

Centro Internazionale Animazione Missionaria C.I.A.M.

Rome, Italy - January 19 - 25, 2005

"Come, Holy Spirit - heal and reconcile"

1 - Introductory remarks

The "young missiologists consultation" was organised by the Mission and Ecumenical Formation Team of the World Council of Churches, on behalf of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, following a suggestion formulated during a session of the Central Committee of the WCC. 32 young theologians, coming from seven regions, many denominations and interested in missiology, learnt to know each other and worked on themes related to the forthcoming world mission conference in Athens (May 9-16, 2005). Whereas the result of the consultation is being shared as a valuable contribution to the preparations for the Athens conference, the consultation had its own identity and purpose, i.e. to provide a space for a dialogue on important issues in missiology between young missiologists.

The consultation was hosted at the CIAM, a centre for missionary spirituality meetings located on the campus of the Pontifical Urbaniana University, immediately adjacent to Vatican City. The WCC expresses its gratitude to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity for its support in organising the consultation as well as to the staff of CIAM, in particular its director, Father Romeo Ballan, for their invaluable hospitality.

Three introductory theological presentations were made:

"The missionary significance of the Holy Spirit as God's empowering, healing and reconciling presence" (Anastasia Vassiliadou, Orthodox, Greece)

"Mission and reconciliation processes" (Puleng LenkaBula, Protestant, South Africa)

"Healing ministries and healing communities" (Baard Knapstad, Pentecostal, Norway)

The major part of the consultation was spent in four thematic groups. **The present document reproduces the reports of the discussions in the groups (chapter 2) and a summary of the debates at the end of the consultation (chapter 3: discussion of group reports, chapter 4: general recommendations).** None of these texts was adopted by the consultation. They provide some insight into the debates.

The participants in the consultation could visit the archives of the Congregation for the evangelisation of peoples, just behind the CIAM. Opportunities were provided for dialogue with Dr Renato Maiocchi, Executive Secretary of the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy, and Msgr John Mutiso-Mbinda, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

2 - Reports presented by the four groups on their discussions

It is important to remember that these reports were not adopted and are a description of part of the discussion which took place in the groups. Recommendations contained in these reports also represent exclusively the discussion in the groups themselves. They were not adopted by the consultation.

2 a - Group on Reconciliation

REPORT ON GROUP DISCUSSION

Four themes:

1. Reconciliation as the nature of the church (its identity)

This nature or identity comes from Scripture, wherein we affirm that God has reconciled and continues to reconcile us to himself/Godself (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). In this we affirm our responsibility (the church's responsibility) to the ministry of reconciliation. We also affirm the ambiguity of human and social agency in the ministry of reconciliation, where sometimes we are agents of conflict and sometimes we are agents of reconciliation.

a. to be the church is to be a body of reconciliation

b. Christians should not forget to reconcile within themselves

c. there are different levels of reconciliation, i.e. personal or familial, social or communal, and structural.

2. Timing within processes of reconciliation

We raise the question of when is the proper time to begin a process of reconciliation. We clarify also that "being aware of history" (a phrase used below) means being aware of past wounds and offences, as well as the continuous effects of these wounds and offences.

a. necessity of being aware of history in the process of reconciliation

1. inherited sin

2. memory

3. timing

b. reconciliation as continuous action (ongoing work)

3. How forgiveness is incorporated into processes of reconciliation

We clarify that forgiveness is a fundamental part of the ministry of reconciliation, however it is not a pre-requisite.

a. reconciliation requires the changing of viewpoints (*metanoia*)

b. how parties involved must acknowledge their wrongs (accountability and repentance)

NB: when people are unable or unwilling to acknowledge their participation in wrongdoing, reconciliation cannot happen. We note here the difference between direct and indirect participation in wrongdoing and injustice.

4. Relationship of justice to reconciliation

We recognise the connection here to *metanoia* and how a change in one part of a system or life necessitates change in other areas of the system or life.

a. Economic justice, Luke 19 and the story of Zacchaeus.

1. Zacchaeus commits to giving half of his wealth to the poor.

2. Matthew 6:24, serving God and mammon.

b. Restorative justice

1. Luke 15:11-31, the story of the prodigal son

How does reconciliation imply a change of culture (changes in culture)? To what extent?

Question of gender violence and the ministry of reconciliation at a personal level. Is it a question of intimacy and friendliness? Are these signs of reconciliation?

The qualities of the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 6)

v.4 through great endurance

v.6 by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love

v.7 truthful speech, and the power of God with the weapons of righteousness

v.8 - 10 treated as impostors, and yet true

as unknown, and yet are well known

as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing

as poor, yet making many rich

as having nothing, yet possessing everything

The fruit of the Spirit may be (are) signs of reconciliation (Galatians 5:22)

- love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control

Metanoia affects everything. It's a change of heart, of attitude.

(Come, Holy Spirit, change our hearts)

PROPOSALS FOR MOVING FORWARD

Concrete ways to facilitate the churches ministry of reconciliation:

use case studies, i.e. the bishop in Europe¹ biblical analysis (bible study)

Doing another consultation on more specific themes, for instance the connection between ecological justice and reconciliation. We believe this is one of many critical matters that face the church today.

Another critical matter is looking at the elements that inhibit reconciliation. Perhaps this could be a thematic focus of a follow-up consultation?

We recommend that the WCC organise contributions of the here attending participants regarding topics such as those named above and other that require additional reflection.

(here were inserted the names of the members of the group)

We represent a variety of Christian traditions and communions.

2 b - Group on the healing ministry in churches

Report on the discussions in the group

Introduction.

The definition of healing as introduced in the preparatory papers of the WCC conference, "Called in Christ to be reconciling and healing communities," covers a great number of issues, such as "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".² Although we value such a general definition of healing, our group considered it important to emphasize the "personal aspect of healing"³. The decision to emphasize this aspect of healing was caused by the impression that until now, WCC has not paid sufficient attention to the question of healing on the personal level. Members of the group also want to emphasize that in this case it is important to operate with the holistic understanding of a person, namely, the understanding that includes physical, spiritual, emotional, mental as well as social aspects of being human. The group also intends to draw attention to the reality of miraculous healing that appears frequently in the ministries and life of churches.

Our discussions on the topic of healing were concentrated on four main points:

1. Impact of worldviews on our understanding of healing;
2. Relation between healing and power, and healing and faith;
3. Practices of healing;
4. Healing with a consideration for those who are not healed;

1. Impact of worldviews on our understanding of healing.

Discussions on the question of worldviews revealed how different backgrounds impact theological understanding of healing. The question of the spiritual realm as an essential aspect of reality and understanding of the cause of illness seemed to be a problem, mainly for those coming from church traditions deeply influenced by the post-Enlightenment paradigm. It seems as if WCC has favored the post-Enlightenment worldview over and against other

worldviews. In relation to that a question was raised whether worldview should be understood in cultural or theological terms. Still an agreement was found concerning the need to challenge the post-Enlightenment worldview which is based on a belief that everything needs a scientific proof and explanation. This belief is particularly devastating for the understanding of healing because it excludes the spiritual realm as well as the reality of miracles.

2. Relation between healing and power, and healing and faith

Different denominational and cultural backgrounds of the members of the group played a significant role also in the second part of the discussion of healing: the emphasis of the discussion was put on two different problems according to the cultural background of the members. Some churches have difficulties acknowledging the possibility of miraculous healing. Other churches struggled with the question how to discern between Christian and non-Christian healing practices. However, we were able to reach a certain level of agreement concerning the nature of healing, i.e., it must be performed in the name of the triune God and it also must point to Christ. The churches must be careful in discerning the healings performed by other spiritual powers and should always stress the power of God as the source of healing. Healing must also be followed by incorporating the healed person in the body of Christ, thus providing him/her the possibility to grow in faith.

3. Practice of healing

The group had a greater level of agreement concerning this part of the discussion. A conviction was shared that churches must rediscover the tradition of healing and the experience of the early church. Here the interdenominational dialogue is very important for sharing the experience of existing healing traditions (liturgical, etc.) as well as helping to rediscover the forgotten ones. Some members acknowledge the recent influence of the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches as a valuable contribution to the healing practices of the churches in the world. There should also be a space for the variety of healing practices without disregarding medical ways of treatment. The members of the group were also engaged in discussion of who could exercise the ministry of healing. Everybody agreed that the ministry of healing should not be narrowed down only to the responsibility of the priest/pastor. Members of the group wished that churches should provide the structural space for gifts of healing to be cultivated. People should be taught about healing as spiritual gift; and the ones who have it should be encouraged to use it. The ones who use it should, however, be guided by more experienced Christians in order to avoid misusage of this spiritual gift. The image of the crucified Christ, emptying himself for others, should be a model for using the power of healing. The group also pointed out a need for a space in the liturgy and the church's life for witnessing and sharing the experience of healing.

4. Healing with a consideration for those who are not healed.

In the discussion of this particular aspect of healing, the group decided not to discuss the causes of the illnesses in general, considering this question to be too broad. We also agreed that a distinction must be drawn between the notion of healing and that of curing. A person can remain physically ill but still be healed in his/her heart and be a full-bodied part of community. The community bears much responsibility to incorporate ill or handicapped persons. We also considered important that God's freedom to heal or not to heal must be regarded in one's search for healing: suffering or illness can be a path to Christ in the same way as the healing can. Still the ones that do not get healed, and their communities, should be

encouraged to believe that God's love is the same for the healed and sick ones. Cases when a person does not get healed should not discourage churches from the healing practices: practices of healing must not be driven by the presuppositions of the post-Enlightenment paradigm that demands that every action should have a result in order to be validated.

Recommendations

The group recommends WCC to pay more attention to the personal level of healing, including miraculous healing. We also like to stress a need for WCC to work on a language that would provide a space for serious consideration for miraculous healings as a part of our worldview. We consider it important to include the subject of miraculous healing as a part of theological education in general. We wish to encourage the interdenominational dialogue concerning the ministries of healing in order to exchange the experience of existing practices of healing as well as support and encourage the churches that wish to develop the ministries of healing. The WCC should encourage the member churches to cultivate the education and reflection of the spiritual gift of healing among their members. Moreover, those engaged in the ministry of healing should be provided with encouragement, support and guidance from the churches. Some members of the group want to emphasize that the modern ecumenical movement should acknowledge, and engage in dialogue with, the growing Pentecostal/Charismatic influence in the world today, especially in regard to their healing ministries.

2 c - Report on the discussions of the Group on Dialogue

Preamble

We met as a group of people that had different needs for dialogue and different attitudes towards it. But there was a general sense that dialogue is important. The group proved that dialogue was possible and shared the different necessities among diverse participants. Dialogue can originate out of situations of tension. Creative tensions could lead to new insights and deeper reflections.

Our group on dialogue was diverse. Our group is comprised of 8 "young" theologians. We come from different backgrounds: one from South Africa, two from Greece, one from Germany, one from the USA, one from Switzerland, one from Syria and one from the Netherlands. We are five women and three men. We are three Orthodox, one Pentecostal, one Lutheran, three Presbyterian/Reformed. Our backgrounds reflect the concerns and issues we brought to (the) dialogue.

In the report below you will find the subjects we have shared with each other. In the report we do not aim to streamline the topics: there are tensions and incongruences, and we agreed to let those come through.

Introduction

Has "dialogue" replaced Christian mission? This is the question we explored throughout our discussions of the last three days. We recognized the legacy of colonialism and mission. Examples mentioned were the Crusades and the violent colonization of Latin America and Africa. Due to this negative connotation of "mission," we explored the positive qualities of dialogue. One positive example of dialogue was liturgy which will be expounded upon later. Whereas mission can imply a one way direction, dialogue necessarily involves an exchange.

We understood in our conversations that dialogue could replace mission, yet we discussed dialogue as a form of mission. We recognized there was a tension between dialogue as an aim and dialogue as having an aim, namely unity between churches. To some group members, unity was a clear aim; for others, this unity was abstract.

Coming from different backgrounds our pre-occupations were with different kinds of dialogue: dialogue rises from a need of people, communities and churches to come to understanding and a way of living together. This meant that our respective interests were with inter-religious, inter-denominational, inter-cultural dialogue and dialogue with secular society. In our report we do not necessarily define dialogue every single time to one of these particular types, where needed, we will be specific.

Whereas we disagreed on the aim of dialogue, we were more united on the attitudes that participants need to bring to the dialogue. Humans have been given reason and free will: dialogue needs to be enjoyed as a tool to express God's love by listening, openness and acceptance. Dialogue is a way of witness to our faith. The Holy Spirit is at work in and between us in our dialogues with God and with each other.

We agreed that dialogue is space where perceptions and misperceptions can be shared, with the purpose of working towards unity. All engaged in dialogue bring their social location with them to the table. Openness towards others means that we realize we are more complete together than individually. Both parties are transformed as a result of engaging in the mutual learning process of dialogue. Dialogue depends on balanced power relations. We addressed that there are inequalities between people and communities: our gender, ethnicity, geo-political situation and our age could be either to our advantage or our disadvantage.

We recognized that a focus on denominational growth - aggressive evangelization of and competition among Christians - is an obstacle to inter-church dialogue. We rejected the idea of "franchise mission" (Ray Bakke/Urban missiologist), i.e. different churches *selling* a similar product competing over *consumers*. Mission in dialogue means to move beyond competition to co-operation. Instead of being self-sufficient, churches need to learn from each other through dynamic mutual exchanges. This includes that all participate: not only North to South and West to East but multi-directional in partnership. We recognized that the churches in the global south ("Two-Thirds World") are growing, and that there is a lively interest in mission, despite the negative experiences of the past.

Up to now, most of our observations have focused on inter-denominational dialogue. In our group, we did address dialogue with people who have no religious beliefs - as is the experience in parts of Europe. Yet, we did not come to conclusions if this dialogue is different from engaging in dialogue with people of different faiths.

We discerned various approaches to the inter-religious dialogue from a Christian point of view. On the one side we find the opinion that all religions are equally true. On the other side we find the conviction that there is no salvation outside Christianity. None in our group identified with these extreme positions. We would like to enter the exchange with people of other faiths with the same attitude as described above for inter-denominational dialogue. We give witness to our faith and receive the other's in order to live in peace, harmony and respect in our societies. As an example of inter-religious dialogue in the Middle East, the Christian-Muslim dialogue was mentioned. Each religion considers itself to be the source of absolute truth. However, the experience of living together - with all its positive and negative aspects -

leads to the discovery of the importance of moving beyond exclusivism to mutual respect and understanding.

We have different theological understandings of mission and how dialogue functions within it. Below we will mention some of the approaches mentioned.

Liturgy as dialogue: For the Orthodox, the eucharist constitutes a fundamental act of mission (as an initiative and as the content of missionary activity and dialogue between the different churches and cultures). The eucharist (that in the Orthodox context is called *Divine Liturgy*) manifests the very essence of the Church as an eschatological Kingdom of God, the reality of communion (*koinonia*) and of unity. The gathering together into one (*synaxis*), for communication with each other (horizontally) and with God (vertically) is, at the same time, the *going forth* for mission. It is through the eucharist that church dialogues with the entire world, assuming it and transforming it. Therefore it is the transformation of the world and of the humanity that the Church proposes. In the Bible we have an example of dialogues: between God and people and among people. This dialogue is not simple and unambiguous. Our contexts are a part of the ongoing dialogue with/in the biblical texts. Dialogue reflects back on the self: we need to evaluate ourselves and the other to validate the dialogue. This leads to transformation, which does not signify that we lose our ecclesial or religious identity. The role of the minister can facilitate the dialogue between the congregation and God and represent the people before God (Martin Luther used the term "tube" between people and God). Dialogue may have an aim in unity, but this needs to be translated in social action.

Everything that we discussed was there because we thought it as a future plan. We tried to find ways to make dialogue flourish. As we reflected on dialogue under the perspective of mission we were influenced by various different backgrounds

A. We have to admit that **mission** is often regarded as a term with a strict positive or negative connotation

From a positive connotation mission is the basic character/ essence of the church.

From a negative connotation it is still an expression of colonization and proselytism

Concluding this, we could say that **Mission** splits.

B. We should admit that **Dialogue** is often or mostly regarded as a term with a strict positive notion. **Dialogue** seems to combine

For some people it has a certain aim (unity)

For some others it is a dynamic process with an open end. So the general idea was that it could be helpful to come up with concrete suggestions for future plans. The nature of our dialogue was completely diverse as a result of our diversity.

Recommendations

1. The clarification of definitions must be a priority and we have to understand those definitions respecting their contextuality. Dialogue is also a matter of terms. The language of

dialogue is a theme of great importance. Dialogue is full of confusion because of the difficulty to understand the language.

2. Mission academics, practitioners/scholars and church leaders could collect, refine, disseminate information in ways that are accessible both to academic and grass-roots level. Dialogue has often lacked an adequate public dimension. It instead has focused on individual or ecclesial concerns. Participation in public forums, politics, social movement and citizenship should be considered as a basis for creative dialogue
3. Community Bible studies can be developed which highlight issues of dialogue between culture, context, religion, gender and class. Develop and encourage the use of contextual-narrative paradigm as a dynamic form of dialogue.
4. The conference in Athens could also develop a participant accountability plan, i.e. time table for regional reports.
5. Initiative research projects concerning youth perceptions on inter-church dialogue and church unity. This research should be qualitative with the option for the development of and critique of contemporary themes regarding the issues above.
6. Analyse denominational constitutions, policies and statutes that cause exclusion and division in the body of Christ.
7. Encourage and facilitate "glocal" dialogue to create awareness of different world view, i.e. North-South, first and two-thirds world.

Conclusion

The process of dialoguing on dialogue has been intensive and transforming for us as a group: the trust and openness among us, with all our differences have been a gift for which we are grateful. This has been a challenging process that we would like to continue. We were reminded to the acts of the apostles by Dr. Renato Maiocchi⁴, who said that the apostles confronted each other in dialogue and love. Hopefully it will be received and continued by other young theologians/missionologists. We will carry this enriching experience with us from here, back to our countries, churches, congregations and studies.

2 d - Pneumatology group: report of discussion

Our group affirmed the growing interest in the theology of the Holy Spirit as a helpful way of understanding and even changing the way we live mission.

We identified several important topics for consideration if we want to understand more about the Holy Spirit in connection with various aspects of mission:

Reconciliation as the work of the Spirit in the Church so that we can be reconciling and healing communities in the world. Participation in the Spirit's work of healing, restoration and renewal. Recognition of the work of the Spirit in other faiths, which can change the nature of inter-religious dialogue. Participation with the Spirit, as Christians are formed into the Body of Christ precisely through diversity, variety and multiplicity. Invitation through the Spirit to let our identity be shaped as being Christ's and agents of the new reality of the Kingdom.

Focus on the presence of the Holy Spirit in all creation, which calls us to an ecclesial understanding of nature/ our responsibility comes from our ecclesial self-understanding

Although our lives should be lived as mission, "Christian living" does not always incorporate such an understanding. This is because we find it necessary to go outside our usual contexts for living and cross boundaries into the contexts of others- this is a major part of what constitutes mission, and we are able to do it only through the power of the Holy Spirit. In this sense, we can suggest that mission consists of the fruit and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Our Christian identity consists of being open to and be led by the Spirit, so that we can be agents of this mission.

A major challenge our group identified is that of discerning or characterizing the nature of the Holy Spirit. This led us to formulate several key questions:

How, if at all, can we discern that the work of the Church is in fact the work of the Spirit? Can we discern a difference between experience of the Holy Spirit and other spiritual experiences? What is the purpose, if any, of describing the nature of the Holy Spirit? How do we perceive and appreciate the different manifestations of the fruit and gifts of the Spirit that we observe in Christian traditions in various contexts? How can we understand the relations between the persons of the Trinity as a way *ad intra* being and how this relation as *perichorisis* is lived *ad extra* as a way of how God is manifesting Himself. Is there any relation between Christ's *oikonomia* and Spirit's *oikonomia* and mission of Christ and mission of Spirit?

We can identify an aspect of contemporary ecumenical mission as the need for open encounter with Christians from diverse communities in order to learn from each other. Within the Church we recognize different types and expressions of spirituality, which are present in diverse traditions in various contexts. Each of these expressions may add to our understanding of the Holy Spirit, although they cannot be said in sum to complete it. Trying to discern the Holy Spirit in this way contributes to Christian unity.

Finally, an emphasis on the Holy Spirit is also powerful in that it directs us to a focus on relevance to this world when we talk about mission. This focus no longer rests so much on a specific message that can be preached but on a radically transformative understanding of experiencing the Kingdom of God here and now, not just in the *eschaton*. Being transformed by the Spirit leads us to become agents of the Kingdom in our communities and in the global community. Therefore, mission becomes the work we do to realize the Kingdom every day, in every place.

(The group added here some thoughts and observations about the consultation in general which were taken up in the evaluation session)

3 - Summary of discussion points raised when the plenary received the group reports

The following notes have a personal character and reflect the way the final sessions have been understood and noted by the two co-moderators. Theses are not official minutes of the discussion, nor in any way an adopted aide-mémoire.

Where needed and possible, this document refers to quotes from the group report in italics.

3 a - Discussion on report of reconciliation group

1

The question of *inherited sin* mentioned in the report is based on a story told in the group about a bishop of a European country who first refused to apologize for sins committed by his church against the Roma during the second world war, on the basis that any church representative of today could not be considered responsible for wrong actions of the past ("We did not do this ourselves"). This raises the question of the collective responsibility of communities, which often are called to apologize for wrongs committed by earlier generations. Should present church authorities or governing bodies confess such sins, and if so, how and on behalf of whom? In other terms: if for reconciliation there is a need to correct past wrongs, who is called to take responsibility for it?

There was no controversial discussion on this in the consultation, but the story itself was a story of high controversy.

2

Forgiveness is not a pre-requisite. Challenged on this formulation, the group explained its text. Forgiveness is essential to any process of reconciliation, as is the desire by the perpetrators to seek for forgiveness, there is no doubt about it. However, the group didn't want to fix a strict chronological sequence and acknowledged that, yes, the "perpetrators" must be held accountable and become aware of what they did, but that could come at any point during a reconciliation process. It didn't have to be the condition for starting it. Not everybody agreed with the explanation. For some, without forgiveness at the very start, one finds oneself in a logic of revenge.

3

"*Metanoia*": During the discussion, it was felt that the liturgical aspect of reconciliation was missing (sacrament of confession or reconciliation e.g.). The group acknowledged, but had never intended to be complete in the description of reconciliation processes.

4

Critique was expressed that the report did not mention the importance of punitive or retributive justice. It hadn't come up in the group's discussions, was the answer.

5

Some missed the personal aspect of reconciliation with God and the need of every human being to be reconciled with God. The group pointed out it wanted to emphasise humanity's response to God's reconciliation. The fact of being reconciled was, for them, the point of departure (not a matter of discussion). It has to do with Christian identity (that's why the text affirms in its § 1 that the identity of the church *comes from scripture*). It is an implicit point. However, they all do recognise that there is no reconciliation without the fruit of the Spirit, and so that reconciliation is linked to pneumatology.

3 b - Discussion on report of healing group

The report was not read, but summarised in plenary.

Both general agreement and (more often) fundamental disagreement were expressed as to the way this report describes elements of the healing ministry and criticises the post-Enlightenment worldview (the term being not very helpful, if it refers to the rational scientific approach which is precisely the one of the Enlightenment). "I am in deep agreement with this

group on post-Enlightenment" "Important - we have a lack of talking about healing and the Holy Spirit" - "I don't find this fits my context and my church" - "I agree with the critique"- "I don't find my background".

Some of the critical points raised could be summarised as follows:

1

The insistence on the "*miraculous*" was challenged. According to the temptation story, in the desert, Jesus rejected the use of the miraculous to manifest the kingdom. He chose the way of powerlessness, the theology of the cross. Others would have preferred terms such as "deeply spiritual" instead of "miraculous". Some were of the opinion that space had to be opened for miracles, but questioned the weight put on it in the text.

2

The critique of the Enlightenment approach was considered too one-sided by most speakers, with the exceptions of people who thought that was necessary, since the ethos of the Enlightenment had frustrated so many Christians. More care was expected from the treatment of the Enlightenment world-view, and the understanding of the sacred and the uncreated energies of God.

3

The lack of a wider perspective was criticised. Even within the Enlightenment paradigm, there are forms of personal healing, there is pastoral care and approach, and much which psychotherapy could contribute to such a discussion and which is totally missing in the group's report. The plenary pleaded for integrating various traditions on the personal healing aspect. There was also criticism expressed because the social levels of the healing ministry had not been addressed (a fact acknowledged in the group report)

4

Questions were raised as to the relation between faith and healing. What was priority: faith in Christ or in miraculous healing? One should also clarify the goal of healing. Basically, healing was based on redemption and restores people to redemption. In other terms, what is the nature and purpose of healing, what are the goals of healing?

5

A specific question was raised as to what was meant by *the more experienced Christians* who should guide those with spiritual gifts (in § 3 Practice of healing). To this, the response was that spontaneous healing has to be controlled from outside, i.e. the community, so that it remains within Christianity. The group didn't want to speak of church magisterium, but wanted to insist on accountability.

In the responses coming from the group, it was clear that there had been internal discussions as well. However, it was stated that the capacity to heal was one of the gifts of the Spirit and could not be disregarded, because of its serious biblical grounding. It is part of the ministry of the church (I Cor. 12, Mark 16). There needs to be a distinction between the miracles Jesus refuses in the temptation story, and his practice of healing, well attested in the New Testament. However, one must be aware that for every biblical "original", there was a "duplicate" in the world, and so there are miracles done by others. The relation between faith and healing is not so simple, since it may imply the faith of the person that is the healer and/or

the faith of the person healed. At times faith is significant in healing stories, at times not. However, faith is what makes people well.

The group was aware of the limitations of its report. It had decided to use that lens for approaching the healing ministry, because that had not often been debated in ecumenical circles. It was aware that it neglected other aspects.

There was general agreement in challenging the excessive use of "should" language in the report. It was clear that this report was a starting point for discussion, not a concluding paper on the question.

3 c - Discussion on report of dialogue group

Following the presentation of the report by the dialogue group, there was also a lively discussion. Debates and comments addressed the following matters:

1

No salvation outside Christianity □. extreme position?

Can one say that a position affirming that there is no salvation outside Christianity is an "extreme" position? If some religions are more true than others and yet there is salvation outside Christianity, a question was asked, does this mean that in the group's opinion, absolute truth is not necessary for salvation? "To live in peace, does that mean one has to deny what we believe?" Some participants for whom mission is a priority affirmed that salvation is in Christ and there is no salvation outside faith in Christ. They didn't feel it correct to have such a position qualified as extreme. They would not however affirm that salvation was possible only in Christianity. Reference was made in the discussion to people from Muslim background having received the revelation of Christ without having links with a church or institutionalised Christianity.

The group acknowledged it had only been able to start exploring the question. They explained that it in the discussions, they had not denied salvation in Christ. The text is to be understood as following: in interreligious dialogue, there are different theories and positions. Some affirm that all religions are true. Others say that only Christianity is the true religion. "We found ourselves in the middle" was the oral summary of the group's position on this question. The word "extreme" in the text means the two ends of a line of possibilities. By "Christianity" is meant: "institutionalised Christianity".

This answer provoked a follow-up question: "Can I take with me into a dialogue the conviction that there is no salvation outside faith in Jesus Christ?". The answer from the group was: yes. The group said it had tried to convey the fact that in a dialogue (e.g. between Christians and Muslims) both will continue to believe in the respective message of their religion, but will be more open. The group wanted to distance itself from exclusivist positions.

On church and salvation, one participant remarked that it was necessary and important to distinguish between the canonical and the charismatic limits of the church.

2

During the discussion, several persons shared thoughts about how they perceived *truth* as related to mission and dialogue. This was not a structured discussion on truth and theology,

however. "We do not own truth, we're part of the truth" said one of the participants. For another, defending an Orthodox point of view, as churches we are the truth, we are not part of the truth. If you don't have the feeling you are the truth, if you think you are not the truth, then no dialogue is possible.

3

There was some debate on the use of the terms *mission* and *dialogue*, and their relation in the text. Did dialogue replace mission or should it be seen as a part of mission? What was the aim of dialogue? The group explained that they had realised how mission had very different significations in the variety of contexts represented in its discussions. They thought that the term was difficult. The group discussed dialogue as a description of God's love and urged to adopt with people of other religions the same attitude as in ecumenical relations. But there was no final conclusion to the terminology debate in the group nor in plenary.

4

Several other items were addressed briefly. One difficult question could not find an answer in that meeting: What are the next steps for Christians living in a situation of religious intolerance, after they have tried as much as possible to dialogue, without receiving a satisfactory answer?

The paragraph on liturgy as dialogue received appreciation in the discussion. Mission should not only be considered as "going outside" or "sheep making".

5

What is the significance of dialogue or mission in a fully *secularised world* (with a classical scientific worldview) in which people have no religious beliefs whatsoever? In such contexts, mission has a very negative connotation. What about interreligious dialogue then, was asked. "We can dialogue also with an atheist. To be Christian is a possibility to see in the other the face of Jesus Christ. We can thus not limit dialogue to those having a specific understanding of truth".

3 d - Discussion on report of pneumatology group

"What is in the report on our discussions contains 10% of what we discussed□.."

In the plenary discussion, the following themes were highlighted:

1

Focus on the presence of the Holy Spirit in all creation

It was not clear what was exactly referred to. If the Holy Spirit is present everywhere, what then is the significance of baptism? Does the group refer to environment questions or to the presence of the Spirit in other religions?

The response emphasised that one should think of stages of the presence of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is present in different ways, in eucharist, the word, human beings, animals, the environment. It is not true to affirm that the Holy Spirit was not present before Pentecost. The Spirit was at work since creation, which does not mean we "naturalise" the Spirit nor disregard Pentecost. Everything which comes to life does so through the Holy Spirit, nothing

has life because of itself. How, would one say, does an animal worship God? Through its own existence. God is not only the creator (in the beginning), but continuously sustains everything.

2

There is a special sense in which the church is "pentecostal", but it was difficult to describe it, said the group in answer to a question. The sentence "participation with the Spirit, as Christians are formed into the body of Christ precisely through diversity, variety and multiplicity" tries to convey something of the discussion in the group.

3

Some persons in the plenary needed explanation on the meaning of *perichoresis*⁵. In their response, group members reminded that all starts from God being relational in Godself. The question is how that is lived in the church. When we speak about the Holy Spirit in the world, we mean manifestations of God in the world, which are not separate from God's own life. The term *perichoresis* defines what is meant by the inner-trinitarian relations (reference to an image of joining hands).

4

The group responded to a question on the significance of the proposal to move away from the classical (ecumenical) paradigm based on God's mission (*missio Dei*). The proposed greater emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit obliges to take seriously the fact that God is a God in relation. It will also emphasise the relational aspect of human life (*I - Thou* relationship in philosophy) and of Christian witness. It can open new ways for an understanding and practice of dialogue.

5

A question was raised - independently of the text of the group report - about the meaning of the reference in Matt. 12:31-32 to the unforgivable sin (blasphemy against the Spirit). One member of the group answered that they had discussed the question, and acknowledged the difficulty and seriousness of the matter. That verse had silenced conversation on the Holy Spirit in many places. No final answer could be given: There is blasphemy when one disregards the witness of the Holy Spirit. If the Spirit is present/at work in all creation, blasphemy would be to disregard this e.g.

6

Remarks came from the plenary to the link between the Holy Spirit and mission. One said that as Christians we go out because we received the Spirit. It's God's mission which leads us to do so. Mission is a direct consequence of the Spirit's presence and empowerment (reference to Acts 1:8). Another intervention mentioned the importance of Christ's incarnation (Phil 2) as focus on mission in his particular context, as more important than an exclusive emphasis on the Spirit.

Several members of the group responded. Christian incarnation is indeed the model of mission. But one has to see that it's the Holy Spirit who gives identity to Jesus (when Jesus is baptised), then Jesus crosses boundaries and preaches. The Spirit gives the dynamics and pulls persons out of their own situation. Mission is to be understood basically as living out Christian life. But it has something to do with crossing boundaries, going out of one's "ego". To go out to the end of the earth and love people is only possible through the Spirit.

4 - Common recommendations

The plenary did not want to own all recommendations coming from the groups as such. They remain group recommendations. There was however on the last evening of the consultation a time dedicated to a plenary exchange on follow-up. The present notes are not to be considered as adopted minutes of that discussion, but summarise matters (not formulations) on which we seemed to have reached some consensus.

* The experience of such a work with and among young missiologists must continue and the WCC/CWME must take the responsibility to facilitate the organisation of further consultations such as the Rome one.

* As much as possible, continue with the same persons, enlarging the group however with persons from denominations or regions not enough represented. It was felt important to build now on relationships which had been established, instead of starting with a totally new group. If the age became a problem, they said, then call this group "forever young missiologists" ..

* Facilitate the creation of a network of young missiologists through a database or a internet directory.

* The *International Review of Mission* is asked to make space to the young missiologists, and perhaps even dedicate a special issue to their research and writings, drawing on persons from this group to form an editorial committee for that.

The following **themes** for future common work and consultations were mentioned in the discussion:

Reconciliation and ecological justice

Reconciliation and healing in broken communities⁶

Liturgical aspects of the themes discussed (rituals of healing, of reconciliation, sharing of wealth of liturgical resources)

Mission (crossing boundaries, dialogue with other people) in the wide sense of the term.

Notes offered by the two co-moderators of the Rome consultation, Beate Fagerli who moderated the final sessions, and Jacques Matthey who took notes.

Geneva, February 7, 2005

Notes

¹ A story told in and to the group. Cf. the report on the plenary discussion below.

² The definition is to be found in: *Healing and Wholeness. The Churches Role in Health. A report by the Christian Medical Commission*. Geneva, WCC, 1990, p. 6

³ By the term "personal aspect of healing" we understand healing that involves physical, spiritual, emotional and/or mental healing of an individual.

⁴ Cf. overall introduction to this document.

5 A Greek term referring to the mutual giving and receiving among the three persons of the Trinity, their interpenetration.

6 The world mission conference in Athens was encouraged to include the miraculous when talking about healing.