

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

1. The present document has been prepared by a multicultural and interdenominational group of missiologists, medical doctors and health professionals. It builds upon the tradition of the WCC's Christian Medical Commission (CMC) and its most fruitful contribution to an understanding of the healing ministry of the church. This document does not repeat what remains well formulated in earlier texts of the World Council of Churches, such as the document "Healing and Wholeness. The churches' Role in Health", adopted in 1990 by the Central Committee. That text situates the healing ministry within the struggle for justice, peace and the integrity of creation, and remains an essential contribution, the urgency of which has even grown in a now globalised world. The present study document concentrates mainly on some medical and theological-spiritual aspects of the healing ministry and their link with a recent ecumenical understanding of mission. It is offered as a background document to the 2005 Athens Conference on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) and an important contribution to a dialogue on the relevance of its theme

"Come Holy Spirit, heal and reconcile - Called in Christ to be reconciling and healing communities".

It is to be read together with the study document recommended by the CWME Commission on "mission as ministry of reconciliation"¹.

The present document does not pretend to make any final statement on healing or mission, but hopes to enrich the debate and enable Christians and churches to better respond to their calling.

1 THE CONTEXT

The global context of health and disease at the beginning of the 21st century

2. Global statistics on the incidence and prevalence of diseases, on the burden of diseases for communities and societies, and on mortality rates, are based on a scientific concept of disease and epidemiological methods for measuring disease and its impact². In medical science, disease refers to identifiable dysfunction of human physiology. We have to acknowledge that this approach is inherently different from a more holistic interpretation of health and diseases used in WCC circles³ and that is not quantifiable with current methods and therefore not easily suitable for statistical analyses.

3. It may anyhow be misleading to describe a global context because the situation is extremely complex and varies enormously between continents and societies, and increasingly also within societies and even within local communities, depending on economic resources which influence living conditions, lifestyle behaviour and access to health care. Any overview will be grossly misleading if taken as an accurate description of local or regional situations.

4. Nevertheless some trends can be discerned.

One can speak of a worldwide improvement in health if measured in terms of premature mortality and disability adjusted life years, except for those regions heavily affected by HIV/AIDS. *Infant mortality* which is a sensitive indicator for general living conditions and

access to basic health care has reached very low levels in Europe and North America and is going down particularly in East and Southeast Asia as well as Latin America and the Caribbean. It is still very high or even increasing in a number of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

5. Other major trends include the *global increase in chronic disease*, particularly mental diseases and diseases affecting the elderly. Even in low-income countries there is an increasing number of adults suffering e.g. from coronary heart disease, cancer or diabetes which are the most common causes of morbidity and mortality in industrialized countries⁴. What is most disturbing is the general trend for a long-term increase in the number of people suffering from psychiatric diseases, particularly depression, both in countries of the North and the South. Accelerated and aggravated experiences of crisis and threat following rapid globalisation processes seem to put excessive pressure on the human psychic system.

6. Currently the international community is engaged in a major review of the global health status as part of the process to assess progress toward the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Three of the eight MDGs are directly referring to health⁵.

7. The impact of *human-made climate change* and deterioration of the natural environment on the global health situation cannot yet be sufficiently mapped and measured, but raises serious concerns as to its potential devastating effects, not only locally, but worldwide. Deforestation e.g. contributes to building up the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere which results in the depletion of the stratospheric ozone and increases ultraviolet radiation. This induces the suppression of immune systems and permit the emergence of cancers and certain infectious diseases that depend on cell mediated immune responses. Global warming leading to a rise of the surface water levels of oceans occasions the flooding of human dwelling places thereby increasing the incident of waterborne diseases. Global warming also leads to the resurgence of malaria and other infectious diseases in temperate countries and increases the danger of cardiovascular illnesses.

8. Despite the advanced technology, the *health state of the world* is still preoccupying as shown in the 2004 World Health Organization report⁶.

It has therefore be pointed out that health and healing are not just medical issues. They embrace political, social, economical, cultural and spiritual dimensions. As it is stated in the WCC document "Healing and Wholeness, the Churches' role in Health": "□ *although the "health industry" is producing and using progressively sophisticated and expensive technology, the increasingly obvious fact is that most of the world's health problems cannot be best addressed in this way* □ *It is an acknowledged fact that the number one cause of disease in the world is poverty, which is ultimately the result of oppression, exploitation and war. Providing immunizations, medicines, and even health education by standard methods cannot significantly ameliorate illness due to poverty* □".⁷

Unequal access to health services - health and justice as ethical challenges

9. The fact remains that in large parts of the world people have no access to essential health services. The question of affordable *access to health care provisions* and the commercialization of health constitute yet other very complex and sensitive issues .

On the one hand scientifically based health care becomes ever more expensive with increased levels of diagnostic and therapeutic sophistication widening the gap between those who can afford it and those who can't. This gets most pronounced in low-income countries but becomes increasingly visible also in high-income countries with reduced public expenditure on health. Christians have to be constantly reminded that access to health care is an essential human right and not a commodity that should be available only for those with sufficient financial resources.

10. On the other hand there is an increased interest in addressing diseases of poverty, in particular the major infectious diseases HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The creation of "The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis & Malaria" by the United Nations is a case in point. Christians have advocated strongly for increased attention to and financial resources for diseases of poverty to achieve greater equity in the distribution of resources. Several global campaigns or initiatives testify to this concern, such as the "Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance" and the "Ecumenical HIV/AIDS Initiative in Africa". On such global health questions, there are also increasing efforts at co-operation between various Faith-Based Communities.

11. Even if in some instances, good health care services help to alleviate poverty, health and healing cannot be disconnected from structural organization of our societies, the quality of relationship among people and the life style.

Increasingly widespread unhealthy life-style patterns⁸ are a consequence of standards and interests of the food industry and of changing cultural behaviours promoted among others by media and the advertisement industry.

12. The present state could be summarised in terms such as:

Today, in our globalised and highly commercial world, people are far from being all healthy, neither as individuals nor as communities, and this despite the many advances in preventive medicine and therapeutic skills.

Many people don't have access to affordable medical care. While preventable diseases are still a major problem in many parts of the world, chronic illnesses often related to life style and behaviour are on the rise, causing much suffering all over the world. A growing number of people with mental illnesses are being recognised today. The costs of medical care have risen to prohibitive levels, making the technology unavailable to many and leading to medical systems becoming unsustainable. High technology has an inhuman face leading to people feeling isolated, and fragmented. Death in modern medicine is seen as failure and is aggressively fought to such an extent that people are not able to die with dignity.

13. People disenchanted with the established medical system are looking for more than treatment of a sick liver or heart. They want to be seen and treated as persons. Their diseases often lead them to ask spiritual questions and there is a growing search for the spiritual dimension of healing..

The importance of the role of the community in creating and maintaining health is being rediscovered in many of the affluent countries.

14. Scientific researchers have started to map what they call the "religious health assets" in order to provide basic data on potential material infrastructure and spiritual contributions by religious communities to national and international health policy.

A number of epidemiological studies carried out by medical professionals, mainly in the USA, highlighting the positive effect of religion and spirituality on health are enabling a new dialogue between the medical and theological disciplines⁹. Scientific medicine itself has become increasingly interested in the spiritual dimension of the human person.

Healing and culture - different worldviews, cultural conditions and their impact on understanding health and healing

15. The way health and healing are defined, sickness and illness explained, depends largely on culture and conventions. In ecumenical mission circles, culture is usually understood in a wide sense, including not only literature, music and arts, but values, structures, worldview, ethics, as well as religion¹⁰.

16. It is in particular the combination of religion, worldview and values that impacts people's specific understanding of and approach to healing. Since culture varies from continent to continent and from country to country or even within countries and groups of people, there is no immediate universal common understanding of the main causes of sickness and illness or of any evil affecting humans.

17. There are cultures in which supernatural beings are seen as the real ultimate causative agents for ill health, particularly on mental disorders. In such worldviews, people go to traditional healers and religious specialists for exorcism and deliverance from evil spirits and demons. Only then can they have the guarantee that the ultimate cause of their suffering has been dealt with. This would not exclude parallel treatments of symptoms with herbs, traditional or industrially manufactured drugs.

18. Masses of people integrate popular religious beliefs and culture in their understanding of health and healing. We may call this popular religiosity and belief in health. This belief may involve veneration of saints, pilgrimages to shrines, and use of religious symbols such as oil and amulets to protect people from evil spirits or evil intentions that harm people.

19. Other, in particular Asian cultures also point to the importance of harmony within the human body as the necessary pre-condition for a person's health, well-being and healing. *Shibashi*, e.g., an ancient Chinese practice of nature-oriented movements attune the body to the rhythm of nature producing an energizing effect. The traditional belief is that healing and health are actual effects of balance in the flow of energy that are affected from within and outside the human body. The clogging of centers of energy (*chakras*) or obstruction in the flow of energy causes illness. Acupuncture or finger pressure are other modalities of balancing the flow of energy.

20. Out of different worldviews culture-specific medical sciences and systems developed in some of the major civilisations of the world. In particular since the Enlightenment, these were disregarded by the Western medical establishment, but are now again increasingly considered worthy alternatives for the treatment of specific illnesses.

21. As a result of advances in medical science and of intercultural exchanges, some people, in particular in Western contexts, develop new life-styles emphasising walking, jogging, aerobic exercise, healthy diet, yoga and other forms of meditation, massage and going to sauna and spa as a way to achieve wellness, health and healing. These may well bring relief from stressful situation and some chronic illnesses like cardiovascular diseases and diabetes mellitus.

22. Certain forms of nature-centered religiosity and indigenous and emerging secular cultures also point to the relationship between cosmology or ecology and health and healing. There is a growing, however still insufficient awareness of the importance of linking ecology and health. The determinants of health are clean water and air and a safe space for all living creatures. Deforestation has profoundly damaged the water supply, polluted the air, and destroyed the habitats of many living creatures turning them into "pests" and creating ill health among human beings and other elements of creation. Very close associations of animals and human beings are now the cause of new forms of epidemics such as the emergence of Avian Flu, a severe and potentially fatal viral infection that is transferred from ducks and chickens to human beings. The tsunami event and post tsunami situation highlights the importance of taking care not only of human beings but of the whole of creation and of attuning oneself to the rhythm of nature.

2 HEALTH AND HEALING AND THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

23. In ancient times, the art of healing belonged to priests . They were consulted in the case of disease and often were regarded as mediators of healing. The unity of body, mind and spirit was understood and accepted.

The centrality of healing in the mission of the early church

24. It is worth recalling that the growth of the early church in the 2nd and 3rd century was - among other factors - also due to the fact that Christianity presented itself as a healing movement to the early Mediterranean societies. The importance of the different healing ministries within the church is reflected by the early accounts of mission in the New Testament. Many writings of the early church fathers also affirm the centrality of the church as a healing community and proclaim Christ as the healer of the world over against Hellenistic religiosity .

25. In affirming that God himself in the life of his Son has lived through experiences of weakness unto even experiencing death himself, Christianity revolutionized the understanding of God and profoundly transformed the basic attitudes of the faith community to the sick, the aged and the dying. It contributed decisively to break up the conventional strategies and mechanisms of exclusion, of discrimination and of religious stigmatization of the sick and the fragile. It put an end to the association of the divine with ideals of a perfect, sane, beautiful, and un-passionate existence. The different attitude to the sick, to the widows and to the poor proved to be a vital source for the missionary success and vitality of the early church.

The monasteries continued to be islands of hope- by caring for the sick.

Medical science and medical missions

26. Over the centuries the development of science and technology, and especially since the Enlightenment, have led to a change in the understanding of the human being and of health. Instead of being regarded as an indivisible unity, the human being was fragmented into body, mind and soul. Medical professionals tend to view a disease as a malfunction of a wonderful and complicated machine to be repaired with the help of medical skills, neglecting the fact that human beings have a soul and a mind. The rise of the disciplines of psychology and psychiatry accentuated this divide taking over the care of the mind. As a result, there was loss of the understanding of the concept of wholeness, as well as of the role of the community and of spirituality in health.

27. Medical missions came about some time later, i.e. in the 19th century, leading to the setting up of church related health care systems in many parts of the world where missionaries were active. Health care was seen by some as an essential part of the mission of the sending church or missionary organisation. Though these mission hospitals provided compassionate care of high quality at low cost, the western medical model of health care was often superimposed on indigenous local cultures with their own therapeutic and healing traditions. However, many medical missionaries engaged in training indigenous people in the art of healing and nursing from the very start of their medical mission.

A holistic and balanced understanding of the Christian ministry of healing

28. A carefully designed, most comprehensive study process initiated by the World Council of Churches' Christian Medical Commission (CMC) in the seventies and eighties showed that many factors or influences are responsible for forms of illness and broken relationships; growing feelings of void and lack of spiritual orientation in people's lives; weaken the natural defences of the body to cope or defend oneself from infections or bio-chemical disturbances in bodily functions or other forms of physical, emotional, or mental disorders;

cause imbalance in the flow of energy leading to obstruction and manifestation of dis-ease; provoke enslavement or addiction from evil desires or influences that hinder the person's response to God's saving grace.

29. According to an anthropology rooted in the biblical-theological tradition of the church, the human being is seen as "multidimensional unity"¹¹. Body, soul and mind are not separate entities, but inter-related and inter-dependant. Therefore, health has physical, psychological and spiritual dimensions. The individual being is also part of the community, health has also a social dimension. And because of the interaction between the natural environment (biosphere) and persons or communities, health has even an ecological dimension.

30. This has led the World Council of Churches to offer the following **definition of health**:

< Health is a dynamic state of well-being of the individual and society, of physical, mental, spiritual, economic, political, and social well-being - of being in harmony with each other, with the material environment and with God.>¹²

Such a holistic view underlines that health is not a static concept in which clear distinction lines are drawn between those who are healthy and those who are not. Every human being is constantly moving between different degrees of staying healthy and of struggling with infections and diseases. Such an understanding of health is close to the one emerging in the more recent debate and research on health promoting factors.¹³

Such a holistic view has also consequences on the understanding of the church's mission:

The Christian ministry of healing includes both the practice of medicine (addressing both physical and mental health) as well as caring and counseling disciplines and spiritual practices. Repentance, prayer and/or laying on of hands, divine healing, rituals involving touch and tenderness, forgiveness and the sharing of the eucharist can have important and at times even dramatic effects in the physical as well as social realm of human beings. All the different means are part of God's work in creation and presence in the church. Contemporary scientific medicine as well as other medical approaches make use of what is available in the world God has created. Healing through □medical means□ is not to be thought of as inferior (or even unnecessary) to healing through other or by □spiritual□ means.

31. There are churches and social contexts (particularly in western post-Enlightenment and modern societies) in which a one-sided emphasis and attention was given to the achievements of contemporary scientific medicine and the physical aspects of health and healing. Here a new openness and attention is needed for the spiritual dimensions in the Christian ministries of healing. There are other contexts and churches in which - due to a different world view and the non-availability of modern western medical systems - the importance of spiritual healing is highly valued. Here also a new dialogue between spiritual healing practices and approaches in modern medicine is essential.

Recent attempts to deepen the understanding of the healing mission of the church

32. One of the most thorough recent studies was conducted on behalf of the Church of England by a Working Party commissioned by the House of Bishops . It produced a remarkably encompassing report developing a definition of healing as a "process towards health and wholeness□. It embraces what God has achieved for human beings through the incarnation of Jesus Christ□. God's gifts of healing are occasionally experienced instantly or rapidly but in most cases healing is a gradual process taking time to bring deep restoration to health at more than one level." ¹⁴

33. It is both significant that at the beginning of the 21st century several important ecumenical church meetings such as the Lutheran World Federation's (LWF) assembly in Winnipeg, Canada ; the assembly of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) in Trondheim, Norway; the General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) in Accra, Ghana, have focussed directly or indirectly on the healing ministry of the church in a world torn by suffering and violence. The following extract from the most recent mission document of the LWF shall stand for many of those efforts:

According to the scriptures, God is the source of all healing. In the Old Testament, healing and salvation are interrelated and in many instances mean the same thing: "Heal me, o Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved" (Jeremiah 17:14). The New Testament, however, does not equate being cured from an ailment with being saved. The New Testament also makes a distinction between curing and healing. Some may be cured but not healed (Luke 17:15-19), while others are not cured but healed (2 Corinthians 12:7-9). "Cure" denotes restoring lost health and thus carries a protological view. Healing refers to the eschatological reality of abundant life that breaks in through the event of Jesus Christ, the wounded healer, who participates in all aspects of human suffering, dying, and living, and overcomes violation, suffering, and death by his resurrection. In this sense, healing and salvation point to the same eschatological reality.> ¹⁵

Recent dialogue of worldviews re. the reality of spiritual powers

34. In recent years, largely because of the rapid growth of Pentecostal-charismatic movements and their influence across the ecumenical spectrum, terms such as "power encounter," "demon[ology]," and "principalities and powers," have become topics of missiological interest and research today as has the question of divine healing in particular. Exorcism, casting out evil spirits, and "witchdemonology" are also terms more frequently used in certain Christian circles today ¹⁶.

Talk about demons and evil spirits is, of course, not a new phenomenon either in Christian theology nor church life. The Christian church, throughout her history - especially during the first centuries and later, more often among enthusiastic, charismatic renewal movements - has either appointed specially gifted/graced persons to tackle evil forces (exorcists) or at least acknowledged the reality of spiritual powers.

35. The rapid proliferation of Christian churches among the cultures outside of the West, has also contributed to the rise to prominence of the theme of demonology. Christians in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific tend to be much more open to the idea of the reality of these forces. In many of those cultures, there is a widespread involvement with spiritual powers even apart from Christian faith.

One of the main reasons why the Western churches - especially the mainline Protestant churches - eschewed the whole topic of spiritual powers for several centuries has to do with the specific nature of their worldview going back to the influence of the Enlightenment. Christian theology and the way clergy was trained did not only ignore the topic but often also helped "demythologize" even the biblical talk about demons and spiritual powers. Earlier documents of WCC on healing and health have not tackled the issue adequately either ¹⁷. Currently, a paradigm shift is taking place in Western culture - often referred to as "postmodernity"- which is challenging a narrow rationalistic world-view and theology.

3 HEALTH AND HEALING IN BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

God's healing mission

36. God Father, Son and Spirit leads creation and humanity towards the full realisation of God's kingdom, which the prophets announce and expect as reconciled and healed relationships between creation and God, humanity and God, humanity and creation, between humans as persons and as groups or societies (healing in the fullest sense as "shalom", Isaiah 65:17-25). This is what in missiology is referred to as *missio Dei*. In a trinitarian perspective, the creational, social-relational and spiritual-energetical dimensions of healing are interdependant, interwoven.

While affirming the dynamic reality of God's mission in world and creation, we also acknowledge its profound mystery which is beyond the grasp of human knowledge (Job 38 f). We rejoice whenever God's presence manifests itself in miraculous and liberating, healing, changes in human life and history, enabling life in dignity. We also cry out with the Psalmist and Job to challenge the Creator when evil and unexplainable suffering scandalise us and seem to indicate the absence of a merciful and just God: "Why, o God? Why me, Lord? How long?" It is in a profoundly ambivalent and paradoxical world that we affirm our belief and hope in a God who heals and cares.

37. As Christians, we acknowledge the perfect image of God as manifest in Jesus Christ, who came to witness through his life, deeds and words how God cares for humanity and creation. The incarnation of God in Christ affirms that God's healing power is not saving us from this world or above all material and bodily matters but is taking place in the midst of this world and all its pain, brokenness and fragmentation and that healing encompasses all of human existence.

Jesus Christ is the core and center of God's mission, the personalisation of God's kingdom. In the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus of Nazareth was a healer, exorcist, teacher, prophet, guide and inspirator. He brought and offered freedom from sin, evil, suffering, illness, sickness, brokenness, hatred and disunity (Luke 4: 16ff, Matthew 11:2-6). Hallmarks of the healings of Jesus Christ were his sensitivity to needs of people, especially the vulnerable, the fact that he was 'touched' and responded by healing (Luke 8: 42b- 48), his willingness to listen and openness to change (Mark 7: 24b- 30), his unwillingness to accept delay in alleviation of suffering (Luke 13: 10-13) and his authority over traditions and evil spirits. Jesus' healings always brought about a complete restoration of body and mind unlike what we normally experience in healings.

38. He inaugurated the new creation, the "end of time" (*eschaton*) through signs and wonders which do point to the fullness of life, the abolition of suffering and death, promised by God as announced by the prophets. But these miraculous actions were not more than signs or signposts. Christ healed those who came or were brought to him. He did not however heal all the sick of his time. The kingdom of God, already present, is still expected. "Healing is a journey into perfection of the final hope, but this perfection is not always fully realised in the present (Rom. 8:22)"¹⁸ .

39. Jesus' healing and exorcist activity points in particular to the accomplishment of his ministry at the cross: he came to offer salvation, the healing of relationship with God, what Paul later described as "reconciliation" (II Cor. 5). This he did through service and sacrifice, fulfilling the ministry of the "wounded healer" prophesied by Isaiah (52:13 - 53:12). Christ's death on the cross is thus both protest against all suffering (Mark 15:34) and victory over sin and evil. By resurrecting Christ, God vindicated his ministry and gave it lasting significance. The cross and resurrection of Christ affirms that God's healing power is not staying apart and above the reality of pain, brokenness and dying but is reaching down to the very depth of human and creational suffering bringing light and hope in the uttermost depth of darkness and despair. The image of the resurrected Christ may be encountered among people who suffer (Matt. 25:31-46) as well as among vulnerable and wounded healers (Matt. 28: 20 and 10:16, II Cor. 12: 9, John 15:20).

40. In ecumenical missiology, the Holy Spirit, Lord and life-giving, is believed to be active in church and world. The ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in the whole of creation initiating signs and foretastes of the new creation (2 Cor. 5:17) affirms that the healing power of God transcends all limits of places and times and is at work inside as well as outside the Christian church transforming humanity and creation in the perspective of the world to come.

God the Holy Spirit is the fountain of life for Christian individual and community life (John 7:37-39). The Spirit enables the church for mission and equips her with manifold charisms, including (e.g.) the one to heal (cure) by prayer and imposition of hands, the gift of consolation and pastoral care for those whose suffering seems without end, the charism of exorcism to cast out evil spirits, the authority of prophecy to denounce the structural sins

responsible for injustice and death, and the charism of wisdom and knowledge essential to scientific research and the exercise of medical professions. But God the Holy Spirit also empowers the Christian community to forgive, share, heal wounds, overcome divisions and so journey towards full communion. The Spirit pursues thus, widens and universalises Christ's healing and reconciling mission.

Groaning in church and creation (Rom. 8), the Spirit also actualises Christ's solidarity with the suffering and so witnesses to the power of God's grace that may also manifest itself paradoxically in weakness or illness (II Cor. 12:9).

41. The Spirit fills the church with the transforming authority of the resurrected Lord who heals and liberates from evil, and with the compassion of the suffering Servant who dies for the world's sin and consoles the downtrodden. A Spirit-led healing mission encompasses both bold witness and humble presence.

Health, healing and the concept of spiritual powers

42. One of the dominant traits in which the healing ministry of Jesus is presented in the NT is that of ultimate authority over all life deforming and life destroying powers including death (Luke 7:11-17; John 11:11; Mark 5:35-43). Biblical worldview takes for granted the reality of the unseen world and attributes power and authority to spirits and the spiritual world.

43. In Jesus Christ the kingdom of God was at hand (Matt.4:17, Luke 11:20) making demons "shudder" (James 2:19) because they realized that Christ had come to "destroy the works of the devil." (1 John 3:8; see Col. 2:15). Since numerous biblical healing narratives refer to demons and evil spirits as the cause of disease, exorcism becomes - consequently - one of the most common remedies (Mark 1: 23-28; 5:9; 7:32-35; Luke 4:33-37; Matt. 8:16; John 5:1-8) for diagnosis rules therapy. There is thus indeed a form of healing which in the Bible is presented as a power encounter between Christ and the evil forces, a specific form of the healing mission particularly highlighted in several churches today, especially those with Pentecostal and Charismatic background.

44. Through resurrection and ascension, Christ has overcome all evil powers. In the liturgy, the church celebrates this victory. Through its witness and mission, the church manifests that the powers - all the powers - have been defeated and so stripped of their binding influence on human lives. Those who follow Christ dare in his name to denounce and challenge all other powers, thus bringing good news: "Go, preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand! Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons!" (Matt.10:7, cf. Mark 16: 9-20).

45. This implies that the churches' ministry of proclaiming the gospel has to consciously address and name the powers, taking up the struggle with evil in whatever way it presents itself. These powers are not to be tampered with but recognized, because their reality rests in the hold they have over people who relate to them as the vital coordinates in life.

This issue of relationship between demonology/powers and healing needs careful study. How to interpret the reality and influence of powers in contemporary contexts and cultures is one of the urgent ecumenical debates¹⁹

Illness, healing and sin. The "already and not yet" of the kingdom

46. Whereas in Christ evil and sin have been overcome, there are still many disasters, illnesses, deficiencies and diseases (physical, moral, spiritual and social) that seem to deny the arrival of the kingdom of God. The Bible knows the tradition saying that disease or disaster can be divine answer to sin, individual or collective. The prophets have repeatedly challenged God's people to repent from its disobedience to God's word. The New Testament knows of the potential relation between sin and sickness (1 Cor. 11: 28-34). There is however a strong insistence by Jesus on denying any direct relationship between personal sin and sickness: "Who sinned? This man or his parents?... this is to manifest the power of God." (John 9:2). Similarly, in his answers to questions related to disasters, Jesus leaves open the question of their origin (Luke 13:1-5) and instead points to the urgency of turning back to God and follow the life he offers.

47. Suffering continues in the period between Easter and the end of history. The gospels do not explain this mystery. But the Spirit strengthens the church for its healing and reconciling mission and enables people to cope with continuing suffering and illness in the light of Christ's redemption. Because Christ has paid the price for all sin and brings salvation, no power has final damaging influence on those who put their confidence in God's love manifested in Christ (Rom. 8 : 31 - 39).

48. In the end, Christ will hand over the kingdom to his Father (1 Cor. 15 : 24), free of illness, suffering and death. In this kingdom healing will be complete. There is found the common root of healing and salvation (*salus*). "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more: mourning and crying and pain will be no more" (Rev. 21: 4).

4 THE CHURCH AS A HEALING COMMUNITY

Church, community and mission

49. The nature and mission of the church proceeds from the Triune God's own identity and mission with its emphasis on community in which there is sharing in a dynamics of interdependence. It belongs to the very essence of the church - understood as the body of Christ created by the Holy Spirit- to live as a healing community, to recognise and nurture healing charisms and to maintain ministries of healing as visible signs of the presence of the kingdom of God ²⁰.

50. To be a reconciling and healing community is an essential expression of the mission of the church to create and renew relationships in the perspective of the kingdom of God. This means to proclaim Christ's grace and forgiveness, to heal bodies, minds, souls and to reconcile broken communities in the perspective of fullness of life (John 10:10).

51. It has to be reaffirmed what the document *Mission and Evangelism in Unity today*²¹ stated, i.e. that "mission carries a holistic understanding: the proclamation and sharing of the good news of the gospel, by word (*kerygma*), deed (*diakonia*), prayer and worship (*leiturgia*) and the everyday witness of the Christian life (*martyria*); teaching as building up and strengthening people in their relationship with God and each other; and healing as wholeness and reconciliation into *koinonia* - communion with God, communion with people, and communion with creation as a whole".

Healing the wounds of church and mission history

52. When Christian churches speak of the healing ministry as an indispensable element of the body of Christ they must also face their own past and present, sharing a long and often conflictual history with each other. Church splits, rivalry in mission and evangelism, proselytism, exclusions of persons or whole churches for dogmatic reasons, condemnations of different church traditions anathematised as heretical movements, but also inappropriate collaboration between churches and political movements or economic and political powers, have left deep marks and wounds in many parts of the one body of Christ and continue to have a harmful impact on interdenominational relationships.

Christians and churches are still in deep need of healing and reconciliation with each other. The agenda of church unity remains an essential part of the healing ministry. The ecumenical movement has indeed been and still is one of the most promising and hope giving instruments for the necessary processes of healing and reconciliation within Christianity. What such processes mean and imply has been described in

the document "Mission and the ministry of reconciliation" recommended by the CWME commission in 2004 ²²

The local Christian community as a primary place for the healing ministry

53. The Tübingen consultations in 1964 and 1967²³ affirmed that the local congregation or Christian community is the primary agent for healing. With all the need and legitimacy of specialized Christian institutions like hospitals, primary health services and special healing homes it was emphasized that every Christian community as such - as the body of Christ - has a healing significance and relevance. The way people are received, welcomed and treated in a local community has a deep impact on its healing function. The way a network of mutual support, of listening and of mutual care is maintained and nurtured in a local congregation expresses the healing power of the church as a whole. All basic functions of the local church have a healing dimension also for the wider community: the proclamation of the word of God as a message of hope and comfort, the celebration of the Eucharist as a sign of reconciliation and restoration, the pastoral ministry of each believer, individual or community intercessory prayer for all members and the sick in particular²⁴. Each individual member in a local congregation has a unique gift to contribute to the overall healing ministry of the church.

The charismatic gifts of healing

54. According to the biblical tradition the Christian community is entrusted by the Holy Spirit with a great variety of spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12) in which charisms relevant to the healing ministry have a prominent role. All gifts of healing within a given community need deliberate encouragement, spiritual nurture, education and enrichment but also a proper ministry of pastoral accompaniment and ecclesial oversight. Charisms are not restricted to the so-called "supernatural" gifts which are beyond common understanding and/or personal world view, but hold to a wider understanding in which both talents and approaches of modern medicine, alternative medical approaches as well as gifts of traditional healing and spiritual forms of healing have their own right. Among the most important means and approaches to healing within Christian tradition mention should be made of

the gift of praying for the sick and the bereaved the gift of laying on of hands the gift of blessing the gift of anointing with oil the gift of confession and repentance the gift of consolation the gift of forgiveness the gift of healing wounded memories the gift of healing

broken relationships and/or the family tree the gift of meditative prayer the gift of silent presence the gift of listening to each other the gift of opposing and casting out evil spirits (ministry of deliverance) the gift of prophecy (in the personal and socio-political realms)

The eucharist as the Christian healing event par excellence

55. The celebration of the eucharist is considered by the majority of Christians as the most prominent healing gift and unique healing act in the church in all her dimensions. While the essential contribution of the eucharist for healing is not understood in the same manner by all denominational traditions, the sacramental aspect of Christian healing is more deeply appreciated and expressed in many churches today. In the eucharist Christians experience what it means to be brought together and to be made one, constituted again as the body of Christ across social, linguistic and cultural barriers, however not yet across denominational divides. The remaining division between churches, which prevent a common celebration at the Lord's table is the reason why many Christians have difficulties in grasping and experiencing the eucharist as the healing event par excellence.

56. The eucharistic liturgy provides however the setting and visible expression for God's healing presence in the midst of the church and through her in mission to this broken world. The healing dimension of the eucharist is underscored by the tradition reaching back to the early church requesting reconciliation with the brother or sister prior to sharing the sacrament. It is expressed also through the mutual sharing of the peace and forgiveness of sins between God and the believers in the liturgy of confession. Very early evidence is also there for the Christian practice to share the eucharist with the sick and to bring it to homes and hospitals. The body of Christ broken for the suffering world is received as the central gift of God's healing grace. Every eucharistic celebration restores both the community of the church and renews the healing gifts and charisms. According to ancient sources the liturgical tradition of anointing the sick with oil is rooted in the eucharistic celebration. In both Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions the oil used for anointing the sick²⁵ is sanctified by the local bishop in the liturgy of benediction of the oil during Holy Week (chrismation mass), thereby rooting the healing ministry of the church both in the eucharist and in the cross and resurrection of Christ.

The healing dimension of worship in general and special healing services

57. For all Christian denominations and church traditions it holds true that the worshipping community and the worship itself can have a deep healing dimension. Opening oneself in praise and lament to God, joining the others as a community of believers, being liberated from guilt and burdens of life, experiencing even unbelievable cures, being enflamed by the experience of singing and of praise are a tremendously healing experience. It must however also be acknowledged that this can never be taken for granted. Inappropriate forms of Christian worship including triumphalistic "healing services" in which the healer is glorified at the expense of God and where false expectations are raised, can deeply hurt and harm people. In many places, still, special monthly or weekly services are experienced as authentic witness to God's healing power and care. Indeed, in such worship, explicit recognition is given to the needs of those seeking healing from experiences of loss, of fragmentation, of despair or physical illness. In many church traditions worship events combine the eucharist with the ritual of personal prayer for the sick and the laying on of hands and are an appropriate response both to the mandate of the church and the longing for healing within the population. The contribution of Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement both within and outside the historical churches to the contemporary renewal of the understanding of the

healing dimension of worship and of mission in general has to be acknowledged in this context.

Deepening a common understanding of a Christian healing spirituality

58. It is clear for all Christian traditions that Christian healing ministries cannot be seen as mere techniques and professional skills or certain rituals. All of them depend on a Christian spirituality and discipline which influences all spheres of personal as well as professional life. Such spirituality depends on faith in God, following Christ's footsteps, on how the body is treated, how the limitations of space and time are dealt with, how pain and sickness are coped with, how one eats and fasts, prays and meditates visits the sick, helps the needy and keeps silence in openness to God's Spirit.

There is a need for discernment as to what constitutes authentic Christian spirituality. There exist theologies and forms of Christian practice that do not contribute to healing. Distorted forms of spirituality or piety can lead to unhealthy lives and questionable relationship with God and fellow human beings.

The ordained and the laity in the healing ministry

59. In many congregations it can be observed that only ordained people are allowed to extend signs of blessing and prayers of healing for people who are in need. Biblical evidence reminds us however that the Spirit and the Spirit's gifts have been promised to all members of the people of God (Acts 2:17, 1 Cor. 12:3 ff) and that every member of the church is called to participate in the healing ministry. Churches are encouraged to support the gifts and potentials particularly of lay people both in local congregations as well as in health care institutions. Empowering people to act as ambassadors of the healing ministry is an essential task of both the ordained ministers and deacons in the church as well as the Christian professionals working in various health related institutions.

60. How each church can best recognise the mandate of the local community, express the responsibility of the ordained ministry and of lay people in the healing ministry, depends on its own tradition and structure. The Church of England has e.g. appointed in many places a healing advisor on the level of the diocese. This minister is responsible for encouragement, education and also spiritual and pastoral advice for emerging healing ministries in cooperation with the regional bishop. The healing ministry of the church thereby receives a visible recognition and support in the church as a whole instead of just being delegated to specialized institutions or restricted to the local situation.

The need for educating Christians for the healing ministry - integration versus compartmentalization

61. There is a growing consensus that education for the different forms of Christian healing ministry is not as widespread and developed as it ought to be in the various sectors of church life. Explicit teaching on a Christian understanding of healing in many programmes of theological education is absent or still underdeveloped. However recently efforts have been made to include HIV/AIDS in the curricula of institutions of theological education in Africa. But many training and educational programmes are taking place only within the different fields of specialized competence. Nurses, doctors, diaconical workers are educated within their own professional fields. There is no interaction between different education programmes

and fields of competencies, and there is a lack to introduce issues and basic themes of Christian healing within the mainline stream of ministerial and adult education in general.

The healing ministry of the community and healing professions

62. The deliberations of the consultations at Tübingen in 1964 and 1967 and the setting up of the CMC in 1968, with the development of the concept of Primary Health Care (PHC) in the 1980s created a PHC movement that began with great hope for change, but has not been sustained. The divide created between high technology based medicine on the one hand and primary health care on the other has been detrimental to the struggle for a better and healthier world. While committed Christian professionals developed outstanding programmes in primary health care, the congregational involvement in the PHC movement was patchy and minimal. Though the access and justice issues were addressed to some extent in that movement, the spiritual aspects were not addressed appropriately. Traditional systems of medicine in many countries have been unnecessarily condemned by the modern allopathic system of medicine and have developed in isolation and in competition to it, creating problems of relation between Christian communities and traditional health specialists.

63. Additional dramatic changes in society and health systems have brought increased tensions in recent years for many of those who are working within the established medical systems, in particular in industrialised countries and centers. Increasing pressures to rationalise health care, to reduce costs and medical personnel tend to prevent doctors, nurses and assistants to relate to a holistic approach in health and healing. At the same time, the need for addressing the whole person in health care has become more than obvious in many parts of the world. How medical personnel will be able to respond to these contradictory requests remains an open question. It is encouraging to discern signs and signals of a new quest and openness for cooperation with religious organizations, particularly Christian churches, in many secular institutions of the established health system.

64. Christian churches should be open and receptive to listen and learn from the situation of those facing the ever more growing contradictions and shortcomings within the established medical systems.

The health professionals on their part should recognise that health issues move beyond the individual to the community which is a social network with many resources and skills that can promote health. Health professionals are challenged to see themselves as part of a broader network of healing disciplines that include the medical, technical, social and psychological sciences, as well as religions and traditional approaches to healing. This wider view will help the professionals to integrate suffering into the concept of health and enable people with incurable physical problems to be healed persons. It will also encourage the health professionals to share information with and empower the patient to feel responsible and take decisions for their own health.

65. The primary health care approach in the community should be backed by adequate secondary and tertiary care facilities. The referral system should be reciprocal and mutually supportive.

Healing ministry and advocacy

66. While this document concentrates on the medical and spiritual aspects of the healing ministry, it acknowledges that there exists a wider definition of healing which includes efforts of persons, movements, societies and churches for fundamental transformation of structures which produce poverty, exploitation, harm and sickness or illness. The earlier CMC study of 1990²⁶ is still considered a valid guideline for that wider aspect of the healing ministry, which gained even more urgency with the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The 1990 document considers health to be a justice issue, an issue of peace, and an issue related to the integrity of creation. Consequently it requests a healing congregation to "take the healing ministry into the political, social and economic arenas:

advocating the elimination of oppression, racism and injustice, supporting peoples' struggle for liberation joining others of goodwill in growing together in social awareness, creating public opinion in support of the struggle for justice in health" 27

67. All Christians, especially those active in healing ministries and in medical professions, those gifted with the charisms of prophecy, are called to be advocates for such a holistic approach on national and international political scenes. Because of their specific competence and experience, they bear a special responsibility to speak with and on behalf of the marginalised and the underprivileged and contribute to strengthen advocacy networks and campaigns to put pressure on international organisations, governments, industries and research institutions, so that the present scandalous handling of resources be fundamentally challenged and modified.

Training

68. Because of all these aspects of the church's mission in terms of health and care, training for medical and health professionals will be a key area for appropriate action. Congregations and those who work in the pastoral areas too need training on the holistic approaches to health and the specific contributions they can make as alluded to in this document.

69. The challenge is for Christians to continue to engage communities- in such a way as to incorporate the pedagogy of healing in the church, so as to

Motivate and mobilise communities to identify the core issues of ill health, to own the issues and to take effective action Identify with the holistic understanding of the healing ministry in the gospel Work with wider societies to bring about difference in peoples health and life

5. OPEN QUESTIONS AND NECESSARY DEBATES

70. This chapter contains items on which there is ongoing debate among Christians from different denominational traditions and/or cultural backgrounds. This does not mean that all affirmations below are contested. But the scope and consequences of some are subject of debate.

All healing comes from God

Christian healing spirituality and non-Christian healing practices

71. That all healing comes from God is a conviction shared by most if not all Christian traditions²⁸. There is however a debate as to the consequence of such an affirmation for the approach of people and traditions or healing practices of other religions.

72. Affirming the presence of God's healing energies at work in the whole of creation, thanks and praise should be given for all different means, approaches and traditions which contribute to the healing of human persons, communities as well as creation, by reinforcing their healing potentials.

73. In many contexts where a strong longing for healing is felt both within as well as outside the Christian churches the question of Christian openness towards and reliance on healing practices rooted in other religions (such as various traditional religious medicinal approaches, but also Yoga, Reiki, *Shiatsu*, Zen-Meditation etc.) is however much debated within churches and Christian health related institutions. To what extent is Christian healing spirituality compatible with healing practices from other religions? Are those reconcilable and in harmony with basic principles of Christian spirituality?

74. Christian spirituality should show openness to all means of healing offered as part of God's ongoing creation. At the same time there are healing practices which associate themselves with a religious worldview which can be in contrast to basic Christian principles, and some Christians are particularly attentive to such dangers. For other Christians still, caution is requested, because evil spiritual powers might disguise their destroying effect behind apparently beneficial healing practices.

75. No healing practice is just neutral. It needs critical theological assessment. This is not to say that any Yoga or Reiki practices e.g. have no place in Christian parish centres. They can be practised, many Christians in the West believe, in ways which do not lead to a dissolution or fundamental distortion of Christian faith and the Christian community. The church has always been aware that God can reveal aspects of how creation works and contributes to healing through peoples of other languages, cultures and even religious traditions and this also applies to the realm of medical treatment, alternative medicine and alternative healing practices.

76. But caution or even explicit rejection are recommended wherever

religious dependency is created on the healer or Guru, absolute spiritual, social or economic obedience is demanded, human beings are kept in a spirit of threat, anxiety or bondage due to healing practices, the success of a healing is made dependant on fundamental changes in the religious worldview of Christians.

77. As the biblical tradition shows, Christians are invited and commissioned to test everything, hold on to the good and abstain from every kind of evil (1 Thessalonians 5: 21-22). When encountering practices of healing and energetic therapeutic work rooted in other religions, Christians should always first of all feel encouraged to rediscover the rich diversity and ancient spiritual traditions of healing within the Christian church itself.

Debate on the concepts of demonology and power encounter

78. Traditionally, the term "demonology" in Christian theology has been part of the doctrine of angels (angelology). Demons/demonic powers denote the "dark" side of the spiritual reality.

The term "power[s]" in theological and ecumenical discourse is used in more than one way. Often and in particular in ecumenical circles it is used in relation to political violence and oppressive social structures

79. Among Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians - but also beyond, among those who continue in the tradition of classical Christianity - the term "powers" usually mean spiritual powers, evil spirits, demons. Consequently "power encounter" is understood as an encounter between the (spiritual) power of God and other gods/spiritual realities. These Christians believe that the true God will show off God's power over others. While it is important that such dialogue does not simplify the complex intricacies of spirit worlds thriving in - and alongside - the age of post-modernism it should at the same time resist any attempt to turn the Holy Spirit into a powerful means to an end as if the church had to vindicate God²⁹. The church is to witness for the living God. She has not to prove God right.

80. An ecumenical challenge to the churches is to acknowledge the various meanings assigned to the talk about powers and try to resist reductionism. While the traditional way of relating "powers" to spiritual forces seems to be the primary biblical connotation, the understanding of powers in terms of social and political realities is also present in the Bible (cf. e.g. the temptation story in Matt. 4:1-11 and Luke 4: 1-13) and can be seen as a legitimate interpretation of the Christian message.

81. The Pentecostal-Charismatic interest in power encounter poses serious challenges and can be subject to theological and pastoral concerns . The idea of "power encounter" as explained above may lead to a triumphalistic, aggressive presentation of the gospel. In some cases, "spirits" are attributed influence and power beyond what appear to be appropriate theologically, blurring the meaning of individual and collective responsibility.

82. This being the case demonology and exorcisms present cognitive and spiritual challenges to those churches whose frame of reference and theology is shaped by a post Enlightenment scientific rationality as is that world-view to the one explaining events through referring to spiritual beings. An appropriate intercultural and ecumenical dialogue for the sake of the churches' ministry of healing as a whole seems urgent.

Sharing resources and insights in Christian healing within the ecumenical fellowship

83. Many church traditions have their own rich insights and liturgical as well as theological treasures and can contribute to a holistic understanding and new appreciation of the Christian ministry of health and healing today. The Anglican, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic traditions offer distinct and different healing liturgies. It is encouraged to make these known among other denominations and traditions and to share such formulas which exist within the ecumenical community of churches.

Study and dialogue on demonology

84. It would be a worthwhile task for the WCC mission desk to initiate a wide scale study process on the topic of demonology and powers since, as mentioned, it is a topic that Christians and Christian communities are tackling in their everyday life. One part of the study task would be to consider the issue of rehabilitating the office of exorcist as Christian ministry in those church traditions where it does not exist.

Ecumenical Initiative on healing spirituality

85. It could be well considered whether for the years to come an ecumenical initiative is needed to deepen the Christian healing spirituality and to encourage related formation courses for voluntary workers, professional health care workers and ordained ministers.

The need for round tables on the future of health, spirituality and healing

86. Established institutions of health care in many countries are in a process of transformation and institutional crisis, partly due to economic factors and financial instability, lack of proper management and leadership, rising costs of high technology medicine, changed patterns in the behaviour of patients, lack of compliance of the patients and the demographic imbalances in many Western societies. Historically speaking Christian mission had played a pioneering role in bringing about and shaping the health systems in many countries of the South. It also has a responsibility in contributing to overcoming the crisis of the established institutions of health care at the beginning of the 21st century. In accordance with the tradition of the Christian Medical Commission and recent proposals³⁰ it is recommended that the various Christian medical commissions and associations existent in the different regions of the world join hands and establish interdisciplinary dialogue forums on the future of health care and health systems both in the West as well as in the South. Ways of exchanging and strengthening the collaboration between the various regional Christian medical associations should be sought in order to give new profile to the Christian ministry of healing and make it more visible and effective before the eyes of the world.

Notes

¹ CWME Conference Preparatory Paper No. 10, on: www.mission2005.org

² cf. Christina de Vries: "The Global Health Situation: Priorities for the Churches' Health Ministry beyond AD 2000". *International Review of Mission (IRM)* Vol XC, Nos. 356/357, p. 149ff.

³ for the WCC definition, see § 31 below

⁴ World Health Organisation (WHO): *The World Health Report - Changing History*, Geneva, 2004

⁵ United Nations: Report on Millennium Development Goals. Cf. www.un.org/millenniumgoals/ Reference is made here to #4: reduce by two-thirds the mortality rate among children under five; #5: reduce by three-quarters the maternal mortality ratio; # 6: Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS. Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

⁶ WHO, *op.cit.*

⁷ cf. *Healing and Wholeness. The Churches' Role in Health. The report of a study by the Christian Medical Commission*. Geneva, WCC, 1990. Document received by the WCC Central Committee. Quote from page 1.

[8](#) such as fast-food and other consumption trends leading to overweight of children and adults in affluent societies, addiction to drugs, overconsumption of TV and video, etc.

[9](#) Cf. Harold G. Koeching, Michael E. Mucculloch, David B. Lason, eds, *Handbook of Religion and Health*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2001.

[10](#) The question of the relation between gospel and cultures was seriously addressed at the world mission conference in Salvador in 1996, cf. Christopher Duraisingh (ed.), *Called to One Hope. The gospel in diverse cultures*. Geneva, WCC, 1998.

[11](#) A conception developed in particular by Paul Tillich. Cf. Paul Tillich: "The meaning of health" (1961) in *Id.*, *Writings in the Philosophy of Culture/ Kulturphilosophische Schriften (Main works/Hauptwerke 2)* ed. by M. Palmer, Berlin-New York, 1990, pp. 342-52. Paul Tillich, "The relation of religion and health. Historical considerations and theoretical questions" (1946), in: *Ibid.*, pp. 209-38. *Id.*, *Systematic Theology III. Life and the Spirit, History and the Kingdom of God*. Chicago, 1963, pp. 275-82.

[12](#) CMC study on "Healing and Wholeness", *op.cit.* (note 6), p. 6

[13](#) One example are the discussions around the conception of "salutogenesis" developed by the medical sociologist Aaron Antonovsky, focusing on what helps maintaining health and well-being in body and soul, instead of focussing on factors producing illness.

[14](#) *A Time to Heal . A Report for the House of Bishops of the General Synod of the Church of England on the Healing Ministry*. London, Church House Publishing, 2000.

[15](#) *Mission in Context. Transformation -Reconciliation - Empowerment. An LWF contribution to the understanding and practice of mission*. Geneva, LWF, 2004, pages 39-40

[16](#) cf. *IRM* Vol. 93, Nos 370/71 July/October 2004 on "Divine Healing, Pentecostalism and Mission"

[17](#) take as an example the CMC study of 1990, *Healing and Wholeness*, *op.cit.*

[18](#) Group report from a consultation with Pentecostals in Ghana in 2002, published in *IRM* July/October 2004, *op.cit.*, p. 371.

[19](#) see below, chapter 5

[20](#) this refers to congregations, as well as church-related health care institutions and specialised diaconical services.

[21](#) CWME conference preparatory document No 1

[22](#) CWME conference preparatory document No 10, *op.cit.*

[23](#) Two consultations held at the German Institute for Medical Mission (Difäm) in Tübingen, Germany, who were at the origin of the creation of the Christian Medical Commission and the health work of the WCC. Cf. *The healing Church. The Tübingen consultation 1964*. Geneva,

WCC, 1965, and James C. McGilvray, *The Quest for Health and Wholeness*. Tübingen, Difäm, 1981.

[24](#) Cf. the excellent chapter on healing community in the CMC document "Healing and Wholeness", *op.cit.* p. 31f.

[25](#) it was only in the middle ages that they were narrowed down to a sacramental sign reserved to the dying as □extreme unction□

[26](#) *Healing and Wholeness, op.cit.*

[27](#) *Ibid.*, p. 32

[28](#) cf. *IRM* July-October 2004 , *op.cit.* (dialogue with Pentecostals); cf. also LWF mission statement , *op.cit.* , p. 39. The affirmation that all healing comes from God is already to be found in the documents resulting from the Tübingen consultation of 1964, cf. *The Healing Church, op.cit.* p. 36.

[29](#) God vindicates the church instead. Mt. 10:19-20; Lk. 21:15; Mk. 13:11

[30](#) cf. results of the consultation held in Hamburg in 2000, published in *IRM* , Vol. XC, Nos 356/357, January/April 2001, on the theme "Health, Faith and Healing".