

Restating the Ecumenical Emphases: A Grassroots Proposal from Princeton

*The Princeton Proposal*¹ (2003) seeks to answer the question: do Christians worship in the same Church? It does so while providing an important and interesting synthesis of grassroots ecumenical thinking, with an emphasis on faith and order issues.

The Proposal contains a very strong statement on the way to oneness, which we will call the essay on unity. This is such a great piece; it is worth publishing it as a separate and lyrical essay, a meditation on why and how to be ecumenical.

Probably the weakest part of the *Proposal* is mainly its lack of appropriate structure; so in this paper, we shall humbly try to reshape it in such a way that it offers a unified stream of thoughts, based upon which an evaluation can be drawn later.

Our main question concerns the specificity of the *Proposal* in comparison with other former declarations on ecumenism, and which of its thoughts we can consider more to the point than others.

Our aim was not only the hermeneutical close reading and ecumenical theological analysis of the *Proposal*, but at the same time a critical underlining of its crucial and important insights, drawing out their implications, as well as the substitution of some one-sided statements which may appear with better and deeper ones.

Our paper thus aims to be a distinct and autonomous statement on ecumenism in its own right; and this reconstructed stream of thoughts

¹ It was published in a separate booklet: JENSON Robert W. – BRAATEN Carl E. (eds.), *In One Body Through the Cross: The Princeton Proposal for Christian Unity*. Grand Rapids, 2003.



can serve as a basis for overviewing the tasks of ecumenism in European and Central European circumstances, taking into consideration the most current descriptions of the ecumenical condition² and dialogue³.

I. History of the Ecumenical Movement

1. The World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) and other Milestones

The historical part of the Proposal (II./11–18.) is rather sketchy and sometimes incomplete; therefore, it would have been better to write it in a more profound way (which does not necessarily mean a longer text) or to leave it out completely. The milestones can be summarised in the following three paragraphs.

According to the most widely accepted notion, the beginning of the ecumenical movement can be counted from the establishment of the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) in 1895, since all the organisers of the 1910 Edinburgh missionary conference came from that organisation, as did all the officers of the International Missionary Council (IMC), established in 1921.

² There have been important surveys and analyses of the ecumenical condition globally, in Europe and in Central Europe; for example: KOLONITS Veronika (ed.), *Survey on the Current State of Ecumenism*. Budapest, 2004.

³ Another evaluation of the same survey, conducted by the Békés Gellért Ecumenical Institute (BGÖI), Pannonhalma: NAGYPÁL Szabolcs, “Your Faith Has Made You Well: Go in Peace, and be Healed of your Trouble”: *The Ecumenical Condition and Dialogue in Europe*. In DEGIGLIO-BELLEMARE Mario – GARCÍA Gabriela Miranda, *Talitha Cum! The Grace of Solidarity in a Globalized World*. Genève, 2004. 108–120.

From this organisation originated both the *Life and Work* (Stockholm, 1925) and the *Faith and Order* (Lausanne, 1927) movements. These two movements established the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Amsterdam in 1948.

Finally, IMC joined WCC in New Delhi in 1961, creating the full organisational unity of the ecumenical movement (while fortunately WSCF remained as a separate organisation, continuing its pioneering and prophetic service).

2. Lesslie NEWBIGIN and the New Delhi Assembly (1961)

The point of reference for the Proposal is the WCC New Delhi Assembly in 1961, and the key figure is Bishop Lesslie NEWBIGIN. He was the main drafter of the New Delhi statement, and the organiser of the WCC–IMC merger. His biographer,⁴ Geoffrey WAINWRIGHT, is a member of the Princeton sixteen, creating yet another connection between the two texts.

The Presbyterian *Lesslie NEWBIGIN*⁵ (1909–1998) was raised in WSCF, and later played a key role in establishing the Church of South India (CSI), one of the miracles of the ecumenical movement, as the broadest and most representative example of organic unity, and as such a living example of the New Delhi model.

NEWBIGIN became a bishop of this church in the year of its unification in 1947, first in Madurai, then in Ramnad, and finally in the respected Madras. From 1959 on, he served as the general secretary of IMC, leading the unification process with WCC. Later, he became the first leader of the Commission on Mission and Evangelism of WCC, between 1961 and 1965.

The Proposal practically offers the resuscitation of the vision of Lesslie NEWBIGIN and New Delhi, taking them seriously again. The most beautiful definition of the model of organic unity is offered by the second point of the WCC New Delhi declaration (1961).

The first sentence of this text, of course, repeats the first sentences of the constitutions of the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA), and WSCF, from 1855, 1894 and 1895 respectively, which is contained as well in the constitution (1948) of WCC:

“We believe that the unity which is both God’s will and God’s gift to God’s Church is being made visible as all in each place who are

⁴ This biography, which establishes contact between the two thinkers: WAINWRIGHT Geoffrey, *Lesslie Newbigin: A Theological Life*. Oxford, 2000.

⁵ His short biography can be found also in the *Ecumenical Dictionary*: THOROGOOD Bernard, (*James Edward*) *Lesslie Newbigin*. In LOSSKY Nicholas – BONINO José Míguez – POBEE John – STRANSKY Tom F. – WAINWRIGHT Geoffrey – WEBB Pauline (eds.), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*. Genève, 2002. 821–822.

baptized into Jesus Christ and confess Him as Lord and Saviour are brought by the Holy Spirit into one fully committed fellowship;

holding the one apostolic faith, preaching the one Gospel, breaking the one bread, joining in common prayer, and having a corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all;

and who at the same time are united with the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages in such wise that ministry and members are accepted by all, and that all can act and speak together as occasion requires for the tasks to which God calls God's people."⁶

3. Konrad RAISER and the Paradigm Shift in Canberra (1991)

Thirty years after the New Delhi Assembly, in 1991, Konrad RAISER greeted the paradigm shift of the ecumenical movement in his book of great effect, resulting in him being elected the new general secretary of WCC.⁷

The Proposal highlights four elements from the analysis of RAISER, in which this paradigm shift is traceable (II./17.). It is important to note here, however, that the German theologian only *describes* these changes, and does not *prescribe* them.

The criticism directed towards his person in the text, therefore, is mostly unjust; even though these changes were certainly not far from his own notions, goals, dreams and perceptions, as we can follow in his later writings and leadership.

It is also crucial to emphasize that the great essay on the spirituality of unity (see below), which guarantees the depth of the Proposal, is identical in its main lines with the vision of the later general secretary.

Finally, it is also worth our attention that Lesslie NEWBIGIN in his analyses⁸ depicts the task ahead of the ecumenical movement in a very similar way to Konrad RAISER. The elements of this paradigm shift are thus the following:

A. Christocentric universalism is replaced slowly and gradually by a *theocentric* concept, which stresses and researches the hidden works of God in the world.

⁶ We quote from the original report: *Report of the Section on Unity: Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC, New Delhi, 1961)*. In VISSERT HOOFT Willem A. (ed.), *The New Delhi Report: The Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC)*. Genève, 1961. 116.

⁷ The original book was written in German, and then translated into English: RAISER Konrad, *Ökumene im Übergang: Paradigmenwechsel in der ökumenischen Bewegung* (Ecumenism in Transition: Paradigm-Shift in the Ecumenical Movement). München, 1991.

⁸ From the many examples, let us just quote one here: NEWBIGIN Lesslie, *The Other Side of 1984: Questions for the Churches*. Genève, 1983.

B. Instead of being concerned mostly with salvation history and Divine economy, the new spirituality concentrates on *caring for the Earth*; in other words, Faith and Order, as well as Mission and Evangelization, take a backseat compared with the efforts of Life and Work (Church and Society).

C. In the name of *balances*, the composition of ecumenical bodies is defined more and more by gender and ethnicity, rather than by theological affiliation.

D. *Interreligious dialogue* gains more and more momentum, at the expense of traditional ecumenical topics.

This last point is mentioned in the Proposal as a sign of detriment, even though one of the measures of credibility and authenticity for Christianity is an active and creative participation in interreligious dialogue.

We certainly have to be very careful with the proportions (even though the interreligious emphases are rather to be protected nowadays); and we should not mix ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, since they are two entirely different endeavours, albeit using the same method, that of *dialogue*. This question is a bit like saying we do not need worship in the Church, since anyway we serve the poor.

It is, in the same way, an unfortunate association of ideas to bring interreligious dialogue into a text on ecumenism, as it is to deal with ecumenical theological questions in a text on interreligious dialogue and mission, e.g. *Dominus Iesus*.

Fear of an excess of interreligious dialogue is highly inopportune and untimely, especially now, when WCC is constantly restructuring its separate commission on interreligious dialogue, continuously threatening its distinct features.

These four changes are of course not (necessarily) signs of “development”. Rather, they are indicators of shifts in theological emphases and aims, of the broadening of our horizon, which might naturally go hand-in-hand with the risk of losing focus and centre.

II. Essay on Unity and Diversity

The third chapter continues the stream of thought of the first chapter: after the “already and not yet” dimension of unity comes the question of unity and diversity. The last chapter completes this line, and the result of this contraction would be an important and precise essay on unity.

1. Biblical Basis for Unity and Ecumenism

Along with the cornerstone of modern ecumenism (John 17, 21–34) and the first letter of Peter (second chapter), the Proposal cites the following Pauline letters: the first letter to the Corinthians (chapters one to three), the second letter to the Corinthians (chapters four, eight and nine), the letter to the Romans (seventh chapter), and the letter to the Galatians (sixth chapter).

In a certain sense, however, the Proposal can be considered as an interpretation of the letter to the *Ephesians*, as a kind of Bible study, especially on the first, second and fourth chapters. It follows the cosmic vision of the letter to the Ephesians, and calls us to be people of vision, dreaming further the dream of God.

It is not the Church, nor God, but Jesus Christ Who is put again into the centre; and from His person, life and will the characteristics of the authentic image of God and Church are drawn: along with unity and catholicity, also apostolicity and sanctity.

2. Unity Existing and Desired

The first chapter (I./1–10.) lays the foundation of ecumenical spirituality, guiding us from the experience of scandal, pain and suffering towards recognising our already existing unity, which is to be followed by a desire for an ever greater unity.

The desire for unity begins with recognition of the *scandal* of division, in itself embodying a revolt against God. In this historic moment, the age of denominational Christianity, all of the denominations are in a scandalous state of revolt.

We contribute to sustaining this institutionalised revolt simply by keeping our denomination and denominational identities separate, distinct and independent of each other. If we accept the scandal of division, we revolt against the Spirit of God.

Unfortunately we have gotten used to division and deem it normal. Neglecting our division, however, is as much a threat to the integrity of our denominations as division itself. Polite and friendly division

is still division; exactly because of this, we must be healed from ecumenical inertia, lukewarmness and anæsthesia, taking seriously the discipline of self-denial and repentance.

Unity is the promise of God in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, and at the same time unity is the gift of God. Our common hope is that our unity will be full one day. Our participation in the realisation of this unity willed by God is, at the same time, recognition of the power and activity of God.

Unity is an organic part of Christian life and calling, its permanent and central focus and dimension, which is to be made visible and manifest. Unity exists in the tension of *already* and *not yet*, and we must take both of these realities seriously.

Discipleship is simultaneously a call for personal sanctification, holiness and participation in community, since we must express our responsibility for each other in an effective and perceptible (visible) way. This duty of unity poses manifest challenges on the levels of authority, structure, institution and practice, calling us towards continual openness and dialogue.

3. Diversity Enriching or Self-Satisfied

The first third of the third chapter (III./19–25.) continues the blessed impetus of the beautiful essay on unity. It draws our attention to the manifold meaning of diversity, discerning each from the other.

We must sharply differentiate between division on the one hand, and diversity, plurality or pluralism on the other. From among the latter, some kinds of diversity or pluralism are enriching, thus to be cherished; while others (maybe not worthy for the name of plurality) exist for their own sake, needing to be reconciled and drawn to greater unity.

The opposite of enriching diversity is therefore not only boring and monochrome uniformity, but scandalous division as well, existing only for its own sake. The ecumenical movement struggles against this last one, which aims not at uniformity but at *mutual enrichment*.

The ecumenical movement is, in a certain sense, the *narrow path* (but not the golden mean) between divisive denominationalism (traditionalism, fundamentalism or sectarianism) and libertarian undemanding indifference.

The name of the affirmation of diversity is love (*agape*), which is manifest in the shouldering of one another's burden, the furthering of the benefit of the other; if the other does something wrong, one should consider this as an occasion for practising our community.

Our belonging to Jesus Christ (which and Who is our Christian identity) provides us with a new and common *identity*. Whoever does not place it in the centre among one's layers of identity fails to notice its importance and places something else instead of Jesus Christ in the centre (for example, one's denomination or one of its elements).⁹

Nowadays, in many denominations and confessions, there is an even graver inner division than those which separated them from each other in the past. Because of this, Jesus Christ is the great riddler of identities: he calls us to continuously rewrite and reconstruct our human identities in a discerning manner.

Jesus Christ defeats the opposition of genders, social classes, nations and cultures; He will certainly defeat the denominational divisions within His Body. The Good News of Jesus Christ has already defeated much more hopeless and impossible situations.

We cannot credibly wish for the unity of humankind if we are unable to realise and manifest even the unity of our Christian community. All of our speeches and sermons about unity and solidarity become ridiculous and incredible, if anyone looks at our own divisions.

These describe exactly the state of confession ahead of Christianity, and call Christians and their denominations to decisively choose between one of these options. Sin divides and turns us against each other in the service of the great Divider (Diabolos). We are indeed in a state of confession: do we want a diabolic, or an ecumenical, Christianity?

4. Spirituality of Unity: Self-Emptying as Worship

The last chapter (VII./70–72., and V./56.) rounds up the stream of thoughts in this essay. It deals with our spiritual duties and responsibilities in the creative tension between the existing and desired unity, as well as between enriching and egotistic diversity.

Realised unity will be and must be reached through the death and resurrection of many current ecclesiastical life forms, since demanding – and thus costly – ecumenism needs sacrifices from all parties involved.

This sacrifice is worth considering as a form of worship, connected with the requirement of our radical self-emptying (*kenosis*), which is the fourth requirement for dialogue, together with the three mentioned in the text.

⁹ This topic is beautifully detailed and dealt with in an article, written by another ecumenical theologian of the Békés Gellért Ecumenical Institute (BGÖI), Pannonhalma: OROVA Csaba, *Commitment: To Truth or Identity?* Mozaik 2004/2. 27–29.

In the cross of Jesus Christ, all the personal and communitarian suffering caused by giving up some of our denominational characteristics can be transformed to the grace of community with the Son, which unites us with the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Our dialogue with each other must begin with self-emptying, as the Logos, Jesus Christ, began His solidarity in a human form: ecumenical service in both its beginning and crowning is of a *kenotic* nature.

Working for unity is also of a *penitential* nature: we must repent all our deeds, habits, attitudes and behaviours which glorify division, disunity and separation. Furthermore, service of unity is also of an *ascetic* (connected with spiritual exercises) and *self-transcendent* nature: we must be ready to suspend our evangelical freedom and to align ourselves to the limitations and concerns of the weaker ones.

It also requires the denominations to take on spiritual poverty, giving up courageously even some of the authentic (good, but restricted or limited) elements of their rich traditions for the sake of greater unity realised in the light of the Gospel.

We must add to the text, however, that denominations must be ready to take on spiritual enrichment also, courageously interiorising many of the authentic elements of others' rich traditions for the sake of greater unity realised in the light of the Gospel.

Kenotic, penitential, ascetic and self-transcendent ecumenical conversion is not an easy task, and it is not a cheap one either. Naturally, the ancient golden rule applies to this process as well: examine everything, and that which is good, undertake.

III. Three Branches of Ecumenism

The Proposal addresses, in a hidden form, the three branches of the ecumenical movement, although unfortunately many times it substitutes the existing disproportions so wisely uncovered with its own Princetonian disproportions.

1. Proclaiming the Good News

Mission and Evangelism (III./26–36.) is dealt with rather shortly and not deeply enough. The remarks made are important, but from this part a mention of, for example, common witness or proselytism is achingly missing.

Our division not only makes our mission inauthentic and ineffective, but also disregards the essential connection between salvation, unity

and witness: the spiritual failure of Christianity in the modern age comes from its never-ending division.

Independently from our role in the scandal of division and from the responsibility we take, we all certainly share its burden also in the proclamation of faith and the good news. Our sins against unity, coming from our divisions, have the following (cultural and denominationalistic) two dimensions.

First, when proclaiming the good news we conspire with the various cultural, social and national divisions, and instead of reconciling them, we even strengthen them, saying that we must serve their demands. Thus we do not allow the realisation of the riddling and transforming power of the good news.

Second, the encounter with other denominations many times just strengthens our loyalty towards our own traditions and our (exclusive) denominational consciousness. Of course it is salutary, so far as we would like to serve others with our unique treasures.

Its risk is, though, that we start to boast of something unique instead of the single, unified and infinite good news of Jesus Christ, or we take pride in our peculiar and diversifying characteristics, instead of confessing our common and only Lord.

2. Service of the World

The second branch of the ecumenical movement, *Life and Work*, or *Church and Society* (V./50–51.) gets even less attention in the text, of course because the authors feel this direction is overemphasised in the ecumenical movement.

The great temptation in this area consists in the submission to political *ideologies*, which indeed have not spared the ecumenical movement in its history. The Proposal underlines only two possible examples for cooperation.

One is the protection of life, which indeed has a confessional status and dignity, and the other one is re-mission and *re-evangelism*, which should rather be classified under the umbrella of the first branch.

One can of course enlist a large number of tasks and responsibilities ahead of the Church in the areas of modern society, life, work, artistic creation and culture, which are all missing from the Proposal, making this part the weakest of all, together with the historical part.

Most obviously, the authors did not want to show a good example of measured and proportioned balance; they rather chose overemphasis in their fight and struggle against another kind of disproportion.

3. Seeking and Respecting Truth

From among the three branches, the Proposal deems *Faith and Order* (IV./37–43., V./44–48., 53–54.) to be the most important by far, aiming to raise it back to its lost dignity. It must be the most important area, because if the Christian community is unable to agree and consent on *apostolic tradition*, then its communal life will have a different basis and fundament and it will witness to something other than this.

The Church's existence is threatened by this distortion. We might witness nowadays to the good news of Jesus Christ, too, at least in our words. But by the mere fact of our division and disunity, we witness and testify to the superficiality and insignificance of unity, oneness, community, reconciliation and atonement and even more by our deeds, acts and behaviours for the sake of prolonging and strengthening our division.

Even the sheer fact of our disunity raises serious doubts concerning the reality and worth of these values, and makes others suspicious that we are working exclusively for our institutional and cultural self-preservation.

Division is strengthened in a certain sense even when a denomination or church makes a decision on an important question without consulting and listening to the others. Even though the apostolic faith contained and formulated in the ecumenical *creeds* are accepted by most Christian communities, it is not these which provide the basis and core of the denominational identities, but rather their peculiar characteristics.

Instead of being prophets for each other and calling one another to what is really important and essential, the denominations act as mutually distorting mirrors, underlining and stressing mostly the incidental and accidental characteristics of the other. Furthermore, the world reinforces this process as well, and consumerism considers denominations and confessions merely as sacral and transcendental packages of supply.

The life force of our divided Christianity was wasted in the last centuries in our ritually reinforced disunity and separation, and in our monologues reciting again and again (mostly for ourselves) our own peculiar doctrines and practices, even if from the point of view of the core and essence of Christianity these are rather marginal.

Since the priests, pastors and ministers are educated for the service of their own denominations, their socialisation (re)enforces exactly the divisive factors between them. Their professional career is defined

by denominational structures, and threatened by any Christian initiatives for greater unity.

Because of this, the emphasis shifted from truth towards identity, leading to the *tribalisation* of the Christian community. The teaching of faith and truth on the one hand, and unity on the other, must not and cannot be played against each other, since the lack of one inauthenticates and discredits the other.

Because there is not only a convergence, but also a consensus between the denominations concerning the fundamental role of baptism and the central place of the Eucharist, we should take the next step in *Eucharistic sharing* on the basis and in the spirit of the most-read document of the ecumenical movement, the *Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry* (BEM, 1982).¹⁰

This part of the Proposal contains extremely important statements, and it is obvious that the authors handled it as their most beloved theme. When searching for the greatest ecumenical importance of the Proposal, this part stands out clearly.

IV. Responsible Acceptance of the Ecumenical Calling

1. Actors of Ecumenism

In a certain respect, all of the above serves merely as an introduction to the excellent recommendations of the Proposal, which again unfortunately stand unstructured and dispersed throughout the text.

The sixth chapter (VI. 57–69.) addresses the various actors of the ecumenical movement, enlisting several duties and tasks for them, in a similar fashion as that found in the documents of the *Groupe des Dombes*.¹¹

A. The most important actors of the ecumenical movement are certainly, as they have always been since the beginning, the unofficial communities and groups of friends, the *grassroots ecumenical movements*, like the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), the International Ecumenical Fellowship (IEF, 1951 and 1967), the Taizé Community, or many others.

They are able to speak more boldly and freely, they can channel their creative and procreative forces more dynamically and completely into ecumenical thinking, and thus they have much larger opportunities

¹⁰ Another interesting recent document on this topic: WETH Rudolf – NAGYPÁL Szabolcs (eds.), *On Eucharistic Sharing: A Statement of the International Ecumenical Fellowship (IEF)*. Písek, 2007.

¹¹ From among their several excellent texts, the most to our point is the following: Groupe des Dombes, *Pour la Conversion des Églises* (For the Conversion of the Churches). Paris, 1991.

and chances for new initiatives and endeavours through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Those who are not in any official position and are not bound by official duties are more likely to receive a specific divine vocation for the service of unity. They get primarily the charisma of healing (1Cor 12,9; Mark 16,18), as well as the blessing and happiness of peacemaking, atonement and reconciliation (Mt 5,9).

This is, of course, not to lessen the special service of for example all the bishops for the restoration of Christian unity. Naturally, they also have more power to really do and achieve something.

B. The *World Council of Churches* (WCC), as (together with the Vatican) the most important body of *official* ecumenism from above, must return to the vision of organic unity and must foremost strive for unity in doctrines and sacraments.

Denominations, likewise, must get out of the vicious circle of mere denominational survival. Ecumenism of *local churches* must be an everyday reality as a part of the life of the congregation; mission is to be conducted jointly, even as far as structure and institution are concerned.

C. *Orthodoxy* must see and recognise the elements of living tradition and worship in the other Christian communities, and at the same time it must leave aside its nationalistic and divisive practice and ecclesiology, since Eastern Christianity is often unable to show and manifest even its own unity to the others.

D. The *Roman Catholic* church must re-read its tradition on the role and service for unity of the bishops, especially the bishop of Rome. The bigger its opportunity, possibility and power to act for unity, the bigger its responsibility is as well, which should be felt and taken by this important denomination.

The teaching office must be able to effectively influence and form the thinking of non-Catholic Christians too, avoiding any return to the conditions and states before the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965).

It must take full responsibility for the effective service for unity, involving non-Catholic participants in decision-making also, since this is the only way it can receive trustworthy counsel concerning the faith and life of the community, in order to raise its authenticity, credibility and acceptance.

E. The various *Protestant* world communions must recognise their

temporal, interim and transitional situation and service, deepening their own traditions always for the sake of the unity of the whole Church.

Evangelical and *Pentecostal* Christians also bear responsibility for the promotion of Christian unity. They must participate in dialogue as well, rejoicing in living faith wherever they may find it.

Moreover, they must recognise and accept the validity, spiritual authority and strength of life of other forms of Christian practices; recognising also the importance and duty of hospitality, catholicity, integrity and pan-Christian health and salvation.

2. Areas of Solidarity and Responsibility

Apart from the actors, we find in the Proposal several possible and desired areas of solidarity and responsibility, structured into six different groups (V./49., 52., 55.). These are not yet detailed properly; they are to be understood rather as signposts on our way.

A. We are to beg, *pray* and intercede unceasingly for each other, for our sister-communities and sister-denominations, for all Christians and for the unity of the whole of Christianity, also regularly taking part in communal worship of our sister-communities, which enlivens and strengthens our community and belonging together.

B. We must design, work out and accomplish together the plan of proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ, continuously harmonising the different occasions and opportunities of *witness* and service.

C. During teaching and *education*, teachers in schools and institutions must always and conscientiously serve the whole Church; and we must prepare pastors and catechists for the service of unity, susciting in them the desire, attitude and spirituality for unity.

D. Joint *social action*, stance and service must also be blessed by common prayer and worship.

E. We must continue ecumenical *dialogue*, convergence and thinking, executing the already existing ecumenical agreements and conventions; the mutual recognition of baptism must be clear and crucial in people's minds and in ecclesiastical bureaucracy.

In teaching offices, theological and doctrinal commissions, we must invite representatives of other traditions too, thus formulating our official documents regarding as wide and broad of a Christian community as possible.

F. We must support and promote by all means the vocation and mission of those who are specially called and charismatically appropriately equipped for reconciliation, community-building and the *service of Christian unity*.

In the pastoral care of ecumenical weddings and *marriages*, we must especially accept and support the ecumenical vocation and mission of interdenominational, interchurch couples and families, always profoundly learning from their common experiences and insights.

Dialogical Cross-Theology

In order to have a longer-lasting effect on the flow of the ecumenical movement, the Proposal should be rewritten and restructured now, utilising the hermeneutical close readings,¹² ecumenical theological analyses,¹³ and many other insights¹⁴ and suggestions.¹⁵ The practical recommendations of *Charta Œcumenica*¹⁶ (2001), for example, are also to be taken into account.

Using the hermeneutics of goodwill, we can summarise that the reasons for the structural discrepancies can be that the text has never aimed to be anything other than a declaration, a Proposal, which as such must be kept brief, and this genre does not require a systematic treatment of its subject either.

Certainly, Christian denominations suffer from a lack of remorse because of our division and disunity; while the ecumenical movement simultaneously suffers from the inadequacy of dynamism and creativity.

It is *cross-theology* (as the theology of the cross, and as cross-fertilising theology) that helps us to faithfully and humbly join the current dynamism of the movement of the Holy Spirit, creating unity and community in our midst.

12 The background papers are collected in another volume: JENSON Robert W. – BRAATEN Carl E. (eds.), *The Ecumenical Future: Background Papers for "In One Body through the Cross: The Princeton Proposal for Christian Unity"*. Grand Rapids, 2004.

13 In Hungary, for example, sixteen theologians (among them from the Békés Gellért Ecumenical Institute (BGÓI), Pannonhalma) evaluated and analysed the work of their sixteen colleagues: FABINY TIBOR (ED.), *ÉGY HÁZBAN ÉLNEK-E A KERESZTÉNYEK? MAGYAR REFLEXIÓK A PRINCETONI JAVASLATRA* (ARE CHRISTIANS LIVING IN THE SAME HOUSE? MAGYAR REFLECTIONS ON THE PRINCETON PROPOSAL). BUDAPEST, 2007.

14 One example of these, evaluating the Princeton Proposal: FACKRE GABRIEL, JENSON Robert W. – BRAATEN Carl E. (eds.), *In One Body Through the Cross: The Princeton Proposal for Christian Unity*. The Gospel and our Culture Newsletter 2004/39.

15 One example of these, evaluating the background papers: RIGGS Ann, JENSON Robert W. – BRAATEN Carl E. (eds.), *The Ecumenical Future: Background Papers for "In One Body through the Cross: The Princeton Proposal for Christian Unity"*. The Ecumenical Review 2004/10.

16 In English, its title is the following: Conference of European Churches (CEC) – (Roman Catholic) Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE), *Charta Œcumenica: Guidelines for the Growing Cooperation among the Churches in Europe*. Strasbourg, 2001.

Suggested Reading

- Conference of European Churches (CEC) – (Roman Catholic) Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE), *Charta Œcumenica: Guidelines for the Growing Cooperation among the Churches in Europe*. Strasbourg, 2001.
- FACKRE GABRIEL, JENSON Robert W. – BRAATEN Carl E. (eds.), *In One Body Through the Cross: The Princeton Proposal for Christian Unity*. The Gospel and our Culture Newsletter 2004/39.
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