**Recommendation Seven:** We urge all European Christians to give strong support to the *Millennium Development Goals* of the United Nations as an urgent practical step towards the alleviation of poverty.

**Recommendation Eight:** We recommend that a consultative process, addressing European responsibility for ecological justice, facing the threat of climate change; European responsibility for the just shaping of globalisation; the rights of Roma people and other European ethnic minorities, be initiated by CCEE and CEC, with the Churches in Europe and with Churches of other continents.

Today more than ever, we acknowledge that Africa, a continent already intertwined with our own history and future, experiences levels of poverty about which we cannot remain indifferent and inactive. The wounds of Africa touched the heart of our Assembly.

**Recommendation Nine:** We recommend backing initiatives for debt cancellation and the promotion of fairtrade.

Through sincere and objective dialogue, we contribute to and promote the creation of a renewed Europe, where unchangeable Christian principles and moral values, derived directly from the Gospel, serve as a witness and promote active engagement in European society. Our task is to promote these principles and values, not only in private but also in public life. We will cooperate with people of other religions who share our concern for creating a Europe of values that also prospers politically and economically.

Concerned about God's creation, we pray for a greater sensitivity and respect for its wonderful diversity. We work against its shameless exploitation, from which the "whole creation awaits its redemption," (*Rom 8:22*) and commit ourselves to working for reconciliation between humanity and nature.

**Recommendation Ten:** We recommend that the period from the 1<sup>st</sup> September to the 4<sup>th</sup> of October be dedicated to prayer for the protection of Creation and the promotion of sustainable lifestyles that reverse our contribution to climate change.

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Paying tribute to all who contributed to this journey, particularly the young *oikumène*, who urged this assembly to be courageous in living the Gospel, we unite in prayer:

O Christ, the True Light, which illumines and sanctifies every human being coming into this world, shine on us the light of your presence, that in it we may behold the unapproachable light, and guide our paths for the work of your commandments. Save us and lead us into your eternal kingdom. For you are our Creator, Provider and Giver of all that is good. Our hope is in you and to you we give glory, now and forever. Amen.

