



# Faith and Love

Shared doctrine reached on the basis of the dialogues of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church

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**Helsinki 2017**

Faith and Love. Shared doctrine reached on the basis of the dialogues of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church

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## FOREWORD

Between 1970 and 2011 the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church were engaged in official ecumenical discussions authorised and approved by the churches' highest bodies. Half took place during the Soviet period; half took place after it. Throughout this time both sides expressed in many ways their view of the discussions' importance and their desire that they should be continued. However, the round of dialogue scheduled for 2014 had to be cancelled, not for reasons associated with the discussion process itself, but because the Russian side saw the exchange of views within the Lutheran Church concerning equal marriage as problematic for its own ecumenical position. Discussions were resumed in 2016, but at a less official level.

For decades the ongoing dialogues have been exceptionally fruitful and have produced results which have had an ecumenical significance beyond the bounds of our own churches. Because the course of the dialogues has been protracted and its results have been gradually accumulated in dozens of documents, only some of which have been published, the wider public has not found it easy to gain a bird's eye view of their importance. At the same time, the theological perspectives opened by the discussions have contributed to theological research in our country and to the ways in which we understand the relationship between faith and Christian life. The situation elsewhere is, at least in principle, a little better, because in recent years a substantial number of the final documents and background material has been published in English. However, familiarisation with the dynamics and results of the negotiations has been hampered by the lack of a systematic overall concept.

The purpose of this book is to correct this problem in three ways. The first section of the book (chapters 1–2) gives a brief explanation of the need for ecumenism in general and then, more broadly, an account of the contexts, processes, and results of the Finnish-Russian discussions. The second section (chapter 3) is a systematic summary, relying on a broad documentary basis, of the doctrinal unanimity that had been achieved by 2011 – a kind of catechism. The section contains detailed references to assist the reader who may wish to check the origins of the section's doctrinal formulations. The fourth section (the appendix) contains all the dialogues' officially approved theses. The reader may thus compare them with the summary in the previous section and at the same time gain a notably more detailed picture of the significance of the dialogues themselves, as well as of how shared views have evolved and unfolded in the course of the dialogues.

I was actively and closely involved in the discussions between 1975 and 2005, for part of this time in its planning as secretary to the Finnish working group. The opinions and interpretations of this book arise from this experience.

Tampere, April 2016  
Juha Pihkala

# 1. WHY ECUMENISM IS A CHRISTIAN NECESSITY

## 1.1. The motive of ecumenical conversation

In the final analysis ecumenism is a question of the credibility of the Christian message and service – although it is, of course, much more than that. Paul’s metaphor of the church as the body of Christ precisely emphasises the church’s visible unity. Christ is not divided, and nor can he be. Many other parts of the New Testament make the same point. Christ’s body must be one in a visible way. The indivisibility of the Christian church may be interpreted – and often is – as a purely spiritual reality that cannot be materialised as any concrete or visible organisation. The “invisible church” is one; the visible church is divided in many ways. Unity already exists, nothing can be done about fragmentation – and nor should doing anything about it be possible.

Despite these differences in interpretation, all churches and Christian communities agree that the church and her message exist for the sake of the world. All are convinced that all people everywhere need the salvation the Gospel brings and its resulting service of love. By its very nature the church has a mission.

In their own circles and with each other Christians may of course support either visible or invisible unity and find theological and organisational arguments in favour of both, but from the outside the matter looks different. Regardless of how well the idea of invisible unity is justified, the division and contradictory nature of our witness to Christ, as well as the dispersion of service into countless separate and competing projects, significantly weakens the credibility of our Christian witness.

It is precisely for this reason that one of the deepest motives for ecumenism is to be found in Jesus’s prayer in chapter 17 of St John’s Gospel:

*As you, Father, 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. (17:21)*

## 1.2. The Christian church has never been carved from a single stone

Although the early centuries of the Christian church may by some criteria be referred to as the time of undivided Christendom, fragmentation and differences have existed from the beginning. The former perspective of indivisibility has relied on the fact that both offices and membership were mutually recognised, the latter on the fact that at the same time continuous tensions between Christians have been a constant state of affairs.

There have – to be reductive – been three reasons for tensions and fragmentation. The first may already be seen in the New Testament: differences resulting from language and culture. Christianity was born out of Judaism, but even in its infancy it was divided, as some of Jesus's disciples were Aramaic-speaking “Hebrews”, while some were Greek-speaking “Hellenists”. Each language brought with it a wide and in itself eclectic cultural heritage, which has inevitably affected how the deeply experiential origins of Christianity have been accompanied and interpreted. Words have therefore collided with words and interpretations with interpretations from the very beginning, but particularly as early Christianity spread beyond the Jewish lands to the “foreign peoples”, i.e., the “pagans”.

It has therefore been necessary to undertake ecumenical discussion from the beginning to preserve a common understanding of the basic starting points, but also for the recognition of the crossing of cultural boundaries as a necessity given the Gospel's universal nature. If Christianity were unable to speak truly and openly in a language and culture differing from those of its original setting, it could not have spread all over the world.

After the Christian faith had spread to the whole sphere of influence of the Roman Empire, the divergent way in which the Latin-speaking West and Greek-speaking East imagined the world formed the largest cultural watershed. Other veins, which produced divergences, have existed from early times. For example, a distinctive Coptic Christianity arose in the Nile Valley, and Georgian and Armenian Christianity – no less distinctive – spread through the Caucasus.

This first reason for fragmentation was thus also a precondition for Christian mission.

A second reason for fragmentation was found in the challenges presented by various life situations, both internally and externally. Christians have sought from the common Christian tradition – especially from the Bible – the nuances and emphases that have in the first place and in the best way answered their existential questions in their own environment.

Eastern Greek-speaking Christianity and the Slavonic Christianity descended from it, which now call themselves Orthodoxy, have relied heavily on the Johanne approach, which describes salvation as participation in the divine life, while

Western Roman and Latin Christianity have had an affinity with Paul, who describes salvation from the perspective of justification.

When world history hampered the interaction between East and West, and a common language was lost, these accentual differences grew in the popular imagination to such a serious extent that they severed the church's communion.

The history of the church has afforded many such examples until our own day. This reason for the emergence of these differing opinions and emphases was itself also necessary and inevitable. Many of the differences of interpretation arising from it have, however, been successfully resolved in ecumenical discussion. The founding connection has been rediscovered.

A third reason for tensions and fragmentation has been the sinfully distorted desire for power wrapped in the cloak of religion, and the stirring-up of fear of the stranger and the other. When political-economic and nationalist conflicts of interest have been harnessed to it as a driving force, bloody persecution and violence have sometimes arisen from this whole, using some interpretational principle of the Christian faith as an ideological weapon.

In terms of their effects the most significant fractures have been the "Great Schism" between the Roman Catholic Church of the West and the Orthodox churches of the East in 1054, and the fragmentation of the Western church due to the Reformation of the sixteenth century. The latter series of events sparked the development of separate denominations, which has characterised the whole European cultural sphere ever since. Since the eighteenth century it has radiated from the influence of missionary work, which followed colonialism, in the form of the range of denominations that have reached every part of the globe.

### **1.3. The modern ecumenical movement arises out of the churches' mission**

Alongside the separation that resulted from these reasons, attempts at contact, often successful, but which also sometimes failed, have continually been made. The Great Schism between East and West resulted in a negotiated settlement in the early fifteenth century. An agreement of unity was approved in Constantinople about a year before the city's sacking and fall to the Turks. This catastrophe also resulted in the collapse of the union that had just been agreed.

If European colonialism brought with its missionary work the range of Christian churches and denominations throughout the world, it was from the missionary sphere that an organised ecumenical movement arose in the last century. Missionaries in both India and Africa discovered that they were carrying out the same service of faith and love. At the same time, however, they saw how fishermen competing on the same fishing grounds of Christ with their own nets and

for their own catches raised ideas that were contradictory and damaging for the credibility of Christian witness, in local people.

Petitions from the mission fields, particularly in the late nineteenth century, gradually received a response from the sending churches. The decisive breakthrough came at the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference in 1910. The motive behind the quest for contact was the words of Jesus quoted above. It arose from the deepest source of Christian faith and love – Christ himself.

The conference also drew up a preliminary draft of the common structure required to allow for the attainment of the aims of contact and unity in a planned way so that all parties committed to it could both be heard and participate actively.

Initially, Edinburgh's legacy was organised in the form of three strands of work, the first of which was the *International Missionary Council*. It immediately continued with ecumenical reflection on issues related to the task of mission. The Faith and Order Commission was established to resolve the challenges presented to unity by theological and doctrinal problems, and the Commission on Life and Work was established to promote practical cooperation and diaconal service.

In addition to its task of addressing the diaconal challenges arising out of its original missionary setting, the last of these commissions also received strong incentives from the ecumenical efforts for peace of the Archbishop of Sweden, Nathan Söderblöm (1866-1931) and the German theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) in the 1920s and 1930s.

In the interwar period these three organs also worked to organise world conferences to address issues related to their respective fields. Shortly before the Second World War it had already been decided to create a common overall structure for these functions, but the plan could only be implemented after the war. The World Council of Churches was established in 1948. For many years the great majority of Christian denominations have belonged to it. The Roman Catholic Church, however, has not joined, but is actively involved in the work of the Faith and Order Commission. The Lutheran Church of Finland is a founding member.

Some churches and Christian communities have not been able to commit themselves to the aforementioned parties' goal of visible unity – that is, to such a goal, which, if achieved, would apply in an as yet unspecified way to the churches' organisations. Some of the communities that remained outside the World Council of Churches organised themselves in the Lausanne Movement, which emphasised spiritual contact and its resulting cooperation. Among its members there has occasionally been harsh criticism of the ecumenical policies of the World Council of Churches. The adherents of the Lausanne Movement have been fearful that the vision would be some sort of centrally governed world church, in which current denominations would merge and lose their distinctness.

It is true that there has been the kind of thinking that might be interpreted as justifying such fears in some circles within the World Council of Churches. The organic model of unity, whereby churches and confessions seek to merge

comprehensively, could be considered an example of such thinking. However, this has been superseded by looser proposals, one of which, in the 1970s, was the model of a “*communion of communions*”, under which denominations and churches retain their basic identity, but solve the doctrinal questions that divide them in shared meetings. At the same time, they also create structures for joint decision-making. World Council of Churches circles have come to describe this as the *model of conciliar unity*.

Since the 1990s a model known as unity in reconciled diversity, applied in some bilateral ecumenical discussions between two denominations, has proven the most fruitful. This has been the background, for example, of the Porvoo Agreement between the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches and the British and Irish Anglican churches. The churches have not united as a single organisation, but recognise and accept each other’s members, offices, and sacraments, having achieved a fairly broad doctrinal and theological consensus. Consensus thus does not need to be perfect or concern all matters.<sup>1</sup>

The Leuenberg Concord, concluded in 1973 by most Lutheran and Reformed churches in Europe – which is also an application of the model of reconciled diversity – has from its beginning relied significantly upon a narrower approach to determining preconditions for unity than the Porvoo Agreement, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland did not join it. However, the basis for consensus was later expanded, and within our church there has been some discussion as to whether the time has now come to join.

In recent decades a clear convergence between the World Council of Churches and the Lausanne Movement has occurred.

Since the Second World War several international confessional alliances have been established. Of these, the largest are the Lutheran World Federation, whose membership includes the great majority of Lutheran churches, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, and the Anglican Communion.

## 1.4. Multilateral and bilateral conversations

The most visible part of the ecumenical conversations of the last century that focused on doctrinal questions was undertaken *multilaterally* in the sphere of the *Faith and Order* movement. There were, therefore, several Christian churches and communities around the table at the same time. From the outset *bilateral* conversations also took place alongside these: for example, the Anglican-Roman

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1 Article VII, which deals with the church, of the Augsburg Confession, the Lutheran church’s most important confessional book, sets out the terms for unity as follows: “And to the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike. 4] As Paul says: One faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, etc. Eph. 4:5–6.”

Catholic conversations between 1921 and 1926; the Anglican-Orthodox conversations since 1930; the Anglican-Old Catholic conversations since 1931; and the Lutheran-Reformed conversations since 1947.

Following the establishment of the World Council of Churches these early bilateral conversations briefly fell into almost complete abeyance, but they were rekindled into full flame by the Second Vatican Council of the 1960s. This new wave of bilateral conversations, in which the Finnish churches have been involved since the 1970s, has fruitfully supported the multilateral conversations, and *vice versa*.

Some of the most significant bilateral conversations have been the consultations held between the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran churches and the British and Irish Anglican churches in the 1990s, culminating in the *Porvoo Agreement*, and the dialogues between the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church, culminating in the adoption and signing of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (1999). Since the 1980s the Lutheran World Federation has also been engaged in dialogue with the Orthodox churches' Joint Commission. All of these have benefited from the results of national churches' bilateral conversations.

Multilateral ecumenical work differs from bilateral work both methodologically and in the nature of its results. The two parties may, in their preparations for the conversations and the topics to be discussed in them, form a joint approach in advance. The parties may also be supported during the conversations by a group of observers which helps the participants. A good example of this is the well-established practice of the Finnish-Russian theological conversations, which will be discussed later.

The same model has been followed in the conversations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Orthodox Church of Finland since 1989, with the Evangelical Free Church of Finland (1983–1984), and with the Pentecostal movement of Finland (1987–1989). Discussions began with the Finnish Baptist Church and its Swedish-language sister-church in 1997, and the seventh round of discussions was held in 2015. Discussions have been held with both of Finland's Methodist Churches – Finnish-language and Swedish-language – since 2002. Arising from them a cooperation agreement between the churches that had taken part in conversations was signed on 14th December 2010.

Bilateral dialogues may work on a centralised basis, following a clear method, in detail and in depth. They may enable the making of theological breakthroughs that may lead to relations of full communion and the mutual recognition of each other's members and offices. This is also because the parties' delegations usually include representatives of the church's or community's decision-making bodies. The path to the sources of ecclesiastical decision-making is relatively short. Parishes may also obtain information on the results of discussions relatively easily and quickly.

In multilateral discussions, in turn, dozens of denominations may be involved at the same time, and there may be significant regional differences in the views of representatives, even of those from the same denomination. Representatives of churches and communities sent to such discussions do not generally have much opportunity to get background support from their own churches during the discussions. Bearing sole responsibility brings caution to the work. This occasionally reinforces, rather than erodes, confessional ties in the multilateral context. The ecumenical process as a whole does not generally proceed in a straight line, but rather like a pendulum: at the same time as closeness is approached in some areas, in others denominational self-understanding may be strengthened. When doctrinal connections are made, differences concerning ethics can gain new emphases.

## 2. THE FINNS' CONVERSATIONS WITH THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

### 2.1. The conversations' starting-points

There are two strands in the background of the more than four-decade conversation-process. On the one hand, their impetus lies in our people's traumatic recent history with our large neighbour, and on the other, in the challenge of the century of global ecumenism of mending disagreements and rifts between denominations and establishing contact.

Since the Second World War the Finnish state's foreign policy has included a determined effort to create various links at different levels in all directions. In the eyes of the leadership of the state, the connections of the church have served and continue to serve overall national efforts. For the churches' part, their universal spiritual motives stemming from their faith and tradition have not always been identifiable with particular state and political motives. Nevertheless, it is clear that genuinely patriotic – probably, however, not nationalistic – sentiments are joined to these universal ecumenical goals. One's own people's history and experience of past interaction are inevitably involved. This is both understandable and justified.

Our Lutheran Church's contacts with the Russian Orthodox Church had already been cautiously initiated in the 1950s. At first, contacts were formal, but through the efforts of Archbishop Martti Simojoki and Metropolitan Nikodim of Leningrad in particular, from 1965 they began to include ecclesiastical and theological information presentations. Gradually, personal friendships also grew.

The ecumenical breakthroughs of the 1960s in particular provided a second important impetus to deepening interaction. In 1961 the Russian Orthodox Church joined the World Council of Churches at the New Delhi General Assembly. It now had a state-approved official position in the ecumenical community. Efforts were made to exploit the opportunities thus opened and to expand contacts. For its part the Second Vatican Council (1963–1965) had opened the doors of the Catholic Church to ecumenical cooperation. Work was done by the Lutheran World Federation to plan theological discussions with the Vatican and, at the end of the same decade, an international dialogue with the Orthodox Church. After a somewhat protracted preparatory phase discussions between the Lutheran World Federation and the Orthodox Joint Commission commenced in the early 1980s.

Simultaneously, various European bodies cautiously began bilateral conversations between national churches, the outcomes of which were understood as

beneficial to multilateral international ecumenical goals. Finland's geographical and international political position naturally led events towards the opening of some sort of conversation between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church. The desire was to analyse the earlier and cautiously initiated discussions as clearly as possible in a theological and ecclesiastical framework. This was the internal intention of both parties in a politically tense environment. This development was indubitably influenced by the fact that Archbishop Simojoki was Vice-President of the Lutheran World Federation at the time.

The directions established in the discussions' early stages proved to strike the right note and to be durable: the conversations continued until 2011, undisturbed by the radical changes in the political environment. However, the high-level discussions that had been agreed for 2014 had to be cancelled because of the Russian Orthodox Church's dissatisfaction with stances taken in the Finnish Lutheran Church concerning same-sex marriage. Nevertheless, the discussions are continuing – at least for the moment – at a less official level.

## 2.2. The aims of the conversations

Official documents created over the years include somewhat scant evidence concerning the aims of the conversations. Enough of the aims have been spoken of publicly, however, to provide an accurate indication of the committed efforts of both ecclesiastical parties. The final document (communiqué) of Sinappi (1970) contained the following general pronouncement:

*Both parties thus desire for their own part to seek the help of God in promoting Christian unity.*

A year later at Zagorsk (1971) this was expressed as follows:

*The parties are convinced that such consideration of significant theological problems promotes the deepening of the mutual understanding of both churches and makes an important contribution to the search for paths and methods for achieving Christendom's unity in faith.*

Exactly the same sentence is included in the Järvenpää communiqué (1974). Kiev (1977) frames it more broadly:

*At the same time, both parties underline the importance of bilateral theological discussion meetings from the perspective of the wider ecumenical movement and of theological dialogue. In the planning of future meetings to discuss the*

*doctrines of God and related matters consideration should be given to the possible use of their findings in broader ecumenical cooperation.*

In Turku (1980) the shared view of the discussions' importance and objectives was expressed as follows:

*The parties are convinced that, despite their bilateral nature, the discussions are also relevant to other Lutheran and Orthodox churches preparing for general doctrinal conversations between their denominations. The parties further note that dialogue has an important place in the contemporary ecumenical movement.*

Corresponding statements are also included in the Leningrad summary (1983). The Pyhtitsa summary (1989) quoted the opening speech by Archbishop John Vikström:

*As we begin these bilateral theological discussions between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church here at the Pyhtitsa Convent, we are fulfilling the call of Christ's church to seek unity in truth and love. Our doctrinal conversations serve to contribute to efforts for the unity of Christ's church.*

The first thesis of the Järvenpää document (1992) states at the outset:

*Our common conviction is that the truth of the Christian faith is one. Although our churches have different traditions, we seek to express and implement in our life the fullness of truth. We seek consensus between our traditions, and this consensus is the ultimate goal of the doctrinal conversations we are undertaking. In doing this, our basis and criterion is the apostolic heritage of the undivided church.*

It may therefore be observed that from the beginning our churches' bilateral discussions have been understood as part of the worldwide effort for Christians' mutual understanding and unity – and ultimately the churches' visible unity. The positive interaction that has grown in the course of the discussions has created the conditions for the recovery of parish life among the Ingrians and Finnish-speaking Karelians, and has subsequently served as an important impulse for the birth and growth of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria, which now operates throughout the territory of the Russian Federation. The discussions have thus contributed in many ways to this development, but this development has not been a pragmatic goal set internally by the Finnish side, a goal which would have been disguised by the quest for ecumenical contact.

The focus of this discussion process has been theological for two reasons. First, this has enabled the avoidance of falling into the traps set by the political and ideological confrontation of the Cold War. Both churches have been able to confine themselves to an area in which they could act, to quite a large extent, on the basis of their own justifications. Second, each church has therefore been focused on the essentials in its ecumenical work: without sufficient doctrinal consensus it will be impossible to achieve the unity of the churches. This principle of qualified consensus is clearly stated in Article VII of Lutheranism's most important confessional book, the Augsburg Confession:

*And to the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike.*

Thus, the Augsburg Confession is a statement that at its core accords with the Orthodox understanding of the conditions required for the unity of the churches.

Clearly, the Soviet state powers hoped to be able to promote their own international political interests with the aid of doctrinal conversations between the churches. This has already been mentioned. The Russian Orthodox Church was obliged to represent peace ideals in the discussions that were supportive of Moscow's worldwide objectives at the time. When the Russian Orthodox Church wished to discuss, in addition to doctrine, social and ethical issues and, recurringly, the theme of peace, it was easy to understand that this was a package without which it would have been impossible to maintain the conversations in the prevailing geo-political conditions. For two decades this was almost the visa requirement, as it were, for the discussions to take place. However, in this area both churches aimed their efforts – for the aforementioned reasons – at a theological approach.

Because the parties to the discussions were churches, worship life and common prayer were essential to this interaction and often served as a dimension that opened new horizons for both sides.

The Finnish party has considered it of the utmost importance, despite the well-known and acknowledged political pressures, to maintain a resolute commitment to the ecclesiastical nature of the discussions. Although we in Finland had no knowledge of the internal discussions of the Russian party in the Soviet period, we have clearly recognised that party's commitment to the same effort. The aim has been that the theological conversation should be free to follow its own logic, without getting mired in the ecumenical concerns of the day and setting short-term goals. For this reason, there has been no reflection on what concrete conclusions in the relations between our churches could be made on possible breakthroughs achieved in the discussions.

During the discussions there has also been no thorough substantive consideration of the concrete consensus that would be required for the achievement of church unity. This has unquestionably been a wise approach.

Professor Kauko Pirinen, who was one of the key players on the Finnish side in the 1980s, used to say that visible unity was the discussions' "remote target". Although an awareness developed in both churches no later than the second half of the 1970s that these discussions were relevant for other ongoing ecumenical dialogues, this awareness was not allowed excessively to bind its own process.

That these conversations were not intended to respond to immediate topical challenges naturally did not rule out the possibility that any results achieved might or should influence other current ecumenical and ecclesiastical conversations. We now know that many bodies have had such an influence in theological research, ecumenical work, and church life.

### 2.3. Topics covered

To date, official doctrinal conversations have been held on fifteen occasions – taking place alternately in both countries.

The first round of discussions was held between 19th and 22nd March 1970 at the Sinappi Study Centre in Turku. The theme was *The Eucharist as an Expression of the Connectedness of Believers*. The second round was held at the end of the following year between 12th and 16th December 1971 at the Trinity Lavra of St Sergius in Zagorsk. It saw the return of eucharistic theology under the title of *The Eucharist and Sacrifice*. Both parties considered the work to be useful, and it was decided to continue.

The interval between the first two meetings proved too short for thorough preparation. It was therefore decided to move to a three-year cycle. The third round was held in Järvenpää between 23rd and 28th May 1974. The theme was now *The Sacrament of the Altar and the Priesthood and the Christian Doctrine of Salvation* (the latter having been inspired by the World Mission Congress held in Bangkok in 1973). Conversation about the Eucharist therefore continued, but in a way that included our churches' doctrine of priesthood. An entirely new theme now emerged, with a relatively short preparation time: our churches' doctrine of salvation.

The fourth round was held immediately after Easter, between 12th and 16th April 1977, in Kiev. The Finnish delegation had already been in situ on 8th April, and participated in worship between Good Friday and Easter Day. The theme of the discussion was *Salvation Interpreted as Justification and Theosis*. The theme, which international commentary saw as almost risky, had been encouraged by the Järvenpää discussions.

The fifth round was held between 5th and 11th June 1980 in Turku. The theme of salvation remained under discussion: the title of the conversations was *Faith and Love as Works of Salvation*. The base that had been reached in Kiev was expanded.

The sixth round was held from 2nd to 14th June 1983 at the premises of the Leningrad Spiritual Academy. The theme was *The Nature of the Church, Eucharistic Ecclesiology*. The Eucharist had already been discussed often, but now consideration shifted to how it was linked theologically to the Christian church's deepest essence as "the Body of Christ".

The seventh round was held in Finland from 3rd to 13th June 1986 in Mikeli. The Christian life as a follower of Christ was examined from the perspective of *Holiness, Sanctification, and the Saints*.

The eighth and final round of the Soviet era was held at the Orthodox Convent of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary at Pyhtitsa in Soviet Estonia between 9th and 19th June 1989. The theme was *Creation (the First Article of Faith)*. It was a sign of a new era that the subtheme was not concerned with peace and the theology of peace, but sought to come to moral and ethical conclusions on the theology of creation.

The ninth round was held between 18th and 28th May 1992 at the Church Training Centre in Järvenpää. The theme was *The Apostolic Faith from a Biblical and Doctrinal Perspective*. In the earlier conversations it had often been stated that both churches relied in their faith and doctrine on the heritage of the Apostles and the apostolic age. This issue was now addressed in detail, along with the doctrine of the church and its perspectives on life.

The tenth round was held between 27th August and 5th September 1995 at the Convent of the Ascension of Christ in Kiev. The doctrinal theme was *The Mission of the Church Today*. In the ethical section the recurring theme of the previous decade was returned to, now under the title of *The Peace Work of the Church and Nationalism*.

The eleventh round was held in the Old City Hall of Lappeenranta between 12th and 19th October 1998. The theme was *Christian Freedom, the Freedom of the Church and the Freedom of Religion*. Although the conversations were held in two groups, as was traditional, the common theses in the final communiqué form a continuum, in which the opening of the section on ethics includes the subheading *Relations between Church, State, and Society*.

The twelfth round took place at the Danilovsky Monastery in Moscow between 28th September and 6th October 2002. No doctrinal or ethical themes were proposed: instead, a thorough evaluation of past discussions was undertaken, and priorities for future discussions were considered.

The thirteenth round of discussions was held between 20th and 25th September 2005 at the Turku parishes' Sinappi Study Centre. The theme was *The Christian View of the Human Being in Modern Europe: Salvation, Faith, and Mod-*

*ern Society*. The Christian concept of the human being had often been present in the earlier documents, but it was now treated thematically and comprehensively for the first time.

The fourteenth round was held in the building of the Metropolitan at the St Alexander Nevsky Lavra in St Petersburg between 18th and 24th September 2008. The theme was *Freedom as Gift and Responsibility: Human Rights and Religious Education from a Christian Perspective*.

The fifteenth round, which took place between 6th and 11th September 2011 at the Lahti Parishes' Siikaniemi Course Centre in Hollola, returned to a consideration of the essence of the Christian church from both a doctrinal and practical perspective: *The Church as Community: Christian Identity and Membership of the Church*.

## 2.4. The discussions' method

Naturally, the first round in 1970 had been general and tentative. Suitable working methods and themes were sought – perhaps starting with the easier ones and proceeding to the more difficult ones. As has been noted, the interval between the first two conferences proved too short. Subsequently, there was generally a three-year cycle that enabled a more careful and patient preparation.

Until 1974 the method followed generally complied with the comparative ecclesiology approach that had been commonly used since the first half of the twentieth century. The churches' doctrine was compared, and common perspectives were sought that were noted along with problem areas requiring further clarification in subsequent discussions.

The latter has proved fruitful in later stages, insofar as it has, for the most part, given the discussions a clear thematic continuity. It has been possible to grasp the findings of previous meetings and build upon them. Through noting the points requiring further clarification and addressing them in subsequent discussions, the common ground has gradually been expanded. There are positive references to this in numerous communiqués and summaries.

The question, raised for the first time in 1974, of how both churches understood and interpreted the saving work of Christ and its meaning, gave a new and deeper dimension to the working method. An ecumenical-theological problem that had been interpreted as being of a fundamental nature between Lutheran and Orthodox faith was identified in advance for subsequent discussions: the relationship between the Lutheran doctrine of justification and the Orthodox doctrine of deification. This could not be solved by a superficial comparison of each of the traditions, but required much more profound theological work by both parties – perhaps also, in part, to rediscover the forgotten treasures of their own tradition as well as to find a way to re-evaluate the actual content of the other's

tradition. This working method, which was arduous and demanded creativity, was to prove a very fruitful choice later. However, it has not always been adhered to with equally strong emphasis over the years.

From the outset in these discussions the aim has been to say together everything that can be said together. A well-established work process has afforded good possibilities for this. Each party has at first given its own presentation on the agreed themes. This has been followed by a general conversation in which the points that remain unclear have been defined, further explanations given, and any areas of consensus emerging from the presentations mapped as far as possible. After this participants have broken up into thematic Finnish-Russian working groups, in which they have drawn up drafts of joint theses. These are then brought to general discussion and approved – after possible amendments – together.

Although the parties to these bilateral discussions in this process have been our church and the Russian Orthodox Church, the Finnish Orthodox have, as interpreters and theological experts during the discussions themselves, provided significant theological support throughout the process.

The basic objective of the theological conversations in terms of both method and content has therefore been to increase *mutual understanding* (consensus) between the parties' traditions, and this has been supported by the method employed. In the first discussions consensus theses were initially recorded (1970, A: 1–5), and then various concepts (B: 1–2). When recording the results of conversations as theses, the aim was later to express only the consensus and shared understandings, although occasionally differing interpretations have risen to the surface.

Not once has it been stated that there has been any sharp disagreement between the parties, but that the churches participating in the conversations have differing emphases or that further clarification work is still required. The question of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist may serve as an example. The theses state that there is a consensus on the matter, but that in interpreting this truth, the parties' views differ (1970, B: 1).

Ahead of the actual theses series of the 1977 Kiev discussions it was separately stated that there was no sharp discrepancy between the Orthodox and Lutheran doctrines of salvation, but that there was “a great consensus” (1977, 1; the same words were used in 1980). Before the consensus theses produced at that time it was explicitly stated that a “wide-ranging convergence prevails”, a convergence which emerges in the seven theses that follow (1977, IV: 1–7).

Work has to some extent been hindered by the fact that during this decades-old process previous conversations' *findings have not always been sufficiently passed on* to new discussion participants who have replaced others. In this respect there have been shortcomings on both sides. Without a doubt, participants who have taken part for a long time have had their memory deceive them. It has therefore been necessary on occasion to return to questions on which a mutually satisfactory result has already been achieved. However, this has not always been a problem,

as the durability of the findings is thus weighed more carefully than before, and their ecumenical reception has at the same time been deepened and expanded in the churches.

There have also been occasions when a new evaluation of the findings reached has been necessary, because between the participants there has been a variety of theological and ecclesiological views which among the conversations' veterans had already begun partially to form into a common approach, but which have re-emerged when new negotiators have been appointed. Common findings that the conversation partners in previous rounds of talks have identified as consonant with Orthodoxy or Lutheranism have not been unequivocally accepted by others. Clearly, ecumenical work is not merely an inter-church concern, but is also necessary within churches.

## **2.5. Reception of the discussions' findings in the churches**

The reception of the ecumenical discussions' findings and their incorporation into each party's theological and ecclesiological reality is a broad question that is sometimes difficult to understand. This is because the participants in the conversations are usually a rather small group of theologically educated specialists in their own church. There may therefore be relatively few opportunities actively and determinedly to describe and interpret to the great majority of the members of the respective churches what has been achieved in the conversations.

The problem has, of course, been recognised from the beginning, and each party has deployed its own resources to address it. In Finland it has been considered important from the outset to prepare for and participate in the discussions ecclesiastically and theologically in the most representative way possible. The delegations and preparations have always been led by the serving Archbishop (1970–1977 – Martti Simojoki, 1980 – Mikko Juva, 1983–1998 – John Vikström, 1998–2010 – Jukka Paarma, and, since 2011, Kari Mäkinen). The delegations have also included other bishops, university theologians representing various disciplines and scientific starting points, and parish priests. Present, therefore, has always been a microcosm of the church's leadership, scientific theology, and the experience of parish work and the perspectives it brings.

Preparatory seminars, which are wider-ranging than the actual delegations, have been structured correspondingly. The group involved in these has been relatively stable over the years, and it has been the aim to select its members to ensure within it sufficient representation of a range of ecclesiastical and theological currents, as well as the different levels of the church. It has therefore been possible to consider many perspectives in the preparatory work, and, on the other hand, information about the progress of the process has spread – given the resources – reasonably extensively. Efforts have been made to ensure that the doctrinal and

ethical approaches presented to the Russian party concerning any theme have the widest possible acceptance in our church.

This way of working, with many bases, has contributed to the reception of the discussions' findings by clergy and parishioners. Because influential theologians have been involved in both the discussions themselves and the preparatory work, the findings have fertilised theological research and penetrated, through it, to the awareness and practice of young theologians as they graduate to the priesthood. This has been especially noticeable since Kiev (1977).

The Finns have tried to ensure that a reasonable balance between continuity and renewal has been maintained in the delegation and preparatory work. It has thus been possible to retain a perspective based on personal experience, while at the same time fresh views have been brought into the process over the years. It is justified to argue that in Finland the preparatory process for the discussions with the Orthodox has been the most significant permanent discussion forum of the internal groups within the church in recent decades.

During these years the Russian Orthodox Church has become familiar to the Finnish party, both at a general and personal level. The relatively unstructured and monolithic picture of the initial phase has received a significant number of nuances. Like the Finnish Lutheran Church, the Russian Orthodox Church is also a bundle of various partial traditions which are often charged in nature. It has become clear that a fruitful ecumenical encounter also means an internal discussion process for both sides.

## **2.6. The most significant findings**

Some of the discussions' findings have represented a breakthrough of considerable international ecumenical significance. In this context they therefore should be raised more broadly. Obviously, however, this is not to suggest that other consensus reached in other areas during the discussions have been of little overall value.

As already noted, the Christian doctrine of salvation, among other issues, was discussed at Järvenpää in 1974. The ecumenical "Salvation Today" conference, held in Bangkok the previous year, which had framed the situation and future of world mission, provided the impetus for this topic. Each of the parties was of the view that the resulting documents were one-sided, over-emphasising the temporal nature of life. Both parties felt that these documents interpreted the world as an internal, immanent event without a clear eschatological dimension referring to God's saving action at the end time.

Because it had been generally stated that Lutheran and Orthodox eschatology – where justification is the core for the former and deification for the latter – were very far apart, and that the parties had despite this arrived at a surprising degree of consensus in their assessment of Bangkok, it was decided to take

what many believed to be a daring step and tackle precisely this issue, which was considered exceptionally difficult. It was adopted as the main theme of the next round of discussions.

In the Finnish preparatory work it was assumed from the start that there must be some point of intersection between these two approaches, as the theological background created by early Christianity was common for our churches. Moreover, despite their many cultural differences, West and East had fully recognised each other for a thousand years. It was therefore necessary to get to work and to delve more deeply than had been customary. The inherited, oft-repeated and schematically crystallised confessional interpretations had to be set to one side, the basic premises tackled, and the issues themselves examined.

The preparatory work focused on two questions in particular, the first of which was exegetical, that is, relating to the interpretation of biblical texts, and the second of which was dogmatic, that is, relating to the doctrine of the church.

In the Pauline texts Lutheran theology has relied especially on those sections in which the Apostle speaks of justification: God, through Christ's death on the cross and his resurrection, forgives human beings their sins, that is, he justifies human beings when they believe in Christ. However, there are also passages by Paul in which he speaks of being "born again" in Baptism and of the "new nature" it imparts. The human being declared righteous by God is thus also reborn as a "new creation".

The first – exegetical – task was therefore to clarify the mutual relationship between these perspectives of justification and new creation, that is, of the Christian's new life. The results of this analysis were then compared with the declaration in the Second Epistle of St Peter, which is considered the classical biblical argument for the Orthodox doctrine of deification:

*Thus he has given us, through these things, his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust, and may become participants in the divine nature. (2 Peter 1:4)*

To interpret and place in perspective the content of Paul's aforementioned texts, it was necessary to sift through a significant body of material outside the New Testament. This challenging task was undertaken by Professor Jukka Thurén. It became convincingly clear that the Pauline doctrine of justification and the doctrine of deification in Peter's second letter were capable of being located within the same overall theological structure. Christ himself was the link:

*For in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. (Gal. 3:26–27)  
So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! (2 Cor. 5:17)*

The thesis was tested in many ways, and proved resilient.

The second question – the dogmatic, or systematic-theological – was this: could justification, according to the Lutheran confession and tradition, be considered to touch the essence of the person in a real way? In other words, did justification bring something real to the human person that had previously been lacking? Or could it be – as has often been claimed in the Protestant tradition – simply a question of divine favour, which reckoned the human being as good from the outside, without any change occurring in his or her essence (the so-called forensic-imputative justification concept)?

In his analysis of Luther's great exposition of Galatians Professor Tuomo Mannermaa notes that the question may be answered in the affirmative. The "alien righteousness" which is "granted" to a believing person is, according to Luther, Christ himself actually living in the believing person (*in ipsa fide Christus adest*). The Christian's new "I" is Christ. Through him the Christian partakes of the "divine nature". Justification is both a *favour* granted by God and a real *gift*, and this gift is *Christ himself*. Through Christ himself the believer is a partaker of the divine life.

A research programme has grown from the findings of Mannermaa's analysis and the challenge it has provoked, and it has produced many scholars and broad international debate over the decades. This has had notable significance for the Lutheran Church's self-understanding, but also, in particular, for its ecumenical relations. It has also been possible to exploit it in the global Lutheran-Orthodox dialogue, for which the Lutheran World Federation takes responsibility on behalf of our confession. It has – furthermore – influenced the emergence of the Porvoo Agreement between the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches and the British and Irish Anglican Churches, which was signed in 1996. It also played an important role in the preparatory work for the Lutheran-Catholic Joint Declaration on Justification, adopted in 1997.

The Kiev discussions concluded that the Lutheran doctrine of justification and the Orthodox doctrine of deification were largely similar in their objectives and made possible fruitful further conversations. Both parties considered this discovery to be of ecumenical importance:

*Until recently the received opinion has been that the Orthodox and Lutheran doctrines of salvation differ significantly. However, the discussions have shown that both important salvation aspects discussed in the conversations – justification and deification – have a solid basis in the New Testament, and that from both aspects extends a far-reaching similarity of belief.*

Despite this fundamental consensus, however, there were still issues requiring discussion. The Russian Orthodox representatives found it difficult to understand how

Lutherans conceived of the significance of faith in the salvation-event itself. There was insufficient discussion time for a thorough exploration of this issue in Kiev.

In his presentation at that time Archbishop Mikhail outlined the Orthodox understanding of the faith. He maintained that it included three phenomenological (appearing in humans' experiential world) degrees: 1.) rational faith, devoid of feeling and movements of will; 2.) faith containing trust and hope; and 3.) faith effected by love. In his view only the third degree was authentic, saving faith.

The Lutheran party did not consider this the most fertile approach. Because, however, each church held faith to be an integrally important matter – along with love – the task of future discussions would be to discover what they had in common and where there might be any divergence.

The aim of the Turku discussions (1980) was precisely to expand on the common ground established at Kiev: how were faith and love related in the context of salvation? The Finnish presentations were made by Bishop Aimo T. Nikolainen (from the exegetical perspective) and Professor Tuomo Mannermaa (from the systematic perspective).

In his section Nikolainen traced the mutual connection of faith and love in the New Testament tradition. His starting point was Jesus's dual commandment of love and the destination was the Johannine principle of the connection between faith and love. His main argument was that the New Testament does reject the "works of the law", by which it is attempted to earn salvation, but "good works" nevertheless inseparably and necessarily follow faith. Faith gives rise to works of love just as a good tree bears good fruit.

In turn, Mannermaa examined the issue on the basis of the mutual dynamic of faith and love occurring in Luther's theology. Throughout, Luther's concept, discovered in Kiev, that Christ himself really lives in the believer – that is, the confluence with the Orthodox concept of deification (theosis) – was in the background. From a Lutheran perspective the expression *fides caritate formata* – faith formed by love – the wording used by Western Catholics for Mikhail's third stage, can be misleading, because it suggests that love may be understood as a characteristic that is poured into the human being. The Christ living in the most internal part of the believer is not a characteristic adopted by the human being, but a living, divine personality. For this reason Luther employed the concept of *fides Christo formata* – faith is formed by Christ: love indeed follows faith, but it is the love of Christ himself.

What the Lutheran party presented at Turku may be summarised as follows:

*Thus, the soteriological starting point is this: in saving faith the righteousness of God ("alien righteousness") is received (mediated by the word and sacraments), which is not merely God's favour towards the human being, but also God's gift to the human being, Christ present in faith. Through his – and only his – passion, death, and resurrection the human being is "reckoned as righteous", but at the*

*same time really becomes – through the presence of Christ – a partaker of the divine life, the essential characteristic of which is love. When faith has received this life, it issues in works of love for others. The believer treats his or her fellow human beings just as Christ has treated him or her. (Pihkala TA 3/1984)*

In coming to Turku the Orthodox party had not completely rid itself of the suspicion that by “saving faith” Lutherans meant an intellectual understanding of faith. Archbishop Mikhail sought to demonstrate in his thorough presentation that such a concept was impossible. In the event it contained many overlaps with the Lutheran presentations, a fact which was identified in the subsequent conversations.

The problem with Mikhail’s approach (from the Lutheran perspective) was that it still examined faith – as had been the case in Kiev – phenomenologically and psychologically, that is, from the perspective of human experiences, while, on the other hand, the Lutheran party had consistently offered a perspective that was Trinitarian and Christological. The Orthodox spoke of what happened in the human person, whereas the Lutherans spoke of what God was doing for the human person. Both perspectives, of course, belong together.

A similar difference in perspective has since been observed in the Lutheran-Catholic discussions that resulted in the Joint Declaration on Justification. Catholics describe what happens to the human person; for their part, Lutherans describe what God is doing. Both perspectives are therefore justifiable, but may easily be interpreted unilaterally. What connects them is the Real Presence of Christ.

This perspective, which supplemented the findings of Kiev, penetrated the Turku discussions, as the beginning of the summary of the discussions asserts:

*In previous discussions it has been found that the key features of Lutheran and Orthodox eschatology – justification and deification – are firmly rooted in the New Testament and that there is an extensive consensus concerning them. This consensus is based on the doctrine of Christ, which the churches share. Christ is the source of our justification and deification. At the same time, however, and despite this consensus, it has been found that the churches disagree concerning the different emphases of these aspects. One such problem concerns the relationship of faith and love in salvation.*

*Where human beings’ God-relationship and salvation are concerned, Lutherans have preferred to speak about faith and the life of faith, whereas the Orthodox have preferred to speak about love.*

*The words ‘love’ and ‘faith’ carry many different meanings in Holy Scripture and in everyday language. In speaking about faith and love, therefore, it is imperative to consider the meanings of these words in any given biblical context.*

*The doctrinal conversations now conducted at Turku have convincingly demonstrated that what both churches teach about faith and love as works of salvation is substantially the same.*

## 2.7. Other theological convergences

The international ecumenical conversation has been conducted on shared findings primarily related to the doctrine of salvation, but a growing consensus has also been attained in other theological areas.

The Triune nature of the Christian faith in God, originating in the time of the Apostles, is recognised as the shared and inalienable starting point of both churches. All theology relies upon this, be it a question of creation, redemption, sanctification, the church, or its mission. This theme is often raised in the various discussions' final documents.

However, the discussions have not touched on the differences of perspective between Western and Eastern Trinitarian theology, which have given rise to ecumenical tensions. This is about more than simply whether in reciting the creed it may be said that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father *and the Son (filioque)*, as is done in the later Western addition.

Important shared approaches about the *theology of creation* and its ecological ramifications were recorded at Pyhtitsa in 1989 that require wider and deeper investigation – if the discussions get back on track. Otherwise, creation has been visible mainly in reflection on the role and mission of the human being.

The church has been discussed in several contexts so that from the findings a broadly shared and diverse view of what the church is, and what its role in the world is, can be perceived. In talking about the church's mission role there has been a shared emphasis that the proclamation of the Gospel and a love of diaconal service are intrinsic to it.

The understanding of the church's *apostolic foundation* and the importance of *apostolic continuity* has increased, but the theme to this point has been handled in a somewhat fragmentary way. The role of the bishop's office has in general been raised, but it has yet to be discussed jointly.

On the basis of the discussions between 1970 and 1974 the Orthodox have understood that the parties' *concepts of Holy Communion and office* are clearly closer to each other than had previously been thought. It was intended to consider the possible sacramental nature of the Lutheran priesthood as a theme for later discussion, but this has yet to be realised. Since the initial conversations Holy Communion has arisen in 1977 in connection with the doctrine of salvation, and in 1983 in discussion of the nature of the church. There has also been agreement on the idea that the Holy Communion is the deepest expression of the churches' and Christians' unity, and not a tool to be used in aiming for that unity.

Both churches assert that Christ's sacrifice at Golgotha is unique, and cannot be repeated. Where the church is concerned, it is a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God and a sacrifice of love for one's neighbour.

The real nature of the Lutheran sacraments – that is, the Real Presence of Christ in Baptism and Holy Communion – would appear to have been strengthened in Orthodox eyes, along with the profile of traditional and Nordic Lutheranism, which is clearly distinct from the Reformed tradition.

On both sides, mutual understanding of the importance of opening ecumenical horizons on worship life arising from the traditions of each, and on other spiritual life, has grown.

## **2.8. The socio-ethical theme - faith and love**

Heta Hurskainen has recently completed a doctoral thesis in English on the discussions concerning the theme of the practical aspect of socio-ethics.<sup>2</sup> The book offers a broad in-depth survey of the discussions – including the presentations. It is therefore worth simply highlighting here some of the key theological issues that help in understanding the nature of the discussions.

### **a. The theme of peace**

Although the focus of the second thematic working group is both churches' ethical doctrine and practice, the common point of departure is therefore theological in the doctrinal sense. Those issues falling within the scope of social ethics were not handled in isolation, but in considering them it was asked how they linked God's declaration to emerging fundamental religious truths.

It has been noted many times in the discussions that peace, the desire for peace, and prayer for peace relate to the core areas of Christian faith and worship life. It is enough to mention here the reciprocal greetings of peace in Lutheran worship and the comprehensive prayers for peace in the Orthodox liturgy.

### ***Scripture and tradition***

Both churches have sought to justify their socio-ethical positions from Scripture and the church's tradition. Both churches share a commitment to the creeds of the early church and the heritage of the undivided church.

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2 Heta Hurskainen, *Ecumenical Social Ethics as the World Changed. Socio-Ethical Discussion in the Ecumenical Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland 1970–2008*. Luther-Agricola-Society, Helsinki 2013.

There have, however, been several differences in biblical application: the Lutheran party's approach has been inspired by historical biblical study, in which matters are not generally justified by individual scriptural phrases but through broader contexts. For the representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church the Bible has been at least as important a source as for Lutherans, but it has generally been used by appealing to individual citations that are often separated from the broader context.

### ***Statements concerning concrete issues that form a threat to peace***

In discussing the theology of peace it has naturally been necessary to cover the concrete threats to world peace and issues of concern in both the 1970s and 1980s. In these contexts it has of course been noted that the historical background of both churches has influenced the conversations. There have been issues that merited discussion but, at the same time, in a way in which sides were not taken on global political tensions. Both churches' representatives have striven to ensure that the *concrete* proposals of peace theses and theses in related secondary themes *have been compatible with our churches' theology of peace, the theology of creation, and the tenets of basic human freedom.*

### ***The law created by the love of God as the basis for peace***

In addressing the theme of peace each of the parties to the discussions has appealed to those New Testament passages that speak about the law written by God in the human heart at the moment of creation, the core content of which is love. Every human being – whether he or she believes or not – understands what is good and right, as well as what is evil and wrong. Our churches' starting point has not, however, been to consider this issue from the perspective of non-believers, but specifically from that of the church's faith.

Despite this shared starting point, clear differences have been observed in the discussions in how the parties perceive the relationship between faith and natural moral law – or the relationship between faith and love, if the language of dogmatics is employed.

Some of the Finnish negotiators, to whom Heta Hurskainen refers as the representatives of the older generation in her doctoral thesis, have been happy to speak of a *theologically understood natural law or of natural law*, the content of which may just as equally be the law given in creation, summarised by the Ten Commandments, the Golden Rule, the Sermon on the Mount, and the double commandment of love: love the Lord your God above all things and your neighbour as yourself. The natural law expresses God from one person to another in the expectation of justice as well as the rights in nature inherent to the human being.

The Sermon on the Mount is also important for both churches, but its function is understood in a slightly different way: in the Lutheran tradition it is seen as an infinitely clear divine mirror, before which the human being recognises his or her sins, while in the Orthodox tradition it is seen more as a law of faith that exceeds the requirement of natural law, but which may also be fulfilled in faith. For them it is a kind of badge worn by one striving in faith.

The Lutheran representatives of the younger generation have conceived of the meaning of law more from a perspective created by faith and love: a living faith becomes visible as an active love that fulfils the law. Faith and love therefore also belong together essentially in the Lutheran interpretation of faith – which the Orthodox had previously understood differently. This matter, and its ecumenical potential, has been raised in the discussions, particularly in Turku (1980) and since, because there has been theological consensus concerning this link, and it has been seen as opening an opportunity to draw even closer in the common fundamentals of socio-ethics.

It can therefore be said in any case that both churches' starting point in peace work is rooted in the Gospel, which leads to the fulfilment of God's law – with less emphasis in the case of the older Lutheran generation than the younger generation.

### ***The church and the world***

The special emphasis of Orthodoxy has been that the theological impact of the church and its faith on the world is seen more broadly than is the case in traditional Lutheranism: the church's faith and love radiate into the world and shape it, "enlighten it" – *transfiguration* is the term that is used here. While Lutherans have preferred to speak of the law of God as written in the innermost heart of all people – which is a concept that is also familiar to the Orthodox – the Orthodox have preferred to link it with the early church's use of the image of the seed of the Logos of God (*logoi spermatikoi*), which is sown in the "field" of humanity, and which is nourished by the Gospel, so that the world begins to transform into the new reality promised to us by God in Christ. It is a question of a sort of sanctification process of the world, in which, according to Orthodox faith, the church plays an active role.

When the Orthodox speak of "people of goodwill", they mean those non-Christians in whom those seeds have so sprouted that cooperation for the promotion of the common good of humanity is possible.

The Lutheran party's view of the relationship between the church and the world is, like the view of the Orthodox, orientated towards the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, or to the mission for God's creation, the world, the salvation of humanity, and the church. God has created the world, and those who believe in Christ await his return, the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the next world. The church is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic.

Lutheran tradition maintains that God governs the world and the church in different ways. This has been referred to as the principle of two regiments or two governments. Secular magistrates serve God's governance of the world when they maintain just order through law and compulsion. Because the law tells us what love requires, the secular government maintains, when it acts correctly, compulsory love of one's neighbour. In the spiritual regiment, that is, in the (one) church God governs people through word and sacrament. These also lead to love, but freely and spontaneously, without the compulsion of the law.

The principle of the two regiments is therefore sometimes misinterpreted, that is, as suggesting that order based on earthly power should have its own law and that the church and its members should submit to all its provisions in public life. Luther's premise is different. The magistrate exercises his or her office correctly when in doing so he or she complies with the universal divine law of love, which is given already in creation, but summarised in the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule:

*For nature teaches the same as love: I ought to do what I would have done unto me. And therefore I may not rob another, however good my claim, since I myself do not want to be robbed. What I would wish in such a case is that the other person should relinquish his right; and therefore I ought also to relinquish mine. (Von weltlicher Obrigkeit, 1523)*

The church prays for the magistrates and obeys them and their laws, as long as they do not tell him to sin (Augsburg Confession XVI, 6–7). The problem has been that this has sometimes led to passivity in the church when it should be exerting its prophetic voice on the basis of God's revelation.

The Lutheran tradition has been quite reticent in speaking of the church's potential to transform the world, but in more recent ecumenical conversation something that has become familiar to it is a perspective that has emphasised the role of the church as an end-time (eschatological) sign: it must draw attention to the predictive signs of the new creation that God has promised. To this is attached a concrete struggle to remedy environmental damage and implement human rights, etc. If this were to happen, it would be precisely the transfiguration of which Orthodox theology speaks.

Decades-long conversations about peace have in any case shown that our churches' theological views are much closer to each other than both sides have traditionally thought.

### 3. SHARED DOCTRINE

The findings of the conversations between our churches have regularly been recorded in formal communiqués as well as in the thematically structured theses series in appendix form. This jointly approved official material has accumulated over four decades to such an extent that the resulting whole – especially for the reader who has not been involved in the process – has been difficult to understand. The aim of this section is to create a systematically organised review of the material that demonstrates the degree of consensus that has been achieved to date as a result of these lengthy discussions. This will also enable a cautious activation of ideas about what direction should be taken if and when the joint work is resumed.

The collection's sources are the theses approved solely in the discussions, mainly concerning the doctrine of the church, but also socio-ethical ones insofar as theological arguments are used in them. In pre-thesis communiqués which were not used as material for this book, the external progress of a given round of discussions is described. These give information about the location and time of meetings, who was involved in them at any given time, who gave presentations, and what kind of events and meetings took place during the discussions. All this is of historical interest. The theological significance is to be found in the theses themselves.

In compiling the sections on shared doctrine, I have stayed as closely as possible to the original phrasing of the theses. I have attached in only some places viewpoints which are absent from the texts as such but which will be of help to the reader.

I have attached every thesis published up to 2011 to the resulting “catechism”. The reader may compare these with the whole created by the summary.

#### 3.1. The authoritative basis of faith

The final acts of the conversations often speak of both churches' shared commitment to a three-stranded authoritative basis upon which their faith and doctrine depend: the Bible; the early-church or apostolic tradition; and the creeds of the undivided church. The church cannot and should not in any circumstances depart from these premises.<sup>3</sup>

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3 Turku 1970, introductory theses. Leningrad 1983, 1:1.

### 3.1.1. The Bible

The Bible – and especially the New Testament – is the main source of Christian faith and doctrine for both the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church, because its canon is formed from the writings of the Apostles and their followers chosen and sent out by Christ himself for his mission. In his great love God, the Almighty Father, in his turn, has sent Christ into the world. Thus, the authority of Scripture ultimately derives from God himself.<sup>4</sup>

The Bible has not been a theme of its own in the discussions, and methods of interpreting it have not been specifically discussed. However, there is an awareness in both churches that exegetical research has suggested various and mutually contradictory conceptions of the historical origins of New Testament texts. At the same time, there is an awareness that in our time religious systems and Christian movements have adopted from modern science and philosophies concepts that have undermined the authority of the Bible. Nevertheless, both churches recognise the whole of the New Testament as inspired by God and as the authoritative criterion for faith and theology. However, no attempt is made in these discussions to define the nature of this divine inspiration.<sup>5</sup>

When theological conclusions are drawn from a single biblical textual citation, the overall context in which any given statement occurs should be considered. Only by proceeding in this way can meaning be correctly understood.

### 3.1.2. The apostolic tradition

Although each of the churches hold the Bible, and especially the New Testament, to be the most important source of and criterion for the church's faith and doctrine, historically the church's apostolic tradition even predates the emergence of the apostolic writings. Both the church and the tradition of faith that it bore had made their contribution decades before the appearance of the first New Testament texts and more than three centuries before the final crystallisation of the canon:

*The divine origin of the apostolic teaching arises from the sending by God, the Almighty Father, of his own Son, who chose and instructed, and sent into the world his Apostles, thus establishing his church. In this great work of God, God's love opens up to us. The apostolicity of the church and the unshakable authority of its doctrine is founded on the divine commission.<sup>6</sup>*

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4 Järvenpää 1992, 2, 4–5.

5 Järvenpää 1992, I:6,9.

6 Järvenpää 1992, 1:4.

While the apostolic tradition extends to the pre-New Testament period, its *reliability and value are apparent in the light of the Bible*.<sup>7</sup> It has no separate authority of its own, but both the mediators and the supports of faith are inextricably entwined – in such a way, however, that of these two, the Bible is what is ultimately used to determine if any doctrine or theological view is derived from God’s revelation.<sup>8</sup>

The church’s apostolicity thus has the same source as the testimony of the New Testament texts. For that reason, this word expresses one of the most essential features of the Christian church. Thus, it lives in the preservation of the doctrine of the Gospel and the sacraments as *instituted by Christ and as proclaimed by the Apostles in the Holy Spirit*.<sup>9</sup>

In its insistence on faith and doctrine as starting points, apostolicity is unquestionably a conservative feature. The basic mission of the church both now and for all time is to bring to the fore in a recognisable form that which has lived and had an effect from the very beginning. At any particular time the authentic and genuine heritage of faith is to be decided in the light of its origins.

However, the apostolic tradition is not concretised or even a crystallised, merely backwards-looking complex; rather, by maintaining its origin as well as its original well-springs, it is and must be a creative and forward-looking process.<sup>10</sup> Christ sent *the Holy Spirit to the Apostles to lead them “into all truth”*.<sup>11</sup> *The apostolic faith must be proclaimed and interpreted in any given situation so that the listener can understand its content and realise its importance for him or herself*. Even as the basis of faith is insisted upon, the requirements of the present moment must be considered. *Only then may the Gospel be experienced as the guiding and liberating word of truth and grace*.<sup>12</sup>

When the apostolic tradition is passed on – whether it is done by teaching and proclaiming the Gospel or in works of love – current life circumstances and the varying shades of the prevailing culture need to be investigated. From a distance and from the outside this will not work; rather, the church must truly live in the time and places where it operates. This process of adaptation to the environment, which is necessary from the perspective of the manner of the Gospel’s reception, which happens always and everywhere and not only in missionary situations, is called contextualisation. It cannot be achieved solely by intellectual endeavour, but requires that we live in local cultures in accordance with the apostolic faith. However, when doctrine adapts to its environment, the interpretation and proc-

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7 Järvenpää 1992, I:2.

8 Järvenpää 1992, I:6.

9 Järvenpää 1974 I:6.

10 St Petersburg 2008, II:6.

11 Järvenpää 1992, I:5.

12 Kiev 1995, 7; Järvenpää 1992, II:7; Siikaniemi 2011, 2.

lamation of the Gospel should not be distorted into syncretism, which is when the apostolic faith is distorted.<sup>13</sup>

Each of the churches considers the continuum of the bishop's office important from the perspective of the apostolic authenticity of faith and teaching, but there has yet to be a conversation on the matter which has explored the fundamentals.

At Järvenpää in 1992 the core issues of the apostolic heritage were crystallised as follows:

- a. God became a human being in Jesus Christ. Salvation is brought by Christ, who takes the form of a servant and suffers death by crucifixion for the sins of human beings. By his death and resurrection Christ has defeated sin, death, and the devil. The Christ who suffered, died, was raised, and ascended into heaven, who is both God and man, is our only salvation.
- b. In Christ we encounter the Triune God. In his Son God the Father reveals to us his infinite and incomprehensible love. We may learn to know God's Son through the revelation and light of the Holy Spirit.
- c. Salvation is not only a past event, but it is reality now in the church and in the lives of those who believe. The saving presence of Christ and the Holy Spirit is fulfilled in the proclamation of the Gospel, the administration of the sacraments, and in worship. In them and by using them God joins us to himself and bestows his gifts upon us. Thus, he realises in us the true apostolic faith, in which we are partakers of the Triune God and salvation in him. This faith is effected in works of love.<sup>14</sup>

Each of the churches agrees that the core content of the apostolic tradition can neither be changed by time nor by those living in time. It must remain constant, irrespective of the historical and cultural environment in which it is confessed and lived.

This was the case even before the emergence of any of the creeds currently in use. The Church Fathers called this core content the rule of faith (*kanon tees pisteoos, regula fidei*). Tertullian (c. 160–225 AD), writes:

*Now, with regard to this rule of faith – that we may from this point acknowledge what it is which we defend – it is, you must know, that which prescribes the belief that there is one only God, and that He is none other than the Creator of the world, who produced all things out of nothing through His own Word,*

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13 Kiev 1995, 7.

14 Järvenpää 1992 I:10.

*first of all sent forth; that this Word is called His Son, and, under the name of God, was seen "in diverse manners" by the patriarchs, heard at all times in the prophets, at last brought down by the Spirit and Power of the Father into the Virgin Mary, was made flesh in her womb, and, being born of her, went forth as Jesus Christ; thenceforth He preached the new law and the new promise of the kingdom of heaven, worked miracles; having been crucified, He rose again the third day; (then) having ascended into the heavens, He sat at the right hand of the Father; sent instead of Himself the Power of the Holy Ghost to lead such as believe; will come with glory to take the saints to the enjoyment of everlasting life and of the heavenly promises, and to condemn the wicked to everlasting fire, after the resurrection of both these classes shall have happened, together with the restoration of their flesh. This rule, as it will be proved, was taught by Christ, and raises amongst ourselves no other questions than those which heresies introduce, and which make men heretics.*

*So long, however, as its form exists in its proper order, you may seek and discuss as much as you please, and give full rein to your curiosity, in whatever seems to you to hang in doubt, or to be shrouded in obscurity. You have at hand, no doubt, some learned brother gifted with the grace of knowledge, some one of the experienced class, some one of your close acquaintance who is curious like yourself; although with yourself, a seeker he will, after all, be quite aware that it is better for you to remain in ignorance, lest you should come to know what you ought not, because you have acquired the knowledge of what you ought to know. "Thy faith," He says, "hath saved thee" not observe your skill in the Scriptures. Now, faith has been deposited in the rule; it has a law, and (in the observance thereof) salvation.<sup>15</sup>*

The rule of faith therefore includes a structure of salvation history which foreshadows the words of the Apostles' Creed and which points the way to the correct interpretation of the Bible. The pure and authentic Christian faith is of course found in the Bible, especially in the New Testament, but not without an accurate guide to interpretation which retains the apostolic origin. The texts alone may, due to their ambiguity, lead the reader astray.

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15 Tertullian The Prescription against the Heretics 13–14:4

### 3.1.3. The creeds of the undivided church

Among the sources and criteria for the apostolic faith, the third strand is the creeds of the undivided church, of which the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (381)<sup>16</sup> is specifically mentioned, but to which the Apostles' Creed also belongs. The Athanasian Creed, which emerged in the Catholic West in the seventh century, was neither adopted nor used by the Eastern Orthodox churches.

Of course, the common foundation also includes the doctrinal statements, approved by the ecumenical church councils of Nicea (325) and Chalcedon (451),<sup>17</sup> and which defend the Christian faith in God and Christ, as well as much other heritage from the earliest times. Some of this heritage has been passed on by word of mouth, some in the church's liturgical practices.

Although our churches' creeds reached their familiar form quite a while after the apostolic period, they are now summaries of the rule of faith inherited from the earliest times. Such is the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, which is the most important for both churches. At the end of the fourth century, the core text, which had long been in use, was expanded with some key understandings concerning God and Christ. These were not reforms in terms of content; rather, they had lived in the church's apostolic proclamation and doctrine since the earliest times. Now, as part of the creed, they had the task of rejecting certain interpretations brought to the fore by surrounding culture and philosophy that had deviated from the path paved by the rule of faith. They have that task to this day.

## 3.2. The Triune God

In both churches the foundation and premise for all proclamation and theology is God, *whose hidden and unknown essence (ousia) is one and indivisible, but in whom there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.*<sup>18</sup> The question is therefore about faith in the Triune God, which received its final doctrinal form in the ecumenical councils of Nicea (325) and Constantinople (381). That faith is in itself, according to the early tradition, drawn from the experience of the first Christians after the resurrection of Jesus.

The Trinity is revealed in the perfect bond, self-giving, and interaction of the persons of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. At the same time as the interaction of that love is an illustration – to the extent that it is possible for human beings

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16 Leningrad 1983, I:1; Järvenpää 1992, I:2.

17 Chalcedon referred to in Leningrad, 1983, I:2.

18 Pyhtisa 1989, I:1.

– of the inner life of God, it also gives a picture of his relationship to the world. Love is also essential in this.<sup>19</sup>

But just as the Triune God is love, he is also holy. In this context holiness means that God's attributes exceed all the human being can comprehend. God's own revelation of himself shows that he cannot be defined, nor can the mystery of his appearance and properties be penetrated. God's holiness simultaneously causes us to tremble and draws us irresistibly to it (*mysterium tremendum et fascinosum*).<sup>20</sup>

In the Western and Eastern churches the shared faith in the Triune God is examined from slightly different angles. In the West the direction has been from God's one hidden substance to his persons visible in the created world; in the East, on the other hand, from the mutual connectedness of the persons to their common substance. These theological differences have not, however, been raised in our conversations. They are not of such an order that they would threaten the efforts for the visible unity and oneness of the churches.

Nor have the discussions addressed the addition, originally made to the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed in the Western church in Spain at the beginning of the seventh century, which was later prescribed for use everywhere. The original text says: *...who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified...* The Western, Catholic, formulation is: *...who proceeds from the Father and the Son (filioque), who...*

The original intention of the addition was to emphasise the divine nature of Christ, the Son, in an environment where some Christians were prone to follow Arius's teaching that only the Father was God in the fullest sense and that the Holy Spirit was a force that proceeded from him. According to Arius the Son was the highest being created by God. That as the second person of God he is of the same substance and value as the Father – just as the Holy Spirit is – is, of course, in keeping with the common faith of the undivided church.

Today, this addition, originally provoked by local circumstances – the sole intention of which was to clarify the text's original meaning – could certainly be discarded. In ecumenical contexts it often has been. It would be desirable if this dispute over a single word which has escalated over time were completely removed from the agenda. It might be enough were the Orthodox party to announce that it does not consider the addition – having explored its reasons – heretical. In any case it is clear that this was not the real cause of the Great Schism of 1054.

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19 Järvenpää 1974, I:1. Turku 2005, II:1.

20 Mikkeli 1986, I:2–5.

### 3.3. Creation

According to the Christian faith the universe in which we live has not existed for ever, but has its origins in an indivisible act of the Triune God in which all three persons were involved. At the discussions in Pyhtitsa in 1989, when creation was the only topic addressed, this was expressed in the texts of the Old and New Testaments and the the words of Athanasius of Alexandria: *the Father creates everything in the Spirit through the Word. The universe is born out of the limitless love and goodness of God.*<sup>21</sup>

Creation is theologically important because it introduces a *holistic vision of Christian faith and life*. It explains how the relationship between God and the world can be understood.<sup>22</sup> In contrast to some ancient concepts the Christian creation-faith sees the world as a tangible reality as good, not evil. *It has great importance to the faith of the church and the individual Christian and for how it is worked out in the world.*<sup>23</sup> *As God's creation, the world is one, and there is nothing that is alien to God.*<sup>24</sup> Christian faith and theology therefore do not accept the idea that there are two sources of existence eternally engaged in equal conflict, one of which is good, the other evil. Although there is evil in the world, *God is one and indivisible, the ultimate beginning and source of existence.*<sup>25</sup>

The biblical creation narrative and Christian creation-faith do not offer an alternative explanation of the world that competes with the natural sciences; rather, they give an overall interpretation, which opens up from faith, for the existence of the world and humanity. *The creation narratives contain essential truths of the faith that have a deep meaning for the world, the laws of which the natural sciences investigate. Both Christian theology and modern natural scientific knowledge must therefore be given serious consideration. Science does not in itself threaten creation-faith, nor creation-faith science. There should be a fruitful interaction between them, which in the current world situation is both possible and necessary.*<sup>26</sup>

As Christian faith emerged, the prevailing concept of creation in non-Christian intellectual circles was usually inspired by Platonic philosophy, which held that the material world was eternal, but in thrall to chaos. Above the chaos of matter was the eternal world of the spirit, which was fashioned by divine ideas and the ultimate summit of which was the divine One. Creation meant, according to this interpretation, that a lower divine being (the *demiurge*), or the spirit of the world, fashioned chaotic matter into the cosmos with the aid of ideas and held

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21 Pyhtitsa 1989 I:2.

22 Pyhtitsa 1989, introduction to the thesis series.

23 Pyhtitsa 1989, introduction to the thesis series.

24 Pyhtitsa I:6.

25 Pyhtitsa I:6.

26 Pyhtitsa I:III.

it together. According to some interpretations this formative creative process was eternal; according to others it had a temporal beginning. In neither case, however, did creation happen from a vacuum or out of nothing (*ex nihilo*).

Christian creation-faith therefore excludes all binding preconditions on God. By his omnipotent word and by a free decision of his sovereign, independent will he has called “*the non-existent to exist*”.<sup>27</sup> God has created the entire world, visible and invisible, from nothing. It is an event entirely beyond human comprehension, for which scientific research has no explanation. Creation in this divine sense is therefore a matter of faith.<sup>28</sup>

The Old and New Testaments use words for God’s creative work (Hebrew *bara* and Greek *ktidsein*) that are not used in talking about the creative activities of human beings. The human being always forms the material at his or her disposal in the world, and in everything adheres to its laws.<sup>29</sup>

Creation from scratch or out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) also emphasises a dimension essentially related to Christian faith: God and the world cannot be seen as the same, as is the case, for example, in pantheistic interpretations. The god in these interpretations is the impersonal strength inherent in the world, which includes the universe itself, the formative and guiding principle: *According to pantheism the world has formed God as an essential internal function. To this is linked the fact that a personal God is ruled out. In its identification of God with the world, pantheism rules out either the reality of the world or God. When the idea of a personal God is lost, it results in a cult of the human, a religion in which the human being is worshipped...*<sup>30</sup>

The God witnessed to and proclaimed in Christian faith is therefore different. In his deepest essence he is absolutely *transcendent*, that is, “beyond” every reality concerning this cosmos. At the same time, however, he is in the midst of and loves the world he has created.<sup>31</sup> God is thus *at the same time* infinitely distant and infinitely close. A correspondingly paradoxical formulation is also essential in talking about Christ. This will be discussed later.

The question is not only about the beginning of everything. The same indivisible creative activity constantly maintains creation. The world could not last for a moment without the creative presence of God at its centre.<sup>32</sup>

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27 Pyhtitsa I:3.

28 The meaning of the words “out of emptiness” and “nothingness” in Christian creation-faith should not be combined with the concept in modern cosmology and quantum physics of a quantum space wave energy, which suggests that the present cosmos came into existence, according to the prevailing “Big Bang” theory, 138 billion years ago. Quantum space also exists, even though the status of what it describes is not confined by time or place.

29 Pyhtitsa I:3.

30 Pyhtitsa I:4.

31 Pyhtitsa I:4.

32 Pyhtitsa 1989 I:5.

Traditionally, the Russian Orthodox Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland have differed in how they have expressed this presence. Orthodox theology has broadly based its position on how Maximus the Confessor (c. 580–662) and Gregory Palamas (1296–1359) express the paradox of God’s remoteness and immanence already mentioned: the essence of the Triune God (ousia) is beyond human experience and understanding, but he is present in the world and influences it through his energies. In Lutheran theology it is customary to assert that the transcendent God influences the world through his living Word. The parties to the Pyhtitsa discussions stated that in expressing this differently the intention of both traditions is the same.<sup>33</sup>

### 3.4. The human being, the concept of the human being, and human rights

As already noted, our churches do not suggest Christian creation-faith can serve as a substitute for or a rival of science. It is not used to take a stance on the age of humanity or the details of the birth and development of the human race.

The biblical creation narratives paint a general theological picture, proceeding from faith, of what the human being is, of what constitutes the human being’s relationship with God, and what constitutes the human being’s place and role in the world. They tell us that the human being is created *in the image and likeness of God*. It is thus that the human being has participated in the divine life, given glory to God in faith and love, resorted to him, and been obedient to him. The human being alongside him – also the image of God – has been his partner and co-worker.<sup>34</sup>

*As the image of God*, the human being has a special status, which differs from all other living creatures on earth. As an integral part of creation, the human being is also above it. We have reason and conscience and – in our original state – free will to choose good and to reject evil. God’s law, which commands us to make these choices, is written in our innermost parts.<sup>35</sup> We have received the task from God of governing, cultivating, and protecting the earth, which is created as a paradise – beautiful and good. We have been required to act in such a way that the status of creation continues to accord with God’s will. Our task and responsibilities therefore encompass the dimension that is now called “ecological”.<sup>36</sup> The acts of human beings affect everything that exists and happens on earth.<sup>37</sup>

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33 Pyhtitsa I:4.

34 Pyhtitsa I:10; Turku 2005, 1:1; St Petersburg 2008, 1; Järvenpää 1974, III:2.

35 Pyhtitsa 1989, I:7; Kiev 1995, 2:4.

36 Pyhtitsa I:9. St Petersburg 2008, 2.

37 Järvenpää 1974, III:2; Pyhtitsa I:7–8; Turku 2005, 1:1.

In our original, sinless state human beings, according to our common faith, participated in the divine life and holiness and thus freely obeyed God's will and progressed towards the future intended for us.<sup>38</sup> It is neither possible nor necessary to take a position on when and where this original state prevailed.

On the basis of creation every human being is – even today – under the auspices of God's universal law. God's will applies to all human beings, because each human being is God's image. Despite their differences, each has equal value and the right to life. *The diversity of peoples testifies to God's richness, goodness, and wisdom in the created world. For this reason all peoples should respect each other and strive for mutual understanding and cooperation.*<sup>39</sup>

### 3.5. Sin

Likewise, just as it is impossible to place the content, location and time of humanity's initially unruptured state in a historical and geographical framework, it is just as impossible to conclude where and when that initial state was broken. The account of the Fall sets the human being's relationship with God, with other human beings, and with nature just as these relations now occur.

The premise of each of the churches in its teaching is that God has created the world to be good. Evil, or sin, is not an original, eternal reality, but came into the world after creation. However, this has not really been covered during the discussions, and nor has it been outlined theologically together. Nevertheless, evil in some way predates the human being, and comes from the invisible spiritual world created by God, and the exercise of free will that occurred there. Relatively few accounts address the subject of Satan and the fallen angels in the Old and New Testaments. There are more texts of this nature outside the canon of Scripture.

The human being's sin therefore starts in our will, the original freedom of which included the concrete possibility of making choices against the will of God. It is precisely of this that the account of the Fall speaks.

The most fundamental feature of human sin lies in the human being's refusal to obey God, our proud positioning of ourselves in the place of God, our desire to decide on our own terms what constitutes good and evil for ourselves, our selfish and reckless use of the power God has given us over nature, and the breach in

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38 Järvenpää 1974, III:2; Mikkeli 1986, 6. The discussions have not addressed more widely how this expression has been presented in theological interpretations at various times, nor have they addressed how the bifurcation of the term – that is the *image and likeness of God* – in the Orthodox tradition may differ from the Lutheran tradition, which speaks only of *God's image*. Each of the churches, however, believes and considers that without the Fall the human being would have grown in faith and love in the direction seen in the New Testament's "New Adam", Christ.

39 Kiev 1977, II:2; St Petersburg 2008, 3; Kiev 1995, I:1. Kiev 1977, II:2; St Petersburg 2008, 3; Kiev 1995, I:1.

our relationship with our neighbours.<sup>40</sup> Self-love has replaced love of neighbour, self-interest the common good.<sup>41</sup>

At the core of everything, however, is the loss of life's connectedness with God and participation in the life of God. It is because of this that illness and death are consequences of sin.<sup>42</sup> God's image in the human being has been corrupted, if not completely wiped away.<sup>43</sup> The holiness and innocence originally contained in that image, however, have been lost. All the suffering and evil caused by human beings, whether they concern people or nature, whether they are caused by an individual or the social functions, ideological systems, or power structures created by people, are the result of this original, fatal rupture.<sup>44</sup>

By our sin fallen human beings have not therefore ceased to be the image of God. Our conscience continues to recognise the divine law that was written in our innermost parts at creation. There is a sincere desire in us to pursue good and prevent evil, but our ability to fulfil this is in continual conflict with our selfish will. Sometimes we keenly feel our brokenness, but we recognise at the same time that we are not robots subject to the involuntary force of another's will, but always make our own choices for ourselves.<sup>45</sup> Even in seeking good we can cause evil.<sup>46</sup> Recently, the huge advance of science and the technology derived from it – which stem from the human being's God-given abilities in creation – have given us *unforeseen power over nature* and almost extreme means to do either good or

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40 Järvenpää 1974, III:3; Järvenpää 1992, II:12; Pyhtitsa 1989, I:10, II:5; Turku 2005, 1:4.

41 Turku 2005, I:4,7, II:2.

42 Turku 2005, I:6.

43 Mikkeli 1986, 6; Pyhtitsa 1989, I:10.

44 Turku 1980, I:1; Mikkeli 1986, 6; Pyhtitsa 1989, II:2, 9.

45 Pyhtitsa 1989, I:10, II:5; Turku 2005, I:5,8,11.

46 Turku 2005, I:8.

evil. For the first time in our history human beings have the capacity to destroy both ourselves and the conditions for life of the entire planet.<sup>47</sup>

Both churches agree that the rupture of the original connection with God, with all its direct and indirect consequences, has created the condition and history whereby sin is necessarily passed on from one generation to another.<sup>48</sup> The human being is therefore a slave to sin and subject to condemnation.<sup>49</sup> Only the mercy of God can free us from this position.<sup>50</sup>

### **3.6. The Son of God made man, the new Adam, does the will of God, reconciles and redeems sinful humanity**

*Because of our fallen condition, the human being is subject to condemnation and death.*<sup>51</sup> However, the essence of the Triune God is love,<sup>52</sup> the object of which is *fallen humanity* and the whole of creation. In his boundless love God has sent his only begotten Son into the world. For our salvation he has taken human nature by becoming incarnate of the Holy Spirit and by being born as a man of the Virgin Mary.<sup>53</sup> The Son of God made man (incarnate) is, according to the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD), *in one and the same person God and Man, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably.*<sup>54</sup> As true God and true Man, Christ has at

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47 Pyhtitsa 1989, I, 10, II:1–3:

1. Humanity is in a situation where human beings, for the first time in history through our culture and activity, have conquered the whole earth and the biosphere necessary for the sustenance of life. At the same time, however, humanity stands on the brink of an abyss. As a result of major scientific and technological achievements, we now have unprecedented power and authority over nature. Yet at the same time we feel more powerless now than ever before. Scientific and technological progress cannot guarantee our safety or well-being. Humanity is threatened with destruction because of the uncontrollability of the situation. Destruction may come in the totality of nuclear war or in the form of a gradual eco-catastrophe.
2. As a result of human activities, the ecological balance has been upset, the soil has been corrupted and both bodies of water and the atmosphere have been polluted. The consequences of all this for plant and animal life are widely known. Natural resources are being ruthlessly plundered faster than nature can replace them, despite the fact that they are essential for future generations. As the world's population grows rapidly, the situation is coming to a head.
3. As Christians, we are convinced that the deepest causes of this current unhappy situation lie in the human being's alienation from God, our distorted attitude towards God's creation, the loss of spiritual values, and the unrestrained pursuit of material values. The deification of science, which for many has become a religion without God, has also contributed to this. Science has been harnessed to serve the human being's own selfish interests, to exploit the created order violently and without restraint.
- 48 Järvenpää 1974, III:3; Turku 2005, I:6. The Western tradition calls this constraint ancestral or original sin. Although there may be some difference in the term used, there is no difference in overall interpretation between the Western and Eastern traditions.

49 Järvenpää 1974, III:3.

50 Turku 2005, I:8.

51 Kiev 1977, II.

52 Turku 1980, I:1.

53 Järvenpää 1974, II:5; Kiev 1977, II; St Petersburg 2008, 2.

54 Leningrad 1983, I:2.

one and the same time both divine and human natures, and makes possible the restoration of the connection ruptured by Adam's Fall.<sup>55</sup>

The God who is incarnate in Jesus Christ is the *new Adam*. In him God's original intention for his people, which in Adam was not realised, is fulfilled. He is thus the inception of a new and saved humanity and creation.<sup>56</sup>

As the old Adam, in falling into sin, has violated God's will and thus severed his vital connection with him, Christ has come to do God's will and to restore that broken connection. He has done this, first, by proclaiming the kingdom of God, which only those who fulfil God's will may enter, second, by his bearing of suffering and death as punishment for human sin – that is, by atoning for it – and third, by his victory over the power of sin and death in his resurrection. Therefore, *he is the High Priest, who by his sacrifice once and for all has brought about atonement and justification*. This has happened so that human beings may be saved and share in the divine life. Thus, Christ has redeemed *Man from the spiritual prison in which he has been set as a result of the Fall*. In his royal person *human nature is deified, or exalted to the divine life. The sinful human being must therefore become, in Christ, part of the new and purified human nature*. When this happens, his nature, corrupted by sin, is restored.<sup>57</sup>

### 3.7. Christ is the foundation and source of the justification of humanity and the divine life

As already mentioned, the Lutheran party has understood salvation from the perspective of justification – that is, how sinful humanity is justified or reconciled with God – or how our sins may be forgiven. The Orthodox party, on the other hand, has traditionally approached the issue from the perspective of deification: that is, how sinful humanity may share in the divine life which was lost at the Fall.

In ecumenical contexts these perspectives were previously considered to be so far apart that the achievement of consensus on this issue was held to be an exceptionally difficult challenge. At the conversations in Kiev in 1977, however, consensus was found, and precisely in the core area of Christian faith and doctrine concerning salvation. Christ himself binds both perspectives to each other.<sup>58</sup>

A person is saved when he or she *comes through faith to share in Christ in his church*.<sup>59</sup> The question, therefore, is not only that the merciful favour of God benefits the human being from the outside as a fruit of the life, death, and res-

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55 St Petersburg 2008, 6.

56 Leningrad 1983, I:5; Pyhtitsa 1989, II:6; Turku 2005, I:9.

57 Kiev 1977, II; Pyhtitsa 1989, II:6; Turku 2005, I:9, II:3.

58 Kiev 1977, I–III; Turku 1980, Preamble.

59 Kiev 1977, I. Järvenpää 1974, I:7.

urrection of Christ, when he or she believes in it, but, above all, that he or she truly becomes a partaker of Christ himself. In faith, Christ himself indwells in the inmost part of the one who believes. The grace of God is therefore Christ himself, as a truly present and active gift. The believer's righteousness – our reconciliation with God – is the righteousness of Christ.<sup>60</sup>

But in the believing human being Christ, the new Adam, is also truly present, as a new person whose divine nature makes him a partaker of the divine life. Grace is therefore not only the forgiveness of individual sins, but a concrete regeneration and growth with Christ of the link with God broken at the Fall. In other words Christ himself grows in the believer and the believer is formed by him.<sup>61</sup> In the essence of the believing person, because of Christ's indwelling of him or her, there occurs in a real sense what the Orthodox Church has traditionally called deification as well as justification.<sup>62</sup> Although Lutheran theology has not used precisely this term for the effect of Christ, in its content it is an integral part of the Lutheran understanding of the faith.

### 3.8. The church, the body of Christ, and the universal people of God

Through both these dimensions of salvation, in which the mercy and love of God for fallen humanity are made visible, a person may become a partaker of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Without this connection no one may come to Christ or be saved.<sup>63</sup>

The head of the church is Christ, who is described in the doctrinal statement of Chalcedon *as one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably at the same time truly God and truly human.* As such, he is always with his church,<sup>64</sup>

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60 Kiev III:8. Since the end of the sixteenth century Lutheran theology has emphasised the *forensic* dimension of justification, that is, that the gracious favour of God "reckons" Christ's atoning work, as a court's verdict, for the benefit of the one who believes. Grace would therefore be the consequence of the cross, death, and resurrection of Christ: because the price of redemption has been paid, God can now forgive. The righteousness thus received is "alien righteousness", based on Christ's merit, and not earned by the believer. In Luther's theology of grace, the source of grace is really present in the one who believes: Christ himself (*in ipsa Christus adest*). He is living and active in the inmost part of the one who believes, and is himself a gift of God's grace. He is the new Adam of the one who believes, their new self. Paul expresses this in Galatians as follows: *I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.* (2:19–20) Luther also speaks of alien righteousness and its reckoning for the benefit of the one who believes, but in such a way that the old Adam remaining in all who believe is reckoned as righteous because of the presence of the new Adam in them.

61 Turku 1980, I:2.

62 Kiev 1977, IV:4.

63 Järvenpää 1974, I:6; Turku 1980, I:2. Järvenpää 1992, I:3. Siikaniemi 2011, 7.

64 Leningrad 1983, I:2; Järvenpää 1992, I:8.

and as Christ, the church is also a divine-human reality. The church's secret may therefore only be opened to people by Christ.<sup>65</sup>

However, the church has been included in the plans of the Triune God even before creation, and throughout salvation history led by God been present in an unknown manner, although as an end-time (eschatological) community it became visible only in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit after Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection. For this reason, the Triune God in himself and the love and interaction between his persons are ultimately the initial image of the church's existence and life in communion.<sup>66</sup>

The New Testament has many names for the church. The most important is the body of Christ, as is often found in the Pauline texts, which is linked to the previously mentioned image of Christ as the head of the church. Thus, the church – like Christ – is a single and undivided whole, but in it are many members. And just as all the members of the human body have a role to play, so do all the members of Christ's body.<sup>67</sup> The church is therefore a living organism in which to all its members access is opened *to the Father by the guidance of the one and the same Spirit*.<sup>68</sup>

Since the church, in the same way as its head, Christ, is a divine-human reality – *the mystical body of Christ* – it is on the other hand the connection of the Holy Spirit in those Christians who keep God's commandments in their lives. No human being can limit this connection. Yet the church is visible, a human communion living and active in time and space, which as such is subject to all the limitations of the temporal life.<sup>69</sup> The fact that at the heart of the historical-temporal communion there are always those who are Christian in name only is also one of these limitations.<sup>70</sup> But even if not all its members have a living faith, it is nevertheless *the mother of the faith and love that bring her children into the divine life*.<sup>71</sup>

The deepest source and manifestation in the temporal world of the connection between Christ and his church is the sacrament of Holy Communion, the Eucharist. It is a joining in the body and blood of Christ, his living presence. At the same time, it is a joining to other Christians, both those who live at this time and those who are in the presence of God in eternity.<sup>72</sup> *The communion of the church culminates in the sacrament of the Eucharist. In the Eucharist the church's*

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65 Leningrad 1983, I:2; Järvenpää 1992, I:8; Lappeenranta 1998, I:5.

66 Siikaniemi 2011, 1–3.

67 Leningrad 1983, I:3.

68 Leningrad 1983, I:3; Mikkeli 1986, I:1; Turku 2005, II:4;

69 Leningrad 1983, I:6; Mikkeli 1986, I:11; Lappeenranta 1998, I:5.

70 Leningrad 1983, I:9;

71 Lappeenranta 1998, I:6.

72 Leningrad 1983, I 4–6.

*members share in the life of Christ and their own lives with all who are members of his body. In this sacrament are joined the Creator and the created, heaven and earth, human beings and angels, and members of the church both living and departed.*<sup>73</sup>

Christ is one; therefore, his body is also one. As a spiritual reality, the church is therefore a universal communion, whose members are comprised of all nations. *All become one in Christ and his church.* It is thus one *people of God*, which transcends the cultural, national, ethnic, and racial differences which proceed from its human dimension, while not annulling them. All are members of the one body, the one and the same people of God. In its temporal history the church has nevertheless been divided and mired in conflict as a consequence of sin, which stands in stark contrast to the unity *that Christ left as an inheritance to his disciples and followers.* The spiritual, invisible unity of the church calls its members to seek visible unity, and unanimity in faith and love.<sup>74</sup>

As shared communion is the deepest manifestation of the church's unity, it cannot, in the opinion of either party, be the instrument for the restoration of the broken connection, but the goal towards which they need to move together until it is reached, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.<sup>75</sup> The churches which lack a connection in Holy Communion must aim, through conversations, for sufficient consensus on questions of the doctrine of the church.<sup>76</sup>

### **3.9. Baptism, Holy Communion, and the priest's office**

#### **a. Baptism**

The church, the body of Christ, and the people of God are thus the habitat in which and through which participation in a saving connection with the Triune God is made.

This connection is fundamentally born when a person hears God's call, receives it and accepts it, and is baptised in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Thus, he or she receives the gift of Christ's righteousness – that is, the forgiveness of his or her sins – and is born again of *water and the spirit*. In really participating in Christ, therefore, he or she becomes a *new creation*. When a child is baptised, this all happens dependent on the faith of its parents, godparents, and the whole congregation.<sup>77</sup> Thus, Baptism joins a person to the body

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73 Siikaniemi 2011, 5.

74 Leningrad 1983, I:11, II:6; Kiev 1995, II:2–3, 6; Siikaniemi 2011, 8.

75 Turku 1970, I:3,5.

76 Turku 1970, I:5.

77 Kiev 1977, III: 3–5, IV:2; Siikaniemi 2011, 4.

of Christ, both to its head and to its members all over the world.<sup>78</sup> It is a once-for-all event that, according to both churches, cannot and must not be repeated.

However, the old self of the Christian born again in Baptism remains, alongside Christ, the new 'I', the sinful effect of which makes it difficult to begin a new life. Those who are baptised in Christ must therefore constantly repent and do penance.<sup>79</sup>

In the Orthodox Church an inherent part of Baptism is anointing, that is, the sacrament of the Holy Spirit's sealing, which in the Lutheran Church is received later at Confirmation. There has, however, been no discussion of the theological significance of these differences in our conversations.

## b. Holy Communion

Christ has instituted the Holy Communion to ensure that the divine life, righteousness, and participation in Christ received in Baptism may endure and be strengthened in each Christian.<sup>80</sup>

Reference has already been made to the central place of the Holy Communion as a manifestation of the divine-human mystery of the essence of the church. While Baptism is a once-for-all event for the individual Christian, the Holy Communion continues to call us to the real participation which we have received in Baptism. We become partakers of Christ and his divine nature: *At Holy Communion the Christian, by the power of the Holy Spirit, is joined with Christ in the fullness of his being both outwardly and inwardly as he or she eats the Body and Blood of Christ under the form of bread and wine (John 6:56).*<sup>81</sup>

But at the same time as the Eucharist is an event that profoundly touches the individual Christian and the church's internal life, it also has an external orientation. Every time it is celebrated it *proclaims to the world Christ's sacrifice on the cross, which is given for the whole of humanity. In the eucharistic liturgy we give thanks and praise with the whole company of heaven and with all the saints to the Triune God.* And although it is celebrated locally, the whole church of Christ always participates in it.<sup>82</sup>

Christ himself is really present in the Holy Communion: both churches agree that the bread and wine consecrated through the prescribed words are what they mean: the body and blood of Christ, a living, real, and effective presence. It is not a question, therefore, of an allegorical event. The Orthodox tradition maintains that at the consecration of the bread and wine they are transformed into

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78 Siikaniemi 2011, 4.

79 Kiev 1977, III:4–5.

80 Kiev 1977, III:6–7.

81 Turku 1970, I:2–3; Kiev 1977, III:6–7; Leningrad 1983, I:4.

82 Zagorsk 1971, I:3; Leningrad 1983, I:5.

the body and blood of Christ; for the Lutheran tradition it is enough simply to say that Christ himself is really present in the consecrated bread and wine.<sup>83</sup> We are agreed on the content of the mystery.

Because the Holy Communion is intrinsically linked with the sacrifice of Christ's cross for the life of the world, the sacrifice is also – with Christ – really present in the eucharistic celebration. However, the church does not repeat that sacrifice, because it is a unique historical event, but its saving content and effect are made present in the life of those participating in the Eucharist each time it is celebrated. *Just as Christ has made the sacrifice of Golgotha, he also gives himself in the Holy Communion when the parish gathers for worship. It is embraced ... through the faith effected by the Holy Spirit.*<sup>84</sup>

In both churches only an ordained person may celebrate the Holy Communion. The validity of the Holy Communion does not depend on the spiritual qualities of the celebrant, but only on their having been correctly ordained and the rite itself being celebrated correctly.<sup>85</sup>

### **c. The priest's office**

In the time of the old covenant the essential function of the Levitical priesthood as laid down in the Mosaic Law was to perform sacrifices for the atonement of the sins of the people. Among the most important were those the high priest performed on the Day of Atonement. This task ended when Jesus Christ gave himself as the perfect and once-for-all atoning sacrifice for the sins of humanity.<sup>86</sup>

Within the scope of the new covenant, the church of Christ, the sacrificial priesthood continues, but now as the common priesthood of all Christians to which the New Testament attests. However, the sacrifice is not an atoning offering for their own sins and the sins of the people of God, because this is no longer needed, but the giving of the whole of life as an offering of thanksgiving to God and as a sacrifice of love to one's neighbours. This is manifested as the state of being a child of God, the right to turn openly to God, the struggle to fulfil God's will, and participation in the saving grace of the Holy Spirit, which the Holy Spirit shares in the sacraments of the church.<sup>87</sup> This common priesthood therefore applies to every Christian – to every member of Christ's church.<sup>88</sup>

However, Christ has also established and decreed for his church a special office of service in calling the Apostles to be his co-servants, in bestowing on them

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83 Turku 1970, I, B: I; Zagorsk 1971, I,II:1–2.

84 Zagorsk 1971, I:1–2

85 Järvenpää 1974, I:9–10.

86 Järvenpää 1974, I:1.

87 Järvenpää 1974, I:1–2.

88 Mikkeli 1986, I:13.

the Holy Spirit and in sending them into all the world. They and their successors work in his name to bring people into partaking in the salvation wrought by Christ. It is in the essence of this church that the main tasks of the apostolic ministry of service are to proclaim the Gospel, to preach and teach, to administer the church's sacraments, and also to undertake the church's life and spiritual work in accordance with God's word as the church understands it. The one called to this office – who in our churches is called a priest – is therefore in his or her proclamation or teaching to rely on the faith of the church's apostolic tradition. He or she is therefore to strive to maintain the content of faith and doctrine as established by Christ and preached by the prophets.<sup>89</sup>

This priestly office is not a continuation of the priesthood of the old covenant, even though the common priesthood of all Christians is indeed that as previously described in modified form.<sup>90</sup> Nor is it joined in Baptism, as is the case with the common priesthood, but the church calls to it suitable people and has instituted them in the correct way, inherited from the time of the apostles, by ordination with the laying-on hands and by the invocation of the Holy Spirit. Ordination to the priesthood, which in each of the churches is done by a bishop,<sup>91</sup> is a once-for-all event; it cannot and may not be repeated.<sup>92</sup>

The common priesthood and the special apostolic ministry belong together and form the body of Christ's *spiritual fullness, consisting of many members*.<sup>93</sup>

### **3.10. Salvation as a process of justification and deification: faith, love, and sanctification**

The human being can therefore only be saved within the church. There the Holy Spirit offers and shares with us the fruits of Christ's atonement in the words of the Gospel and in the sacraments, wakens us from spiritual death to life by declaring to us, who are wayward sinners, the forgiveness of sins when we repent and believe the Gospel, joins us in membership of the body of Christ, and makes us partakers of the divine life. Then sin and death no longer control us. The way to salvation is not changed.<sup>94</sup>

Salvation, or inclusion in God's eternal heavenly kingdom at the end, is open to everyone, but only because of the sacrificial work of Christ, who is God and

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89 Järvenpää 1974, I:3–4, 6. Kiev 1977, III.

90 Järvenpää 1974, I:3–4.

91 The position of the bishop's office in the maintenance and guaranteeing of the church's apostolicity and in its continuity has not been addressed, but the issue has been raised for consideration in forthcoming negotiations. Siikaniemi 2011, 1:7.

92 Järvenpää 1974, I:6–8.

93 Järvenpää 1974, I:6.

94 Järvenpää 1974, III:6–7. Kiev 1977, II.

human. Called by the Holy Spirit, we turn towards God in our inmost being, are baptised, made righteous, and become children of God, a new creation.<sup>95</sup> This has already been discussed above.

### a. Justification

Justification – that is, the pardon and forgiveness of sins – happens *in the living, functioning and effective-through-love, that is, saving, faith that comes with repentance*.<sup>96</sup> Merely to believe the truth of the Christian doctrine is not therefore the faith that saves a person and leads him or her to good works. This is wrought only by the personal vital connection with God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, which becomes a part of a person by the grace and love of God alone. A person cannot earn this by any of his or her works. However, the first fruit of the Holy Spirit is precisely the love that leads a person to do good works and fulfil God's law.<sup>97</sup>

At the same time, however, it is clear that a weak faith hoping for reward or fearing punishment may issue in *good behaviour* or works that are in conformity with ethical principles. These are what the Apostle Paul calls works of the law.<sup>98</sup>

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95 Kiev 1977, IV:1–2.

96 Kiev 1977, IV:3. The formulation was presented in its fullness, because during the Kiev discussions what Lutherans mean when they say that a person is justified and saved by faith alone had yet to be thoroughly considered. The Orthodox had interpreted this from their own tradition's standpoint, according to which by the word faith is meant the knowledge of the head and acceptance of the content of doctrine. Only when it is filled with love is it a living, saving faith. However, in speaking about a saving faith, Lutherans have also included in the word "faith" those things that the Orthodox party has attached solely to faith in order for it to be salvific faith. At the discussions in Turku in 1980 a common understanding of the relationship of faith and love was reached:

"In previous discussions it has been found that there is a solid New Testament basis for justification and deification, the key aspects of Lutheran and Orthodox soteriology. This consensus rests on the doctrine of Christ, concerning which the churches share common ground. Christ is the foundation of our justification and our deification. At the same time, however, it has been found that despite this consensus disagreement exists between the churches on various aspects of their emphases. One such problem is the relationship between faith and love in salvation.

"When the question concerns the relationship between God and the human being, and salvation, Lutherans have preferred to speak about faith and the life of faith, while the Orthodox have preferred to talk about love.

"There are many different meanings attached to the words 'love' and 'faith' in the Sacred Scriptures and in common language. In talking about faith and love, therefore, it is essential to consider the meaning of these words in the context of each biblical text.

"Our doctrinal conversations in Turku have now convincingly demonstrated that both churches teach about faith and love as works of salvation in essentially the same way." Turku 1980, I: Preamble.

97 Kiev 1977, IV:5; Turku 1980, I:3–5.

98 Turku 1980, I:5.

## b. Deification

A person who has become a partaker of Christ and the fruits of his saving work – that is, justified – has started on a new path that leads to deification. It is a process in which he or she grows in holiness and draws closer to God. The grace of the Holy Spirit is its active power and in this power the person progresses in a deep and sincere faith, to which hope is connected and which is full of love: *All of us who with unveiled faces behold the glory of the Lord as in a mirror are being transformed into the same likeness from glory to glory. The Lord, who is the Spirit, will bring this to pass.* (2 Cor. 3:13)<sup>99</sup> However, the full likeness of Christ and full participation in the divine life cannot be attained in this age, but are fulfilled only in the resurrection of the dead.<sup>100</sup>

On his or her way towards God, the Christian performs every good work, from its beginning in his or her consciousness all the way to its fulfilment, under the influence of the grace of the Holy Spirit. This effect of grace is never in his or her life compulsive or violent; rather, the Holy Spirit works with and through his or her will. Everyone thus has the opportunity not to conform to the will of God.<sup>101</sup> *In practising his or her faith among people the Christian is actively cooperating with God. He or she does good determinedly to his or her neighbour because it is the will of God, and also receives what is necessary for the fulfilment of the Creator's good purposes. In this cooperation the greatness of God and human humility before him are underlined.*<sup>102</sup>

## c. Faith working as love

In the Christian's daily life saving participation in Christ – that is, faith – expresses itself as two loves that are nonetheless inextricably connected with one another. The first is directed towards God, the second to people, whether near or distant. Christians express their love towards God by conforming to his will with gratitude

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99 Kiev 1977, IV:4.

100 Järvenpää 1974, III:8.

101 Kiev 1977, IV:6–7. To understand this formulation it must be remembered that Lutheranism rejects the possibility of human initiative and free will in the birth of faith itself: God in his mercy always takes the initiative. Cooperation in this has been rejected with the term synergism. The Orthodox (as well as Catholics) have sometimes understood this as suggesting that no person who believes and is saved could have free will, so that he or she could, through application of his or her free will, either cooperate with God or not. However, this is not the case according to Lutheran theology. One participating in faith and salvation can, as one freed by God, act in cooperation with God, and this is called synergy, but because the old Adam is also in him or her, he or she may oppose that which is good, the life that conforms to the will of God. This statement was added to correct an erroneous interpretation of how Lutherans understand the cooperation of God and the human being when a person has already become a partaker of salvation. How human will itself contributes to the salvation-event has not been covered in the discussions, although it has been noted that this is a theme that should be addressed.

102 Turku 2005, I:4.

and by confessing their faith in him. The second is expressed in their identification with their neighbour through loving conformity to the Golden Rule, and in taking their burdens upon themselves. In this way they do for their neighbours what Christ has done for them first.<sup>103</sup>

The more believers share the love they have received from God with their neighbours, the more Christ himself finds a place and form within them. They are also more able to resist evil, even if in their temporal lives it will never completely disappear. But it can also happen that they fall by the wayside, remain unrepentant of their sins, and lose their faith and love. To remain on the path to salvation they will need again and again to repent, and will remain sinners in need of forgiveness to the end.<sup>104</sup> At the Last Judgement everyone will be judged according to how their faith has been shown in love, because only love and its works will reach eternity.<sup>105</sup>

#### **d. Holiness, sanctification, and Christian identity**

This process of growing towards the likeness of Christ, which is often referred to above as deification, is generally described in Lutheranism – in accordance with Western tradition – as sanctification. Both the name and the matter are of course familiar in the Eastern tradition. The question is ultimately only of a slightly different perspective concerning the same series of events.

Sanctification is also a question of participation in God – in the holiness of God. It is an expression of his perfection, which is absolute, transcendent, and makes the human mind tremble, that separates him from all creation, but which at the same time draws it to him. It is solely a property of God.<sup>106</sup> But in those called by God, who in Christ's church and by the influence of the Holy Spirit participate in the holiness of God, there is also a holiness that separates them from those who do not participate in it. However, as with others, sin remains in them until the end of their life, but the holiness of God, in which they have come to participate, simultaneously distinguishes them from others.<sup>107</sup> They have a personal and common Christian identity through the influence of the Holy Spirit that has the task of showing outwardly in a love that extends to all people and affects how they behave practically in their lives. It therefore entails choices, and active pursuit and struggle.<sup>108</sup>

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103 Turku 1980, I:6–7; Mikkeli 1986, I:13.

104 Turku 1980, I:8–9.

105 Turku 1980, I:10.

106 Mikkeli 1986, I:1–5.

107 Mikkeli 1986, I: 7–14.

108 Mikkeli 1986, I:14.

A holy life of faith and love does not identify, therefore, with the surrounding world, but calls people to the sphere of holiness. *Wherever the church's members live in accordance with their faith by showing Christian love in their actions and attitude to the surrounding world, the church's membership will be strengthened and the church will attract new members.*<sup>109</sup>

The life of holiness therefore invites everyone who is joined by the word and the sacraments to spiritual growth in faith and love. Sanctification is a process, and people progress in it by following Christ's example under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Both churches deeply value those people in whom faith has, as a fruit of the Holy Spirit, issued in visible works of love that invite others into the church's communion and to follow Christ. They are to be remembered with respect and love and their example should be followed. Thus, the communion of the saints of Christ's church exceeds limits of time and space. *The church militant joins with the church's rejoicing in praise and prayer.*<sup>110</sup>

Although the holiness described above applies first and foremost to the person, the image of God, the external material reality of the person is also a channel in this world of the work of the Holy Spirit, who mediates it. This not only concerns the sacraments of the church, but – for example – places and buildings set apart for this purpose. However, sanctification never happens without prayer and God's word, received in faith.<sup>111</sup>

### **3.11. Mission – the church's task**

#### **a. The witness of faith**

The church's single, absolute, imperishable, and *fundamental task is, in striving for unity, to proclaim the message of salvation to all nations, so that all people might believe in Jesus Christ and be saved.* The church therefore exists for the salvation of people and the world. But at the same time ecumenism, the call to connectedness and unity, is at the core of the church's mission.<sup>112</sup>

Although mission is the church's fundamental task, it is more than just one task, even though it is absolutely central. It belongs to the *esse* of the church. The church is itself mission – and mission undertakes everything the church undertakes. At the same time, it is precisely what the church is. Its deepest source lies in the mutual love of the persons of the Triune God, from which issues his love

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109 Siikaniemi 2011, 2–6.

110 Mikkeli 1986, I:15–16, 18.

111 Mikkeli 1986, I:17.

112 Järvenpää 1974, III:18; Järvenpää 1992, II:11; Kiev 1995, I:3,9.

for the world and the human beings whom he has created in his love. God loves fallen human beings in his sending of Christ to redeem them from the power of sin, and loves them still in sanctifying them so that all might partake in eternal life.<sup>113</sup> And because the church with its mission stems from the love of the Triune God, the creator, redeemer, and sanctifier, the end-time, eschatological objective of the church's mission is not only the salvation of human beings, but to its sphere must belong everything that has originally belonged to God and that has suffered and continues to suffer because of human sin. The church's mission therefore concerns the whole of creation.<sup>114</sup>

In being sent to proclaim the Gospel, teach the apostolic faith, join new members to itself in Baptism, and celebrate the Eucharist in its worship,<sup>115</sup> the church of Christ is to avoid proselytism, that is, the attempt to persuade those who have already joined another Christian church to convert to another denomination. The right to change denomination is, of course, an inalienable principle of the freedom of religion if it arises from a person's own free choice, but this fact cannot be used to support proselytism, which inevitably damages the common witness of the churches and of Christians.<sup>116</sup>

## **b. The service of love**

As faith and love in the life of the individual Christian are organically linked, so they are linked to each other in undertaking the church's mission. A diaconal and socio-ethical dimension belongs to the Gospel itself, in which the eschatological future of God's kingdom and the hope that reaches out towards it is anticipated. Its comprehensive premise is faith in the Triune God, the whole of whose creation is founded on love. This love, which has culminated in Christ, is not only for the church, but for the whole world. The serving love shared in the mission of the church also applies to the whole of created reality. When the church engages in assisting and serving in various ways those in need, the poor, the sick, the oppressed, the exploited, and those who suffer discrimination – be they near or far – it is not a peripheral matter, but springs from the core of faith in works of love and hope.<sup>117</sup>

As an ecumenical – catholic – communion, the church can, as a selfless servant of love, be a sign of connectedness for the dispersed world and its peoples, and a builder of justice and peace. When it acts in this way, this is not then social-ethical activity that is foreign and secondary to its essence, but the result and fruit of a

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113 Kiev 1995, I:1–2.

114 Kiev 1995, I:3.

115 Kiev 1995, I:4.

116 Järvenpää 1992, II:11; Kiev 1995, I:11.

117 Kiev 1995, I:7; Järvenpää 1974, IV:11; Kiev 1977, II:1–2; Turku 2005, II:1–2; Siikaniemi 2011, 10.

faith built on love.<sup>118</sup> However, as it undertakes these tasks, the church must guard against identifying with any political objectives extraneous to its own premises.<sup>119</sup>

But in addition to the fact that love must apply to all people, its focus must be on the whole of creation, which is groaning and suffering on account of human sin.

The church also undertakes its mission when it strives on behalf of the ecological good of the creation around it.<sup>120</sup>

### 3.12. Eschatology

The faithful and loving member of the body of Christ is a partaker of salvation and divine life, but not in its ultimate form. As the new Adam, Christ is the beginning of a new creation, but salvation in its full measure will be attained with the coming of God's kingdom. Only then will that which is already experienced today in anticipation as a partaker in Christ in the church be fulfilled. Faith in this world therefore looks to its final destination and trusts in its fulfilment, and the Christian calls this faith hope.<sup>121</sup>

Inherent in salvation is therefore the strong hope and expectation that all the consequences of the sin of human beings will eventually give way in creation, too, which will also *be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God* (Rom. 8:21). However, this does not imply a passive retreat from the world, but an active striving to anticipate in humanity and creation God's promised end-time reality in diaconal service, and in good works of faith, and love.<sup>122</sup>

An eschatological tension between the saving work of Christ and its final fulfilment marks the life of the church and its members. Although the church *is not of this world*, that is, it does not fulfil the distorted goals of life in separation from God, it already *exists* and is working *in this world, which* God has created and redeemed. It therefore works in partnership with all those outside it who sincerely seek the good, but at the same time maintains a Christian distance from every circumstance in which society and its authorities act against the will of God. It also raises its prophetic voice and recalls *both its own members and society's decision makers to the truth, peace, and justice of God. Ultimately*, however, the church exists *to serve the fulfilment of the world to come*.<sup>123</sup>

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118 Kiev 1977, II:1–2; Turku 1980, II:6–7; Mikkeli 1986; 2:2

119 Kiev 1995, I:7.

120 Järvenpää 1974, IV:10; Kiev 1977, I:3; Pyhtitsa 1989, Preamble, I:7–9; Turku 2005, II:1; St Petersburg 2008, 1–2.

121 Järvenpää 1974, IV:9; Pyhtitsa 1989, II:6; Lappeenranta 1998, 4.

122 Järvenpää 1974, IV:10–11; Kiev 1977, II:1:3; Pyhtitsa 1989, II:6–7; Lappeenranta 1998, 4; Siikaniemi 2011, 9.

123 Lappeenranta 1998, 4,9. Turku 2005, II:10; Siikaniemi 2011, 9.

## What has been achieved?

What has been presented here is a doctrinal and theological balance sheet of the conversations held between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church between 1970 and 2011. The light it sheds makes possible the question of what has been achieved and what the ecumenical significance of the findings might be.

This question may be answered at length, but also briefly, and the latter is most suited for this book in its entirety. When the systematic summary above is compared with our church's most important confessional book, the Augsburg Confession, the Lutheran reader will discover that the doctrine expressed with the Russian Orthodox Church more or less completely overlaps with the Augsburg Confession's first section, *The Chief Articles of Faith* (I–XXI) – even if it is structured a little differently. Furthermore, it contains common perspectives concerning several issues in the Confession's final section, *Articles in which Are Reviewed the Abuses which Have Been Corrected* (XXII–XXVIII), which concerns positions where Lutherans differed at that time with the Catholic Church.

Although there are many theological and church-order related questions – among them, the conditions required for a common recognition of the priestly office – which still require much work so that the conditions for communion and visible unity may be met to the satisfaction of the Orthodox party, the Finnish Lutheran party might perhaps take the view that the findings thus far already satisfy the condition of Article VII of the Augsburg Confession:

*Also they teach that one holy Church is to continue forever. The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered. And to the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike. As Paul says: One faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, etc. (Eph. 4:5–6.)*

Far-reaching concrete steps towards unity are unlikely to be expected in the near future. The ground prepared by these dialogues still gives hope for the future of the conversation between our churches. Many seemingly impossible issues have opened as doors to possibility. It sometimes seems, however, that when formerly contentious issues are resolved, new mines are brought to the surface which require defusing before the journey can continue. Much humility – and patience – will therefore be required.

# APPENDIX: THESES DRAFTED BETWEEN 1970 AND 2011<sup>124</sup>

## Turku (Sinappi) 1970

### Summary of the discussions dealing with the eucharist

After hearing the lectures from both churches on topics of 1. Eucharist as a Manifestation of the Unity of Believers, and 2. The Theological Foundations of the Churches' Peace Efforts, both delegations discussed them and came to the following conclusions, which in turn were approved by both groups:

*I*

1. Both parties consider that the treatment of the theme »Eucharist as a Manifestation of the Unity of Believers« chosen for the discussion, has been beneficial to both churches.
2. With the help of the lectures and the subsequent discussion, the parties have understood much more precisely and deeply the other party's viewpoints on this question. This applies to the theme in general as well as to its many details.
3. In examining some of the aspects of the material handled, certain similarities have been recognized in the understandings of both sides.
4. The continuation of mutual contact has been regarded as appropriate. It was felt that this could best be done by organizing similar theological discussions in the future, discussions the purpose of which would be to examine doctrinal and confessional questions that are particularly char-

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<sup>124</sup> Updated information is available on the internet at [sakasti.evl.fi/oppikeskustelut](http://sakasti.evl.fi/oppikeskustelut)

acteristic of each church. Such questions have already appeared in the discussions held.

5. Publication of the materials of this meeting by both churches is considered necessary.

*II.* Both parties examined the question of the eucharist and decided to present the results of the discussions in the following form, which is founded on the belief that is given by in Bible, preserved in the early Christian tradition, and confessed by the undivided church.

***A. In the following questions which arose in the handling of the eucharist and the unity of Christians, a consensus between the parties was reached.***

1. The eucharist is a secret, a divine essence, before which even the most penetrating theology becomes silent, feeling holy awe; and which is received with the help of the Holy Spirit through faith.
2. In the eucharist, a Christian through the influence of the Holy Spirit is united with his whole being both in an externally and internally recognizable way in Christ when he receives Christ's body and blood in the form of bread and wine (John 6:56).
3. The eucharist, as a sacrament instituted by Christ, is the clearest manifestation of the the unity of Christians with the head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ, and through him also of the Christians' mutual unity as members of the church, the body of Christ.
4. The unity of Christians in the eucharist belongs properly to their spiritual life, but at the same time, it creates mutual unity between Christians over racial or national boundaries, and this spreads to the world that peace which Christ has decreed to his disciples and followers.
5. The unity in the eucharist is the deepest manifestation of the oneness of the church. That is why the eucharist cannot be used as a tool to bring about unity with regard to the considerable doctrinal differences that exist between the churches. Both sides must strive very responsibly in trying to reach unanimity on the questions involving the eucharist, and the whole doctrine of the church.

***B. Different understandings have been found in the following instances:***

1. Both sides confess that the body and blood of Jesus Christ, God and man, are present in substance in the form of bread and wine by his own spoken words of institution (Matt. 26:26–28; I Cor. 11:24–27), but in the interpretation of this truth the views of the two sides differ.
2. Both sides recognize the sacrificial nature of the eucharist but they differ in the interpretation of what this sacrifice means.

The questions in which different understandings and interpretations have arisen will have to be studied further from terminological, exegetical, dogmatic, liturgical, and historical standpoints at future discussions, and the views of both sides have to be compared in more depth and detail, taking into consideration the ecumenical discussions held on the subject, and especially the research of the Faith and Order Commission.

**Summary of the discussions dealing with peace**

In the discussions on the theological foundations of peace efforts, the delegations of the Orthodox Church of Russia and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland have together agreed on the following:

1. The question of war and peace has never in the history of mankind been as difficult and timely as at present.
2. Advances in technology have on the one hand revealed to mankind enormous constructive possibilities, and on the other hand have given man tools of destruction with powers never before seen.
3. Nuclear weapons have changed the nature of war. Their use cannot be approved in any circumstances, not even in so-called just wars.
4. The balance of power which is built on the »balance of terror« created by nuclear weapons, cannot bring about lasting peace.
5. Peace with God is a prerequisite for the striving of Christians for peace on earth.
6. Christians cannot withdraw from their responsibility in peace efforts by appealing to the fact that the peace of God concerns only individuals, or that a complete state of peace will be realized only at the end of time.

7. Mankind forms a whole. God created life good and complete, but because of Adam's fall, it has been shattered. Redeemed and reconciled by Christ, Christians have by serving, by proclaiming reconciliation, and by creating unity to try and repair that which sin has broken. The witness of peace by Christians is effective when they, keeping peace amongst themselves, »maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace« (Eph. 4:3).
8. In working for peace, Christians have to work together not only with each other but also with all people of good will.
9. Peace requires justice, which includes also a state of social, economic and international justice. Because of this, Christians have continually and carefully to search to see where people are without justice, and where justice is threatened. Christians have to strive together against the exploitation of their fellowman, the degrading of the value of man, racial discrimination and all forms of discrimination, hunger, poverty, injustice, and against everything which is a threat to world peace and normal life.
10. It would be most beneficial for mankind, if injustice was removed by peaceful methods. Therefore, the churches have to support and also actively take part in research on peace and conflict. In the search for solutions, the relevant view points and justice have to be given priority.
11. The churches have to try to support social and economic renewal in the world. In their striving for peace, the churches have to focus special attention on activities which are preventive, such as development aid and development cooperation.
12. The delegations realized that the time allotted for handling of the peace question was too short, and that discussions between both churches concerning peace problems should be continued. The theme for the next time could be, for example, justice and violence.

## Zagorsk 1971

### Summary of discussion dealing with the eucharist

I. The papers presented and the exchange of ideas showed that the viewpoints of the parties reached consensus in the following in stances:

#### **A. *The real presence of Christ in the eucharist***

1. The sacrament of the eucharist has a central meaning in God's eternal saving act of man through Jesus Christ. »God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself» (2 Cor. 5:19).
2. In the eucharist, the bread and wine are the body and blood of our Savior. Christ is truly present in the eucharist in the fullness of his person as God and man. When we partake of this meal, we become partakers of Christ as members of his body, i.e., the church.

#### **B. *Christ's sacrifice and the eucharist***

1. The once-and-for-all sacrifice of Calvary cannot be repeated, and its saving effect reaches all times. The eucharist is not the repetition of the sacrifice of Calvary, but is a manifestation of its saving significance and effect in the church's and in every Christian's life today.
2. In the same way that Christ has made the sacrifice at Calvary, he also gives himself in the eucharist in the worship service of the church. That is why the eucharist is the instrument of the Holy Spirit for salvation.
3. The whole church of Christ participates in our eucharistic celebration; we are assured of this because the church is the body of Christ.
4. The sacrifice of Christ is received in the eucharist through faith, which is effected by the Holy Spirit. The eucharist mediates communion with the Son of God who became man, Jesus Christ, and makes the believers partakers of his being. That is why the gifts of the eucharist are the forgiveness of sins, and sanctification.

II. In the following instances, however, there appeared differences between the Orthodox and Lutheran doctrines:

1. According to Orthodox doctrine, the bread and wine become in substance Christ's body and blood in the eucharist. This change in substance remains indefinitely in the holy gifts regardless of their use.  
According to Lutheran doctrine, the words of institution of the eucharist are words of creation, which, as such, are enough to assure the real presence of Christ at the eucharist, in the bread and wine. The Lutherans do not use the eucharistic bread and wine outside of the service.
2. The Orthodox Church gives serious emphasis to the sacrificial nature of the eucharist. The eucharistic sacrifice is brought by Christ himself, while the church as his body participates in it. The immediate participation of the church members in the eucharistic sacrifice is, above all, prayer, which includes praise, thanksgiving and petition.

Even though the teachings of the Lutheran Church emphasize the very close contact between Christ's sacrifice and the eucharist, nevertheless, it avoids using the word »sacrifice» in connection with the communion service, because it wants to underline that Christ's Calvary sacrifice is sufficient once and for all. As such, the eucharist is also to the Lutheran Church a meal of hope, joy and thanksgiving.

### *III. Forthcoming discussion:*

The two parties feel that it would be appropriate and rewarding to both sides to continue the discussions, and the themes could, for example, be the ministry, and the Christian doctrine of salvation, both of which are connected to the problems already discussed.

## **Summary of the discussions on justice and violence**

As agreed by the delegates of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Orthodox Church of Russia at the meeting in Sinappi, Turku, on March 19–22, 1970, it was desired to continue to examine together the subject of justice and violence, and as a result three lectures were given on this subject at this meeting.

After discussing these lectures in their meeting, the participants came to the following conclusions:

1. God has created mankind to be one, and has redeemed it through his son, Jesus Christ. When the Son of God became man, he took it upon himself to carry the sin and suffering of the world. As the follower of its

Lord, the church takes part in the anxiety of the world, but also in the hope revealed by Christ's becoming man and by his redemption.

2. The witness of the churches on behalf of peace and justice is founded thus on God's act. Christians have been called together to be peacemakers. This will of the Lord is the starting point for the witness for peace by the churches. That is why they can do this task only by being faithful to the one who sent them, and by using his message as their source.
3. The churches witness to the will of their Lord in man's world, which is damaged by sin. This means that they are forced constantly to ask for the real meaning of, and means of attaining, peace and justice. Thus, they cannot be satisfied with the decisions made during the course of their history, but have bravely to search for new possibilities together with those who have the same objectives. When in the atomic age every local war can spread into an atomic war, Christians and churches have to bear more responsibility than before in their efforts to avoid international conflicts, and in strengthening peace among nations.
4. In witnessing that their Lord is the Prince of Peace, Christians cannot forget prayers for peace, and for the victims of violence. They want to repent of their own and their nation's sins. Only thus can they be peacemakers.
5. At the same time, the churches are sure that lasting peace cannot be built upon violence or the threat of it. Peace demands the accomplishment of justice, but as Christians we know that even that is not enough without brotherly love between people and nations.
6. In their proclamation, the churches have to keep peace and justice in sight. And then it should not be forgotten that people together are responsible for the preservation of mankind, and for the right use of nature that God has given them. Social structures have to be formed so that they further the cooperation of people. Discrimination against people because of race, religion, nationality, or sex cannot be tolerated. All nations have to have an opportunity to freely develop their own way of life in cooperation with others.
7. Christian love demands that Christians actively take part in building relations within their society, nation, state, and between nations. That is why Christians have actively to oppose such injustices as wars of aggression, colonialism, race segregation and other forms of racial discrimination, economic exploitation, and injustice within society and state.

8. The participants of the discussion stressed especially the significance of disarmament. Likewise, they felt it important that at the first opportunity a European security conference should be held, which the Finnish government has offered to host in Helsinki. The calling together of this conference undoubtedly would advance the strivings of nations toward realizing justice.
9. Lasting peace in society cannot exist where humane life is prohibited. Therefore the obedience of a Christian toward the authorities has its limits. Likewise, lasting peace among nations cannot be built upon imperialistic strivings for benefits.
10. Both parties deemed it necessary that in future discussions the handling of related questions be continued.

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*Phifaret*

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## **Järvenpää 1974**

### **Theses on the theme »the eucharist and the priesthood«**

#### *I.*

1. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ received and fulfilled a high - priestly mission, giving Himself as a perfect sacrifice for the sins of mankind. His redemptive work made superfluous and abolished the Levitical priesthood of the Old Covenant prescribed by the Law of Moses. For »the earlier tent ... is symbolic, pointing to the present time. The offerings and sacrifices there prescribed... are in force until the time of reformation. But now Christ has come, high priest of good things already in being... and thus he has entered the sanctuary once and for all and secured an eternal deliverance« (Hebr. 9, 8–12).
2. Through the influence of the Holy Spirit the members of the Church founded by Jesus Christ have the priesthood of the New Covenant, com-

mon to them all, to which God's word distinctly testifies (1 Pet. 2, 5, 9). This priesthood, which is established by God and preserved uninterruptedly in the Church through the influence of the Holy Spirit, will continue in the everlasting Kingdom of God, where a new song is sung to Him, who has »made of them a royal house, to serve our God as priests« (Rev. 5, 9–10).

Here under the conditions of this earthly life the priesthood of all believers is expressed in the following ways: Christians are children of God (Rom. 8. 14–16); Christ has made it possible for us constantly to turn to God in prayer (Jn. 16. 23–24); we fight a spiritual fight, in which we are crucified with Christ (Gal. 2. 19, 5. 24); we offer up to God the sacrifice of praise (Hebr. 13. 15); and we also offer ourselves to God as »a living sacrifice, dedicated and fit for his acceptance« (Rom. 12, 1); and we make use of the saving grace of the Holy Spirit, which is given in the sacraments of the Holy Church.

3. By calling His twelve apostles and pouring out the Holy Spirit upon them Jesus Christ established in His Church a special ministry of service (Mt. 16. 18; 28. 18–20; Jn. 20. 23), which has since been called the ordained ministry. It cannot be separated from the essence of the Church, and it will last until the second coming of Christ. This ministry cannot be regarded as a continuation of the priesthood of the Old Covenant (see section 1).
4. The ordained ministers are fellow - servants of Christ and they have been called to act in the name of Christ, fulfilling His will in order that men should participate in the salvation which Christ has effected (Hebr. 3. 14). Thus it is the task of the ministry:
  - a. to proclaim the Gospel, to preach and teach;
  - b. to minister the sacraments of the Church;
  - c. to bear responsibility for the spiritual guidance of the life and work of the Church according to God's Word, as comprehended by the Church.
5. The ordained ministry and the priesthood of all believers belong together and constitute together the spiritual fullness of the Church as Christ's body, made up of many members (1 Cor. 12.4–31; Rom. 12.4–8). The ministries of these members differ in character.
6. One of the essential characteristics and signs of the Church of Christ is its apostolicity. Therefore the Church is called apostolic. Apostolicity means resolute preservation of the teaching of the Gospel and the sacraments such as Christ instituted them and the apostles proclaimed them by the Holy Spirit.

On the forms and continuity of the apostolic succession see part II.

7. The ordained ministry is received through the call of the Church and through right ordination. Since apostolic times ordination has been performed with the laying on of hands and with the invocation of the Holy Spirit.
8. Ordination to any office through the laying on of hands is indelible and cannot be repeated.
9. The Eucharist, as instituted by Christ, can be administered by persons who have been ordained to the ministry.
10. The validity of the Eucharist does not depend on the moral qualities or spiritual state of the minister, only on the fact that he is a rightly ordained minister and that he administers this sacrament in the right way.

This does not, however, in any way take away the personal responsibility of the minister administering the sacrament for his behaviour and spiritual state before God and his own conscience.

## *II.*

Both parties in the conversations agreed that neither the discussions on the theme »The Eucharist and the Priesthood«, based on the papers delivered, nor the above theses exhaust this very important theological problem. Therefore all the participants in the conversations unanimously considered it necessary that these problems should be studied in greater depth and further discussed in the future. In particular, the following specific questions should be examined and discussed when the work is continued:

11. From the point of view of the problem concerning the sacramental character of the ministry and in the light of the entire doctrine of the sacraments an examination should be made of the consequences to our dialogue of certain parts of the confessional books of the Lutheran Church, according to which ordination taking place through the laying on of hands can be called a sacrament.
12. As for the problem regarding the forms of the apostolic succession it is stated: the undivided Church has preserved the doctrine of the apostolic succession. Therefore there should be a study of the significance for our

dialogue of the fact that the apostolic succession includes both the succession of right apostolic doctrine and the succession of the laying on of hands.

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## **The christian doctrine of salvation: theses**

We with one accord praise the Triune God for his work of creation, redemption, and sanctification.

### *I. The creation and the fall of man*

1. Almighty God, who is One in His substance and Triune in the persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, has created the visible and the invisible world.
2. God created man in His own image, gave him a share in His life and glory, and commanded him to cultivate and care for the creation. Participation in the Divine Life meant giving the glory to God: faith and love, seeking His help and obeying Him.
3. However, man fell into sin. He disobeyed God and did not give Him due glory, and wanted to decide for himself what is good and what is bad. Thus man lost his blessedness, his share in the Divine Life. He fell into the slavery of sin and was subjected to condemnation.
4. The fall of Adam was not only disastrous to himself, but also began the history of the sinfulness of man. This corruption is unavoidably inherited, and is spread to all the descendants of Adam (Rom. 5.12, 19).

### *II. The atonement of Christ*

5. Because God loved the lost human race He sent to the world His Only Son, who was incarnate of the Holy Spirit by the Virgin Mary and was made man. Jesus Christ was obedient to the Father unto death (Phil. 2.8), in order that through the obedience of one man many would be made

righteous (Rom. 5.19). His innocent death was a redemptive sacrifice for the life of the world (Jn. 6.51). Christ has risen from death and sits at the right hand of God. Exercising all the fullness of God's authority, he has commanded the Church to teach all that he has commanded (Mt. 28.20). Raised to the heights (Phil. 2.9) he does not shrink from calling us his brothers (Hebr. 2.11). In Christ »we were al once freed from punishment, and put off all iniquity, and were also born again from above and rose again with the old man buried, and were redeemed, justified, led up to adoption, sanctified, made brothers of the Only-begotten, and joint heirs » (St. John Chrysostom, Hom. on Romans X, LNPF 11).

### *III. Faith and sanctification*

6. The Holy Spirit gives the fruits of Christ' s atonement in the word of the Gospel and in the sacraments. This takes place in the Church, which is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic (cf. the Creed). Without the Church nobody can come to Christ the Lord and be saved. The Gospel proclaims to unworthy sinners that their sins are forgiven because of the obedience of the God-man and that they participate in his holiness when they repent and turn to Christ (Mk. 1.15).
7. The Holy Spirit makes alive again those who are dead in sin, and unites them together, making them members of Christ's body. Whoever truly believes the Gospel and receives the sacraments in faith is given by God a share in the Divine Life. Through faith Christ dwells in his heart (Eph. 3.17). The Holy Spirit teaches man to know the love of God in Christ and to love God and his neighbour. The Bible ex-horts us: You must work out your own salvation in fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you, inspiring both the will and the deed, for his own purpose» (Phil. 2. 12– 13). Man is not saved by his own good deeds (Eph. 2.9), but faith is also dead, if it is not manifested in good deeds (Jam. 2.17).
8. A Christian must strive throughout his life to reject sin and aim at sanctification. God's grace teaches us to reject impiety and worldly desires and to live chastely, righteously and in a godly way in the present age (Tit. 2.12). »This is the will of God, that you should be holy (1 Thes. 4.3). Jesus says: »You must therefore be all goodness, as your heavenly Father is all good» (Mt. 5.48). The full likeness of Christ and full participation in the Divine Life will not be realized, however, before the resurrection of the dead.

#### *IV. Soteriology and eschatology*

9. Salvation is also a matter of hope and expectation. In some passages of the New Testament (e.g. Rom. 5.9–10) the word salvation is used in the sense of future salvation. Future salvation is the fulfilment of everything we have already experienced, because of the merit of Christ, in his Church, »for we have been saved, though only in hope» (Rom. 8.24). This can also be expressed in another way. »Salvation today» (the expression occurs in Luk. 19.9) is an anticipation of final and perfect salvation. In the same way the Eucharist, where Christ is really present, is a foretaste of the wedding supper of the Lamb in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 19.9; cf. also Mk 14.25).
10. These truths of the Bible have important consequences. The relationship of man to his environment, to nature, which God set him to nurture, gains new meaning from Christian hope. Man's selfishness has impoverished and spoiled God's creation and its life. Man is to blame for the fact that »the whole created universe groans» (Rom. 8.22). It lives, however, »in hope» (Rom. 8.20) that it will be »freed from the shackles of mortality and enter into the liberty and splendour of the children of God» (Rom. 8.21). To Christians this means awakening to a strong sense of responsibility for protecting and developing the life of nature.
11. Social and international questions must also be examined in the light of the Christian hope. Social reforms, aspirations for racial and national liberation, and the work for achieving and strengthening a just peace are not Christian salvation in themselves. They are, however, actions which are man's duty on account of the salvation given to him; they are good deeds of faith, hope and love. Though perfection will be achieved only in the coming everlasting life-to come, the hope of the future victory of the Kingdom of God encourages Christians, the whole Church of Christ on earth, to fight and work in order to bring about, as fully as possible, a foretaste already in this life of the righteousness, peace and joy of God.

#### *V. The Bangkok conference, 1973*

12. The doctrine of salvation is the essence of the Gospel of Christ, because Jesus Christ is the foundation of his Church and the life and activity of every Christian.
13. In agreement with the message of the Bangkok conference in 1973 we are convinced that the misery of men and nations living in poverty and

need, in distress and suppression, must be a constant source of concern to all Christians.

14. We accept the view expressed by the conference that God as Creator and Saviour gives man full dignity, a right to many-sided development and to a life befitting human beings. Confidence in this leads to the diminishing of alienation between men, to fruitful mutual enrichment, to the exchanging of experiences, and to collaboration for the welfare of all, as well as to a struggle for economic justice, political freedom, peace and renewal of culture. All this, in obedience to God's will, promotes the liberation of the world.
15. We are conscious that peoples and churches living in welfare have not yet done everything possible to meet the need of men and nations. Our problem is that so many people - even Christians - are still reluctant to work for social justice. We also know that distorted power structures play a substantial part in this reluctance, which is contradictory to the salvation brought by Christ. Christians must strive to eliminate this reluctance in every possible way.
16. However, we cannot accept the fact that in the discussions at the conference, as well as in its final documents, insufficient attention was given to the salvation of man through the Gospel of Christ and to man's moral perfection. This proper dimension of salvation was not fully voiced in the Bangkok Conference of World Mission and Evangelism.
17. The Bangkok conference has been considered a celebration of salvation. We think, however, that real celebration of salvation takes place when man has been reconciled with God and his neighbours in Jesus Christ, and especially, when the Church triumphantly celebrates the Eucharist.
18. The unique mission of the Church, while striving for unity, is to proclaim the message of salvation among all nations in order that all men should believe in Jesus Christ and be saved. This principle must also be observed in the ecumenical movement.

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## Kiev 1977

### **Summary of the theme »Salvation as justification and deification», at the theological conversations between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church in the centre of the Exarchate of the Ukraine in Kiev during April 12th-16th, 1977.**

#### *I.*

Until recently, there has been a predominant opinion that the Lutheran and Orthodox doctrines of salvation greatly differ from each other. In the conversations, however, it has become evident that both these important aspects of salvation discussed in the conversations have a strong New Testament basis and there is great unanimity with regard to them both.

#### *II.*

1. According to our common faith our Saviour Lord Jesus Christ is the initiator and fulfiller of our salvation.
2. Since the fall man has been subject to condemnation and death. But because of His love to us, the Son of God took human nature upon himself, bore the sins of the whole world (Isaiah 53) and the punishment for sin, which is death. »For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin» (2 Cor. 5:21).
3. But in the resurrection Christ triumphed over death. His death and resurrection destroyed sin, damnation and death. Therefore redemption is exacted in our churches by singing: »Christ hath risen from the death, by death trampling upon death, and to those in the tombs He hath restored life. »
4. The God-Man, Christ, risen and ascended into heaven, sat down at the right hand of God. He is the high priest who through his offering has for once and all brought about reconciliation and justification. He is the King in whom human nature has been deified, i.e. promoted to divine life.
5. Wherever man through faith participates in Christ in His Church, there sin, damnation and death no longer rule over him.

6. Thus Christ is the basis of our justification and deification.

### III.

1. Christ gave to the apostles and the whole Church the task of preaching the Gospel through the whole world. The Gospel is preached through the Word of God, the Holy Sacraments and Christian lives (Matt. 28: 18–20, 5:16).
2. Through the Word of God, the Holy Sacraments and the Divine Service we become participants in justification and deification in Christ.
3. In Holy Baptism we become participants in Christ in a real way. »For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ» (Gal. 3: 27). Thus we are justified in Baptism and deification begins, i.e. participation in divine life. In Baptism we are freed from the power of sin, death and the devil and reborn to eternal life we enter the kingdom of Christ.
4. The old man remains, however, in the Christian who is reborn in Baptism. This makes it more difficult »to walk in newness of life» (Rom. 6:4). For this reason repentance of sin and fulfilment of God's commandments are an essential part of deification.
5. In order to preserve the fruit of rebirth in us Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist. The God-Man Jesus Christ, who has given himself as a sacrifice for our sins and who has vanquished death through death is given to us in the Holy Eucharist.
6. When we consume His real body and blood, we receive Him in our hearts by faith and love. In that we inwardly and outwardly participate in His divine nature. Thus in the Holy Communion more than anywhere else the mystery of justification and deification is revealed to us.
7. The Word of God, Baptism and the Eucharist invite Christ come to live in us. »I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.» (Gal. 2:20).

### IV.

During the conversations we have read papers on the theme to »Salvation as justification and deification» and used them as a basis for the exchange of opinions.

There has been remarkable unanimity on the essence of justification and deification when they are regarded as the most important aspects of personal salvation.

This unanimity has been noted above all in the following points:

1. Every man can be saved, i.e. become a partaker in the eternal kingdom of heaven but only by virtue of the sacrifice given by the God-Man Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12, 1. Tim. 2: 5–6, Rom. 5:8).
2. Salvation of man begins when God calls him, and he turns to God in his heart by faith, which is followed by rebirth through water and the Spirit (John. 3:5), i.e. Baptism. In Baptism God makes man His child (Rom. 8:15–17, Eph. 2:13, 19), he becomes a new creation (2. Cor. 5:17, Gal. 6:15) and is justified (Rom. 3: 24–28). In infant Baptism this is realized as a result and at the responsibility of the faith of the parents, godparents and the whole congregation.
3. According to the understanding of the Church justification is pardon and remission of sins received by the Christian through Baptism (1. Cor. 6: 11) in a living active faith »which worketh by love« (Gal. 5:6), i.e. saving faith united with repentance.
4. When the Christian has been justified, he takes a new road leading to deification. The Church understands it to be a process of growing in holiness or coming closer and closer to God. »But we all, with open face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord« (2. Cor. 3: 18). Deification takes place under the influence of the grace of the Holy Spirit by a deep and sincere faith, together with hope and permeated by love (1. Cor. 13:13).
5. The natural fruit of a real living faith are good deeds (Matt. 7:16–18, Luke 6:45).
6. Any good deed, in whatever way it may be manifested (as a thought, a word, an activity) the Christian does under the influence of the grace of the Holy Spirit (Luke 18:26–27, John 6: 65, 15:5, 1. Cor. 4: 7). Furthermore, the influence of grace covers the whole good deed from its beginning in the thoughts of man up to its realization (Acts 17:28, Phil. 2:13).
7. Grace never does violence to a man's personal will, but exerts its influence through it and with it. Every one has the opportunity to refuse consent to God's will or, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to consent to it.

Furthermore, the opinion of the Orthodox part is that what has been said above presupposes cooperation between God's saving grace and man, i.e. freedom of will.

V.

The contents of the papers and the following discussion made it possible to achieve mutual understanding on the basic theological views mentioned above, but they also caused some difference of opinion or different emphases in a few questions.

Such problems which need further study and careful attention are the following:

1. The relation between faith, hope and love in salvation.
2. The Christian's hope of personal salvation.
3. The relation between God's grace and the freedom of man's will in salvation.
4. The precise definition of the contents of the word »faith», which is used in a varied way both in the Bible and in common language.
5. The relation between Law and Gospel in salvation.

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### **Summary of the theme »Salvation and the kingdom of peace: the object of faith and the ethical task«**

The fourth theological conversations between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church have paid attention to the wish expressed in the third theological conversations between these Churches in Järvenpää, Finland, in 1974, that it would be useful to continue the dialogue on the theme of peace. The fourth conversations held in Kiev fulfilled this wish by pondering the theme »Salvation and the kingdom of peace: the object of faith and the ethical task», which was chosen by both Churches together. Three papers were delivered on this theme.

On the basis of the contents of these papers and as a result of the discussion which followed, the participants of the conversations have in the spirit of mutual understanding and Christian love come to the following conclusions:

### *I. Salvation and the Christian's social responsibility*

1. The concepts of salvation and the Christian's social responsibility belong closely together. As a citizen of two kingdoms - the kingdom of the world and the kingdom of Heaven - the Christian has been called to strive for the kingdom of Heaven and to be at the same time an active builder of a just kingdom of the world.
2. As children of one Heavenly Father, their Creator and Shepherd, all men are under the protection of His universal law. God's will and protection belong to all men. Therefore Christians have been called to carry out their mission and service in all societies in order to make it good and just.
3. In the salvation achieved by our Saviour Jesus Christ for all men, the ultimate goal of which is the coming kingdom of God, the forces of the kingdom of God have already begun to act in this world. This is the second presupposition of the Christian's activity and social responsibility. The Christian's life and activity must aim at advancing the kingdom of God. Thus the social responsibility of the Christian has a twofold basis.

### *II. The basis and character of the social work of the Church*

1. The social responsibility of the Church comes from the essence of its message and character. Although the ways of carrying out this responsibility depend on historic conditions, they cannot be derived solely from them; neither can they be identified with any human ideological system.
2. The Church does not create and cannot create political programmes. Nor can it decide what kind of social and political system a country should have. The Church must, however, enlighten Christians, stimulate ethical consciousness in them and influence their conscience so that they can actively use their Christian liberty to fight against social injustice and build a juster and more human social system.
3. The basic task of the Church is to lead people to salvation. At the same time it has been called to inspire, promote and support in every possible way the carrying out of the principles of peace and justice on the national and the international level.

### *III. The Christian's responsibility for peace*

1. The responsibility for peace and the preservation of life on earth concerns all mankind irrespective of time, nationality or religion. It is a common concern of all people particularly now when the very existence of the world is in danger of destruction. Therefore the Christians must work for peace and common security in cooperation with all people of good will. Thus they preserve untouched the fundamentals of their work for peace arising from the Gospel, and they also preserve their Christian consciousness.
2. Because of the Christians' great responsibility for the work of peace it is of paramount importance to stress the fact that peace is indivisible. Thus, when we strive for its full realization, we should not be contented with one-sidedness or partiality. Because of her universal character the Church is obliged to teach the necessity of an undivided peace and to take part in the work of building peace and it is also suited to this task.
3. The Christian's work for peace is based on the teaching and example given by our Lord Jesus Christ. The work for peace is inspired by the hope of the coming kingdom of peace because final and complete eschatological peace will be created by the Lord.
4. Christ's message frees people from the slavery of sin. As children of God they are given freedom for the Heavenly Father has made them His children in our Saviour Jesus Christ. This freedom of God's children takes away fear, abolishes hatred, calls forth hope and creates mutual understanding and harmony among people. This kind of inner renewal and communication between people exerts a positive influence on their brotherhood when they strive for the transformation of unjust structures of society as well as the finding of new ways of working for the good of all mankind.

### *IV. Concrete suggestions*

1. Both sides express their pleasure that the wish expressed by them during the two former conversations (in Zagorsk, in 1971 and in Järvenpää, in 1974) with regard to the necessity and usefulness of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe was fulfilled. Both parties are glad about the signing of the Final Act of Helsinki in 1975 and firmly hope that the process of international detente and cooperation, having begun successfully, will obtain a permanent character and that besides political detente, concrete measures will be taken in the field of disarmament. The peoples of Europe have the right to expect from the coming Belgrade

Conference development and implementation of all points of the Helsinki Agreement, in their general framework as well as in detail. An overall implementation of the recommendations of the Helsinki Agreement is important from the point of view of furthering detente and strengthening peace. We have to ensure that merely taking advantage of any separate point of the Helsinki Agreement does not harm detente and cooperation.

2. Besides all that has been said above, both sides utter their conviction that the participation of Christians in the development of detente and international cooperation is most usefully carried out through the work of national, territorial and international Christian organisations which devote themselves to the work for peace, as, for instance, the World Council of Churches and the Conference of European Churches, which are ecumenical organisations common to our churches. Moreover, the participants in the conversations are well aware of the fact that many Christians participate in the work for peace through organisations like the Christian Peace Conference and the Pax Christi International.
3. The representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church informed the members of the delegation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland that in June this year there will be an international conference in Moscow: a Conference of leaders of religious communities for a lasting, stable peace, disarmament and just international relations. The representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church have expressed the wish that this should be a positive impulse for the work for peace of people of good will as well as of those who hold different religious opinions.
4. The participants in the conversations with one accord hope that the God of peace will bless different efforts for the peace and welfare of all mankind.
5. The participants expressed a wish - which will be submitted to the leaders of their churches - that in the following theological conversations the theology of peace will be studied from the point of view of the transfigu-

ration of the world on the one hand and from the point of view of Law and Gospel on the other hand.

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Kiev, April 15th, 1977

## **Turku 1980**

### **Summary on the theme »Faith and love as Elements of Salvation«**

During the previous negotiations it was stated that the central aspects of the Lutheran as well as of the Orthodox doctrines of salvation, i.e. of justification and deification, are firmly based on the New Testament, and that there is great unanimity on both these aspects. This consensus rests on the doctrine of Christ, in which the churches have a joint basis. Christ is the basis of our justification and deification. At the same time, it has, however, become evident that, in spite of this unanimity, there are differing views between the churches as regards the emphasis to be placed on the different aspects. The relation between faith and love in salvation is one such problem.

In referring to man's relation to God and salvation, Lutherans tend to stress faith and the life of faith, whereas the Orthodox prefer to stress love.

The words 'love' and 'faith' have many different meanings both in the Scriptures and in general usage. Therefore, whenever faith and love are discussed, it is absolutely necessary to note the precise meaning these words carry in the Biblical context where they occur. The theological conversations now held in Turku have proved conclusively that the doctrines of both churches on faith and love in salvation are essentially similar.

### **The theses**

1. God, who is one in His essence and Triune in the persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, is love. This is the foundation of our salvation. For us and for our salvation the Son of God, Jesus Christ, true

God and true Man, became man and thus has overcome sin and death through his life, death and resurrection. Through all this He has become the initiator of our faith and the source of our love towards God and our neighbours (1 Joh. 4:7, 19).

2. In Jesus Christ, in whom dwells the whole fulness of the godhead, God has revealed His inconceivable love for mankind - for the world departed from Him (1 Joh. 4:8, 16; Joh. 3:16). When we become members of His Church in Holy Baptism, and when we believe in Him, the Son of God, who came into the world to save sinners, we participate in His divine life. When we receive Christ through His Holy Word and Holy Sacraments, we become - in the different wordings of our distinct traditions - God's children (Rom. 8:14–17), justification (Rom. 3:24) and reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18) are bestowed upon us, and we are deified (1 Joh. 3:2).
3. Mere belief in the truth of Christian doctrine does not yet constitute saving faith and does not lead to good works (James 2: 17–26). Saving faith is a life in personal communion with God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit (Gal. 2:20, 5:25). Lutherans particularly stress faith as trust in God and in His promises.
4. A living faith means walking in the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:25). The first fruit of the Spirit is love (Gal. 5:22). As love comprises all the commandments, it is the fulfilment of the law (Matt. 22:40, Rom. 13:10). Thus faith gives birth to works of love, as a good tree bears good fruit (Luke 6: 43, 46).
5. God gives salvation out of His grace and love. This salvation in its essence far exceeds our understanding (1 Cor. 2: 9) and thus cannot be earned through good works. Yet faith working through love (Gal. 5:6) yields good works as its fruit.

In this context the Lutheran participants stress that a distinction must be made between such deeds with which we attempt to earn salvation and which St Paul calls 'the deeds of the law' (Rom. 3:19–20, 26–28, 4:2–8, Gal. 2:16, Eph. 2:8–9) and deeds which are a result of faith ('Good deeds', Eph. 2:10). Faith and 'the deeds of the law' are mutually exclusive, but faith is inseparably followed by 'good works'.

A faith that involves hope of a reward (2 Cor 3:11–12, 4:17–18) or even fear of punishment, may result in good behaviour (Jude 23, 1 Pet. 1:17, Phil. 2:12). The relation between faith and love is, however, the »excellent way» (1 Cor. 12:31).

6. The decisive role of love is salvation in indicated in the commandment of love: »Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself» (Luke 10:27). Man's love of God is his response to the love of God towards men (1 Joh. 4:19) and it manifests itself in faithfulness to God, in professing one's faith and in love for one's neighbours (1 Joh. 4:7–10).
7. As the Son of God, in assuming human nature, placed himself in the position of man (Phil. 2:6–7), so the Christian in his relation to his neighbour ought to show Christ's disposition (Phil. 2:5), that is love, and place himself in his neighbour's position (Rom. 15:7) and bear his burdens (Gal. 6:2) and so express the love of Christ. In such love the 'golden rule' that Jesus taught is realized: » Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets» (Matt. 7:12).
8. The more man extends the love he has received from God to his neighbours, the more Christ is formed in him (Gal. 4:19, Eph. 3:17–19) and the more effectively he can withstand evil. In this effort to attain sanctification, man, however, always remains imperfect (Matt. 5: 48, Phil. 3:12–14) and always needs renewed penitence and forgiveness of sins.
9. If man remains in sin and does not repent, he might lose both faith and love and, at the same time, salvation. The fight against sin continues throughout man's life on earth.
10. In the final judgement man's faith and love will be judged. Everyone will be judged according to how faith has become manifest in works of love (2 Cor. 5:10, Matt. 25:31–46). Love exceeds even faith and hope (1 Cor. 13:13), because the works of love last for eternity (Rev. 14:13). At the advent of Christ in glory to which we look forward, judgement and salvation will finally become a reality that is, mercy will be granted to sinful man for Christ's sake, and man will become a partaker of the life of the world to come.

### **Summary on the theme »The Theological Foundation of the Churches' Work for Peace«**

1. God created everything to be good, but because of the fall of man the whole creation groans in the bondage of corruption (Rom. 8:20–22).

Its recovery to health presupposes that God's original intentions for the creation are allowed to become realized.

2. God's activity in restoring health does not concern individuals alone, but embraces the whole of mankind. As God's intentions are realized, the world achieves its ultimate fulfilment.
3. War has been one of the worst and most dangerous consequences of sin throughout the history of mankind. Therefore it is of prime importance to uproot this evil from the life of the human community. Since our world is God's creation, work for peace does not concern only Christians, but all people. Its means and realization are matters for human reason, for reason, too, is a gift bestowed on man by God. The Christian concepts of the creation and of man thus unfold the possibility for all human beings to work together for peace.
4. God's presence in this world, His Kingdom and grace are joyful realities. The Kingdom of God will appear in glory, but even so, it is already present here and now. We participate in this Kingdom through God's Word and the Sacraments. Through them we are called to be citizens of the Kingdom of God in faith, hope and love. We believe and trust that this Kingdom of Christ remains victorious, irrespective of what happens in the world.
5. As citizens of the Kingdom of God the followers of Christ are summoned to be workers for peace in the world. They are able to follow this call as children of God only if they are at peace with God. Where this has happened, there exists a new basis for confidence and service between men. In this sense the Gospel, too, is a basis for the work of peace carried out by the churches.
6. God's creative work in the world is a basis for the unity of mankind, and for brotherhood among men. Because of her catholicity, the Church is called upon to be the sign of the unity of mankind. Therefore, because of the good intention inherent in God's creative will and due to her very essence, the Church has been summoned to build unity among nations. Thus, by assuming responsibility for her own unity, the Church can be of service as far as unity in the world is concerned.
7. Through the church the grace of God is active in the world, leading people to unity with one another, and promoting and reinforcing humaneness.

8. Peace is based on the realization of truth, justice and freedom in the community of men. Therefore Christians must be instrumental in safeguarding all internationally acknowledged human rights and ensuring that other proclamations safeguarding human dignity are accepted by all nations and then applied in practice.
9. In order to realize humanity in the world it is necessary for Christians and for people outside their ranks to join forces in creating conditions where privation, structural and other violence are abolished and freedom prevails.
10. Christians regard the breaking of peace and aggression by one people against another as fratricide, destroys the unity of mankind that God created. »He hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth» (Acts 17:26).
11. The nations are worried about their safety, and this increases the tension between them. At the same time as the rich nations spend enormous sums on the arms race, hundreds of millions of people lack the opportunity of satisfying their basic needs and cannot even obtain the most elementary medical care. In many developing countries the arms race is given priority over satisfying the most basic needs of the people. The increasing arms race constitutes a serious threat to world peace.
12. Limited natural resources and environmental pollution exclude quantitative growth from being the prime objective. In the present situation, development must be directed towards achieving quality of life. Christians should base their own lives on the principles laid down in the Gospels, as these contain the necessary conditions for the quality of man's life. Christians should act so as to promote responsible control and use of natural resources.
13. The gap between the rich and the poor within societies and nations prevents human dignity from being realized and constitutes a serious threat to peace. This compels us to demand the realization of justice and the even distribution of goods throughout the world.
14. In the light of what has been stated above, the task of the church is to educate its members for responsible service in the world.
15. The credibility of the message of the church presupposes solidarity with those who suffer from injustice, deprivation of freedom and circumscription of human rights.

16. In its prophetic mission, the church cannot identify itself with structures and norms which promote oppression or violate human dignity. It ought to encourage those responsible for social and economic activities to strive for justice.
17. The churches wish to support the governments in their efforts to achieve international detente and to stop the continuing arms race, and to create an atmosphere of confidence between all nations in the spirit of the final document signed in Helsinki during the European Conference for Security and Co-operation.

Turku, June 11th, 1980

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## **Leningrad 1983**

### **Summary on the theme »The Nature of the Church«**

1. The Holy Bible contains the bases of the doctrine of the Church in a way that is binding upon us at all times. They have given rise to the definitions of the Church which are to be found in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed.
2. Jesus Christ, our Saviour, is Head of the Church. As the Council of Chalcedon teaches us, He is God and man in one person, without confusion, without change, without division and without separation. The mystery of the Church is revealed to us only through Him.
3. The most essential of all the definitions of the Church in the New Testament is »the body of Christ«, often used by Paul the Apostle. We have become members of the Church of Christ through faith and baptism into Christ, (Gal. 3:26–28) who is Head of the body. As members of the body of Christ, we all have a special task to perform (1 Cor. 12:4–13); we are bound to each other and we have been called to rejoice and suffer together

as well as to serve each other in love. The Church is a living organism, in which all its members have by one Spirit access through Christ to the Father (Eph 2:18).

4. The new life of the members of the Church in Christ and the everlasting joy of salvation are inseparably connected with the Holy Communion, in which we are given the body and the blood of Christ.  
» The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.» (1 Cor. 10:16–17).
5. In celebrating the Holy Communion, the Church proclaims to the world the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, which covers all mankind, as well as His death and resurrection. In the eucharistic liturgy we together with the heavenly powers and all the saints thank and praise the Triune God.
6. In participating in the Holy Communion the Christian is strengthened as a member of the Church, the body of Christ. So, all Christians together are the mystical body of Christ. Unity in God as well as unity in faith and love between the members of the whole Church is realized in the Holy Communion.
7. The celebration of the Holy Communion and the Church belong together. As there is no Holy Communion outside the Church, neither can there be the Church without the Holy Communion.
8. We believe in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and teach that this One, Holy Church will remain permanent forever. The presence of Christ in the Church, in the word of God and in the sacraments, as well as the fact that He is Head of the Church, give the Church great hope and joy everywhere, on all occasions.
9. There are both real and nominal members of the Church. In striving to live righteously, no Christian will be perfect in this life. Only God, who is omniscient, can rightly judge the real membership of the Church.
10. The word of God calls every member of the Church to continuous repentance, renewal and striving for righteous life. God's word teaches the Christian that he is a member of Christ's body, as well as Christ's disciple and follower in everyday life.

11. Christ Himself, God and man (St. John 14:9–11), is present in the Holy Communion, which unites all the members of the Church. Therefore, schisms among Christians contradict Christ's work to create unity. This work He performs through the Church and the Holy Communion which He has given to the Church.

Separation between people, particularly schisms between Christians are a result of sin; they stand in sharp contrast to the unity which was Christ's legacy to His disciples and followers.

When we in faith have come to know God's love for us, love for God and man leads us to go in the direction where the schisms can be overcome (1 John 3:16; 14:19). According to the teaching of the Apostle Paul, without Christ and the love given in Him (1 Cor 13:1–3, Gal. 5:5) no works, not even the achievements of the inward spiritual life, can play a decisive role in salvation, which is the meaning and the goal of the whole Church and of every member of her.

Leningrad, June 10th, 1983

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### **Summary on the theme »The Work of the Churches for the Promoting of Peace in the Modern World«**

#### *The concern of the Churches over the present world situation*

1. The Churches note with deep concern that during the first years of the 1980's peace has been endangered more seriously than ever before. Detente has ceased and the attempts to bring the arms race under control have not produced the desired result. Many states are falling into the vicious circle of an increasing arms race and the great powers have less trust in each other than previously. During the past years, the arms race, including nuclear weapons, has reached a new and unknown dangerous phase.

2. In different countries an increasing number of people react with less and less patience to the threat of nuclear weapons and the arms race. At the same time people, particularly young people, are losing hope for the future.
3. Because the big sums of money spent on the arms race are urgently needed for the fight against poverty and other social injustice, and because nuclear war is a threat to mankind, culture and nature, both the arms race and nuclear war must, therefore, be regarded as crime against mankind.

### *Christians and peace*

4. The faith of Christians proves that peace in the world is a gift of God. Mankind is responsible for this gift. Therefore, the Christians have to do all they can in order to maintain and strengthen peace.

Having confidence in God's guidance, Christians have to maintain hope at all times, understanding that they are called to achieve peace in line with God's will. They have to abandon any feelings of false security as well as passivity.

5. The Holy Bible and the faith of the Church see in Adam the prototype of sinful, divided mankind. Having become the new Adam, Jesus Christ gave mankind salvation and hope. (Rom. 5:12–21, 1 Cor. 15:21–22).
6. Christians see in the Church a universal community, the prototype of the future unity of mankind. Particularly now, when contradictions and schisms threaten to endanger man's prospects of survival, it is important to remember the unity of the Church which crosses all boundaries, and understand that it is an invitation to work for the cause of peace.
7. Christians know that there will never be a complete guarantee for peace and that they have to work hard in order to create it. This is also one of the reasons why Christians are called to contribute to the work for peace at all times.
8. International conflicts often give one party a distorted impression of the other party. Therefore, Christians should not see their opponents as an incarnation of evil, nor ought they to go to extremes in idealizing their own nations. Instead, attention must be paid to the demands of different parties as well as to the interests that give rise to conflicts.

9. Confidence can be built up only when one party does not seek for security at the other's expense, but when, instead, both parties together discuss the conditions of common security. At the same time, their intentions and plans must create mutual confidence.
10. It is particularly the task of Christians to try to influence nations so that they should not drift apart nor consider their conflict of interests to be irreconcilable. Building bridges of confidence between different nations is one of the Church's tasks. Here the Church must be faithful to its Lord, who »hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us - the enmity« (Eph. 2:14).

### *The work of the Church for the promoting of peace*

11. The work for the promoting of peace originates in the Holy Bible. God created the world, which was meant to be one and in which people were meant to be brothers and sisters. In becoming man, Christ gave his followers the task of demonstrating love and brotherhood (St. John 34–35). Therefore, the work for the promoting of peace means the defence of justice and human dignity.
12. The fact that the Church serves people means that it already works for peace. The Church serves the cause of peace by preaching the Gospel. It wants to attract attention to Christ, whom the Bible describes as »our peace« (Eph. 2:14). In every service, the Church prays for peace. In this way it calls its members to work for peace.
13. By serving in different fields, the Church educates its members in the spirit of peace. It is the Church's task to contribute to the growing understanding between different opinions, generations and peoples. In doing this, the Church turns to its own members and also to all those who in cooperation with the Church seek the same goals for mankind.
14. In working for the strengthening of Christ's peace, the Church acknowledges the great importance of the work for the promoting of peace. The members of the Church play an increasingly active role in the work of Christian peace organizations, in the ecumenical movement, as well as broadly humane forms of work for peace outside the Church.
15. In the present situation we support the widespread idea of creating nuclear-free zones (particularly in the Nordic countries). We actively try to pre-

vent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to freeze their numbers as the first step on the way to general disarmament.

16. The task of the Church in the work for the promoting of peace is to awaken people's conscience and to support their conscientious decisions. The Church cannot present or propagate any detailed social models. It expects statesmen to have a sense of responsibility and high moral qualities when they attempt to solve international problems.

Leningrad, June 10th, 1983

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## **Mikkeli 1986**

### **Summary on the theme of Holiness, Sanctification and the Saints**

1. Holiness is one of the basic concepts of religious and spiritual life.
2. Holiness is the holiness of God. God is holy, because He is God. His holiness makes man tremble and at the same time attracts him (*mysterium tremendum at fascinosum*).
3. Holiness in its absolute fullness is characteristic of God and only of Him. Any holiness in His creatures is relative and limited. Although it cannot be compared to the holiness of God, it has its origin in Him.
4. Because holiness is characteristic of God, it cannot be defined, any less than God can. However, it is revealed and given in God's revelation in all its forms.
5. The holiness of God can be considered as the fullness of his characteristics, passing human understanding, only part of which is known to us from God's revelation.

6. God created man holy, when He created him in His own image. This image was corrupted by the Fall, whereby man lost his holiness. The Fall of man is reflected in the whole cosmos (Rom. 8:20–22). In Christ, the New Adam, the Christian becomes a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). This foreshadows the renewal of the whole of creation.
7. Everything that God has created belongs to Him. God chose one people from among the nations to be His own and consecrated it (Ex. 19:5–6). The Church, the new people of God, is holy (1 Pet. 2:9), because it is the Body of Christ.
8. The believing members of the Church are also holy, because they partake of God's holiness. At the same time, however, they are sinners, because their faith and love are imperfect (1 Jn. 1:8).
9. Holiness in the world of man is not the same as sinlessness; rather liberation from sin is to be regarded as a fruit of sanctification. However, every sin violates the Christian's holiness, as illness breaks a person's health.
10. Sanctification is participation in the holiness of God. Sanctification is life in fellowship with God and Christ and the Holy Spirit living in man. »As thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth» (Jn. 17:18- 19). »The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me» (Jn. 17:22–23).
11. People have a share in sanctification when in the sacrament of baptism they are joined through faith to the mystical body of Christ. They become members of the Church of Christ. Then the holiness received creates the necessary requirements for salvation, in other words it has a decisive soteriological significance.
12. Sanctification takes place in the Church, where the Holy Spirit works in the Word of God and in the holy sacraments. Christians must constantly return in repentance and penitence to the holiness of God received in baptism. In the Church the Holy Spirit gives us forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. Sanctification is continuous growth in the knowledge of God's grace and of Christ, but at the same time in the knowledge of one's own sinfulness.

13. All the members of the body of Christ are his representatives in the world. God's people are a holy priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5, 9), who offer thankofferings to God, proclaiming His good works and serving their neighbour in love (Phil. 2:17; Rom. 12:1; Heb. 13:15–16).
14. Without a Spirit-inspired effort to carry out God's commandments no sanctification takes place in man (Mt. 7:21; Phil. 2:12- 13). Sanctification also includes good works, which are a fruit of faith produced by the Holy Spirit.
15. Christians whose faith has produced rich fruits in this life and who are held in high regard because of their good works should be remembered in the Church. They should be regarded with respect and love, and their example should be a source of instruction.
16. The holy men and women who have reached the goal are an example to the members of the Church militant. The saints give us an example, because they followed Christ by faith (I Cor. 11:1; Heb. 13:7). The Church militant unites with the Church triumphant in praise and prayer. The Orthodox party is convinced that salvation is furthered by turning to the highly-venerated saints as intercessors on our behalf, just as we, as members of the Church on earth, constantly turn to one another with prayer requests, and as we carry out those requests; likewise the saints accept our requests and carry them out in love.
17. The source of all holiness is God. The ultimate object of sanctification is man, but this process of sanctification also uses material reality as a channel. The requirements for sanctification are prayer and the Word of God received by faith. Without these there is no sanctification.
18. The world, where the sense of holiness is becoming obscured, needs more than ever the example of the saints, both those here on earth and those in heaven. »... that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life» (Phil. 2:15–16).<sup>1</sup>

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1 Note: Biblical quotations are taken from the Revised Standard Version.

## **Summary on the theme of "The Sermon on the Mount and the Work of the Churches for Peace in Today's World"**

1. The Sermon on the Mount expresses the law of God, the content of which is love. Christ, the Prince of peace, has fulfilled the law (Mt. 5:17).
2. By faith the Christian participates in Christ's fulfilment of the law, that is, love. In spite of sin and various temptations, Christians are called, according to the words of the Saviour (Mt. 5:9), to do good deeds aimed at making peace, and in every way to promote and serve peace in the world.
3. The Sermon on the Mount assures the Christian that God's care for him is unchanging. The love proclaimed in the Sermon on the Mount is not only directed towards friends, but also towards enemies (Mt. 5:43–48). The Sermon on the Mount is thus at all times a powerful stimulus to the work of Christians for peace.
4. The existence of the churches promotes the cause of peace in a fruitful way. Thus the churches have a great responsibility for the work of peace. They must systematically train their members in a spirit of peace.
5. The social work of the Church is called to serve justice and peace. Lasting peace is not possible, however, without a relationship of trust between nations. On the one hand, this presupposes that all peoples and states respect generally-recognized human rights and freedom. States should be responsible for meeting the essential, basic needs of men. On the other hand, relations between states are based on the principle that the abuse of rights and liberties is unacceptable.
6. The improvement of international law, alongside national legal systems, is of special importance. In this work the Christian has a great responsibility.
7. Christians should serve peace in different social positions and tasks. Their calling also includes taking part in the debate on justice and peace, and in the effort to solve current problems in this area.
8. Christians work for the strengthening of peace by praying, fasting and giving offerings, by participating in the work of the ecumenical movement, and by co-operating with all those engaged in the work for peace. Christians must support such political, diplomatic and other feasible peacemaking initiatives as are in harmony with justice and peace.

9. The churches participating in the discussions emphasize that in the present situation it has proved essential to develop international organizations to supervise the implementation of agreements on the limitation of nuclear armaments and the peaceful use of nuclear power. The churches reemphasize their earlier opinion on the necessity for general nuclear disarmament and the ending of the continuing arms race. They support the creation of a nuclear-free zone in Northern Europe. The churches oppose the development of existing weapons of mass destruction and the planning of new ones.

The churches consider their special task as being to maintain faith in the meaningfulness of and opportunities for working for peace as this millennium draws to an end, and hope that our world will be prepared to celebrate the 2000th anniversary of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ as a festival of reconciliation and peace.

## **Pyhtitsa 1989**

### **Summary on the theme of The Creative Work of God**

*I*

The final communiques of the previous discussions refer to the creative work of God in a multiplicity of connections. God's creative work has offered a central theological starting point for discussions on the foundation and praxis of the work for peace carried out by the churches. Reference has been made to creation when speaking about the Christian concept of man (anthropology), the ultimate reality of the world (cosmology), the doctrine of salvation (soteriology) as well as the view of the future opening up through faith (eschatology).

Thus the creative work of God discloses an important holistic aspect of Christian faith and life. One of the most significant issues is how the relationship of God to the world is understood, as it has great importance to the faith and action of the church and the individual Christian. Therefore the question about creative work and the creation was brought to the forefront in these talks.

While the theme provides a natural continuation of the previous talks, it has exceptional current interest attached to it. In a significant way the Christian faith interprets the present ecological crisis of the world; Christian love leads people to struggle to overcome this crisis; and Christian hope provides the courage necessary for such efforts.

## II

1. The Christian Church praises God, whose hidden and unknown essence (ousia) is one and undivided, yet three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The doctrine of the Triune God is not only an expression of the internal life of the Godhead but also of His relationship with the world.
2. The created world is the act of the united, undivided Triune God. “God the Father creates everything through the Word in His Spirit.” (St Athanasius of Alexandria, *cf.* Ps. 33:6, Is. 40:25–26, Neh. 9:6).

The entire creative work is a manifestation of God’s infinite love and goodness (Psalm 8; Psalm 19; Psalm 74:12–17; Psalm 104). The New Testament Scriptures lay special emphasis to the share of the Son in the creative work (1 Cor. 8:6 and Col. 1:15–19). Also the Holy Spirit sustains the life of the creation (Ps. 104:24–30, *cf.* Job 33:4).

3. The Bible uses words such as *baaraa*, OT and *ktidsei*, NT, to describe the creative work of God. These words are not employed in the meaning of creative human activity. What man creates comes from the existing world, following its general laws. God, on the other hand, has through the exercise of the free choice of His own will and by His almighty creative Word brought “non-existence to existence” (2 Mace. 7:28; Rom. 4:17, Heb. 11:3; *cf.* Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, etc.). The Apostolic Fathers teach that this is to be taken literally and that for this faith is necessary, as it is extremely difficult to explain how *ex nihilo* creation can take place.
4. God created the world out of nothing (*ex nihilo*). The entire visible and invisible world is the creation of God. God’s being is absolutely transcendent to the created world. God is different in being from the world, dissimilar, not interfused, as is accepted in the Pantheistic view of the world. And yet God is in the midst of His creation, loving it.

According to Pantheism the world has been formed as an action arising out of the internal compulsion of God. This concept is linked to the denial of a personal God. In equating God with the world Pantheism excludes either the reality of the world or God. When the concept of a personal God vanishes, we are led into the cult of man, a religion in which man is worshipped, with multiple catastrophic consequences.

By equating God with the world and by deriving everything as coming from the same source Pantheism completely destroys the distinctions between truth and error, good and evil, beauty and ugliness.

In Orthodox theology the presence of God is expressed by saying that God is present and has influence in the creation through His energies (St Maximus the Confessor and St Gregory Palamas). Lutheran theology uses the expression that God has influence in the world through His Word. Both traditions share the same intention.

5. Even after its creation the world is at every hour and in every place totally dependent on God. The world cannot remain even for a moment, without God's continuous sustaining power. The world is neither autonomous, nor is it neutral territory in regard to its Creator.
6. God has created the entire visible and invisible world as good. As God's creation the world is one. There is nothing in it which would be alien to God. The Christian belief in creation does not correspond to the dualistic concepts of the world, because these are in conflict with the Biblical truth that God is one, undivided, the ultimate beginning and the source of all being.
7. The Biblical creation accounts show man's place in the world. According to them, man is at once part of the creation and at once in a special position as the image of God, which position raises him above the rest of the creation (Gen. 1:25–28; Ps. 8: 6–9). His acts do not only affect humanity, but all of the creation.
8. Created as the image of God man was, as a child of God, admonished to cultivate and protect the land (Gen. 1: 28–29; 2:15–25). He is to confess the Creator of the cosmos as his own God and so behave in his actions that the condition of the creation would be in accordance with God's will (cf. Ez. 36: 26–38). As the image of God he is responsible to God in all his actions for his entire existence (1 Cor. 6: 19–20).
9. God being one, the world, too, is one and indivisible. As the handiwork of the Divine Creator, a respectful approach is especially demanded towards the earth, the habitat of man, the crown of the creation. This is the reason the ecological problem is not primarily a physio-material problem but a spiritual and esthetic one. Man is the most crucial factor in the ecological dilemma.
10. Even the Biblical account of the Garden of Eden in Gen. 3:1–24 reminds man that sin has distorted God's image in him. By putting himself in God's place he has renounced the companionship between men and begun to misuse nature. The creation suffers because of man's selfishness. Man who is dependent on this suffering creation has driven himself to the brink of destruction.

11. God's intention for man in the creative work is only carried out insofar as he becomes a partaker in Christ, the image of "the invisible God". (Col. 1:15; Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18; 2 Cor. 5:17). Through Christ man already participates in this new life promised by God (2 Cor. 5:17; Phil. 2:5–11, Heb. 1:2–10), which is manifested as faith, hope and love in the world (1 Cor. 13).
12. Since the Christian in himself has side by side both the new creation and the old nature distorted by the Fall, his battle against selfishness and against the misuse of the creation remain incomplete in time (Rom. 7:14–25). Thus he is dependent on God's mercy in all things. He is not only prompted onwards merely by anticipation of concrete results but ultimately by eschatological hope based on God's promises (Rom. 8:18–25; Rev. 21 and 22).
13. Even if God's kingdom is not manifest throughout the creation in a visible manner, it is present in an invisible and inward way (Lk. 17:21). It is there where Christ calls people to God through the agency of the Holy Spirit: to believe, to love and to do good works (Matt. 25:34–40).

### III

The purpose of the Biblical account of the creation is not to provide a naturalistic, scientific explanation of events but to offer of the existing world a holistic interpretation opening up through faith. The creation accounts contain truths central to faith with a profound significance for the world whose laws, and their regularity, are studied by the natural sciences. This is a challenge to the Christian Church. A proper response to this challenge can be made only by taking both Christian theology and modern scientific knowledge seriously. As such science does not threaten the belief in creation, or the belief in creation science. Between the two there is to be a fruitful interaction, a situation both possible and necessary in the current situation of the world.

### **Summary on The Theme of Man's Responsibility for God's Creation**

1. Humanity is in the situation where man through his culture and activity has conquered for the first time in history the entire world and the biosphere, so indispensable to life. Yet humanity has driven itself to the brink of the abyss. As the result of significant scientific-technological achievements man has acquired unprecedented strength and power over nature. At present, however, man senses his lack of strength more strongly than he has previously. The progress gained in the sciences and in technology is incapable of guaranteeing his security or welfare. Mankind is threatened by disaster

because he lacks control over this situation. Disaster is also a possibility, total disaster in the shape of nuclear war or partial as an ecological catastrophe.

2. As a result of human activity the ecological balance has been shaken, with the soil depleted and waterways and the atmosphere polluted. The consequences of all this on our flora and fauna are known to all. Natural resources are shamelessly robbed beyond nature's own capacity for renewal, even though these resources are requisites for future generations. The situation is rapidly worsening due to the population explosion.
3. We Christians are convinced that the profoundest cause of this unhappy situation is found in the alienation of man from God, in the prostitution of his relationship to God's creation, in the loss of spiritual values and in the uncontrolled quest for the material things in life. This has been further advanced by the worship of science, to many people a religion without God. Science has been harnessed to serve man's selfish desires, to exploit the creation infinitely and violently.
4. As Christians we share the responsibility for man's selfish approach to nature, which is one of the causes of the crisis. At the same time we are convinced that the Christian faith educates man to have a caring approach to nature. Also, the Christian faith increases our hopes concerning the preservation of the creation's integrity, in addition to demonstrating a realistic way out of this dilemma.
5. God created man in His image and likeness. Yet the Bible does say that man was depraved in the Fall (Gen. 3). At the same time sin distorts man's relationship to God and his fellow man, it also makes of him an exploiter of nature. This is the religious and moral point of departure for the ecological crisis. The breach of relational faith leads to a lack of, and a prostitution of, love.
6. Christ is the second Adam and the beginning of the new creation; in the words of St Paul, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation... " (2 Cor. 5:17). Partaking of Christ lays the basis for the Christian's responsibility for the creation. Faith in Christ also means that his relationship to nature is renewed. This healing process will be completed when "the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21).
7. The integrity of the creation cannot be achieved without the discovery of a new way of life. This includes a responsibility for the cultivation

and care of nature, to take place in accordance with God's will (Gen. 2:15). Thus the responsibility that both the individual Christian and the church hold for the integrity of the creation means, in practical terms, the battle against man's sin, selfishness and greed, all of which are responsible for pushing the creation to the brink of destruction. The church works for the preservation of nature by proclaiming the law of God and the gospel of Christ.

8. From its very beginning and throughout its history, the Christian faith has emphasized the simple life style in contrast to the affluent consumption of goods and the exploitation of natural resources. This corresponds to the principle of ethical self-discipline, which godly Christians both in the East and in the West have honored as their guideline, and which ought to be every Christian's basic policy. St Paul states: "I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want" (Phil. 4:12). It should be noted that this feature has been an essential part of everyday piety among both the Finnish and the Russian peoples.
9. Sinfulness is manifest in those acts of each individual which cause damage to his environment. In the entire society sinfulness is also disclosed by such activities, ideological systems and power structures whose effect on the destruction of nature is far greater than that of individuals. The arms race exhausts natural resources, weakening man's possibilities for survival as well as creating the threat of war. The interests of industry and business are often in conflict with the conservation of nature. All humanity needs energy, but the use of its various forms threatens the balance of nature, each in its own way. As Christians we regard the demands for continued economic growth as a serious threat to the future of the earth and of life, in addition to nuclear war. Also science and its applications must take into consideration the ecological tolerance of the globe, as science cannot stand independently of its ethical value bases.
10. There is a great need for urgent, cooperative efforts by all mankind to ensure the integrity of the creation. Time is running short. Legislation is needed both on the part of the individual sovereign states and between various countries. The international, so-called Brundtland Committee has drafted an outline for international legislation on the environment. We support the policy that the international community sign agreements calling for the cessation of the pollution of nature throughout the entire world. Such agreements are to be expedited quickly. Individuals, the economic

infrastructure and society must be prepared to pay the expenses incurred by the conservation of the environment.

11. We call upon the governments of all nations to support the ongoing disarmament process, to cease experimentation with all weapons of mass destruction, and to channel the funds thus released into the creation of the prerequisites necessary for the protection of life and the preservation of the environment.
12. While convening as delegates of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church within the territory of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Estonia we have concluded that many environmental problems touch upon us closely as neighbouring countries. The treatment of these problems calls for legislative action from our states, in addition to international cooperation.
13. The assimilation of a new ecological mode of thought and the awakening to a holistic concept of ethical responsibility in regard to nature are necessities. The people of God must learn to bear their share of the responsibility for future generations. We appeal to all Christians to unite forces for the preservation of life on the earth. Each and every member of the church is called to advance the common good both in his own personal life and in society, in accordance with his capabilities. We find it of great importance that education directed at the preservation of life and the environment be carried out in the whole of society. We urge all churches and Christians to unite their strength for the achievement of these objectives

## Järvenpää 1992

### Summary on Apostolic Faith in Biblical and Doctrinal Perspectiv

#### *Appendix 1 to the Communique*

1. It is our common conviction that the truth of the Christian faith is one. In spite of the fact that our churches have different traditions, we strive to express and realize the fullness of the truth in our lives. We are searching for a consensus between our traditions, and such a consensus is the ultimate goal of our theological discussions. The apostolic legacy of the undivided Church is the basis and criterion in this search of ours.
2. The apostolic faith, which is expressed in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, lives in the tradition of the Church. The reliability and value of this tradition becomes apparent in the light of the Scriptures.
3. We unanimously agree that the Church of Jesus Christ is one, holy, catholic and apostolic. Both the Orthodox church and the Lutheran church receive the apostolic gospel of Jesus Christ and seek to follow it unwaveringly.
4. The divine origin of the apostolic teaching lies in the fact that God, the Father Almighty, has sent his Son, who chose his apostles, taught them and sent them out into the world, thus establishing his Church. In this mighty act of God, his love is revealed to us. The apostolicity of the Church and the firm authority of its doctrine are based on this divine mission.
5. Christ, risen and ascended to heaven, sent the Holy Spirit to the apostles to guide them "into all the truth" (John 16:7,13). They taught people by word of mouth and in writing, as well as by their own example. The New Testament canon was compiled out of the writings of the apostles and their followers.
6. Despite the fact that scholars have presented different views on the historical origin of certain texts in the New Testament, the Christian Church recognizes with devotion the whole New Testament as inspired by God and submits itself to its apostolic authority. The Scriptures are the basis and criterion of Christian theology, and they evaluate the accordance of that theology with the divine revelation.

7. The aim of Christ's coming to the world and the apostolic gospel of him is the salvation of fallen mankind. For this to happen, the Church must continue to proclaim the gospel of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15:1–7) and to teach Christians to obey everything He has commanded them (Matt. 28:20).
8. Jesus Christ, the founder and Head of the Church (Col. 1: 18), has promised to be with his Church always (Matt. 28:20). It has been entrusted to the Church, which is to be obedient to the gospel of Christ, to preserve the apostolic faith and to teach its content. This is possible only through the Holy Spirit, who guides the Church "into all the truth" (John 16:13).
9. In today's world there are many religious organizations and Christian movements which do not recognize the value of the apostolic doctrine and what it obliges. This is our common concern. We want to hold to the precious apostolic legacy given to the Church.
10. In the whole content of the apostolic legacy we want to emphasize especially the following:
  - a. In Jesus Christ God became man. Salvation is accomplished by Christ, who took the form of a slave and suffered death on the cross because of human sin. By his death and resurrection Christ overcame the powers of sin, death and Satan. Christ, God and man, who suffered, died, rose from the dead and ascended to heaven, is our only salvation.
  - b. In Christ we encounter the Triune God. It is in his Son that God the Father reveals his infinite and incomprehensible love to us, and it is through the revelation and illumination by the Holy Spirit that we can learn to know the Son of God.
  - c. Salvation is not only an event of the past but also present reality in the Church and in the lives of the faithful. The saving presence of Christ and the Holy Spirit is realized in proclaiming the gospel, in administering the sacraments and in worship. It is in and through them that God unites us with himself and gives us his gifts. He creates in us the true apostolic faith, in which we participate in the Triune God and the salvation that is in him. This faith is effective as love (Gal. 5:6, 1 John 4:19).

## **Summary on Apostolic Teaching and Witness in the Life of The Church today**

### *Appendix 2 to the Communique -*

1. In the New Testament usage the word "to confess" (homologeïn) means as follows: man witnesses with all his being, in both word and deed, that Jesus Christ is his Saviour and the Lord of his life,
2. The apostolic faith is expressed most genuinely where Christ is proclaimed, the sacraments are received and the Scriptures as well as the creeds of the undivided Christendom are remained faithful to.
3. People become confessors of the apostolic faith when they are incorporated into the body of Christ, the Church, by baptism administered in the name of the Holy Triune God and by true faith. The real presence of Christ, received in the sacrament of baptism, thus makes salvation possible.
4. Because of significant social and political changes as well as the diversity of the contemporary world, the apostolic witness of the churches faces new tasks, The churches are thus required to examine more and more attentively and critically their own relation with the society they are involved in.
5. In this world, which is both uniting and polarizing at the same time, Christians search for communion so as to be able to give the apostolic witness and to confess Christ together so that the world may believe (John 17:21).
6. The apostolic doctrine is the only reliable foundation for the unity of mankind and the brotherhood of man. Therefore the Church, as the body of Christ, is called to promote communion between nations. It must work for the unity of mankind and reject nationalism, which, along with the hostility it gives rise to, separates nations from each other.
7. When Christians confess the apostolic faith in their lives today, they must both preserve the foundation of this faith (Eph. 2:20-21) and take the requirements of the present into consideration. Only then will the world experience the gospel as the guiding and liberating word of truth and grace.
8. Witnessing the apostolic faith to the world is rooted in the gospel, the spiritual life of the Church and its members' true fight of the faith. The

Church is constantly being called to "go" out into the world, to open to the life of the world and to be effective in all areas of life.

9. In the present world situation the differences between rich and poor countries have accumulated. The apostolic teaching calls Christians to a simple lifestyle. The apostolic message requires them to be merciful and just to those suffering from poverty and unjust social structures.
10. In this world of change, God's word and the apostolic faith set the Church a prophetic task. They call Christians to criticize the injustices of society and, furthermore, to point in a constructive spirit to those values which are in accordance with God's will.
11. The apostolic service of the Church necessarily presupposes that Christ is proclaimed, in accordance with his command: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19). In fulfilling this command, Christians must avoid proselytism, i.e. efforts to convert Christians from one denomination to another. Action of this kind hinders them from achieving the unity of faith, confuses the spiritual life of the faithful and makes the truth revealed by God an object of ridicule to non-believers.
12. Today's world is significantly affected by the development of various forms of science and by different kinds of philosophies. These have accomplished various positive things in many areas of life. On the other hand, Christians are convinced that science and philosophy can also lead to destructive results if guided by values of life differing from those included in the apostolic faith. Science and philosophy cannot be free from ethical responsibility.

## **Kiev 1995**

### **Summary on the Mission of the Church**

1. Mission is part of the essence of the Church. It has a trinitarian foundation, and is based on a special commission and promise given by the Risen Lord (Matt. 28:18–20). The Son has received all authority from the Father ("All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me"; Matt. 28:18), and the Son has promised to be with his Church through the Holy Spirit ("I am with you always, to the end of the age"; Matt. 28:20). The essential

elements of mission are the teaching of the apostolic faith, and baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

2. The source and motivation of mission is the love of the Triune God. Love prevails between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Triune God loved the world when he created and redeemed it, and he continues to love the world in sanctifying it. Because of his love, the Father sent his Son to the world to save it: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (John 3:16).
3. Mission has an eschatological perspective. What mission aims at is the salvation of the world, humankind and the whole of creation. The Triune God brings that which has originally been his back into communion with him (1 Cor. 15:24–28; Rom. 11:36). God has authorized his Church - which is "one, holy, catholic and apostolic", as the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed says - to carry out mission. Only this kind of Church can conduct mission in accordance with the teaching of Christ.
4. The essential elements of the mission of the Church are baptism and the eucharist, in both of which believers are united with Christ: "We were all baptized into one body... and we were all made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13). "... one body... one baptism" (Eph. 4:4–5). "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Cor. 10:17). The eucharist also involves the eschatological dimension of mission: "As often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor. 11:26).
5. The Church is God's people, which is called to proclaim the gospel, because it is "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" (1 Pet. 2:9).
6. When Christians fulfil their missionary task, they are themselves bound by the Word which they preach, "... so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified" (1 Cor. 9:27).
7. The apostolic faith must be proclaimed and interpreted in all situations in such a way that the listeners can understand its content and its significance for their own lives. However, this kind of contextualization cannot be achieved by intellectual efforts alone, but it also means living together in local cultures in accordance with the apostolic faith (1 Cor. 9:20-23). In the history of mission, it has not been unheard of that local cultures have

been needlessly destroyed on the pretext of Christian faith, and replaced by the culture of missionaries. On the other hand, contextualization must not be distorted by turning it into syncretism either, because in that case the apostolic faith is distorted.

8. Mission includes both the proclamation of the gospel and the service of love, which cannot be separated from each other. Service or diaconia is one essential dimension of missionary work. Its aim is to serve all poor people, as well as those who suffer from injustices and evil. These can also manifest themselves in social structures. The Church cannot ignore this kind of evil; rather, it is called to promote justice through its proclamation and teaching. However, Christian faith must not be made political. As far as the theological foundations of diaconia and social ethics are concerned, there are difficult problems which must be dealt with more thoroughly in our churches' future discussions.
9. Ecumenically, churches have many opportunities to work together in fulfilling their task of global service. By bearing witness to the gospel in the world and by serving their neighbours unselfishly, Christians make their missionary work truly ecumenical. "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). Any missionary organization which takes advantage of people's distress in order to convert them to its own faith acts against the ecumenical principle of diaconia.
10. Inasmuch as the freedom of religion as a social principle guarantees the right of individuals and communities to practise religion, we support it unreservedly. Religious freedom establishes fundamental preconditions for the realization of human rights and fundamental social rights, and it must not be used for their violation. The principle of religious freedom gives no support to proselytism, i.e., to attempts to convert baptized Christians from one denomination to another. In itself, however, the principle of religious freedom does not lead to true Christian freedom, even though it provides the Church with an external framework for its activities. The true Christian freedom is a gift of God. "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:31–32). "For freedom Christ has set us free" (Gal. 5:1). The Church's mission and its dialogue with non-Christian faiths and ideologies are not mutually exclusive but interconnected. The uniqueness of Christianity does not mean that tolerance, which is a necessary condition for peace, should be abandoned (1 Tim. 2:1–14).

11. Proselytism is against ecumenism. It destroys Christian love and is therefore in conflict with mission. Churches which aim at mutual communion and agreement should rather try to support each other in fulfilling their missionary task.

### **Summary on the Church's Work for Peace vs. Nationalism**

1. The Almighty God created the human being in his own image. Because God's image is present in every human being, all nations are equally valuable and have an equal right to live. The diversity of nations bears witness to the riches, goodness and wisdom of God in the created world. Therefore, all nations should respect each other and seek mutual understanding and cooperation.
2. In Jesus Christ, "there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free" (Gal. 3:28). Thus, differences between "Greek", "Jew", "barbarian" and "Scythian" have disappeared in Jesus Christ (Col. 3:11). All become one in him and his Church. The fact that there are different nationalities is not annihilated by their members' joining the Church; however, all nations are equal before Christ. When the Church proclaims Christ, it invites nations to respect each other.
3. From the very beginning, the Church has understood itself as God's people, which consists of several nations. All nations are called to join the people of God in Christ. Christianity has crossed, and still crosses, ethnic, cultural and politico-social boundaries. Therefore, it is not in the nature of the Church to support hostility or patriotism of any kind.
4. According to the teaching of the Apostle Paul, God's law is written on the hearts of all human beings (Rom. 2:14–15). On this basis, all human beings have an idea of what is right and what is wrong. As a result of the Fall, however, nations' ability to understand each other has become distorted.
5. Inter- and intranational conflicts and disagreements are tearing our world apart, and cause suffering and pain. The original cause of these conflicts is sin. The Church not only tries to abolish these conflicts' destructive consequences, but also, above all, it fights against their original cause, sin. The Church of Christ is a community of reconciliation and peace in the world.
6. The universal Church of Jesus Christ is a community of believers, and its members come from all nations. Because the Church is the body of

Christ, there is no room in it for national conflicts. All members of the Church are one in Christ and in his Church, regardless of racial, national and linguistic differences. As a consequence of sin, however, Christians have become divided in the course of history, but, nevertheless, they aim at the unity of the Church of Christ. Although national differences remain, the unity of the Church means agreement in faith and love.

7. In the course of its long history, the Christian Church has created prerequisites for nations' independent lives and for the development of their original cultures. The Church has been, and still is, a great educator of nations. It respects their national traditions and cultures - although this principle of respect has not, unfortunately, always been obeyed in the history of the Church.
8. The Church invites all nations to participate in the realization of love and justice that are in accordance with God's will. One part of this is the abandonment of selfish interests, and the willingness to act towards other nations and ethnic groups according to the "do to others as you would have them do to you" principle (Matt. 7:12). In wartime and during other crises, the Church is called to be particularly watchful, so that it cannot be used as an instrument of self-serving nationalistic aspirations by anyone.
9. The reconciliation of humankind in Christ has established the prerequisites for the reconciliation which the world needs. The life of the body of Christ, i.e., the Church, is where participation in this reconciliation brought about by Christ takes place. The Church is in the service of reconciliation in the world when its members lead Christian lives, pray for peace, and take part in the eucharist - the sacrament in which both the gift of reconciliation with all people and an invitation to this reconciliation are present.

## Lappeenranta 1998

### Summary on the themes

*The Freedom of a Christian, the Freedom of the Church, the Freedom of Religion and Relations between the Church, the State and Society*

*The Freedom of a Christian, the Freedom of the Church, the Freedom of Religion*

Our discussions on freedom brought up several meanings of the concept. First, freedom means the free will given by God to humans upon creation. Secondly, freedom means a Christian's spiritual liberty, that is, a Christian's special partaking of the Holy Spirit. Thirdly, freedom is the totality of human rights that must belong to an individual in society and with respect to the state. We decided to return to the theme of a human's free will with regard to salvation in later discussions.

1. The freedom of a Christian, the freedom of the church and the freedom of religion correspond to the plan that the triune God has concerning humans, and the concepts are closely linked with each other (Col. 1:14–18; Phil. 3:20–21).<sup>1</sup>
2. The freedom of a Christian is not only a person's freedom as an individual and as a member of society, but it is a spiritual freedom from the bondage of sin, death and evil. This freedom is a gift from the triune God's expressing His limitless love that seeks out and saves people, as made apparent in the life, sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and this freedom is upheld by the Holy Spirit, for "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (2 Cor. 3:17). It does not depend on any earthly circumstances, but comes to a Christian as God's gift in faith and in baptism, and at the same time it is a Christian's final heavenly goal (Gal. 5:1; John 3:16; 1 John 4:9–18; Phil. 2:13). This gift from God is at work in every Christian who responds to God's love by fulfilling the Great Commandment (Mark 12:29–31; Gal. 5:6).
3. The freedom of a Christian becomes complete in everlasting life, when the corruption of sin is gone. There, a Christian is a completely renewed

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<sup>1</sup> All biblical quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version. Lappeenranta 1998

person (Rev. 21:1–5). In the temporal life, however, selfish inclinations continually limit a Christian’s internal and external freedom. Because of this we must again and again attend to God’s word that condemns the “old Adam”, calls us to repentance and liberates us into a joyful faith, strengthening the new creation in us (Rom. 1:16–17, 7:14–25; 2 Cor. 5:17–18).

4. The world is heading towards its eschatological goal, when all of creation “will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (Rom. 8:20–22). The church occupies a key position in this process, because it is called on to proclaim to all people the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ, of which the apostle Paul says, “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:2). The church’s mission is to unite people with Christ through baptism, strengthen them in grace through the Eucharist, and direct them to the true way of spiritual life.
5. On earth the church is the inexhaustible source of a Christian’s spiritual freedom, because it is one with the free and heavenly Jerusalem (Gal. 4:26; Heb. 12:22–24; Isaiah 54). The church is a reality that is both divine and human: on the one hand it is communion with the Holy Spirit as experienced by Christians who enact Christ’s commands in their life, so that it is not subject to any human limitations, and on the other hand it is a human community united by faith and the sacraments and spiritual life, whereupon it is subject to all the limitations of temporal life.
6. As a visible human organization the church is free when it can live according to its inner nature and confession and openly fulfil the task assigned to it by Christ (Matt. 28:18–20). It is, then, in a visible way a mother of faith and love, bearing children for a divine life. Even if the visible church lacks external freedom to carry out its task, it is nevertheless a divinely established entity that is absolutely free in an invisible, internal way (Matthew 16:18; Heb. 13:8) even when it suffers persecution (John 10:28–29; 16:33).
7. From the viewpoint of the universal governance of the triune God, freedom of religion is an instrument by which He gives the church external freedom in which to act according to its nature and task: to proclaim the gospel openly to all and to administer the Holy Sacraments. From the viewpoint of the state and human society, on the other hand, religious freedom is a civil right. A society that nurtures religious freedom understands and advances its own good, because the upholding of religious

freedom promotes peace and charity both on the individual level and in the life of society (Rom. 12:18).

### *Relations between the Church, the State and Society*

8. Churches, religious communities and the state have points of contact in all societies and political systems, and they have common interests relevant to citizens. When the state enacts human rights in a civil society, it must not only passively allow freedom of religion (“negative religious freedom”) but also actively promote the rights of citizens to exercise their religion (“positive religious freedom”) and put these rights into practice. In this sense laws on religious freedom have a dual purpose: to ensure opportunities to practice religion and at the same time to prevent the abuse of religious freedom.
9. The church lives continuously in a situation of eschatological tension (Rom. 8:24–27; 1 Cor. 13:12; 2 Cor. 5:7) that characterizes its relationship with the state and society. The church and the state are different by nature, and this means they have different tasks. The church fulfils God’s will in the world, bound to time and place, always in a specific state and society. It has a spiritual task, but its message has important social implications as well. Despite its social dimension, however, the church must not participate in political activities that contradict its spiritual task. It cannot identify itself with any political party or grouping.

In fulfilling its task the church is on the one hand subject to the governing authorities (Rom. 13:1–2) and constantly praying that they will act according to God’s will (1 Tim. 2:1–4), but on the other it always has a duty to be critical of the authorities and of society (Acts 4:19, 5:29). The church has a prophetic task to remind its own members and those who make decisions in society about God’s truth and about peace and justice (Amos 5:24).

10. Efforts are being made in Finland as well as in Russia to find the optimal way of arranging church-state relations. In developing these relations it is necessary to take into account the established cultural, religious and social realities in each country, and it is likewise necessary to harmonize relations between the majority churches and the various religious minorities, relations between believers and unbelievers, and relations between various ethnic and cultural groups. This requires the development of national legislation and administrative procedures concerning religious life. The churches must actively participate in this process.

The parties to these theological discussions express their conviction that the model of positive relations between the church and the state and its society that is typical of many European countries must be strengthened in our own countries. This model combines loyalty to the principles of religious freedom with broad cooperation between the state, society and the churches.

11. The churches of Finland and Russia have different experiences of church-state relations between the church, the state and society. Interaction between them has moulded history, culture and the national identity in both countries.

Cooperation between the church and the state must be developed further, especially in charitable and social work and in the education of children and young people. All these sectors are important for strengthening social morality. Together, the state and the church preserve a country's historical and cultural heritage.

The state and the churches serve the members of society in various fields of life, and they have the special task of upholding peace in their own societies and in the whole world. The church also serves the members of society through its work among the military forces and in hospitals and prisons.

Cooperation between the church and state, and between the church and society, is in harmony with the principle of religious freedom. Such co-operation develops religious freedom in a creative, positive way, opening up new prospects for educating and enlightening the souls of individuals and the souls of our nations and all of Europe.

It is our common conviction that the Christian churches must be in contact with each other in order to fulfil their mission in the world.

As for our churches' membership of the Conference of European Churches and its Church and Society Commission, we agree that we can make use of our shared experiences and opinions on church-state relations and relations between the church and society in these and other contacts between Christians.

Christians must be encouraged to provide an active input into pan-European processes, and contacts between the churches and European communities must be supported and developed together. One thing that

the churches can contribute to these political and social processes is their broader view of a Europe that has room for a diversity of languages, cultures and religions.

## **Turku 2005**

### **Summary The Christian View on Human Being in Today's Europe Salvation, Faith and Modern Social Realities**

#### *Christian understanding of being a human*

The overall theme of these theological discussions puts theological anthropology together with present challenges to the Christian faith. Earlier, representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Russian Orthodox Church have discussed their understanding of what it is to be human in the context of salvation. The subject has been approached from a soteriological viewpoint in 1977 in Kiev (Salvation as justification and deification), in 1980 in Turku (Faith and love as elements of salvation) and in 1986 in Mikkeli (Holiness, sanctification and the saints). Based on these thirteenth theological discussions and referring to theses prepared in earlier meetings the delegations give together the following statements:

- I.1. God created humankind in his image and likeness (Gen. 1:26–27). Originally, humans were not inclined to sin; instead, their free will followed God's will and was aligned with it. God put people in a world that was good and beautiful.
- I.2. Humans were called to live in fellowship with God and to live according to his will. Having been endowed with free will, humans were nevertheless unable to follow this call in their own strength without God. God called people to eternal life that is possible only in fellowship with him.
- I.3. Humans were created to live in fellowship with each other. They were intended to be a part of the order of love in which all creatures serve each other. The commandment of love given by God reflects the intention he has as Creator, that the purpose of the existence of humankind is to remind of the essence of the triune God.

- I.4. In the fall to sin humans refused to obey God. Love toward others was replaced by self-love. Consequently love toward the Creator of the world was narrowed down into love toward the created world, apart from God. In the Fall people were spiritually separated from God. A human became bent inward upon oneself, no longer seeing the world as God's gift but as something to exploit selfishly.
- I.5. Human will was distorted in the Fall. People came to know good and evil (Gen. 3), but it also became difficult to achieve good and prevent evil. A human's selfish will resists what the mind knows to be good. In its original state before the Fall, human will naturally sought what is good, but in the fallen state the will is distorted. "The LORD said, '... the inclination of the human heart is evil from youth...'" (Gen. 8:21).
- I.6. Sin brought illness and death into the world. "Sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). Sin and its consequences are passed on from each generation to the next.
- I.7. God originally intended to have humankind live in unity and mutual love. People were separated from each other by sin, and they started to think that turning inward upon oneself is better than fellowship in love. Individuals started to seek their own personal good in society.
- I.8. As a consequence of the Fall, human activity can lead to evil even when there is desire to do good. Only God's grace can resolve this tension and contradiction. The Bible tells about the covenant made by God and proclaims the promises God has given. Although people have not been obedient in this covenant, God holds to his promises and is gracious toward people.
- I.9. According to the New Testament, Jesus Christ is the new Adam in whom God's purpose for humankind is fulfilled. The breaking of God's will was the sin of Adam, whereas Jesus came into the world to do God's will (Heb. 10:7-10). Jesus proclaimed a kingdom that could only be entered by those who do the will of God (Matt. 7:21). Christ fulfilled God's will and overcame the power of sin. Christ, then, gives life; because of his death and resurrection every human can overcome the power of sin and be saved from death. Christ redeemed humankind from the spiritual imprisonment caused by the Fall. A human who turns to Christ in faith is freed from the power of evil by the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church, and this individual's will is made whole and compliant to God's will.

- I.10. God's grace in Christ releases a human from slavery to the law and from bondage to sin. The Holy Spirit awakens the liberated human to want as well as to do what is good (John 8:32, Rom. 6:18, Rom. 8:2, Gal. 5:1). This freedom given by God as a gift includes as a first fruit an experience of the wholeness into which humankind has been created but which is only fully realized in eternity (Rom. 8:23). Gospel accounts of healing foreshow final and holistic salvation.
- I.11. As a consequence of sin the human will lost its wholeness. "I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ...I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do" (Rom. 7:15,19). Nevertheless a human is not a doll or a robot remote-controlled by external powers. One is forced to make choices between good and evil in every moment of life.
- I.12. A human partakes of salvation in the Church of Christ. The Savior himself established the Church. According to the teaching of the apostles, the Church is the body of Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit. Within the Church a human who believes in the triune God and in Christ the Savior receives help that strengthens the will to follow the God-given commandment to love. As a follower of Christ, the Church as a community must help individuals in various ways to live in accordance to God's will.
- I.13. In its creed the Church praises the triune God for his plan to save humans. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit work together for our salvation so that a sinner turns toward God in the way that God has intended. "It is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure." (Phil. 2:13) When God in his grace gives faith and love as a gift to a human, he also aligns the human will to receive what the gospel offers. Salvation is God's gift that begins in this life and is fulfilled in eternity.
- I.14. In practicing faith among people a Christian works actively together with God. A Christian strives to do good to others because that is God's will, and also accepts from others what is needed to fulfill the Creator's good purposes. God's greatness and a Christian's humility before him are accentuated in this co-operation.

## *Foundations of social ethics and a critical look at European values*

- II.1. Our common foundation in social ethics is faith in the triune God. The Holy Trinity is a perfect communion of the persons in self-giving communication of their being. The substance of this unity is love. God's love toward the world is manifested in creation, and it culminates in Christ. God is goodness and the source and giver of all good. Because God is at work in all of creation, we understand that social ethics have to do with all the reality of the created world.
- II.2. Humankind has been created to live in communion, but falling into sin has broken this fellowship.<sup>1</sup> As a result of the Fall, powers opposing the realization of love are in this world. Today they are manifested as selfishness and self-centeredness that have arisen from unbelief. The Church sets up the commandment of love against them.
- II.3. Sin has broken the human being, but this brokenness has been healed in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). The Son of God came into the world to be human and to suffer and die for the sake of the salvation of humans (Phil. 2:6–8). A Christian, partaking of Christ and his divine love, is awakened to love fellow humans. A fallen sinner is transformed into a person who exists not only for one's own sake, but who lives for others. The fullness of being a human is made true in union with Christ, and the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:36–40) to love God and love one's neighbor as oneself tells us what this fullness means. God's love, by its nature spreading gifts, leads people to care for those who are weak and suffering, to promote justice, well-being, peace and security in the world.
- II.4. The Church is the body of Christ, its members united in love with each other and with Christ by the Holy Spirit. God upholds and renews life with his word and his sacraments in the Church. The Church, like Christ, is called to love and to give itself for the life of the world through witness, service, and caring for the world created by God.
- II.5. The demand to love is unconditional and applies to all. It must be understood in the light of God's word and as expressed in the Ten Com-

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<sup>1</sup> "Communion" and "fellowship" (both usually corresponding to the Greek *κοινωνία*) are the same word, *yhteys*, in the Finnish text. This translation into English alternates between these alternatives according to context.

mandments and the Sermon on the Mount. Society must also strive to distribute good so that all of its members get their fair share. The task of the Church in this time and age is to remind people about living according to God's will and by its teaching guide people to put the commandment of love in practice and to make right choices.

- II.6. In today's Europe Churches are continually faced with challenges posed by secularism and privatization of religious life as well as alienation from Christian values and teachings of the Church. Despite this, religious and spiritual longing and the need for moral principles have not decreased. This challenges Churches to strengthen their mission in this world and to hold on to their right to engage in dialogue with society.
- II.7. Many basic European values such as every person's value and dignity or being responsible for others have their roots in Christianity. Churches have had a key role in building up European identity. Europeans must recognize the Christian roots of their own culture and civilization conscious of the fact that Christianity is not a tradition of the past. Christianity is a living spiritual heritage that inspires millions of people and gives meaning to their lives. Churches must, therefore, participate actively in the continual development of modern Europe.
- II.8. The social role of the family has changed, and traditional family values have weakened. Even so, families are decisively important for the future of society. We wish to emphasize the responsibility that all of society has to support families. We stress that the marriage of a man and a woman has theological and spiritual significance; it is a spiritual calling. Churches have the task of supporting spouses to commit themselves to a lifelong relationship and to grow in love, mutual respect and the procreation of life. We call upon Churches to support families with children in the Christian upbringing of a new generation.
- II.9. Young people are in a vulnerable position in European society. They are subject to many kinds of influences and a flood of information. Many of them have not received Christian upbringing at home, and many of those who have received it become alienated from the Church as they seek their own way. They have spiritual needs, however, and they try to satisfy them in various ways. The Church has the task of engaging in dialogue with young people, supporting them in their spiritual search and guiding them to full spiritual life.

II.10. The Church is an eschatological community, already partaking of the Kingdom of God in this age and bearing witness to it. While being in this world and fulfilling their task, the Church and every individual Christian are not of this world. We partake of God's kingdom, and the ultimate purpose for the Church to exist is to serve the fulfillment of the world to come.

## **Pietari 2008**

14th Theological Discussions between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland St. Petersburg, September 18th–24th, 2008

### **Abstract**

The delegations of the theological discussions noted at the beginning of the discussion that the context of Russian Orthodox Church and Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, the circumstances and historic backgrounds of Finnish and Russian societies and the position of the churches and their possibilities to influence in their countries are different. However, we can note that the churches' theological views on human dignity and human rights and right to religious education are close to each other.

### *1 Human rights*

1. Each person is created by God. God has given us all reason and conscience. That is why people have the ability to distinguish between good and bad (Genesis 2:7; Proverbs 20:27). The human dignity is based on their being unique and irreplaceable as creations of God. God created people in his own image and according to his likeness (Genesis 1:26) – not to be slaves but free servants of God. God has given people the task of cultivating and cherishing the creation and of loving God more than anything else and their neighbours as themselves. They still have this same task.
2. God's incarnation in Jesus Christ expresses God's love for the world he created and for the human beings (John 3:16). In the incarnation, Christ unites his divine nature with human nature and makes salvation possible. As images of God, humans are called to act according to love and mercy. When following Christ, the incarnated God, who has suffered for human beings, we are to make the sacrifice of loving our neighbour. (Phil. 2:5–11).

3. Both rights and duties are involved in being a human being. Based on creation, all people must be treated with respect and according to their human dignity. Human rights are inalienable rights that belong to all humans, and societies must secure the implementation of these rights.
4. When implementing human rights and freedoms, Christians must follow the example of their Lord and be faithful to God's commandments (Mark 10:29–31) that obligate them also to be responsible for their neighbours and the society.
5. Freedom of religion is a basic human right. The special duty of the state is to create prerequisites for practice of religion both in private and in a community.
6. It is important for Christians to be able to confess their faith in society and implement faith and love in different sectors of society (Gal. 5:6).
7. If legislation in society interprets citizens' basic rights in conflict with the word of God or prevents them from being implemented, the Church and Christians must, following the instructions of the apostle, obey more God than humans (Acts 4:19–20, 5:29).
8. In addition to freedom of religion, human rights include right to life, basic social, political and economic rights, for example freedom to assemble and to organise, freedom of speech and right to work and subsistence. The duty of the Church is to defend the human rights of all people and to emphasize, in addition to the rights, also the importance of fulfilling one's duties according to the principle of reciprocity (Matt. 7:12; Rom. 13:8).
9. Our Churches are to continue the discussion on human value and human rights. Also the issue of power and use of force was brought up in our discussions. It is good to examine these issues closer in our next theological discussions.

## *II "Religious Education and Teaching of Religion from a Christian Perspective"*

1. Our Saviour considered children as an example of faith, gave them a very special place near him and called for us to be like children (Matt. 19:13–15; Matt. 11:25). According to Christ's example and following his

commandment (Matt. 28:18–20), our churches are to take care of the Christian education of children in the spirit of the gospel.

2. The goal of Christian education and teaching based on Christian anthropology, is to help us to create the right kind of relationship with God, our neighbours and environment (Deut. 6:20–25; Psalms 78:2–7). Relaying a certain amount of knowledge is part of Christian education, but its goal is especially the overall development of a human being's personality (Prov. 3:13–18).
3. God has given us conscience, the ability to distinguish between good and evil (Rom. 2:14–15). Due to sin, understanding this may easily become blurred and that is why people need the guidance given by the word of God. Christian education is based on the values of the gospel and it strives to rouse and enhance the voice of conscience in us (Eph. 6:4).
4. The church must have the right and possibility to actively participate in creating and assessing the value base of society also at the stage when an individual's value system is being formed – in our childhood and youth. Each child has the right to have answers to the big questions about God, origin of the world and meaning of life. Our churches are aware of their responsibility of getting the growing generation acquainted with the answers that Christian faith offers to these basic questions of life (Eccl. 12:1–7).
5. Each culture has been influenced by the religious traditions involved in it in history. The message of Christianity has significantly impacted the development of our culture in two millennia. Religious education in schools helps children and youth to be aware of the Christian roots of our society.
6. Christian education and teaching of religion are a process of relaying the Christian world view, tradition, ethics and lifestyle. Tradition is one of the basic principles in the development of civilisation and culture. Tradition is not a stagnant state but a creative process. Relaying the Christian tradition creates and upholds a safe atmosphere of hope that supports children in the development of their personalities. Knowing and adopting one's own tradition gives a firm basis for respecting other people's traditions (Lev. 19:33–34; Deut. 10:17–19).
7. Freedom of religion is a basic human right. Each child has the right to religious education that corresponds to the child's own religious traditions. Information about religion cannot be taught in schools completely impartially because the teaching always reflects some world view and value

system. Accepting religious education in the curriculum does not lessen the non-religious character of school. A distinction must be made between the baptismal teaching of the Church and the school's religious education. Schoolchildren should have the possibility to obtain profound knowledge of their own religious tradition and basic knowledge of other traditions.

8. The educational goals of public school and Church can be in harmony with each other. In many European countries, such as Finland, schools offer teaching of one's own religion in the spirit of positive freedom of religion. Getting to know religious traditions is in line with this principle.
9. Christian education supports the ethical values of society in the spirit of responsible freedom and creates the prerequisites for the encounter of religions and different value systems. The duty of Christian churches is to be actively involved in solving inter-cultural conflicts and support reconciliation between and peaceful coexistence of cultures.

## **Siikaniemi 2011**

*The Church as Community. Christian Identity and Church Membership*

### **Thesis Group I.**

1. The Church was part of the plans of the triune God already before creation and it has been present through the whole history of salvation led by God as is said in the Epistle to the Ephesians 1:3,4,13: "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. ... And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit."
2. The Holy Trinity is the first image of the Church's existence and life. In Church the person partakes of eternal life through the grace of the Holy Spirit through God's word and holy sacraments, and he comes into the community of love which is a picture of the love that exists between the persons of the Holy Trinity.

3. The Church that was predicted in the Old Testament and founded "when the times reach their fulfillment" (Eph. 1:10) by Our Lord Jesus Christ is an eschatological community. In it the history of salvation culminates in the descent of the Holy Spirit. The central meaning of the history of salvation is the Lord's suffering servant, Our Lord Jesus Christ, depicted in the book of Isaiah, chapter 53, whose life, suffering, death, burial and resurrection are key points in the gospel on the kingdom of heaven that is to be declared to all people. The Father has sent the Son to connect all people to Him through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit that acts in the Church allows a person to partake of salvation, sanctifies him and leads him to eternal life.
4. Baptism in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit makes a person a part of God's act of salvation in Christ. Baptism joins the person to the Church as a member, into the body of Christ, and connects with both the head and all its members. (Galatians 3:26–29)
5. The Church fellowship culminates in the sacrament of communion. In the Eucharist the members of the Church share both Christ's and their own life with all the members of his body (1 Corinthians 10: 16–17). In this sacrament the Creator and the created, heaven and earth, humans and angels, the living and previously living members of the Church are connected.
6. Since the beginning, baptism and Eucharist have been the most important sacraments in Christian thought. On them is founded the Church's unity and communion (koinonia) that the triune God creates. "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." (Ephesians 4:3–6)
7. The one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church is a historical reality that at the same time transcends the boundaries of time and space. The Church's unity and continuity are closely connected to the ministry of bishop. The question of the bishop's place and role in the Church should be taken up as a theme in the next discussions between our churches.
8. Christ's Church is universal. Its message about the death of the son of God and resurrection belongs to all humanity. It concerns their whole life comprehensively, both physically and spiritually. The Church is called to

faithfully fulfill Christ's command of preaching the Gospel and serving the world. (Matthew 28:18–20)

9. Jesus declared an eschatological jubilee (Luke 4:17-19 and Isaiah 61:1-3) when God's justice is realized on earth. Christ himself gave an example to his disciples of how to serve (Mark 10:42-45 and Luke 22:25-27). For Christians this was an invitation to do social work. The first Christians sold their belongings and distributed it among the needy thus giving future generations an example of Christian love and sacrifice (Acts 2:42–47).
10. The Church is a community of mutual sharing and atonement, through whose mediation God's love is revealed to the world (Matthew 25:34–40). Christ takes man's sin, distress and suffering to bear, and Christians are also called to carry each others' burdens (Galateans 6:2). That is why the Eucharist and social work belong inextricably together. Christ gives himself utterly as a sacrifice so that his own people will give themselves as living sacrifice (Romans 12:1), and would conduct "liturgy after liturgy". Communion directs them to feed the hungry, to take care of the weak, to heal the sick and to bring hope to the hopeless. The Church also has a social dimension. The Church lives in the world, but not from the world. It should prove to the world God's goodness and love in both word and deed.

## **Thesis Group II**

1. The Christian faith is a fundamental element in European culture and society. Christianity has shaped our understanding of the deepest nature of human personality. This understanding emphasizes the infinite value of human life as well as a person's freedom and responsibility. According to the Christian viewpoint, personality develops best in a society that cherishes the person's uniqueness but which also shields it from selfish individualism. Christian society reflects the life of the Holy Trinity and sets the person into a connection, *koinonia*, with God and other people. Taking part in society's life also modifies the person's real Christian identity, the strengthening of which is one of the Church's most important pastoral duties in this age.
2. In the ongoing process of the shaping of ecclesiastical identity, the message of the Bible, the creeds of the Early Church and the heritage of church fathers and teachers remain unchanged. At the same time the Church cannot leave unanswered the new challenges of today's society.

3. One of the most important tasks of the church is moulding its members' true Christian identity on the basis of early Christian ideals. It should be the identity, based on the Gospel, of the disciples of Christ and those who follow His will (1. John 3:23) and who acknowledge Christ as Lord and God (John 20:28). In this sense, Christian identity should be by its nature Christ-centered and Eucharistic. Today, the question of ecclesiastical identity is especially important. The moral implications of the Christian identity have a special meaning in this process.
4. A Christian upbringing significantly affects the moulding of a Christian identity whose basis is built in homes and congregations. The church should support the educational task of homes so that the message of the church becomes the most important feature defining the members' Christian identity. The activities of the congregation should support the formation of a Christian identity. The educational goals of the public schools and the church can be compatible with those of the church (thesis II,8 of the St. Petersburg 2008 talks). Thus, the school can support the strengthening of a Christian identity.
5. The message and actions of the Church are essentially linked together. Where church members live according to their faith, showing Christian love in their deeds and in their attitudes to the surrounding world, the church's membership becomes strengthened and the church attracts new members.
6. In love motivated by faith the church life's missionary dimension becomes manifest and Christ's command is fulfilled: "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35)

In Hollola on the 11th of September, 2011

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Patriarch Pimen and Archbishop Martti Simojoki in Kiev 1977

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