

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Geneva, Switzerland
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REPORT OF THE MODERATOR

1. The World Council of Churches was mandated by its 8th Assembly to take up the challenge of globalization as a central part of its agenda. In taking up this challenge, the Council has focused mainly on economic globalization. This is too narrow a focus. The influence of globalization on the life and witness of the churches is growing every day. The Council must immediately begin developing an ecclesiological framework and perspective for a comprehensive ecumenical response to globalization.

2. Two factors have prompted me to address this issue. First, you may remember that in 1999 the Central Committee identified four thematic foci for the programmatic work of the Council after the Harare Assembly. Two of these foci, 'being church' and 'witness and service amidst globalization', seem to me to be particularly relevant. Second, tomorrow a special session will be devoted to the presentation of 'The Nature and Purpose of the Church', a Faith and Order study aimed at a common ecclesiological statement. A coherent reflection on these thematic foci and the Faith and Order study could provide the elements for an ecclesiological response to globalization. The purpose of my report is to start this reflection.

Major Features of Globalization Affecting the Church

3. Globalization is shaping our individual and communal life and the relationships within and between religions, societies and states. It is a complex reality with contradictory implications. It generates division and interaction, fragmentation and wholeness, tension and coherence, polarization and integration. Increasingly, it is creating unstable, uncontrollable and unsustainable conditions in all domains of human life. How is globalization affecting 'being church' today?

3.1. Globalization is generating *interconnection*. Globalization has created a network society, in which almost all segments of humanity are 'on line' with each other and with the whole world. Microchips, satellites, fiber optics and other advances in information and communication technology will further enhance this interconnection.

3.2. Globalization is enhancing *integration* by eliminating borders - human, geographical, cultural, economic, religious, etc. In spite of this process, nationalism, racism and xenophobia are steadily increasing.

3.3. Globalization is disintegrating *communities* by alienating human beings from their own environments and histories. In so doing, it is destroying their identity, values, traditions and life-styles.

3.4. Globalization is *homogenizing* cultures. It is leading humanity to greater cultural uniformity by destroying local cultures. This cultural uniformity is creating a global monoculture that degrades religious symbols, values and traditions, and changes the way people perceive themselves, the way they communicate and the way they judge others.

3.5. Globalization is creating a *shift of power* from national to multinational and transnational institutions. It has given more attention to productivity and less attention to accountability; as a result it has weakened the voice of the people and the role of civil society.

3.6. Globalization is deepening *inequalities* by preventing the equal distribution of resources. Governments responding to the demands of the free market economy are not able to build the accompanying social and political structures. This situation is creating more poverty and social exclusion, which in turn are intensifying the problems of racism, discrimination and intolerance.

3.7. Globalization is encouraging *people to follow the movement of capital* across national boundaries and regions. Because this movement produces cultural, religious and political conflict, migration has become an acute world problem.

4. Globalization is an irreversible process; we are part of it and are constantly affected by it. How should the church respond to its challenges? Harare stated that “although globalization is an inescapable fact of life, we should not subject ourselves to the vision behind it”.¹ We should neither affirm it uncritically nor reject it blindly. We need to adopt an attitude of critical realism and, as Harare suggested, our response should come from a ‘faith perspective’. How can the church, out of its resources of faith and historical experience, reshape and reorient globalization through a **critical interaction with it**, and at the same time re-assess and redefine its own perceptions, presuppositions and practices? I believe that this is a crucial question that the church is bound to grapple with. Therefore, any ecumenical response to globalization must start with reflection on ecclesiology, namely ‘being church’ in the context of the present-day world.

The Self-Understanding of the Church in a Globalized World

5. Globalization is imposing new ways of ‘being church’, affecting even the church’s self-understanding. The question is not what constitutes the church; rather, as the Harare Assembly put it, the question is, “how do we live our faith in the context of globalization?”² What does ‘being church’ mean in a fenceless society? This is the most acute concern and critical challenge that the churches must wrestle with in the context of an ecumenical response to globalization. Indeed, globalization questions our narrow

ecclesiological perspectives and ossified perceptions and calls us to make a comprehensive and critical assessment of our ecclesiological self-understanding. I see such an attempt proceeding in the following way.

5.1. *We need to move from a static to a dynamic concept of church.* Our ecclesiologies have generally been affirmative, descriptive and reactive. We have developed our ecclesiological self-understanding mainly in opposition to each other and have used our differences as self-defense against each other. These approaches, which have made our churches nearly self-sufficient, have led them to self-isolation. Most of our ecclesiological teachings still pertain to specific periods of history and have no relevance today. The church cannot be reduced merely to an institution concerned with self-perpetuation. We all carry with us a history and tradition full of ambiguities and bitter experiences. We cannot forget the past. Nor can we ignore the present predicament. Self-contained and self-sufficient perceptions of church are seriously called into question. Furthermore, the church can no longer maintain its theology, doctrine and liturgy as shields against the encroachment of new realities and values produced by the forces of globalization. We must develop a dynamic ecclesiology that opens up the church to its environment and to the world at large; we must develop a holistic ecclesiology that defines the church's self-understanding in a broad perspective and in relation, not in opposition, to the other; and we must develop a responsive ecclesiology that is relevant to the concrete conditions of life and the expectations and concerns of people.

5.2. *We must protect and transcend the local church.* The church is essentially a local reality. The New Testament identifies the church as the eucharistic gathering of Christians in a particular place. Globalization has radically altered the notion of locality. The local is no longer an isolated reality. Close relations between people across geographical, cultural and confessional boundaries have created new loyalties and have shaped new identities; hence, the local church has lost much of its traditional meaning. The local church must maintain its integrity and specificity. This is crucial since it is a basic assumption in our ecclesiological teachings. But it must remain open to the global. The church must not be 'of Ephesus'; it must be 'in Ephesus' (1 Cor. 1: 2; 2 Cor. 1: 1; Eph. I: 1). Because of its universal structure and, in a sense, transnational identity, the Roman Catholic Church may be able to cope with the tension between the local and the global. But the Orthodox churches and many historical Protestant churches will find themselves in a difficult situation if they do not redefine their ecclesiological self-understanding in a way that, on the one hand, strengthens the locality of the church both as geographical and human reality and, on the other hand, takes the local church beyond its own context by making it global through its diaspora. Globalization will continue to challenge, even more strongly, the prevailing provincialism, parochialism and nationalism in our ecclesiologies. To meet this challenge, the local church must seek to interact creatively with the global; it should reorganize its life and mission in a way that makes it an inseparable and integral part of the universal people of God; and, it should redefine the concept of 'locality' in terms of its multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-confessional context.

5.3. *We need to ensure the integrity and sustainability of the ecclesial community.* By disintegrating local communities and encouraging mono-society, globalization is connecting people globally and disconnecting them locally. The cyber community is threatening the identity, integrity and sustainability of ecclesial community. Being Christian is not a 'private affair'; it is manifested through a community of faith. A recent WCC consultation, with the theme of 'Believing without belonging', has noted that "the Western experience of church makes it possible for people to believe without belonging and belong without believing."³ Harare reminded us that "the logic of globalization needs to be challenged by an alternative way of life of community in diversity"⁴. We cannot create real community by merely connecting people. We must build a community whose sustainability and integrity are ensured by moral and spiritual values. Our ecclesiology should nurture a deeper sense of belonging to the community of faith. The church is the Christ-event, which is manifested through the Koinonia of faith. How can the church provide a sense of meaning, identity and direction to modern societies? How can the church, as the gift of God, become an inclusive community where diversities are safeguarded, equality is assured and participation and accountability are encouraged? How can the church as Koinonia help build broader communities, held together by common ethical values?

5.4 *We need to make the church 'reach out' outside the church.* Globalization is shaking up the institutional foundations and expressions of Christian faith. It is challenging the ethno-centered identity, the hierarchical patterns and the form of governance of the churches. New Christian communities are being formed, new faces of Christianity are appearing and new forms of 'being Christian' are emerging in all parts of the world. The institutional church, particularly in the west, is declining, while interest in spirituality and the private expression of Christianity is rising. The church must engage in a serious process of self-definition and self-articulation. The church is not a frozen institution; 'being church' is determined by 'being Christian'. And for many Christians today, 'being Christian' is not determined by being a member of a church or by expressing one's faith within the institutional church. A few years ago, a pastor of my church in the U.S.A, complained to me that his parishioners go to the next-door 'Christian gathering' because, he said, "it is more attractive". I asked him why he was not making his church more attractive and why he was not taking the church to the people out there. Isn't this the reality in most of our churches? The gap between the church and the people is widening. The church cannot ignore the faith-experience of the people beyond its gates. The church's catholic plenitude and charismatic action go beyond its canonical and structural boundaries. The institutional church is not only losing its membership, but also its impact on society. The church must not only have a holistic and responsive ecclesiology; it must also overcome its rigid institutionalism and blind parochialism and seek new ways and new models of 'being church' in order to become a responsive church, a church of the people and for the people.

Towards Renewing and Resharpener the Catholicity of the Church

6. Globalization is a challenge to the church to reaffirm and express its inherent catholicity. Many contemporary theologians argue that we should seek to comprehend and assess globalization from the perspective of the catholicity of the church. Catholicity is not geographical expansion or institutional universalism; it is a dynamic process by which the Triune God constantly creates, redeems and fulfills his creation. Catholicity is an essential feature of the nature of the church and its ecumenical vision. Uppsala described catholicity as “the quality by which the church expresses the fullness, the integrity and totality of life in Christ”, which must be expressed in all aspects of the church’s life. While catholicity is God’s gift to humanity and creation, globalization is an anthropocentric reality. They are qualitatively different in their nature, scope and vision. The church is called to renew its catholicity by critically assessing the process of globalization. With its vision of *oikoumene*, the ecumenical movement may help the churches to recapture the catholicity of the church in a new world context. Such a process requires a number of actions.

6.1. *To open the local to the global.* Catholicity is expressed in its fullness and authenticity through the local church. In fact, the local church is not a part of the catholic church and the catholic church is not the sum of the local churches. The well-known statement of St. Ignatius of Antioch, “where Christ is, there is the catholic church”, remains valid and relevant. There is no ‘local catholicity’ or ‘global catholicity’; there is one catholicity, manifested both locally and globally. The church derives its catholicity from Christ and not from its members or geographical space. Catholicity is not a question of geography or structure; it is quality of life in Christ. The local church must seek to realize its catholicity in each and in all places in full communion with the churches of all places and times. No local church can be catholic in isolation. Catholicity, unlike globalization, does not destroy the local; it does, however, reject the self-sufficiency of the local church and call it to transform the exclusive and self-contained localism to inclusive and open locality. Catholicity is not universalization of the local church through universal structures. It is the God-given quality of church, which holds together universality and locality, and keeps the church growing and moving forward to God’s future. The eucharist is the locus and source through which the church lives and articulates its catholicity since the eucharist embraces all Christians of each and all places.⁶ The concept of ‘catholicity in space’ and ‘catholicity in time’ (St. Irenaeus)⁷ acquired a particular attention in early ecclesiology. These two dimensions of catholicity are inter-connected; the Orthodox Church, however, has always given priority to eucharistic and qualitative catholicity.⁸ Indeed, with its eucharistic nature and eschatological vision, catholicity takes the local church, in the power of the Holy Spirit, beyond its geographical boundaries, institutional captivity, ethno-cultural embodiment and all forms of human limitations. Therefore, the eucharistic understanding of catholicity and the catholic understanding of eucharist are essential for the church’s perception of itself as a global and eschatological reality.

6.2. *To preserve diversity and enhance wholeness.* As a gift of God, catholicity implies fullness, wholeness and diversity; it embraces all people, time and space. Globalization

rejects diversity and imposes uniformity; catholicity upholds diversity and promotes coherence within an integrated whole. Globalization encourages centralism; catholicity affirms polycentrism. Globalization destroys community; catholicity builds up and sustains community and enhances wholeness. Globalization excludes and marginalizes; catholicity ensures the fullness and plenitude of the community of faith, calling for the involvement of the entire people of God (including the oppressed and exploited, the marginalized and handicapped) into the life of the church. Thus catholicity starts from below by building community and providing space for all to grow spiritually and morally and in freedom, while globalization starts from above by imposing its own agenda, system and way of life. Our churches should endeavour to rediscover the all-embracing and community-based nature of spirituality, which may ensure diversity and coherence, particularity and wholeness. Orthodox spirituality with its strong emphasis on the interconnectedness of the sacred and secular, the imminent and transcendent can provide this holistic perspective.

6.3. *To generate mutuality and sharing.* By challenging the self-sufficiency of local churches, catholicity calls them to recognize that they belong to each other and need each other, and that, in spite of cultural, ethnic and geographical divisions, they are an inseparable and integral part of the one Body of Christ. Catholicity does not belong to a single church; as a gift of God it acquires its authenticity when it is lived out in each and in all places and shared with other churches. In this way, catholicity enhances interrelatedness and interaction and establishes ecclesial interdependence among the local churches by deepening the sense of Koinonia and providing them with a global framework of praying, reflecting and acting together. Interaction, interconnection and interdependence are also characteristics of globalization. However, unlike globalization, catholicity is based on a quality of life sustained by mutual solidarity and sharing, mutual accountability and empowerment. Catholicity builds a community whose entire life and witness are shaped by eschatological vision. In catholicity, mutuality and sharing are not merely concepts or methodologies, but gifts of the Spirit that permeates the entire life of the church. These gifts must be expressed through a quality of life and witness that calls into question all forms and expressions of exclusiveness, discrimination and marginalization.

6.4. *To grow together towards conciliar fellowship.* The conciliar fellowship of local churches in each place is the basis of catholicity. Conciliarity is expressed through eucharistic communion and unity of faith. It rejects self-centredness and gives visibility to catholicity. The Nairobi Assembly put it clearly: “The one church is to be envisioned as a conciliar fellowship of local churches which are themselves truly united. In this conciliar fellowship, each local church possesses, in communion with the others, the fullness of catholicity...”⁹. Thus, a renewed commitment to conciliarity would provide a dynamic framework for the church to express its catholicity both on local and global levels, and this expression of catholicity would, in turn, urge the churches to develop ‘conciliar forms of life and action’ expressed through common prayer and decision-making, communion in faith, mutual commitment and accountability.¹⁰ Through its structures and processes of conciliar ecumenism and through the WCC as a global, pre-conciliar fellowship, the ecumenical movement tries to help the churches build local,

regional and global conciliar fellowship. Although Faith and Order has spent a lot of time and energy on the ecumenical debate on conciliar fellowship, I think that the ecumenical reflections on conciliarity must be revisited and further deepened in a new framework.

6.5. *To develop an inclusive vision of catholicity.* Catholicity is not just a mark of the church. Because it is rooted in divine mystery and is related to God's purpose for the world, catholicity rejects all human-made systems and transcends all structures. The church cannot simply ignore globalization. It must subsume globalization within its dynamic vision of catholicity. This inclusive vision of catholicity provides clear criteria for the church to judge the pride and arrogance of globalization. Hence, the church needs to sharpen its ecumenical vision of catholicity, which has been blurred by ethnic, cultural and confessional considerations. R.J. Schreier is right when he says that "a renewed and expanded concept of catholicity may well serve as a theological response to the challenge of globalization".¹¹ I believe that Orthodox ecclesiology, eschatology, christology and pneumatology, with their all-embracing and all-inclusive perspectives, can play a pivotal role in enhancing the inclusive concept of catholicity.

6.6. Catholicity is both a given reality and a process: the church **is** catholic; yet it constantly **becomes** catholic. Catholicity is both an ontological and functional reality; it is a 'gift', a 'task' and an 'engagement', as Uppsala described it.¹² As a 'gift' catholicity allows the church to perceive itself as part of a whole; as a 'task' it makes the church a reality that is sent to the world; and as 'engagement' it challenges the church to fulfill its missionary vocation.

Catholicity: A Call for a Renewed Missionary Engagement

7. By perceiving catholicity as a 'task,' a 'call' and an 'engagement', the ecumenical movement has placed catholicity in a missionary perspective. I consider this of crucial importance since it forces the church to look forward by providing an eschatological vision to the church's missionary outreach. Catholicity calls the church to renew its missionary vocation in the midst of globalization. The Harare Assembly urged the churches "to witness to and embody God's intention for the world in the face of growing globalization and the values which underlie it".¹³ In this context it is important to underscore the following points.

7.1. *The church is essentially a missionary reality.* Mission is the *esse* of the church, which is sent to "the ends of the earth" (Mt. 28: 20; Acts 1: 18) to bear witness to God's reconciliation, healing and transformation of humanity and creation. In a sense, mission creates the church. It gives a clear identity and purpose to the church. As a God-given task, mission should always remain at the heart of the church's self-understanding. In God's design, "the church exists only in relation to the common destiny of humanity and all creation".¹⁴ One cannot do mission without the church and one cannot have church without mission. 'Being church' is not an abstraction; it implies 'becoming church'. It is ecclesiological heresy to divorce these two vital dimensions of the church: 'being church' means caring for life, having a ministry of reconciliation, engaging in diakonia,

empowering the powerless and struggling for peace with justice. It means becoming what the church is called to become: the anticipation of God's kingdom. Such a missionary understanding of the church takes the church beyond its geographical locality, cultural confines and institutional boundaries and makes it a global reality. In fact, missionary outreach expresses both quantitative and qualitative catholicity by bringing together and engaging all churches in the one mission of God. In the Orthodox perspective the eucharist is a missionary event; through it the eschaton becomes a reality and the church is transformed into an icon of the Kingdom. Hence, the eucharistic gathering is the starting point of mission. It is significant that the Orthodox Church has always taken eucharistic ecclesiology and missiological ecclesiology together as one whole. In addition to this legacy of the early church, the ecumenical movement reminds us of the dynamic interconnectedness existing between *Koinonia*, *diakonia* and *Kerygma* in missionary perspective.

7.2. The church's mission is grounded in missio Dei. Mission is an ecclesial event, not a function of the church. The church has no mission of its own; it participates in God's mission. Mission is God's continuous self-kenosis by which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, he recreates, transforms and renews what is fallen and distorted. The purpose of God is to bring all nations into a living unity in Christ by the Holy Spirit. The church is God's missionary instrument for the fulfillment of his design for the world. It is sent into the world to proclaim the reign of God by becoming 'the salt', 'the light' and 'the life' of the world (jn. 1: 19) and by shaping a morally and spiritually sustainable society reconciled to God. The church is the continuation of Christ's mission handed over to the disciples. Therefore, mission must be located in the socio-political context of the world. The church cannot ignore the world with its ambiguities and polarizations, conflicts and evil forces. The church's mission, as an instrument of God's mission, is to liberate, humanize and transform the world. The sacramental nature and eschatological dimension of mission are crucial to understanding the catholicity of both the church's nature and its missionary calling. Catholicity is deeply rooted in church's participation in *missio Dei*. The missionary vocation of the church will reach its completion when God's design for the world is fulfilled.

7.3. Mission: the local and global action of the church. Mission is both the ingoing and outgoing of the church. It is the church's self-realization in time and space. Mission starts with the eucharist, but the good news needs to be known and shared by all who seek liberation from the forces of evil and death. Jesus Christ exhorted his disciples to "go therefore and make disciples of all nations..." (Mt. 28-19). The missionary outreach of the church has no established boundaries; it transcends limits and limitations and embraces the whole world. The local and global become closely intertwined in the missionary action of the church. Mission is the global action of the local church. As Christ's salvific action through the church, missionary outreach gives concrete and global manifestation to both qualitative and quantitative catholicity. The Gospel clearly points to the universality of salvation. Christ has identified himself with the Messiah who would gather together the dispersed people of God. The disciples were sent by Christ to the world with this mandate. The church is the visible sign and instrument of God's design for the whole world.

7.4. Our ecumenical endeavor to reach a common ecclesiological perspective must be accompanied by a common missionary engagement. The aim of this engagement is to make the Gospel an incarnational reality in the life of globalized societies. The whole world is in dire need of the liberating and humanizing presence of the Gospel. The ecumenical movement has encouraged the churches to move from 'missions to the six continents' to 'mission to the world'. It must continue to remind the churches of their missionary task and challenge them to go beyond church-centered mission to mission-centered church. Mission is the pilgrimage of the people of God towards the eschatological goal.

The Church: the Convergent Point of Theocentric Catholicity and Anthropocentric Catholicity

8. Under the strong impact of globalization, humanity seems to be converging into a single historical process. Some, however, see conflict as the end-result of this process. As Christians, we believe that humanity and creation live under the promise of God's Kingdom; we are called, therefore, to 'search for the Kingdom of God' (Mt. 6: 33). Catholicity provides the space and eschatological vision for the church to become, as the sign, sacrament, instrument and foretaste of Kingdom, the converging point of theocentric catholicity and anthropocentric catholicity (or human globalization). Uppsala proclaimed that catholicity "empowers the church in her unity to be a ferment in society, for the renewal and unity of mankind". Hence, the church "needs a new openness to the world in its aspirations, its achievements, its restlessness and its despair. This is the more evident at a time when technology is drawing men into a single secular culture".¹⁵ The church lives and struggles with this vision.

8.1. *History and eschaton interact in the church.* The church is both a historical and eschatological community. It is a concrete reality in time and space and an eschatological reality transcending history and moving towards the messianic promise and hope. The eschaton entered history with the Resurrection and Pentecost. Thus, the horizontal and vertical come together in the church, and the historical and eschatological dimensions of the church enter into close interaction in the eucharist. The eucharist transforms the eschaton into a dynamic reality in the context of history and into a vision that sustains the life of the church and helps it to move beyond itself. The Christian concept of eschatology is dialectical; it brings together the past, present and future: the Kingdom has already come, is coming and will come in fullness. God's *Kairos* transforms human *Kronos*. Eschatology leads history to the eschaton. However, the creative tension between history and eschatology, between 'already' and 'not yet', between 'here and now' and eschaton will continue until the 'fulfillment of all things' in Christ.

8.2. *God's globalization subsumes human globalization.* God was revealed in Christ to the whole of humanity; in Christ "all things are held together" (Col. 1: 7) and humanity and creation are led towards their final consummation. This basic biblical affirmation has been strongly emphasized by those church fathers who have considered not only

humanity but also the whole cosmos as one unity within the scope of God's redemptive work in Christ. In fact, Christ himself initiated God's globalization, the Kingdom of God. In this context it is significant to note that God's revelation in the Bible evolves from Israel to that of the whole humanity and from God's Kingdom in Zion to the Kingdom of God, embracing the entire humanity and creation. While human globalization promotes uniformity, God's catholicity builds an integrated and coherent diversity. Globalization creates interconnection and interdependence between 'all things'; catholicity brings 'all things' into a new relationship with God. Uppsala reminds us that "it is within this very world that God makes catholicity available to men through the ministry of Christ in his church. The purpose of Christ is to bring people of all times, of all races, of all places, of all conditions, into an organic and living unity in Christ by the Holy Spirit under the universal fatherhood of God." At the same time Uppsala warns us that the world points to 'secular catholicities' of its own and has produced its own 'instruments' that "often seem more effective than the Church itself".¹⁶ God's catholicity, with its holistic and eschatological nature and transforming power, embraces the human globalization and integrates it within its dynamic process and vision. We must rediscover this unique feature of catholicity that is deeply rooted in biblical theology and is a significant aspect of early ecclesiology. God's catholicity offered in Christ to humanity and human-made anthropocentric catholicity are qualitatively different. They will remain in tension unless the world's broken and distorted catholicity is healed and appropriated by God's catholicity. Indeed, a new emphasis on catholicity and eschatology might significantly help the church to reaffirm its holistic vision of humanity, united and reconciled by God, beyond the plurality of faith and culture. This is a major task urgently put before the ecumenical movement today.

8.3. *Humanity, creation and kingdom converge in the church.* The Bible considers the world as one coherent whole: all things in heaven and on earth will come together in Christ in eschaton (Eph. 1: 10). The church is the icon of the humanity to come; it is the recreated creation. In St. Origen's words, the church is 'the cosmos of the cosmos'. The eucharist is the sacrament of the Kingdom; it reveals, manifests and communicates the Kingdom of God. In the Orthodox view, humanity and creation must be seen in eucharistic and eschatological perspective. Because of their eucharistic and eschatological ecclesiology, the Orthodox do not believe that the church is only an historical and horizontal reality. They believe that the church is a continuous process of becoming that will reach its consummation in parousia. Eucharistic and eschatological vision of the church takes the church beyond the ambiguities of history and opens it towards God's Kingdom. The Orthodox liturgy is a living and enriching experience of this dynamic reality. The church is God's instrument called to work for the reconciliation and communion of all humanity and creation in God's Kingdom. Vladimir Lossky describes the church as the converging point of humanity, creation and Kingdom; "The church is the center of the Universe, the sphere in which its destinies are determined. All are called to enter into the church, for if man is a microcosm, the church is a *macro-anthropos*, as Maximus says. It increases and is compounded in history, bringing the elect into its bosom and uniting them to God. The world grows old and falls into decay, while the church is constantly rejuvenated and renewed by the Holy Spirit who is the source of its life. At a given moment, when the church has attained to the fullness of growth

determined by the will of God, the external world, having used up its vital resources, will perish. As for the church, it will appear in its eternal glory as the Kingdom of God.”¹⁷ The church is the messianic gathering, the gathering in Christ of all nations (Mt. S. 11; Gal. 3.8). Too much stress on the institutional aspect of the church has greatly undermined the eschatological nature of the church. Petros Vasiliadis is correct in stating that in Orthodox ecclesiology “the church does not draw its identity from what it is or from what was given to it as an institution but from what it will be, i.e. from the eschaton”.¹⁸ The church is ‘in’ the world but not ‘of’ the world (John 17); it is part of God’s plan for the future. With its vision of catholicity and eschatology, the church is struggling to fulfill that plan. This vision sustains the church’s life, hope and faith. God’s catholicity will reach its eschatological fulfillment with the unity of all humanity. We must, therefore, rediscover the eschatological nature and vision of the church. We must also re-emphasize the pneumatological dimension of ecclesiology. It is the Holy Spirit that takes the church’s catholicity beyond the institutional boundaries of the church and gives it a cosmic dimension. Such an approach will greatly contribute towards the church’s response to globalization.

Unity of Church as Sign of the Unity of Oikoumene

9. With its technological progress, economic integration and cultural homogenization, globalization is leading the world towards a unity characterized by uniformity, unipolarism and monoculture. What alternative vision of unity can the church offer to humanity? Uppsala considered the church as the sign of the coming unity of humanity. As our ‘Ecumenical Vision’ puts it, ‘being church’ in the world means being ‘together on the way’. What does it mean to be together on the way?

9.1. *Being church together through the Koinonia of faith, life and witness.* Most of our theologies, doctrines and ecclesiologies have been shaped by the logic of division. We have built our identity and affirmed ourselves through our differences. In spite of the significant growth in ecumenical fellowship, each church seems to be convinced that it possesses ecclesial fullness and does not need the other. I firmly believe, out of my ecumenical experience, that the sense of being interconnected with other churches, being ‘churches together’ as one Koinonia, and not being churches separately and unilaterally, is the way towards unity. This is not a monolithic unity. This is a unity in which diversities are preserved within the Koinonia of faith, life and witness. The destiny of the world according to the design of God (Rev. 7: 1-12) lies in diversity, not in homogenization, pluralism, not in uniformity, wholeness, not in disintegration, coherence, not in contradiction. Therefore, being churches together means affirming our diversities, yet transcending our divergences and celebrating our common unity in Christ. Being churches together means building a Koinonia of wholeness and coherence in faith, life and witness, a Koinonia of love, sharing, hope and mutual forgiveness. Being churches together means working, serving, acting and suffering together as one Koinonia of faith, life and witness. This Koinonia is an incarnational reality, given by God in Christ. This vision of unity stems from the very *esse* of ‘being church’.

9.2. *Being church together through convergence.* The ecumenical vision of the unity of the church implies a convergence process. Through this convergence process, differences become complementary rather than mutually exclusive, and conflicts are transformed into creative tension. This process calls the churches to recognize in one another the one church of Christ. This is precisely the challenge of the ecumenical movement to the churches. Canberra reminds us that “the goal of the search for full communion is realized when all the churches are able to recognize in one another the one holy, catholic and apostolic church in its fullness.”¹⁹ While globalization is creating a fenceless world, many churches are building confessional fences as a way of self-affirmation. They are even afraid of ecumenism, considering it another expression of globalization. In spite of considerable advances in our debate on unity, we have not been able to take any concrete steps on the way towards visible unity, save for some agreements within the context of bilateral dialogues. In the Council we have conducted extensive studies on the Apostolic Creed; why are the churches not yet disposed to accept it as the credal basis of their ecclesial unity? We have almost reached an agreement on BEM; why are the churches still reluctant to move to the reception process? I know the complexity of these processes. I also understand the hesitation of the churches. But we must all remind ourselves not only of the imperative of being together, but also of the crucial urgency of working together toward the unity of the church. For many decades we have endeavoured to reach consensus by setting reception processes, but differences have persisted. Can we integrate our differences into a convergence process and work for a coherent plurality? Can we transform our conflicts into creative interaction? This is the challenge that the church can present to globalization. Globalization advocates false unity. The church’s unity is a gift of God; it is a christocentric and all-embracing Koinonia, which points to the unity of oikoumene. The WCC should continue to serve as a framework and instrument to enhance such a convergence process.

From ‘Space’ to ‘Household’

10. The words, ‘space’ and ‘household’ were introduced into the ecumenical debate during the last decade. ‘Space’ denotes an open place where free interaction and exchange take place. It is used in opposition to the concept of ‘institution’. ‘Household’ is a biblical image that means the ‘whole inhabited earth’; it also refers to the community of faith, whose foundation is Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3: 9-11).

10.1. *Globalization is an invitation to the ‘space’.* The space that globalization has created has its own system, values and criteria. The global space is an anthropocentric reality, dominated by secularism, syncretism and consumerism. In spite of its tremendous technological, scientific and economic progress and achievements, the space provided by globalization will, sooner or later, become a dangerous place if it is not given a ‘moral orientation’ and a ‘spiritual sustenance’ and transformed by the ecumenical vision.²⁰

10.2. *The ecumenical movement is an invitation to the ‘household of God’.* The ‘household (oikos) of God’ comprises the world and the whole creation. The church’s vision of oikoumene looks beyond the ‘here and now’ to the fulfillment of the eschaton.

It challenges the self-sufficiency of humanity and reminds it that it is accountable to and totally dependent on God. The ecumenical vision strives for the unity of the 'household of faith' (Gal. 6: 10): "The Church is called, in the world, to be that part of the world which responds to God's love for all men, and to become therefore the community in which God's relation to man is known and realized. In one sense the Church is the center and fulfillment of the world. In another sense it is the servant of the world and the witness to the hope of its future. It is called to be the community in which the world can discover itself as it may become in the future."²¹ The church is the anticipation of the household of God where we "are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints" (Eph. 2: 19). In this household people are reconciled in Christ to God and to each other.

10.3 According to the church fathers the church is called to lead humanity and creation to theosis, i.e. to sanctification, transformation and deification. I believe that in order to counter the effects of globalization, the church must reaffirm and re-articulate its catholic, eschatological and ecumenical vision, where God's design for humanity and creation is given a focal emphasis and clear expression. Uppsala warned us not to "confuse the unity and catholicity of the church with other solidarities and communities". Harare reminded us that "the vision behind globalization includes a competing vision to the Christian commitment to the oikoumene, the unity of humankind and the whole inhabited earth."²² The Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation convocation in Seoul, with its 'Ten Affirmations', invited the churches to enter into a covenant to lead humanity towards the 'household of God'. Hence, global vision and ecumenical vision, 'space' and 'household' must not be confused or equated. With its prophetic ministry the church should become a **critique of global vision**. With its powerful vision of catholicity, ecumenicity and eschatology, the church must engage in a serious and constructive **dialogue with globalization**. And, with its God-given ministry of healing and reconciliation, the church should become the **herald of God's globalization**.

Looking Ahead

11. The ecumenical response to globalization must remain a top priority on the ecumenical agenda in the period ahead.

11.1. The Harare Assembly called the churches to take a coherent and comprehensive ecumenical approach to globalization and it considered the WCC a global framework, which, with its 'unique perspective', could significantly assist the churches to confront the challenges of globalization. The Council has already started this multi-faceted process through awareness building, establishing networks and advocacies on common ecumenical issues and encouraging partnerships and alliances with groups in civil society. This process must continue with renewed emphasis through various programmes, initiatives and actions of the Council.

11.2. Special attention should be paid to the ecclesiological dimension of the ecumenical response to globalization. In this context Faith and Order should bring together the major ecumenical studies, such as Just, Participatory and Sustainable Society, Justice, Peace

and Integrity of Creation, Unity of Church - Unity of Mankind, Unity of Church and Renewal of human Community, Christian Faith and the World Economy Today, Ecclesiology and Ethics and The Nature and Purpose of the Church. It should also include the reports of the Assemblies. In bringing these materials together, Faith and Order should identify and synthesize those perspectives and analyses that may strengthen our ecumenical response.

11.3. In my judgment ecclesiology will remain a major ecumenical issue for many years to come. I welcome the strong emphasis the Special Commission has placed on ecclesiology in its report. We need to continue our focus on ecclesiological issues and challenges. Questions related to ethics and ecclesiology, mission and dialogue must be seriously addressed, particularly within the framework of the ecumenical response to globalization. The emerging ecumenical realities call Faith and Order, which yesterday celebrated the 75th Anniversary of its creation, to reassess its agenda, style and methodologies.

11.4. 'Being church' is not only an ecclesiological issue. It deals with the essence of Christian faith and is at the heart of ecumenism. Discussion on 'being church' should continue at all levels and should permeate the entire life and work of the Council, as articulated through the three major groupings of the Council's planned programmes for 2003-2005, (1) staying together - deepening the fellowship, (2) acting together - responding to the needs of the world, (3) learning together - for greater understanding.

Aram I
Catholicos of Cilicia

August 2002
Antelias, Lebanon

Notes

¹ Diane Kessler, ed., *Together on the way: Official Report of the Eight Assembly of the World Council of Churches*, WCC publications, 1999, Geneva, 183.

² Harare, 183.

³ <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/news/press/02/08feat-e.html>.

⁴ Harare, 183.

⁵ Norman Goodall, ed. *The Uppsala Report 1968 - Official Report of the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches*, Uppsala, July 4-20, 1968, WCC publications, 1968, Geneva, 13.

⁶ Cf. John Meyendorff, *Catholicity and the Church*, 1983, New York, 91.

⁷ Meyendorff, *Catholicity*, 91-2.

⁸ On this point it is worth reading Nikos A. Nissiotis, "The Church as a Sacramental Vision and the Challenge of Christian witness", in *Church, Kingdom World*, edited by G. Limouris, Faith and Order papers 130, Geneva, 1986, 99-126.

⁹ David M. Paton, ed., *Breaking Barriers: Nairobi, 1975*, the Official Report of the Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Nairobi, 23 November - 10 December, 1975, WCC publications, Geneva, 1975, 60.

¹⁰ *Faith and Order - Louvain 7971*, Geneva 1971, 226; Michael Kinnamon, ed. *Signs of the Spirit*, Official Report of the Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Canberra, Australia, 7-20 February 1991, WCC publications, 1991, 173. For further discussion on conciliarity, see my book, *Conciliar Fellowship. A Common Goal*, WCC publications, Geneva, 1991.

¹¹ Robert J. Schreiter, *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local*, Orbis, New York, 1997, 128.

¹² Uppsala, 13.

¹³ Harare, 146.

¹⁴ *The Nature and Purpose of the Church*, Faith and Order paper n.181, Geneva, 1998, 56.

¹⁵ Uppsala, 14.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, New York, 1976, 178.

¹⁸ Petros Vasiliadis, *Eucharist and Witness - Orthodox perspectives on the Unity and Mission of the Church*, WCC, 1998, 14.

¹⁹ Canberra, 173.

²⁰ Konrad Raiser, *Transforming Globalization and Violence - Moral and Spiritual Formation for a Culture of Life*, WCC Publications (work in progress).

²¹ Lewis S. Mudge, *The Church as Moral Community - Ecclesiology and Ethics in Ecumenical Debate*, WCC Publications, Geneva, 1998, 68.

²² Harare, 183