

## SIXTH REPORT OF THE JOINT WORKING GROUP BETWEEN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

### CONTENTS

#### FOREWORD

*The Sixth Report of the Joint Working Group*

*Introduction*

#### I. THE ECUMENICAL SITUATION

1. Current development
2. Patterns of relationships between the WCC and the RCC
3. Factors that influence the relationship

#### II. FUNCTIONS AND OPERATIONS OF THE JWG

#### III. ACTIVITIES OF THE JWG DURING THE PERIOD 1983-90

##### A) *Priorities of this period*

1. Unity of the church - the goal and the way
  - a) The local and universal church
  - b) Hierarchy of truths
  - c) Ethical issues as new sources of potential divisions
  - d) Councils of churches
  - e) Christian mixed marriages
2. Ecumenical formation
3. Common witness
  - a) Common witness, mission and unity
  - b) The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
  - c) Collaboration in justice, peace and the integrity of creation (JPIC)
4. Social thought and action

##### B) *Ecumenical collaboration in other areas between WCC and RCC partners*

1. Major studies and other activities in the field of Faith and Order
2. Bilateral and multilateral dialogues
3. Dialogue and witness
4. Faith, science and ethics
5. Health care, healing and medicine
6. Diaconal service..., peace... and refugee work
7. International issues and human rights
8. Education (general education, theological education, family education)
9. Renewal and spirituality
10. The role of the laity in church and society
11. Ecumenical Institute at Bossey
12. Preparation for the seventh assembly of the WCC

#### IV. PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE (1991-98)

1. Towards a more effective role for the JWG
2. Proposals for future work

*Appendix A:* The Church: Local and Universal. A study Document Commissioned and Received by the Joint Working Group

*Appendix B:* The Notion of "Hierarchy of Truths": An Ecumenical Interpretation. A study Document Commissioned and Received by the Joint Working Group

## FOREWORD TO THE SIXTH REPORT OF THE JOINT WORKING GROUP

*The Joint Working Group for relationships between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches has just become twenty-five years old - an opportunity for it to take stock of what it has achieved.*

*The Joint Working Group came into existence immediately after Vatican II and the opportunity the latter opened up and endorsed for the Roman Catholic Church. The Group was entrusted with studying the conditions for cooperation between the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church and even - in the first few years - with considering the possibility of the latter's becoming a member of the WCC. When that prospect proved premature, the JWG turned its attention to furthering relations and practical cooperation between the two partners as far as possible.*

*In submitting the sixth report of JWG, we wish first of all to say how grateful we have been for the experience we have had since it was given its present membership, following the 1983 Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Vancouver:*

*Fraternal cooperation among its members has indeed been gradually consolidated till it has become a real fellowship characterized by mutual trust and respect. We have learned to talk to each other and listen to each other with real openness. And our awareness of the common mission of our churches in the world has deepened to the point where that mission is seen as the urgent priority.*

*Reading this sixth report will in itself show the extent to which the productive relations between the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church have multiplied and developed. Setting aside the places in which they have found institutional expression, especially in the Commission on Faith and Order; most of the sub-units of the WCC and their Roman Catholic partners have worked out a process of mutual consultation and sometimes common action which must be taken fully into account. The JWG has constantly applied itself to following this process through and expanding it. It has nevertheless not confined itself to this but has also sought to contribute its own bricks to the common structure. The JWG decided to publish as an appendix to this report two documents - on "The Church: Local and Universal" and on the "Hierarchy of Truths" - which it had ordered and officially received and which demonstrate this. We hope they will make a useful contribution to opening up new stages of fruitful reflection on the journey towards Christian unity.*

*It is true that we have also had to face certain difficulties - especially, as the report shows, in the field of social thinking and action. And in the last few years Roman Catholic participation in the World Convocation on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation was subject to a variety of ups and downs on which there is no occasion to go into in detail here. We would mention only that this enabled us to realize that as Cardinal Willebrands put it "the difference in nature between the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church" represents a continuing obstacle to the full development of their relations. This obstacle must be analyzed more thoroughly. That must be one of the priority tasks of life next JWG.*

*Above all, however, we wish, in submitting this report, to state jointly our firm conviction that whatever may be the hazards of the day-to-day history of ecumenism, the search for unity must never cease. We have to be completely and constantly obedient to our Lord's command: "that they may all be one." We cannot play fast and loose with that prayer and take up our stance in some status quo. On the contrary, we must gratefully appraise the whole way along which the Lord has already brought us over the last fifty years and go forward yet more boldly and hopefully out the path he himself has opened up and in which he constantly walks ahead of us and awaits us!*

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# THE SIXTH REPORT OF THE JOINT WORKING GROUP

## INTRODUCTION

The Joint Working Group of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) joyfully celebrates its twenty five years of ecumenical endeavor. Its mandate to serve the RCC/WCC relationships was given by the Central Committee of the WCC at Enugu, Nigeria in 1965 and by the authorities of the RCC in the same year.

Since then the Group has made five reports. They reflect the steady growth and maturing in the relations between the RCC and the WCC. The Sixth Report is prepared in a spirit of gratitude for these fruitful years. It gives an account of the activities of the Group since the last Assembly of the WCC at Vancouver in 1983. It also looks to the future with hope as the relationships continue and develop.

## I. THE ECUMENICAL SITUATION

### 1. CURRENT DEVELOPMENT

The life of the churches and the thrust of the ecumenical movement are affected by the situation of our world. Today there are many signs of hope for the human family, not least in places where spiritual forces have helped to break down the forces of tyranny. But we also face many grave problems which threaten the well-being of humanity and call for the concern and solidarity of all people of good will. The followers of Jesus Christ have a special duty to be fully present in the world in this time of promise and difficulty. It is a time when the ecumenical movement is more than ever necessary if the churches and Christian communities are to be a sign and seed of the unity, peace and hope which the human family needs.

There is much room for encouragement. An increasing number of Christian communities and ecumenical organizations are active in working for unity among Christians. A number of the essential issues dividing Christians have still to be resolved, but suspicion and hostility have in large part given way to good will and mutual respect. Churches and Christians of different confessions often engage in common witness and in projects of inter-church-aid which respond to urgent human need. In a world so often marked by despair the ecumenical movement itself, as an historic effort to achieve full reconciliation among Christians, is a source of hope. The movement reaches back to the deepest spiritual roots that all Christians share and can be an answer to the spirit of secularism which marks our modern world.

The WCC and the RCC have played an important part in the ecumenical process, not least through their Joint Working Group (JWG). The official visit of Pope John Paul II in 1984 to the WCC, as well as the visit of Dr Emilio Castro, General Secretary of the WCC, to the Holy See in 1986, have helped consolidate the relationships and the cooperation. In its letter to the Extraordinary Synod in 1985, the Central Committee of the WCC could speak of the bonds of "Fraternal Solidarity" that exist between the two partners. On important ecumenical occasions each has shared in the initiatives and events of the other. The Assisi Day of Prayer for Peace, called by Pope John Paul II in 1986, was supported by the presence of a high level delegation from the WCC. There has been notable Roman Catholic (RC) presence in the WCC Assemblies and conferences.

So the ecumenical task has continued well. However, it has yet to reach its goal of full visible unity. The JWG still has substantial work to do. It is more than ever called to help the RCC and the WCC to strive for the unity of Christians and for the unity and solidarity of all human beings.

### 2. PATTERNS OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE WCC AND THE RCC

Twelve RC theologians are full members of the Faith and Order Commission.

Seven others participate as consultants in the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME). A RC representative is on the Bossey Board. For a number of years now, three Roman Catholics have worked on the WCC program staff: in CWME, Bossey and JPIC. Various forms of contact and working relationships have developed also between other WCC sub-units and Vatican offices, and missionary societies. There has been useful and continual mutual exchange of information, of newly-published documents and of staff visits.

Catholic consultants and observers have participated in a series of WCC conferences, meetings, consultations and seminars.

Many member churches of the WCC and the RCC have close relationships on regional and national levels in

taking part in the contributing to ecumenical organizations.

### 3. FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE RELATIONSHIPS

The above-mentioned patterns are positive factors which promote ecumenical collaboration and strengthen relations not only between WCC sub-units and Vatican departments but also between WCC member churches and the RCC throughout the world. Encouraging statements about the results of this collaboration and achievement of the JWG have been made by Pope John Paul II, representatives of the WCC and leaders of local churches.

Through the agenda of the JWG and other ecumenical endeavors, the RCC and the churches in the WCC fellowship have faced the challenges of division. They have shared in some basic theological reflections on visible unity and contributed to the process of reconciliation, renewal and growing communion. The WCC and the RCC have increased awareness of the need for mission and dialogue, for promoting the values of the Gospel in secularized societies, for Christian stewardship of creation, for furthering justice and peace, for the protection of human rights and dignity.

The WCC member churches belong to almost all Christian traditions. They bring a variety of theological streams into the WCC, which has implications for ecumenical dialogue and collaboration.

The diverse understanding of the ecumenical goal and of the means of achieving visible unity may affect ecumenical progress. Acts of proselytism, excessive concern for "confessional identity," lack of awareness about common problems and ecumenical tasks also affect dialogue and rapprochement. Divergencies on basic doctrinal questions, ethical, social and political issues further limit the process of advancing towards full communion and effective common action.

The WCC and the RCC differ in their nature, their structure, their style of operation, their exercise of authority. Sometimes these differences are a hindrance to cooperation. The RCC is a universal Church with a strong hierarchical structure fostering unity in diversity. The WCC is a fellowship of autonomous churches bound together in the search for visible unity and common witness. They are not held together by canonical/structural form, but see themselves as belonging to an ecumenical fellowship which enables them to grow together.

The ecumenical partners need to be sufficiently attentive to the use of their own press and other media in portraying the image of the "other." Likewise, more care needs to be taken in the ways the partners speak of some events in the life of the churches and their ecumenical significance.

## II. FUNCTIONS AND OPERATIONS OF THE JWG

In its "First official Report," the JWG stated that "its task, both spiritual and pastoral, is to be undertaken in a spirit of prayer and in the conviction that God is guiding his people... The Group is ... called on to discern the will of God in the contemporary ecumenical situation" (First Report, 1). This has been a guiding principle for the members of the Group.

The JWG is a consultative body. It explores new forms of cooperation between the WCC and the RCC, and prepares projects but does not make or monitor policy.

At present the JWG consists of 12 members from each side, some of whom are involved in pastoral work in different parts of the world, others are from departments of the Roman Curia and Units of the WCC. Consultants are co-opted for particular tasks. The JWG normally meets once a year.

A small Executive is responsible for the ongoing work between annual meetings and prepares the agenda and material for the plenary meetings. At the end of its normally 7-year mandate, the JWG presents an official Report to the parent bodies.

Members may also discuss questions and ideas arising from JWG work with their own churches so as to foster dialogue and ecumenical relations.

The JWG is called to help in assessing the ecumenical situation and stimulating the search for visible unity and common witness. It should select those ecumenical issues which require particular care, and promote development of relationships between the WCC and the RCC. This means giving attention, support and encouragement to whatever contributes to wider ecumenical progress, and discerning differences which hinder WCC/RCC relations. By keeping itself informed and stimulating the spread and exchange of information, and sponsoring particular studies, the JWG serves as an instrument of cooperation between the WCC and the RCC. When its findings commend themselves to the parent

bodies, the JWG offers its services in helping to present ideas and proposals to the appropriate departments on either side, and to such concerned bodies as theological faculties and ecumenical institutes.

### III. ACTIVITIES OF THE JWG DURING THE PERIOD OF 1983-1990

#### A) PRIORITIES OF THIS PERIOD

Since the Sixth Assembly of the WCC (1983) the JWG has concentrated on four areas: "Unity of the Church - the Goal and the Way," "Ecumenical Formation," "Common Witness" and "Social Thought and Action." Some of these themes, of course, overlap.

#### 1. UNITY OF THE CHURCH - THE GOAL AND THE WAY

The JWG has kept high on its agenda the goal of visible unity of Christians and has regularly undertaken studies of specific importance for this task. A significant role in this work has been carried out by the Faith and Order Commission and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU). The JWG hopes that by such studies it can be of service in complementing and supporting the ongoing work of bilateral and multilateral dialogues.

In the period 1983-1990 five areas of studies relating to unity have been undertaken by the JWG. Two are primarily theological: "The Church: Local and Universal" and "The Hierarchy of Truths." The impetus for work on these two themes came during the visit of Pope John Paul II to the WCC (1984). A third area of study concerns new potential sources of division, especially ethical issues. A fourth relates to the impact of Councils of Churches on the ecumenical movement. A fifth is concerned with a particular pastoral issue: Christian mixed marriages.

##### a) *The Local and Universal Church*

This study document deals with fundamental aspects of the mystery of the Church: its local and universal expressions. There is first of all a discussion of the ecclesiology of communion. It is presented as a framework within which the study of the Church local and universal takes place. It emphasizes that these two dimensions of the Church are not two alternative aspects of the Church from which to choose, but must be understood in relationship, and seen simultaneously. A second part looks at the Church local and universal in ecumenical perspective, presenting the view of Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant positions on this theme. A third section indicates ecclesial elements required for full communion with a visibly united Church, which is the goal of the ecumenical movement. This discussion includes a presentation of the way the notion of ecclesial communion has been interpreted by the RCC in the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) and by the New Delhi (1961) and Nairobi (1975) Assemblies of the WCC. A fourth section describes the ways in which the different Christian World Communions understand and use canonical structures to express and safeguard communion within their churches.

The JWG commissioned and received this study document and presents it with the hope of stimulating further ecumenical reflection on this theme. It is added to the Sixth Report as Appendix A.

##### b) *Hierarchy of Truths*

The purpose of this study was "an ecumenical attempt to understand and interpret the intention of the Second Vatican Council in speaking of a 'hierarchy of truths', and to examine some implications for ecumenical dialogue and common Christian witness" (para. 3). The result of this work is a study document which is appended to the Sixth Report. It analyses the conciliar statement, indicates examples of a "hierarchy of truths" in Christian history and in different Christian traditions (even though the expression is not used there) and draws out implications for ecumenical dialogue and for the goal of full communion as well as for mission, common witness and theological method. It is noteworthy that this study document is the first ecumenical text on this subject.

The JWG commissioned and received this study document and hopes that it will render a service to the wider ecumenical discussion. It is added to the present report as Appendix B.

##### c) *Ethical Issues as New Sources of Potential Divisions*

The past 25 years have seen more and better multilateral and bilateral dialogues on those *doctrinal* differences which helped to cause and perpetuate divisions among the churches. In many of these dialogues the RCC has been an active partner with member churches of the WCC. Convergence and common affirmations are beginning to form on such

classical divisive doctrinal issues as Scripture and Tradition, baptism, eucharist and ministry.

But during the same period, personal and social ethical questions have appeared, causing disputes and even threatening new divisions within and among churches. All Christian traditions recognize that ethics cannot be separated from revealed doctrine: faith does have ethical consequences. Yet the JWG notes that in fact there is not enough serious, mature and sustained ecumenical discussion on many of these *ethical* issues and positions, personal and social; for example, nuclear armaments and deterrence, abortion and euthanasia permanent married love and procreation, genetic engineering and artificial insemination.

The JWG has taken the first steps in exploring the new sources of potential ecumenical divisions. It first asked a few interchurch groups to investigate and illustrate this development in local contexts, and then it convened a small group of specialists to review these studies. The JWG proposes that the subject be a priority for the post-Canberra period. The JWG's intention is not to examine the substance of each of the potentially or actually divisive issues, but to see how they may best be approached in dialogue. Such issues can offer new opportunities for the increase of mutual understanding and respect and, we may hope, for common witness without compromise of a church's convictions or of Christian conscience. The JWG emphasizes the following questions:

1. Why are some ethical issues so emotionally and intellectually divisive that often mature dialogue about them is inhibited, even avoided?
2. In what ways do churches formulate ethical principles and decide on specific issues?
3. Do churches help their members to enlighten and form consciences?
4. In what ways do the churches understand and use their authority to decide on specific issues for all their members?
5. What are the ways in which the churches should humbly enter into public debate, where peoples of other world faiths or of secular persuasions also desire to live together peacefully and justly; how should Christian convictions be presented as a contribution to the common good?
6. When does an ethical issue on which Christians disagree become an obstacle to full ecclesial communion?

In discussing these questions, Christians can re-discover the resources which our church traditions provide for ethical analysis and decision making. We can better learn to respect the convictions of others who are rooted in their traditions and commitments, and to continue dialogue even in disagreement without demanding that anyone should compromise convictions "for the sake of unity."

#### d) *Councils of Churches*

On several occasions the JWG has discussed what Councils of Churches can do to foster unity and to follow up its own work. A very important contribution during the period under review was the Second World Consultation for National Councils of Churches (NCCs), held in Geneva in 1986. This meeting brought together 120 leaders from some 70 NCCs and regional ecumenical bodies:

- a) to share their experience and expertise;
- b) to encourage the "reception" of recent developments, such as the increased participation of the RCC in NCCs (35 NCCs and 3 Regional Councils of Churches with RC membership);
- c) to continue reflecting on their ecumenical role and ecclesiological significance.

There were major papers on councils as instruments of unity and in relation to justice, peace and service. One workshop explored specific ecclesiological issues, following on from the theological consultation on "The Significance and Contribution of Councils of Churches in the Ecumenical Movement" which was held in Venice in 1982. Other workshops dealt with the role of NCCs in ecumenism, aspects of mission and dialogue, issues of finance and resource sharing, and councils in their social and political context.

The papers, responses and workshop reports have been published by the WCC in *Instruments of Unity: National Councils of Churches Within the One Ecumenical Movement* (ed. Thomas F. Best, Geneva, WCC, 1988).

The vitality and development of NCCs affect the ecumenical movement as a whole. Of particular interest to the JWG are the cases where the RCC is moving to official membership; this at times promotes reflection on crucial ecclesiological and practical issues.

The Geneva Consultation touched upon a number of important matters of common concern in the community of National Councils. Examples include:

- 1) the emergence of *koinonia* as an expression of self-understanding of the Councils, affirming unity, diversity and creative interaction;
- 2) shared life and commitment prompt shared reflection on the nature of the Church;
- 3) people learn more about ecumenism as they take part in the work of NCCs;
- 4) churches in a Council learn together what it means to be “the Church in that place”;
- 5) they begin to understand “the instrumental” character of it but also to appreciate that they have a germinal unity, a certain “ecclesial density” (Instruments, pp. 42-3);
- 6) churches in a Council will be brought up against the problem of the local and the universal and the relation between authority and autonomy.

#### e) *Christian Mixed Marriages*<sup>1</sup>

In the course of the first years of its existence the JWG on many occasions considered the pastoral challenges which mixed marriages pose. Its work certainly contributed to the progress represented by Pope Paul VI's *Matrimonia Mixta* (1970), which has been developed in the new Code of Canon Law (1983). Churches normally encourage marriages between persons of the same communion. However, churches and society no longer view mixed marriages as the object of reproach, but now consider them with greater appreciation and understanding. The churches still seek more effective pastoral means to assist couples and their children in such marriages both in preparation for marriage and continuing Christian counseling during the marriage itself.

Those couples who take seriously their vocation in marriage as a union in Christ, have found it to be an enriching ecumenical experience. Nevertheless, because of the divisions in Christianity, they and their children reflect the sufferings of Christ; with hope and prayer they travel together the road of conversion towards the goal of unity.

Conscious of the increase in mixed marriages and their significance for the ecumenical movement, the JWG held a Consultation on this question in 1989. Its report pointed to the rich experience offered by mixed marriages but also to persisting problems such as: 1) the mutual recognition by churches of such marriages, 2) differing baptismal practice, 3) the education of children, 4) intercommunion.

The Consultation stressed the need for common pastoral care before and during marriage, especially during the early years. It recommended more study of the ecclesiological implications of mixed marriages. Finally, it asked that the next JWG should study the report.

## 2. ECUMENICAL FORMATION

The Fifth Report of the JWG emphasized the urgency of the task of ecumenical formation. It stressed that the ecumenical dimension must be an indispensable part of all processes - of Christian formation, whether of laity, of youth, in catechesis, in religious education, in theological training.

The subject has been a priority in the subsequent sessions of the JWG. Following discussion and reflection at the Riano meeting (Rome), 1985, a first draft of a possible study document on the subject was prepared. This went through a series of revisions, with texts being prepared for discussion in Bossey, 1987, Venice, 1988, and St Prix (Paris), 1989. But a primary task remains: to adapt the content, length and style of the draft document to the audience it addresses. After a small consultation in 1990, the Executive of JWG will hand over the unfinished task to the next JWG, in the hope that the new Group will give the topic priority on its agenda.

## 3. COMMON WITNESS

Collaboration between Christians in the search for new ways of rendering common witness has been consistently encouraged by the RCC and the WCC. Pope John Paul II has emphasized that common witness among Christians is a stimulus to the search for full unity. In the joint statement issued by the then General Secretary Dr Philip Potter and by Cardinal Willebrands on the occasion of the visit of Pope John Paul II to the WCC (1984), mutual commitment to collaboration in the social field and the need to strengthen cooperation in several other areas was stressed. Pope John Paul II has expressed his conviction that “common witness among Christians is possible in various fields. It is founded on the common faith which exists among them and which the comparison in the dialogue in process has shown in a new light ... The common witness which can be given today is a stimulus for the search for full unity” (*L’Osservatore Romano*, 23 January 1986).

The JWG is pleased to note that in many countries important work of common Bible studies, use of the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle, joint Bible translations, publication and distribution is carried out. Very important is also the collaboration between churches in the area of press, radio, television and other means of communication, as well as the training of personnel in specific fields. In some places, the celebration of local, national, regional and international events, the common struggle for human rights, justice and peace (e.g. Basel Assembly on Peace with Justice, 1989), and the sharing of resources, have also contributed to unity, renewal and common Christian witness.

#### a) *Common Witness, Mission and Unity*

Following the publication of the Common Witness document by the JWG in 1982, steps were taken to distribute it widely and to emphasize its importance both to the visitors to the WCC and to RC groups. The presence of RC consultants in the Commission of CWME and their participation in the WCC Mission Conference in Melbourne 1980 led to the appointment of an RC consultant to the staff of CWME in 1984.

During the period under review, there has been a renewal of CWME staff visits to Rome as well as a visit of Catholics from Rome to Geneva. Members of the staff participated in three Roman Catholic mission seminars. An invitation to the Missiological Congress at the Urbaniana University (Rome) was also extended to CWME.

A series of visits was made by the RC consultant to both Roman Catholic and Protestant missionary organizations in order to discuss common witness as practiced at both national and local level. An important part of the consultant’s work during recent years has involved promoting and organizing RC involvements in work arising from the WCC Mission Conference in San Antonio, Texas (May 22 - June 1, 1989). This included a seminar on the Conference theme held in Rome with representatives of the WCC, some departments of the Roman Curia and RC missionary organizations. A Vatican delegation of 20 observers was present at the Conference itself. The local Committee for the Conference was chaired by the ecumenical officer of the RC diocese of San Antonio.

RC representatives contributed to the discussion on the Mission/Unity issue both at Faith and Order and CWME meetings.

The question of proselytism has been raised at various meetings and has made the need to promote common witness more urgent. It will be for the next JWG to suggest ways in which common witness, mission and unity can be further promoted. It is important to involve those organizations and groups who share the concern for a common witness to Jesus as Lord and Savior in today’s world. There is also need to continue ecumenical reflection on the challenge of New Religious Movements.

#### b) *The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*

The Week of Prayer is one of the oldest ways of expressing and celebrating the spiritual communion that binds the churches together in listening to the word of God, in praise and intercession. The 80th anniversary of the Week of Prayer, 1987-88, was marked by gratitude for this form of ecumenical fellowship and “spiritual ecumenism,” which is generally regarded as an indispensable basis for all other ecumenical endeavors.

Christians are convinced that their efforts to overcome their divisions can only be fruitful through the Lord’s blessing. Therefore, prayer should be at the very center of the ecumenical movement. The various other ecumenical activities that may be occasioned by the Week of Prayer are important, but they should not “obscure” the significance of praying together for unite. In thousands of places all over the world Christians gather together to pray for Christian unity and the needs of all people. In many places and circumstances this Week remains, for various reasons, the main expression of local ecumenism. The material for the Week of Prayer is prepared each year through joint consultations of the PCPCU and the Faith and Order Secretariat (WCC). Local churches of different traditions prepare draft texts for these consultations.

At all its meetings the JWG has heard reports about the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. It has noted that in several countries observance of the Week is expanding, while there is a certain stagnation in others. An enquiry undertaken by the PCPCU in 1984 regarding the week of Prayer showed how vital is the practice of ecumenical prayer for education and renewal, unity and common witness. The considerations and suggestions of the JWG point in the same direction. Churches must be reminded that the Week is not just a prayer for unity once a year, but is an integral part of continuous ecumenical formation and collaboration; that material and proposals for the Week should reflect a wider range of context and opportunities; that more preparation/adaptation should be done at the local level; and that more thought should be given to the relationship between prayer, ecumenical formation and shared activities.

The JWG is convinced that the Week of Prayer can provide one of the most fundamental ecumenical experiences and inspirations and that therefore it deserves the active participation and commitment of all churches.

#### c) *Collaboration in Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)*

The initiative for the JPIC program and Convocation came from the Sixth Assembly at Vancouver (1983). At the 1985 JWG meeting, the PCPCU was asked to investigate the possibility of RC participation in JPIC. In January 1987 the WCC Central Committee officially invited the RCC to be a 'co-inviter' with the member churches of the WCC, non-member churches, and CWCs for the World Convocation on JPIC (Seoul, 1990). In December 1987, Cardinal Willebrands informed Dr E. Castro that although the RCC would not be a 'co-inviter' because of some unresolved difficulties (for example, "the different nature of the two bodies"), it would collaborate in the project because of the common Christian concerns for justice, peace and integrity of creation. The RCC sent participants to the preliminary consultations (Genova, 1986; Glion, 1986; Granvollen, 1988), appointed a staff person to work full-time in Geneva with the JPIC desk, and designated five official representatives on the 30 member Preparatory Group.

In September 1988, the WCC General Secretary invited Cardinal Willebrands to arrange for the RCC to appoint 50 participants to the Seoul Convocation. Cardinal Willebrands and Cardinal Etchegaray (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace) responded to Dr Castro in November 1989: the RCC would appoint twenty experts to Seoul in the capacity of advisers - the type of participation now customary in WCC Assemblies and other major meetings. Meanwhile, the RC staff assigned to JPIC remained; Roman Catholics continued to serve on the local planning committee in Seoul; and the RCC assured financial support for the convocation. Furthermore, local RC churches have fully participated, together with other Christians, in the development of national or regional JPIC programs, and their representatives attended the Convocation in Seoul as members of delegations either of NCCs or of regional ecumenical bodies of which the RCC is a member.

At its January 1990 meeting, the JWG discussed the process that led to the official RC decision. The common Preparatory Group work and the presence of RC official advisors and others at Seoul, as well as the urgency of common Christian witness in confronting the world's survival issues, will lead the JWG to follow attentively this post-Seoul process, and to be alert to the ways of possible cooperation in the period which leads to the Canberra Assembly and thereafter.

#### 4. SOCIAL THOUGHT AND ACTION

At its meetings in Le Louverain (1979) and Marseille (1980), the JWG accepted a proposal to form a Joint Consultative Group on Social Thought and Action (JCG) that would undertake a study on collaboration in the field of social thought and action. When the mandate of SODEPAX came to an end in 1981, the JCG continued work in this field, focusing first on development, peace and human rights. Later, attention was specifically given to the issues of racism and apartheid (1985-87). At its meeting in Venice (1988), the JWG, with the agreement of the parent bodies, decided not to renew the mandate of the JCG, which ended the same year. The work formerly done by this Group is now to be carried out by the JWG itself, with the help of small ad hoc study groups, on basic issues such as development and debt crisis, racism and apartheid, armaments and arms transfers, human rights and religious liberty. At its 1989 meeting, the JWG strongly recommended that it was now time to explore the possibilities of common witness against racism. The Pontifical Council on Justice and Peace (PCJP) and the WCC Program to Combat Racism (PCR) are working together on a common reflection on the issues of racism and apartheid.

#### B) ECUMENICAL COLLABORATION IN OTHER AREAS BETWEEN WCC AND RCC PARTNERS

##### 1. MAJOR STUDIES AND OTHER ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF FAITH AND ORDER

Since 1968, the RCC has been officially represented in the Commission on Faith and Order; so have several other non-member churches of the WCC. This is the basis for continuing and extensive cooperation, which has enabled Faith and Order to include in its work RC theological perspectives and contributions. Thus, the wider dimensions of current

ecumenical endeavors have always been present in this work. In recent years this cooperation and the consequent wider outlook has deepened and led to remarkable results.

The 1982 Lima document on *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (BEM) was a major result of this cooperation. The document was elaborated with the help of RC theologians and led to convergences on issues that had long - been divisive. In the broad discussion process on BEM from 1982 to 1990 the RCC was actively involved at international, national and local levels. Roman Catholics have discussed BEM in ecumenical groups, seminars, commissions, seminaries, theological faculties, publications, etc.

Most importantly, the RCC accepted the invitation of Faith and Order to send a response to BEM at the highest appropriate level. This involved several steps. First, the document was sent to RC Bishop's Conferences, theological faculties and others asking them to study it and send their reports to the PCPCU. These reports were analyzed and taken into account by the PCPCU, which then, with the help of a team of theological consultants, prepared a draft response to BEM. The response was brought to its final form as a result of collaboration between the PCPCU and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. In August 1987, it was sent by the PCPCU to the Faith and Order Secretariat in Geneva.

The RCC has thus for the first time given an official response to an ecumenical document. The response affirms the ecumenical achievement represented by BEM. It contains a positive evaluation of large sections of BEM, points to areas that from an RC point of view need further study and raises ecclesiological questions which, according to the RCC, need to be faced if ecumenical progress is to be made. It reaffirms the commitment of the RCC to continuing multilateral dialogue.

Pope John Paul II and other RC leaders have repeatedly underlined the importance of BEM in the movement towards visible unity. The BEM process is probably the most significant instance for many years of ecumenical rapprochement between Roman Catholics and Christians of other traditions.

RC theologians have participated in all meetings, consultations and drafting groups of Faith and Order in recent years. They have thus made theological contributions to the major study programs on *Towards the Common Expression of Apostolic Faith Today* and *The Unity of the Church and the Renewal of Human Community*.

The meeting of the Faith and Order Commission in Budapest in August 1989 received the results of these studies, which will determine the future direction of the work of Faith and Order. This will include more comprehensive work on ecclesiology, especially a re-consideration of the "unity we seek," for which RC contributions and cooperation are of crucial importance. The same applies to the plan to hold the Fifth World Conference of Faith and Order in 1993.

## 2. BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL DIALOGUES

While the WCC and the RCC cooperate directly through multilateral dialogue in Faith and Order, many member churches of the WCC have been engaged for a long time in bilateral dialogue with the RCC, either through their respective CWCs at the world level, or directly at the national level. During the last eight years, both the number and range of bilateral dialogues have increased. They represent an important element of the present ecumenical movement and have led to significant results.

There is common agreement that multilateral and bilateral dialogues have complementary purposes and possibilities. Ways have been developed to further their complementary character and to help to give them common purpose. Thus, the work of Faith and Order has profited from the insights and results of bilateral dialogues and these in turn have focused attention on the developments and achievements in multilateral dialogues. For example, several bilateral dialogues and many responses of the churches to BEM have seen the BEM document as providing a wider framework within which dialogues can find common aims. *The Fourth Forum on Bilateral Conversations*, sponsored in 1985 by the CWCs, and organized by Faith and Order, has confirmed the complimentary character of multilateral and bilateral dialogues by evaluating and comparing main elements of multilateral convergence on BEM and the results of bilateral dialogues on the same issues (*Report of the Fourth Forum on Bilateral Conversations*, Faith and Order Paper no. 125, Geneva, 1985). *The Fifth Forum* was held in 1990 and focused on the question of consistent ecclesiology in bilateral and multilateral dialogues.

It will also be a task of the next JWG to follow developments in bilateral and multilateral dialogues and help to ensure that they together serve the one ecumenical movement. This corresponds to a request by the WCC Central Committee in 1988 which was addressed to the JWG and Faith and Order.

## 3. DIALOGUE AND WITNESS

Cooperation between the WCC Dialogue Subunit and the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue (PCID) has continued regularly. There have been yearly joint staff meetings held alternately in Rome and Geneva. Conversations during the past three years have been concerned with:

- 1) the role of dialogue in relation to religious fundamentalism,
- 2) dialogue and mission;
- 3) the place of dialogue in a religiously plural society.

In 1988 a joint meeting was held to discuss the possibilities and problems of tripartite dialogue: Christians, Jews and Muslims. The WCC and its RC partners have also been jointly in contact with Islamic and other organizations.

RC groups have participated in the study of the Dialogue Sub-unit on "My Neighbors Faith and Mine" which makes Christians more aware and informed about religious pluralism. Inter-religious dialogue is growing in importance; WCC and RCC partners should discuss the questions it raises and share information, studies and publications.

#### 4. FAITH, SCIENCE AND ETHICS

There are moves towards collaboration on these topics: 1) faith and science, 2) technology and environment, and 3) the theology of creation. For example, Cardinal Sin addressed a Church and Society meeting on technology and its effects on the poor, held in Manila. RC observers attended the working committee meeting of the Sub-unit on Church and Society in 1988 and 1989. Further, RC theologians attended consultations on "A Theology of Nature and Theocentric Ethic" (Annecy, September 1988) and on "God, People and Nature – One Community" (São Paulo, June/July, 1988). Valuable RC contributions on these themes were made.

#### 5. HEALTH CARE, HEALING AND MEDICINE

Since 1982 collaboration in this field has found expression in the presence of RC observers/consultants at the WCC Christian Medical Commission (CMC) meetings. They are appointed jointly by the PCPCU and the Pontifical Council for Health Care Workers. The partners have undertaken joint activities in the field of health care, healing and medicine. For some years there have been mutual invitations to meetings. The exchange of visits between CMC and the Vatican staff have helped further collaboration. One proposal that would augment this cooperation in the future is the appointment of RC consultants to work with CMC Commission.

#### 6. DIACONAL SERVICE..., PEACE...,

The WCC/CICARWS Emergencies Desk maintains good relations with Caritas Internationalis on disasters, and often works closely with national organizations related to Caritas Internationalis such as Caritas Germany, Caritas Switzerland, Catholic Relief Service and Secours Catholique in France. Effective joint relief work has been done in Ethiopia and there are plans to support actively long term reconstruction by the Armenian Apostolic Church. A protocol has been signed by the Armenian Soviet Republic, by WCC/Caritas Internationalis and by the Armenian Apostolic Church.

In the wider context of co-ordinating agency response to disaster, CICARWS and Caritas Internationalis are members of the LICROSS-Volags Steering Committee in which six members are engaged, the others being the League of the Red Cross Societies, Oxfam, Catholic Relief Service and the Lutheran World Federation. It, too, should be noted that there was important co-ordination through the CCDA in 1983-86.

In June 1989 CICARWS visited Rome and met Bishop Alois Wagner, the Vice President of Cor Unum. A number of areas of mutual interest were identified and an agreement to encourage dialogue on world developments, refugee service and relief operation was warmly welcomed. Sharing information on the position of the two organizations, in the Vatican and the WCC, will help the two bodies in meeting the challenge ahead.

In many parts of the world (Africa, Latin America, Europe) CICARWS partners and networks collaborate with RC colleagues. In Africa there are many NCCs in which Catholics are full members, e.g. Sudan, Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland, Lesotho and Liberia. In these countries there are ongoing refugee programs in which CICARWS and the RCC participate fully in leadership and funding.

The RCC and the WCC member churches together address issues relating to peace, e.g. in Sudan and make joint statements. In 1988 a visit to Europe by Sudan church leaders was organized in which Roman Catholics participated. In

1989. a journey was made to North America, to explain to churches and human rights movements the difficult situation in Sudan and its people's deep need for peace. The Namibia Repatriation Program, handled by CICARWS, received funds from RC Funding Agencies. These brief examples—refugee aid, joint projects, peace action, repatriation programs—indicate that some African Christian Councils are active in coordinating essential programs and need direct funding to be able to offer to their societies leadership and resources. An equitable way must be found by all partners to support ecumenical enterprises.

#### ...AND REFUGEE WORK

In 1984 CICARWS/Refugee Service held a consultation of church-related partners in Western countries which had significant RCC participation, to examine the situation of asylum and refugee protection.

In 1986 a global Consultation on Protection and Asylum in Zurich was jointly organized by CICARWS, Swiss Inter-Church Aid (HEKS) and Caritas Switzerland. The Consultation brought together representatives of the various Catholic and WCC-related networks. It called for greater collaboration between RC and WCC-related groups serving refugees. An International Ecumenical Committee on Refugee Protection was established, to be convened alternately by the WCC and Caritas Internationalis with the participation of other global bodies, such as the LWF, International Catholic Migration Commission, etc.

After this initiative on the international level, efforts have been made to foster collaboration between WCC and RC agencies at the regional levels. The Zurich consultation called for the establishment of joint committees or working groups in each of the regions.

The North American Continuing Committee for Refugee Protection is composed of both RC and WCC-related bodies (Canadian Bishops' Conference, Canadian Council of Churches, NCCCUSA, US Catholic Conference) and meets regularly. In Europe, a joint CEC-CICARWS European Churches' Working Group and Asylum and Refugees was set up and has met every two years since 1988. Catholic participation has been continuous, represented by an observer from the Council of European Bishops' Conferences.

#### 7. INTERNATIONAL ISSUES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Member churches of the WCC in Latin America and the Caribbean have taken wide-ranging initiatives on human rights, with RC participation at local level. These are seen as ministries of assistance to victims of human rights violations, as well as pastoral help. Human Rights Resources on Latin America (HRROLA) has spread ecumenical groups which have RC leadership. It has sought funds from churches and agencies related to CICARWS/WCC for work in which most, if not all, membership in a given ecumenical committee belongs to the RCC.

Examples of cooperation dot the landscape of Latin and Central America. Representatives from *El Salvador* have, with the help of CCIA, appeared before the UN Human Rights Commission. *Chilean experience* includes the work of the Committee of Cooperation for Peace in Chile. This Committee, made up of Lutherans, Methodists, Orthodox, Roman Catholics, and evangelicals, has carried out ministries with political prisoners, exiles and families of those who have disappeared.

In *Brazil*, the NCC constituted by the RCC and Protestant churches has closely followed the situation on human rights, especially in relation to land rights involving several indigenous nations. The Ludigenist Missionary Council is developing sections and programs in this connection which are appreciated by the different ethnic groups. The participation of leaders of some Protestant churches in the Pastoral Commission on Land has opened up this section of the National Bishops' Conference of Brazil to ecumenical dialogue and greater commitment. This progress was confirmed at the 7th Inter-Ecclesial Meeting of Basic Ecclesial Communities in July 1989, where RC, Orthodox and Methodist Bishops were present.

WCC and RC-related organizations jointly sponsored a meeting in Brussels, 16-20 May, 1988, on the European Community and the Debt Crisis of African, Caribbean and Pacific (A.C.P.) countries.

Representatives of the Vatican PCJP have attended the Commission on Churches' Participation in Development (CCPD) Advisory Group and Economic Advisory Group meetings. CCPD is a member of the Advisory Board of the Swiss RC/Protestant initiative regarding the international debt crisis.

#### 8. EDUCATION (GENERAL EDUCATION, THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION, FAMILY EDUCATION)

Collaboration in these areas during most of the period under review was limited to those situations in which the WCC and RC partners in Education participated in jointly planned activities with NCCs and regional ecumenical bodies to which local RCCs belong. Examples of this were a workshop held in the Pacific on Ecumenical Learning for JPIC, in September 1988, and the Consultation on the Church and Persons with Disabilities held in Bangkok in March 1989.

Another area of indirect collaboration is in relation to "street children." Following the International Year of the Child (1979) a three-year Inter-NGO Program on Street Children and Street Youth was started on the initiative of the International Catholic Child Bureau (ICCB) in 1982. The WCC and ICCB among others founded a new organization in 1986, called CHILDHOPPE, in order to continue the work. The headquarters are in Rio de Janeiro.

Since the beginning of 1988 the scope for joint collaboration, particularly in the field of Adult Education, increased significantly when a RC priest from Mauritius joined the WCC staff. Because of his previous involvement in ecumenical adult education work in Asia and the Pacific he has brought the WCC into contact with a new network of RC or RC-related organizations that are open to ecumenical collaboration on Justice, Peace and Development education.

In East and Southern Africa, Training for Transformation programs, which were originally started by the RCC, are now being planned ecumenically by NCCs (e.g. Zambia, Zimbabwe) and the All Africa Conference of Churches, with significant RC involvement. The WCC Adult Education Program is actively participating in this development.

Catholic educators are involved in the work of the Program on Theological Education (PTE) through the Association of Theological Institutions. RC representatives have attended some consultations sponsored by PTE and other ecumenical partners.

#### 9. RENEWAL AND SPIRITUALITY

Since 1983, "Spirituality" has figured largely in the life and the programs of the WCC and in cooperation between the WCC and the RCC.

A first step towards "A Spirituality for Our Times" was a consultation held in Annecy (France), in December 1984, in which the RC contribution was substantial. Because of need for further study and reflection on some aspects of spirituality, the Sub-unit on Renewal and Congregational Life (RCL), as well as other sub-units of the WCC, have organized a series of seminars and consultations. In all of these the RC participants shared their specific experiences and understanding, making possible creative dialogues between various traditions and cultures of the ecumenical community.

In the period 1985-1988, a series of workshops have been held for renewal of worship in Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America, Caribbean, North America and Australia. Roman Catholics participated in these meetings and, in some cases, shared in the leadership.

#### 10. THE ROLE OF THE LAITY IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY

A good deal of common work in this field has been done on the one hand by the RCL and other sub-units in Program Unit III "Education and Renewal" and, on the other, by the Pontifical Council for the Laity (PCL).

The Sub-unit on RCL has a desk for Lay Centers. In Asia, Africa, North America, Caribbean and Europe, networks of ecumenical centers and lay academies include RC centers and staff.

RCL and other sub-units in Education and Renewal sent their comments on the Lineamenta-document prior to the Synod of Bishops in October 1987 to the Synod Secretariat in the Vatican. Moreover, WCC Unit III engaged in a meeting in Geneva on 26-27 February 1987 with representatives of the PCL on the questions raised by the subject of the Synod of Bishops, in 1987.

In November 1988, WCC staff visited the PCL in Rome and discussed the present dialogue and the promotion of this topic. In February, 1990, this discussion was carried further in the seminar on "Merging Ecumenical Trends regarding Laity" organized by Unit III with RC participation.

As part of future cooperation between the WCC and the PCL, the RCL has proposed to continue this ecumenical reflection on "The Role of the Laity in Church and Society."

#### 11. ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE AT BOSSEY

During recent years, the dynamic WCC/RCC collaboration at Bossey has continued. It has been strengthened by the appointment this time for 3 years of a RC professor to the annual Graduate School. The participation of a RC observer on the Bossey Board, the continued interest of the PCPCU in the Graduate School, and the invitation to Bossey staff and students to visit annually various departments of the Roman Curia, the Unions of Superiors General, the Missiology Department of the Gregorian University, the Dominican House of Studies, the Focolare Movement and the St Egidio parish community, have made a positive impact on WCC/RCC relationships and on youth commitment to the ecumenical movement.

#### 12. PREPARATION FOR THE SEVENTH ASSEMBLY OF THE WCC

RC theologians and others have been involved in the preparations for the Canberra Assembly through consultations on the theme and sub-themes, several regional meetings, visitors programs, and ecumenical team-visits. Twenty RC observers will attend the Assembly and contribute to its deliberations. Others are serving on the local committees and many RC parishes throughout Australia are participating in the preparatory process of study and prayer.

### IV. PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE (1991-1998)

#### 1. TOWARDS A MORE EFFECTIVE ROLE FOR THE JWG

The JWG is dedicated to its mandate. In a happy atmosphere it has fulfilled difficult tasks and tried to meet vital priorities. But its status, its heavy agenda, the sensitive nature of the issues it deals with, short annual meetings and limited financial resources do not allow it to cover the whole pattern of relationships between the RCC and the WCC.

Further work is needed to strengthen its role. This could be done. Composition, working methods, financial resources and staffing could be improved. Possibilities should be explored of holding some meetings in different countries. This could stimulate local contacts and make the JWG more effective.

Better communications, through publications, special visits and meetings could help the work of the JWG to be better known within its constituencies.

Given the limited time and resources available to the JWG, *its agenda should be more limited in scope* and better use could be made of the time spent together. While continuing to devote part of its agenda to reviewing cooperation between various programs of the WCC and the departments of the RCC, the JWG should in future give greater attention to assessing both the ecumenical situation and important developments in various regions of the world, particularly at local level. In some cases these reviews could be done through written reports. The JWG should concentrate on developing topics of crucial importance for church unity and common Christian witness.

The signs of the times continue to be a challenge to all churches and a call to renewal and unity. The demands of WCC/RCC relationships call for renewed joint efforts to achieve the goal of visible unity of the Church and the renewal of human community. Credible Christian witness, mutual respect and growth in truth and love must be sustained and further developed.

#### 2. PROPOSAL FOR FUTURE WORK

After assessing its activities over the past 7 years as well as the development in the ecumenical situation, the JWG proposes the following priorities for the next period:

A) *Ecclesiological Dimensions of Ecumenical Work;*

B) *Ecumenical Education and Formation;*

C) *Common Witness and Mission.*

The first area provides continuity on the central and on-going concern for the unity of the Church - *the goal and the way*, and places emphasis on ecclesiological issues, such as: the ecclesiology of communion and the unity we seek.

The second and the third areas also focus on major ecumenical fields, where joint effort is urgently needed.

A) There are many indications that both in bilateral and multilateral ecumenical dialogues the understanding of

the nature and mission of the Church is becoming a central topic. This is so because ecumenical conversations so far have led to the recognition that many of the remaining difficulties in the theological dialogue have their roots in different ecclesiologies, especially in different concepts of the place and mission of the Church in God's saving and transforming action. Closely connected with this are: 1) the question of authority in the Church, 2) the relations between Church and humanity, 3) the ecclesiological basis of a common Christian witness and service in a broken world crying out for reconciliation and renewal. "*The ecclesiology of communion*" integrates a number of basic ecclesiological concerns within a coherent vision.

Through its work on "The Church - Local and Universal" and other topics the JWG has already been involved in the new ecclesiological debate. This debate will continue and the JWG should be an active partner in it. The Group may again choose a specific aspect of ecclesiology for its own contribution.

The question of "*the unity we seek*" remains important on the ecumenical agenda. There has been an emerging ecumenical consensus on the conditions and expression of the goal of visible unity, as witness the statements of the WCC Assemblies from New Delhi (1961) up to Nairobi (1975). However, since 1975 developments in bilateral dialogues and Faith and Order studies, new relationships between the RCC and other churches, experiences in church union negotiations, changes in ecumenical perspective have all made necessary a re-statement of "the unity we seek" which should build on the New Delhi and Nairobi statements.

The 1991 Canberra Assembly is expected to take up this task. It will be a major responsibility of the JWG to evaluate such a re-statement, to assist in its interpretation and application and to monitor and support further steps towards this goal.

Among matters needing specific attention are:

- the continuing impact and implication of the BEM process;
- the continuing development of the Faith and Order studies on "Towards the Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today" and "The Unity of the Church and the Renewal of Human Community";
- the ecumenical significance and contribution of councils of churches (cf. chapter III, A.1.D., p. 64 above);
- the possibility of a more comprehensive ecumenical movement and its structures (especially with regard to evangelical and charismatic/pentecostal movements).
- developments of and input from bilateral multilateral dialogues.

During the next period the JWG should further deepen the study of *New Sources of Division: Ethical Issues* (cf. III. A. 1. C., pp. 63-64).

The report and the recommendations of the consultation (1989) on *Mixed Marriages* (cf. III. A. 1. E., pp. 64-65) should be studied particularly for its ecumenical and ecclesiological implications.

Major demographic changes, refugees and migrant workers make more urgent problems of *Inter-religious marriages*. A new study on this question should be undertaken in cooperation with the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the WCC Sub-unit on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths.

B) Further study on *Ecumenical Formation* (see III. A. 2., p. 65) should embrace the wide field of *Ecumenical Education*. Promoting work for unity, transforming the life of Christians so as to bring about deeper conversion of heart and renewal of the Church, should extend to the education of priests, pastors, theologians and laity.

C) During the 1990s the call for common *Christian witness* in missionary endeavors "so that the world may believe" (cf. *John* 17,21) should continue to be a major task for the JWG (cf. above III. A. 3. and 3a., pp. 65-66).

The JWG should further explore ecumenical approaches to "*Dialogue and Proclamation of the Gospel.*" This could be done in collaboration between the WCC sub-units (CWME, Dialogue) and RC partners.

The JWG should also go on moving *Towards Common Perspectives on Social Thought and Action*. During the past period there have been difficulties in tackling some social issues, such as apartheid, JPIC, and with some of the instruments used, e.g. SODEPAX and the JCG. The JWG has called a special meeting to examine these problems, to discern successes

and failures and to make recommendations for the future. Its report will be given to the Executive Committee for the JWG for consideration in the next steps of collaboration.

The JWG recognized that throughout the world, *ecumenical cooperation at local, national and regional levels* between WCC member churches and the RCC often flourishes, with fruitful results in common witness and mission. The JWG recommends that in the future more account be taken of such ecumenical collaboration and its significance evaluated.

D) Further, the JWG recognized that *new issues are arising in the world which may call for ecumenical collaboration*. These include the considerable spiritual and ideological challenges for the whole world coming from the events in Central and Eastern Europe and in other regions. The response of churches to these theological, economic, political and social issues could be strengthened through ecumenical cooperation. The role of the churches and their life together in such changing societies, and the kinds of solidarity and fellowship they may need from churches elsewhere, could be part of the JWG's future concern. Likewise, the global ecological crisis, newly recognized as an urgent matter of survival, may well call for joint responses.

Future decisions about official WCC/RCC cooperation in any of these areas should be carefully considered in the light of the recommendations to come from the meetings on these subjects.

E) Besides these aims, the JWG could continue to monitor *collaboration on matters which may arise from major ecumenical events*. The need to give attention to the results of the JPIC World Convocation has already been mentioned. The 7th Assembly of the WCC at Canberra in February 1991 will certainly provide new ecumenical impetus. The theme of the Assembly "Come Holy Spirit - Renew the Whole Creation," can open up fresh dimensions in theological exploration, spiritual understanding, and hope for God's presence and action in the world.

Likewise, Roman Catholic events, such as the General Synod of Bishops in 1990, and the Special Synod of African Bishops, the centenary of the first social Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, 1991, can open new paths to explore in this relationship. The JWG encourages openness to the Spirit as we consider the ecumenical implications of these events. They could provide room for increased collaboration between the WCC and RCC.

#### F) *Churches and Christians towards the year 2000*

As we approach the end of a millennium, the attention of churches and peoples throughout the world will be focused upon hope for the future. This historical turning point will provide a natural occasion for all Christians to reflect on the state of their ecumenical relationships, recommit themselves to unity, and strengthen their common witness for the sake of the world's salvation. The next JWG to serve after the Canberra Assembly could take the responsibility of coordinating the responses to the Assembly made by the WCC member churches, the RCC and, if possible, other non-member churches. It may be hoped that the churches might offer together to the world a Christian vision of unity and renewal, of social, economic, and spiritual life which can contribute to the work for a stable and just world as we enter a new millennium. This goal might be considered by the newly established JWG.

The JWG renews its hope that it will continue to serve as an instrument of unity and ecumenical collaboration between the two partners. It will try to open hearts and minds to the gifts of the Holy Spirit who leads all Christians to unity (cf. *Gal 5:22-23*).

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ENDNOTES

1. "Mixed Marriages" is used simply to describe the union of spouses of different Christian churches or communions. In more recent times the term "Inter-church-Marriages" is used in some areas to indicate that both parties are clearly committed to their respective churches.