Study Project on Sustainable Mobility Worldwide Summary of Findings

Mobile - but not Driven

Towards equitable and sustainable mobility and transport



World Council of Churches Justice, Peace and Creation

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The Study Project on Sustainable Mobility Worldwide

The threat of climate change has long been a major concern on the agenda of the World Council of Churches. For more than ten years, the Council has consistently urged governments to take the measures required to mitigate the impact of climate change and has sought to strengthen the churches' awareness of this threat and its implications for their witness and daily life.

Motorised mobility is one of the main, if not *the* main contributor to the emissions of carbon-dioxide responsible, together with other greenhouse gases, for global warming and the destabilisation of today's climatic conditions. As a corollary of its efforts in the field of climate change, the World Council of Churches launched in 1998 a study project on the problems of motorised mobility. How can forms and patterns of motorised mobility be developed which are in harmony with the requirements of both equity and sustainability? A study guide under the title "Towards Sustainable Mobility Worldwide" was sent to all churches with the request to reflect and comment on it in the light and perspective of the particular situation in each part of the world.

The responses were collected and discussed at an international consultation held at the Evangelical Academy Bad Boll, Germany in May 2000. The following pages contain a summary of the findings.

The urgency of new approaches is more widely recognised today

Today, issues of traffic and transport are higher on the agenda of national governments and local authorities around the world than in earlier times. The reason is simple. In the last few decades the number of motorised vehicles has increased immensely in almost all countries of the world. Patterns of society and styles of life have changed. A new situation has arisen. At the same time the negative impact of motorised transport on many aspects of life has become more manifest. Obviously, the situation varies from country to country. But everywhere – whether in the industrialised or in the developing world – the tension between the 'dream' and the 'nightmare' of motorised transport has become a daily experience. How can equitable and environmentally sustainable patterns of mobility be achieved? The need for adequate regulation is sharply felt today. Traffic and transport planning has become a central political issue. If motorised mobility on the road and in the air is to contribute to the quality of human life, approaches must be found to guide its further development.

A few figures may illustrate the quantitative leap, which has taken place in the recent past.

In 1950 there were 70 million cars, trucks and buses worldwide. Today there are ten times as many (700 million).

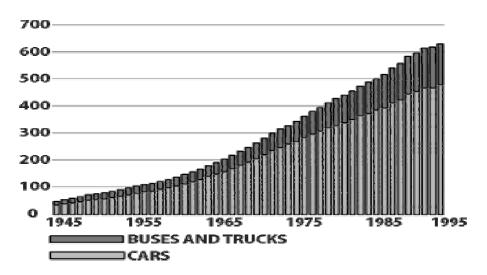
From 1965 to 1986 the individual motorised transport increased by 91%; in the same period energy consumption of motorised traffic went up by 168%.

In the last 40 years the number of cars increased five times faster than the growth of the population. In industrialised countries nearly 50% of the population own a car, in third world countries, only about 1% are car owners.

Since World War II the scheduled domestic and international air traffic increased from 9 million passengers annually (1946) to more than 1.5 billion in 1999 or by approximately 10% per year. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) expects a further annual growth of 5% through 2015.

Fig. 1

Trends in Global Motor Vehicle Registration, 1945-1995



Source: American Automobile Manufacturers Association (AAMA), *World Motor Vehicle Data 1993* (AAMA, Washington, D.C., 1993), p. 23 and American Automobile Manufacturers association (AAMA), *Motor Vehicle Fact and Figures 1996* (AAMA, Washington, D.C., 1996), p. 44.

The vision guiding the churches in their witness

Churches are called to participate in the debate on the future of motorised mobility. Given the immense potential of motorised mobility for human life and the whole planet, they cannot shun the responsibility to take a stand on the issues involved. Motorised mobility in its variety of forms offers exciting new perspectives, it rightly attracts the enthusiasm and the imagination of the present generation; however, it also has the potential of leading to increased injustice and ecological destruction. Churches cannot remain silent when God's gift of life is at stake.

What is the churches' vision for society? They will seek to propose an order of society governed by the perspectives of "justice" and "sustainability". Their

vision is of a responsible human community in which all members share equally in the goods provided by Creation without exploiting her to the disadvantage of future generations.

Mobility, community and human fulfilment

Mobility has always been and still is an essential dimension of human life. Human beings have not been created as plants to stay in one and the same place; they are capable of moving and changing location. Moving is necessary for human survival. The quality of community life depends on it. People enrich one another through coming together across cultural boundaries. They collaborate by reaching out. Being mobile provides a sense of fulfilment. Transport helps to exchange goods and to put them to wider use.

But motorised mobility is not an end in itself. It must serve to build and enrich community. It is a human capacity, which can be used or misused. The choice of forms and quantity of mobility is subordinated to the requirements of human dignity and genuine community.

There has always been a close connection between mobility and trade. New forms of trade have led to an increase of trade, and increased trade inevitably involves a higher degree of mobility. To a large extent, today's explosion of motorised mobility is due to the patterns of trade. As local markets are replaced by the exchange of goods at the world level, distances of transport increase. The question must be asked whether today's amount of trade serves community and human fulfilment.

The price of motorised mobility

The lessons, which we have so far learned from the study project clearly indicate that today's forms of motorised mobility fail to fulfil this purpose. The price we pay for motorised mobility is out of proportion to the gains we draw from it.

The following aspects deserve to be mentioned:

- Traffic and transport have a negative impact on *health conditions*. Road users generate damage to themselves, other individuals and society – through noise, pollution and accidents – in the form of illness, in particular respiratory diseases, injuries and deterioration of mental health and social relations.

The World Health Organisation (WHO), European Area has issued several reports on this subject. It draws particular attention to the negative consequences of today's sedentary life style. In a Fact Sheet recently published on the occasion of the World Health Day 2002, we read that "physical activity reduces by 50% the risk of developing coronary heart disease, adult diabetes or obesity, by 30% the risk of developing hypertension...". WHO strongly advocates substituting

walking and cycling for driving, pointing to the fact that more than 30% of car journeys in Europe are of less than 3 km daily and 50% of less than 5 km. These distances would provide the recommended daily ration of physical activity.

- The increase of motorised mobility leads to a general *acceleration of human life*. The desires express through the slogan "higher, faster and farther" tend to break the balance between activity and rest. This acceleration of life multiplies horizons and options and accelerates the movement of people and the exchange of goods over great distances.
- Around 500,000 people loose their lives annually due to motorised transport. The death toll on the road and due to aircraft accidents is year by year higher than the toll of the devastating wars, which have taken place in recent years. In addition, more than 10 million people are injured and many among them remain handicapped for the rest of their lives.

Figures vary between a minimum figure of 461,000 (International Road Federation, IRF, for 1999) and 700,000. Not all countries provide statistics, and casualties are determined in different ways. Whatever way of counting is used, the figures are impressive: 54 per hour, 1290 per day, 461,000 per year.

- Traffic and transport severely affect *the human habitat and landscape*. The need for roads, parking space and airports, changes the face of cities and villages and makes convivial life less likely. Streets and squares are no longer places for people to meet. The increase in mobility diminishes the sense of responsibility for the immediate neighbourhood. Self-realisation of the individual person is given priority over the commitment to community, especially the local community.
- Traffic and transport make *enormous claims on the environment*. They contribute decisively to pollution of the air, the soil and the water. Large areas of land are being designated for roads and airfields. With the transformation of the environment, riches of natural beauty are inevitably being destroyed. The gains obtained by motorised mobility are no doubt outweighed by these damages. To a large extent the costs related to motorised mobility are not borne by the actors; i.e. the people driving, travelling and transporting, but by society in general. Society has to pay large sums for health costs, rehabilitation of the handicapped, measures to protect against environmental degradation, etc. To a certain extent, even the infrastructure for motorised mobility must be provided by public funds.

Motorised mobility and climate change

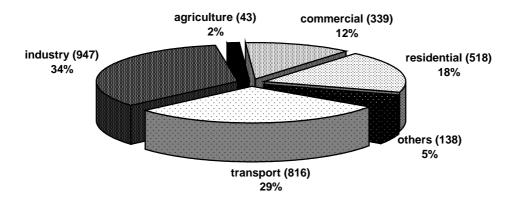
Traffic and transport are, above all, the primary cause of *climate change*. They are the main source of carbon-dioxide emissions, which lead to global warming and, as a consequence, disturb the present climatic conditions with disastrous effects such as more frequent floods, storms and droughts. For at least two

decades, the scientific community has sought to shake public indifference and has called for measures to mitigate the impact of climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the scientific arm of the UN negotiations on Climate Change, representing over 2000 specialists on climate issues, has recently published its Third Assessment Report. The verdict is clear. Climate conditions *are* changing and there is little doubt that human activity is largely involved in these changes. If emissions are not drastically reduced in the near future, weather anomalies will increase even further. To keep changes within bearable limits, the scientific community calls for a reduction of 60% of CO2 emissions by 2050 (compared to 1990 levels).

The prospect of climate change makes it even more important to review present forms of motorised mobility. Clearly, the targets put forward by scientists will not be reached without a fundamental re-orientation of present patterns of motorised mobility. In the area of motorised mobility, any "business as usual" approach would be irresponsible.

Fig. 2

CO2 emissions worldwide in billion tons



Source: OECD, Cars and Climate Change, 1990, p 21

Various modes of motorised mobility

Not all modes of motorised mobility contribute to the same extent to a negative impact on the environment. Recent studies, e.g. the IPCC report on aviation (1999), have shown that by far the most damaging form of motorised mobility is air transport. Its share in overall transport is estimated at only 3-5% but is likely to increase considerably in the future. It contributes to the greenhouse effect not only through CO2 emissions but also by producing vapour and cirrus clouds and

causing other forms of pollution. Airplanes cause 100 times more damage per passenger kilometre than trains, supersonic planes even as much as a thousand times more damage. In addition, aviation infrastructure becomes increasingly burdensome for the human habitat and for national budgets. The expansion of airports meets with increasing resistance because of high levels of noise and increased risks of accidents.

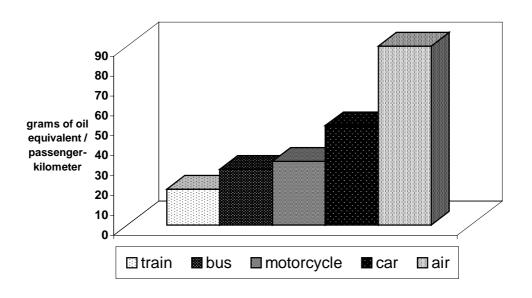
Private cars are next in the row. They consume per person and kilometre a relatively high amount of fuel. Rail transport is ecologically the least damaging means of transport.

In light of this, it is imperative to abandon today's dominance of the private car and to support public transport to the highest possible degree. The same applies to the transport of goods. Wherever possible, train systems need to be revived to allow for a shift from the road to the rail.

Ultimately, the most "human", and no doubt most healthy, form of mobility is walking. While for a great many there is still no alternative to walking, where motorised mobility increases, the potential of walking tends to be forgotten.

Fig 3.

Energy consumption by transport mode



The situation differs from country to country

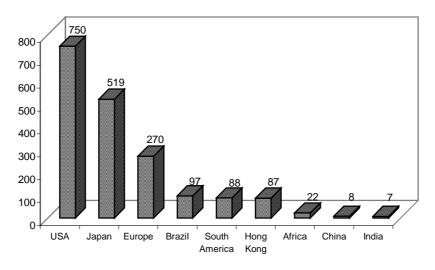
How can a new culture of mobility be brought about? How can a reorientation of transport facilities be achieved? Clearly, the reduction of CO2 and other harmful emissions required to keep climate change within acceptable limits, cannot be obtained without reducing motorised mobility, particularly on the road and in the air.

Many possible measures could be taken. Before engaging in a discussion of various approaches, it is essential to point out the diversity of situations that must be addressed.

There is a basic difference between industrialised and developing countries. While motorised mobility is expanding everywhere, the issues and priorities differ from place to place. The industrialised world faces problems of over-expansion and over-consumption. How can the demand for the transport of persons and goods be reduced to reasonable levels? How can erroneous developments of past decades be set right? How can new priorities be achieved among the different modes of transport; i.e. private car versus public transport, changing transport of goods from the road to the train, setting limits to air transport, especially for short distances?

Fig. 4

Motor Vehicles per 1000 persons, 1994



Source: American Automobile Manufacturers Association (AAMA). Motor Vehicle Facts and Figures 1996 (AAMA, Washington, D.C., 1996), pp. 44-47.

Within the group of industrialised countries there is a marked difference between Western and Eastern Europe. Since the fall of the communist regimes, transport systems have changed. The use of private cars has dramatically increased; often, worn out second-hand cars have been imported from the West. Accordingly, priority was given to the construction of roads. In many places, public transport facilities have diminished in quantity and quality. The question is now how to develop a more balanced approach to traffic and transport issues.

In the developing world, still other questions arise. In many countries of the South, the basic needs of transport are not fulfilled. Remote areas continue to be isolated. Large parts of the population, especially women, continue to walk, often carrying enormous loads, over long distances. Often, the infrastructure ensuring efficient communication in the whole country is missing. The primary

question in developing countries is therefore not how to reduce motorised mobility but how to develop transport in ways which make it accessible for all.

In short: less motorised transport is needed in the industrialised countries, while better transport is what is required in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe and in the countries of the South.

How can traffic and transport be reconciled with sustainability?

Action to reach this goal requires steps at many levels at the same time. The negative impact of motorised mobility can be reduced by technological, economic and political measures. Ultimately, everything depends on human behaviour. Ensuring a better future calls for a new approach to mobility.

A. Technological efficiency

Much can be achieved by technological improvements of all modes of motorised and mechanical mobility.

Motorised vehicles are at present clearly wasteful. There are, in particular, many ways to reduce the need for energy and the amount of harmful emissions from all types of motorised transport. The efficiency of planes, cars, trucks, buses, motorbikes and trains can be raised considerably above present levels.

There is in particular a high potential for the technological improvement of cars. Energy consumption in cars can be drastically reduced by the introduction of new and more efficient models. The famous "three litre car" is not just a pious wish, it can be manufactured. Much could also be obtained by improved driving behaviour. Tests have shown that fuel consumption can be reduced up to 30% by more responsible driving.

Less advanced is the use of alternative sources of energy for moving vehicles. But research is underway in several areas: vehicles equipped by solar energy, hydrogen, etc.

The aviation, automobile and ship-building industries bear a great responsibility in this respect. By producing highly polluting and fuel consuming vehicles, they are primary actors in environmental destruction and health degradation. For them, technological efficiency is an ethical imperative. But it is in the long run also an economic necessity. Though aviation, automobile and ship-building industries have a short-term interest in high production rates, they should also have an interest in developing strategies, which ensure sustainable economic activities in the long run.

More and more, industries will have to address not only the issue of a more sustainable production but also the impact of their products on society. For a long time, they paid little attention to the effects of their products on society. They sold what seemed to sell best and did not first seek to serve the needs of a given country. Industries have a moral obligation to participate actively in

reflection on traffic and transport planning and to get involved in the implementation of more reasonable approaches.

B. Political 'efficiency'

Achieving sustainable transport for all segments of society requires political action. The expansion of motorised transport cannot be left to uncontrolled economic pressures. There is a need for consistent planning guided by an overall vision and the criteria of both justice and sustainability. To resist a non-coordinated or even chaotic expansion of traffic and transport, a framework is needed that ensures mobility within just and reasonable limits. To be successful in this venture it is essential that different interest groups participate in this debate through a democratic process.

Such a framework includes several aspects; e.g.,

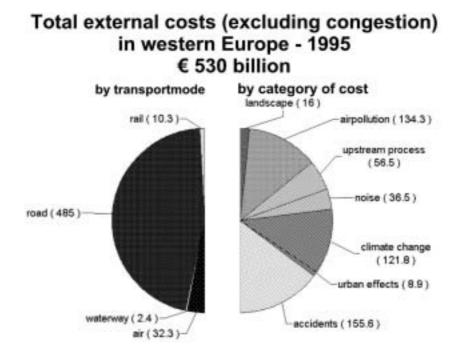
- Reducing the demand for transport through urban planning; i.e., reducing traffic in cities by new and improved offers of public transport, creating car-free areas, speed limits, shortening travel needs from home to working place and also from production to consumption, offering safe bicycle lanes and walking paths, etc.
- *Choice of modes*; i.e., promoting the most appropriate and least damaging modes of traffic and transport, in particular revitalising and enlarging train transport for persons and goods.
- Introducing stricter rules on traffic security; e.g., speed reduction in inhabited areas, highways and tunnels, increasing fines for breaking traffic rules, etc.
- Imposing fiscal and other economic measures in favour of a social and environmentally balanced transport policy; e.g., road and tunnel tolls, fuel taxes, etc.

C. Internalisation of external costs

An important consideration for effective "political efficiency" concerns the internalisation of external costs. Motorised traffic and transport are in fact subsidised. The benefits they bring to society are largely outweighed by the costs society has to pay for them. External costs, i.e., costs that are not covered by the price paid by the user include

- Impact on health, including medical and rehabilitation costs following accidents.
- Impact on nature; i.e., degradation of air, soil, water, vegetation and fauna.
- Impact on climate conditions.
- Large parts of the cost of infrastructure; i.e., construction of roads, tunnels, airports, etc.

Fig. 5 A study conducted by INFRAS/IWW came to the conclusion that the external costs caused by transport (excluding congestion) for 1995 amount to € 530 billion or 7% of the GDP of the countries included in the study.



Prices should tell the truth. If the "polluter pays principle" was strictly to be applied, users of motorised vehicles would have to pay a much higher price for their ways of being mobile. In fact, traffic and transport are socially unjust because people making little use of air and car transport are forced to contribute financially to the functioning of a destructive system. By favouring the change to alternative energies, the "polluter pays principle" may also significantly contribute to reducing the dependency of numerous national economies from petrol imports.

It is therefore essential that an estimate of external costs be established for each country. People need to be aware of the financial implications for society of motorised mobility. Admittedly, it is difficult to establish reliable figures. The economic consequences of climate change, for instance, are uncertain in many respects and are therefore difficult to calculate. But even with such uncertainties, it is clear that the external costs of traffic and transport are enormous.

The most striking example of unfair fiscal policy in the transport sector is air traffic. The present situation clearly amounts to a market distortion. Aviation enjoys direct subsidies because no tax is levied on kerosene. This anomaly should be corrected as soon as possible. There is no reason for exempting the most damaging mode of transport from taxation. Action will be possible only on the basis of international agreements. All efforts towards international conventions must therefore be pursued and supported consistently.

D. Investments

The development of motorised mobility depends largely on the assignment of investments. How are priorities set both in public and private investments? In taking their decisions governments, banks and development agencies need to take into account the criterion of sustainability and attribute accordingly the sums available for investments.

In most countries, the last five decades have seen a gradual deterioration of train transport. The train system in the United States, for instance, once well functioning, has been abandoned, giving priority to air traffic. After 1989, in Eastern and Central Europe, instead of supporting and improving existing train systems and other forms of public transport, investments were made available by international development programmes primarily for the construction of long distance roads from Western to Eastern Europe. As long as priority continues to be given to road and air transport, it will prove very difficult to realise more sustainable approaches to motorised mobility.

What is urgently needed both at national and international levels are more responsible investment policies. Priority setting is particularly important at the international level. How can investments be so directed that they contribute to genuine and sustainable development in disadvantaged or developing countries? The availability of investments is a decisive factor in traffic and transport planning. The decisions of international development programmes' institutions can, indeed, have disastrous effects from the perspective of sustainability.

E. Culture of sustainable mobility

The issues of motorised mobility cannot be exclusively addressed at the technological, political and economic levels. The WCC study project has shown clearly that the present forms and degrees of mobility have a strong cultural component. This has deep roots in the minds and hearts of people but the desire to be mobile and free is also produced by intense publicity on the part of commercial firms. Maximum mobility is promoted as an indisputable value. Motorised mobility has become part of today's culture.

True, the negative impact of motorised mobility causes more and more people to look for alternatives. But in most cases, such people remain in minority.

Whatever may be achieved at the technological, political or economic level to offer solutions, just and sustainable patterns of mobility can only be brought about by a change in today's culture. There is need for a fundamental change of emphasis from quantity to quality. The pursuit of mobility must be subordinated to the pursuit of the higher criteria of justice and sustainability. There is ultimately no escape from the conclusion that today's level of motorised mobility must be reduced in many countries and be drastically re-organised in others.

The role of the churches

A. Participation in public debate

The churches' role is primarily to insist on the imperative to review present patterns of motorised mobility. In the first place, they will consistently point to the impasses into which present planning (or non-planning) is inevitably leading. But their main duty is to participate wherever possible in the public debate on traffic and transport planning.

Both the negative impact of motorised mobility and unjust distribution of transport facilities more and more often cause people to protest. They wish to protect their homes from the noise of airplanes and trucks, from the pollution of the air and from the risk of accidents. In cities they advocate more freedom for pedestrians and cyclists. They protest against the neglect of remote areas in overall traffic planning. Churches need to be very receptive to these manifestations. They are indications that present planning is insufficient. For the churches, they are an occasion to recall the larger challenge of a fundamental reorientation of traffic and transport.

B. Guiding principles for churches' policies

What are the principles, which guide the churches in public debates on traffic and transport? Guided by the general vision offered in the beginning of this report, we offer the following seven theses:

- In all planning, the churches will *protect the quality of life of people* and seek to create the conditions for sound community life. Churches will not be prepared to sacrifice these concerns to technological or economic considerations and interests. Planning must be based on the double criteria of justice and sustainability. The benefits of mobility must be made available to as large a part of the population as possible, and they must be made available in ways, which cause a minimum of environmental destruction. Justice must be ensured for present and also for future generations.
- In all planning, the *fundamental difference between rich and poor* needs to be taken into account. While in industrialised countries the overriding concern consists in reducing and moderating motorised mobility, the priority in developing countries must be to ensure a reasonable development, which meets the basic transport, needs of all people and communities.
- In planning mobility, the *needs of all segments of society* must be taken into account, especially persons not owning a private car, children, disabled and aging persons, etc. They are not only likely to suffer most from the negative impact of motorised mobility but are most in need of its potential. For disabled persons, the use of a car may open new and liberating horizons.
- Projects must not be imposed from above. Planning needs to take place *in consultation with the people*. Churches will insist on planning "from below".

- To serve the goal of sustainability, the churches will consistently give preference to *the least harmful means of transportation*. Air transport, especially over short distances, is to be reduced, transport of persons and goods on the road to be minimised. (Buy local and seasonal goods!). Wherever possible, train networks should be revived and expanded. The fixation on the private car needs to be broken. Public transport should systematically be granted the privilege of first priority, and safe conditions should be guaranteed for pedestrians, cyclists and other non-motorised means of transport.
- Churches will support *technological improvements* diminishing the negative impact of motorised mobility. They will welcome all projects aiming at *reducing the necessity for travelling* from one place to another; i.e., reducing unnecessary transport of goods, shortening distances between home and work as well as between the places of production and consumption.
- In the interest of the quality of community life, churches will call into question *the values underlying today's culture*, in particular the idol of speed and the pursuit of mobility for mobility's sake. They will seek ways to "de-accelerate" life and favour a life style in harmony with the rhythm of community life.

C. The churches' witness

The churches are called to speak out on the follies of today's motorised mobility and insist on new directions in traffic and transport planning. But it is even more important for them to offer alternatives through their way of life. They will be listened to, as they are capable of showing that other approaches are possible.

What does this imply? Again, we offer seven considerations:

- In the first place it means that *Christians recognise their ways and modes of being mobile as a challenge and a vital issue.* Often, the opinion is held that "mobility has nothing to do with the Christian faith; traffic and transport problems are to be addressed by society at large". In fact, every member of society is an actor and it is essential that Christians seek to set signposts and examples of alternative ways.
- It is part of the Christian witness to reflect on ways of reducing mobility and in particular on ways to limit its negative impact. Do I really need to travel by air when other ways of transport are available? Do I really need a private car? Do I really need to "take the car" for short "walking distances"? Can I not continue to "go to church" as we used to say instead of "driving to church"? For what purposes can I use a bicycle? Can I share a car with others? Personal mobility needs to be planned consciously and carefully.
- Christians will adopt a slower pace of life, more strongly emphasising the values of encounter and exchange in community. Jesus calls us to 'love our neighbour'. This does not mean that we have no responsibility for those who live far from us. In a world, which is more and more closely connected by all sorts of bonds, a witness of responsible love is required for victims of injustice

in all parts of the world. But Jesus' commandment undoubtedly means that our primary responsibility is towards people close to us.

- Christians have *a large stake in today's tourism*. It is not only individual Christians who travel long to distant places for "recreation". Congregations, too, encourage tourism by offering visits of distant countries, in particular the Holy Land. The benefit of these programmes is undeniable as long trips are carefully prepared. They can contribute to mutual understanding. But often, the same benefits can be obtained by "re-creation" in our own country. In recent years, the old tradition of pilgrimages on foot has been revived one of the most sustainable forms of mobility!
- How do churches view the use of cars? Many churches, especially in industrialised countries are "highly motorised". It is considered to be a matter of course that pastors and church employees should drive cars. In many cases this is no doubt legitimate. Pastors serving several dispersed congregations are scarcely able to fulfil their task without the use of private cars. Nevertheless, churches can *promote a new attitude to the use of cars and encourage other means of being mobile;* e.g., by granting allowances for public transport. In many places, walking or cycling offers a very natural opportunity for contact with people of the community.
- Annually, myriads of church meetings take place at all levels; regional, national and international. They require a high degree of mobility on the road and in the air. Encounter and exchange is essential for life and witness of the churches. Yet often, not much thought is wasted in calling meetings. They are ill prepared and unproductive. In particular, little thought is given to the implications for the environment. It is therefore important that *planning be more conscious*. How important is each particular meeting? To what extent can its purpose be achieved by other forms of communication (electronic communications, telephone conferences, etc)? Has enough preparation taken place to justify the mobility involved in meeting?
- To a certain extent, motorised mobility is inevitable. Obviously, since users do not pay the full price which it is causing, the suggestion has been made that *Christians should adopt "self-taxation"*; i.e., to pay a certain amount for every passenger kilometre and make it available for environmental projects. Self-taxation is in the first place a means to control personal mobility and to be constantly aware of its negative impact. Clearly, the amount to be paid will have to vary according to the mode of transport used. Most important is a voluntary tax on air travel which causes the highest environmental nuisance. In the North, various projects of voluntary air travel taxes are already in place.
- There are many Christian parishes and communities already deeply engaged in these issues. In many places, positive and encouraging experiences have been enjoyed. It is essential *to publicise and exchange the stories of such efforts*. They can serve as a stimulus for others as well.

D. Mobility in the service of love

Can we deduce any guidance from Bible? Motorised mobility is a modern phenomenon and we can therefore not expect any direct guidance from the Bible. The Biblical message nevertheless provides indirect answers.

Clearly, mobility as such is not considered to be a value in the Bible. In many instances, in order to respond to God's call, people depart from their homes. Abraham leaves his home to migrate to a country to be shown to him by God. Elijah is sent on a long journey of forty days. The apostles are summoned to preach the gospel "in Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the world". But there is an equally strong emphasis on staying. The fulfilment of the exodus is the arrival in the promised land. The people is meant to dwell in the place it has been given. God's punishment is to sent them into exile and God's forgiveness enables them to return. Moving is often described as an attempt to escape from God's presence. Jonah flees into a foreign country to avoid fulfilling God's order. But above all, we are called to share in God's own rest on the seventh day of creation. God grants and imposes on his people a day of rest.



Being mobile is a gift to be used in the service of love to God and our neighbours. Since the impact of today's patterns of mobility is destructive, the love of God and our neighbours constrains us to establish the extent of mobility, which is in harmony with God's will and the well being of both humankind and the whole planet. To go beyond permissible scales amounts to a violation of God's commandments of love.

What is it that stands in the way? The idolatry of mobility has deep roots.

Motorised mobility provides an illusion of freedom and self-realisation. The capacity of moving beyond personal capacity gives a feeling of power and

domination. As I move, I experience myself as a lord and master. In fact, the Bible tells us clearly that such freedom is at best independence from the constraints of life. True freedom finds its fulfilment in love and solidarity.

Motorised mobility fundamentally changes the notion of time. As I move fast from place to place, I have the impression that I am capable of achieving more in the same time span. I can accelerate life and thus create the feeling that the time given to me on this earth lasts longer. In fact, the Bible tells us that true time consists of moments filled with God's presence and love of our neighbours. Acceleration has the effect of emptying time of its true content.

Motorised mobility transforms our notion of space. As I move from place to place, I develop a new sense of space. I am capable of being present in many places. Motorised mobility seems to grant the gift of "ubiquity". The planet is yours, we are told by travel agencies. In fact, the Bible tells us that we are called to be obedient within the limits of God's calling.

Ultimately, love is the key to discovering the true scale of mobility.

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We hope that this account of the study process meets with your interest and approval. We are aware that we have only touched on the issues. Many issues remain unexplored, and all need further elaboration. But we hope that this report may give you enough data and affirmation to engage in a fresh discussion on issues of motorised mobility – at all levels in your church. The whole aim of the WCC study project consists in placing transport issues more explicitly on the churches' agenda. The discussion will continue, and though the study will not be continued in the near future, it is our hope that the theme will be taken up again as the awareness of its urgency grows among churches and communities.

