

ECUMENICAL DIALOGUES AND THEOLOGICAL STUDIES SPONSORED BY THE WORLD ALLIANCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES UNTIL 2003

I. ECUMENICAL DIALOGUES

The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) is a confessional body ecumenically oriented. Bilateral and multilateral dialogues are a clear expression of WARC's commitment to Christian reconciliation and communion. Bilateral dialogues are official talks between two churches or families of churches aiming at overcoming inherited divergences often related to doctrine and church order that separate them. Through international bilateral dialogues and multilateral conversations WARC helps to foster deeper understanding and larger cooperation among different church families and to make available to the whole Church the specific contribution of Reformed faith and life.

Roman Catholic-Reformed Dialogue

The dialogue between the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches is the first world level Roman Catholic-Reformed dialogue since the Reformation. It is already in its third phase. The first one (1970-1977) dealt with the question of the role and place of the Church within the relationship between God and the world. Its final report, [*The Presence of the Christ in Church and World*], was published in *Reformed World* 36(5), 1981 (see also H. Meyer and L. Vischer (eds.), *Growth in Agreement*, New York-Geneva, Paulist-WCC, 1984, p. 434-463 – WCC ISBN 2-8254-0679-1). The second round (1984-1990) focused on the doctrine of the Church on trinitarian basis. Its general theme was "Church: People of God, Body of Christ, Temple of the Holy Spirit". The final report, [*Towards a Common Understanding of the Church*], was published under number 21 in the series "Studies from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches" (only the Spanish translation is available). It was also published in J. Gros *et al.* (eds). *Growth in Agreement II - Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998*, Geneva-Grand Rapids, WCC-Eerdmans, 2000, p. 780-818 - WCC ISBN 2-8254-1329-1. The members of the Reformation-Catholic Dialogue Commission (the Netherlands) produced a series of essays on [*Towards a Common Understanding of the Church*]: see *From Roots to Fruits - Protestants and Catholics Towards a Common Understanding of the Church*, Geneva, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1998, 192 p. The third phase of the Catholic-Reformed dialogue started in 1998. Its general theme is "The Church: Community of Common witness to the Kingdom of God". The first meeting of this third phase, held in Venice, Italy, May 6-12, 1998, reviewed the results of the second round of the dialogue. The second session took place from September 15-21, 1999 in the Netherlands under the theme "The Kingdom of God as context for the Church's Common Witness". The third session, held in Rome, Italy, September 13-18, 2000 had as its theme "The Church as Sign of the Kingdom in History". The fourth session took place in Cape Town, South Africa, August 22-28, 2001. It dealt with case studies linking the theme of the present round - "Church as Community of Common Witness to the Kingdom of God" - to the South African context and examined the theme of the Kingdom in recent ecumenical dialogues. The fourth session was held in Newry, Northern Ireland, September 18-24, 2002. It once again dealt with case studies relating the general theme of the present round to the local situation and advanced plans for the writing of the final report. The following session, held in Toronto, Canada, August 2003, advanced the drafting of this round's report expected to be completed in October 2004.

Lutheran-Reformed Dialogue

In view of the developments in conversations between Lutherans and Reformed in Europe and in North America, the Lutheran World Federation and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches called an *ad hoc* Joint Study Committee in January 1968. The Committee "paid particular attention to relations between the WARC and the LWF", underlined "the necessity of clarifying divergent understandings of 'church unity'" and indicated that "closer Lutheran-Reformed relationships and cooperation at all levels should not lead to formation of a 'closed Reformation bloc' within the world church..." The first series of conversations took place between 1970 and 1979. It dealt with a wide range of common theological concerns and explored different possibilities of "closer working relationship" between the LWF and WARC. A progress report published in 1975 ("Lutheran Reformed Joint Committee"), *Reformed World*, XXXIII(7), September 1975, p. 314-320 dealt with the implications of the Leuenberg Agreement, discussed again the 1971 proposal of a universal council, evaluated Lutheran-Reformed area reports and made recommendations to both families. The second series of conversations was held by the Lutheran-Reformed Joint Commission in Geneva 1985, Chicago 1986, Driebergen 1987 and Budapest 1988. It intended "to build on regional agreements already reached" and "to respond to needs of member churches, especially in Asia, Africa and Latin America". The main topics were the common faith, the Lutheran-Reformed way to unity, unity in diversity. The final report, together with two other Lutheran-Reformed regional documents (the Leuenberg Agreement and "An Invitation to Action") were published in [*Toward Church Fellowship*], Geneva, LWF-WARC, 1989, 72 p., ISBN 2-88190-009-7. Just before the beginning of the third series of conversations, the International Reformed Center John Knox organized a symposium on possible further steps in Lutheran-Reformed relations (see L. Vischer, ed., *Rowing in One Boat – A Common Reflection on Lutheran-Reformed Relations Worldwide*, Geneva, CIRJK, 1999, 87 p.). The third series of conversations started in 1999. A Joint Lutheran-Reformed Working Group with a three-year mandate was established "to follow up the positive results" of the 1989 report and "promote the process of reception of these results in Lutheran and Reformed member churches, furthering the growing communion between them". The Joint Working Group met for the first time in Geneva in November 1999. Participants presented reports and assessments concerning Lutheran-Reformed relations. The second session was held in November 2000 in Campinas, Brazil. The two commissions discussed Lutheran-Reformed cooperation in Brazil (with representatives of the LWF and WARC member churches) and in the USA, analysed the responses to a question on the same topic sent to all member churches and started plans for the final report of this round. The papers presented by the two theological advisors, André Birmelé (Lutheran) and Lukas Vischer (Reformed), focused on the question of making visible the fellowship already existing among the churches of the Reformation. The third session took place in Geneva, 14-17 October 2001 to finalise and adopt the final report of the present round, published in September 2002: [*Called to Communion and Common Witness*] - Report of the Joint Working Group between the Lutheran World Federation and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (1999-2001), Geneva, LWF-Warc, 2002, 53 p. ISBN 3-906706-93-1.

Roman Catholic-Lutheran-Reformed Dialogue

After preparatory meetings held by Lutherans and Reformed in 1969 and 1970 in Geneva and by Lutherans, Reformed and Catholics in Rome, in 1970, this trilateral dialogue on the subject of interconfessional marriages met successively in Strasbourg (1971), Madrid (1972), Basel (1973), Strasbourg (1974) and Venice (1976). For the [Final Report of the Roman Catholic-Lutheran-Reformed Study Commission on "The Theology of Marriage and the Problem of Mixed Marriages"], issued in 1976, see also H. Meyer and L. Vischer (eds.), *Growing in Agreement – Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level*, New York-Geneva, Paulist-WCC, 1984, p. 277-306 - WCC ISBN 2-8254-0679-1.

Baptist-Reformed Dialogue

Delegations appointed by the Baptist World Alliance and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches met four times between 1973 and 1977. The main topics of discussion were: Distinctive elements of Baptist and Reformed heritages, God's purpose for the world, Scripture, Church, Baptism, Mission, Ministry, local and universal church. A [final report] was published (see also *Baptists and Reformed in Dialogue*, Geneva, WARC, 1983, 56 p.; *Report of Theological Conversations*, Geneva-Washington, WARC-BWA, 21 p.; see also H. Meyer and L. Vischer (eds.), *Growth in Agreement – Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level*, New York/Geneva, Paulist/WCC, 1984, p. 131-151 – WCC ISBN 2-8254-0679-1). Both commissions met again in 1982 to review the final report in the light of comments of member churches of the two Alliances. The "Report of the Evaluation Group" was also published in *Baptists and Reformed in Dialogue*, p. 29-39.

Anglican-Reformed Dialogue

After a preliminary meeting held in 1978, WARC and the Anglican Consultative Council representatives met four times between 1981 and 1984. It was hoped that "an official dialogue with the Anglican Communion would be of help to those Reformed and Anglican churches that belong to a union of churches or are taking part in negotiations for union" (L. Vischer). Anglicans and Reformed discussed Ecclesiology, Sacraments, Ministry and the form of unity. For the final report see [*God's Reign and Our Unity*] – The report of the Anglican-Reformed International Commission, London/Edinburgh, SPCK/Saint Andrews, 1984, 90 p., Saint Andrews ISBN 0-7152-0578-1. See also J. Gros *et al.*, *Growth in Agreement II - Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998*, Geneva-Grand Rapids, WCC-Eerdmans, 2000, p. 114-154, WCC ISBN 2-8254-1329-1.

Mennonite-Reformed Dialogue

WARC and the Mennonite World Conference representatives met in 1984. Papers presented provided general introductions to both families and addressed the issue of the condemnation of the Anabaptists in Reformed confessional documents. Participants issued an appeal for dialogue beginning at the local level (see *Mennonites and Reformed in Dialogue*, Geneva, WARC, 1986, 89 p.). A second round of conversations took place in Waterloo, Canada, October 11-14, 1989. For its report see [*Findings of the Consultation on Baptism, Peace and the State in the Reformed and Mennonite Traditions, 1989*]. All papers presented in the 1989 session were published. See R.T. Bender and A.P.F. Sell (eds.), *Baptism, Peace and the State in the Reformed and Mennonite and Mennonite Traditions*, Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1991, 247 p. ISBN 0-88920-204-4.

Disciples of Christ-Reformed Dialogue

Members of WARC and the Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council met in 1984 and held a major international consultation in 1987 (see: A. Sell, ed., *Reformed and Disciples of Christ in Dialogue*, Geneva, WARC, 1985, 63 p., out of print; [*Towards Closer Fellowship*] – Report of the Dialogue Between Reformed and Disciples of Christ, Geneva, WARC, 1988, 16 p., ISBN 92-9075-007-3; *Reformed World*, XXXIX(8), December 1987, p. 829-841; see also *Mid-Stream*, April 1988). The main themes of both consultations were: our common faith; the Church; Baptism; Lord's Supper; Ministry; Mutual recognition as churches; Cooperation. A WARC/Disciples of Christ Ecumenical Council Consultation, held in Indianapolis in July 1994, recommended closer monitoring of Disciples of Christ-Reformed relations. The final report of the 1987 meeting, preceded by a Historical Introduction prepared by Lukas Vischer, was also published in J. Gros *et al* (eds.), *Growth in Agreement II - Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998*, Geneva-Grand Rapids, WCC-Eerdmans, 2000, p. 176-186, WCC ISBN 2-8254-1329-1.

Prague Consultations on the First, Radical and Second Reformation

The so-called Prague Consultations are a series of conversations conceived in 1984. They were initially held on the premises of the Comenius Faculty of Protestant Theology in Prague, Czech Republic, in 1986 (Prague I, on the heritage of the First and Radical Reformations), 1987 (Prague II, on Eschatology and Social Transformation) and 1989 (Prague III, on Christian Faith and Economics). They constituted a unique multilateral forum, gathering, during these first three sessions, only representatives from such different churches or movements as Brethren, Quakers, Mennonites, Waldensians, Hutterian Brethren, Moravians, Hussites and Czech Brethren. The Prague Consultations have two purposes: to cultivate the heritage of the First Reformation (12th through 15th century) and of the Radical Reformation started in the 16th century and, secondly, to draw the consequences of that heritage for the commitment to historical changes inspired by common hope. The World Alliance of Reformed Churches in cooperation with the Lutheran World Federation and the Mennonite World Conference organized the subsequent sessions, attended also by Methodists, Baptists, Reformed, Lutherans and a representative of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. The 1994 session (Prague IV, on the Sermon on the Mount and its reception in different traditions) as well as the 1998 one (Prague V, on Justification and Sanctification in the traditions of the Reformation) were held in Geneva. Prague VI met in Strasbourg, France, in February 2000 under the theme "New Life in Christ". A selection of papers presented at Prague I and Prague II was published by *Brethren Life and Thought*, XXXV(1), Winter 1990 – ISSN 0006-9663. The following articles on the First Reformation were published in WARC's *Reformed World* (September 1993): "The Waldensians and the Theology of History" (Giorgio Tourn); "Some Aspects of the Hussite Movement" (Milan Opočenský); "The Unitas Fratrum and the 16th-Century Reformation" (J.L. Hromádka) and "A Europe of 'Two or Three' Reformations" (P. Winzeler). Contributions to [Prague IV] as well as final statements of [Prague I to III] were published in Opočenský, M., ed., *Towards a Renewed Dialogue*, Geneva, WARC, 1996, 199 p., ISBN 92-9075-023-5. Papers presented at [Prague V] were published in Opočenský, M. and Réamonn, P., ed., *Justification and Sanctification in the Traditions of the Reformation*, Geneva, WARC, 1999, 280 p., ISBN 92-9075-064-2. Prague VII took place in Prague, Czech Republic, November 28 to December 2, 2003. It dealt with the theme "The Significance of Reforming and Prophetic Movements for Church and Society".

Methodist-Reformed Dialogue

After a preliminary meeting held in Saint Albans, England, in 1985, "to formulate both shared convictions and differences and to survey the state of reciprocal relations" (L. Vischer), representatives of WARC and of the World Methodist Council met in Cambridge in 1987. The main topics of those conversations were: the gospel to be confessed together and the compatibility of Methodist and Reformed expressions of it. For the Saint Albans session please see "Report of Methodist/Reformed Consultation", *Reformed World*, 38(8), December 1985, p. 444-447, 452. This report includes the attempt of a joint statement of faith. The final report of the Methodist-Reformed dialogue, "Together in God's Grace", was published in *Reformed World*, 39(8), December 1987, p. 821-829. See also *Reformed and Methodists in Dialogue*, Geneva, WARC, 1988, 16 p., ISBN 92-9075-006-5; G. Wainwright, *Methodists in Dialogue*, Nashville, Kingswood Books, 1995, p. 23-28 and the chapter "Perfect Salvation in the Teaching of Wesley and Calvin", p. 143-158, and Jeffrey Gros *et al.* (eds), *Growth in Agreement II - Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998*, Geneva-Grand Rapids, WCC-Eerdmans, 2000, p. 270-274, WCC ISBN 2-8254-1329-1.

Orthodox-Reformed Dialogue

Bilateral conversations between the representatives of Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches began in Leuenberg, Switzerland, in 1988. They were prepared by a

series of conversations (Istanbul, 1979, Geneva, 1981 and 1983) whose main topics were the Immutability and Communicability of God, the Authority of the Church and the Trinitarian Foundation and Character of Faith and of Authority. Papers presented in those three preparatory meetings, together with an "Agreed Understanding of the Theological Development and Eventual Direction of the Orthodox/Reformed Conversations leading to Dialogue" were published in 1985 (see T.F. Torrance, ed., *Theological Dialogue between Orthodox and Reformed Churches*, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1985, ISBN 0-7073-0436-9). The first three sessions of the Orthodox-Reformed dialogue (Leuvenberg, 1988; Minsk, 1990 and Kappel, 1992) dealt with the doctrine of the Trinity as based on the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed and with particular attention given to the teaching of Athanasius, Basil and Gregory Nazianzen. The main papers presented as well as [The Agreed Statement on the Holy Trinity] which registers "a doctrinal consensus between the East and the West never reached before" were published in 1993 (see also T.F. Torrance, ed., *Theological Dialogue between Orthodox and Reformed Churches*, Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1993, vol. 2, ISBN 0-7073-0725-2). In the following session (Limassol, Cyprus, 1994) an [Agreed Statement on Christology] was reached (see also Lukas Vischer, ed., *Agreed Statements from the Orthodox-Reformed Dialogue*, Geneva, WARC, 1998, Studies from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, n. 38 – ISBN 92-9075-050-2). Sessions held in Aberdeen, Scotland, in 1996, and in Zakynthos, Greece, in 1998, dealt with the Mystery, Nature, Unity and Membership of the Church. All papers from Kappel 1992 through Zakynthos 1998 were published by Fr. Dr. George Dion Dragas in *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, vol. 43(1-4), 1998. The "Memorandum" of the 1988 session as well as the agreed statements on the Holy Trinity and Christology were also published in Jeffrey Gros *et al.* (eds), *Growth in Agreement II - Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998*, Geneva-Grand Rapids, WCC-Eerdmans, 2000, p. 275-294. In the [Pittsburgh Session] (April 2000), papers dealt with Baptism, Confirmation and Chrismation, and the Apostolicity of the Church along the lines of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. The subcommittee of the Orthodox-Reformed international theological dialogue met at the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, Istanbul, Turkey, February 16-18, 2001, to prepare the joint commission session to be held in September 2002 in Romania. It was agreed that the theme of the 2002 session will be "The Holiness of the Church". The 2002 session was postponed to September 2003. It was held in Sibiu, Romania.

Oriental Orthodox-Reformed Dialogue

The first meeting of representatives of the five Oriental Orthodox Churches – Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopian, Malankara Orthodox Syrian (India) and Syrian – and of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches took place in Geneva in August 1992. Ever since both delegations have met in Wadi-El-Natroun, Egypt (1993), Driebergen, the Netherlands (1994), Kottayam, India (1997) and Richmond, USA (1998). Christology, Scripture and Tradition as well as the nature and mission of the Church were the main topics of discussion. A detailed description of the first four sessions followed by an [Agreed Statement on Christology] was published in the series "Studies from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches" (see H. Wilson, ed., *Oriental Orthodox-Reformed Dialogue – The First Four Sessions*, Geneva, WARC, 1998, ISBN 92-9075-051-0). *Reformed World* (March 1998) published summaries of papers by Christopher B. Kaiser, Henry Wilson and Milan Opočenský as well the full text of a paper by the Orthodox theologian K. M. George. For the Agreed Statement on Christology reached in 1994 see also Jeffrey Gros *et al.* (eds), *Growth in Agreement II - Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level*, Geneva-Grand Rapids, WCC-Eerdmans, 2000, p. 291-294 - WCC ISBN 2-8254-1329-1. The 6th session of this dialogue, held in Musselburgh, Scotland, in January 2000, dealt with distinct understandings of Sacrament or sacraments. The last session of the present round of theological conversations between the Oriental family of Orthodox churches and the World Alliance took place in Beirut, January 23-28, 2001. The report of this round was adopted by both commissions in that meeting. It includes the agreed statement on christology signed in 1994 as well as convergences and divergences on theological issues such as Tradition and Holy Scripture, the nature of the Church and its mission, ministry (including the service of women in the church) and sacraments. The theological secretary acted as the editor of the final version of that report. Following a decision taken by the WARC Executive Committee meeting of August 2001, the final report of the Oriental Orthodox Reformed dialogue was submitted to all WARC member churches for their study and action in October 2001.

Pentecostal-Reformed Dialogue

After a meeting held in Mattersey, England, in 1995, to explore the interest in and the feasibility of developing an ongoing dialogue at the international level, representatives of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and members of different Pentecostal Churches met successively in Torre Pelice, Italy (1996), Chicago, USA (1997), Kappel-am-Albis, Switzerland (1998) and in Seoul, Korea (1999). The Torre Pelice session dealt with the theme "Spirituality and the Challenges of Today". Participants identified two important areas of common ground: the central role played by the Bible in both Christian families and the importance of the Holy Spirit in proclamation and praxis. The topic of the following session was "The Role and Place of the Holy Spirit in the Church". Much debate was engaged around the key issue of *charismata*. The Kappel session reflected on the theme "The Holy Spirit and Mission in Eschatological Perspective" whereas the Seoul session dealt with the topic "The Holy Spirit, Charisma and the Kingdom of God" (see Hyun, Y. and Macchia, F., *Spirit's Gifts – God's Reign*, Louisville, Office of Theology and Worship of the Presbyterian Church USA, 1999. 66 p.). The 5th session of this dialogue, which was also the last one of the present series of conversations, was held in São Paulo, Brazil, in May 2000. It undertook an overall evaluation of the work accomplished and produced a final report based upon the first five years of discussion. For the text of the final report, [Word and Spirit, Church and World], see *Pneuma* (Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies), Fall 2000; see also *Reformed World*, 50(3), September 2000, p. 128-156; see also *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, 4(1), January 2001, p. 41-72. On the Pentecostal-Reformed dialogue and its report see also Frank D. Macchia, "Spirit, Word, and Kingdom: Theological Reflections on the Reformed/Pentecostal Dialogue", *Ecumenical Trends*, 30(3), March 2001, p. 1/33-7/39. The final report of the Pentecostal-Reformed dialogue was submitted to all WARC member churches for study and action in October 2001. A second series of conversations under the theme "Experience in Christian Faith and Life" was planned in Pasadena, USA, June 2001. The first session, held in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, addressed the issue of experience in Christian worship. The second, which took place in Puerto Rico, June 2003, dealt with the relation between experience and fundamental elements of the Christian life.

African Instituted Churches-Reformed Dialogue

Representatives of the Nairobi based Organization of African Instituted Churches – an institution created in 1978 to express the needs and concerns of nationalist, prophet-healing and/or Pentecostal churches founded by Africans – and of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches met for the first time in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1998. Their aim was to learn more about each other and to identify matters of common concern that could serve as points for future dialogues. These were: Unity, in response to ethnic, denominational and political divisions; Gospel and Culture; the empowerment of women. They agreed on holding a series of three dialogues under the general theme "Christianity in the African Context". The first of these three sessions was held in Kigali, Rwanda, in 1999. In the [*Kigali Statement*] participants identified historical, cultural and ecclesial challenges faced by Christian churches in Africa and agreed on concrete actions. The second of the three sessions foreseen for this dialogue was held in Lagos, Nigeria, March 4-7, 2001. It dealt with the theme "Reconciling identities: learning from and challenging each other (The prophetic role of the Church, the free movement of the Holy Spirit)". The two sides presented papers on the following topics: "Africa in crisis: what is the practical prophetic role of the Church"; "The Experience of the Holy Spirit in Worship" and "Our Churches and their role and strategies for education". Both organisations agreed to submit the 1999 [*Kigali Statement*] to their respective constituencies and to urge them to respond to this document and encourage dialogue at the local level. The last session of the present round of theological conversations took place in Nairobi, February 2002. The final report of the OAIC-Reformed dialogue was published in January 2003 and submitted to all WARC member churches for study and action.

Adventist-Reformed Dialogue

Seventh-Day Adventists and Reformed met in Geneva in 1998 and 1999 to explore the possibility of starting a bilateral dialogue. This dialogue had as its theme "The Church in the Setting of the Reformation Heritage: its Mission in a World of Widespread Injustice and Ecological destruction". It took place in Jongny-sur-vevey, Switzerland, April 1-7, 2001. The meeting was co-chaired by Dr. Bert Beach (USA, general secretary of Seventh-day Adventist Council on Interchurch Relations) and Prof. Cynthia Rigby (USA, Reformed, Associate Professor of Theology, Austin Theological Seminary). The Adventist representatives presented the following papers: "Seventh-day Adventists: A Profile" (by Dr. William G. Johnsson, Australia/USA, Editor of the *Adventist Review*), "The Apocalypse: God's Answer to the Human Cry for Ultimate Justice" (by Dr. Roy Adams, Grenada/USA, Associate Editor of the *Adventist Review*), "Keepers of the Garden: Christians and the Environment – An Adventist Perspective" (by Dr. John T. Baldwin, USA, Professor at the Seventh-day Theological Seminary at Andrews University), "Seventh-day Adventists and Religious Freedom – An Aspect of Justice" (by Dr. John Graz, Switzerland/USA, Director of the Department of Public Affairs and Religious Freedom of the Seventh-day Adventist General Conference), and "Protestant Theological Heritage in Seventh-day Adventism" (by Dr. Hans K. LaRondelle, The Netherlands/USA). The Reformed representatives presented the following papers: "The Challenges of the post-Cold War for Protestant Christianity in Latin America" (by Dr. Arturo Piedra, Costa Rica, Professor of Church History at the Latin American Biblical University), "Church Concerns from the Southern Africa Perspective: A Presentation to the Adventist-Reformed Dialogue" (by Revd Rupert Hambira, Botswana, Synod Secretary of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa); "Women's Concerns from a Dalit Perspective" (by Dr. Nalini Arles, Dean of Master's Studies of the United Theological College, Bangalore), "The Doctrine of Forgiveness and Its Implications for Justice: A Reformed, Feminist, North American Perspective" (by the Reformed Co-Chair, Dr. Cynthia Rigby, USA, Associate Professor of Theology, Austin Theological Seminary) and "Reformed Ecclesiology and Missiology" [by Dr. Alan Sell, England, (former WARC theological secretary) Professor of Christian Doctrine and Philosophy of Religion at The United Theological College, University of Wales.] In the [Report of the International Theological Dialogue Between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches - 2001], both sides agreed that "the Reformed and the Adventists have frequently misunderstood one another and viewed each other with suspicion". They went on to offer mutual clarifications. They address the issue of the challenges to Christian mission today, particularly in connection with economic injustice (including HIV/AIDS and violence against women and children), ecological destruction and several forms of prejudices. The report of the Adventist-Reformed dialogue was submitted to all WARC member churches for study and action.

II. THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

WARC's Department of Theology was created in 1959. Its main responsibilities are to strengthen theological sharing among member churches, to represent Reformed opinion in international [dialogues] and to facilitate cooperation in Reformed [theological education]. Research work on the Reformed tradition with special reference to its contemporary significance underlies the implementation of such mandates. Research happens through special studies undertaken in connection with general councils themes or theological topics identified by member churches or by the Department itself. In what follows you will find information about some of these studies.

Ordination and the Ministry in the Reformed Tradition

The 1954 General Council requested this study. Its main aim was "to restate the characteristic Reformed understanding for the ministry and ministries of the Church". The report saw the pattern of the ministry of the Church as an extension of the three "offices" of Christ (Prophet, Priest and King): Proclamation of the Word, Sacramental and pastoral functions and ministry of church order and discipline. As an interim report, it was presented to the 1959 Executive Committee in São Paulo, Brazil and referred to the Department of Theology for further study. It was sent to each member church of the Alliance, and to individual theologians, with questions concerning the next steps to be taken in the study, the adequacy of its theological basis and practical situations that should be taken into account. The interim Report was criticized on the following grounds: the ministry of the Church is not continuous with the ministry of Christ; the report was too clerical and traditionalist in its outlook; it tried "to set up a timeless doctrine of the ministry, when we can really deal with specific situations". The *Ordination and the Ministry* study was later on included in the *Catholicity* study.

WARC texts related to this study:

"Meaning of Eldership Seen as Vital Issue for Reformed Doctrine of the Ministry" (Lewis S. Mudge), *Bulletin*, 1(2), August 1960, p. 8-11.

Catholicity

In 1960, The Alliance Executive Committee requested the Department of Theology to undertake a study on "Catholicity as it might be understood by Reformed Churches". The Catholicity study was among the early major researches undertaken by the Department of Theology under the inspiration of Lewis S. Mudge, its first Executive Secretary. Mudge published in the *Bulletin* of the Department of Theology two articles that were "deliberately written to be provocative". Responses by Jacques de Senarclens, Thomas F. Torrance, John Macquarrie, Markus Barth and others were published in the 1961 summer issue of the *Bulletin*. Hendrik Berkhof presented a paper on "The Catholicity of the Church" (1. The History and Present Meaning of the Idea; 2. Pleroma in the Letters to the Ephesians and Colossians; 3. Theological Consequences for the Concept of Catholicity; 4. A Few Ecumenical Consequences) to the 1961 summer meeting of the Alliance's European Theological Committee. As a result, the European Area Council produced seven theses on the meaning of catholicity for Reformed Churches. The North American Area Council as well as Dutch theologians also joined the debate. Together with a series of essays by H. Berkhof (H. Berkhof, *De Katholiceit der Kerk*, Nijkerk, The Netherlands, 1962. German translation: 1964), Lewis S. Mudge's book *One Church: Catholic and Reformed – Toward a Theology for Ecumenical Decision* (London, Lutterworth, 1963. 96 p.) grew out of that study and raised questions later assigned to the consideration of the 1964 General Council. In connection with the study of Catholicity, The 1964 General Council requested the Department of Theology "to consider the question of oversight (Greek *episkope*) in the Church, with particular reference to union negotiations". The Alliance European Theological Commission was requested to take up this assignment. Its chairman, J.K.S. Reid, presented a report on the theme to the 1970 General Council (see below).

WARC texts related to this study:

"Catholicity Study Prompts Reflection on Reformed tasks in Ecumenical Movement" (Lewis S. Mudge), *Bulletin*, 1(3), December 1960, p. 6-9; *Bulletin*, 1(4), February 1961, p. 9-12.

"Some Reformed Churchmen Speak their minds: Letters to the Editor on Catholicity", *Bulletin*, 2(1), Summer 1961. 16 p.

"The Catholicity of the Church – Dutch Theologians in Debate", *Bulletin*, 6(1), Autumn 1965, p. 1-9.

"Catholicity as It Might be Understood by Reformed Churches" (Department of Theology Working Paper), August 1961. 33 p. Structure: I. The Ecumenical Movement and the Problem of Catholicity (The Ecumenical

Movement Comes of Age; A New Look at the "Great New Fact"; The Question of Catholicity) – II. Christology and Ecumenical Theologizing (The Program of Ecumenical Study; The Christological Method; Christological Analysis and the New Humanity in Christ) – III. The History of Christian Thought: Two Points of Viewing (Tradition and Church History; Church History and Justification; Holy History and Holy Spirit) – IV. The Practical Business of Union (The Problem of World Confessional Alignments; Union Negotiations as They Now Stand; Some Axioms for Union Negotiations).

"Report on the Study of Episkope". *Nairobi 1970* – Proceedings of the Uniting General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Presbyterian and Congregational). Geneva, WARC, 1970, p. 184-195.

The Theological Basis of Human Rights

The 1970 General Council recommended that the Department of Theology undertake a study on "The Theological Basis of Human Rights and a Theology of Liberation". The study would include consideration of such questions as: "How can I be free? God liberating or oppressing? Can the Church be a liberating Church? What does freedom mean when applied to institutions? Freedom as creativity – a biblical concept?" Jürgen Moltmann wrote the initial paper. It "stimulated a wide response from groups of theologians and churches throughout the world". Between 1971 and 1975 many of the member churches, some officially and others unofficially, as well as a number of special committees and groups of theologians produced a variety of statements on several aspects of the issue in question. In a consultation held in London in February 1976, attended by 21 participants from 14 countries in all continents, the [final consensus statement], drafted by Jürgen Moltmann and Jan M. Lochman, was approved. According to Richmond Smith, then Executive Secretary, "up to the present [1982] the report has gone through several major reprintings in English, French, German and Spanish. What is more to the point, the report has been very favourably received through the Reformed family and far beyond". Following an initiative sponsored by the WARC in 1977, it was proposed that a limited research project be implemented, involving Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed theologians concerned with the study of the theological basis of human rights. An informal inter-confessional study-group met in Geneva in 1980 and produced a [Report of a Limited Research Project on the Theological Basis of Human Rights]. In the context of the 1982 General Council's rejection of the apartheid system as a sin and the 1983 Executive Committee call for an worldwide ecumenical gathering of churches to bear witness to peace and justice (see [A Covenant for Peace and Justice, 1983]), the John Knox International Reformed Center organized in August 1987 a seminar on "Forms of solidarity: Human Rights" whose findings were published in its studies series (see below). In connection with the 1989 General Council debates on Christian witness in view of the ecological crisis, WARC published a "Proposal for enlarging the Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (see below). The Alliance 1994 Executive Committee meeting recommended that "measures be taken for the revival of the proposal to hold a consultation on the theological imperatives for human rights, and its implementation before the 1997 General Council." In the following year, the Executive Committee authorized "the holding of a small consultation on the theological imperatives of human rights, to revise the 1977 (sic) Theological Statement on Human Rights". A consultation held in 1997, with the assistance of the World Council of Churches and of the Lutheran World Federation, realized that a simple revision of the Theological Statement on Human Rights was not appropriate and that a new statement should be prepared.

WARC and John Knox Center publications related to this study:

"The Theology of Human Rights and the Theology of Liberation" (Interim Report), *Reformed World*, 33(6), June 1975, p. 268-274.

"[The Theological Basis of Human Rights]" (1976 London Consultation), *Reformed World*, 34(2), June 1976, p. 50-58.

"[A Christian Declaration on Human Rights]" (Jürgen Moltmann), *Reformed World*, 34(2), June 1976, p. 58-72.

"[Report of a Limited Research Project on the Theological Basis of Human Rights]", *Reformed World*, 36(8), 1981, p. 370-375.

Rights of Future Generations – Rights of Nature – Proposal for enlarging the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Lukas Vischer, ed.). Geneva, WARC, 1990, 68 p. Contents: Proposal for a resolution; I. "Human Rights, Rights of Humanity, and Rights of Nature (Jürgen Moltmann and Elisabeth Geisser); II. The Rights of Future Generations (Peter Saladin and Christoph Zenger); III. The Rights of Nature (Jörg Leimbacher); IV. Rights of Creation – Theological Perspectives (Christian Link); IV. The Role and Contribution of the Churches (Lukas Vischer); Appendix: The United Nations 1982 World Charter for Nature.

Forms of Solidarity – Human Rights. Geneva, Centre International John Knox, 1988 195 p. Essays, Bible studies and regional reports in English, German and French.

Reformed World, 48(2), June 1998. Texts on "Theology and Human Rights" by Alan D. Falconer, Jill Schaeffer and Clement John.

Reformed World, 48(3), September 1998. Texts on "Theology and Human Rights" by Russel Botman, Charles Harper, Julio de Santa Ana and Sun Soon-Hwa.

Called to Witness to the Gospel Today

The 1980 WARC Executive Committee meeting received a memorandum prepared by Lukas Vischer on behalf of the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches. The memorandum requested the Alliance to work out a position paper on "certain distinctive theological issues which challenge the life and witness of the Reformed..." to be presented to the 1982 General Council. The Executive Committee called an international consultation in August 1982 to draft that paper. A special committee on Reformed Witness Today met during the 1982 General Council and reshaped the original draft in the light of ongoing debates. The General Council received the document and instructed that it be sent to all member churches for reactions and responses. The Document recognized the "manifold ways in which the Spirit is at work in our midst", e.g., opening new doors, helping churches to discover in new ways the challenge and relevance of the Gospel and helping churches and individual Christians to bear steadfast witness in situations of injustice, repression and persecution. At the same time, it identified three major challenges: "the Gospel of Jesus Christ himself", "the promising and threatening developments of the contemporary world" and "the encounter with other churches in the ecumenical movement". The response to these challenges required a common effort of reflection and action. The Document intended to be an invitation to such a common effort. It dealt with four themes: I. The Central Affirmation: Jesus Christ – Lord and Saviour; II. Re-thinking the Reformed Heritage; III. Communion in Christ – A Sign of Christ's Presence in the World; IV Witness in a Threatened and Divided World. This study, under the coordination of C.S. Song until 1986, became the central Activity of the Alliance between Ottawa 1982 and Seoul 1989. The study text *Called to Witness to the Gospel Today* was published as the first volume of the series "Studies from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches". It was translated in several languages. Regional consultations related to the study were held in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe. The final findings of the study were presented in Section I "Towards a Common Testimony of Faith" of the 1989 Seoul General Council.

WARC and John Knox Center publications related to this study:

Reformed Witness Today – A Collection of Confessions and Statements of Faith Issued by Reformed Churches (Lukas Vischer, ed.). Bern, Evangelische Arbeitsstelle Oekumene Schweiz, 1982. 468 p. (Texts of confessions and statements from union negotiations from the following countries: Madagascar, South Africa, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Great Britain, Cuba, Canada, U.S.A., Ghana, Zambia, India, Sri Lanka, Australia, New Zealand and Belgium.)

Confessions and Confessing in the Reformed Tradition Today. Geneva, WARC, 1983, 24 p.

Called To Witness to the Gospel Today. Geneva, WARC, 1983, 52 p. (study text)

"[A Covenant for Peace and Justice] – A Statement of the Executive Committee of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches". Kappel, WARC Executive Committee Minutes '83, p. 42-46. Also: "A Covenant for Peace and Justice – A Statement of the Executive Committee of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches". *Reformed World*, 37(6), June 1983, p. 179-182.

Newsletter of the study "Called to Witness to the Gospel Today", numbers 1 to 8, September 1983 to February 1988. Includes responses from Warc member churches to this study.

Testimonies of Faith – Letters and Poems from prison in Taiwan. Geneva, WARC, 1984. 96 p.

"Called to Witness to the Gospel Today – Cairo Consultation – 1984". *Reformed World*, 38(2), June 1984. Texts by Allan Boesak, Ansley Coe Throckmorton, Lukas Vischer, Peter D. Latuihamallo, Grégoire Ambadiang de Mendeng, N.K. Dzobo and C.S. Song.

"Theological Explorations into Cultures (Bali Consultation I)", *Reformed World*, 38(6), June 1985.

"Theological Explorations into Cultures (Bali Consultation II)", *Reformed World* 38(7), September 1985.

"Called to Witness to the Gospel Today: Two Responses from Korea". *Reformed World*, 39(4), December 1986. Texts by David Kwang-Sun Suh and Keun-Won Park.

Towards a Common Testimony – Confessing the Faith Today. Geneva, IRC John Knox, 1989. 299 p. (Part I: Confessing Today; Part II: Confessions and Confessing in the Reformed Tradition; Part III: Reflexions on Confessing Today – Contributors include: J. D. Douglas, A.I.C. Heron, A. F. P. Sell, C.S. Song, L. Vischer and D. Willis).

Covenanting for Peace and Justice – Reflections by WARC Church leaders. Geneva, WARC, 1989, 109 p. (Texts by: Choan-Seng Song, Walter Brueggemann, Lukas Vischer, Saindi Chiphangwi, José Belo Chipenda, David M. Gill, Károl Tóth, Joachim Guhrt, Douglas John Hall and Lars Lindberg).

"Towards a Common Testimony of Faith", *Seoul 1989* - Proceedings of the 22nd General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Presbyterian and Congregational) (E. Perret, ed.). Geneva, WARC, 1990, p. 171-178.

"Response to 'Called to Witness to the Gospel Today' – by a team of theologians and laypersons from Taiwan". *Reformed World*, 41(1), March 1990, p.23-32.

Who Are We Called to be? Reformed Self-Understanding

The World Alliance 1989 General Council noted that "our sense of Reformed identity seems less secure than in the past" and requested "fresh exploration of our common Reformed ethos". The Department of Theology submitted to the Executive Committee the proposal for a study process on the Reformed Self-Understanding. Following the agreement of the Executive Committee, the Department of Theology issued a call for papers and organized, between 1993 and 1994, a series of regional meetings held in West Africa, Southeast Asia, Caribbean-North America, Europe, Latin America and Pacific. The findings of individual contributions and regional meetings were reviewed and summarized in the course of a consultation held in Auburndale, USA, in 1994 and were fed into section I of the 1997 General Council.

WARC texts related to this study:

Who Are We Called to Be? – West Africa Regional Consultation – Ghana, 9th – 13th February, 1993. WARC, n.d., 63 p.

Reformed World, 43(1-2), March and June 1993. Articles on Reformed self-understanding by: F. Balasundaram, Karel Blei, Margrethe Brown, Lydia A. Eleblu, Lynn Japinga, George Sabra, Enyi B. Udoh, Lewin L. Williams and Henry Wilson (ed.).

Who Are We Called to be? – Regional Reports and Individual Papers on Reformed Self-understanding. Geneva, WARC, 1993, (mimeo).

Being Reformed Christians in Asia Today (Yeow, Choo Lak and Henry Wilson, editors). Singapore, ATESEA, 1994, iv/58 p. Contributors: Kamol Arayaprteep, M. P. Kody, Yeow Choo Lak, Lydia N. Niguidula, Wilhelmus A. Roeroer, C. Sangzuala and Henry Wilson.

Christian Fundamentalism Today

The consultation on "Christian Fundamentalism Today" was planned and carried out jointly by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity of the Roman Catholic Church. It was held in Mülheim, Germany, in 1993 and gathered together 24 participants from 12 countries. According to a preparatory document, the consultation intended "to analyse and discuss the phenomena of fundamentalism. The primary focus will be Christian fundamentalism. The consultation will assess the impact of Christian fundamentalism within Christian world communions and their ecumenical relations".

WARC text related to this study:

Christian Fundamentalism Today – The Papers and findings of the WARC/LWF/PCPU Consultation – 22 to 26 February 1993 (Henry Wilson, ed.). Geneva, WARC, 1994. 108 p. ISBN: 92-9075-015-4. Contents: Fundamentalism: The Indian Experience (George Matthew); Fundamentalists, Protestant and Catholic: An Ecumenical Challenge? (Thomas F. Stransky); A Mainline Protestant Perspective (Kirsten Nielsen); Fundamentalism, Churches, Church Relations: A Roman Catholic Perspective (Remi E. Hoeckman); A Conservative Evangelical Perspective (Heinrich Schäfer); An Interpretative Lutheran Reflection (Kirsten Nielsen); An Interpretative Reformed Perspective (Malachie Munyaneza); An Interpretative Roman Catholic Reflection (Teresa Gonçalves).

Ordination of Women and Emerging Ecclesiologies

The ordination of women in Reformed churches was the theme of a consultation held in Geneva in 1992 by the World Alliance's [Department of Partnership of Women and Men], then known as PACT. Contributions from biblical, systematic, historical and contextual perspectives were published in the book *"Walk, My Sister" – The Ordination of Women: Reformed Perspectives*. According to that meeting, Reformed churches should undergo major structural changes in order to incorporate the gifts of women. The question of ecclesiological exclusion, of those who have no access to church offices because of race, caste or social status, was further explored in the consultation held in Kampen, the Netherlands, in 1993 under the theme "Challenges from the Emerging Ecclesiologies to Ecclesial Renewal". The consultation, according to Henry Wilson, then Executive Secretary of

the Department of Theology, "was an attempt to look at the question of church renewal, not just in general terms, but from the perspective of those whom our churches so often exclude".

WARC texts related to this study:

"Walk, My Sister" – The Ordination of Women: Reformed Perspectives (Ursel Rosenhäger & Sarah Stephens, ed.). Geneva, WARC, 1993. 176 p. Exegetical studies by Nirmala Vasanthakumar, Isabel Apawo Phiri, Sang Chang, Elsa Tamez and Ursel Rosenhäger; Systematic theological studies by Henry Wilson, Esther Suter and Najla Abou Sawan; Historical study by Jane Dempsey Douglass; Social and cultural approaches by Martha Essem and Perpetua Numfor (Cameroon), Samuel Dansokho (Senegal), Susan Chuang (Taiwan), Osmundo Ponce (Guatemala/Colombia) and Amaal Tawfik (Egypt); Conclusion by Jana and Milan Opočenský.

New Wine – The Challenge of the Emerging Ecclesiologies to Church Renewal (Henry Wilson & Nyambura J. Njoroge, ed.). Geneva, WARC, 1994. 112 p. ISBN 92-9075-016-2. Main Contributions: Reinventing the Church: Base Christian Communities in Latin America (Guidoberto Mahecha), A New Vision of the Church: The Challenge of the African Independent Churches (F. Kimani Githieya), In the House of the Lord are Many Mansions (Doreen Hazel), Minjung Experience, Minjung Church (Kim Sung Jae), Womanist/Feminist Challenges for Wholeness (Isabel Apawo Phiri), *Ubi Christus Ibi Ecclesia*: Some Christological Themes Relevant in Formulating New Ecclesiologies (Pamela Dickey Young), We Are Not Alone (John Parry).

Islam in Asia and in Africa

The World Alliance 1989 General Council encouraged member churches "to engage fearlessly in dialogue with persons of other faiths with a view to better mutual understanding, and for the renewal of society". In response to this recommendation, the Department of Theology organized two consultations on Muslim-Christian relations. The first one, on Islam in Asia, was held in Bangkok, in 1991, in cooperation with the Lutheran World Federation. It was an expression of ecumenical cooperation between two world communions who have been "committed to fostering interreligious understanding and dialogue between different religious communities". It brought together 26 Christian representatives "knowledgeable about the world of Islam and with a deep commitment to promoting Christian-Muslim relations in their respective contexts". The Second consultation, on Islam in Africa, took place in Malawi, in 1994. It gathered 22 people from 9 African countries. Its purpose was "to assess the different types of relationship that exist between Christians and Muslims in different African countries and to learn from one another's experiences".

WARC texts related to this study:

Islam in Asia – Perspectives for Christian-Muslim Encounter (Paul Rajashekar and Henry Wilson, ed.). Geneva, LWF-WARC, 1992. 227 p. ISBN: 3-906707-09-5. Main presentations and regional reports: Theological and Historical Rationality Behind Christian-Muslim Relations (Charles Amjad-Ali), Resurgent Islam: Its Political Implications for Asia (Andreas D'Souza), Islamic Resurgence and Asian Culture and Society (Hilario M. Gomez). Reports on Christian-Muslim relations in Bangladesh (M. Eugenia), India (Andreas D'Souza), Indonesia (Ng Kiok Nam), Pakistan (James Channan), Philippines (Robert Day McAmis), Sub-Saharan Africa (Hans Haafkens), Middle East (Jan Henningsson), Europe (Jan Slomp). Bible studies by Olaf Schumann.

Islam in Africa – Perspectives for Christian Muslim Relations (H. S. Wilson, ed.). Geneva, WARC, 1995. 106 p. ISBN 92-9075-022-7. Contents: Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (J. Haafkens), Christian-Muslim Relations in South and South-East Asia (H. S. Wilson); Country Reports: Cameroon (Alfred Ondo), Ghana (Johnson Mbillah), Kenya (Lawrence P.K. Mbagara), Malawi (T. A. G. Mwambila), Morocco (Hans U. Reitzel), Nigeria (Agwu Kalu), South Africa (Samson A. Khumalo), Sudan (Elom Sowu).

Ethnicity and Nationalism

In response to the historical changes that took place in Europe in 1989, the Department of Theology organized two consultations. The first one was held at Penser, Switzerland in 1990. Its theme was "Christian Community in a Changing Society". It dealt with the meaning of those "sudden and drastic changes in societies around the globe" and tried to discern the challenges that the new historical situation presented to the witness and service of the churches. The second consultation, held also under the impact of the ethnic crisis in Bosnia and Rwanda, took place in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in 1994. Organized in cooperation with the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation, the meeting focused on one of the main characteristics of the post Cold-War Era, namely the resurgence of the question of ethnicity and nationalism related, among other factors, to the reorganization of nation-states. The World Alliance, wrote Henry Wilson, then Executive Secretary of the Department of Theology, attempted in that consultation "to engage its member churches in evaluating the emerging social and political forces". According to Théo Tschuy, the Colombo meeting "called on the churches to reassess their history critically and to evaluate their own involvement and their inadvertent support for nationalism and ethnocentric ambitions". The following papers presented to the consultation were published in *The Ecumenical Review*: "Understanding Ethnicity and Nationalism" (by Jayadeva Uyangoda), "A Vision of Embrace – Theological Perspectives on Cultural Identity and Conflict" (by Miroslav Volf); "Ethnicity and Nationalism in Sudan" (by James Mabor Gatkuoth) and "Hungarian Minorities in Europe: A Case Study" (by Robert J. Pátkai).

WARC texts related to this study:

Christian Community in a Changing Society (H.S. Wilson, ed.). Geneva, WARC, 1991. 92 p. ISBN: 92-9075-012-X. Main Contributions: Biblical Views on "Church-State" Relations and their influence on Existing Political Ideologies (Norman K. Gottwald), A Historical Survey of Reformed Views on the Relationship between Church and State (Eberhard Busch), "'Foedus' and 'Vocatio': The Reformed Orientation Towards Political Life" (Mario Miegge); Case studies on Church-State relations: German Democratic Republic (Johannes Langhoff), Czechoslovakia (Pavel Ruml), Northern Ireland (Daphne Gilmour), Lebanon (George Sabra), South Africa (Douglas Bax), South Korea (Chung-Hyun Ro).

The Ecumenical Review, 47(2), April 1995, p. 189-224.

"[Ethnicity and Nationalism: A Challenge to the Churches]". *The Ecumenical Review*, 47(2), April 1995, p. 225-231. "Ethnicity and Nationalism: A Challenge to the Churches", with an introduction by Henry Wilson. *Reformed World*, 45(3), September 1995, p. 113-124. "Ethnicity and Nationalism: A Challenge to the Churches", in Théo Tschuy, *Ethnic Conflict and Religion*, Geneva, WCC, 1997, p. 150-156, ISBN: 2-8254-1190-6.

Gospel and Cultures

The regional conference on "Called to Witness to the Gospel Today" held in Cairo, Egypt, in 1984, referred to culture as one of the urgent reasons that "compels us now to engage in theological effort and credible witness". In response to the "urgent need... to develop theological understanding of cultures based on actual experiences in specific cultural contexts", the Department of Theology organized a consultation on "Theological Explorations into Cultures". It took place in Bali, Indonesia, from March 25-29, 1985. Of 26 participants, 23 represented 16 (out of 27) member churches of the Alliance in Indonesia. Papers presented dealt with the following themes: "An Approach to other Cultures – The Case of the Church in Bali"; "African Ancestor Cult: A Theological Appraisal"; "A Christian Reflection on Beauty in the Japanese Cultural Context"; "Experiments of Inculturation in the Toraja Church"; "Indigenous and Reformed – The Meeting between Christianity and Pre-Literary Religions and Islam on an Eastern Indonesian Island".

The WARC 1993 Executive Committee decided, on the recommendation of the Department of Theology, to undertake a study process on Gospel and Cultures in close cooperation with the World Council of Churches. The findings of this study would be fed into the 1996 WCC world conference on mission (held in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil) as well as into the 1997 General Council of the Alliance. After an exploratory meeting held in Auburndale, USA, in 1994, and a study involving "individuals, congregations, small groups, theological faculties and institutions" in different regions of the world, a major conference took place in Tana Toraja, Sulawesi, Indonesia, in 1996. The [*Gospel and Cultures*] Study had four main *foci*: Authentic witness within each culture (Mission); local congregations in pluralistic societies (Education); empowerment of identities in community by the gospel (Liberation); one gospel – many expressions (Cross-cultural sharing). Participants from 23 countries attended the meeting. The Bible studies and a series of regional approaches to the theme of this study process were published in *Gospel and Cultures – Reformed Perspectives*, edited by Henry Wilson.

WARC texts related to this study:

"Theological Explorations into Cultures (Bali Consultation I)", *Reformed World*, 38(6), June 1985.

"Theological Explorations into Cultures (Bali Consultation II)", *Reformed World* 38(7), September 1985.

Gospel and Cultures – Reformed Perspectives (Henry Wilson, ed.). Geneva, WARC, 1996, 159 p. ISBN 92-9075-030-8. Contributors include: R. Arce Valentín, K. Blei, M. Brown, A. Case-Winters, C. Duraisingh, S. Dansokho, P. Holtrop, C. S. Song, E. Templeton and H. Wilson.

Debreceen 1997 – Proceedings of the 23rd General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (Presbyterian and Congregational) (Milan Opočenský, ed.). Geneva, WARC, 1997, p. 186-188.

The Mission of Reformed Churches Today

The World Alliance of Reformed Churches is starting preparations to hold its next General Council in Accra, Ghana, in 2004 under the theme "That All May Have Life in Fullness". Through different preparatory initiatives such as publications and meetings, the Alliance intends to challenge its member churches to join in a "gathering process" that will start before the General Council, reach its culmination in the General Council itself and hopefully bear fruits after that. It is also expected that through this gathering process and through the General Council WARC member churches will be encouraged to indicate the ways they intend to respond together to the call that the 1997 Debreceen General Council addressed to all WARC member churches to engage in a process of recognition, education and confession on matters of economic justice and ecological destruction. In close connection with the "gathering process" leading to the next General Council as well as with the ongoing efforts to mobilise member churches to respond together to the Debreceen call, the 2000 WARC Executive Committee decided to implement a "process for reflection and development of a mission statement and other strategies that might lead to a renewal of mission in the churches". In its report to the same Executive Committee meeting, the Department of Theology noted that "what we need is a focus on mission that will produce fresh missiological thinking and energy in response to the new contexts in which Reformed churches find themselves at the beginning of the 21st Century". The ultimate aim of this process "should be not just a statement on mission but the renewal of our churches for a fresh understanding and engagement in mission". It should produce suggestions as to how "this theme might be developed at the next General Council". The WARC Executive Committee asked the Geneva Executive Staff to nominate a small core group to design this "process for reflection and development of a mission statement and other strategies that might lead to a renewal of mission in the churches". According to the WARC Department of Theology, this core group should gather data "from many current efforts among our constituency" and also "gain insights from the Mission in Unity Project". It should pay attention to academic missiology, "but even more important, to the lived missiology of the people of God in the contemporary world", to develop a "dynamic interactive process with the churches" and take into account the new global situation. In order to carry out this mandate, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches held a consultation at "Le Cénacle", Geneva, Switzerland from July 4-8, 2001 to design the above-mentioned study process on the mission of Reformed churches today. The results of that consultation were submitted to the 2001 session of the WARC Executive Committee.

Globalisation and Church Structures

The Lutheran World Federation and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches are holding a study on the challenges that the new cultural situations shaped by economic globalisation raise to the way the Reformation churches organise themselves to witness to the Christian gospel today. The preparatory meeting took place in Geneva, February 20-25, 2001. Lutheran and Reformed participants submitted short papers on the theme, discussed and agreed on the general content and methodology of the consultation to be held in Tutzing, Germany, February 3-7, 2002. The 2002 meeting dealt with the issue of the Protestant heritage in the horizon of the changing faces of Christianity and religion as a whole today with particular attention to church institutions. It discussed case studies of Reformation churches from different parts of the world that are or have just gone through restructuring processes. It then dealt with issues such as "Gospel and Church Structures" and the future of Reformation churches in the ecumenical movement. A selection of contributions to this joint study will be published in 2003.

OdairPedrosoMateus
2003/2004