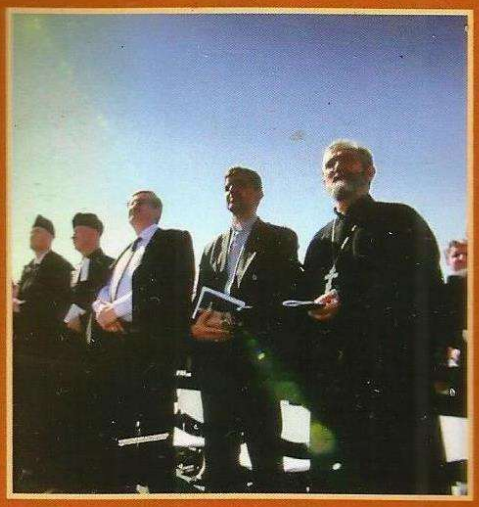
PUBLICATIONS OF THE POPE JOHN PAUL II RESEARCH CENTRE

UT UNUM SINT ECUMENICAL RESEARCH GROUP



TWO CENTURIES OF THE SEARCH FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY IN HUNGARY

LECTURES ON THE AIMS OF CHRISTIAN UNITY

PÁZMÁNY

PÁZMÁNY PÉTER CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY 1635

MARGRIET GOSKER
ordained minister of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands

PRAYER IS AT THE HEART OF ECUMENISM

My ecumenical pilgrimage with as a guide: 'I am a friend of all who serve the Lord'

INTRODUCTION[1]

At the beginning of a surprising new international ecumenical magazine that aims to serve the unity of all churches, we should realize the importance of our ongoing prayers for unity. Prayer is at the very heart of ecumenism.[2] Ever since the beginning of the ecumenical movement, prayers and worship have provided an important contribution to its purpose. As formulated in the WCC constitution, the primary purpose of the fellowship of churches in the World Council of Churches is to call one another to visible unity in one Faith and in one Eucharistic Fellowship, *expressed in worship* (Italics M.G.) and a common life of Christ.[3]

I want to introduce myself here as a member of the *Ut unum sint* Ecumenical Research Group,[4] and show readers of this magazine my own way through ecumenism and my participation in ecumenical developments.[5] I joined the European Society for Ecumenical Research, founded in 1978 and made many ecumenical friends there.[6] Being part of this new Research Group is, in a way, a result of that membership. Friendships for life were formed, because ecumenism lives in friendship and trust.

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[1] I thank Revd. Harvey Richardson (Methodist presbyter in the British Methodist Church) for improving my English. I thank Prof. Dr. Marcel Sarot from Tilburg University for his additions and corrections. All Websites are accessed between August and November 2022.

[2] "Im Mittelpunkt der ökumenischen Bewegung steht das Gebet", *Pilgerinnen und Pilger auf dem Weg des Friedens. Die Reise des ÖRK von Busan nach Karlsruhe,* WCC Publications, Geneva 2022, p. 67.

[3] In Amsterdam (1948) the purpose of the WCC was formulated as 'to carry out the work of the world movements for Faith and Order and Life and Work'. It was changed in Nairobi (1975), into a much more specific speaking of 'calling the churches to the goal of visible unity in one faith and in one Eucharistic Fellowship expressed in worship and in the common life of Christ, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe'. There was another change adopted, by the Harare assembly (1998), saying: 'the primary purpose of the fellowship of churches in the World Council of Churches is to call one another to visible unity in one faith and in one Eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and a common life in Christ, through witness and service to the world, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe'.

[4] The group is established at Pazmány Péter Catholic University of Budapest in 2022.

[5] I was active in the *Council of Churches in the Netherlands* (1982-2022), I was a member of the Doctrinal Conversation Group on Ministry, Ordination and Episkopè (MOE, 2009-2012) for the CPCE (*Community of Protestant Churches in Europe*, Leuenberg). I was part of the Joint Working Group (2008-2010) preparing the birth of the *World Communion of Reformed Churches*, which was founded in 2010 as a merger of the *Reformed Ecumenical Council* (REC) and the *World Alliance of Reformed Churches* (WARC). Margriet Gosker (ed.), *A Man for All Seasons, Essays in recognition of work of Richard van Houten for the Reformed Ecumenical Council 1987-2010*, Grand Rapids 2010. I was responsible for the Commemoration of the Reformation, serving the Protestant Church in the Netherlands (2015-2017).

[6] http://www.societasoecumenica.net/

I am grateful I was given a mandate from my own church and from different ecumenical bodies, and this gave me the opportunity to work confidently at the ecumenical ideal. 'I am a friend of all who serve you' (Psalm 119:63).[7]

But as we all know, times are changing. Ecumenism in the 21th century has acquired a great sense of '*déjavu*'. We have not made as much ecumenical progress as we had been hoping for in the 1980s. Already in the '90s expressions were used such as 'ecumenical winter' and 'stagnation'.[8] How can this *unity* for which we care so much really come to us and be accepted as a gift of God? Sometimes it occurs to me, that we are talking and talking – again and again. Dialogues, discussions, conversations – we try to listen to each other and we try to clarify our points of view. We are conferring on key ecumenical differences.[9] We tell each other that no church can do without ministries, and at the same time we cannot recognize each other's ministries. We differ about whether or not the ministry is a sacrament. We differ about whether or not there should be a kind of hierarchy, with bishops and popes. We differ about whether or not we can share the table of the Lord. We differ about whether or not women can be ordained and can be representatives of Christ. We do not differ whether or not men can be ordained and can be representatives of Christ.[10] We differ about authority. We differ about whether or not there is a continuous chain of legal apostolic succession. We pray for unity, for dialogue and understanding, for dedication, for patience, and for change.[11] Sometimes I wonder if we really want our prayers for unity to be answered and realized?

Nevertheless, it remains important that the ecumenical ideal continues in our time. As followers of Jesus Christ it cannot be right for us to remain so divided as we are now. It is important that we go on working diligently, and our prayers are necessary all the more needed. It is from this inspiration that I want to emphasize here the importance of prayer. 'Orando et Laborando', as it is written on the roof of the Református Kollégium in Debrecen.

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[7] *The Good News Translation* (GNT), formerly called the Good News Bible or Today's English Version, first published as a full Bible in 1976 by the American Bible Society.

[8] Melany A. May, 'Fire or Ice? Or how will we stay together?', in: *The Ecumenical Review*, 45 (1993) 1, pp. 114-117,114. Rena Weller Karefa-Smart during the fifth World Conference on Faith and Order, Santiago de Compostela, in a personal reflection: *The future of the ecumenical movement*, Original Conference Document no 26, p. 3.

[9] R. David Nelson, Charles Raith II, *Ecumenism. A Guide for the Perplexed*, Bloomsbury, T&T Clark, London/Oxford/New York/New Delhi/Sydney 2017, pp. 101-121.

[10] Nobody doubts whether men can be ordained and can be representatives of Christ, although most ordained ministers who have abused young people and children in the church are men.

[11] Margriet Gosker, 'Om eenheid', in: Klaas van der Kamp, Beppie van Laar (ed.), *Eén druppel jou. Gebeden.* Council of Churches in the Netherlands in cooperation with EA and EZA, Themanummer 47 in de reeks Oecumenische Bezinning, 2014, without pages.

ONGOING PRAYERS FOR THE UNITY OF ALL CHRISTIANS

Hanne Lamparter has given a short overview and analysis of all different prayers and ways of worship during consecutive WCC assemblies and conferences.[12] There is no need to repeat it, but I do want to emphasize that prayer is at the very heart of the ecumenical movement. Prayer is not preserved for just one Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, celebrated each year in January or in some countries, around Pentecost. It is an ongoing mission. Jesus prayed that his followers might all be one. When we pray with and for one another, we can smell God's gift of unity. Prayer helps us on our way towards unity: "so that the world may believe" (John 17:21).

Organized movements for promoting ecumenical prayer started initially with the World Day of Prayer, apparently initiated by US Presbyterian women in 1887. Other Protestant denominations were willing to join this initiative. Annually on the first Friday in March, prayer goes around the world again. This event is prepared by women from different countries every year. Hundreds of thousands of people in many countries participate. As a young girl I always joined this annual day of prayer with my mother, and I still do. In this way Christian communities become more aware of the international and ecumenical dimension of the Christian faith and rise above the navel-gazing, a tendency I see happening in some local congregations here in the Netherlands.

The World Council of Churches organizes every year the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. It began in 1908 and focused on the need of prayer for church unity. In 1966 the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (now known as the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity) began the joint official preparation of the Week of Prayer text, which was used for the first time in 1968 and continues still. The 80th anniversary of the Week of Prayer 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 efforts.[13] The 100th anniversary of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2008 took as its theme for the week: "*Pray without ceasing*". This appeal from the apostle Paul (I Thess.5:17) stresses prayer as an integral part of Christian life.

The WCC also organizes an Ecumenical Prayer Cycle. Praying for each place on earth and its people at least once a year, is its goal. So Christians can affirm their solidarity with their brothers and sisters throughout the world. I always feel

[12] Edinburgh (1910), Oxford (1925), Lausanne (1927), Oxford (1937), Edinburgh (1937), Amsterdam (1948), Lund (1952), Evanston (1954), New Delhi (1961), Montreal (1963), Uppsala (1968), Nairobi (1975), Vancouver (1983), Canberra (1991), Santiago de Compostela (1993), Harare (1998), Porto Allegre (2006), Busan (2013). Hanne Lamparter, 'The history of Ecumenical prayer. A journey of crossing borders', in: Jelle Creemers, Ulricke Link-Wieczorek (ed.), *On Nations and the Churches: Ecumenical Responses to Nationalisms and Migration. Nationen und Kirchen: Ökumenische Antworten auf Nationalismus und Migration.* Proceedings of the 20th Academic Consultation of the Societas Oecumenica. Tagungsbericht der 20. Wissenschaftlichen Konsultation der Societas Oecumenica. Beihefte zur Ökumenischen Rundschau 129, Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, Leipzig 2020, pp. 310-321.

[13] *Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches, Sixth Report. Including two Study Documents. The Church Local and Universal. The Notion of "Hierarchy of Truths": an Ecumenical Interpretation*, Geneva/Rome 1990, p. 9.



Református Kollégium in Debrecen, photo Margriet Gosker 07-06-2022

comforted when the Netherlands is on the schedule, because our highly secularized country definitely needs global worldwide prayers. Another prayer movement is the Fellowship of the Least Coin (FLC), initiated by Asian women in 1956. They provide a *Circle of Prayer* (CoP), publishing prayers from all over the world every year.[14] This year (2022) the theme of this prayer circle is: Touch our lives, heal our world.[15] But foremost and fundamentally, of course, is the prayer for unity of Jesus Christ himself. According to John 17:20-23 we pray with him that the churches might overcome their conflicts in obedience to the Lord Jesus and his prayer, which is full of love.

My prayer is not for them alone.
I pray also for those who will believe in me
through their message that all of them may be one.
Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.
May they also be in us so that the world may
believe that you have sent me.

I have given them the glory that you gave me,
that they may be one as we are one.

[14] This year the theme of the Prayer Circle of the *Fellowship of the Least Coin* (FLC) is: *Touch our lives, heal our world*, Volume 26, 2022. Headquarters now located in the Philippines. https:// www.fellowshipoftheleastcoin.org/

[15] https://www.margrietgosker.com/downloads/MargrietGoskerPublicatie0198.pdf

I in them and you in me—
so that they may be brought to complete unity.

Then the world will know that you sent me
and have loved them even
as you have
loved me.[16]

Are we following Jesus and yet still so divided? I do not see how this situation can be justified. Jesus clearly wanted his disciples to be one. He also prayed that all believers (the whole present and future 'church') should be one, meaning not only his immediate disciples, but also all those who in a later stage would come to faith in Him.[17] It is encouraging that we are all mentioned in his prayer; those who followed Jesus in earlier times, those who follow Jesus now, and also all later generations.[18]

His moving farewell prayer expresses the hope that the world may believe. This is not in an unspecified manner, as often has been assumed, but it goes far deeper. The thing is, we as followers of Christ may experience and celebrate and radiate the oneness with him in such a way that the whole world is amazed, discovering that Jesus is not just one among others, but someone who is really sent by God the Father himself. The divine origin of Jesus and his relationship to God is the basis of his mission. The unity Jesus speaks of is not a kind of unity just built on sympathy or unanimity, or friendship or a certain kind of organization[19], and he certainly does not mean an exclusive or constricting unity, which people experience as painful or even oppressive. The unity he speaks of does not deprive us from our own identity or identities. It is a complete, loving and all embracing unity.

ἐγὼ ἐν αὐτοῖς,
καὶ σὺ ἐν ἐμοί,
ἵνα ὦσιν
τετελειωμένοι εἰς ἕν,
ἵνα γινώσκῃ ὁ κόσμος,
ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας,
καὶ ἠγάπησας αὐτούς,
καθὼς ἐμὲ ἠγάπησας.

Not only Jesus but also the apostle Paul emphasized, more than once, the importance of our unity in Christ and called upon the church to be one, and avoid divisions. He appealed by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all should be one, and that there should be no divisions, but that all should be truly united in Christ. When it was reported to him that there was quarrelling among groups in the

[16] NIV (New International Version).

[17] C.K. Barret, *The Gospel according to St John. An introduction with commentary and notes on the Greek text*, London1970, p. 427.

[18] Teresa Okuze, 'Johannes', in: Erich Eynikel e.a. (ed.), *Internationaal Commentaar op de Bijbel*, Band 2, Kok Kampen/ Uitgeverij Averbode, 2001, pp. 1668-1731, 1722.

[19] Rudolf Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, Van den Hoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1964[16], p. 392.

Corinthian community he critically asked how they could say "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ." Is Christ divided?[20]

1962-1982, SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL AND BEYOND…

I have always been ecumenically inspired. As a student (1965-1971) I organized several ecumenical discussion circles. During my studies I heard a lot about the second Vatican Council (1962-1965) from my professor of systematic theology prof. dr. Gerrit C. Berkouwer (1903-1996), who was positive towards the ecumenical movement. This was quite progressive at this time in our traditional Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. To our surprise, the reformed Prof. Berkouwer was invited to be an observer at the Second Vatican Council, which opened on 11 October 1962, exactly 60 years ago. He vividly told his students about this 'unexpected council'.[21] The most important fruits of the council for the ecumenical movement were the dogmatic constitution on the church *Lumen Gentium*[22] and the decree on ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio*,[23] both released on 21 November 1964. The decree on ecumenism emphasized in §8 that prayer is the soul of the ecumenical movement. This amazing ecumenical commitment took on a great flight during Vatican II, partly due to the work of the Dutch cardinal Willebrands (1909-2006), who was the first secretary of the newly formed Vatican *Department for Christian Unity.* He served for twenty years as president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (1969-1989).[24] Certainly for Protestants, the paragraph mostly quoted of *Unitatis Redintegratio* is §22, because it indicates most clearly the changed position of a Roman Catholic point of view. Previously Protestants were seen by Rome as heretics, now they were considered as 'ecclesial communities'. "Though the ecclesial communities which are separated from us lack the fullness of unity with us flowing from Baptism, and though we believe they have not retained the proper reality of the Eucharistic mystery in its fullness, especially because of the absence of the sacrament of Orders, nevertheless when they commemorate His death and resurrection in the Lord's Supper, they profess that it signifies life in communion with Christ and look forward to His coming in glory. Therefore the teaching concerning the Lord's Supper, the other sacraments, worship, the ministry of the Church, must be the subject of the dialogue."

Pope Paul VI and patriarch Athenagoras I, after regretting historical mistakes, started their ecumenical meeting with joint prayer.[25] On January 6, 1964 they met in

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[20] I Cor 1:10-14, Rom. 14:1-15:13, Eph. 4:1-6.

[21] G.C. Berkouwer, *The Second Vatican Council and the New Catholicism*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 1965, pp. 5-32.

Dutch original: *Vatikaans Concilie en nieuwe theologie*, Kok, Kampen 1964.

[22] *Dogmatic constitution on the Church Lumen Gentium, solemny promulgated by his holiness Pope Paul VI* on November 21, 1964. https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_ council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html

[23] https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html

[24] Karim Schelkens, *Johannes Willebrands, Een leven in gesprek,* Uitgeverij Boom, Amsterdam 2020, pp. 205-274.

[25] A film of the meeting has been made:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4DuNJ9g4RFA

the Garden of Olives in Jerusalem and they prayed there together for church unity.[26]Their meeting was followed by an ecumenical process, which aimed to solve these historical problems: the excommunications of 1054 and the schism between the churches of the East and West.[27] Both wanted their churches to forget about it. On December 7, 1965 a joint Catholic-Orthodox declaration was read simultaneously by cardinal Willebrands in St Peter's Basilica in Rome and by Chrysostomos in St. Gregory's Cathedral in Constantinople.[28]This was a significant step towards restoring communion between Rome and Constantinople and other Orthodox Patriarchates.[29] Would other steps follow? We now realize that the model of unity which the Orthodox Churches adhere to is different from Western models of unity, which were mainly based on gradual consensus,[30] at least for a long time. But even that is changing.[31]

1982-1993, FROM LIMA TO SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

My real start in the ecumenical movement was about 1982 with the appearance of the famous Lima documents. In 1982 the document on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (*BEM*) was published.[32] In addition to the convergence text, a liturgical text appeared at the same time, known as the *Lima Liturgy.* It gave a great opportunity for ecumenical progress and was seen as a Καιρος moment by many scholars and even as a 'providential gift'.[33] Dietrich Mendt wrote a poem about it in German: *Das Lima-Klima.* This text was recited at a session of the Synod of the Union of

[26] http://volgconcilie.be/DagOpDag/211.html

[27] Schelkens, p. 286. https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/speeches/1965/documents/hf_pvi_spe_19651207_common-declaration.html

[28] https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/speeches/1965/documents/hf_p-vi_spe_19651207_ common-declaration.html

[29] In 2022 the ecumenical relationship between pope Francis and patriarch Kirill of Moscow has fallen to zero due to the Ukrainian war.

[30] Prof. Hryniewicz, quoted by Peter de Mey, 'A Roman catholic perspective', in: Tim Noble, Iwana Noble, Martien Brinkman, Jochen Hilberath (ed.), *Charting Churches in a Changing Europe. Charta Oecumenica and the Process of Ecumenical Encounter*, Amsterdam/New York 2006, pp. 17-42, 39.

[31] Johannes Oeldemann, 'Gradual Church Communion as an Ecumenical Model?, in *Charting Churches*, pp. 127-142.

[32] *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry,* WCC Publication, Faith and Order Paper 111, Geneva 1982, 1986[19] *Doop, Eucharistie en Ambt. Verklaringen van de commissie voor Geloof en Kerkorde van de Wereldraad van Kerken*, Archief van de Kerken, Amersfoort 1983[2]. *Taufe, Eucharistie und Amt. Konvergenzerklärungen der Kommission für Glauben und Kirchenverfassung des Ökumenischen Rates der Kirchen*, Frankfurt am Main/Paderborn 1982[2]. *Baptême, Eucharistie, Ministère. Convergence de la foi*, Paris 1982. Karel Blei, Anton Houtepen, Margriet Gosker, 'De Nederlandse kerken en het Lima-Rapport. Evaluatie Sectie Geloofsvragen van de Raad van Kerken in Nederland', in: *Tijdschrift voor Theologie*, 29 (1989) 2, pp. 148-163.

[33] Thomas Hopko,'BEM: Report on the Process and the Churches Responses', in: Thomas Best, *Faith and Order 1985-1989. The Commission Meeting at Budapest 1989*, WCC publications, Faith and Order Paper 146, Geneva 1990, pp. 73-80, 75.

Evangelical Churches in Potsdam-Hermannswerder (the former DDR).[34]

The Lima climate.

It is well known that Christians
have been quarreling with Christians
since ancient times.
One praises the Blessed Mother,
the other swears by Martin Luther.
One wants communion,
not just bread, but wine for everyone.[...]
The Christian says this, the Christian says that.
The atheist no longer knows what is cut and stung
and which is the right Christian.
But look, there has been a love climate
lately, since Lima!
What was separated will soon be united
and what was considered wrong will be denied.
The Christian soon eats from one table
as a mixed Catholic-Ortho-Lutheran Christian.[...]
As much as the division hurts:
Lima makes all things
right again!

It touched me deeply. After all those years of ecumenical efforts – since Edinburgh (Scotland 1910) – could this really be a breakthrough in the quest for unity? Could we understand each other as churches in Jesus Christ and learn to accept the gift of unity? Could we recognize each other's baptisms and ministries? Could we sit together at the one table of the one Lord?[35] The bishops of the Netherlands wrote an open letter after a while: *Our ecumenical task, a priority*[36] It was clear. There was work to be done! There should be a good practical ecumenical cooperation within our Christian communities, but also thorough theological thinking was needed and had to be done. Both are equally important and one cannot work without the other.

[34] The text is a bit shortened. "Das Lima-Klima. Bekanntlich schon seit alten Zeiten die Christen sich mit Christen streiten. Der eine preist die Gottesmutter, der andere schwört auf Martin Luther. Der eine will zum Abendmahl, nicht Brot nur, sondern Wein für alle. [...] Der Christ sagt dies, der Christ sagt das. Der Atheist weiß nicht mehr was gehauen und gestochen ist und welcher ist der richtige Christ. Doch sehe da, ein Liebesklima herrscht neuerdings und zwar seit Lima! Was erst getrennt, wird bald vereint sein, und was als falsch galt wird verneint sein. Der Christ schon bald von einem Tisch isst als Katho-Ortho-Luther-Misch-Christ. [...] So sehr die Spaltung Schmerzen tut: Lima macht alles wieder gut!" Hans-Georg Link, *Bausteine für unsere Ökumenische Zukunft. Erfahrungen und Vorschläge von Vancouver 1983 bis Karlsruhe 2021*, Bonifatius, Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, Leipzig 2019, p. 169.

[35] Margriet Gosker, 'Das ökumenische Gespräch über Eucharistische Gastfreundschaft in den Niederlanden', in: Johannes Brosseder, Hans-Georg Link (ed.), *Eucharistische Gastfreundschaft.*
Ein Plädoyer evangelischer und katholischer Theologen, Neukirchen 2003, pp. 159-163.

[36] *Onze oecumenische opdracht, een prioriteit. Een brief van de Nederlandse bisschoppenconferentie over oecumene* [Bisschoppelijke brieven, Nr 23], Utrecht 1987.

And so I stood with one foot in the middle of everyday ecclesiastical practice, and with the other I took steps – together with others – on the path of theological ecumenical reflection. I decided to devote my dissertation to the BEM Document and I was awarded my PhD at the Károli Gáspár University in Budapest.[37] For me it is not only a great joy but also very interesting to participate in the many ecumenical discussions and to get acquainted with all these different points of view. It was – and still is – a rich source of inspiration to reflect in an ecumenical context about Baptism, the Lord's Supper and the Eucharist, not only with believers in local churches, but also as various Christian bodies, knowing that we need each other very much, with the hope of enriching each other tremendously. It is extremely important to read the Bible together. Celebrating liturgy together is such a heartwarming experience. Delving into each other's traditions and specialties is always surprising and helpful. Biting into dogmas together without choking is so useful. We are learning that our own truths desperately need the supplementation of others. I would not have missed it. As I grew in ecumenism I realized even more the significance of worship and the importance of authentic prayers.[38]

The *Lima liturgy* was composed for the Plenary Session of Faith and Order in Lima (Peru). It was celebrated on January 15, 1982 for the first time.[39] Then it was used at a Central Committee Meeting of the WCC in Geneva (July 28, 1982) under the leadership of Philip Potter. Thereafter it was officially used only twice at a WCC Assembly. For the first time at the sixth WCC Assembly in Vancouver (Canada 1983) and for the second and last time at the seventh WCC Assembly in Canberra (Australia 1991).

Canberra is also called the 'Praying Assembly'. It was held under the leadership of Emilio Castro, who published a book about ecumenical prayer.[40] It occurred to me that the theme of the Canberra Assembly was actually a prayer in itself, asking the Holy Spirit for help: 'Come Holy Spirit, renew the whole creation'. A special volume of the Quarterly of the WCC which served as preparation for the Assembly missed exactly this point. Prayer was hardly mentioned.[41] Sharp discussions arose during this Australian Assembly about ecumenical worship. For example, how to handle with the heritage of the aboriginal culture, and how to handle with inculturation as such? How to deal with inclusive language? Was it right to stick to fixed traditions as much as possible or should diversity be enjoyed? Some participants and delegates felt excluded, especially those who could not accept the open invitation to the Lord's

[37] Margriet Gosker *, Het ambt in de oecumenische discussie, de betekenis van de Lima-Ambtstekst voor de voortgang van de oecumene en de doorwerking in de Nederlandse SoW-Kerken*, Delft 2000. Margriet Gosker. 'Wer dafür eine Nase hat... Das Lima-Dokument 30 Jahre später – Fokus: Die Niederlande', in: *Una Sancta* 67 (2012) 3, pp. 216-225.

[38] Kyriaki Fitzgerald, 'Reflections on Spirituality and Prayer', in: Thomas Best, *Faith and Order 1985-1989. The Commission Meeting at Budapest 1989*, WCC Publications, Faith and Order Paper 146, Geneva 1990, pp. 180-183.

[39] Max Thurian, 'The Eucharistic Liturgy of Lima', in: Max Thurian (ed.), *Ecumenical Perspectives on Baptism Eucharist and Ministry*, Appendix II, WCC Publications, Faith and Order Paper 116, Geneva 1983, pp. 225-246. Ottfried Jordahn, Rolf Christiansen, *Gottesdienstgestaltung nach der Lima-Liturgie*, Konsequenzen für den Gottesdienst gemäß der Lima-Liturgie in der Nord-Elbischen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche 1984.

[40] Emilio Castro, *When we pray together*, WCC Publications, Geneva 1988.

[41] Lemoupoulos was the only one who mentioned prayers. George Lemopoulos, 'Come, Holy Spirit' in: *Come Holy Spirit, Special number of The Ecumenical Revue*, Volume 41 (1989) 3, pp. 461-467.

Supper.[42]The sermon in Canberra was delivered by Jacquelyn Grant.[43] Her words were many times interrupted by applause and approval.[44] In Canberra we saw far fewer ecclesiastical representatives participating in the Lord's Supper than during previous assemblies. When the *Lima Liturgy* was celebrated it was clear that members of Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches were not allowed to receive the bread and wine.

In 1995 a Conference was held at Bossey, Switzerland in order to evaluate the *Lima liturgy* .[45] In retrospect it was probably not to the most suitable thing to do. As a result of these reflections, the Eucharist has no longer been celebrated at WCC Assemblies. The liturgy itself has received rather strong criticism, and a lot of questions have arisen. Was not the name itself a bit misleading? It could give the impression that not only BEM but also the *Lima Liturgy* was officially presented to the churches. In reality the *Lima Liturgy* could not lay any claim to authority, as was made perfectly clear by Max Thurian (1921-1996), one of the contributors to it.[46] And was it really ecumenical in the full sense of the word? Schultz spoke of the missing voice in the *Lima Liturgy* (that is, the voice of the churches of the Reformation).[47] Church of England bishop Colin Buchanan stated that some questions about the ethos of celebrating the Eucharist were omitted, and some questions of ecclesiology still had to be solved.[48] The Orthodox Churches were convinced that the ecclesiological problem was not well addressed. Was the *Lima liturgy* not actually a patchwork of various traditions, mostly Western? Where was the participation of Eastern Orthodox Church families? And how could it be meaningful for women? Was the image of the Church and Lima's conception of ministry not limited by certain boundaries and traditional frameworks, despite all the space and openness in the formulation?[49]. In 2009, Sara Hinlicky Wilson even asked almost cynically: "Is an ecumenical Eucharist a homeless imitation of the real thing, hosted by nobody, gathering only a self-selected number of individuals who have the time, money, and luxury to worry about church unity?"[50]

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[42] Lamparter, p. 317.

[43] Jacquelyn Grant (born 1948) is Professor of Systematic Theology at the Interdenominational Theological Union in Atlanta.

[44] Hans-Georg Link, 'Gottesdienste in Canberra', in: *Canberra 1991. Kölner Ökumenische Beiträge* Nr 16, Ökumene Referat des Evangelischen Stadtkirchenverband Köln, 1991², p. 33-37, 35.

[45] Thomas F. Best, Dagmar Heller (ed.), *Eucharistic Worship in Ecumenical Contexts: The Lima Liturgy – and Beyond*, WCC Publications, Geneva 1998.

[46] "Diese Liturgie will aber keine andere Autorität beanspruchen als die, bei einigen bedeutenden Anlässe gefeiert werden zu sein", Max Thurian (ed.), *Die Eucharistische Liturgie von Lima*, Sonderdruck aus Ökumenische Perspektiven von Taufe, Eucharistie und Amt, Verlag Otto Lembeck, Frankfurt am Main/Paderborn 1983, p. 1.

[47] Frieder Schulz, *Die Lima-Liturgie. Die ökumenische Gottesdienstordnung zu den Lima Texten. Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis und zur Urteilsbildung*, Johannes Stauda Verlag, Kassel 1983, p. 29.

[48] Colin Buchanan, *ARCIC and Lima on Baptism and Eucharist, including the Lima Eucharistic Liturgy*, Grove Worship Series 86, Cambridge 1983, p. 16.

[49] Maaike de Haardt, 'Vrouwen en Lima', in: *Kosmos en Oecumene.* Reacties op Lima, 21(1987) Nr 1/2, pp. 42-45, 44.

[50] Sara Hinlicky Wilson, 'Ecumenical Liturgy, Its Possibilities and Problems', in *Lutheran Forum*. 43, (2009) 2, 3-9, p. 6.

Nevertheless, in spite of all these inevitable discussions and considerations it is my strong conviction, that living worship and persistent prayers are indispensable for the future of our long ecumenical pilgrimage, because it is the only way to get closer to God and closer together in obedience to Jesus' prayer for unity. As the thanksgiving prayer of the Lima Liturgy reads:

O Lord, our God
we give you thanks for uniting us
by Baptism in the Body of Christ
and for filling us with joy in the Eucharist.
Lead us towards the full
visible unity of your Church
and help us to treasure
all the signs of reconciliation
you have granted us.
Amen."[51]

In 1993 I participated in Faith and Order proceedings myself and joined the Fifth World Conference in Santiago de Compostela, where κοινωνία was the keyword.[52] For the last time, but unofficially, the *Lima Liturgy* was celebrated here in an official WCC setting. It was clear, however, that the liturgy, as such, could not be used officially any more, since Roman Catholic and Orthodox participants could not partake, according to their own canonical discipline. Also, questions were raised about how to handle the concepts 'unity' and 'diversity'. It was seen by the organizers as a complex and difficult issue. In the Santiago *Conference Handbook*, we read: "The question of Eucharistic worship at ecumenical meetings is at present difficult and will remain so until churches themselves arrive at a closer agreement. Eucharistic Fellowship cannot be enforced or imposed even though some are impatient. For this reason none of the services prepared by the Planning Group will be a Eucharist".[53] So the balance was sought by offering each day a *Lima Liturgy* conducted by a pastor from a different Protestant confession or an Anglican priest. Each presiding pastor was invited to simplify and shorten the liturgy as he or she thought appropriate.[54] In fact in Santiago the *Lima Liturgy* was open for only Anglican and Protestant participants. Some local member churches continued to invite all participants to the Table of the Lord. There was of course –as always– a lot of official prayer and inspiring worship in Santiago's great Cathedral with the famous Botafumeiro (a giant

[51] Max Thurian (ed.), *Ecumenical Perspectives on Baptism, Eucharist and Minis*try, WCC Publications, Faith and Order Paper 116, Appendix II, The Eucharistic Liturgy of Lima, Geneva 1983, pp. 225-246, 246.

[52] Thomas F. Best, Günther Gassmann (ed.), *On the way to Fuller Koinonia*, WCC Publications, Faith and Order Paper 166, Geneva 1994. Günther Gassmann (ed.), *Documentary History of Faith and Order 1953-1993*, WCC Publications, Faith and order Paper 159, Geneva 1993.

[53] *Conference Handbook.* Towards Koinonia in Faith, Life and Wittnes, Fifth World Conference on Faith and Oder, Santiago de Compostela, WCC Publicatons, Geneva 1993, pp. 30-31.

[54] Thomas F. Best, Janet Crawford, Terry MacArthur, 'Worship and Bible Study, the Foundation of the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order', in: *Mid-Stream. The Ecumenical Movement Today*, 33 (1994) 1, pp. 43-54.

incense thurible, the biggest in the world), and in a crypt housing the tomb of the apostle James. I myself was touched by the Santiago-Prayer and put it in my pocket for many years.

O,
God,
holy and eternal Trinity,
we pray for your Church
in all the World.
Sanctify its life,
Renew its worship
Empower its witness,
Heal its divisions,
Make visible its unity.
Lead us with our brothers and sisters,
towards communion
in faith, life and witness
so that united in one body
by the one Spirit
we may together witness
to the perfect unity
of your love
Amen

1993-2000, ECUMENICAL DIRECTORY–UT UNUM SINT–JDDJ–DOMINUS IESUS

An important stimulus for ecumenism was the publication of the Ecumenical Directory in 1993[55] and two years later the appearance of the papal encyclical *Ut unum sint*, a document especially committed to ecumenism.[56] Both were a great stimulus for the progress of ecumenism. The Swiss cardinal George Cottier (1922-2016) had a major influence in the preparation of *Ut unum sint*. The document deals with the relations of the Roman Catholic Church with the Churches of the East, and all other so called 'ecclesial communities'. *Ut unum sint* shows beyond doubt that the Roman Catholic Church – not a member of WCC – is officially clearly committed to the goal of Christian unity, probably even more determined than many Protestant communities. The document builds on *Unitatis Redintegratio* (November 21, 1964). Pope John Paul II (1920-2005) affirmed in *Ut unum sint* the ecumenical commitment of Vatican II as important and irreversible. He states in §2 that the commitment to ecumenism must be based upon the conversion of hearts and upon prayer, which will also lead to the necessary purification of past memories. No less than seven

[55] *Directory for the application of principles and norms on Ecumenism.* Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Rome 1993. http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/documenti/testo-in-inglese.html

[56] https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25051995_ut-unum-sint.html 'Ut unum sint, Over de verplichting tot oecumene', [Paus Johannes Paulus II], in: *Een-twee-een. Kerkelijke documentatie*, 23 (1995) 6/7, pp. 3-45.

paragraphs deal with the *Primacy of prayer* (§21-§27), with several biblical references (Mt 18:20, John 17:21, Heb. 13:8). §24 refers to many papal visits, for instance when John Paul II prayed in the Church of Saint George at the Ecumenical Patriarchate (November 30, 1979), with the Primate of the Anglican Communion at Canterbury Cathedral (May 29, 1982), in North and South America and in Africa, and at the headquarters of the World Council of Churches (June 12, 1984), in Saint Peter's Basilica during the visit to Rome of Patriarch Dimitrios I (December 6,1987) and in the Scandinavian and Nordic Countries (June 1-10, 1989). For the Pope these occasions of prayer were an unique experience.

Two paragraphs (§26 and §27) are especially relevant for us, as they are devoted to ecumenical prayer and worship. §26 states that the community at prayer always enables us to discover anew the evangelical truth of the words: 'you have one Father' (Mt. 23:9), and: 'you have one teacher, and you are all brethren' (Mt. 23:8). Ecumenical prayer discloses this fundamental dimension of brotherhood in Christ. He died to gather together the children of God, all who were scattered, so that they may become 'sons and daughters in the Son' (Eph. 1:5). Ecumenical prayer, as the prayer of brothers and sisters expresses both the mysterious reality of God's fatherhood and the truth about human nature, shared by each and every individual. Precisely because we are separated from one another, we meet in Christ with hope for the future of our unity and communion. The change of heart, which is the essential condition for every authentic search for unity, flows from prayer and its realization is guided by prayer: for it is from newness of attitudes, from self-denial and unstinted love, that yearnings for unity grow towards maturity. We should therefore pray to the divine Spirit for the grace to be genuinely self-denying, humble, gentle in the service of others, and to have an attitude of brotherly generosity towards them. In §27 it is stated that praying for unity is not a matter reserved only for those who actually experience the lack of unity among Christians. In the deep personal dialogue which each of us must share with the Lord in prayer, concern for unity cannot be absent. Only in this way will that concern become fully part of the reality of our life and of the commitments we have made. Pope John Paul wanted to reaffirm this duty for ecumenical engagement. He also set a model, which he considered exemplary: namely that of Maria Sagheddu (1914-1939), a professed member from the Trappists, now known as the Blessed Sister Maria Gabriella of Unity.[57]She devoted her life to meditation and prayer for Christian unity, inspired by John 17. According to the pope she is truly the cornerstone of all prayer because of her total and unconditional prayers for unity. He concluded, that the example of Sister Maria Gabriella can help us understand that there are no special times, situations or places of prayer for unity. Christ's prayer is offered as a model for everyone, always and everywhere.

After thirty years, the ecumenical guidelines were now due for revision. The next important ecumenical step was the appearance of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (JDDJ), October 31, 1999 in Augsburg, Germany. After encouraging dialogues between Lutherans and Roman Catholics, the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity agreed that their churches now shared a common understanding of justification. The doctrinal condemnations of the 16th century concerning the doctrine of justification, appear in

[57] Maria Gabriella Sagheddu (1914-1939) was influenced by Paul Couturier and desperately involved in the Prayer for Christian Unity. She was beatified in 1983 by Pope John Paul II. Martha Driscoll, *A Silent Herald of Unity: The Life of Maria Gabriella Sagheddu.* Cistercian Studies, Kalamazoo 1990.

a new light: The teaching of the Lutheran churches presented in JDDJ does not fall under the condemnations from the Council of Trent. The condemnations in the Lutheran Confessions no longer apply to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, as presented here in JDDJ.[58] JDDJ was adopted by the World Methodist Council (23 July 2006),[59] by the Anglican Consultative Council (2016) and by the World Communion of Reformed Churches (6 July 2017).[60]

Five years after *Ut unum sint*, many were really disappointed by *Dominus Iesus.*[61] Prayer and worship are actually missing in this document. Is this why it went wrong? The Ecumenical Council of Churches in Hungary stated that *Dominus Iesus* was received with surprise and outrage, especially among Protestants. It said that – while agreeing with the declaration's desire to draw a clear line between our Christian faith and the trends of religious and philosophical pluralism– other statements raised doubts about the Roman Catholic Church's ecumenical commitment and credibility, especially in its dialogue with other Christian traditions. Elisabeth Raiser said that *Dominus Iesus* had the opposite effect to what it intended. Konrad Raiser stated that the most serious aspect of *Dominus Iesus* is the almost total failure to take into account developments achieved in the past 40 years of ecumenical dialogue. Eugen Drewermann described the declaration as the product of 'fanaticism and insanity'. [62] The German church leader Manfred Koch, president of the Evangelical Churches in Germany, said it was a step backwards.[63] Anglican Archbishop George Carey of Canterbury said the document did not fully reflect the deeper understanding that had been achieved through ecumenical dialogue and cooperation over the past 30 years.[64] The WCC spoke of a 'tragedy'. Ishmael Noko, general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation was disappointed that 35 years of ecumenical dialogue seemed not to have been considered.[65] "The impact of these statements is more painful because they reflect a different spirit than that which we encounter in many other Lutheran-Roman Catholic relationships." Setri Nyomi, then general secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches said that the declaration was made without

[58] http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/dialoghi/sezione-occidentale /luterani/di-alogo/documenti-di-dialogo/1999-dichiarazione-congiunta-sulla-dottrina-della-giustificazion/ en.html

[59] https://worldmethodistcouncil.org/wmcs-statement-of-assocation-with-the-joint-declaration-of-the-doctrine-of-justification/

[60] https://evangelicalfocus.com/world/2704/the-world-communion-of-reformed-churches-joins-the-joint-declaration-on-the-doctrine-of-justification

[61] Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Declaration 'Dominus Iesus' on the Unicity and salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church*, 2000. https://www.vatican.va/ roman_curia/

congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000806_dominus-iesus_en.html

[62] http://www.reformiert-online.net/aktuell/details.php?id=119&lg=eng

[63] Manfred Koch, président du Conseil des Églises évangéliques, estime que *Dominus Jesus* représente un pas en arrière pour les relations œcuméniques. http://pascalide.fr/dominus-jesus-leseigneur-jesus-unique-sauveur-23/

[64] Matthew W. I. Dunn, 'The CDF's Declaration Dominus Iesus' and Pope John Paul II', in: *Louvain Studies*, 36 (2012) 1, pp. 46-75, 51-52.

[65] https://ecumenism.net/2000/09/problem_with_dominus_iesus_is_one_of_tone_not_substance.htm

ecumenical sensitivity and seemed to go against the spirit of Vatican II.[66] The Swiss theologian Hans Küng (1928-2021) said that the declaration is a mixture of Medieval backwardness and Vatican megalomania.[67] There was even talk of a deliberate strategy to somehow slow down the growing ecumenical rapprochement.

Why all these negative voices? I am not sure if there are good reasons for them. Is *Dominus Iesus* really as anti-ecumenical as many perceived? Cardinal Ratzinger denied strongly to the main objections against *Dominus Iesus* and the Pope himself defended it.[68] I think that this text is not primarily intended to say anything negative about ecumenism. *Dominus Iesus* is – as the title indicates – primarily about Jesus Christ's place among the world's religions. That is actually the theme of the declaration, which opposes the current relativism, and which has a clear message. Yes, it also says something disturbing about other churches. And the Roman Catholic Church is regarded here as the 'pillar and foundation' of the truth (I Tim. 3:15), but admits that elements of holiness and truth can be found outside the Roman Catholic Church, especially in those ecclesiastical communities not in full communion with it. At the beginning as well as at the end, the declaration recalls the mission of the Church. "Ecclesial communities which have not preserved a valid episcopal office and no valid Eucharistic mystery cannot be called churches in the proper sense of the word. They are in communion with the Catholic Church, but that communion is still 'imperfect'. Nevertheless, they are of great importance in the mystery of salvation and essential in the advancement of the Gospel. Because the Holy Spirit also works in these ecclesial communities, they have in no way lost their meaning."[63]

What is written here in *Dominus Iesus* is, in my view, nothing new at all. It has been said that way since the Second Vatican Council (*Lumen Gentium* §8). If the Council texts are compared to *Dominus Iesus,* I do not see a backward step. In fact, there is nothing to worry about. So the question remains: Why did Protestants react so strongly? Are they not very well informed or do they suffer from collective ecumenical amnesia? On the other hand, the question also arises: why exactly did the Vatican think it was necessary to bring this up again? Was it intentional? Is seems there was a sort of a miscommunication within the inner circles of the Vatican. Bishop Walter Kasper, a member of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, said he would have written much of it in a different way and he added that he had not managed to have his own suggestions incorporated into the declaration. The document was not, he stressed, 'a comprehensive statement of the Catholic understanding of the question of ecumenism', and there was no question of the Catholic Church claiming a 'monopoly on salvation'.[69] In that case, it is truly regrettable that the criticism was not a little more reserved, especially for the sake of true ecumenism.

It was Cardinal Cahal B. Daly, Archbishop Emeritus of Armagh (Ireland) who responded in a proper way to the criticisms, by pointing out the possibility of self-

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[66] http://columbanird.org/systems/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/McBrien-Richard-2001-Dominus-Iesus.pdf

[67] "Selon Hans Küng, ce document indique que le Vatican est revenu à une période préconciliaire". https://www.letemps.ch/societe/declaration-dominus-jesus-nen-finit-faire-vagues

[68] https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/answers-to-main-objections-against-dominus-iesus-10119 http://www.reformiert-online.net/aktuell/details.php?id=119&lg=eng [63] *Dominus Iesus*, IV §16 and § 17.

[69] http://www.reformiert-online.net/aktuell/details.php?id=119&lg=eng

criticism and a call to pray. He said: "This conversion, this self-examination, calls for prayer, deep, contemplative and often silent prayer. We must never doubt the power of prayer for unity. Prayer indeed is the means by which Christ draws us into that union of ourselves with God which is our sharing in Christ's own union with his Father and is the condition for our union with one another in Christ."[70]

2001-2013, CHARTA OECUMENICA AND MINISTRY, ORDINATION EPISCOPE (MOE)

The first Ecumenical European Assembly was held in Basel (Switzerland) in 1989. I was privileged to be a participant of the second European Ecumenical Assembly in Graz, (Austria, 1997) There the initiative was taken for a number of joint agreements, which in 2001 led to the *Charta Oecumenica*, a charter for growing cooperation between the churches in Europe. The conference theme in Graz was: *Reconciliation, gift of God and source of new life.* The Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the Council of European Bishop's Conferences (CCEE: Concilium Conferentiarum Episcoporum Europae) called on member churches and bishops' conferences to begin working on an ecumenical charter. Cardinal Vlk said in Graz that the political 'Wende' in Europe was also a challenge for the churches. Communism had left terrible marks. Now was time for Christians to contribute to the whole of Europe to become a homely house.[71] The Charter was worked on, and the *Charta Oecumenica* was finally adopted on 22 April 2001 at Strasbourg, and signed by Metropolitan Jérémie, president of the CEC and Cardinal Vlk, president of the CCEE. In his speech during the third European Ecumenical Assembly in Sibiu (4-9 September 2007), Sam Kobia mentioned the affirmations of the *Charta Oecumenica*. The Charter is a unique document for European churches in their ecumenical history. It contains many guidelines for increasing co-operation among the churches and it is the first joint document ever published by the European churches together. It contains more than 25 concrete promises to which the churches commit themselves.[72] The heart of it is common ecumenical prayer and worship, followed by commitment and action.[73] It emphasizes Christ's prayer that all may be one (John 17:21). If the churches want to be faithful to this prayer of Jesus, they cannot go on as before, and they cannot be

[70] https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/dominus-iesus-and-ecumenical-dialogue-9967

[71] Kardinal Vlk, 'Mauer in den Herzen überwinden', in: Österreichische Katholische Presseagentur – Evangelische Pressedienst für Österreich (ed.), *Kathpres, Gemeinsamer Sonderdienst Zweite Europäische Ökumenische Versammlung 1997 (Graz)*, p. 8.

[72] I repeat here some of the commitments I think are most important: "We commit ourselves to follow the apostolic exhortation of the Letter to the Ephesians and persevere in seeking a common understanding of Christ's message of salvation in the Gospel (1); in the power of the Holy Spirit, to work towards the visible unity of the Church of Jesus Christ in the one faith, expressed in the mutual recognition of baptism and in Eucharistic fellowship, as well as in common witness and service (2); We commit ourselves to counteract any form of nationalism which leads to the oppression of other peoples and national minorities and to engage ourselves for non-violent resolutions (3); to strengthen the position and equal rights of women in all areas of life, and to foster partnership in church and society between women and men (4); to oppose all forms of anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism in the church and in society; to seek and intensify dialogue with our Jewish sisters and brothers at all levels (5); to conduct ourselves towards Muslims with respect; to work together with Muslims on matters of common concern(6)".

[73] *Charta Oecumenica*, 2002, p. 1.

content with the present situation. They must strive to overcome their divisions. The churches have many hymns and liturgical prayers in common, especially the Lord's Prayer, and ecumenical services have become a widespread practice, all of which are features of a true Christian spirituality. "We commit ourselves.to pray for one another and for Christian unity; to learn to know and appreciate the worship and other forms of spiritual life practised by other churches; to move towards the goal of Eucharistic fellowship." Here we see how the *Charta* also underlines the lack of Eucharistic Fellowship – such a painful sign of the divisions.[74] Of course, this problem cannot easily be solved. The *Charta* also recommended the introduction in European churches to an Ecumenical Day of Prayer for the Preservation of Creation. As far as I can see it did not happen however. In 2015 Pope Francis established a World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, encouraging Catholics throughout the world to pray for our common home. He had taken to heart the concerns of ecumenical patriarch Bartholomew and the suggestion itself was made by metropolitan John Zizioulas of Pergamon, who said that a joint Catholic-Orthodox day of prayer for the environment would mark a further step in the closeness of the two Churches.[75] Were the other churches excluded? No. Cardinal Koch, as president of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity was asked to make the necessary contacts also with other ecumenical bodies and the WCC in order to make sure, that all believers in Christ could take part.

A Consultation on the *Charta* was held in Leányfalu (Hungary) from 27-30 November 2003. In a joint communiqué, issued on 2 December by CEC and CCEE, it was emphasized that the reception of the *Charta* in Eastern European countries is different from the reception in Western European countries."The East still carries today the scars of the past authoritarian regime. But the strength of their spiritual vigour and their artistic and liturgical magnitude enable them to make an invaluable contribution to the vitality of Christianity, in our secularized world".[76]

What has been the significance of the *Charta* in recent years and how influential has the *Charta* been? The authority of the *Charta* derives only from the voluntary commitments of the European churches and ecumenical organisations, at local, regional and national levels. Aikaterini Pekridou investigated the local impact of the *Charta* and collected the responses of the churches who signed it. Many beautiful words were written down, but did they correspond to reality? The response of the Union of Protestant Churches in Alsace and Lorraine expressed regrets, saying that church leaders generally struggle to bring the achievements of ecumenism and the spirit of the *Charta Oecumenica* to all members of the Church. This response pointed out that the inability to imagine a 'pedagogy of ecumenism' and go beyond symbolic gestures that church leaders put forward (as for instance in the case of the 500th

[74] Kajsa Ahlstrand, 'The significance of the *Charta Oecumenica* today: Critical Comments from a Protestant Perspective', in: Tim Noble, Iwana Noble, Martien Brinkman, Jochen Hilberath (ed.), *Charting Churches in a Changing Europe. Charta Oecumenica and the Process of Ecumenical Encounter*, Amsterdam/New York 2006, pp. 9-15.

[75] https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150806_lettera-giornata-cura-creato.html.

[76] https://fsspx.news/en/news-events/news/hungary-european-churches-assess-diffusion-ecumenical-charter-20810

anniversary of the Reformation), ends too often with ecumenical indifference or timidity.[77]

In response to the 20th anniversary of the *Charta* in 2021 Cardinal Angelo Bagnasco, president of CCEE, and Revd. Christian Krieger, president of the CEC, issued a joint statement which was in rather vague terms. It gave thanks to God for the achievements of the global ecumenical movement and action in local ecumenism. But have we made any progress since it was published? Let us pray that this important and valuable document, in which the European churches committed themselves to ecumenism, will not be forgotten, but will be brought again to their attention with new vigor, with new strength in obedience to God's commandment.

For me 2009-2012 was a very interesting period. I was a member of a doctrinal conversation, a Study Group, installed by the CPCE (Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe) about Ministry Ordination and Episkope (MOE).[78] We defined the Protestant position on ministry, ordination and episcope. The results were accepted by the 2012 and 2018 General Assemblies. A reprint of MOE was published in 2021.[79] Also, our work is of vital ecumenical interest for the churches. For example, it has its impact in the Protestant Church of the Netherlands where a development is now going on to place more emphasis on the calling to the ordained ministry. In fact, the PCN has introduced the term 'ordination' now, which was unusual until recently.[80]

2013-2020, ECUMENICAL COMMEMORATION OF THE REFORMATION

In 2015 many churches started preparing for the Reformation Year 2016-2017.[81] Was there a possibility and willingness to re-evaluate the Reformation in an ecumenical perspective? Could we celebrate together as Protestants and Roman Catholics this jubilee? Yes we could – although there were some voices less ecumenical, wanting to cling to old ideas. In the Netherlands I was the organizer of this event for our church, the Protestant Church in the Netherlands, and I worked closely with Karla Boersma, the organizer of Refo500. We succeeded in organising the 'Luther Year 2016-2017' in a really ecumenical way, because we were convinced this was our ecumenical task.

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[77] https://www.ceceurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/The-local-impact-of-Charta-%C5%92cumenica_GA-1.pdf,p. 4.

[78] Members of the editorial group (2009-2011): Martin Friedrich, CPCE (secretary), Margriet Gosker (Protestant Church of the Netherlands), Paul Henke (CPCE), Martin Hirzel (Schweizerischer Evangelischer Kirchenbund), Ulrich Körtner (Evangelische Kirche A. u. H.B. in Österreich), Sven Oppegaard (Den Norske Kirke), Harvey Richardson (Methodist Church in Britain (chair). We met 13-15 March 2009 in Berlin-Spandau, 17-21 September 2009 in Berlin and in Vienna in 2010. Our document is accepted by the Assembly (20-25 September, Florence 2012).

[79] Mario Fischer, Martin Friedrich (ed.) *Leuenberg Texts 13: Amt, Ordination,Episkope und Theologische Ausbildung. Ministry, ordination, episkopé and theological education*. Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, Leipzig 2021².

[80] Margriet Gosker, 'Ambt in verandering. Geroepen en gezonden in theologisch en oecumenisch perspectief', in: *Kerk en Theologie*, 73 (2022) 1, pp. 8-23. *Geroepen en gezonden. Ambt en diversiteit in de Protestantse Kerk in Nederland*. Rapport van de werkgroep ambt, 21 december 2020.

[81] Margriet Gosker,'Erős vár a mi Istenünk. 500 Years of Protestantism in the Netherlands in Ecumenical Perspective', in: *Sárospataki Füzetek*, 21 (2017) 2, pp. 29-44.

We were, of course, aware of some dark aspects of the Reformation. So the question was: Do we celebrate or just commemorate? We could hardly celebrate, in my view.[82] It even seemed inappropriate. We realized that Protestants and Roman Catholics have gone their separate ways for the last 500 years. We should regret our failures and confess our guilt. Consequently, it was rather difficult to celebrate the 500 years as a festivity.[83] All schisms turned out to be exactly the opposite of what the Reformation was supposed to be. The 500 years of Reformation can be commemorated, but hardly celebrated, because of the pain and the guilt of the separation. But it is also clear that Luther and the other great Reformers did not want to divide the church. They just wanted renewal, refreshment. They wanted to reset the church, as we would say today. Luther wanted to make the church more catholic.[84] A big help was the appearance of the document *From Conflict to Communion* (Lutheran Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017), already published 2013.[85] I am very grateful that, for the first time in history, we could commemorate the Reformation centenary in a truly ecumenical way. "What happened in the past cannot be changed, but what is remembered of the past and how it is remembered can, with the passage of time, indeed change. Remembrance makes the past present. While the past itself is unalterable, the presence of the past in the present is alterable''.[86] We are not able to tell a different history now, but we are able to tell that same history differently. This is precisely what we should do. The Reformation anniversary 2017 was very different from the previous Reformation centenaries. It was truly ecumenical.

It is also worth noting that Pope Francis in 2018 at the 70th Anniversary of the World Council of Churches in Geneva expressed his appreciation for the work of the World Council of Churches and raised the notion of forgiveness. He said: "In the Bible, seventy years represents a significant span of time, a sign of God's blessing. But seventy is also a number that reminds us of two important passages in the Gospel. In the first, the Lord commands us to forgive one another not only seven times, but "seventy times seven" (Mt 18:22). That number, of course, does not serve as a limit, but opens up a vast horizon; it does not quantify justice, but serves as the measure of a charity capable of infinite forgiveness. After centuries of conflict, that charity now

[82] M. Gosker, '500 Jahre Protestantismus in den Niederlanden', in: Hans-Georg Link and Dorothea Sattler (ed.), *Zeit der Versöhnung*, Vanden hoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 2017, pp. 88-93, 91. F. Trento, '500 Jahre Reformation sind kein Grund zum Feiern.' https://www.kath.ch/newsd/500-jahrereformation-sind-kein-grund-zum-feiern/ (9th Augustus, 2017)

[83] G. Bausenhart, 'Feiern oder begehen? Eine katholische Perspektive auf 1517/2017, in: Ökumenische Rundschau, 61 (2012) 1, pp. 6-22. V. Leppin, '2017 ein Jubiläum', in: Ökumenische Rundschau, 61 (2012) 1, pp. 23-35, 23.

[84] J. Vercammen, then Archbishop of the Old Catholic Church in the Netherlands during a Summer School of the Protestant Theological University, gathering in the Dominican Monastery in Huissen, 11th July, 2017.

[85] *Common Prayer. From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran – Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017*. Text by the Liturgical Task Force of the LutheranRoman Catholic Commission on Unity.

[86] *From Conflict to Communion. Lutheran Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017. Report of the LutheranRoman Catholic Commission on Unity*, Leipzig, 2013, II, §16.

allows us to come together as brothers and sisters, at peace and full of gratitude to God our Father."[87]

2020-2022, 11TH WCC ASSEMBLY IN KARLSRUHE

A new document of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity with ecumenical guidelines appeared on 4 December 2020: *The Bishop and Christian Unity: an Ecumenical Vademecum.*[88] It is based on *Unitatis Redintegratio*, the *Ecumenical Directory* and *Ut unum sint.* §§16-19 are about the importance of prayer for unity together with other Christians, and prayer for the needs of the world. In this document the episcopal ministry is central, because in the Vatican's view the ministry entrusted to the bishop is a service of unity within his own diocese and also a service of unity between the local and the universal church.[89] I am just asking myself here: is there a risk of an advancing clericalism in the ecumenical movement? Have we not lost over the years the commitment of the lay people and all believers, which was so important in the 1980s? And what can we do about that?

I was privileged to be a participant in Karlsruhe (Germany), were the 11th Assembly of the WCC was held (31 August– 8 September 2022). The daily worship was well prepared, devout and impressive. Each day's common prayer explored a different aspect of Christ's love. The closing ceremony was full of enthusiasm and touched the hearts of the up to 4000 participants, among them many young people. We had Bible studies, morning prayers (composed of liturgies from different church traditions), midday prayers and evening prayers (each prepared by one specific church tradition), every day. We prayed that the love of Christ, which moves us to love the creation, to love each other, to share with each other, might give us compassion for life, and move us to be faithful witnesses, in order to change the world. We really were a 'Prayer Community'.[90] The Assembly, however, was overshadowed by the presence of disasters and conflicts: the Covid-19 crisis, economic injustice, hunger, poverty and war, even close by in Europe.[91]. I wished there had been a daily day prayer for Ukraine. I missed it. There were prayers of lament and distress, denouncing injustice, but as far as I could see, they were not very clear or specific. One of the reasons may have been that everything had been prepared and printed in advance. That does not promote spontaneity, but was it another reason to avoid indignation? Naming specific names or regions could make others feel excluded. The Assembly did not repudiate her Russian Orthodox member church, but urged all churches in Russia and Ukraine to speak out against the Russian war of aggression with clarity. I

[87] https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/june/documents/papa-francesco_20180621_pellegrinaggio-ginevra.html. Met dank aan Marcel Sarot.

[88] https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2020/12/04/201205a.html

[89] In 1993 ecumenical guidelines for pastoral work appeared: *The ecumenical Dimension in the Formation of those engaged in Pastoral Work*. http://www.christianunity.va/content/ unitacristiani/ en/documenti/en.html

[90] "Die 11. Vollversammlung wird eine 'betende Vollversammlung sein". WCC Publications, *Textbuch Ökumenischer Rat der Kirchen, 11. Vollversammlung, Karlsruhe, Deutschland 2022*, p. 13.

[91] *Oasis of peace. Spiritual Life Resources. Oase des Friedens: Gottesdienstbuch. Oasis de paix: Resources pour la vie spirituelle, Oasis de Paz: Recursos para la vida spiritual*, WCC Publications, Geneva 2022. Preface, p. IX.

ask myself: if Desmond Tutu was still alive and he had raised his voice at the Assembly, what would he have said? Would he have supported a suspension of the Russian Orthodox Church?[92]

During an evaluation gathering of the Dutch delegation in Karlsruhe the leadership asked what everyone should remember most and would take home as precious? The answers were unanimous: the meetings with people from all over the world and especially the daily prayers had made the most impression. During a session in the Netherlands (Utrecht, 15 October 2022) it became clear that the Dutch delegation does not yet have any strategic plans for the future.[93] I have said there that we should continue to work with the ecumenical guidelines of the *Charta Oecumenica*, because this *Charta* focuses on our own specific European situation. I concluded that people think ecumenically in segments, without a wide inclusive perspective. It's more about being on the road: as a Dutch ecumenical document stated: 'The goal is the way'.[94]

In his address (2 September 2022) to the Assembly, Cardinal Koch mentioned how different dicasteries (departments) of the Roman Curia and other Catholic organizations are collaborating with the WCC, such as the joint preparation of the texts for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.[95] Unfortunately I did not see or hear of any new ecumenical developments in Karlsruhe. Honestly I have to say, that we were much further ahead in the earlier times of Lima, Vancouver, Canberra and Santiago. I think it is high time to win a lot more young people in Western Europe and also a lot more lay people for the sake of ecumenism. We must also regain the sacramental dimension of ecumenical services in the future.

CONCLUSION

Taking everything into consideration, I conclude that an enormous amount of ecumenical work and theological thinking has been done since the second Vatican Council, in which I have been actively involved for more than 40 years. Was it a journey through the desert? Many of my colleagues in all churches thought – and still think – my ecumenical engagement is just a kind of a personal hobby. *BEM* has been almost forgotten and the *Lima-liturgy* is no longer used. But Prayer for Unity has been always at the centre of the ecumenical movement, which *Ut unum sint* confirms. Renewed attention was drawn to the *Ecumenical Directory* in 2020. The *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* is re-affirmed in the *Notre Dame Consultation Statement* (March 29, 2019):"We re-affirm the basic truths of the doctrine of justification which are expressed in JDDJ, emphasising that the message of God's grace is powerful and urgently needed in our time. We commit ourselves to communicate this message to people of our time in meaningful and relevant ways

[92] Eddy van der Borght, Jacob Meiring, 'Geen genoegen nemen met een 'gemakkelijke' verzoening. Wat zou Desmond Tutu gezegd hebben in Karlsruhe?', in: *Tussen Ruimte* (2022) 3, pp. 29-34.

[93] Wim Houtman, 'De les van Karlsruhe; Meer vieren, minder vergaderen', in: *Nederlands Dagblad* 15 oktober 2022, p. 14.

[94] https://www.raadvankerken.nl/files/2020/01/Het-doel-is-de-weg-2008.pdf

[95] Address of Cardinal Kurt Koch, Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity, at the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Karlsruhe (Germany), 2022.

through our common witness and service."[96] The dust that was kicked up after the publication of *Dominus Iesus* has settled in the meantime. The *Charta Oecumenica* was received with enthusiasm, but for me it is not really clear how it actually worked out. I think after Basel, Graz and Sibiu, it is time now after 25 years for a fourth European Ecumenical Assembly, where the *Charta Oecumenica* could be revitalized. The work on Ministry, Ordination and Episkope (MOE), done for the Leuenberg Community, was fruitful, at least for the Protestant Church in the Netherlands. It would be interesting to investigate whether this also applies to other churches. The *Commemoration of the Reformation* has brought Protestants and Roman Catholics closer together, but has it brought any new ecumenical initiatives? After all these years, I am aware that I belong to a group of old ecumenical 'hares', and gradually I have come to know how the 'hares' run! But thankfully every new generation starts its own ecumenical pilgrimage. Every new generation starts its own way of thinking, acting and praying. Will they continue on our ecumenical pilgrimage in the way we began? Will the new generation find new ways under the guidance of the Holy Spirit? I am a friend of all who serve the Lord, including all generations to come. I hope and pray that all friends and followers of Jesus Christ, our Lord, will continue to contribute to the vision of visible unity.

[96] https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/460306/ecumenism_joint-declaration_2019_ en.pdf