

THE 12TH CEC ASSEMBLY: A NARRATIVE REPORT

Founded by the Viking King Olav Tryggvason in 997, Trondheim is Norway's third largest city, beautifully situated at the edge of a fjord in the middle of the country. Rich in historic monuments, Trondheim – whose ancient name is Nidaros – was Norway's first capital, and Nidaros Cathedral is still the venue where new kings receive their ceremonial blessing. 850 years ago, in 1153, Nidaros was established as an Archbishop's See, becoming the main Christian centre in the whole Nordic area. Its Cathedral was built between 1070 and 1300 on the shrine of St Olav (King Olav Haraldsson who reigned from 1015 to 1030 and is Norway's patron saint), and has been a popular pilgrimage site for centuries.

From 25 June to 2 July 2003, Trondheim was the "ecumenical capital" of Europe as the venue of the 12th Assembly of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) with the theme "Jesus Christ heals and reconciles – Our witness in Europe". Over 800 ecumenical "pilgrims" gathered from all European countries: 270 delegates from the member churches, 80 delegated representatives from the associated organisations, plus observers, staff, stewards, media and visitors.

CEC: not just a forum, but an advocate

Preceded by an orientation programme for newcomers to CEC Assemblies, the 12th Assembly opened on Wednesday evening, 25 June, in the "Spektrum" Congress Centre. Its first action was the election of the Assembly Officers: Rev. Jean-Arnold de Clermont (Reformed Church of France, President of the French Protestant Federation) was elected as Moderator, and Bishop Béla Harmati (Lutheran Church in Hungary) and Dr Katerina Karkala-Zorba (Church of Greece, Orthodox) were elected Deputy Moderators.

The President's and General Secretary's reports followed. "Christianity", said Metropolitan Jérémie of Switzerland, President of CEC, "has a message of hope for the world. In spite of the appearances and the difficulties, allow me to recognise with you that the dynamic of the real Christian spirit has been put on the move in Europe in a spirit of peace, of confidence and of stability". He underlined that during his six years as president he had the opportunity "to deepen the meaning of collegiality and collaboration" and the "feeling of collective responsibility for a common testimony of Christians in the present world, which challenges us in many ways".



Ecumenical Patriarch
Bartholomew

All is a gift, all is grace

From the address given at the opening service, Nidaros Cathedral, 26 June 2003.

(...) Our task is not an easy one. At a time when the European Union is rapidly expanding, when Europe is seeking to understand and define itself anew – at a time, moreover, when many would wish totally to exclude Christ and the Christian Church from their definition of what constitutes Europe – how shall we succeed in bearing effective witness? How shall we convey to contemporary Europe a message that is humble yet prophetic, kenotic yet challenging? How shall we carry into practice the Beatitude: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Matthew 5,9), and yet at the same time be faithful to Christ’s teaching that He comes to bring “not peace but a sword” (Matthew 10,34)? How shall we heed God’s warning spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: “They have healed the wound of my people carelessly, saying ‘Peace, peace’, where there is no peace” (Jeremiah 8,11)?

At the outset let us be clear about one thing. Christ says to us, “Apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15,5). It is a striking fact that in *The Philokalia*, the classic Orthodox collection of spiritual texts, there is no verse from Scripture that is quoted more often than this.

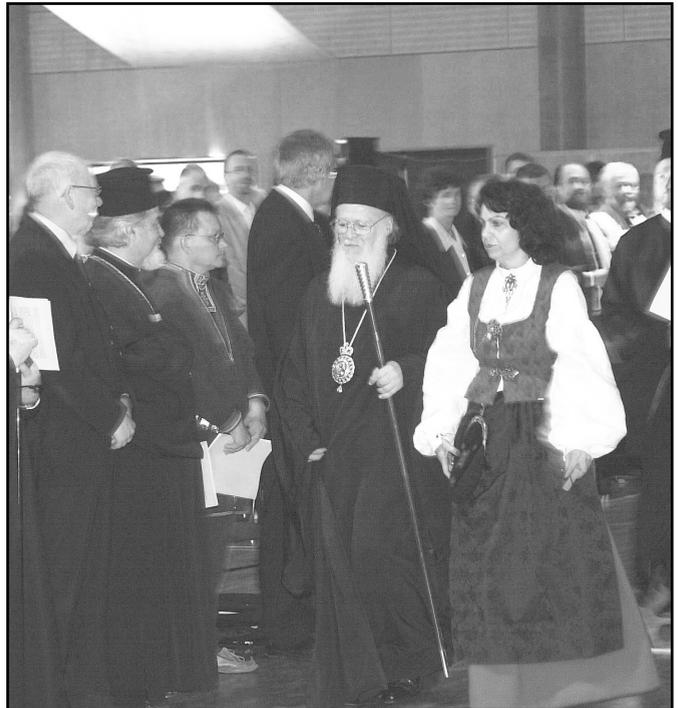
“Apart from me you can do nothing.” All is gift; all is grace. If we are to speak to Europe a word of healing and reconciliation, then, that word has to be God’s word and not our own. What, as Christian communities, we have to offer to the world is not a programme, not an ideology, but a person: the Theanthropos (God-man) Jesus Christ. Healing means salvation; and salvation means Christ the Saviour. (...) “I am the truth”, Christ insisted (John 14,6). Saving truth is not a series of propositions but a living person.

Salvation is Jesus Christ the Saviour: but what does Christ mean to us? As a guiding image to inspire us in our Assembly, let us call to mind the meeting of the risen Christ with His disciples on the evening of Easter day (John 20,19-20). His first word to them, “Peace be with you”, is a word of healing and reconciliation which brings them joy. But His next action is to show them His stigmata, His

The General Secretary, Rev. Dr Keith Clements, noted that CEC had been born into a divided Europe, seeking to unite Europe when it was divided militarily. Today CEC has a role to play in a much more open and complex Europe, and its task is to be as inclusive as possible.

Dr Clements spoke in turn with the Director of the Church and Society Commission and Associate General Secretary of CEC, the Rev. Rüdiger Noll. In detailing the life of CEC since the last Assembly held in Graz, Austria in 1997, they highlighted the formal completion of the integration process between the European Commission on Church and Society (EEECS) and CEC; the celebration of CEC’s own fortieth anniversary at Nyborg Strand in September 1999; and the CEC-CCEE Ecumenical Encounter at Strasbourg just after Easter 2001. This Encounter launched the “*Charta Oecumenica* - Guidelines for the Growing Cooperation among the Churches in Europe”, a document jointly produced by CEC and Council of European Bishops’ Conferences (CCEE), which has become the most widely received and discussed ecumenical text in Europe.

Dr Clements pointed to the role of CEC not to be just a forum, but an advocate; not just to discuss the truth, but to “speak truth to power” in the world. CEC had spoken on issues ranging from the peace process in Northern Ireland to the war on Iraq, from human rights legislation to the conflict on Kosovo. This role has come to the fore through the most important change in the structure and life of CEC since Graz, namely the integration of the European Ecumenical Commission on Church and Society





Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

wounds, the marks of the Passion that He bears on His hands and His side. (...)

These wounds that the risen Christ shows to His disciples are His credentials to a suffering humankind. These same wounds are our healing and our hope. They make it plain that, though He has risen victorious from the dead – though He is soon to ascend into heaven in glory – yet in His perfect being there is still a place for our pain and anguish. The wounds of the risen Christ underline the truth of what is said in the Epistle to the Hebrews: “We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested and tempted as we are, yet without sinning” (Hebrews 4,15).

These words lead us to reflect upon the double way in which Christ acts as our healer and Saviour. He is our Saviour, first, because He is – in the words of the Nicene Creed – “True God from True God”. Salvation is a divine act; a prophet cannot be the saviour of the world, for the death of a mere man does not destroy death. If, then, Christ is to save us He must be God. He cannot just be one of us.

But, in the second place, as the Epistle to the Hebrews makes clear, salvation has to reach the point of human need. Christ our God heals us, not from a secure distance, not in an exterior manner, but by Himself becoming what we are, by making Himself totally vulnerable, by accepting into Himself all our pain and grief. “In every respect tempted as we are”, suffering with us and for us in His compassionate love, He is in very truth the wounded healer. Although He is not one of us, He is one with us.

As Saint Gregory of Nyssa affirms in his Catechetical Orations, the true greatness and glory of God are to be seen, not in any act of overwhelming power such as the creation of the universe, not in any cosmic miracle such as the stilling of the storm, but rather in the kenosis whereby He has chosen to share in all our fragility and brokenness, becoming obedient to death, even death upon the Cross. His total sharing in our humiliation is the true summit of His divine omnipotence. God is never so strong as when He is most weak.

Such is the way in which Jesus Christ heals and reconciles. Such is the message that we are called to bring to Europe.

In speaking of Christ as healing and reconciliation, there is something else that we

(EECCS) with CEC to form the CEC Commission on Church and Society.

Ecumenical endeavours have come alive and borne fruit where CEC has cooperated with Roman Catholic bodies, for instance on the *Charta Oecumenica* and on the Church and Society work in the European Convention and the draft text of the EU Constitution. CEC has been developing a role in helping churches caught up in conflict situations and has worked in partnership with local churches on long-term peace building in the Balkans.

The full text of the President's and General Secretary's reports are published in section II of this book.

Welcoming each other

During the Evening Prayer, held in the beautifully decorated Worship Hall of the Spektrum Congress Centre, six new member churches and seventeen associated organisations were welcomed. They have all joined CEC since the last Assembly held in Graz, Austria, in 1997.

The new member churches are: the Alliance of Protestant Churches of Luxembourg, the Church of God in Croatia, the Evangelical Church in the Principality of Liechtenstein, the Presbyterian Church of Wales, the Salvation Army (UK Territory with the Republic of Ireland), and the United Methodist Church of Bulgaria.

The new Associated organisations are: AIDRom (the Ecumenical Association of Churches in Romania), the Christian Council of Norway, the Council of Churches in the Netherlands, the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Hungary, the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Slovakia, the Ecumenical Council of Finland, the Estonian Council of Churches, the European Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations (YMCA), the European Baptist Federation, the European Section of the International Prison Chaplains' Association, the European YWCAs, the Inter-European Commission on Church and School, the International Association for Christian Education, the Irish Council of Churches, the Portuguese Council of Christian Churches, the Spanish Committee on Coop-



Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

have to add. Salvation is personal but it is not solitary. No one is saved alone. We are saved in the Church, as members of it and through our communion with all its other members. Healing and reconciliation in Christ have an ecclesial dimension. We are saved through our incorporation into the Body of Christ by means of the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist.

Here precisely we are brought face to face with one of the challenges that we cannot avoid at this assembly. Our unity is genuine, but it is still incomplete. Despite all the progress that has been made in our quest for visible unity – and for this we glorify God – we Orthodox remain convinced that the time has not yet come for us to share together at the Lord's table in His sacramental Body and Blood. There continue to be serious doctrinal questions over which, as Churches, we are still in disagreement; and so, according to our Orthodox understanding of the Eucharist, it would be unrealistic, and even untruthful, for us to share together in Holy Communion.

When discussing this painful and disputed issue, all of us need consistently to respect the good faith and spiritual integrity of all who differ from us. Those who believe that the time has not yet come to share in Communion should not accuse the opposite side of treating the Holy Mysteries in a casual and lightminded manner. At the same time those who believe that at this very moment we can and should receive communion together, must not suggest that anyone who says "Not yet" is lacking in openness and love. God alone knows who among us shows the deepest reverence for the Eucharist, and who among us feels the greatest love.

I would like to conclude with two final suggestions. Let us be practical, and let us be silent.

First, then, in all our deliberations let us seek to be practical and realistic. Healing signifies the removing of specific wounds; reconciliation means the overcoming of particular divisions. It is not enough to formulate theories; we must resolve on concrete action. (...)

In the second place let us also sometimes keep silent. Let us allow some space in this congress for the dimension of hesychia or creative stillness. "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46,10). As well as listening to each other, let us also listen to the Holy Spirit.



eration between the Churches, and the Union of Evangelical Free Churches in Germany.

Also during the Evening Prayer, the Assembly celebrated the integration of CEC and EEECS. The stage at the centre of the hall featured a typical Norwegian rustic table, made from a tree-stump with a large flat stone placed on top. This stone represented a symbol of Jesus Christ, Healer and Reconciler, the "cornerstone" upon which the churches' witness is built. Placed upon the large stone were the logos of CEC and EEECS with many small white and grey stones representing, respectively, CEC member churches and associated organizations. During the prayer, representatives of new member churches and associated organizations went to the table, adding their own small stone as a symbol of their participation in the ecumenical fellowship.

Living water for Europe: the opening service

On Thursday, 26 June, participants assembled in Trondheim's historic Nidaros Cathedral for the opening service, led by Finn Wagle, Bishop of Nidaros and Presiding Bishop of the Church of Norway (Lutheran), with the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople as preacher. King Harald of Norway and Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik attended the service.

"We have been expecting you for a thousand years", exclaimed Bishop Finn Wagle. "We Christians, from the whole of Europe, can at last be united in giving thanks to God together for the progress of the Gospel from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth".

His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew told the congregation: "Our task is not an easy one. At a time when the European Union



is rapidly expanding, when Europe is seeking to understand and define itself anew – at a time when many would wish totally to exclude Christ and the Christian Church from their definition of what constitutes Europe – how shall we succeed in bearing effective witness”?

“Healing and reconciliation in Christ have an ecclesial dimension. We are saved through our incorporation into the Body of Christ by means of the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist. Here precisely”, said the Patriarch, “we are brought face to face with one of the challenges that we cannot avoid at this Assembly. Our unity is genuine, but it is still incomplete. Despite all the progress that has been made in our quest for visible unity – and for this we glorify God – we Orthodox remain convinced that the time has not yet come for us to share together at the Lord’s table in His sacramental Body and Blood. There continue to be serious doctrinal questions over which, as Churches, we are still in disagreement; and so, according to our Orthodox understanding of the Eucharist, it would be unrealistic, and even untruthful, for us to share in Holy Communion”.

“When discussing this painful and disputed issue”, His All Holiness added, “all of us need consistently to respect the good faith and spiritual integrity of all who differ from us. Those who believe that the time has not yet come to share in Communion should not accuse the opposite side of treating the Holy Mysteries in a casual and lightminded manner. At the same time those who believe that at this very moment we can and should receive communion together, must not suggest that anyone who says ‘Not yet’ is lacking openness and love. God alone knows who among us shows the deepest reverence for the Eucharist, and who among us feels the greatest love”.

His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew suggested, “Let us be practical and silent... It is not enough to formulate theories; we must resolve on concrete action... Christ is looking at us through the eyes of all who suffer. Is that not frightening”?

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

Saint Ignatius of Antioch spoke of Christ as “the Word that came out from silence”. If our words at this meeting do not spring from silence of heart, then we shall prove to be, in Saint Paul’s phrase, “a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal” (1 Cor. 13, 1). But if the words that we speak to Europe at this Assembly are indeed words that come out from silence, then by God’s grace and mercy they will prove to be words of fire, liberating and life-creating.



Bishop Finn Wagle

The outlook from the North

From the welcome at the opening service, Nidaros Cathedral, 26 June 2003.

(...) We have been expecting you! Not only since the decision was taken that CEC's 12th General Assembly should take place in Norway and in Trondheim. No, we have been expecting you for a thousand years. We have been expecting you to come so that we, Christians from the whole of Europe, can at last be united in giving thanks to God together for the progress of the gospel from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth – northwards through the far-flung continent of Europe.

We are all part of European church history and of the history of the conversion of Europe – for better and for worse. We who are gathered here for the opening service of CEC's Assembly, bring with us, individually and together, a part of the story of the Gospel's progress through Europe, our own continent. This is a story that weaves us together with invisible threads, made visible at this moment, here in Nidaros Cathedral. Never before has this common history been made visible with such great density and diversity so far north in Europe as at this moment. That makes this morning and these days especially important for us.

He urged those present to find stillness. "If our words at this Assembly do not spring from the silence of the heart, then we shall prove to be, in saint Paul's phrase 'a noisy gong or a clanging symbol'. But if the words we speak to Europe at this Assembly are indeed words that come from silence, then by God's grace and mercy they will prove to be words of fire, liberating and life-creating".

Earlier, Bishop Finn Wagle had told the congregation: "Let us pray that CEC's outlook may be saturated by a healed view of life itself. That our lives are woven together in the rich tapestry of vulnerability, made holy by him who made himself vulnerable for our sake. We bring a longing for reconciliation and healing with us to the CEC Assembly... manifested in the water you have brought from your homes... a symbol of our common baptism and our common faith".

While the congregation of more than 1,500 sang in Norwegian, German and English, men, women and children came from their seats carrying water they had brought from their countries. Drop by drop, water from all of Europe was poured into a silver vessel to remain there till the final worship.

The great cathedral resonated to the sounds of choirs: the Nidaros Cathedral Boys' Choir and The Norwich Cathedral Choir. Refrains of Kyrie (Denmark) and Alleluia (Ireland) echoed along the nave and young people led the prayers of intercession before the final blessing and the stirring hymn "Guide me, O thou great Redeemer".

While the delegates walked to the Spektrum, HM King Harald of Norway walked to the river and opened a fountain near Saint Olav's well, by the riverside of Nidelva.

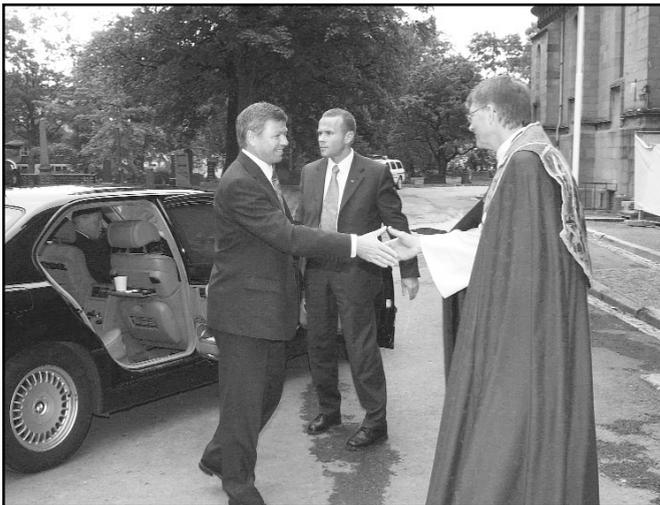
Reconciliation between North and South

Back in the Spektrum, the Assembly resumed its work. The Moderator welcomed the King, the Prime Minister and other dignitaries, and

invited the Prime Minister of Norway, Kjell Magne Bondevik, to address the Assembly. Mr Bondevik, who is an ordained minister of the Church of Norway, underlined the relevance of the Assembly theme: the belief in the reconciliation and healing granted by God through Jesus can bring "inspiration and hope in a cold world", just as the Gulf Stream brings warmth to cold Norway.

The keynote speech on the Assembly theme, given by Dr Kenneth Kaunda, former President of Zambia, followed.

Dr Kaunda called on churches in Europe and other developed nations to reorganise themselves so that they can make a more effective witness for justice and reconciliation. He recalled the obser-





Bishop Finn Wagle

The history of the European churches is a history of factors that divide us and factors that unite us and bind us together. Seen from Nidaros Cathedral, it is the uniting power of the history of Christianisation that first springs to mind: We are gathered here in the northernmost of Europe's ancient cathedrals, Christ Church in Nidaros, the burial place of Saint Olav, the patron saint of Norway. We know that in the course of his life Olav was deeply in touch with the main routes that the gospel followed in its progress northwards across Europe. He must have picked up impulses from the various forms that the gospel took along these different routes in Eastern, Western and Central Europe: he was baptised in Rouen in France. He imported his bishops from England. And he spent his last winter with his relative Prince Jaroslav in Novgorod in Russia, before he died at the Battle of Stiklestad here in Nidaros in the year 1030.

Can't we just sense how the various traditions and expressions of faith merged and became an integrating force in the martyr king's life? And doesn't this give us a fascinating perspective on the riches this assembly possesses and the challenges it faces? Among our rich variety of traditions and experiences and expressions of faith, what is it that these days in Trondheim will cause to melt and merge, when CEC's General Assembly looks towards Europe from the far north?

The outlook from the north:

- It must be an outlook that gathers its strength and inspiration from our various traditions and expressions of faith, taking into account that the area of this Assembly also is an area of indigenous people.
- It must be an outlook that doesn't stop at Europe's borders, but reaches from the ends of the earth to the ends of the earth.

Let us pray that CEC's outlook from the north may be saturated by a healed view of life itself: that our lives are woven together in the rich tapestry of vulnerability, made holy by Him who made Himself vulnerable for our sake. (...)

vation of his contemporary, the late Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere, that "peace is the product of justice: without justice, there can be no peace".

Commenting on the Assembly's theme, "Jesus Christ Heals and Reconciles – Our Witness in Europe", Kaunda said: "Healing and reconciliation of Europe's people can take place only as Europe and the other rich and powerful nations reconcile with peoples of other continents in a common struggle for a socially just and sustainable future. Only then can Europe contribute to a healthy and just world".

He listed many instances of European and other western interests taking unjust advantage of less powerful peoples, from the historical practices of slavery and colonialism to the current occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq, the current harsh immigration laws and the crushing burden of debt administered by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Kaunda accused the IMF and World Bank of "unjust" policies "that are bringing back, through other windows, the processes of slavery, colonialism and human bondage". And yet, he recalled, some Europeans have worked as effective opponents of their own countries' injustices, from the anti-slavery movements to demonstrations against war in Iraq.

Kaunda argued that the Christian church "must reorganise itself in such a way that it can be listened to effectively". He challenged the churches to "help fight poverty directly" through their ministries. He also encouraged them to influence policy-makers in national governments. This should be done in a spirit of full partnership between rich and poor: "Peoples of the world do not want to be driven, but they do want to be active participants in the family of humanity. That is what democracy is all about".

Taking a moment to "congratulate President George W. Bush, the Congress and the American people for supporting the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis" through last month's approval of 15 billion US dollars for 12 African and two Caribbean nations, Kaunda went on to urge US leaders "to see to it that the money so generously offered is given without conditions".



Kjell Magne Bondevik,
Prime Minister of Norway

Reconciliation is like the warmth of the Gulf Stream

*From the speech at the opening
session, 26 June 2003.*

(...) Trondheim's identity as an important church centre and a place of pilgrimage dates back close to a thousand years, to the months shortly after King Olav Haraldsson fell in the battle of Stiklestad in the summer of 1030. Ever since, St. Olav has been Norway's patron.

This year celebrates the 850th anniversary of the establishment of the Archbishop's See of Nidaros here in 1153. Four hundred years later the see was abolished, at the reformation in 1537. During the centuries of the Archbishop's See of Nidaros, Norway became a part of medieval Europe - religiously, culturally, administratively and politically. This was a fundamental inspiration to our country. We were part of the faith of the age, of the Western European church tradition under Rome.

Not even in their highest visions or wildest fantasies could the first archbishop - Jon - and the three kings of the time - Øystein, Sigurd and Inge - have imagined an assembly like you gathered here these days: 126 European churches and 43 affiliated organisations. Nor could they have imagined all the upheavals that have taken place since: Victories and defeats, schisms and uprisings, wars and sufferings, knowledge and science, peace building and democracy, terrorism and fear. And no more are we able to look into the future from this point.

History has shown that the uniform society they belonged to could not endure. The Church is one by virtue of Christ, not by virtue of its organisation. God's justice is built on the power of mercy. The justice of countries is built on human law and the power of the sword. And we have, through the history of Christian faith, finally learned that when we believe that God and the World belong together, we do it in a different way than Europe did 850 years ago. Faith is a source of wisdom and insight into justice and hope. Faith is not a basis for secular power.

(...) As you can see, this is a beautiful country, although a cold one. However, the Gulf Stream brings sufficient warmth for us to build and live in this country. This may be



Kaunda recalled that he spoke to the Assembly of the World Council of Churches which met at Uppsala, Sweden in 1968. His topic then had been "Rich and Poor Nations". Thirty-five years later, he said that the key question for Christians in a world of poverty and wealth remains the same: "How, in a practical way, we may express the Golden Rule", Jesus' teaching to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you".

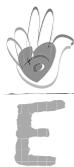
Kenneth Kaunda served as the first president of the Republic of Zambia from 1964 to 1991. A graduate and former teacher at the Lubwa Mission School, he began his speech by singing several verses of a hymn, "Stay By, Stay", and closed with the liberation song "Sons and Daughters of Africa, Unite", the refrain adapted so that he closed with the words, "In the name of great Africa, we shall fight and conquer AIDS".

The Torg, a market place for Christian witness

The keynote speech was followed by the inauguration of the "Torg" (the Norwegian word for "market place"): a large hall with thirty information booths from different Christian organizations, a Women's Café and an Internet Café, space for exhibitions, music and cultural events - and a space just to be still, lying on mats in a quiet corner of the hall.

The Torg was officially opened in the presence of HM King Harald V of Norway, Prime Minister K. Magne Bondevik, Dr Kaunda and His All Holiness, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. The Torg "is a place of tolerance to meet old and new friends", declared the mayor of Trondheim, Ms A. K. Slungård.

Each day the Torg had a different focus: Scandinavia, the issue of indigenous people (Sami and Roma), youth, Europe, and "The church in a new time", with "Interesting Persons" as speakers in direct dialogue with participants and visitors. The "Interesting Persons" were: Prof. Ole Henrik Magga, President of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues; Dr Kaunda; the Orthodox Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana and All Albania and the Lutheran Bishop of Lubeck (Germany), Dr Bärbel Wartenberg-Potter; the Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of the Anglican Communion, Dr Rowan Williams.



Among the musicians who made their contribution to the Torg we would particularly like to mention Ulla Pirttijärvi-Lånsman, a musician and actor who brought to the Assembly the voice of the Sami, the indigenous people of Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Kola Peninsula in Russia. Both in the Torg and in the evening worship on Thursday, she sang music inspired by “Joik”, the traditional Sami way of singing passed down through her family, sometimes expressing feelings rather than words.

A series of films on reconciliation, which were featured in the Vår Frues Church; an exhibition of icons at The Garden Gallery; and eight “Extra Hearings”, beyond the official “Hearings” programme (see below) were also part of the cultural programme of the Assembly.

The challenge of healing and reconciliation: the Thematic Hearings

After the Assembly’s official opening, on Thursday afternoon and Friday morning, three sessions were devoted to a special programme of 16 “Thematic Hearings”, with 5-6 hearings held in parallel with each other. These were set up by a number of CEC’s partner organizations to give an introduction to a whole range of issues dealing with the Assembly theme and the ways in which the CEC constituency is engaged with them in Europe. The hearings were also meant to serve as a challenge to the future work of CEC in different fields such as peace and reconciliation processes, globalisation, witness and mission, majority/minority churches, dialogue between religions, communication, genetic technology, HIV/AIDS, sustainable development, etc.

Kjell Magne Bondevik

true also for the belief in the reconciliation and healing granted to mankind by God through his Son, bringing inspiration and hope in a cold world.

(...) The belief is not in uniform societies, but to build societies where everybody has freedom and responsibility for his own belief. We seek God and his will, not in the strength of earthly power, but in the strength of healing and reconciliation.



THEMATIC
HEARINGS**1. Different and strange people**

“Transcendent faith can make people different and strange” according to David Stevens, the General Secretary of the Irish Council of Churches (ICC). “Different people” such as these “are able to cross boundaries, to forgive others, to become peacemakers. It is they who are likely to become agents of reconciliation”. This observation came during the first hearing on reconciliation as viewed from the context of confrontation among Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland. The hearing, organised jointly by the ICC and the Ecumenical Association for Academies and Laity Centres in Europe (EAALCE), was introduced by Peter Middlemiss of the EAALCE. He explained that in fact the hearing was not only about Northern Ireland, but about any situation of conflict – and indeed during the debate examples arose from ethnic conflicts in Rwanda, Israel and Palestine, Fiji and the former Yugoslavia.

Stevens identified the two most important factors in seeking reconciliation as honest relationships and committed leadership. Together, these two factors can culminate in true dialogue. “Reconciliation is a practice and a journey”, said Stevens, “not a theory or an ideology”.

The hearing suggested factors that may lead churches and their partners in dialogue on the journey. There is the need for churches to admit past failures and their own complicity in confrontation and violence; differences between the parties must be acknowledged, explored and accepted; relationships must be given time and attention; genuine dialogue requires vulnerability as well as honesty; communities need to hear one another’s stories, and hear one another’s pain, so that one day there may be a “reconciliation of memories”; forgiveness can come only after relationships have been firmly established; transformation of the world is linked to the transformation of one’s self; each dialogue partner must avoid self-righteousness and recognize his or her own hypocrisy; together, the participants must

discover a common hope and a vision of the future, finding the strength to persevere over the long haul.

Stevens reported that a Mennonite conflict resolution specialist from the USA once told him that, in her work, “it takes 30 years to know whether an intervention has succeeded”. He noted that such a timeline, like every item on the list of factors necessary for reconciliation, “is profoundly counter-cultural”.

Middlemiss and Stevens praised the work of the Corrymeela Community, a 40-year-old project for the healing of social, religious and political divisions in Northern Ireland and throughout the world. The hearing concluded with prayer for the mission of that community, and particularly for its ministry to youth.

2. Migration is not a crime

The second hearing was organised by the Churches’ Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) on the theme “Migration in Europe - Churches’ Involvement in Migration and Integration, Asylum and Refugee Protection and Against Racism and Discrimination, in view of a Common European Policy on Asylum and Migration”. The hearing was chaired by Dr Anne Marie Dupré (Italy), CCME Moderator, and Doris Peschke (Belgium/Germany), CCME General Secretary. Presentations were heard testifying concretely to the work being done in the United Kingdom (from the Rev. Arlington Trotman, Churches’ Commission for Racial Justice), in Greece (from Dr Antonios Papantoniou, Church of Greece) and in Spain (from the Rev. Alfredo Abad, Spanish Evangelical Church).

Topics discussed included the battle of statistics, the contradictions among government policies dominated entirely by economic concerns, and the struggle against the temptation to consider migrants as sub-human.

The preliminary draft for an EU policy which was proposed at Thessalonika was disturbing. There was praise for Germany’s and Sweden’s opposition to suggestions from the United Kingdom.



It was affirmed that people do not become illegal immigrants by choice. They are in this situation because they have no other options. They seek safety and prospects for a somewhat more “human” existence in our countries, which they know are wealthier than their own.

It was said without doubt that migrants are deceived by smuggling rings, but also by governments which maintain ambiguous policies. EU countries contribute to irregular immigration, since there is not one of them which does not employ illegal labour. We may say this is not desirable, but we profit from it.

It was stated that these people are not criminals, and migration is not an offence. Nevertheless, government policies are becoming disturbingly radical. The suggestions made at Thessalonika by the United Kingdom were considered scandalous.

The group felt that several principles should be strongly affirmed as the basis for the churches’ commitment:

- Migrants are being criminalised. There is no such thing as an illegal person - there are only people who find themselves in irregular situations. Public opinion is afraid of them. The churches must educate people to change this mentality;
- It is unjust for people who have lost everything to be rejected in addition. They must be helped and their situation must be regularised. The churches must join migrants in their struggle for dignity, and must campaign for just and equal treatment for asylum seekers. For example, the New York Protocol of 1997 (detention only for those who pose a threat to public safety) should be promoted, to counter the temptations of governments to confine migrants in camps within, and more recently outside, Europe;
- Migrants’ work qualifications should be considered. They should not be underemployed;
- The amalgamation of “asylum seekers” with “economic migrants” should be discouraged.
- Governments should be encouraged to sign

the Convention on Protection of Migrants’ Rights, which come into force on 1 July 2003.

3. Facing up to the HIV/AIDS pandemic

HIV/AIDS is the greatest humanitarian disaster in modern history. To face the challenge of HIV/Aids, the churches need to put a human face to the virus. Only then will people who are HIV positive be able to feel part of the community and then churches can be a place of healing, speakers told those gathered at the third hearing.

Stu Flavell, International Coordinator of the Global Network of People living with AIDS provided “the human face”. He talked movingly of his partner, Paco, who died of an AIDS-related lung disease. “Paco died in my arms at home and I really appreciated all that my parish did. But it was exceptional and it is not what HIV positive people usually experience”. In contrast he said some churches threw people out of their congregations, and he referred to church leaders who have spoken of “this evil disease-ridden evidence that God is bringing retribution”.

Meanwhile other church leaders were honest, humble and frank, Mr Flavell told the Hearing organised by Norwegian Church Aid and the World Council of Churches. But still those leaders failed to bring reconciliation because HIV positive people could not find a home in their churches. “We live as outsiders, as obviously marked sinners and you and I have to bring people back into our communities”. He reminded everyone, “You are as sick as your secrets. We need to tell the truth about things that make us uncomfortable”.

Margarita Neliubova, of the Russian Orthodox Church, told the gathering that HIV is just a disease, not a crime or a failure. In Russia where the epidemic had started later than in some parts of the world, it is spreading quickly, primarily among intravenous drug users. Even seven year olds who experimented with drugs have become HIV positive.



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Church-related organisations around Europe have responded to the pandemic: Mrs Marit Lindheim, Norwegian Church Aid Programme Coordinator for Europe, described projects in Armenia, Belarus, Ukraine and St Petersburg. Dr Manoj Kurian of the World Council of Churches said that accountable and responsible leadership is needed to tackle AIDS, a preventable disease. “There is a huge untapped energy of people willing to work. If we get our attitudes and messages right we can conquer this”, he said.

4. Churches as healing communities

The fourth hearing, organised by the Netherlands Missionary Council (NOW-ALW) in cooperation with the Church and Mission Society (CMS, United Kingdom), was concerned with the situation of young African and Latin American churches and their work among immigrants in Europe.

The Rev. Tom Marfo from Ghana, now living in the Netherlands, reported on his own faith journey and his work. “In the southern hemisphere, the winds of mission are blowing. By the grace of God I am today a believer and a servant of God”.

The African churches are freeing themselves from European liturgical forms and discovering their own musical gifts and spirituality; their congregations among migrants in Europe are also attracting people of other cultures. In his work as a missionary in Amsterdam, Marfo concerns himself with African women who have become slaves in the Dutch sex industry through trafficking. The women find shelter in church “Safe Houses”, but the churches do more than that - sometimes they even find work for the women on an informal basis. “It is not enough to help the women to leave their former life; we must also make a new life possible for them”.

5. Facing new challenges in a changing Europe

“We must deepen relationships between the churches, learn to respect different traditions and meet for conversations and reflection”, said the Lutheran Bishop Hans Stiglund from the Church of Sweden Diocese of Luleå. Bishop Stiglund was speaking at the hearing entitled “Facing Common Challenges in a Changing Europe - a Christian Perspective in the Baltic and Barents Regions”. At this hearing, the increasing secularisation in Europe as well as issues of integration and migration were discussed.

“Jesus said that we all should be one. We have a major mission based on the gospel. We, the churches, could become an even stronger team if we can find common ways in a world of fragmentation. The churches can show the way and be an important instrument, not least in peacekeeping work. They can stand for stability in a world of fluctuation, in society at large”, said Bishop Stiglund.

In the Barents and Baltic Sea region, there has been close collaboration for many years between Lutherans, Roman-Catholics and Orthodox Christians. Every church family is represented around the Baltic Sea.

Bishop Stiglund, who is the chairperson of the Council of Christian Churches in the Barents Region, said that he can see that the churches could take greater responsibility in preventing social problems and unemployment in the Barents region. “Our problems are, after all, fairly similar”.

“There is more that unites us than separates us. This has been evident during our conversations. Conversation and dialogue are the cornerstones of our work. We meet across boundaries, religious boundaries and national boundaries, and we share experiences and learn from one another. So far, we do not collaborate with any other regions, but that might come in time”, Bishop Stiglund thought. He added that it is important that local work is undertaken. In the Diocese of Luleå, for example, young people are offered a trip to Murmansk in Russia in order to meet young Russians.



Lutheran Bishop Biörn Fjärstedt, from the Church of Sweden Diocese of Visby is the chairperson of the network called “Theobalt” (Theology in the Baltic region), which is dedicated to working through dialogue, studies and communication in order to deepen cooperation and collaboration between churches around the Baltic Sea.

“We are facing a new challenge coming from the new Europe”, he said. “In the long term, there is a risk that the European Union (EU) and NATO might erect new boundaries against those nations who are not members of these bodies. I can see some danger, for example, that the Russian Orthodox Church might once again find itself behind a boundary, behind an iron curtain. Here the churches could play a significant role by building bridges between the Russian Orthodox Church and other churches in the area”.

Bishop Fjärstedt believes that strong churches could play a major role here. However, another question to reflect on is what, actually, is a “strong” church. Is it a church that has many members but only a few who are active, or is it the other way round? “One question that all churches must do further work on”, he said, “is how we can encourage our members to take greater and more active responsibility. More people must carry the work of the church in order for the church to be strong”.

6. A new European slave market?

Trafficking in human beings within Europe – especially trafficking in women – is a growing problem. According to estimates by the United Nations, it affects about half a million women in Europe. Initiatives by Christian churches against this form of slavery were discussed at the Assembly.

At Hearing 6 on “A New European Slave Market? Trafficking in Women in Europe - Challenges to the Churches”, organised by the Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women (EFECW), women reported on the situation in their countries. Poverty and corruption, unemployment, hidden and public vio-

lence characterise the situation of numerous women in central and eastern Europe. “In this situation, dreams of life in the West arise, and women are ready to do anything to fulfil these dreams”, said Kateryna Levchenko of the Ukraine, speaking for the women’s network “La Strada”. Only a few countries in Europe have laws expressly against trafficking in human beings. But such laws are a prerequisite for recognising the affected women as victims of crime rather than as criminals themselves. Only laws against such trafficking make it possible for the victims to receive health care, legal protection against deportation and the possibility to act against those guilty of trafficking.

Bishop Ciprian Campineanu of Romania, Pirjo-Liisa Penttinen of Finland and the Rev. Antje Heider-Rottwilm, an official in the Evangelical Church of Germany, described the actions taken by their churches against trafficking in human beings. Priests are informing young women about their rights, church synods are pressing their governments for legislation, local churches are setting up shelters for the affected women and providing pastoral care for them. In their recommendations to member churches and partner organisations of CEC, participants in the hearing called on them to work actively on behalf of victims of trafficking and to exhort their governments and societies to improve the legal situation. The recommendations called for a common witness by the churches of Europe against slavery.

7. Churches and bioethics

The hearing “How are the churches facing bioethics in the 21st century?” was organised by the Society, Religion and Technology Project (SRTP) of the Church of Scotland, with the participation of Dr Elaine Gadd, Special Advisor to the Council of Europe Committee on Bioethics, Strasbourg; Professor Egbert Schrotten, Moderator of the Working Group on Bioethics of the CEC Church and Society Commission; Dr Donald Bruce, SRTP Director, and Dr Konstantinos Zorbas, Orthodox theologian from Greece.



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“If it is possible to use stem cells to cure Alzheimer’s or Parkinson’s disease, I don’t have the answer, but it worries me!” were the words of a participant in this hearing, summing up the questioning by church members and in our society.

The hearing brought together and highlighted the ethical questions with which we are confronted by today’s medical research. These are also connected with issues of justice, the global economy and environmental ethics, such as: Who has access to health care? Should everything be done which it becomes possible to do?

The churches were challenged to provide non-moralising pastoral care which helps the individual assume his or her responsibilities.

On cloning, or the status of the human embryo (and the discontinuation of pregnancy), it was found that the differences of opinion cut across the churches, although churches have long been dialoguing with one another and with the society on the subject.

There was unanimity against cloning for reproductive purposes; however, therapeutic cloning, use of stem cells, manipulation of plants and animals or the possibility of some day slowing down the aging process aroused more debate, since these represent a gold mine for entire sectors of medical research and also raise issues of justice.

Dr Donald Bruce shared his dilemma with regard to the human embryo: “If I knew what it was and that it would really become a baby, I wouldn’t do anything to it. But we don’t know! Let’s be honest and recognise that we are confronted with a dilemma, and that we could be mistaken. It’s better to say we don’t know”.

Dr Konstantinos Zorbas proposed that our reflections, unlike those of science with its limited concept of what a human being is, move towards a spiritual bioethics based on a Christian anthropology. This would see the human person as a mystery, pointing to the mystery which is God, as a being in relationship and in communion with others, and all of that in dialogue with science. He felt that we should not shut the door on the scientists, but must ask the question, “for what are we doing this?”

**8. Minority
and majority
churches –
conflict and
reconciliation**

We commit ourselves “to defend the rights of minorities and to help reduce misunderstandings and prejudices between majority and minority churches in our countries”. Starting from this commitment from the *Charta Oecumenica*, the hearing on “Minority and majority churches – conflict and reconciliation” looked at some examples of relationships between majority and minority churches, especially in central and eastern Europe. The hearing was organised by the Leuenberg Church Fellowship (LCF, now called the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe) and by the Gustav Adolf Foundation (Gustav-Adolf Werk, Germany).

Many stories were told, all very different from one another, but with a common positive message; that the good co-operation between minority and majority churches is a reality in many cases.

Prof. Elisabeth Parmentier (France) brought the example of the co-operation between large and small churches in the Leuenberg Fellowship, of which she is the president. Minority churches are particularly supported in the Fellowship because, according to the ecclesiology of the Reformation, the shape and size of a church doesn’t matter: what is important is to be rooted in Jesus Christ.

Bishop Mieczyslaw Cieslar represented the Lutheran Church in Poland. The social and diaconal work that the Protestant minority churches do in Poland is very important and the relationships with the Catholic majority and the Orthodox Church, mainly present in the north east part of the country, are very positive.

Baptist churches are a minority almost everywhere in Europe. Dr Theo Angelov, General Secretary of the European Baptist Federation, expressed his concerns regarding the recent case in which a Baptist Church building was burnt. He spoke about violent actions in Georgia toward minority churches, such as the burning of Bibles because they are considered sectarian literature. However, cases of positive



relationships also were mentioned, even in Georgia, where Baptist and Orthodox believers shared in ecumenical prayer.

Father Michael Tita presented the perspective of the majority church from Romania where 87% of the people belong to the Orthodox Church. In Romania majority/minority relations are fairly good due to the strong ecumenical relations built before 1989 through inter-confessional conferences held twice a year. The fact that churches' representatives managed to meet during the regime time, in order to discuss issues like freedom or disarmament, helped the ecumenical relationships stay alive.

Bishop Gusztav Bölcskei, from the Reformed Church in Hungary, brought up the interesting point of view of a church that is the second largest in Hungary. Being a church "in the middle" can be difficult but the important role it can play is one of building bridges between the bigger and the smaller churches. Ecumenical relations in Hungary are very important for the youth of the churches. 20,000 young people attended an Ecumenical Youth Congress, which they initiated.

In the end, Rev. Doris Krause spoke about the Gustav-Adolf-Werk activities aimed at supporting Protestant churches in minority situations, for example in Eastern Europe.

In his final statement, Moderator Prof. Martin Friedrich, from the LCF office in Berlin, appealed to the churches not to regard themselves primarily as minority or majority churches, but to see themselves simply as churches of Jesus Christ with obligations to all people and to other churches.

9. Diaconia – struggling for a social Europe

Europe needs to have a human face, a socially concerned face. Europe should offer all its inhabitants quality of life. These are visions for our continent which all churches share.

At the hearing organised by the European Diaconal Forum, the question for discussion was what contribution can be made by diaconia, the social welfare work of the churches in Europe, to make these visions perceptible in people's lives. The panel consisted of representatives of various ecumenical organisations involved in diaconal work at the European level: Ninni Smedberg and Albert Brandstätter of Eurodiaconia, Annemarie Dupré of the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe, Alexander Belopopsky of the World Council of Churches, Jürgen Klute of the European Contact Group on Urban and Industrial Mission, Tatiana Kotova of the Interchurch Diaconal Council of St. Petersburg, Russia, and APRODEV, and Eva-Sibylle Vogel-Mfato of CEC.

In her introduction, Ninni Smedberg, Eurodiaconia Vice President and moderator of the hearing, emphasised the extent to which the social reality in many parts of Europe is distant from the visions of the churches. A precise analysis of the local context always needs to be the first step in diaconal work if it is to have lasting success.

The panel members first provided a many-faceted picture of the current challenges in diaconal work at the European level. It was clear that the political upheavals since 1989 have had a decisive influence on diaconal tasks. The "new poverty" phenomenon affects, besides European Union member states, many of the central and eastern European countries which are entering as new members. It is not yet possible to speak of a social welfare policy concept within the EU. The gap in prosperity within Europe is especially striking, between some EU member states and those which have no prospects of EU membership in the near future. Nowhere in the world is the gulf separating rich and poor greater than at the border between northern Finland and northern Russia. Migration is a phenomenon which calls urgently for diaconal as well as political action.

Diaconal action must respond to these phenomena at various levels, in pursuing the goal of "Quality of life for all":



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- working with those affected at the grass-roots level;
- promoting diaconal projects;
- building up diaconal structures in countries where social safety nets no longer function;
- influencing political decisions on social welfare legislation, especially at EU level;
- building networks and close cooperation among existing diaconal organisations, initiatives and projects in Europe.

The second question from the moderator to the panel members had to do with the structure of ecumenical diaconal work at the European level: how can the work of the various existing programmes be most effectively organised?

A majority of the participants agreed that, especially in view of large shortfalls in financial resources, it was absolutely necessary to avoid duplication of structures, to increase cooperation, to discuss and agree on work to be done, and to pay special attention to networking among existing diaconal initiatives.

10. The right to communicate is a basic human right

“In most countries of Africa, communication is a major problem. Churches should help establish communication systems, which are essential for the development of human society”, Kenneth Kaunda had said in his keynote speech at the opening of the Assembly. Kaunda’s appeal found an echo in the hearing “Called to communicate – the Churches’ witness in the Information Society”, organised by the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC).

The General Secretary of WACC, Randy Naylor, presented WACC’s mission, namely to promote participative and creative forms of communication which foster empowerment of people, especially those who are marginalised.

Myriam Horngren, from the Campaign for Communication Rights (CRIS) spoke about the United Nations’ World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), to take place in

Geneva in December 2003, with a follow-up session in Tunis in 2005. WSIS aims to “develop a common vision and understanding of the information society... and to draw up a strategic plan of action for successfully adapting to the new society”. In view of the WSIS, CRIS – a coalition of non-governmental organisations – is lobbying to affirm the right to communicate as a means to enhance human rights and to strengthen democratic participation.

Karin Achtelstetter, Director of Communications of the Lutheran World Federation, urged the churches to become more involved in reflection and action on the issues related to “information ethics”.

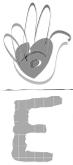
Gianna Urizio, President of the European region of WACC, moderated the hearing. She underlined the need for the churches and ecumenical organisations to closely monitor the WSIS process and to work for the recognition of the right to communicate as a basic human right. Equitable and affordable access to modern information tools (e.g. Internet) for all people should be ensured.

11. Churches work for a just peace settlement in the Middle East

“School children cannot go to school on their own in some parts of Israel/Palestine. They will be stopped at checkpoints, shot at with tear gas, have their bags searched and some children will even be subjected to harassment. That is, unfortunately, how the everyday life for many children and young people in today’s Israel/Palestine can be described”, said Joanna Lilja, 26 years old from Sweden, during hearing No. 11. The hearing was organized by the Christian Council of Sweden (SKR) on the theme “The role of the churches striving for peace”.

Ms. Lilja had recently returned from Israel/Palestine, having worked in Gaza as an accompanier for three months as part of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI).

She indicated that “thanks to EAPPI, people from various parts of the world are cur-



rently in Israel and Palestine in order to support those who work for a just peace settlement". At the present time nine countries are sending participants.

The World Council of Churches began this programme a year ago. The initiative was taken following a direct appeal from church leaders in Jerusalem.

"Peace does seem very far away indeed, but we must not give up", Joanna said. "We can help just by being there and showing our solidarity, and by lobbying; telling others what we hear and see. It is important to give people hope!"

The programme aims, through international presence, to lessen the violence, to give hope for a peaceful solution, to further respect for international law and to raise awareness around the world about what is happening.

In Sweden ten churches and church-related organisations have united under the management of the Christian Council of Sweden to run an accompaniment project, called SEAPI (The Swedish Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel).

12. Sustainable development after Johannesburg - a challenge for the churches

Hearing number 12 was organised by the European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN). Its aim was to raise delegates' awareness of the political and practical necessity of eco-social development and at the same time motivate them to take action in their churches.

Peter Pavlovic from Brussels, who was a CEC observer at Johannesburg, described the modest results of the world summit on sustainable development (26. August- 2. September 2002). He stressed that it is precisely because of these modest results that churches undertake lobbying on political and economic issues to support the cause of just living conditions for today's and for coming generations.

Oddmund Graham, Oslo, adviser to the Norwegian environment minister, outlined the

strategy of Nordic countries on sustainable development. But even in Norway there is still a yawning gap between claims and reality. This can be seen in the exploitation of oil and natural gas in the ecologically highly sensitive Barents Sea. It was also clear that the only thing that will be of further help is binding international agreement, for instance regarding over-fishing in the North Sea or the radioactivity of the nuclear waste plant in Sellafield.

Bishop Eberhardt Renz, Germany, one of the WCC presidents, presented a paper on "Solidarity with victims of Climate Change". Pictures of the catastrophic flooding in Chechnya showed how just how dramatic the damage caused by climate change actually is. The "Church in Action" project by Rommie Nanta from the Netherlands illustrated how national churches can contribute to protecting the climate.

Churches must speak up for political frameworks that are sustainable, but they must also act in ecologically sustainable ways in their own activities. In this area, the Revd Tom Tomren presented the activities of the Norwegian churches, including the "Fairer Trade" project, through which consumers from all walks of life have been introduced to fairly traded coffee.

Hans-Hermann Böhm, Stuttgart, Germany, pleaded for a systematic environmental management of churches. He presented the European Union's "Environmental Management Audit Scheme" (EMAS), was well adapted to bringing about a continual improvement in the Environmental Performance Measurement and to help in reducing costs and use of resources. National and local church administrations, conference centres and congregations should use the EMAS system and so set an example at a European level. Böhm gave a report about the work of the Environmental Management working group of the ECEN and the planned brochure with examples of good practice from the churches of Germany, Great Britain, Finland, Norway, and Sweden.

The moderator, Bishop Ernst Baasland from Stavanger (Norway), gave a bravura performance by bringing together in only two hours such stimulating contributions about the



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practical implications and penetrating questions. Many of the questions that were raised could be discussed in greater depth on the stall in the TORG being run by ECEN and the Norwegian churches, using the material that was to hand. The “Green Church” constructed by Hans-Jürgen Schorre from Oslo was a striking attraction for all assembly visitors.

All in all the hearing was a good opportunity for delegates to consider ecological and social issues and to take home with them ideas and examples of sustainable development.

13. Healing of memories: Roma and the Nordic churches

Introduced by Roma songs of the road, the hearing “Healing of Memories - an Ongoing Task - Roma and the Nordic Churches” was moderated by Doris Peschke of the Churches’ Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), with the participation of Roma organisations of northern and central Europe and church representatives.

The Roma have been marginalised, rejected, forced to give up their identity and their culture. They have had their children taken away, their women sterilised, not to mention the thousands of Roma who have been massacred in concentration camps. About these actions the churches have remained silent, and have sometimes even participated in them.

This process of exclusion still goes on today, and the Roma fear that new laws, surfing on waves of conditioned and fearful public opinion, may restrict their rights even more.

It was not until quite recently that processes of asking forgiveness and compensation for prejudices suffered have been undertaken, especially by the churches and governments in northern Europe. They have been working in the areas of human rights and social welfare. They have integrated Roma culture into church liturgies. This process is still going on, and it will take time to establish a real partnership with the Roma.

The Roma themselves are also becoming involved in this process of reconciliation and

working, despite their insecure situation, in all sorts of social welfare and evangelisation activities, particularly in aid of their sisters and brothers in eastern Europe who live under conditions of extreme poverty and marginalisation.

Invited for the first time to speak in an official, Europe-wide church setting, Roma representatives formally presented to the CEC General Secretary a statement on the treatment of Roma in Europe and in the churches.

The process of reconciliation, the document states, is not easy for either side; it requires patience, tolerance and respect. Remembering the past, taking account of suffering, and uncovering prejudices endured are important to overcome barriers and enter into healing of the wounds which have been inflicted.

The declaration recommends that the churches facilitate the process of healing of memories by recognising their role in marginalising the Roma and in exterminating some of them, by asking them for forgiveness, compensating them for prejudices endured and combating the segregation still present in education, health care and social life.

The churches are urged to facilitate the participation of Roma in working groups and committees on human rights, and to launch a campaign to integrate Roma into the churches, perhaps by setting up a theological education institution for them, or by integrating Roma into existing institutions.

The Roma would like an ecumenical visit from western churches to the peoples and churches of central and eastern Europe, to investigate a response from the churches to the situation of these minority persons.

Recalling the position taken by Peter in relation to Cornelius, and Jesus’ prayer for unity, the Roma representatives called on Christians to leave behind their discriminatory and suspicious attitudes.

Participants in the hearing were: Elias Axelsson, Rev. Ondrej Prostednik, Rev. Henry Hedman, Rev. Väinö Lindberg, Tuula Åkerlund, Leif Bodin Larsen, Anna Gustafsson, Marianne Grønnerud, Lars Demetri, and Rev. Erling Petersen.



14. The need to globalise justice Economic globalisation is a system that stands in contradiction to “life in all its fullness” as promised in Christ. The mechanisms of unbridled markets favouring the rich and ignoring the poor run counter to the ecumenical Christian vision of justice for all, in the view of speakers at the hearing on global society.

The hearing was sponsored by Kairos Europa, a network of churches, trade unions, non-governmental organisations and other civil society activists in Europe working together for economic, environmental and social justice. The principal speakers were Ulrich Möller of the Protestant church in Westphalia, Germany, and Ulrich Duchrow and Martin Gueck representing Kairos, co-authors of “Economic Alternatives: Responding to the Fifty Years of the Dominant Financial Systems Established at Bretton Woods”.

According to Gueck, there is a growing realisation that something is wrong in the world economy, and not just in the developing nations of the southern hemisphere. Since the 1980s, there has been a renaissance of the absolute power of the marketplace and a trend toward protecting the financial rights of certain individuals rather than guaranteeing economic justice to whole communities of “global losers”. This renewed emphasis on individual freedom is described by critics as “neo-liberalism”. In the face of unjust conditions, Gueck told the hearing, “the ecumenical movement is struggling to globalise justice”.

Möller described a gathering momentum among churches to incorporate economic justice as a component essential to their confession of faith. “The church is called to bear witness to God’s justice”, he said, adding, “This means that Christians are required to opt for justice, even if we have not yet discovered one single, agreed approach. Even so, we cannot leave this responsibility solely to the secular pressure groups and anti-globalisation demonstrators”.

Duchrow traced the theological exploration of economic justice as a confessional issue.

Explicitly raised by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), which in the 1980s had declared apartheid as “heresy” following a similar “processus confessionis”, this subject is now a joint project of the WARC, the Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches. Biblical teachings regarding justice, and practical consequences for the churches in the contemporary world economy, are expected to spur actions by a series of ecumenical gatherings from the CEC Assembly to the 2006 Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

15. Christians and Muslims must work together in a secular society Pluralistic Europe as a challenge for religious people and the way Christians and Muslims have much to teach each other

about living as neighbours in a mainly secular society were explored in a hearing at the 12th Assembly of the Conference of European Churches Assembly this week.

In a hearing, led by the Islam in Europe Committee of CEC and CCEE (Council of European Bishops’ Conferences), those present listened to the experiences of Hans Vöcking from the Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences in the European Communities (COMECE) and CCEE, and Muhammad Osman Jawari, General Secretary of the Muslim Society in Trondheim, also representing the Islamic Council of Norway.

Dr Riad Jarjour, General Secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), said there was an urgent need for dialogue because it is a reality of life that there are lots of tensions between Christians and Muslims and in some places this means war; Christians attack Muslims and Muslims attack Christians. “You should understand each other as you want to be understood”, he urged. “There is a culture of dialogue growing that is having an impact on the world stage. The events post 11 September 2001 and the involvement by many churches in the mass demonstrations across



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Europe against the war in Iraq 2003 were signs of hope in grim times. The Churches' stand against the war in Iraq has helped build wonderful Christian/Muslim dialogue", he said.

The Bishop of Oslo, Gunnar Staalsett, looked ahead to the enlargement of Europe. The inclusion of Turkey would bring many more Muslims into the EU. "This is not a sign of threat", he said "but an opportunity to develop the spiritual dimension". The bishop shared news of a gathering during the week of the Assembly in Baghdad of twenty-two religious leaders. "They have never sat at the same table before. Each one of us should give praise to the Lord that this is possible and that there are religious leaders involved who affirm the dignity of us all".

The hearing gave an opportunity to explore how dialogue takes place. Some present said that it was important for Christians and Muslims to focus on working together through daily encounters and day to day life, learning how to be neighbours. Others said that the consultations that focused on theological dialogue, studying the Bible and Koran, were also essential because grappling with theological studies deepens faith. There is a need to bridge the gap between those who see the need for dialogue and those who do not.

Education of children was clearly an area for Christian/Muslim encounter. One woman from Sweden told delegates "We have to thank our Muslim brothers and sisters for the fact that they never cease to say 'we are believers' because now in our schools our children say 'we are Christians'. Muslims have taught us to be conscious of who we are".

**16. Central
Europe
between market
and mafia**

"Our resources are no longer our own. Through privatisation, water, the earth's mineral resources and energy are now in the possession of western corporations".

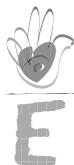
The hearing on "Central and Eastern Europe - the Social, Economic and Environmental Challenges. Tasks for all the European Church-

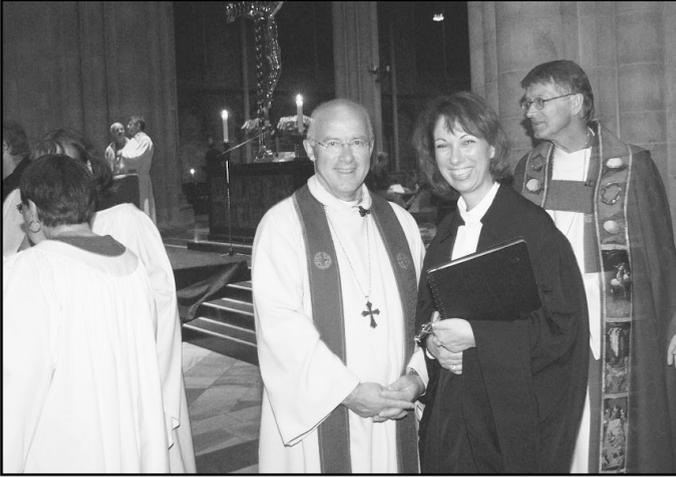
es and Civil Society" was concerned with the social, economic and environmental-political problems of the massive changes in central and eastern Europe. The hearing was organised by the European Contact Group (ECG) in cooperation with the Work and Economy Network in the European Churches (WEN).

The radical transformation of the economy in particular, which is often experienced as "Mafia capitalism", and the "brain drain" - the emigration of well-educated professionals, represent huge challenges to the countries formerly behind the Iron Curtain. Unemployment is excluding many people from the economic upturn, diseases such as tuberculosis are spreading, organised crime is destabilising societies.

In this situation, the churches are offering job training and aid projects. One programme in the Czech Republic aims to provide a hundred churches with energy independence by installing solar panels on their roofs. Other projects are concerned with improving ground water and using wind energy. As one participant reported, "Many governments want to solve the economic problems first and then worry about environmental policies, but the two cannot be separated. Environmental and social welfare issues go together".

In order to influence the legislation of their countries, the churches are presenting their positions jointly at the European level. "In our country people say, the EU is over us, but is not for us", said a Czech scientist of the mood in his country. "Where it used to be Moscow, now it's Brussels". In this situation, the churches are called upon not only to be supporters of EU membership, but also to know how Europe works. They must represent their concerns, but also keep some distance between themselves and their governments: "We want to help shape our society, but we don't want to be monopolised for certain political purposes".





Presentation of Assembly theme paper

After the series of hearings, the Assembly met again in plenary on Friday afternoon, where the Theme Paper was presented by OKRin Antje Heider-Rotwilm (Germany) and Prof. Constantinos Scouteris (Greece). Rev. Antje Heider-Rotwilm presented the background to the paper and the process of the development of the paper from its inception, how it was devolved to the churches for discussion, and how the revisions of the paper emerged after considering the comments of the various contributions. She noted that the paper was carefully divided so that the four Assembly section meetings could address certain issues.

Professor Constantinos Scouteris outlined the Christological aspects in the paper. He urged the churches to think in order to find what to say about Jesus Christ today. The passion of Christ, he said, is the focus of the whole of Christianity. The uniqueness of the incarnate word of God is central to understanding the Christian church. It is the churches responsibility to make Christianity credible today. What do the churches have to offer? God allowed himself to become part of human history, to demonstrate another way of existence as redeemer and reconciler. Churches have to bring Jesus Christ to the people of today. "That they all might be one" (John 17,21) is a mandate for all who follow him. The Word became flesh in order to transform the world. The Assembly theme challenges the European churches to find, in Jesus Christ, their message for all the social work and other activities which they undertake in the world today.

Plenary on Charta

Immediately after the Theme Paper presentation, the first of a series of 3 "informational plenaries" started. In a programme co-ordinated by Viorel Ionita, Study Secretary of CEC in Geneva, the contents of the *Charta Oecumenica* were outlined and analysed. The 10-page document represents a theological consensus on directions in church unity, common mission, worship, ecumenical relations, mutual assistance in relating to institutions of the new Europe and engaging together as Christians in

Rev. Isabelle Graesslé

The trace of God's desire in us

From the sermon on Luke 17, 11-19 - Nidaros Cathedral, 28 June 2003.

(...) A man called Ieshouah finds himself on the road to Jerusalem. He passes the fringe of a heretic and strange territory called Samaria. On his way, the man meets ten lepers. They stand at a distance, simply because the law forbids them to get closer. Only the words they exchange will bring them together. And they shout: "Ieshouah, Master, have pity on us!".

Surprisingly, the man asks them to go and to have the priests examine them, for according to Jewish law, it was the priests who had to examine you when you were healed, especially from leprosy. And the ten lepers find enough confidence to follow the advice of the young rabbi whom they had met on their road.

And it works... on the way, they are made clean. But still, between them and their healer, the distance remains: they have had what they wanted, they admire their purified bodies and disappear from the story. Just one of them, when he sees that he has been healed, comes back, praising God in a loud voice, for it seems that for him healing means much more than the purification of his body. For the nine others, the prophet Ieshouah was a way to encounter a new life, a life of reintegration into the social and religious community. This in itself is already quite a result! For the tenth, however, it is his healing which constitutes the way to pass to renewed life. For this tenth man, the gift of healing is almost overclouded by the healer. Ieshouah had asked him to let the priest examine him... actually, the man examined himself and found that he was healed. And that is why he comes back: not because he is polite, but because he has examined himself.

Then, the distances take another dimension, they disappear themselves in this movement of the coming back of the Samaritan, who suddenly finds himself very close to the rabbi on the road. Here he is, shouting again. This time, he is not asking for pity, he is just shouting his gratitude. At that moment, the physical healing, though quite spectacular, has become an inside journey. A journey where the distances are abolished and a human being is resurrected and restored to



Rev. Isabelle Graesslé

himself: "Get up and go; your faith has made you well". One could also understand this to mean: "Get up, be resurrected yourself so that you can go on your new road".

But this story shouldn't be wrongly understood, as a moral story where nine lepers remained on a very physical level, and only the tenth was capable of coming back to himself, only one was capable of re-appropriating his own history.

One shouldn't forget that all the lepers were sick and that all were healed. The only detail that the story gives us, is that for one of them, something particular has happened: he sees himself healed and this is what changes his life. To attest to this change, Ieshouah sends him back, on the road, with this affirmation: "Your faith made you well". Does it mean that the first nine are not yet made well... there is nothing about that in the story. Maybe, then, the miracle doesn't correspond to the healing itself... but to what happens after the healing. To what is made out of the healing...

Beyond healing, there have been words exchanged, distances have been abolished, a confidence has been re-established, a dismissal has been made in order to continue on the road. Beyond healing, it is simply a resurrection. This is what salvation means. And it's already quite a lot! For years, I didn't like the word "salvation". I found it dated, unsuitable to the postmodern expectations about spirituality and faith. Actually I think I disliked more what theology had done to the concept of "salvation", a kind of supreme goal to pursue, by virtue of moral principals or, in a more Protestant version, by virtue of tons of faith. But the story of the Samaritan leper just tells us about the fullness of life. About the many leaves of the tree of life which have fallen on our path. About the many messianic fragments which are connecting us to our divine origin.

When the rabbi on the road dismisses the healed leper for the second time, when he sends him off on the roads of the world with the assurance of a salvation given in plenty, it is to remind him of the intensity which from now on belongs to him. Although Ieshouah is the Messiah, he is the one who reveals to each and everyone their own messianic part. Salvation therefore, as the Kingdom, begins not in an imaginary future, but already down here, starting from the moment that each of

dialogue with Jews, Muslims and followers of other world religions. At the same time, the *Charta* does not claim to be the final word on these subjects. As Orthodox theologian Grigorios Larentzakis said in a panel discussion, "The *Charta Oecumenica* is not Church Dogma, nor is it Canon Law. It has to do with building community among the churches. It offers us the possibility of discovering the meaning of truly ecumenical relations, of speaking in harmony as Christians rather than in a monotone. We know hope and joy in this undertaking, yet there is much more to do. And in the end, there is no dogmatic or canonical problem we cannot solve after having made such a beginning". CCEE General Secretary Aldo Giordano added, "The *Charta Oecumenica* is a living document witnessing to the living Christ. In this context, miracles are possible".

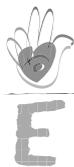
Speakers at the *Charta Oecumenica* plenary also included Bishop Bärbel Wartenberg-Potter (Germany), Rev. Gianna Sciclone (Italy), Bishop Ciprian Campinealu (Romania), OKRin Antje Heider-Rottwil (Germany), Prof. Reinhard Frieling (Germany), Dr Peter Kromer (Austria), and CEC General Secretary, Dr Keith Clements.

During the debate which followed, one of the delegates rose to question whether the *Charta Oecumenica* goes far enough in addressing ecumenical controversies. In particular, he regretted its failure to provide a solution to "proselytism" by some churches among populations already considered members of another Christian tradition. He called on CEC to enter new dialogues aimed at a pact promising "non-aggression in mission".

Plenary on youth

The Youth plenary followed, during which the state of churches and the world formed the subject matter for musical performances, a computerized photographic display, symbolic actions, dramatic readings and personal reflections. Eleven young people were involved, representing the youth organisations in partnership with CEC: the World Student Christian Fellowship (WSCF)-Europe, the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe (EYCE) and the Orthodox youth fellowship SYNDESMOS. They were, in order of appearance: Peter Sajda (Slovakia), Christian Roar Pedersen (Denmark), Nadzeja Cherkas (Belarus), Siri Gjaere (Norway), Daniela Rapisarda (Norway/Italy), Zsuzsa Rihay (Hungary), Gyrid Gunnes (Norway), Carl Petter Opsahl (Norway), Kaisa Aitlahti (Finland), Michel Charbonnier (Italy), Dirk Thesenwitz (Germany).

While the young leaders noted "grave limitations" in the traditional ways of the churches, and asked whether churches can be more than mere "relics of the past", they suggested that there remains within the churches a possibility of encounter with the Holy Spirit who "is not bound by the canonical boundaries of the church". Particular criticisms voiced by the youth were the attitudes of some communions toward women and the segregation of youth leadership to an "informational plenary" as opposed to the assembly's "business" sessions. Nonetheless, they affirmed that the churches' affirmation of the Triune God, the perfect model of unity in diversity, provides the grounds for "a Christian hope in the future of Europe", a hope of healing and reconciliation even within the churches themselves.



Bishop Baerbel Wartenberg-Potter (Lutheran) of Germany and Archbishop Anastasios (Orthodox) of Albania rounded out the afternoon's programme with a pair of responses to the youth. The white-haired Anastasios introduced himself to the assembly as "a representative of the youth of the Fifties". Bishop Wartenberg-Potter assured young people that their voices were being heard. "The Oikoumene needs youth," she said, "and not in any paternalistic or maternalistic way. We need you to challenge us". Archbishop Anastasios agreed, recalling that "youth are not simply the future of the church, you are our present". He called on young people to insist on being taken seriously by their elders, and to bear their share of the burdens of leadership.

Four Sections to "digest" inputs and plan the future work of CEC

The third and last informational plenary, on Europe, took place later, on Monday afternoon, as it was clear that – after a wide range of speeches, hearings and plenaries – delegates really needed time to "digest" and discuss all the input, meeting in four sections on Friday evening and the whole of Saturday. Each section dealt with a certain number of issues posed by the Assembly Theme. Section 1, on "Growing in solidarity" focussed on healing and reconciliation of the divisions and disparities within European society. Section 2, "Growing together in Europe", highlighted the factors which are for and against the development of Europe as a community of people based on shared values of human dignity, justice and freedom. Section 3, "Growing witness in society", dealt with the issue of how to communicate the Gospel in today's society, and on the Christian response to contemporary questions such as biotechnology and the ecological crisis. Section 4, "Growing fellowship between churches", dealt with the *Charta Oecumenica* process, theological dialogue and relations between the "historic" European churches and the more recently arrived "diaspora" churches from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

To enable greater interaction and discussion, participants in Sections were seated at "round-tables" according to language preference. The Sections, as well as working on the basis of the "Graz to Trondheim" report and the input from the preceding Assembly sessions and hearings, were provided documentation on particular areas of CEC's work and its future possibilities. There was a CEC staff presentation at the beginning of each Section's meeting. A major task of the Sections was to construct proposals to be conveyed to the Policy Reference Committee for consideration in its report, which will form the basis for the future work of

Rev. Isabelle Graesslé

us is healed from missing his or her messianic part. It is when each of us is reconciled with it, which means then reconciliation is possible also with others, even when they come from Samaria. Knowing that, whether we like it or not, we are always the Samaritan to somebody!

Just after this story, the Pharisees ask leshouah when the Kingdom of God would come. The rabbi answers: "The Kingdom of God does not come in such a way as to be seen. No one will say: 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!; because the Kingdom of God is within you'". (Luke 17,20-21).

It is exactly because the Kingdom is really here and now, in our midst, inside each one of us, that our lives cannot be reduced to what it is physically. Our origin calls us to greatness as well as to greater intensity. Our road is marked by small and large resurrections. This is because the word which resurrects our messianic part, the word which is resurrection, continues to send people off on the roads of life.

Besides miracles which are wonders, there are miracles of other profundity. Miracles which open an exchange of significant words, miracles which give meaning to life, which untie that which preys upon our lives, those we all know so well: for our modern leprosies often bear the names of our anxieties.

Healing and reconciliation, in our existence, have something to do with the trace of God's desire in us. A desire to see us reconciled, healed and resurrected to life, here and now.



Metropolitan Daniel

Saint Peter and Paul: Apostles and Martyrs in Europe

From the address given at the Orthodox Divine Liturgy, Nidaros Cathedral, 29 June 2003.

Saints Peter and Paul: two different persons called by our Saviour Jesus Christ to preach the same Gospel of love and salvation.

Different as a place of birth and culture or professional formation, Saint Peter and Saint Paul were called to be Apostles also in a different way and received from Christ and from the Church different missions: to Saint Peter the preaching of the Gospel among the Jewish people, to Saint Paul the mission among the Gentiles. Saint Peter appears the first in the lists of the Apostles. Saint Paul is the thirteenth among the Apostles! In this plan for the salvation of the world, Christ prefers every human being. Saint Andrew is the first called by Christ, Saint Peter is the first in the lists, Saint John is the beloved disciple. Saint Paul although the last one to be called, becomes the first in the missionary field. With every person and with every nation, Christ has in His love a preferential and unique relation because He gives Himself entirely to every person and every nation that believe and love Him.

What do Saint Peter and Saint Paul have in common? The essential and the plenitude. That means the fervent faith in Christ and in the living communion with Him. Saint Peter witnessed the divinity of Jesus Christ: "You are the Son of the Living God" (Math. 16,16). Saint Paul witnesses that in Christ "dwells all the fullness of Godhead bodily" (Col. 2,9) and the Mystery of the Christian faith is the Mystery of "God who was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory" (1 Tim. 3,16).

Both of them have a powerful experience of repentance or conversion. Peter denied Christ three times. Then he wept bitterly and loved Christ until his death in martyrdom. Saint Paul persecuted the Church of Christ and then regretted that for all his life, he worked for the Church more than any other.

Saint Peter and Saint Paul also have in common their strong love for Christ and for His Church. (...) They have in common their

CEC. The Sections also had the opportunity of reporting to a later plenary session, on Tuesday morning.

Worship at the heart of the Assembly's life

At this stage it is appropriate to underline that the Assembly did not just consist of plenaries, hearings and sections. Personal exchanges were central, enabled by the common meals, the meeting space at the Torg, late evening strolling in the medieval centre of Trondheim, and the "Café Børsen" which was at the entire disposal of Assembly participants.

Another aspect which played a key role in the Assembly's life was worship. It was prepared by an international Worship Committee, including liturgists and musicians from different denominations, and was powerfully accompanied by a local youth Gospel Choir, integrated with stewards and Assembly delegates. Local churches, particularly the Cathedral congregation and its choirs, also made major contributions.

Apart from the opening and closing services, and the special worship programme on the week-end, morning and evening prayers were held in the Spektrum's Worship Hall. Each morning service reflected a particular confessional liturgical style. Every morning, participants were offered a symbol or an icon whose meaning was connected with the theme and the biblical lesson of the day. Immediately after the service, participants went into small Bible study groups to discuss the meaning of the reading. Discussions followed the guidelines suggested in the Assembly Worship Book, "Gloria Deo".

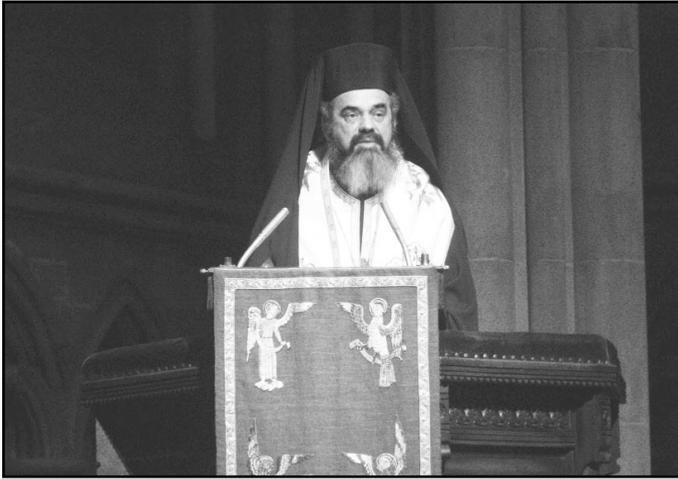
On Friday morning the service was according to the style of the so-called "free" Protestant churches. The theme was "The Healing Community" and the lesson was from Mark 2,1-12 (the healing of a paralytic). The symbol was a scroll of Scripture, made of two sticks and a sheet of paper, so that it also reminded the paralytic's mat. Jesus' words were written on the scroll/mat: "I say to you: Stand up, take your mat and go!".

On Saturday the morning prayer was built on an abbreviated shape of the Orthodox Matin service. The theme was "The Resurrected Reconciler", and the reading was the dialogue between Peter and the Resurrected Lord (John 21). The symbol was the Russian icon of the women at the tomb, and a traditional Orthodox hymn was sung: "When the Women disciples of the Lord had learned from the angels the glad tidings of resurrection... they spake exultingly to the Apostles: Death is no more, Christ God is risen".

A small Armenian cross, made of obsidian, was given to participants on Monday. The service was according to the Armenian tradition. The theme was "Our Common Witness", with the parable of the house built on the rock (Matthew 7) as the lesson.

Finally, the morning prayer on Tuesday was according to the Lutheran tradition. The emphasis was again on "Witness", with a reflection on the call to mission in Europe (Acts of the Apostles 16). As a reminder of the first European convert, Lydia, who opened her house to welcome the apostles, participants were given a reproduction of a key from an ancient church in Trondheim.





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martyrdom in Rome and the date was kept in the tradition of the Church to be in 29th of June, 67 A.D., during the persecutions of the Emperor Nero against the Christians. So, they could be called Apostles for Europe and Martyrs in Europe.

Which were the realities during their mission in the Europe of their time?

First, a pantheist and idolatrous religiosity confused the Creator with the creature (cf. Rom. 2,25) suppressing the freedom and diminishing the dignity of the human person, increasing the forms of spiritual and social slavery.

Secondly, they confronted the self-sufficiency and the arrogance of the Greek-Roman philosophy, which could not accept the Cross and the Resurrection of Christ, that means the humble love of the Almighty and the Resurrection of the body from the death, because the fatalism of death kept all the antique world in a slavery of the spirit: "and to release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2, 15). Therefore the faith in God that is not confused with the changing world, the faith that conquered death brings freedom to the world.

Thirdly, they confronted the self-sufficiency and the hostility of the political imperial power. Saint Peter and Saint Paul ask in their epistles that the imperial political power and the administrative and military authorities be respected. More than that they call them servants of social goodness and prosecutors of criminals (I Pet. 2, 13-14 and Rom. 13, 1-13). But the Apostles never confused or replaced the spiritual power with the secular one and never confused the Kingdom of God with the Roman Empire, nor the temporary Emperor with the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal and living One. That is why they witnessed Christ until their death.

The Saints Apostles Peter and Paul are for us teachers of the faith, model missionaries and intercessors for the life and unity of the Church.

Through their life, deeds and writings, they urge us to love Christ, His Gospel and His Church, to work for the healing and salvation of all human persons and peoples, without difference of race and gender, nation or social status. They are for us teachers of reconciliation, of forgiveness, of unity and of holiness. They teach us to pray continuously, to work

Evening prayers were prepared by different groups. Thursday evening featured a Sami service, with music inspired by "Joik", the original Sami way of singing. On Friday evening the service was prepared and led by youth, while on Monday it reflected the Apostolic/Pentecostal style, led by representatives of the so-called "immigrant" churches in Europe. The last evening prayer on Tuesday was built on the Orthodox Vespers into which was incorporated the traditional Orthodox blessing of bread and other gifts of creation.

Fifteen hours of prayer...

But the "peak" of worship life was reached during the week-end. As Saturday merged into Sunday under the "midnight sun" of Norway, a succession of liturgical traditions took their turns in worship events under the vaulted chambers of Nidaros Cathedral.

The progression of liturgies began at 10 p.m. on Saturday 28 June with the celebration of the Eucharist under the auspices of the Lutheran, Anglican and Reformed Protestant communions. Nidaros Cathedral, built in the 12th century, has been a Lutheran place of worship since the 16th-century Reformation. Within the past 30 years, the Church of Norway has been one of the Lutheran churches that has come into full communion with Reformed churches through the Leuenberg Agreement and with Anglican churches through the Porvoo Agreement. Ordained officiants from all three traditions shared in celebrating and serving the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The sermon was delivered by the Rev. Dr Isabelle Graesslé, Moderator of the Company of Pastors of the Reformed Church in Geneva, Switzerland. She is the first woman to succeed the Protestant reformer John Calvin in that office.

Through the night, prayer services and meditational organ music were offered in the cathedral organised by local Christian groups from Trondheim. In the medieval Chapter House, adjacent to the sanctuary, a crowd of worshippers gathered at midnight to attend an Orthodox Vigil service



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continuously good deeds, but never count on ourselves more than on the grace of the living God shown in Jesus Christ.

In the Orthodox iconography, Saints Peter and Paul, the first and the last among apostles, represent the communion of Israel with all the nations on earth, as well as the link between unity and freedom.

The two "keys" of Saint Peter represent repentance and forgiveness, humbleness and love, through which we enter into the Kingdom of God. And the "Sword" of Saint Paul represents the power of the spiritual Word that distinguishes between error and truth, egoism and love, between death and life.

Let us pray to Saints Peter and Paul, these princes of the Apostles, to help us to be fervent missionaries in the Europe of today as they were in the Europe of their time, to be able to tell every Church and nation of Europe: "Rejoice always in the Lord, and again I say Rejoice!" (Phil. 4,4).

that filled the high-ceilinged space with incense, chanted music and fervent prayer.

Morning brought two Orthodox liturgies; the first was Armenian Orthodox and the second was Eastern Orthodox. The Armenian church is a member of the Oriental Orthodox tradition which broke with the Eastern and Western Church over disagreements concerning a Christological definition adopted by the Council of Chalcedon in 451. 20th-century dialogue has helped "Chalcedonian" and "pre-Chalcedonian" churches discover common ground.

The Armenian liturgy, with Archbishop Vosskan Kalpakian presiding, began in Nidaros Cathedral at 9 a.m. ending in time for the Eastern Orthodox liturgy at 11. Metropolitan Jérémie of Switzerland, president of CEC, presided at the Eastern Orthodox service while the sermon was given by Metropolitan Daniel of Moldova and Bucovina. Metropolitan Daniel noted that, in the liturgical calendar, 29 June is the feast day of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, the two great apostles who were martyred in Europe and have been recognized as patron saints of Rome.

A rich week-end programme

Various other events accompanied the weekend. We will mention:

- On Saturday at noon, there was the Templeton Prize "European Religious Writer of the Year" presentation to Agneta Lagercrantz, reporter



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A NORWEGIAN "HUSTAVLE"

THE CRY FROM A WOUNDED PLANET

Sons and daughters of the Earth,
you who know good and evil:
Life is in danger! Show that you Care!

All that you have
is given to you in trust.
You must pass it all on to
those who come after you.

DISCOVER THE WHOLENESS

The Earth is a tapestry
woven without seams.
No-one has the right
to tear it apart.

STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE

Mother Earth
has enough to meet
the needs of all,
but not to satisfy
their greed.
The gap between
poor and rich
is contempt
for human dignity.

SENSE THE HOLINESS

A holy fragrance hovers
over all that exists.
Life must be valued,
protected and loved.

LIVE IN RECONCILIATION

Sons and daughters
of the Earth,
you who have the power
to tear up her tapestry:
You are called to a life
of reconciliation!

REJOICE IN THE BEAUTY

Creation has a wealth of its own.
Nothing is mere raw material.
The gifts of the Earth
must be handled
with devotion and gratitude.

REMEMBER THE CONTEXT

Your life is woven into the
pattern of all life on Earth.



Ambassador François Scheer

A vision of Europe

From the presentation at the plenary session on Europe 30 June 2003.

(...) I believe deeply in the future of Europe. But what do we mean by Europe?

To begin with, it is clear that Europe is not doing well. Economically, we know that it is having trouble recovering its rhythm of growth. A number of its member states are experiencing high rates of unemployment. Institutionally, the machinery of Brussels is breaking down, since it was conceived originally for six member states, and we subsequently became 12 and then 15. Now it no longer works at all, so in this regard the integration of Europe has ground to a halt. Politically, need I remind you of what happened to Europe during the recent crises? Whether you take the war with Iraq or the Middle East problem, there is no united Europe here - it is completely absent. What a sorry spectacle of a parting of the ways! And finally, at the level of identity, I ask you: where are the European visionaries today? Who, in the governments of our countries, is capable of getting Europeans dreaming again? There are no more great voices speaking of Europe. All we have now are mechanics, who can fix punctures and put a little petrol and oil in the motor. But there are no more architects. All this leads me to think that, even though in the past we have seen crises which Europe has always succeeded in overcoming, we have never before been at this juncture. The question we should be asking ourselves today is, "What can we do to get European integration out of the ruts in which it is now completely stuck?"

I would like to make three suggestions.

First, it seems to me essential that we go back to the sources from which European unity began.

Let us remember that it was first of all a great adventure in reconciliation and peace - along with, of course, its corollary, solidarity. Europe as we see it in Brussels has often been presented as a product of the Cold War. This is both true and false: true, because Europe prospered in those days, from the confrontation between East and West; false, to the extent that it was not this confrontation which brought about the movement towards unity. To the contrary, it was the desire to end the madness of the wars in which Europe had

for the Stockholm based newspaper "Svenska Dagbladet". The award is administered by the CEC Communications Office on behalf of the John Templeton Foundation.

- On Saturday evening, before the Lutheran service there was a multimedia presentation of Norwegian church life, with the participation of a local children choir. The presentation was concluded by the Bishop of Trondheim, Finn Wagle, who presented all participants with a gift: a Norwegian "Hustavle", that is a set of "household rules" given in a decorative form, to be framed and hung in one's home. The "Hustavle" (see box) suggests that we should care for the earth, rejoice in the beauty of creation, struggle for justice and live in reconciliation.
- On Sunday, a delegation from the Assembly visited the former concentration camp of Falstad, where 5.000 prisoners from 13 nations were interned during the German occupation. A memorial service according to the orthodox tradition was held.
- Also on Sunday, the ordination of a Norwegian Anglican deacon, Mary Strømmen, was held in the Cathedral, presided over by Bishop Geoffrey Rowell of the Anglican Diocese of Europe.
- The weekend concluded with a fish barbecue in the open air at the Spektrum, accompanied by Greek songs and dances performed by a local group, and a Gospel night in the Worship Hall with the Trondheim Youth Gospel Choir.

Two days of debate in plenary

From Monday morning the Assembly gathered again in plenary, to discuss and amend the first reports from the various Assembly committees. These reports were later adopted and thus form the basis for the future work of CEC. Details of these two days of plenary debate (including the reports from the sections), as well as texts of *all* approved documents can be found in the Assembly CD which accompanies this publi-



Ambassador François Scheer

been foundering for hundreds and hundreds of years. It was that decision that was the beginning of the European movement. And it was completely clear that it began with reconciliation between France and Germany. (...)

The second suggestion: I think it is important to face up to the difficulties which Europe will experience in the next several years, and they will be much more serious than the ones it is going through today. They are of two kinds: first, EU enlargement, and secondly, the relationship with the United States.

EU enlargement is an absolute historical necessity. Right after the fall of the Berlin Wall, no one could have imagined otherwise than that the European Union would open its gates to this Europe which had been under Soviet domination for so long. For the first time in its history, Europe had the possibility to be really unified within the confines of the entire continent, without war, without unbalanced treaties, without imperial ambitions. So no one thought for a moment of putting off EU enlargement until better days. We know that this enlargement is a work in progress, that it is not finished. But we must be aware that the Europe which will result from it is a new Europe. This Europe has nothing more to do with the Treaties of Paris and of Rome; it is being founded anew. We are not going to go from 15 to 25 with impunity, in a few years, after it took us over 40 years to grow gradually from six to 15. Economically it will be quite a shock. And the governments of this Europe of 25 are going to require a great deal of good will and great seriousness in managing their affairs if we are to make a success of this enlargement. (...)

As for the United States, I think the crisis in relations between Europe and the United States over the war in Iraq was an important revelation of the future of trans-Atlantic solidarity. I don't see Atlantic solidarity ever again being what it has been during the last 50 years, because the United States is no longer the same as we have known it for 50 years, supporting us in our struggle against the Soviet threat. The United States is a wounded country, traumatised by what happened on 11 September 2001. The United States has discovered that the world is an even more dangerous place than it had thought - something which "old Europe", to use the words of a well-known American

caution. In the following paragraphs we will summarize the Assembly's decisions, the full text of the major final documents are published in section III of this book.

Plenary on Europe

The last "informational plenary" on Europe was held on Monday afternoon, 30 June. The plenary opened with greetings from Dr Michael Weninger, advisor to the European Commission, who expressed appreciation for the theme chosen for the Assembly and the fact that the churches were tackling the issue of European division. He said that the churches represented human dignity in a secularised world. As the political advisor to the president of the European Commission, he expressed thanks from President Romano Prodi for the work of the churches.

François Scheer, former French ambassador to the European Union (EU), said the war in Iraq and conflict in the Middle East had revealed the EU's weakness as a political force.

Scheer believes that European unity should be founded on three pillars: persistence in seeking peace, which can be done by other means than war; a permanent dialogue with Europe's larger neighbours, including Russia as a full partner now, and with developing countries through financial aid, cancellation of debts and a real political dialogue on human rights; and Europe as a community of values, referring to the Charter of Basic Rights. It is here that the churches have a particular responsibility.

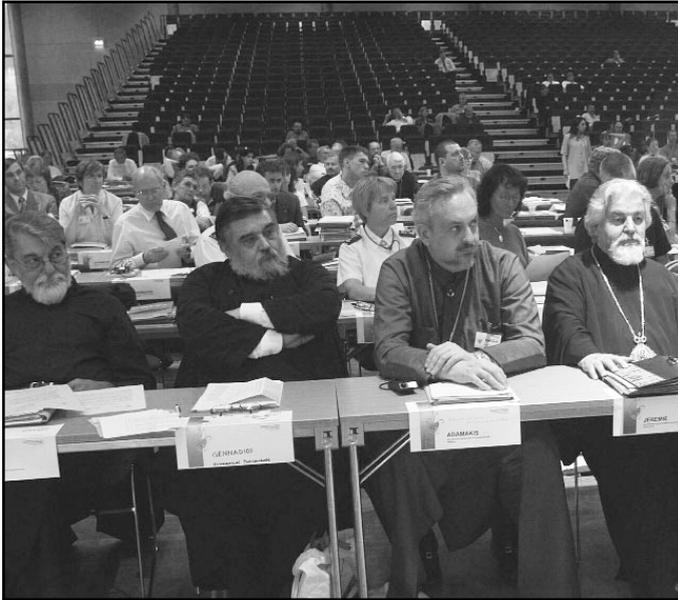
In conclusion, Scheer said, "Europe is not a natural entity. If it does not go forward it cannot hold together. We must not wait for countries that hesitate".

Archbishop Anastasios of Albania spoke from a church viewpoint: Europe needs to be ethical, generous and have a vision which promotes enthusiasm and confidence in humanity. The main source of these values is the church, the body of Christ. It must be a prophetic sign for European unity: "We must be in the forefront of Europe's global responsibility". The local churches must commit themselves to the transformation of the society, bringing to it the values which are their own: human dignity, justice, peace, solidarity, love.

A vigorous debate followed. In a secularised Europe, prone to laxity, a Russian Orthodox delegate found that Protestantism is too complacent. Western Protestant delegates replied: let's talk about it before judgement is passed, CEC is the place to do so! For others, the borders are not so much geographical as within ourselves and in each of our churches.

Delegates also spoke in favour of educating youth, of helping minority churches in their relations with their states, and of a multi-polar vision of the world. Others expressed a concern: "If Europe cannot say what its origins are, what can it say about the present?" "We regard it as a gift that we live in a united Europe without the Iron Curtain. It still surprises us every morning; but we need a democracy based on spiritual values."





Towards the integration of CEC and CCME

The 12th Assembly of CEC, recognising that migration is an overall reality in Europe that challenges societies, political institutions, and churches, has agreed to strengthen its co-operation with the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) as "the competent ecumenical agency for migration and integration, refugees and asylum seekers and against racism and discrimination in Europe". The Assembly has endorsed plans for an integration between CCME and CEC so that CCME will become a Commission within CEC.

Founded in 1964 and based in Brussels, CCME's original task was to deal with the issue of migrant workers from Southern Europe living in Central and Northern Europe. In recent years, it has focussed on issues such as asylum, irregular migration, trafficking of human beings, racism and xenophobia, promoting awareness in churches and in society. A recent development is attention to the growing number of "immigrant" churches, particularly in the western countries. CCME has regular working relations with a number of European non-governmental organisations, and has developed a close co-operation with Caritas Europa and the Commission of Bishops' Conferences in the European Communities (COMECE) in Brussels.

Working jointly with other Christian organisations, CCME is monitoring the development of European Union legislation on migration and asylum. Regular dialogue with European Institutions is upheld by CCME to promote human and social rights of migrants and refugees.

The Assembly also approved a statement on the United Nations' Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, (which came into force on the same day, 30 June

Ambassador François Scheer

humorist, has known for a long time. Europe has known for centuries that the world is dangerous. What happened on 11 September made it more so, but fundamentally nothing has changed. Today the United States is a country at war, a country which intends to pursue those who, in its opinion, are the sources of international terrorism. Europe will have its role to play in this pursuit, but let's not have any illusions, the United States does not need Europe to carry on this hunt. For me, the trans-Atlantic crisis is much deeper than what we have previously imagined, and it will not be resolved in a few months or a few years.

These two elements - EU enlargement and the relationship with the United States - are going to weigh heavily upon the future of Europe. Paradoxically, they can also be an opportunity to re-launch, to found anew, the European effort towards unity.

So here is my third suggestion: we must convince ourselves, and be resolved, that European unity still remains an absolute necessity, both for Europe and for the world.

What we must do first, and at any price, is to succeed with EU enlargement. The creation of this enormous market will take time, but we will do it, as we have accomplished those things which have already become realities in the past forty years. We will preserve the European economic and social model, which will enable us to keep a good balance between necessary action by government authorities and the necessity for private initiative.

Next, we must do everything we can to ensure that Europe is present to the rest of the world. Here we must stop asking the question of whether our presence in the world depends on our trans-Atlantic relations. It is my conviction that the bond of Atlantic solidarity will recover its significance when Europe has demonstrated its capacity to take its own destiny in hand. There is certainly no use in our waiting on the goodwill of the United States, to do this. It is up to Europeans to take the initiative, to assert themselves on the international scene.

This presence in the world must be built upon three pillars.

The first is the persistent quest for peace, by bringing into play all those mechanisms of mediation, conciliation and decision which are made available by international law and



Ambassador François Scheer

international organisations. (...)

This also implies that Europe will maintain a permanent dialogue with all its large neighbours, those to whom we cannot say, without more ado, "You belong in the European Union". I am thinking particularly of Russia. Europe's obligation to dialogue with Russia is a special priority. (...)

Our presence in the world also includes, of course, the quest for solidarity with the developing world. Europe ought to be at the forefront of the struggle against poverty and for sustainable development. (...)

Finally, the third pillar: Europe is not simply a community of parallel destinies. It is also a community of values. We can even say that this is the basis of its identity. We were reminded of all this by the Charter of Fundamental Rights which was drawn up in 2000, and it was also an element in the debates of the Convention on the Future of Europe. It is evident that if the churches have a particular responsibility, it is in this area. Not that I would want to limit the churches' actions to the area of values. It is my view, and I will repeat it, that the churches today should be present in all areas of action on European integration. But in the area of values, it is clear that they have an absolute obligation. (...)

(...) The churches have a major role to play in the debate on values, in defending those values which owe so much to the religious heritage of the peoples of Europe. (...)

2003). Participants in the CEC Assembly called on "all governments in Europe to ratify this convention", which "provides a necessary basic standard for protecting the human rights of both documented and undocumented migrant workers". Churches in Europe also call on the people and media in Europe "to welcome migrants who come within their borders with respect and generosity".

Europe at a crossroads. Report of the Public Issues Committee

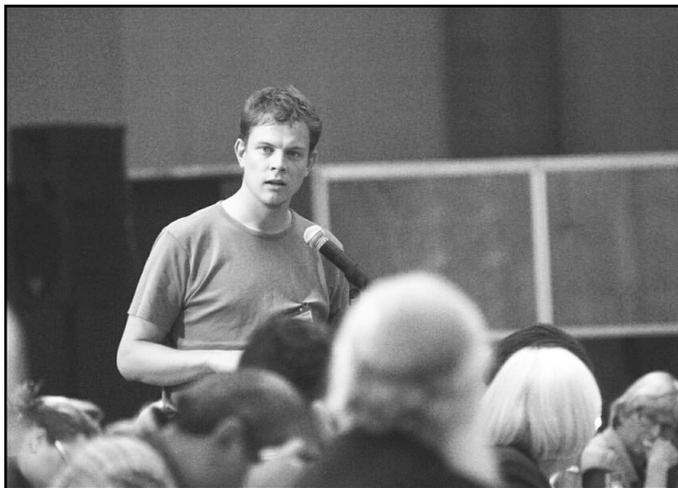
The 12th Assembly of CEC "is being held at a time of significant change and vision. Europe has set itself to move from wounds to reconciliation; from hostility to hospitality; from self-centredness to a culture of open doors".

Adopting the report of its Public Issues Committee (see full text in section III), the Assembly affirmed that it "welcomes the outcome of the European Union (EU) Convention on the Future of Europe as an important achievement... an attempt to give the European Union a set of common values and objectives, including freedom, justice, peace, solidarity and civil participation". The Convention has approved a draft constitution for the enlarged EU. Speakers at the CEC Assembly showed particular appreciation for Article 51 of the proposed constitution, in which the European Union pledges to "maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue" with the churches of Europe and other religious, philosophical and non-confessional organisations. If adopted, this article will mark the first time that churches and their identity and positive roles in society are formally recognised in a legally binding document of the EU.

Although some of the delegates expressed their churches' positions that the constitution should make clear mention of the Christian contribution to Europe, others felt the preamble's current reference to the continent's "religious" heritage to be sufficient. The CEC Assembly took no position on this constitutional issue, but underlined that "in the spir-

it of the *Charta Oecumenica*, we are convinced that the spiritual heritage of Christianity constitutes an empowering source of inspiration and enrichment for Europe".

Development of institutions in the "New Europe" brought a special focus on the EU this year, yet the CEC Assembly assured that its approach to Europe "is not bounded by the present nor by the potential borders of the European Union." CEC is fully engaged with churches and other partners "from the Atlantic to the Urals, from the North Cape to the Mediterranean" and is "an integral part of the global village in solidarity with all other regions of the





Archbishop Rowan Williams

Let us swim in the water of God's gift

From the sermon on John 4, 1-14, closing service, 2 July 2003.

“Give me a drink of water”, says Jesus to the Samaritan woman. (...)

The Samaritan woman is surprised to be asked: an enemy, a member of the aggressive majority branch of her faith, from over the border, is putting himself, even if only in a small way, at her mercy for a moment, saying, ‘I need your generosity’. This is at least part of what makes a revelatory moment. Reconciliation begins not simply with an act of goodwill from one alienated party to another but rather with a word or a gesture that gives someone the chance to become a giver. (...)

The very first thing we should take from this story is the deeply challenging revelation that true communion begins when someone acknowledges need.

This is why there is no reconciliation possible in our world between powerful and powerless, historic oppressor and historic victim, simply in terms of the powerful becoming a little more benign, the oppressor relaxing their hold. With the best will in the world, this remains only another gesture from on high, unless it leads on to the moment when the powerful say, “We need you – not as objects, not as victims, but as people who have the dignity of giving life to us”. (...)

But of course the gospel goes further and deeper than even all this. Jesus says, “If you knew who it is who is asking for a drink, you would ask him”. Here is the Saviour, the Anointed, asking for our help and our generosity, weary and thirsty. The evangelist means us to realise that when we see who is asking for help, we see that the intensity of divine love is such that it draws God from heaven to earth with an urgency that can only be compared with the thirst of a parched and desperate person in waterless places. This is a bold comparison, yet it is what the text invites. God’s yearning for our health and bliss is so great that it brings God to “lie at our feet” in humility, as St Augustine said. It brings him to the dry desert of his agony in Gethsemane, and the bitterness of the cross. When he has cried ‘I thirst’, he has accomplished what he came to do; he has so brought from heaven to earth the yearning of God for our good, in his death as in his life, that there is no more to be

world”. CEC’s concern, the statement continued, is “not in European interests alone” but “must embrace care for the whole of God’s creation and for the generations that will come after us”.

The assembly called for “fruitful dialogue” among churches, governments and “people having different points of view on the foundations of social order and related value systems”. Observing that various faith communities, “such as Jews and Muslims”, have contributed to the life of Europe for generations, CEC concludes that the “richness of encounter with people from other faiths and cultures” is a gift of God.

The Christian voice must be strengthened in Europe. Report of the Policy Reference Committee

Churches in Europe face a common challenge: the secularisation of minds. While apathetic secularism is a problem, there is also a growing craving for spiritual values and spiritual experiences. “There is a need for strengthening the Christian voice in this continent”, affirmed the 12th CEC Assembly in the adopted final report of the Policy Reference Committee (see full text in section III). To meet this need, the report sets out plans for the future work of CEC in the following areas:

- Living together as Churches in Europe
- CEC and Europe
- Facing global problems in a European perspective
- CEC as part of an ecumenical world
- The organisation of CEC and its relationship with its members

The tasks and visions of the Conference of European Churches must be grounded in the promise of the Gospel. Theological work is vital for CEC and its member churches. Theology will enable the churches “to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that is in you”. This involves respect for the dignity of all humankind.



Archbishop Rowan Williams

said or done: it is finished. And if that is the quality and the intensity, the weight, of God's love, we may well conclude, as Jesus tells the Samaritan woman she should, that it is we who need to be doing the asking. For us, the water that gives life and never fails is precisely that endless divine longing for our health and peace which brings God among us as a human being.

When we know that we are, each one of us, seen by God in this way, as objects of an endless passion for our good, we find life. We know, as did the Samaritan woman, that we are known thoroughly and still called and loved. And we discover in all this that as we turn to each other with our hands open to receive, we discover how "our life and our death are with our neighbour", as St Antony of Egypt put it: for communion and reconciliation to happen, we must begin to receive ourselves from one another.

Who we are is a mysterious gift, not something we possess, understand, defend and manipulate. We find ourselves when we understand that we don't know and need to be told who we are – when we come to drink of the waters of God's love poured out for us. And this triggers a new receptivity to each other. (...)

If Jesus heals and reconciles because he is the presence on earth of God's "thirst" for our life, our own proclamation of this has to reflect the pattern of the conversation at Jacob's Well. Like the Samaritan woman, we have to discover that the one who asks is really the one who is offering to give – to give us the freedom and the dignity to give in our turn. For the life that God wants to give is the reflection in us of God's own life, which is always an outpouring and sharing. The paradox is that we can only become attuned to this divine life as we let go of what we think we have to give, what we think we possess and might, if persuaded, decide to share. In place of this careful husbanding of our resources, we are asking to be channels of the passionate outpouring of God. It affects us as churches in Europe, as nations in Europe, as a European group in the wider world. At every level, Jesus Christ seeks to turn us around, to convert us, to his thirst, his longing for the life of the world which costs him everything. And he promises that as we are converted, we shall find our healing, our wholeness, with each other, and swim in the life-giving water of God's gift.

The "Charta Oecumenica – Guidelines for the growing co-operation among the churches in Europe" provides the members of CEC and CCEE (Council of European Bishops' Conferences) with a tool for co-operation between churches on local, national and European levels.

The first recommendation of the report affirms support for "the endeavour of a Third European Ecumenical Assembly in 2007 in Eastern Europe, as a joint project of CEC and CCEE". Other recommendations on issues around "Living together as Churches in Europe" include:

- the continuation of theological co-operation between various confessions within CEC, with special consideration given to intensify the process of clarification between Orthodox and other member Churches, as well as the co-operation between CEC and CCEE; the implementation of the commitments of the *Charta Oecumenica* on mission, making sure that Churches help each other and avoid competing with each other;
- attention to the relations between majority and minority churches and welcome to churches for migrants and ethnic minorities;
- dialogue with Islam through the CEC-CCEE committee on Relations with Islam in Europe;
- encouraging the creation of an ecumenical network of theological faculties in Europe.

On "CEC and Europe", the voice of the churches must be heard in spiritual and social matters and in general ethical questions such as bio-ethics and the environment. Healing of memories is essential for harmony in Europe. Recommendations adopted included that, through its Church and Society Commission (CSC), CEC should:

- keep membership informed about developments on the European level and present a common voice to institutions and political bodies;
- continue effective co-operation and work sharing with the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences in the European Communities (COMECE) and other church offices in Brussels;
- monitor individual and collective religious freedom;
- encourage and enable its member Churches to pursue the debate on European integration, the implementation of the results of the Convention on the Future of Europe, the Intergovernmental Conference and the accession of new member states to the EU.

In considering global problems in a European perspective, the Assembly acknowledged that globalisation concerns economic, political and security issues. CEC will aim to strengthen Europe's sense of responsibility for the whole of humanity, particularly the poor and marginalised. Recommendations included:

- theological reflection on the relationship between vulnerability and security, including the question of shared values between European and American Churches;
- that CEC and its member Churches contribute to overcoming violence, including efforts to facilitate cease-fires and to support reconciliation.

The structure of ecumenical co-operation in Europe and the world has to be reshaped to meet the needs of current member Churches. Chris-





Rev. Berit Lånke

Assemblies must involve Christians from the grass-roots

Berit Lånke is a Lutheran woman pastor who was seconded to CEC by the Church of Norway to serve as the 12th Assembly Organising Secretary from September 2001 to July 2003. After the close of the Assembly, she returned to her parish in Trondheim. We asked her to comment on her work with the Assembly and the involvement of local Christians.

“As the only CEC member church in our country”, said Berit Lånke, “the Church of Norway was the responsible host for the Assembly, but from the very beginning the Christian Council of Norway (an associated organisation of CEC) was involved in the preparation. The Host Committee also included a representative of the churches in the wider Nordic region, as well as members of church-related bodies in Norway. Lots of interesting ideas came out of the Host Committee: some of them were realised while, of course, some others could not be implemented. But it was nice to work with such a creative group”.

Rev. Berit Lånke wants to underline the important role played by the local churches and community in preparing and running the Assembly operation. “Almost all Christian congregations in Trondheim were actively involved”, she says. “More than 50 volunteers from a local association ensured the basic services, such as cleaning, serving meals, helping with the Torg and the cultural and worship events. The Trondheim Youth Gospel Choir was enthusiastically involved, and so was the Cathedral parish congregation with its choirs and staff. The City Council was also very supportive”.

What was the most difficult task in Berit’s work? “Definitely, it was the continuous fight against financial constraints. We had to re-adjust our plans several times but, in the end, things worked”. And what was the most pleasant part of the work? “I really enjoyed working with so many people, both at the national and international levels. As the Assembly Secretary I was part of all the different preparatory sub-groups, and I had the chance to meet and work with old and new friends. I particularly enjoyed working with the worship preparation. At a difficult time in the ecumenical movement, it was good to

tian young people in Europe and associated Christian youth organisations should be able to see themselves as integrated parts of CEC. The report recommends:

- to improve working methods, which should be based on the active participation of member churches and associated organisation;
- to strengthen communication and develop the CEC Website;
- that CEC, in order to strengthen ecumenical work on migration, asylum issues and the work against racism in Europe, pursue the process of integration between CCME (Churches Commission for Migrants) and CEC;
- to establish a strategy group to evaluate work in the area of solidarity and diaconal service, as well as the work of the women’s desk in order to develop strategies to promote the gender perspective;
- to evaluate the way the CEC Assembly is organised, in order to increase the quality of interaction and effective participation.

Central Committee largely renewed

On Tuesday, 1 July, the Assembly thanked the 60 young “stewards” that helped as volunteers in various sectors of the Assembly’s organization. A recommendation on “CEC and Youth” was unanimously adopted. It states that CEC should “increase its commitment to youth” and co-operate with the youth organizations in partnership with CEC “in organizing and facilitating ecumenical encounters of young people in Europe”. It also underlines the need to “strengthen the youth dimension within the CEC structures and to appreciate the important contributions and perspectives people of the younger generations can contribute to the life and work of CEC”.

The debate on youth clearly influenced the elections for the new Central Committee. In fact, the first list presented by the Nominations Committee did not include enough young persons, but several candidates voluntarily withdrew in order that a higher number of young people. As a result, the 40-member Central Committee was largely renewed, with 27 new members. The new composition may be summarised as follows:



Rev. Berit Lånke

see that Christians from different churches could pray together, being mutually enriched by the variety of their spiritual traditions”.

What was the impact of the Assembly on the Norwegian churches? “It was an important ecumenical experience, first of all because it gave us the opportunity to work together, and also because it strengthened our awareness of being a part of the European Christian fellowship, called to a common witness to Jesus Christ, the Healer and Reconciler”.

What are Berit’s wishes for the next CEC Assembly? “In Trondheim we clearly drew on the experience of the European Ecumenical Assemblies of Basel and Graz, trying to involve not just the official delegates, but also partner organisations and Christians at the grass-roots level, and providing a lively setting. My hope is that, in spite of growing financial constraints, CEC will be able to follow this pattern”.

- Gender: 24 men and 16 women.
- Age: 6 young members under 30 years of age, and another 5 members in their early thirties.
- Denomination: 21 Protestants (8 Lutherans, 6 Reformed, 4 United, 3 Methodists), 13 Orthodox, 3 Anglicans, 1 Oriental Orthodox (Armenian), 1 Old Catholic, 1 Hussite.
- Position in the church: 14 lay persons and 26 ordained. Among the ordained there are 7 Orthodox Bishops, 2 Anglican Bishops, 4 Protestants in leadership position within their church, and 8 ordained women.
- Geographical provenance: 6 from the North/West (United Kingdom and the Netherlands), 7 from the Baltic region, 7 from Central/Western Europe, 4 from the East, 6 from Central/Eastern Europe, 7 from South/Eastern Europe, and 3 from the South.

A letter from Trondheim

The closing actions of the Assembly were the approval of a final message, entitled “Letter to the churches from the 12th Assembly of CEC” (see full text in section III) and the approval of the Finance Report (see CD). Then the Moderator and the General Secretary expressed thanks to all those who contributed to the successful flow of the Assembly, including stewards, interpreters and translators, CEC and co-opted staff, the Assembly Organiser, Rev. Berit Lånke with the local hosts and volunteers, Mr Tor Simensen with his colleagues from the Tvette Conference Organisation, and Bishop Finn Wagle for his continual support throughout the Assembly.

The last word was given to the outgoing President of CEC, Metropolitan Jérémie of Switzerland, who said that the Assembly’s experience of common work as women and men as young and old was “an apprenticeship for living together and a witness to the world”. He also expressed the hope that the new leadership of CEC will take this experience further, and that the Assembly’s theme, “Jesus Christ heals and reconciles – our witness in Europe” will continue leading us to a “perfect communion”.



Go forth in faith and witness

Immediately after the outgoing President's speech, participants walked to the riverbank of Nidelven for the closing service. The silver bowl containing the water collected from the pilgrims during the opening service was carried from the cathedral to the river in a procession led by a cross. Part way through the service the water was poured into the river to flow out to the world. The waters of the river were then blessed by Archbishop Anastasios of Albania, and Holy Myron (holy oil made from forty flowers) was poured into the river by Archbishop Kalpakian of the Armenian Church.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev. Dr Rowan Williams preached the sermon taking as his text the story of the woman at the well. He said that "true communion begins when someone acknowledges need". In a global economy there has to be some way of the prosperous world saying to the poor "We are hungry and thirsty for your welfare; we are not ourselves, not fully human without you".

At the end of the service the General Secretary of CEC, the Rev. Dr Keith Clements, commissioned the members to "Go forth in faith and witness to the truth of God in our continent".

The members of the CEC Central Committee

North-West

Bishop Richard Chartres,
Anglican, UK, England
Dr Alison Elliot, Reformed, UK,
Scotland
Revd Susan Helen Jones,
Anglican, UK, Wales
Ms Heather Morrow, Reformed,
UK, Ireland
Revd Dr Bastiaan Plaisier,
Uniting Protestant
Churches, Netherlands
Mr Colin Ride, Methodist, UK

Nordic-Baltic

Revd Helen Bjørnøy, Lutheran,
Norway
Mr Simon Larsen, Lutheran,
Denmark
Dean Margarethe Isberg,
Lutheran, Sweden
Ms Anita Jakobson, Lutheran,
Latvia
Ms Kadri Metsma, Lutheran,
Estonia
Revd Matti Peiponen,
Lutheran, Finland
Archpriest Veikko Purmonen,
Orthodox, Finnish, Finland

East

Deacon Alexander Vasyutin,
Orthodox, Russian, Russia
Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin,
Orthodox, Russian, Russia
Bishop Yeznik Petrossian,
Armenian Apostolic,
Armenia
Archbishop Longin (Talypin),
Orthodox, Russian, Germany

Central-East

Mr Boguslaw Buresz,
Reformed, Poland
Metropolitan Daniel
(Ciobotea), Orthodox,
Romanian, Romania
Revd Elfriede Dörr, Lutheran,
Romania
Mr Andrzej Kuzma, Orthodox,
Polish, Poland
Dr Mariella Mihaylova,
Methodist, Bulgaria
Revd Hana Tonzarova-
Skorepova, Hussite,
Czech Republic

South-East

Metropolitan Emmanuel
(Adamakis), Orthodox,
Ecumen. Patr., Belgium
Archimandrite Benedict
Ioannou, Orthodox, Ecum.
Patr., Switzerland
Bishop Athanasios
(Hatzopulous), Orthodox,
Church of Greece, Greece
Dr George Kakkouras,
Orthodox, Church of Cyprus,
Cyprus
Ms Katerina Karkala-Zorba,
Orthodox, Church of Greece,
Greece
Metropolitan Gennadios
(Limouris), Orthodox,
Ecum. Patr., Turkey
Archbishop Anastasios
(Yannulatus), Orthodox,
Albanian, Albania

Central-West

OKRin Antje Heider-Rottwilm,
United, EKD, Germany
Landessup. Walter
Herrenbrück, Reformed,
Germany
Ms Almut Bretschneider-
Felzmann, United, EKD,
Germany
Dr OKRin Hannelore Reiner,
Lutheran, Austria
Dr Britta Schmitt,
United, EKD, Germany
Ms Carole Soland, Old Catholic,
Switzerland
Revd Thomas Wipf, Reformed,
Switzerland

South

Revd Jean-Arnold de Clermont,
Reformed, France
Bishop Carlos Lopez, Anglican,
Spain
Revd Birgit Wolter, Methodist,
Italy

