



Joint Texts

24

Healing of Memories – Witnessing to Jesus Christ

A Joint Statement on the Year 2017

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Imprint

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Published by Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland
(Evangelical Church in Germany),
Herrenhäuser Straße 12, 30419 Hannover, Germany

and the Secretariat of the German Bishops' Conference,
Kaiserstraße 161, 53113 Bonn, Germany

Layout: MediaCompany – Agentur für Kommunikation GmbH
Cover picture: Marco Stenzel

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Foreword

The 31st of October 2017 will be the 500th anniversary of the day chosen to mark the beginning of the Reformation. The events of that time triggered a cascade of historic developments, the effects of which have not only shaped the Protestant and Catholic Churches to this day, but also transformed society. We intend to make the 500th anniversary of the Reformation an occasion on which we mutually reflect on the Reformers' concerns, and listen anew to their call for repentance and spiritual renewal.

A glance back at history reveals the suffering and hurt that Christians inflicted on each other. This leaves us feeling shaken and ashamed. Looking back can also have a salutary effect, however, if we are bold enough to do so in gratitude for the fellowship we have gained today and with the prospect of reconciliation. A first milestone on this path is the Joint Statement 'Healing of Memories – Witnessing to Jesus Christ' presented here by the German Bishops' Conference and the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany. Here the two Churches provide an account of what Christians did to each other, in order to analyse it in the light of their ecumenical fellowship. The statement also expresses the two Churches' gratitude for the gifts that we receive in each other. Our reconciliation process will involve identifying honestly the questions that remain open, and pursuing their continued clarification with a sense of urgency. In our view this is an outstanding moment in our fellowship. After centuries of mutual segregation, we will be celebrating a Reformation anniversary with this willingness to forgive and open a new chapter.

Based on this Joint Statement on the Year 2017, and as an extension of it, the German Bishops' Conference and the Evangelical Church in Germany will be inviting worshippers to a Germany-wide penance and reconciliation service at St. Michael's in Hildesheim on 11 March 2017. There, on behalf of our Churches, we will declare our guilt before God, and ask Him and each other for forgiveness. Before His countenance we will commit ourselves to a further deepening of our fellowship. The service in Hildesheim will be a further milestone in the healing of memories. We

would like to suggest that others hold similar services at the regional level so that the reconciliation process can also bear fruit there.

We are grateful that the German Bishops' Conference and the Evangelical Church in Germany are marking the 500th anniversary of the Reformation by launching the healing of memories process, and taking key steps to implement it. We are confident that the healing of memories will liberate and invigorate us so that we may more credibly bear joint witness to the Gospel. It will strengthen us in celebrating 2017 together as a festival of Christ. At the same time it will provide the spiritual foundation and innermost drive for our celebration. May the experience of healing and reconciliation be with us throughout Reformation Year 2017, and motivate us to continue resolutely on the path to full unity of the Church.

Hannover/Bonn 16 September 2016



Bishop Dr. Heinrich Bedford-Strohm
Chair of the Council of the
Evangelical Church in Germany



Reinhard Kardinal Marx
Chairman of the German
Bishops' Conference

The Project:
Healing of Memories –
Witnessing Together

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The 31st of October 2017 will mark the 500th anniversary of the day we associate in our historical memory with the beginning of the Reformation. To this day, opinions remain divided as to how we should interpret this event and the developments that followed it. Some celebrate the day as a great anniversary on which they joyfully reaffirm the importance of the Gospel for the Church's journey, which they believe was rediscovered through the Reformation. Others see primarily the division of Christendom associated with the Reformation and the effects this had, which they find painful. Yet others view the Reformation as a process of historic upheaval with strong political, social and cultural effects on the modern age, but do not attach overriding importance to the ecclesiastical consequences. Many may see such perspectives as overlapping or interlinked, with one or other aspect dominating. And not a few of our contemporaries see the event as possessing barely any significance at all for them, because the Reformation and the debate surrounding it have become something which is now alien to them, or with which they were never familiar in the first place.

In this situation, Protestants and Catholics alike feel challenged to join together in sharpening the focus of their memory of this event and its consequences. The history of Reformation anniversaries shows just how much each anniversary was shaped by the spirit of its particular age, and how much both sides used it to distinguish themselves from the other. 2017 is the first commemoration taking place in the age of ecumenism and the age of growing secularisation. It is also the first that will no longer be seen only in the German or European context, but from a global perspective. We intend to respond to this challenge. The public controversy concerning whether there can be a joint *celebration* or joint *commemoration* of the Reformation demonstrates the need for a serious, theologically coherent and politically sensitive examination of the matter.

We will base our response to this challenge on societal and ecclesiastical processes for a *healing of memories*. These will refer explicitly to the theology of reconciliation, which all of us find attested to in Holy Scripture.

1.1. The Culture of Memory

Appraising outstanding events is never a straightforward matter. Ambivalence, complexity and controversial interpretations are characteristic features of the way we remember things. How we remember the course of history during the Reformation in the 16th century is no exception. The Reformation and the Catholic responses to it stimulated reflection on faith, an examination of the Church and the development of religious practice. On both sides it brought forth great theology, great art and huge commitment in catechesis, liturgy and care of the needy. People gave their whole lives to their faith. However, as the Reformation – and the Catholic response to it – also brought forth or exacerbated numerous conflicts, and polarised its contemporaries from the outset, competing memories and narratives of its course and impacts arose. As historical distance to the 16th century grew, it gradually became impossible for the historical memory to reproduce events from its own perspective. Instead, this memory became strongly influenced by the different narrative traditions that had emerged within the denominations.

Historical research therefore has an important task of reconstruction to perform. Despite the intentions of historians to meet scholarly standards, for a long time historical research was shaped by the biased perspectives of the various denominations and their respective interpretive patterns. Commentators often call for an unbiased appraisal and historiography of the Reformation. However, there is no transdenominational point from which the Reformation could be considered. This is why it is so important to produce an ecumenical historiography in which the denominational perspectives are not simply placed alongside each other, but are compared and related to each other. This approach will lead to considerable re-evaluations and differentiations.

The past that presents itself to the collective memory must be seen as ‘a product of cultural construction and representation’ (Jan Assmann), however. When looking back on history people tend to focus on what reinforces and confirms their views, rather than on what disconcerts them by

causing them to call into question their judgements. They focus chiefly on what seems important to them from their point of view. It remains the task of historians when looking at the past to foster engagement with that which is disconcerting, and will often remain so. This is the only way to create fresh perspectives that can bring to light new insights in a process of critical discourse. Nonetheless, the act of remembering always touches on issues of identity; both disappointments and hopes come into play. Not even the most professional engagement with the past is fundamentally immune to wishful thinking. Conversely, it is precisely the public interest that demands and drives engagement with a controversially interpreted past.

1.2. Dealing with Guilt and Suffering

Histories of conflict, such as those uncovered and unleashed by the Reformation, usually involve not only new departures and renewal, but also guilt and suffering. The schism within the Church led to people being oppressed, persecuted, displaced or even killed due to their profession of a divergent faith. Wars broke out which were so barbaric and lasted so long that they became indelibly imprinted in human memory. This situation has largely changed in Germany since the Peace of Westphalia (1648). But there is still a long way to go before we reach the respectful coexistence between the denominations that ought to be a natural state of affairs in the ecumenical age – a goal that has by no means been reached everywhere. Alongside some promising rapprochement, considerable mistrust and a lack of understanding between Catholics and Protestants remain, and in some regions of the world there is open hostility.

It is therefore understandable that the mutual hurt caused not only in the more distant but also in the more recent past continues to stick in the mind, and that far from everyone has got over it. Brotherly and sisterly words of sorrow concerning the suffering inflicted in the past remain appropriate. Many are waiting for others to give them a sign of reconciliation that expresses their horror and regret for the hurt inflicted on their forebears. Others are seeking an opportunity for themselves to take the first step towards reconciliation and understanding.

Remembering the past is not an end in itself. It always serves also to provide orientation in the present and help shape the future. To achieve this we need to analyse the causes and effects of conflicts, discuss forms of injustice frankly, and admit to contamination by the power of evil. The work of remembrance enables later generations to see things from the victims' perspective. It thus makes a vital contribution towards humane orientation.

The traumas that burden memory also mean that processes of healing may also be initiated. These traumas need to be brought to light so that they are not suppressed – suppressing them would itself create further problems. When memory is clarified, people who seek reconciliation can find it by coming together despite the guilt of their parents and forebears, and their own partiality and lapses, which separate them from each other. This is why processes of commemoration can always be arranged as process of healing. This coming together heals destroyed relationships, painful wounds and the traumas that blight memory.

1.3. Model Processes

A model for this is provided by the reconciliation process pursued in South Africa following the end of the apartheid regime under the motto 'healing of memories'. Church representatives played a not unimportant role in this political reconciliation process. The task that we face cannot be compared to conditions in South Africa. But in the Christian Churches too, there are examples of how a critical and conciliatory analysis of the past can be organised on an ecumenical basis under the guiding idea of *healing of memories*. Between 2004 and 2007, for instance, the Christian Churches based in Transylvania in Romania took part in an exemplary *healing of memories* project. Similar processes have taken place in Northern Ireland, Serbia, Ukraine, Slovakia and Finland. During a church service at the Mennonite World Conference in Stuttgart in 2010 the Lutheran World Federation asked for forgiveness for the injustice inflicted on the 'Anabaptists' during the Reformation period and thereafter. Without any mention of the phrase 'healing of memories', in 1966 the Archbishop of Salzburg, Andreas

Rohracher, apologised for the actions of his predecessors in driving Protestants out of the country. In 1983, in a homily in the protestant *Chiesa di Cristo* in Rome, Pope John Paul II remembered the ‘difficult history’ and the ‘arduous beginnings’ of the Evangelical-Lutheran community in the city, and admonished all to seek God’s grace which, as he put it, one should not mistrust. There are numerous other examples.

The *healing of memories* is a process. The participants agree to meet on a regular basis for a certain period of time, during which they tell each other their stories and thus step inside each other’s landscapes of memory, which are different and often antithetical. Each hears and sees with the ears and eyes of the other. They come to realise what the others have suffered, and what each has done to the others. Together, they seek reconciliation.

1.4. The Prospect of Reconciliation

Holy Scripture raises the great hope that reconciliation is possible despite huge guilt and huge suffering – not because the guilt and the suffering associated with it are forgotten, suppressed or trivialised, but because God takes care of them. The Biblical notion of reconciliation takes shape chiefly in the Letters of the Apostle Paul. In essence he picks up a foundational experience of Israel, the people of God, which is then fulfilled and extended beyond all boundaries by Jesus.

Reconciliation cannot be taken for granted. This is because each sin is not just a one-off act of wrongdoing that it might be possible to make up for. It is rather the manifestation of an inner discord with God and human beings that first needs to be pacified. Each act of wrongdoing results in consequences that burden the lives of the victim as well as the perpetrator. And although each individual can only be called to account for what they are personally responsible for, all human beings with all their happiness and all their hope live under the burden of sinfulness which they cannot banish from the world through their own efforts. In both the Old and New Testaments, the abysmal depths of sin and guilt are sounded out. In our current task we must not be content with a superficial understanding. On the con-

trary, we must face the bitter truth that not infrequently it was sacred zeal that brought about sin and guilt. The *healing of memories* therefore presupposes that the stories of the victims are told – and that those who tell the stories today do so from the victims’ perspective. Without wishing to detract from guilt and responsibility in any way, here we should note that it is not always possible to draw a sharp distinction between perpetrators and victims.

Reconciliation is a manifestation of grace. No one can be entitled to it, because perpetrators cannot demand forgiveness from victims, and no one at all can demand anything from God. Yet the experience of faith shows that forgiveness is bestowed as a gift, and that reconciliation occurs – through God, who alone is able to manifest all His justice in all His mercy. ‘All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation’ (2 Cor 5.18). We know that we stand before God together; we confess our sins to Him; we trust Him to forgive our sins and give us the strength to forgive each other. And God is the only one we can expect to perform the *healing of memories*. This is why prayer and worship are a necessary part of the reconciliation process that we wish to pursue with 2017 in mind. We can only perform the ‘ministry of reconciliation’ when we ourselves are reconciled with each other.

Reconciliation becomes a task. ‘Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good’ (Rom 12.21)’. The reconciliation that is bestowed upon us as a gift requires our active engagement on very different levels – chiefly in our lifestyles and our solidarity, in our speech and our thoughts, and in our worship. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus calls us to take the first step even if we ourselves have suffered injustice: ‘First go and be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift’ (Mt 5.24). We intend to abide by this rule, which requires us both to begin by reaching out to each other. We will meet each other in the spirit of reconciliation. We will ask each other for forgiveness, and grant each other forgiveness. We will not allow the dark sides of the past to prevent us from worshipping together; but we will not enter into this worship without having first talked at length. Our joint remembrance will then become joint worship – the worship of

Jesus Christ the reconciler who has brought us peace with God (Rom 5.1). By doing this we will express our thanks that the path of healing was possible and led to the goal.

1.5. Our Goal

Today we also aspire towards a healing of memories in order to ensure that 2017 does not deepen the rifts between us, but strengthens our bonds so that together we can bear witness to faith, hope and love. We know that the Reformation, and the Catholic reform often referred to as the ‘Counter-Reformation’, not only created wounds, but also enriched religious life and fostered the political culture of living together in diversity. But we do wish to face up to the responsibility that we share as a result of our common history, so that as we look back on 500 years of Reformation we are able to perform an ecumenical act of reconciliation with full conviction and on a stable foundation. We wish to give thanks for the religious inspiration that flowed from the Reformation and the Catholic response to it.

The *healing of memories* is not an attempt to rewrite history. It is the declared intention to allow memories to be transformed from a means of division into a means of reconciliation. As we pray for unity, we know what makes us different from each other despite all that we have in common. These differences should not prevent us from working together in a spirit of trust and worshipping together in the fullness of hope. The wounds of history will then be able to heal. A wound is healed when it no longer needs to be closed and no longer causes pain – and when we can touch the scars that it might have left without hurting anybody. This is the spirit in which we are pursuing a *healing of memories*.

Healing of this kind can be understood and practised in two ways. If we emphasise the *healing of memories*, this focuses our attention on the traumas and the taboos that burden these various memories. By freeing ourselves to brighten those memories and speak frankly before our fellows because we feel able to trust in their empathy, a process of healing begins. This can lead to the wounds closing and the scars no longer causing pain.

On the other hand, if we emphasise more strongly the fact that the memories themselves can be a force for healing once we become aware of them, we also become aware of the possibility of healing *through* memories. Memories are always a healing force when we are able to step into other people's shoes as we remember, and learn to see the stories that stand between them and us from their perspective. The *healing of memories* and healing *through* memories are two dimensions of the same process. Either way the outcome is a deeper understanding of each other, mutual empathy and ultimately reconciliation.

In complete freedom, together we wish to provide a public account of what we have done to each other and how we enrich each other. We will do so in the knowledge that we are called to reconciliation with God and with each other, so that we can bear credible witness to Christ. We will do so in gratitude to all those who face up to the past and serve peace through ecumenical work. We know that we cannot force reconciliation, but we also know that it occurs wherever people come together under the Gospel.

In the Holy Scriptures we read that it is God Himself who causes His works to be remembered (Ps 111.4). He reminds us that he is the Lord of history, our judge and our saviour. We entrust our memories to God so that he will purify and hear them. Trusting in God who heals our wounds, in 2017 we can together worship Jesus Christ, the Lord of His Church, the servant of all humankind, for whom He gave His life. Sharing our faith in Him will enable us to place the guilt of history at God's mercy.

To account for our hope of reconciliation, we will describe the paths of ecumenism as a narrative that does not settle for alienation, but rather leads to growing harmony. We will highlight a small number of selected *lieux de mémoire* (a term coined by the French historian Pierre Nora, which is sometimes translated as 'realms of memory') that exemplify how the Reformation led to wounds, but also makes healing possible. We will make ourselves aware of the rapprochement between Catholics and Protestants, and identify a number of important points of difference between Catholics and Protestants today that continue to cause pain to many believers, or are

doing so for the first time. We will also describe key theological topoi with far-reaching impacts on culture and society that we now recognise as being impossible for Catholics to address without engaging constructively with Protestant theology, and vice versa. Finally, in the spirit of a reconciliation that is possible, we will describe forms of reciprocal empathy and a shared celebration of faith that will make 2017 a date that opens up for us – from a living memory of the past, and an open description of the present – a promising future that the ‘God of hope’ (Rom 15.13) may bestow on us. Together we will proclaim our faith in this God, and bear witness to Him. Together we will interpret the memorial year 2017 as an invitation to celebrate Christ.

Ecumenism Today – Looking Back and Looking Ahead

2

2017 is the first commemoration of the Reformation in the ecumenical age. The *healing of memories*, which is designed to enable us to bear witness to Christ together, is the fruit of intensive ecumenical dialogues. We will briefly describe the most important stages in this process of dialogue in order to bring to light the foundations on which we are able to build today. One salient feature of 2017, however, is the division of churches that is still in place. This is why we need to identify the ecumenical efforts, but also the key open questions and tasks that need to be borne in mind when preparing for 2017.

2.1. The Ecumenical Movement

For centuries the relationship between Protestant and Roman Catholic Christians was characterised by profound reserve, ranging from deep-seated resentment to undisguised hostility. Even where brothers and sisters in faith thus divided would use one and the same church building more or less voluntarily, they usually remained separated from each other by thick walls – and approved of this separation. Initially it was only individuals who, following the failure of the religious colloquies in the 16th century, resumed the quest for rapprochement and accommodation. One such was the philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, who from 1679 to 1702 on behalf of the Court of Hanover led official negotiations on the reunion of the Christian Churches. This came after the Thirty Years' War had sensitised representatives of both denominations to the need to overcome their mutual hostility. Leibniz envisioned a union of particular Churches that would retain different liturgies, while moderately following the Augsburg Confession. He also wished to include the Orthodox Churches. His undertaking never got beyond the stage of negotiations.

At the same time, in the course of the 18th century the denominational antagonisms became less absolute and more relative in the minds of the educated. The view that the individual's freedom of religion and freedom of conscience should be considered a precious good that served the interests of peace, whereas intolerance bred only discord, gained currency in many parts of Europe. Here and there it also met with massive resistance,

because the opponents of religious tolerance feared that the truth of Christian teaching might get lost and Church authority diminished. Nonetheless, it was impossible to halt the trend towards the general acceptance of the freedom of religion and freedom of conscience.

Admittedly there are distinctions to be drawn between earlier developments and today's human rights to freedom of religion and conscience. Nonetheless at the time a number of pioneering and hope-filled attempts were made to foster peace between the denominations. The treaty signed in conjunction with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 granted the head of the household – at least in theory – the right to practice a *religio privata* that differed from the religion practised publicly. One hundred and fifty years later, tolerance of those of other faiths had become a recognised principle in the general evolution of law. Article 1 of the American Bill of Rights of Virginia (1776) guarantees that the congress will neither establish any state religion nor prohibit the free exercise of religion by law; as well as the freedom of religion, the freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom of assembly are guaranteed. In modern democracies these and similar provisions are firmly enshrined, as is the case for instance in the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany.

In the first instance, however, the evolution of law has improved only the external frameworks within which the two sides coexist. It does not in itself indicate any shift in theological views or denominational mentalities. This is where responses from the Churches were – and are – required. Tolerance is a good thing. Strictly speaking, however, we tolerate only things that we reject. If we affirm something, then we have no need to tolerate it. So respect for the freedom of conscience of others (which is something we can only welcome) is only the important first step. In itself it does not take us beyond alienation and antipathy. This is where profound change did not take place until the 20th century. At this point both sides realised that they needed to seek theological communication and talk to each other.

Rapprochement becomes possible when both sides approach each other with respect and are willing to listen. Trust can then also develop. This took

place slowly, and did not occur everywhere at the same time or with the same intensity. Nor was the process without setbacks and disappointments. Even so, it did take place with the outcome that today Christians from many denominations do get together to celebrate the liturgy of the Word and renew their baptismal vows, largely share the same wording of the Credo and the Our Father when they pray, share a continuously growing body of their hymns and spiritual texts, care for the needy together, organise ecumenical Church conventions or incorporate ecumenical elements into their own conventions, and are filled with a deep longing for union at the Lord's table. Those who only a century ago who would have tended to deny that the other side were practicing the true faith or were even Christians at all, today see themselves as grounded in the one unrepeatable baptism in the name of the triune God, with each side recognising the validity of the other side's participation in it.

The Christian Churches have become aware of the fact that the catholicity and ecumenicity of the Church are inseparably intertwined, and that unity in Christ is not just an imperative to provide Christians with guidance, but is also a shaping force with implications for the life of the Church and its manifestations. The desire for ecumenical rapprochement that we often see today corresponds with the ecumenical awakening of the 20th century. This began with the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910. Salient highlights thereafter were the general assemblies of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948 and New Delhi in 1961, and the Decree on Ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). Today it has diversified into an abundance of bilateral and multilateral meetings, dialogues and actions. By listening patiently and endeavouring to share theological insights, the two sides have moved closer together. They have learned to step inside the theological perspectives of their opposite numbers, and listen to their questions and take them seriously. The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification by the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church (31 October 1999), which was also signed by the World Methodist Council, made it clear that while the gospel of justification can be interpreted and accentuated in different ways, these differences have lost their church-dividing significance.

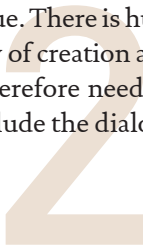
The ecumenism in the day-to-day life of the Christian Churches matches the ecumenism at the level of official dialogues and meetings. The figures vary by region. In Germany the Protestants represented by the Evangelical Church in Germany and Roman Catholics are in the majority; hence they have a particular calling to influence society. There are also responsible for ensuring that the rights of the other Christian traditions are upheld in all ecumenical undertakings.

An ecumenism ‘in the chancel’ would hardly be likely to succeed if it was not matched by an ecumenism in people’s everyday lives – in those places where Christians of various denominations meet as neighbours, colleagues, classmates and fellow students, and are finding today more than ever before that they share the same challenges in practising their respective Christian faiths. Although there are one or two regions in Europe where denominational milieus remain stuck in a defensive posture towards each other, fortunately this is not usually the case, and certainly not in Germany. The dramatic course of 20th century history in Germany, which from a denominational point of view was shaped initially by the *Kulturkampf* (‘cultural struggle’) of the Bismarck era, provoked and promoted in its own particular way people’s willingness to embrace ecumenism.

In the trenches of the First World War, for instance, the inter-denominational antagonisms paled into insignificance. In the German-speaking countries, during the period of National Socialist dictatorship and the upheaval that followed the *Una sancta* movement then emerged with its notion of a Protestant catholicity (Friedrich Heiler, Nathan Söderblom, Max Josef Metzger). The ‘martyrs of Lübeck’ (the Catholic priests Johannes Prassek, Eduard Müller and Hermann Lange, and the Protestant pastor Karl Friedrich Stellbrink), who were executed in 1943 because of their resistance, are representative of all those who when resisting violence and injustice, or in deep distress, give unconditional priority to fellowship in faith over denominational differences. After the Second World War, returnees from prisoner-of-war camps told of the spiritual communion they had experienced in the camps, which also enabled them to survive. When in external misery, people are thrown back on the basic elements of

faith, and undergo the healing experience of discovering that the workings of Jesus Christ cannot be confined or limited by the boundaries of any particular denomination.

The expulsions of people from their homelands after the end of the Second World War brought great harm. Yet the migratory movements within Germany which this entailed broke up the confessional blocs that had until then existed in the Roman Catholic- and Protestant-dominated territories. The new denominational neighbourhoods that emerged provided fertile ground for ecumenism. Then as now, ecumenism lives from encounter. In the formerly Protestant-dominated areas of central and northern Germany, the Roman Catholic communities grew. Conversely, many Protestants migrated to the formerly Catholic-dominated worlds of Westphalia, Bavaria and the Rhineland. Too little research has been performed on the significance of these migratory movements for the history of ecumenism. They certainly brought about rapprochement and growing mutual respect on a scale that can barely be overestimated. It is thanks not least to this development that the open-mindedness towards ecumenism that we see in the large majority of people today is considered obvious and appropriate in every way. No one need any longer explain why they seek fellowship with another. One might rather need to explain why one would refuse ecumenical fellowship someone else. People have largely accepted that the credibility of Christian witness is directly dependent on the fellowship of those who bear witness to the Gospel. In its institutionalised form the ecumenical movement began outside the Roman Catholic Church. The Second Vatican Council marked a change in this respect, in that the Roman Catholic Church reached out to the other Churches. Today further questions arise that encourage us to seek new ways of managing the process in which the Pentecostal communities which are growing at an ever faster rate find a place in the ecumenical dialogue. There is huge social affliction in the world. Justice, peace and the integrity of creation are challenges that we face now more than ever before. We therefore need to extend the ecumenical dialogue among Christians to include the dialogue between religions.

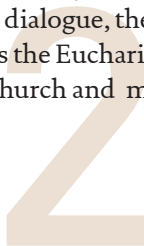


2.2. Open Questions and Tasks

Today, the ecumenical movement has come a long way. Yet despite all the efforts to build growing trust in Christian fellowship founded on faith, open questions have remained and a number of new ones have arisen. These questions require further discussion. They also present major ecumenical tasks for the future.

First of all, in terms of both mentalities and theological judgements typical differences remain with respect to an exchange of views on the Reformation and its effects. For Protestants, 1517 is part of a chain of events that they see as being decisive for their own identity and pointing the way forward for the future of the Church. Catholics, on the other hand, usually see the Reformation as being of only secondary importance for their own sense of identity, and many of them see it as a schism. Secondly, in the 500 years since 1517 as a result of the Reformation important developments have taken place on both the Roman Catholic and the Protestant side that were not foreseeable in the 16th century, but now play a major role in shaping the profiles of the two denominations. On the Catholic side, one example is the proclamations of the First and Second Vatican Councils concerning papal authority and the magisterium. On the Protestant side we might mention the decision to ordain women. More recently, bigger differences have also emerged in the fields of ethics. Consequently, with regard to the reconciliation of the Churches it is not sufficient to jointly reflect only on the differences formulated in the 16th century, and achieve convergence. We also need to recognise the new challenges and deal with them.

In two thematic areas that are closely linked theologically and have long been the subject of ecumenical dialogue, the need for clarification becomes particularly evident. The first is the Eucharist and eucharistic communion; the second is conceptions of Church and ministry.



2.2.1. The Eucharist and Eucharistic Communion

As far as the Protestant side is concerned, Catholics are welcome to take part in their communion services. According to the Catholic understanding, however, sharing the Eucharist requires a degree of Church communion that does not yet exist. This question is of major importance for the life of faith. Many people, particularly those in inter-denominational marriages, suffer from the fact that they are usually not allowed to approach the Lord's table together, although this is sometimes handled differently in pastoral settings. In a given case, one conceivable pastoral criterion might be a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and a life led in solidarity with the Catholic Church. In such settings, others fear that Holy Communion is being used as a means to the end of ecumenical rapprochement, which has not yet progressed far enough to allow the two denominations to celebrate the Eucharist together. Yet others see the risk of a reductive sacramentalism if the entire ecumenical movement were to be reduced to the understanding of the Eucharist and eucharistic communion.

In all probability there will be no quick fix. It is therefore all the more important to focus on what is already currently possible. The first thing to mention here is baptism, which is mutually recognised by all member Churches of the Evangelical Church in Germany and the Roman Catholic Church. The ecumenical liturgies have an importance all of their own. They celebrate the present Word of God. They strengthen communion. And they motivate hearers to serve in the world. It is also possible for adherents of either denomination to participate in the other denomination's Church services, which brings huge spiritual benefit. This applies particularly to eucharistic services, even if those taking part do not actually take communion.

Admittedly, current practice is unsatisfactory. We need to redouble our efforts to remove the psychological barriers, and above all to address the foundational theological questions. The ecumenism of the 20th century has made great strides in this respect, even at points where this used to be difficult to imagine. Examples include the fundamental importance of proclaiming the Word, the understanding of eucharistic 'commemoration'

and the sacramental presence of Jesus Christ, the ‘lay chalice’ and the two kinds of communion. Nonetheless, the status quo remains that the different understandings of ecclesiastical ministry have not yet been clarified to the extent that both sides acknowledge eucharistic communion. Pastoral sensitivity is required when dealing with the situation.

2.2.2. Understanding of Church and Ministry

In the year 2000 *Dominus Iesus*, the Declaration of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, caused a stir by proclaiming that Protestant ‘communities’ were not ‘Churches in the proper sense’. Many on the Protestant side felt that this declaration was derogatory. On another level we see that in the run-up to the Reformation anniversary in 2006, the Protestant Church characterised itself as a ‘Church of Freedom’, which causes the question of whether this might be interpreted as implying that the Roman Catholic Church was a Church of bondage.

As different as they are, both these cases demand clarification. Essentially both sides need to look at their respective understandings of ‘Church’. Both sides need to avoid simply reassuring themselves. They need to keep their ecumenical partner in mind.

The Second Vatican Council reaffirms that in terms of its institutional form the Roman Catholic Church remains unique in having retained all the biblically founded structural elements, which include the ministry of the Bishop of Rome. Furthermore, the Second Vatican Council distinguishes between the outer form of the Church and its inner spiritual life. It concedes that in view of the divisions, it is not capable alone of expressing the fullness of catholicity (see Second Vatican Council, *Unitatis redintegratio* 4). It acknowledges that key ‘elements’ which build up and give life to the Church are also present in the non-Catholic Churches and Communities, and that God uses them as a ‘means of salvation’ (*Unitatis redintegratio* 3). This is not called into question by *Dominus Iesus*. We require fresh theological advances to appreciate the specifically Protestant way of ecclesiastical being, and to describe this in positive terms.

Today the Protestant Church sees itself as the Catholic Church that has undergone the Reformation. This allows us to see in a positive light the 1,500 years of Church history that we shared prior to the Reformation. In turn, this confronts the Catholic Church with the question of its attitude towards the Reformation, particularly in view of the fact that the Catholic Church has since adopted many elements that were also of central importance to the Reformers. These include the liturgical use of vernaculars, greater attention to Holy Scripture, and strong participation by laity and clergy alike in the life of the Church. For its part, the Protestant Church needs to clarify how it should interpret today the tradition, which is founded in Holy Scripture, of the Church's ministry (*episkopos*, presbyters and deacons), and the ministry of Peter conferred on him according to the New Testament (Mt 16.18 ff.; Lk 22.32; Jn 21.15 ff.)

For these reasons, ecumenical dialogue has focused more recently on the question of how the two sides can together further develop the notion of the apostolicity of the Church. They agree that apostolic succession can neither be reduced to historical succession in the episcopate, nor understood independently of the episcopal ministry. We can and must continue working in this direction.

2.2.3. Consequences

No Church is immune to the temptation of choosing to make its own conception of itself the theological yardstick for all Churches. All Churches must overcome this temptation.

One particular challenge with regard to the different ecclesiological understandings of the two denominations is their thinking on how to organise decision-making process. Which Christian voice will be heard in public? In our media-dominated everyday life, messages from people who speak with authority for a global community are often easier to communicate than statements by decision-makers who can only claim to speak legitimately for a specific region. Synodal structures should guarantee that all those whose situations are being spoken about are consulted. Decisions

that are taken with authority may offer a stronger guarantee that earlier thinking is preserved and kept in mind. Questioning the period of validity of a teaching formulated in the synodal process may cause resentment, just as a general questioning of the representativity of a decision taken on behalf of the community of the faithful may do. In the two examples mentioned above – the Eucharist and eucharistic communion – differences have once again deepened recently because too little attention has been paid to the results already achieved through ecumenical dialogue. It is therefore all the more important that we make a joint effort for 2017.

Today, the option of seeking common ground in doctrinal theological discourse on faith and Church constitution (Faith and Order), which is founded on the history of the ecumenical movement, and the option of jointly organising Christian witness through deeds (life and work), are once again gaining a higher profile. Fresh perspectives have emerged recently, despite the open questions regarding the purpose of ecumenism and the associated dispute concerning the right paths to achieve a goal that remains undefined. Denominational diversity is (also) seen as a source of enrichment. Some Christian communities have preserved a good that others have lost, and are now sharing it with the latter as a gift. In particular, the discovery of the great wealth of ways of living the one Christian spirituality benefits all Churches. A willingness to see and embrace experiences in Christian traditions other than one's own, listening to each other, living with each other and being there for each other – these are fundamental concerns of ecumenism today.

Christians often do not know each other well enough. Indifference or even a sense of self-sufficiency can also be hurtful. The voluntary commitment to ecumenical thought and action contained in the *Charta Oecumenica*, which was signed by all churches at the European level in 2001, has lost none of its urgency: 'We commit ourselves to follow the apostolic exhortation of the Letter to the Ephesians [Eph 4.3-6] and persevere in seeking a common understanding of Christ's message of salvation in the Gospel; [We commit ourselves] in the power of the Holy Spirit, to work towards the visible unity of the Church of Jesus Christ in the one faith, expressed

in the mutual recognition of baptism and in eucharistic fellowship, as well as in common witness and service' (*Charta Oecumenica* 1). In many areas of ecumenical everyday life, this voluntary commitment by the Churches is being honoured through action at the local level. Particularly the places where people meet in situations of distress have always been those that challenge Christians to act together: in hospices, during telephone counselling, in prisons, at railway stations and airports, in theatres of war, and when counselling the grieving and bereft. This is where ecumenism exists in a living relationship with the shared centre of faith: Jesus Christ, whom we call upon in the paschal confession.

Lieux de Mémoire –
Value Judgements and
Evolving Constructs

3

As much as trust between the denominations has grown through numerous dialogues and experience of thing shared in common, in many cases the traumata remain perceptible and often lingers on beneath the surface. Today, both sides are able to understand and explain the history of the developments that led to the Reformation – yet images and memories that are by no means *only* a thing of the past continue to be powerful. When someone is preparing for an anniversary, such remembrances are revived and brought back to living memory – and when others concerned dispute whether one should describe the event as an anniversary, it becomes clear that memory has much more to do with value judgements and identity formations than mere historical reconstruction. The image we remember clearly also reflects how we see ourselves in the present.

Inspired by the French historian Pierre Nora, scholars now often refer to the focal points around which we organise memory as *lieux de mémoire*. This means more than just specific geographical sites. These *lieux de mémoire* can also be buildings, people or even particular events with which we associate much more than just the historical retelling of the past. Such *lieux de mémoire* are an expression of collective memory linked to many emotions – including pride as well as pain. A detailed history could be written of the *lieux de mémoire* that shape the way we remember denominational schisms, but also reveal ways in which we might overcome division. In what follows we will no doubt only be able to identify a few distinctive stages that live on and reflect in a striking way the basic theological questions that we need to clarify and struggle for in today's ecumenical setting.

3.1. Martin Luther's Nailing of His Theses to the Church Door – the Problem of Mythologisation

The central *lieu de mémoire* for the commemoration of the Reformation in 2017 is without a doubt the preeminent Protestant founding myth, which marks the date for the anniversary: *The nailing of his theses*. Luther himself never mentioned such an event. Only in the final years of his life did oth-

er people tell this story, and thus become part of the monumentalisation of the Reformer that followed. Increasingly this became the central symbol of Protestant (chiefly Lutheran) self-portrayal. Even the very first depiction in the context of the Reformation centenary in 1617 shows a monk who, although he is not nailing the theses onto the door of the Wittenberg All Saints' Church, is inscribing them with a quill, and in so doing is shaking the Church of Rome from the province. The 'nailing of the theses' did not become a heroic narrative until the 19th century. At this point the image came into wider use. It represented the valiant hero of a Protestant-dominated nation – and Roman Catholic polemics responded with the image of an unscrupulous monk, in the wrong from the start, daring to express criticism beyond that to which he was entitled. In a key scene, the Luther myth came to embody the religious quintessence of the Reformation movement – Luther, the hero of faith, struggling against the supposed fixation on external works in the Middle Ages and its heirs in the Roman Catholic Church. Time and time again, the anniversary of the supposed nailing of the theses provided Protestants with an opportunity to use such images to highlight and sharpen the distinction between reformed and Catholic piety, and celebrate the courage of the founder of their own Christian way of life. The Catholic responses mirrored this mythologisation.

The intricate connection between this religious typification and the events narrated is demonstrated by the emotional debate that ensued when, in 1961, the Catholic Church historian Erwin Iserloh suggested rather provocatively, though with good reason, that 'The nailing of the theses never took place'. The German weekly magazine *Der Spiegel* smugly summed up the commotion as follows: 'Protestants can protest once again. Catholics would cause them believe that Martin Luther never did pick up a hammer and nail his 95 theses to the church door in Wittenberg' (*Der Spiegel*, 1/1966). Although disagreement on the nailing of the theses today does not run along strictly denominational lines, the fact that the debate flared up again in the run-up to the Reformation Decade demonstrates that it remains something of a sensitive issue.

In historical terms, the ‘nailing of the theses’ is of relatively minor importance as a *lieu de mémoire*. If it did happen it would have been an event in the everyday life of a university. If it was merely a legend – and there is much to suppose that it is – this would take nothing away from the young Luther’s theological message, which is certainly about more than the alternative between faith and works. Yet the ‘nailing of the theses’ is an issue that also seems to entail the question of whether Martin Luther should be celebrated as a model of valiant and determined struggle against supposed papal oppression, or whether he should be seen as a theological reformer whose spiritual concerns might well also find their place in the Roman Catholic Church. This is why it is also appropriate to engage with the theses themselves. Although Luther’s Reformation cannot be reduced to the theses, it cannot be understood without them.

3.2. The Diet of Worms and Religious Wars – the Problem of Politicisation

One *lieu de mémoire* that is scarcely any less deeply rooted in the collective memory is the Diet of Worms (1521). The dedication of the Worms monument in 1868 was attended by political representatives from all over Protestant Germany. It testifies to the glorification of events in the 19th century, as do the impressive re-enactments that we see in modern-day films on the life of Luther. Things have even gone as far as the trivial merchandising of ‘Luther socks’ bearing the historically inaccurate but extremely memorable words ‘Here I stand; I can do no other’ [German: *Hier stehe ich, ich kann nicht anders*]. Against this backdrop, Luther is celebrated time and again as a hero not only of religious freedom, but also of civic liberty. This *lieu de mémoire* thus involves a one-sided appropriation of notions of freedom, contrasted with the converse image of subservient ‘soft-living flesh in Wittenberg’ (Thomas Müntzer).

This contrasting image culminates in the *lieu de mémoire of the Peasants’ War*. Here Luther is often seen as an advocate of violent suppression of the interests of the peasantry, and a harbinger of authoritarian and illiberal

structures. As incongruous as these two images seem, the one thing they do have in common is that they both refer to the inextricable link between the conflicts caused by the Reformation and issues of power. The amalgamation of ecclesiastical and temporal power in the mediaeval episcopate, and the authoritarian enforcement of the Reformation and confessionalisation in all German territories - regardless of whether the signature was Catholic or Protestant- created a system in which religion was inseparable from coercion.

If there is any *lieu de mémoire* for this calamitous history, it is the *Thirty Years' War* from 1618 – 1648. What began as a local conflict in Bohemia developed into an all-out clash of denominational parties. While one side was fighting for full restitution of the old church, the other was celebrating quasi-messianic redemption by King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden. The striking feature about this *lieu de mémoire* is the fact that what happened in the war cannot be explained through a straightforward or clear-cut narrative. Obviously it was not a purely religious war. It was caused by the hunger for power on the part of the ruling class in Germany and the whole of Europe. This was also reflected in the interdenominational alliances, which were motivated by tactical considerations. Yet given the denominational propaganda that went with it, we cannot simply speak of a functionalisation of religion. The representatives of the denominations were also players in these events, and burdened guilt on themselves. Whether people in Lützen commemorate the successes of Gustavus Adolphus, or people in Nördlingen the victory of the Habsburgs – the memories remain present, and Ottfried Preußler's 'Little Ghost', first published in 1966, ensures that the remembrance of these events continues to be handed down, even in a children's book.

These memories of the Thirty Years' War heighten our awareness of how closely denominational differences were linked to violence. The war in the 17th century was not the only one waged in the name of the denominations. The Schmalkaldic War of 1546/47 had already led the two blocs to clash. Time and time again, the enforcement of a particular denomination in a territory led to repression. Protestants were expelled from Salz-

burg on several occasions, the most recent of which was in the 19th century. Conversely, Bismarck's *Kulturkampf* led to massive restrictions on the lives of Roman Catholics. If proportional representation for the denominations is still being discussed in the political sphere in Germany today, this reflects a persistent awareness of the fact that, as a result of the Reformation and the Catholic responses to it, religion has been associated with power claims and coercion. This is why we must investigate the tension between religion and power, and use both the positive and negative experiences of the two denominations in their relationship with each other as we address the new challenges of pluralist societies.

3.3. Mapping the Denominations – the Problem of Confessionalisation

The link between religion and politics also results in a *lieu de mémoire* – the *denominational map of Germany* (*Konfessionskarte*) – which continues to exert an effect to this day. Despite the major changes that the migratory movements following the Second World War brought with them, the distribution of denominational affiliation in Germany still clearly reflects where rulers of which denomination held power. The pattern reflects the ruling of the Diet of Augsburg in 1555, according to which territorial rulers determined the affiliation of their subjects (the formula later become known as *cuius regio, eius religio*). This arrangement was confirmed after the Thirty Years' War by the Peace of Westphalia. Just how effective this was became evident whenever the estates of the country did not wish to follow their master when he changed his religion. This was the case for instance when the Elector of Brandenburg converted to the reformed denomination in 1613, and when August the Strong of Saxony converted to Catholicism in 1697. In Dresden, even the architecture of the Church of the Royal Court had to accommodate the fact that the subjects remained Lutheran, as was the case in Brandenburg. The difficulties which resulted from the fact that during the early modern period, outside the imperial cities the existence of two denominations could be managed only by keeping the two in adjacent territories, rather than mixing them socially, were still evident in the 19th century. When the Napoleonic wars and the Con-

gress of Vienna led to the emergence of denominationally mixed territories. At this point – and very clearly so in the so-called “mixed marriages” dispute of Cologne – the questions arose that still reverberate to this day when it comes to relationships between the two denominations. What opportunities can we give to people who enter into marriage from different denominations to share their lives as Christians? At least for those couples with roots in the Church, this tension encroaches deeply on their everyday lives.

Thus the historical shaping of Germany by the impacts of the Reformation also points to the core of the denominational conflict that is felt in many areas of society to this day: the schism, marked by the complimentary *lieux de mémoire* of the *anathema* on Luther on the one hand, and the rejection of the papacy as the *antichrist* by broad parts of the Reformation on the other. The papal bull *Exsurge Domine* of 15 June 1520 that threatened Luther with anathema, and on the basis of which Luther was ultimately excommunicated on 3 January 1521, is to this day still included in ‘Denzinger’, a compilation of doctrinal decisions of the Roman Catholic Church (in German). Moreover, the question of whether this anathema should be lifted, or whether it can be lifted at all (because the person concerned is deceased and has come before his celestial Judge), was raised anew in the run-up to 2017. The fact that Protestants must feel hurt by many of the condemnations contained in the bull remains, as does the memory of Luther’s response. On 10 December 1520 he burned the bull and the whole of mediaeval canon law before Wittenberg’s Elster Gate – and to this day a ‘Luther Oak’ planted in 1830 serves as a reminder of this event. The Reformer himself replied to the papal condemnation by writing ‘Against the Bull of the Antichrist’ – thus using a term he had considered an appropriate designation for the Pope since the Leipzig Disputation in 1519: *antichrist*. Since it appears in his “Smalcald Articles”, this designation remains a part of Luther’s confessional writings to this day. The realisation that this designation, which found its way into the translated version of the confessional writings, is not, objectively speaking, an appropriate one for the papacy, is by no means one that is automatically

shared by all Protestants. This is demonstrated for instance by the debate triggered the publication ‘The Condemnations of the Reformation Era – Do They Still Divide?’. Like the wounds mentioned above, the one inflicted here may have largely closed – but it has not yet fully healed. It is therefore all the more important that we take a critical look at confessionalisation, and clarify objectively the issues that remain controversial.

Theological Keys –
500 Years of Reformation
in Ecumenism Today

4

The Reformation and the Roman Catholic response to it have led to a rediscovery of basic concepts of Christianity that are highly significant for religious practice, and in some cases there has been a polarisation of their interpretations. The passionate debates, the struggle for status, and competition between the denominations, have inflicted wounds. On the other hand the controversies have driven a process of reflection on what it means to be a Christian, even though this may often have been pursued by some in order to highlight or foment differences between the denominations, and strengthen their own position by profiting at the expense of others. At the same time there has always been fundamental and lasting common ground: Holy Scripture, the Creed, liturgy, many hymns and prayers, catechism and missionary activities, political engagement, and the initiatives of the denominational organisations *Diakonie* and *Caritas* that care for the needy. Yet these basic commonalities often threatened to turn into conflicts about how exactly they should be interpreted and what would be the appropriate way to use them. Not infrequently, the way people defended their own position often prevented them from both critically analysing and self-confidently assessing both their own strengths and weaknesses, and those of the other denominations.

Today, Protestants and Catholics can join together in saying that the stimulus generated by the Reformation, as well as the critique of it, and the critique of the critique, have had a profound effect on both the Protestant and Catholic understandings of what is essential to Christianity. What the denominations need to provide an account of today is how they define the relationship between substantive common ground and denominational differences. Roman Catholic theology can candidly explain which impulses from the Reformation it can benefit from, and how it will integrate these impulses into its thinking, as well as what queries it has and where it sees a need for clarification. Protestant theology can candidly explain which impulses from the Reformation it considers especially important from an ecumenical perspective, and how it has benefitted in its identity formation by engaging with Roman Catholic theology. The preparations for 2017 are the best time for both sides to explain, in a spirit of construc-

tive criticism, what they appreciate about each other, and to what extent they are no longer able to formulate their own basic theological concepts without engaging with those of the other side. This is a contribution to the task of *healing of memories* that we constantly face anew. Performing this task will help us bring the question of God into our joint dialogue today in new ways.

Three of these basic concepts been selected below. These are (i) faith in relation to works; (ii) freedom in relation to obedience, particularly towards the authority of Church leadership under the Gospel, and (iii) the unity of the Church in the context of schism and diversity.

These three basic concepts were selected from among other conceivable options because they are of major importance in the ongoing debates in society and within the Churches, and receive a great deal of attention. For all three topics it becomes clear that ecumenism cannot embark on a path that ignores the events of the Reformation; it can only follow a path that, with the Reformation and its reception, leads to a new form of church unity. Guidance along this path will be provided by Holy Scripture.

4.1. Faith and Works

In his later recollections, Martin Luther identifies the discovery of faith in its fundamental importance for justification as the beginning of his religious awakening (Weimar Edition 54, 182.12, 186.29). He, the Augustinian monk and professor of Biblical theology, recognised that the divine justice which St. Paul writes about is not there to punish the sinner, but to bestow the gift of justification. ‘The righteous shall live by his faith’ – this is how he renders the key sentence from the Old Testament (Hab 2.4) in Romans (Rom 1.16 f.). Martin Luther does not claim to have invented a new theology by doing this. On the contrary, he recalls already having found a similar theology of justification in the works of St. Augustine, after having read him in a new light. Nonetheless, in his time Martin Luther did give a new weight to the concept of faith, which is characteristic of Christianity: he placed it at the centre of the relationship that people

should have with God according to His will. In doing so he exerted a strong influence on later times, on the Protestant as well as the Roman Catholic side.

Martin Luther developed his theology of faith from his readings of the Biblical texts. He was also influenced by the piety movements of the late Middle Ages, particularly mysticism. Citing St. Paul, he used his theology of faith to critique what he branded as a ‘religious fixation on works’ (“Werkerei”). Starting with his rejection of the sale of indulgences, his critique becomes twofold direction of impact: it is directed first of all against the popular expectation that religious works will earn the individual performing them merit before God; secondly it targets the claim of the Church hierarchy that they possessed an authority of their own in dispensing the means of grace. This critique by Luther is rooted in a deep spirituality of faith. This is evident not only in his theological writings, but also in his songs and prayers, as well as his awareness of the need to care for one’s neighbour, which has been part of the Church’s mission ever since its inception.

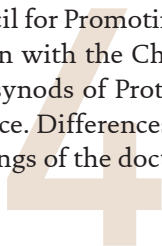
This new profile and weighting of faith is directly linked to the way in which the Reformation moved the Gospel to the centre of the Christian proclamation of salvation as the message of God’s grace justifying the sinner from faith alone. The critique is at its most pointed when directed against the soteriological notion that the human beings can justify themselves through their works alone. The self-righteous individual fails to recognise how radically dependent they are on God’s grace (see Lk 18.9-14); they interpret this total dependency on God not as an opportunity to obtain their salvation, but as an offence on their own capabilities. This contrasts with the Reformer’s insight, which emphasises that the sinful human being is wholly dependent on God’s grace, which they can only receive. *Sola gratia*, which is based on a Christological and soteriological rationale, must therefore be maintained throughout. Luther’s newly profiled conception of faith is at odds with the concept developed by Thomas Aquinas, which had a major impact on Catholic controversial theology. Different understandings of faith lead to different approaches to the doc-

trine of justification. For Aquinas, the basic definition of what it is to be a Christian includes not *sola fide* (*fides*), which he interprets as ‘rational assent’ to the Gospel, but also love (*caritas*), which he construes as the unity of the love of God and love of one’s neighbour, in accordance with Jesus’ twofold commandment. By contrast, Luther argues that according to Paul and the Gospels, as well as key points in the Old Testament, faith must be understood as the unity of trust and faith, of conversion and insight, of receiving and making a commitment, in which God’s grace puts an end to the sinful human desire to earn God’s grace. According to Luther it is therefore faith ‘alone’ (*sola fide*) that justifies. This does not imply that human freedom and responsibility are any less important. The Reformation was confident that the justified person would perform good works of their own accord, freely and gladly (*sua sponte ... libenter et hilariter* – Martin Luther). The new ethos of the Christian human being is an ethos of fulfilling God’s commands in gratitude, as a result of having received God’s grace.

The Catholic critique of the Reformation, which also found its way into the Council of Trent, sets out to emphasise human free will, and thus human responsibility and human involvement in justification. It expresses the suspicion that *sola fide* undermines the theological importance of leading a Christian life, and Christian ethics. However, this suspicion only arises because faith is construed as assent to the Gospel, rather than as an all-embracing response of the human being to God’s Word as in Luther’s theology; seen in this light, *sola fide* seems to fall short as an account of the grace of justification. Conversely, the Reformers interpret the Roman Catholic tradition that faith must be shaped by love (*fides caritate formata*) as placing a limit on God’s grace by including human works, even though this theology of grace in fact sets out to provide a comprehensive anthropology of freedom. The theologians of the Reformation based their criticism on their own definition of faith, without appreciating in a constructive way the specific concepts of scholasticism and the Council of Trent.

Over the last few decades there has been considerable convergence between Roman Catholic and Protestant understandings of the message of justification, and the relationship between faith and works. Misunderstandings have been cleared up, and similarities and overlaps described. From the many examples that could be included here we have selected two. Not unreasonably, Dietrich Bonhoeffer criticised '[...] grace sold on the market like cheapjacks' wares. The sacraments, the forgiveness of sin, and the consolations of religion are thrown away at cut prices' (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, New York, 2015, 43) as a basic evil of Protestant piety. In the Encyclical letter *Lumen fidei* (2013), Popes Benedict XVI and Francis defined the idea of faith based on its Biblical roots, in a way that contemporary readers can relate to.

It has become possible to translate the doctrine of justification from the language of one into the language of the other without weakening the promises made in the Gospel. The study commissioned by the Evangelical Church in Germany and the German Bishops' Conference 'The Condemnations of the Reformation Era. Do They Still Divide?' found that '[...] we sinners live solely from the forgiving love of God, which we merely allow to be bestowed on us, but which we in no way – in however modified a form – “earn” or are able to tie down to any preconditions or postconditions' (Karl Lehmann/Wolfhart Pannenberg [eds.], *The Condemnations of the Reformation Era. Do They Still Divide?*, Minneapolis, 1990, 69). The doctrinal differences that exist need to be measured in relation to this consensus. Seen in the light of this consensus, the doctrinal condemnations of the 16th century no longer apply to those they were aimed at on either side. This was laid down in the 'Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification', which was signed in Augsburg on 31 October 1999 by the then president of the Lutheran World Federation and the then President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, after extensive worldwide consultation with the Churches involved, and with the express approval of many synods of Protestant State Churches and the German Bishops' Conference. Differences between the Roman Catholic and Protestant understandings of the doctrine of justification do remain.



However, these differences do not divide the Churches. Rather they serve as ‘salutary warnings’ against blinkered confessional perspectives.

In both Protestant and Roman Catholic theology in the 20th and 21st centuries, however, the return to the Biblical foundations has revealed significant differences between the Biblical, the Reformed and the Tridentine conceptions of faith and justification. These differences arose because the conditions under which the conceptions were developed, and the goals that they were designed to achieve, have shifted significantly as historical challenges have changed. Exegesis today places much stronger emphasis than it used to on the affiliation of Jesus to Judaism, as well as on the Old Testament roots and the Jewish context of the Pauline conception of justification. Thanks to new discoveries and research, this context has come into much sharper focus today than it could have in the 16th century. Exegesis today recognises that it was not a general mindset of religious merit that Paul had criticised (see Rom 7), but a specific salvific confidence in the commandments of the Law and the human possibilities for achieving justification by obeying them. It also recognises that key ingredients of the Biblical theology of faith and justification include not only answering the question of the salvation of an individual sinner, but also the missionary integration of the Gentiles into the people of God and the deepening of ecclesiastical unity.

Distinguishing between the Biblical notion of faith on the one hand, and the genuinely Reformed as well as the traditional Roman Catholic understandings on the other, creates fresh scope today for jointly witnessing faith. Turning towards Holy Scripture together allows us to strengthen Protestant-Catholic ecumenism, which at the same time fosters Jewish-Christian dialogue. Returning to Biblical witness together demonstrates that the faith which justifies is always the faith that is ‘working through love’ (Gal 5.6). Justification and sanctification are inseparably intertwined. Proclamation of the Gospel only becomes the proclamation of ‘cheap grace’ that excuses and trivialises everything when we forget that the gift of justification *affects* the human being in ways that change them. There is an intrinsic link between the justification of the human

person *sola fide* and the redefinition of their life *sola fide*. The crucial thing is to ensure that the momentum generated by the Reformation and the Roman Catholic response to it enables faith in the world today to be articulated in such a way that God is glorified and that the greatness of His love can be divined, without denominational disputes casting a shadow over the witness to faith.

According to the Gospel of Mark, ‘Believe in the Gospel’ is the first and most important requirement that Jesus makes of us. It is based on the central concern of his proclamation that the kingdom of God is “near” (Mk 1.15). The disciples who listened to these words are shown in the Gospel of Mark as being on the path of discipleship. As they tread this path they are shown their mission, which is to proclaim this Gospel on their part. At the same time they are also confronted with their own weakness, powerlessness and failure. And they discover Jesus as the ‘Son of man [who] did not come not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many’ (Mk 10.45). Today, the faithful of all Christian denominations recognise themselves in these disciples. In the disciples they perceive their own temptation to ask the question ‘who was the greatest’ (Mk 9.35 parr.). The *healing of memories* also serves to make us recognise the magnitude of this temptation. If we can resist it with God’s help, we will be able to witness Christ together even though our paths may be different.

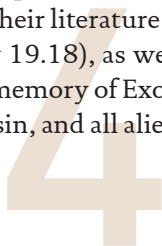
4.2. Freedom and Authority

‘It is for freedom that Christ has set us free’ (Gal 5.1; see also Gal 5.13). This avowal by the Apostle Paul unites Protestant and Catholic Christians alike. The meaning of freedom has changed dramatically from ancient to modern times, however. Emphasis also differs between the denominations. The Protestant Church often sees itself as the ‘Church of Freedom’, referring to the Reformation and particularly to Martin Luther’s treatise ‘On the Freedom of a Christian’ (1520). However, it cannot be the purpose of such a vocation to deny another Church the attribute of freedom. The ecumenical dialogue in particular reveals the tensions in which the concept of freedom continues to unfold. Catholic theology reminds us

that the freedom of the will is a major concern of the Council of Trent that resounds throughout the modern era. But what is the relationship between freedom for the Church and freedom in the Church? What does obedience mean in the context of freedom? What is the relationship between freedom and the authority of the Church, which is institutionalised not only in the structures of the Roman Catholic Church, but also in those of the reformatory Churches? We need to critically review these traditional opposites to determine their precise significance.

An analysis of the discourse of freedom based on the Bible in its entirety will attempt to make the diversity of the Biblical witness to freedom productive for faith, and for the yearning for freedom experienced by modern people. An approach of this kind will serve the *healing of memories*. Martin Luther refers to the Apostle Paul, who in the Letter to the Galatians defends the freedom of faith (see Gal 2.4), and fleshes it out with the commandment to love (see Gal 5.1.13). Two elements are constitutive to the Pauline notion: the reference to God, who reveals Himself as our liberator in the crucified Jesus Christ (see Gal 1.3 f.; 3.13 f.), and the reference to the truth of the Gospel, which creates the possibility of freedom (see Gal 2.5.14; 4.16; 5.7). Paul bore witness to this truth at the Apostolic Council (see Gal 2.1-10) as well as in the dispute with Peter in Antioch (Gal 2.11-14), and developed it into the doctrine of justification (see Gal 2.15 f.). It is belief in Christ that liberates, because it sees all that is good as wrought solely by the grace of God. This theology of freedom is as formative and as binding for the Roman Catholic Church as it is for the Protestant Churches.

The Pauline theology of freedom is rooted in the theology of Israel. The liberation from Egypt left a profound mark on the people of God. The memory of Exodus shapes their literature and inspires their ethos of love of one's neighbour (see Lev 19.18), as well as charity towards strangers (see Lev 19.34). The living memory of Exodus nourishes the hope of final redemption from guilt and sin, and all alienation and oppression.



Jesus saw his mission as being to liberate people from their sickness and need (see Lk 4.18 f., which takes up the promise made in Is 61.1 f.). He came to deliver them from their guilt and lead them to the kingdom of God, the realm of liberty and peace (see Rom 14.17). The liberty that God bestows so that people can accept and shape it is the great promise that led Jesus and the apostles to proclaim the Gospel. The Gospel is offered to each and every human being; if the messengers are rejected they should shake the dust from their feet and move on (see Lk 10.1-16).

Martin Luther dealt with the topic of ‘freedom’ in the context of the doctrine of justification as a strictly theological issue. He distinguished two aspects: evangelical freedom (*libertas Christiana*) and freedom of the will (*liberum arbitrium*). He defended ‘evangelical freedom’, which involves living one’s faith in devotion to God and one’s neighbour, vigorously and with great personal commitment. By contrast he radically called into question the ‘freedom of the will’, understood as the human ability to decide autonomously in favour of God and the good, and to act accordingly. Can there be a freedom of the human will before God? Following Augustine, Luther emphasises that human beings can only receive salvation (*mere passive*). At the same time he emphasises the importance of God’s election of the individual for their orientation towards faith. Here his concern is to identify the action of God’s grace as the foundation of freedom. This freedom is a divine gift. Luther associates this insight with openness to the prospect of universal salvation. Freedom and attachment are inseparably linked in a reciprocal relationship. The Christian is a free lord over all things *and at the same time* a dutiful servant in all things – obliged to no one and to everyone at one and the same time. The Christian experiences their freedom in attachment to Christ, and through the strength of that attachment to Christ is able to commit to their neighbour in freedom and in gratitude.

As part of the ‘Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification’ (1999), a convergence was achieved with regard to the relationship between the activity and passivity of the human being in relation to justification (see *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, 19-21). The respect for

and appreciation of freedom as an aspect of the relationship with God and one's neighbour found in the Roman Catholic tradition is to be seen in the context of the shaping of a new life in faith. The human person is and remains responsible for their actions, for the good or against the commandments of God. The consensus achieved in the context of the doctrine of justification and anthropology can be used to place the Biblically-based notion of freedom, understood as a divine gift embraced by the justified, in a relationship of constructive criticism with the modern notion of freedom as autonomy. It is true that the modern understanding of freedom transforms a genuine element of the doctrine of justification when it ascribes to the human person the ability to act in self-aware responsibility from within the self. However, when this ability is made so absolute that the liberating power of the human relationship to God is denied, and the relation of freedom to other human beings is restricted exclusively to the horizontal dimension, then freedom is threatened at its very core. Action based on self-aware responsibility requires a positive relationship to the experience of God, because in faith, the self is constituted by the love of Jesus Christ (Gal 2.19 f.). This means that freedom is lived not against but with God and one's neighbour, and therefore does not end at death, but is rather completed by the resurrection. The kingdom of God is the realm of freedom that people of various faiths and very different worldviews hope for.

The Second Vatican Council referred to freedom in several contexts. The Council was particularly concerned to ground the freedom of religion by invoking the inalienable rights of individual liberty (see in particular *Dignitatis humanae* 2; 4). The background to these arguments was the fact that in many countries the free exercise of religion is subject to interference. The Council emphasises the autonomy of social institutions (arts and sciences) vis-à-vis the Church (see *Gaudium et spes* 36) just as much as it emphasises the right and the duty of all the baptised to freedom of expression, including freedom of expression within Church institutions (see *Lumen gentium* 37).

On all these issues there is a clear consensus between the Roman Catholic and Protestant positions. Today, both denominations see themselves and

act as advocates of the inviolability of human dignity, and insist on the validity of the liberties enshrined in constitutional law in Germany and in other democracies. The peaceful revolutions in the autumn of 1989 would have been inconceivable without the cross-denominational engagement of the Churches for political freedom. However, this was preceded by a long and often arduous learning curve. In their more recent history the Christian Churches were too often on the side of the opponents of liberties. A *healing of memories* concerning engagement for liberties will need to address self-critically the mistrust of modern liberation movements nurtured in both denominations, and together both sides will need to bring forward the Biblical tradition in the current debate in order to enrich it.

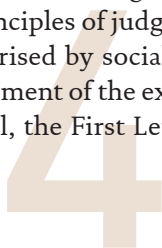
What is the relationship between freedom and authority within the Church? The Church in which the ‘glorious liberty of the children of God’ (Rom 8.21) is to be experienced requires leadership by persons with a corresponding vocation. Leadership, however, requires authority – defined decision-making authority on the one hand, and acceptance of and loyalty towards decisions taken on the other. This is no different in the Protestant Churches than it is in the Roman Catholic – at least in principle. Nonetheless the Churches do go about organising ecclesiastical authority in different ways. The Roman Catholic Church has adhered to the episcopal structures of Church governance, invoking apostolic succession. In the reformed tradition, forms emerged that were consciously designed to enable all the baptised to participate in leadership and doctrinal responsibility. In the reformed Churches, the reception of modern liberties moulded by the Enlightenment already favoured this development as early as the 16th century. Although synodal channels of consultation have been strengthened significantly in the Roman Catholic Church since the Second Vatican Council, doctrinal decision-making remains the prerogative of the competent ordained ministers (priest, bishop and Pope).

The *healing of memories* will allow a prosaic exchange of experiences concerning the opportunities as well as the limits and risks of synodal and

episcopal channels for ecclesiastical decision-making on religious issues. Each denomination can reflect self-critically on its own tradition, and seek out the strengths of the other without having to fear any loss of identity.

The hallmark of genuine authority is the absence of all forms of subservience and subjugation. Authority of this kind gains a hearing because those who hear it are willing to listen of their own accord. The authority of the Gospel is this kind of authority – the witness of Jesus Christ that liberates and obligates people at the same time. This gives rise to an irreversible gradation of authority: from the authority of Scripture read and interpreted in the light of Christ and the authority of faith, to the authority of the resulting Church teaching, and on to the authority of those individuals appointed to interpret Scripture and faith. This gradation is uncontroversial in the ecumenical dialogue, as far as the basic idea is concerned. What has been controversial, however, are the different weightings given to the individual elements within the scheme. The *healing of memories* will strengthen and stabilise the willingness that all possess to align and underpin all theological decisions with the scriptural witness to Christ.

A limit is placed on the freedom of the individual by the need to safeguard the freedom of others. Freedom means neither arbitrariness nor indifference, neither irresponsibility nor radical and unfettered individualism. When human actions jeopardise the fundamental rights of third parties, which are protected by God, we must resist. Theologically speaking, freedom does not mean abandonment to choice that is free of norms. On the contrary, the exercise of freedom is subject to the Gospel, which promises all creatures – including sinners – the intrinsic rights guaranteed by God. A *healing of memories* will need to take into account the social consequences of inter-denominational disagreement on ethical issues, with reference to the various principles of judgement (freedom versus authority). In a situation characterised by social discrimination on account of faith, by the political curtailment of the exercise of religion and by public contradiction of the Gospel, the First Letter of Peter has the following

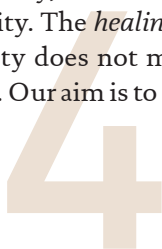


message for Christians: ‘Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up of evil; but live as servants of God’ (1 Pet 2.16). The letter reminds the faithful of their calling to proclaim the great deeds of liberation among the royal and priestly people of God (1 Pet 2.9 f.; Ex 19.5 f.). To do so, they must obey Jesus Christ (1 Pet 1.2). To gain a firm foothold in faith when hearing the Word they need pastors who take their lead from the Good Shepherd Jesus, and therefore heed the admonition to tend the flock ‘not lording it over those intrusted to you but being examples to the flock’ (1 Pet 5.3). All forms of Church governance are subject to these tensions, as is the formation of individual conscience. The *healing of memories* will serve this process of dialogue. It will set out to bear witness to Christ both comprehensibly and authoritatively – with many voices, all singing variations on the same tune.

4.3. Unity and Diversity

None of the actors in the Reformation era intended to hurt the Church. Studying the impacts of particular individuals who lived in the 16th century is no longer sufficient to explain the phenomenon of confessionalisation in Western Christianity. Historical research has revealed that Reformation ideas had deep roots in the patristic and mediaeval traditions. In the early modern age intellectual history, the existing social tensions, political conditions and theological insights combined to influence events. We will heal the memories when we join together in analysing the manifold events of the Reformation age, with a willingness to acknowledge the complexity of processes and leave behind one-sided assignment of blame.

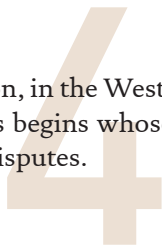
When we ask whether the Reformation led to a division of the Church or manifested its genuine diversity, we need to examine our underlying conception of unity and diversity. The *healing of memories* is predicated on the understanding that unity does not mean uniformity, and diversity does not mean arbitrariness. Our aim is to experience catholicity in a communion of difference.



In the early 16th century the Church was not a uniform entity. The Middle Ages entertained a vision of the *Corpus christianorum*. Yet the communion between East and West had been fractured since the 11th century. In the pre-Reformation era, individual controversies, particularly those concerning the relationship between the sovereign action of God and human participation in the process of salvation, had contributed towards the formation of theological schools. Religious orders each maintained their own particular charisma. Ambitious cities challenged their territorial rulers. In the West, during the 15th century, with the movement of the Bohemian Hussites fighting for their independence from the papacy, and later on so-called Gallicanism, which insisted on the traditional rights and freedoms of the French Church, strong forces emerged that for various reasons rebelled against a uniform Church ruled from Rome. The Western European nations Portugal and Spain concentrated on Christianising the newly discovered parts of the world. In Rome too, many tended to look towards the New World rather than the Old.

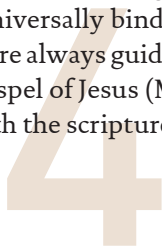
The major importance of the Reformers' renewed emphasis on the Gospel often went unnoticed. Neither the popes nor the bishops of the day had the strength to properly assess the full import of the processes unleashed in Germany and Switzerland, and respond appropriately. Conversely, the obstinacy of the Reformation movements outweighed their will to unite. Nonetheless, the early theological disputations between Catholics and Protestants were conducted with great intensity and were of a high quality. Furthermore, the doctrinal formation of the day in both denominations (reformatory confessional writings and Council of Trent) is held in high theological regard today, particular controversies notwithstanding. One contribution to the *healing of memories* must be to commemorate all those people who, with the means available to them at the time, wished to serve *one* Church.

In the age of the Reformation, in the West a history of the differentiation of Christian faith traditions begins whose causes are to be found by no means only in theological disputes.



National interests, which had an impact not least during the early religious wars, also affected events, as did the personal agendas of particular political rulers. The centuries that followed brought consolidation of the newly emerging institutions, which focused on defending the legitimacy of their own existence. In the context of missionary efforts, particularly in the 19th century, those Church denominations that invoke the Reformation as a source of their identity made a contribution towards the pluralisation of denominational circumstances worldwide. Under the given social conditions in each particular setting, specific features emerged in the design of liturgies, in the forms of catechesis, in the exercise of leadership and in the options for ethical action that in certain cases also make it difficult for the denominational world federations today to maintain the unity of their confessions. Since the Second Vatican Council the Catholic Church has increasingly recognised the challenge of responding to the need for regional differentiation within catholicity, in view of the different needs, cultures and mentalities. The crucial task we share remains that of missionary witness to faith in the world; the *healing of memories* will serve this witness.

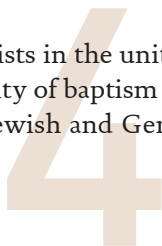
The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (381 AD), which is spoken in the original Greek by Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Christians alike (while the *Filioque* was added in the Latin West), links the work of the Holy Spirit with the faithful expectation that the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church can be preserved. The early church creeds are an integral part of the Reformatory confessional writings. The four essential attributes of the church identified in this Creed (unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity) are intrinsically linked. The unity of the Church is realised when she devotes herself entirely to serving the proclamation of the one holy God, when the Church's teachings are demonstrated on the basis of Biblical teaching to be universally binding and therefore catholic, and when the Church's actions are always guided by the apostolic origin of her mission to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus (Mk 1.15) and witness to his resurrection 'in accordance with the scriptures' (1 Cor 15.3-5).



Martin Luther, Philipp Melanchthon and Johannes Calvin believed they could prove that the Roman Church of their day was not catholic, and therefore should not be recognised as the one holy Church. Only by teaching in accordance with Scripture could a church designate itself as ‘Catholic’, they argued. The Reformers distinguished between two uses of the term ‘Church’, and at the same time related these to each other. On the one hand was the visibly present Church. On the other hand was the Church of faith, whose presence was concealed. All Churches in the diversity of their historical forms should, so the Reformers asserted, bear visible witness to the four essential attributes of the Church of faith. Regarding the claim to catholicity the Second Vatican Council also distinguished between the completeness of institutional elements (including the Petrine ministry), and a recognition of the fact that given the way people practice Christian faith in their lives, the Roman Catholic Church will not be able to achieve the fullness of catholicity on its own (see Second Vatican Council, *Unitatis redintegratio* 4). Given the many schisms from antiquity on, a *healing of memories* must be based on an ecumenical effort to achieve an appropriate understanding of the joint commitment to unity and catholicity; it will then bring to the fore the essential attributes of the Church – one, holy, catholic (in the sense of universal) and apostolic.

We must base our joint ecumenical reflection on ‘unity’ in Scripture. Any notion of unity will contain some element of denominational preconceptions. Although this proviso applies to any description of historic processes, as well as the interpretation of the Bible, this hermeneutic insight remains very important, because all Churches recognise the authority of Scripture. We need to approach the full meaning of God’s Word through a reciprocal process of supplementing and correcting our respective interpretations of Scripture.

The unity of the Church exists in the unity of the Body of Christ (1 Cor 10.16 f.) and thus in the unity of baptism (see Gal 3.26-28). In the quest for communion between Jewish and Gentile Christians, this had to be



granted in a Church that was engaged in vigorous missionary activity. There was a need to ensure table fellowship between the circumcised and the uncircumcised, also taking into account differences in dietary laws (see Gal 2.11-21). Church unity needed to take shape in local settings where there were conflicts over the right doctrine (see Rom 14; 1 Cor 1-4; Gal 1; Phil 1-3). In controversies Paul refuses to invoke human authorities, and points to Christ as the sole foundation and guarantor of unity (1 Cor 3.5-15). Unity of faith is crucially important for the credibility of the Gospel. This does not mean uniformity, however. It means organic diversity, as demonstrated by the image of the Body of Christ (see 1 Cor 12.12-27; Rom 12.3-8; see also Gal 3.26 ff.). In the second and third generations too, the invocation of the one Lord, the one faith, the one baptism and the one hope is of constitutive importance for establishing Christian unity (see Eph 4.4-6). The specific details of how human resources are organised to provide official leadership of the community remain secondary to this concern.

For the New Testament concern of preserving and deepening the unity of the Church amidst the variety of paths and talents, Jesus' prayer for the unity of his followers handed down in the Gospel of John remains constitutive: 'My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that they may all be one; Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me' (Jn 17.20 f.). Consequently, the old question of whether Holy Scripture establishes the unity of the Church or justifies the variety of denominations needs to be liberated from its confessionalising functionalisation. Holy Scripture rather testifies to a unity of the Church that is not seen as uniform, but instead corresponds to the unity of the Body of Christ, which consists in the cooperation of its many members (1 Cor 12.13-27).

Models of unity have been produced time and time again during the history of the ecumenical movement. These include models of partial unity for instance in the field of caring for the needy, as well as models of all-embracing unity ranging from merger to conciliar communion. Theoretical

models have gradually been replaced by reflections on models of unity that are already being applied in practice. To date, the quest for ‘visible unity’ of the Church has formed the basis for consultations at the level of “Faith and Order”, and the *Charta Oecumenica*, which was signed in Strasbourg in 2001 by all the denominations in Europe.

One point of controversy between the denominations is what constitutes an essential part of being (*esse*) Church, and what constitutes an optional extra (*bene*).

According to *Confessio Augustana* 7, it is sufficient for being Church in the true sense to preach the Gospel purely and to administer the sacraments properly. The ordained ministry is publicly recognised as a regulated office (*Confessio Augustana* 14), but is not constitutive for being Church. From the Roman Catholic perspective, however, the tripartite ordained ministry is constitutive for being Church.

We should state frankly that today there is no shared vision of church unity to which we should aspire. This frankness is itself part of the *healing of memories*. It turns out, however, that the *healing of memories* provides us with a fresh awareness of existing challenges. Together we need to ask the question: Is ‘unity’ (still) the goal? Which form(s) of ‘unity’ should we aspire to? We need ecumenically viable answers to these questions to guide us.

What protects us against resignation in the ecumenism of Churches is the idea that ‘unity’ can be construed as a qualitative notion rather than one to be understood in numerical terms. On this understanding, unity then means clear determination, distinctiveness, clarity and resolve. The one profession of Christ distinguishes the one Church from other religious traditions. In the interreligious context the idea of the *healing of memories* can mean becoming jointly aware of the fact that any perception of difference between the Churches that appears irreconcilable diminishes the credibility of witness to Jesus Christ. This memory is also associated with the shame present in all Christian traditions of having succumbed to the

temptation of abusing the invocation of Christian truth as a tool in the violent struggle against other religions. Wounds to the body of the other denominations are also our own wounds. Healing the body of the other denominations also heals us. What the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians concerning the Body of Christ holds true: ‘If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it’ (1 Cor 12.26).



Remembering – Healing – Witnessing to Christ

5

1. The commemoration of the Reformation in 2017 is intended to be an ecumenical event. It will therefore require a healing of memories.

Until now, Reformation anniversaries have tended to reinforce denominational differences rather than reduce them. The forthcoming celebration of the last 500 years is expressly designed to strike a different note. In a shared awareness of the Gospel, it will strengthen the ecumenical bonds that have grown between us over the past few decades. This will include facing up to our history. That history was defined not only by major theological discoveries and deep spiritual experiences, but also by mutual hurt and the infliction of wounds. Both these dimensions have shaped not only the relationship between us, but also the society we live in. The time was ripe to launch a process expressly dedicated to the healing of memories. This will enable our mutual understanding to continue growing, and strengthen our witness to Jesus Christ and the Churches' ministry in the world.

2. Healing of memories is a complex process. This statement, which we are issuing in ecumenical solidarity, is part of that process.

The development of the global ecumenical movement has created a new situation. We can now approach the history of the Reformation and its effects together, and learn to recount it in a way that overcomes prejudice, misunderstandings, distortions and entrenched positions. Martin Luther and the reformatory movements wanted to place the Church under the liberating call of the Gospel, and renew it comprehensively in the spirit of the Gospel. The Catholic side sought to renew the Church in communion with the Pope and the bishops. Nonetheless rifts emerged which, despite all the efforts to preserve the unity of the Church, caused it to fragment.

In the dispute over the truth of the Gospel that our Churches waged bitterly from the 16th century onwards, both sides sought to point out errors and failures on the opposite side. They were unable to seek the common ground, preferring instead to accentuate the differences and thus further exacerbate the existing conflicts. Today we are able to critically analyse the causes and mechanisms of this development. We can identify typical ar-

eas in which the strategies of separation and rejection would continue to have an effect for a long time to come. These include for instance the mythologisation and heroisation of Luther, mirrored by a demonisation of Luther. We can point to the functionalisation of denominational differences that were designed to legitimate power interests and even justify wars. And we can draw attention to confessionalisation designed to create identity by emphasising difference. We must continue struggling to find the right understanding of the truth of the Gospel, but not in a way in which some profit at the expense of others. The healing of memories is a path that opens up new horizons here. Those taking part must agree to view their own history with the eyes of the others, and see history from their perspective. This will liberate us to understand our own guilt, and empathise with others.

The healing of memories is embedded in the history of ecumenical learning, and includes the mutually productive experiences of the two organisations *Diakonie* and *Caritas*. Essentially it is a spiritual process that embraces guilt and forgiveness, liturgical devotion to God and committed charity towards our neighbours. Our statement provides a clear example of how far we have already come along this path – thanks be to God.

3. Ecumenical penance and reconciliation services will play a key role in the process of healing of memories. The best opportunity for this will be the period up to 31 October 2017.

The Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany and the German Bishops' Conference will be inviting worshippers to an ecumenical penance and reconciliation service in Hildesheim on the eve of Reminiscere Sunday — '[Lord,] remember Thy mercy...', the Second Sunday of Lent. They encourage us celebrating similar services, local and regional. At these liturgical celebrations we will speak of our guilt before God and ask Him for forgiveness, so that we become free to forgive each other. In this way we will witness to Jesus Christ, who calls on us to repent and grants us forgiveness. Reconciled with Him and each other, we will be certain in the knowledge that our mission is to bear witness to God's love in the world. We will

make manifest the fact that the Christian Churches exist not in opposition to each other, but for each other.

4. The penance and reconciliation services for the healing of memories will point to a wider process. They will be intrinsically linked to activities providing care for the needy, as well as to catechistic and theological projects which embody the spirit of ecumenism and brotherly and sisterly fellowship. This will enable the healing of memories to become a broad movement.

We are committed to the goals of the Charta Oecumenica, which our Churches helped to draw up, and which was co-signed by the member Churches of the Council of Christian Churches in Germany (ACK) at the first Ecumenical Church Congress in Berlin in 2003. We commit ourselves ‘in the power of the Holy Spirit, to work towards the visible unity of the Church of Jesus Christ in the one faith, expressed in the mutual recognition of baptism and in eucharistic fellowship, as well as in common witness and service’ (*Charta Oecumenica* 1). In this spirit we will agree to develop joint projects to proclaim the Gospel, to uphold and foster the freedom of religion and freedom of conscience, and to make every possible effort to act together, particularly where there is a need for our social responsibility and our contribution to the reconciliation between peoples, cultures and religions. One example of this is the preparation of a social ministry congress which the Central Committee of German Catholics and the German Protestant Church Convention will be hosting together with the Evangelical Church of Germany and the German Bishops’ Conference in September 2017. We will rely on theological scholarship and the importance of ecumenism in research and teaching.

5. When we speak of the healing of memories we will not overlook the fact that there are further open questions that continue to divide us. But we will not allow them to divert us from our ecumenical path.

The fact that we will not be celebrating communion together in 2017 demonstrates that despite all our ecumenical rapprochement, to this day we have not yet found common answers to fundamental questions con-

cerning our understandings of Church and ministry. Nor have we been successful in all cases in reaching unanimity on current matters of individual and social ethics and speaking with *one* voice where we would need to. Nonetheless, this does not invalidate our experiences with the healing of memories. We do discuss the controversial issues with an attitude of mutual respect, willingness to learn and openness to criticism. We see that the differences do not destroy the huge amount of common ground that exists between us. We see the healing of memories as an opportunity and a source of encouragement to continue treading the path of ecumenism patiently and purposefully so that the unity amongst us grows and eucharistic communion becomes possible.

6. The healing of memories will liberate us to bear witness to Jesus Christ together, and therefore more credibly. It will encourage us to approach the impending Reformation anniversary as a festival of Christ.

In his indulgence theses, which he published in 1517, Luther focused on penance – a principle that he always maintained: people can and should confess their sins, trusting in God’s grace. They will receive forgiveness through Jesus Christ. The call to repent has lost none of its topicality. The basic aim of the Reformation is to lead the Church back to Jesus Christ. As Churches in the 21st century we therefore feel called to reform and renewal. The healing of memories is to be seen in this context. Through our ecumenical initiative we wish to demonstrate that there is nothing inherently destructive about belief in God; on the contrary, it serves peace, because it overcomes guilt, distress and suffering, hatred and enmity. This is what we vouch for, and we invite others to measure us by the fact that responsibility before God does not constrain human freedom, but promotes it. By engaging with our own history we can demonstrate that diversity and unity need not be opposites, but can be mutually complementary when human interaction is inspired by God’s Spirit and guided by Jesus Christ.

Prayer

Jesus Christ, Son of the living God,
Our Saviour, our Hope, our Redeemer:

We stand before you bringing the burdon of our divisiveness and severance:

We stand before you with the clouds that shadow our past.

We stand before you humiliated and desolate on the sufferings
which were caused by our conflicts.

Before you we confess our guilt; before you we plead in misery.

Your endless mercy is our only shelter.

Forgive us what divides us from you and one another.

In the light of your truth we perceive our failure:
our lack of cautiousness and our lack of brotherly and sisterly terms,
our lack of attention and respect to one another.

Grant us the spirit of reconciliation,
that takes away what separates us,
that makes us take reliable steps towards church unity.

Jesus Christ, our saviour, our hope, our redeemer:

Be our daily bread we live from.
Be our light that makes us see.
Be our path to proceed on.

Amen.

Annex

Healing of Memories – Witnessing to Jesus Christ

Ecumenical Penance and Reconciliation Services

Draft Liturgy

On the 11th of March 2017, the eve of Reminiscere Sunday, the Second Sunday of Lent, the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany and the German Bishops' Conference will be inviting worshippers to a key ecumenical penance and reconciliation service at St Michael's church in Hildesheim. The service will continue the process of the healing of memories that first came to a decisive point in the Joint Statement 'Healing of Memories – Witnessing to Jesus Christ', which the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany and the German Bishops' Conference approved in spring 2016. At the service, the two Churches will bring before God what they declared and agreed on in this Joint Statement. They promised to ask Him for forgiveness so that they are free to forgive each other. As a sign of reconciliation they will give thanks to God for the gifts that are preserved in our Churches and that we treasure in each other. From this reconciliation, obligations will arise for future fellowship that both sides will enter into before God.

To make the healing of memories a more effective process, the German Bishops' Conference and the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany encourage others to hold similar services at the regional and local levels after 11 March 2017. We are therefore publishing the draft liturgy below, on which the service in Hildesheim will be based. The draft liturgy will also be helpful when preparing key services at the regional and local levels, where it can be adapted to suit particular circumstances. The path on which the German Bishops' Conference and the Evangelical Church in Germany have embarked is for the time being a bilateral undertaking. The remaining member Churches of the Council of Christian Churches in Germany (ACK) will be able to get involved through witness. At the service this can be manifested by representatives of the other ACK member Churches taking part.

Our painful history of division, our plea for forgiveness and our reconciliation will be expressed at the service in Hildesheim through a symbol-

ic act for which a three-dimensional cross has been specially designed. At the beginning of the service this cross will be placed in such a way that it acts as a kind of barrier in the church. It can then symbolise the fact that Christians in the past have often abused the cross as a symbol of assignment, in the belief that they knew who was following Christ in the right way and who was not. Positioned in this way the cross will be a sign of the sectarianism from which we suffer to this day. During the service the cross will be placed upright, as a sign of the fact that we Christians stand together beneath the cross, on which our hope is founded. The symbol of a barrier will thus be turned into a symbol of reconciliation. The cross made for Hildesheim is available in a medium-sized version (40x40x40 cm) for regional or local services. A smaller version (13x13x13 cm) is also available, which worshippers might hold in their hands. For further information or to place orders, please contact the address shown on the inside back cover of this brochure.

Draft Liturgy

Entrance (organ playing)

Opening

P. lit. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

C. lit. The Lord be with you.

R. And also with you.

P. lit. Sisters and brothers,
a warm welcome to this ecumenical service, in which we are celebrating the memory of the Reformation together for the first time in our parish/in our city/in our town/in our region. Thanks be to God.

C. lit. Sisters and brothers, we are celebrating this service together. We do so in fellowship with the worshippers who attended the Germany-wide penance and reconciliation service held in Hildesheim on 11 March 2017 by the German Bishops' Conference and the Evangelical Church in Germany, and with everyone else celebrating the anniversary in the same way. Through prayer we share in fellowship with Christians of all denominations.

P. lit. In the past, centenary celebrations of the Reformation have deepened the gulf between the denominations. In the anniversary year 2017 we are doing things differently. We will explore the roots we share, the challenges we need to jointly address, and the tasks for the future that bind us together.

- C. lit. Our will to make our mark was stronger than our will to seek the common ground. Today we will ask God for His mercy for what we did to each other. But we will also thank God for the riches we share in each other.
- P. lit. We are standing together before the cross of Jesus Christ. In this church you see the cross lying sideways. It seems like a barrier that is blocking our path: the path to each other, the path to our neighbours, the path to God.
- C. lit. Together we will place ourselves beneath the cross of Jesus Christ. Within this hour we will lift it up, and allow ourselves to be lifted up by it. We will celebrate an ecumenical festival of faith in Jesus Christ.

Opening hymn

Penitential Psalm (may be sung)

Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered.

Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against,
him, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through
my groaning all day long.

For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.

I acknowledged my sin to you, and I
did not cover up my iniquity;

I said, 'I will confess my
transgressions to the LORD'; then
you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you
may be found; surely when the mighty waters rise they will
not reach him.

You are my hiding place, you will protect me from
trouble; and surround me with song of deliverance.

Rejoice in the LORD, and be glad, you righteous, sing,
all you who are upright in heart.

(Ps 32,1-7.11)

Kyrie

C. lit. Jesus Christ, our brother, our friend and our saviour, we praise
you and beseech your mercy.

C. s. You are constantly lovesick for us. You have written us into your
book of the Godhead. You have painted us in your incarnation.

(after Mechthild of Magdeburg, The Flowing Light of the Godhead III,2)

Kyrie eleison (or similar)

P. s. You are the most high, the most good, You are handsome and
powerful You are so merciful, and just; You bring age upon the
supercillious, and they know it not.

(after Augustine, Confessions I, 4)

Kyrie eleison (or similar)

C. s. You died on the cross. Without you we would have life for but a moment. Through you we may hope to enjoy eternal life.

(after Anselm von Canterbury, Prayers 27)

Kyrie eleison (or similar)

P. lit. God, you sent us your son Jesus Christ, so that trusting in You we may receive the Holy Spirit, in whom we praise, glorify and worship You from now until all eternity.

R. Amen.

Hymn / music

Confession and plea for forgiveness

P. lit. Sisters and brothers,
we will now declare our guilt before God, before each other
and before the world, and ask our merciful Father in heaven
for forgiveness.

C. lit. We will entrust everything to Him who has reconciled us with
Himself, and uplifted the Word of Reconciliation among us.

Moment of silence

P. s. I confess that in their zeal and intolerance, Christians have waged war against each other. Large swathes of Germany and Europe were ravaged. People were persecuted, banished, tortured and killed for their faith. The history of hurt does not end where people lay down their weapons. We remain part of it, when we injure and condemn each other in our thoughts, words and deeds.

- C. s. I believe that Jesus Christ heals the wounds which zeal and intolerance have torn open. I beg forgiveness for the hatred that makes God a tool of its own will and inflicts suffering on innocent people.
- R. Forgive us, O Lord.
- C. s. I confess that the joy of faith was perverted into arrogance. Human pride stood in the way of God's glory. More energy was channelled into pointing out the error of others' ways than into allowing the Gospel to shine forth. This danger is not banished. We too continuously get in the way of the task we share, which is to proclaim the Gospel.
- P. s. I believe that Jesus Christ heals the wounds which pride of man has torn open. I beg forgiveness for the lust for power that has seized the Church and brought darkness into its witness to God.
- R. Forgive us, O Lord.
- C. s. I confess that the desire to live according to God's will has brought forth not only common ground, but also deep division. Families were torn apart when their members belong to different denominations. Villages and cities became enemies because they were Protestant or Catholic. Denominational disputes turned communion into a symbol of severance. We have yet to find a way of celebrating our communion with Jesus Christ and each other in the Eucharist.
- P. s. I believe that Jesus Christ heals the wounds torn open by denominational antagonisms and the rupture of eucharistic communion. I beg forgiveness for the lack of charity that allows our love of God to wither, and for our segregation at the Lord's table.

R. Forgive us, O Lord.

P. lit. We bring our need and our guilt before You, our God. We confess our sin and hope for Your mercy.

C. lit. We listen to Your Word. We place ourselves under the cross of Jesus. We entrust our ecumenical path to You. We pray to You in the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

A. Amen.

Hymn / music

First Reading

Lector Reading from the Second Letter of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians, Chapter 5

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

(2 Cor 5.17-21)

This is the Word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Prayer

- C. lit. Jesus Christ, Son of the living God,
Our Saviour, our Hope, our Redeemer:
- P. lit. We stand before you bringing the burdon of our divisiveness
and severance:
We stand before you with the clouds that shadow our past.
- C. lit. We stand before you humiliated and desolate on the sufferings
which were caused by our conflicts.
- P. lit. Before you we confess our guilt; before you we plead in misery.
Your endless mercy is our only shelter.
Forgive us what divides us from you and one another.
- C. lit. In the light of your truth we perceive our failure:
our lack of cautiousness and our lack of brotherly and sisterly
terms.
our lack of attention and respect to one another.
- P. lit. Grant us the spirit of reconciliation, that takes away what
separates us, that makes us take reliable steps towards church
unity.
- C. lit. Jesus Christ, our saviour, our hope, our redeemer:
- P. lit. Be our daily bread we live from.
- C. lit. Be our light that makes us see.
- P. lit. Be our path to proceed on.
- A. Amen.

Gesture of 'Uprighting the cross'

(turning what stands for a barrier into a symbol of reconciliation)

Musical accompaniment

Second reading

Lector Reading from the Gospel according to St. Matthew, Chapter 18

‘[...] For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.’ Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, “I tell you not seven times, but seventy times seven.”

(Mt 18.20-22)

This is the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

R. Praise be to Thee, O Christ.

Hymn / music

Homily

Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,

God from God,
Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he was born of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered, died, and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in fulfilment of the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven.
He is seated at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.
He has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Hymn / music

Prayer of thanksgiving

P. lit. We do not wish to forget what we did to each other. But we also
wish to thank God for the riches we have in each other.

- C. lit. If we have reason to be grateful, it is not because we deserve it. It is because God has bestowed a gift on us that we may not refuse.
- P. lit. After centuries of mutual hurt and assignment, the ecumenical process of the past few decades has led us to take many steps towards reconciliation. A new culture of dialogue has become possible.
- C. lit. We have come to understand each other better, and recognised more clearly the responsibility we share for proclaiming the Gospel and loving our neighbour. We have achieved a mutual recognition of baptism. For this we thank You, merciful God.
- R. Good God, we thank You.
- C. lit. We thank God for the spiritual, theological and ethical impacts of the Reformation that we are able to share in the Catholic Church. Examples include an appreciation of the Word of God and Holy Scripture. They include the Doctrine of Justification: It is also important for the Catholic Church to recognise that a person is justified not by deeds of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. We see the engagement of so many women and men in Protestant parishes as living witness to faith. We appreciate the intensive debates and the responsible decision-making processes in the synods. We are impressed by the Protestant Church's strong commitment to caring for the needy both in Germany and throughout the world. And we could mention many other things too. Dear Protestant sisters and brothers in faith, we thank God for the fact that you are, and that you bear the name of Jesus Christ.
- P. lit. We thank God for the Catholic Church's witness to faith. We see that it is in the true sense of the term a universal church that joins together nations, languages and cultures. We view with great

respect the love of the liturgy that is cultivated in the Catholic Church.

We appreciate the particular attention given to the handing down of faith, confession and thought that has shaped the history of Christendom, and therefore our history too. We embrace the challenge of deepening our own understandings of Church and unity of Church, of ordination and of ministry, in dialogue with the Catholic Church. We are impressed by the services performed by the Catholic Church to care for the needy both in Germany and throughout the world. And we could mention many other things too. Dear Catholic sisters and brothers in faith, we thank God for the fact that you are, and that you bear the name of Jesus Christ.

R. Good God, we thank You.

Prayers of intercession

C. lit. God our Father, You are the source of our hope. We thank You for Your love. We ask Your forgiveness. We ask Your help.

S. We pray to You for those who suffer as a result of the dispute between the denominations, both within and outside the churches. Let them not become bitter, but strengthen them with signs of reconciliation.

R. Hear us, O Lord.

S. We pray to You for those who are persecuted for their faith. Let them experience Your presence, even if you seem to be far to them and give them joy and certainty in the Gospel.

A. Hear us, O Lord.

S. We pray to You for those who work to proclaim God's Word and serve the poor. Let them not weaken in their dedication, and help them raise their awareness of what they can do together.

R. Hear us, O Lord.

S. We pray to You for those who hold political responsibility here in Germany and throughout the world. Give them wisdom, integrity and a will to uphold justice so that they can work for the benefit of humankind.

R. Hear us, O Lord.

S. We pray to You for those who have passed away, particularly those who were the victims of religiously motivated violence. Let them see Your countenance, You who are their life.

R. Hear us, O Lord.

P. lit. Merciful God, You hear our prayers that we bring before You with faithful hearts. Comply our requests, as it pleases Your Will. We glorify You in the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ Our Lord.

R. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

P. lit. Let us join together in prayer as Jesus taught us.

R. Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
For ever and ever.
Amen.

Hymn / music

Commitments

- C. lit. Sisters and brothers,
it is not our intention that this service should remain without
consequences.
- P. lit. We feel empowered to take concrete steps that will change our
prayers, our teachings and our actions in the spirit of ecumenical
siblinghood.
- C. lit. Trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit, we undertake to
emphasise the fundamental common ground in all forms of
proclamation, and to continuously move forward along the
path of ecumenical learning.
- P. lit. Trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves
to join together in bearing witness to God in this world, who is
a God of peace and hope. We commit ourselves, wherever pos-
sible, to act jointly and actively support each other, not least with
respect to the activities of care for the needy performed by our
respective organisations Caritas and Diakonie, and on matters of
social justice, peace-keeping and the protection of human rights.
- C. lit. Trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves
to foster and intensify the ecumenical culture of dialogue and

cooperation on all levels of Church life. Here we will be guided by the Charta Oecumenica, to which we made a joint commitment as members of the Council of Christian Churches. We intend to pray for our ecumenical partners at all services.

- P. lit. Trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to refrain from everything that would give rise to further discord between the Churches. We commit ourselves to seek dialogue on ethical issues on which we do not yet agree before taking any decisions.
- C. lit. Trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to provide marriages that unite the denominations with every support to strengthen their shared faith and promote the religious upbringing of their children. We commit ourselves to make the basic pro-ecumenical stance present in such marriages productive in our Churches.
- P. lit. Trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to make further progress along the path towards the visible unity of the Churches.

[Further commitments relating to the specific regional context can be inserted here.]

- C. lit. We enter into these commitments before God.
- P. lit. May He be with us, so that we may keep them.
- R. Amen.

Hymn

Blessing

- P. lit. May the Lord be with you and protect you.
 May the Lord allow His countenance to shine over you in His
 mercy.
 May the Lord turn His countenance towards you and bestow
 upon you the gift of salvation.
- C. lit. May the triune God grant you this, the Father through the Son
 in the Holy Spirit.

Exit (organ playing)

Key

- P. lit. Protestant liturgy
- C. lit. Catholic liturgy
- S. Speaker
- R. Response

**Members of the working group involved in preparing the Joint Statement
and the Draft Liturgy included in the Annex**

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For the service in Hildesheim the German Bishops' Conference and the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany commissioned Father Abraham Fischer OSB of Königsmünster Abbey in Meschede to create a cross, which is shown on the front cover. A medium-sized version of this cross can be ordered for services at the regional or local level. A smaller version was also available, which worshippers might hold in their hands. Click here to find out more:

<http://christuskreuz2017.koenigsmuenster.de>

Medium-sized cross
(40x40x40 cm)



Small cross
(13x13x13 cm)



