

TEO, ISSN 2247-4382
70 (1), pp. 82-109, 2017

The Need for Reconciliation in Europe Part II

Dieter Brandes

Dieter Brandes

United Evangelical Mission, Germany
Email: dieter.brandes@gmx.de

Abstract

This material continues the previous presentation on the reconciliation process in Europe. Now we turn to the Church's Ministry of Reconciliation in Europe. In the first part of the paper we show some examples of Reconciliation processes between and within Churches and then we go on by discussing the efforts for reconciliation made by the Conference of European Churches.

Keywords

Europe, reconciliation, church, Conference of European Churches, Charta Oecumenica

III. The Church's Ministry of Reconciliation in Europe

III.1. Examples of Reconciliation processes between Churches

Churches must confess "that they themselves in the past, were often bad witnesses to the Christian message of reconciliation"¹ and very often "Religions and churches (themselves) are part of the problem".²

¹ *Final Document Nr. 3 of the Second European Ecumenical Assembly in Graz 1997 (Graz 3)*, www.kek-cec.org, B3: "Lasting necessity of reconciliation".

² *Final Document Nr. 3...*, B34: "Role of churches in conflicts".

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And to look back and reappraise is not “straightforward progression” because “rather, dangers are everywhere: civil wars, economic breakdowns, and massive hardship”.³

But the characterization of the Christians hope is “neither facile optimism nor resigning pessimism” but orientation to the “God’s universal Ministry of Reconciliation”. Therefore “the churches are called upon to take over the Ministry of Reconciliation”⁴ because “the future of Europe will depend not least on how faithfully Christianity fulfills its mission”.⁵

Viorel Ioniță as one of the writer of the Charta Oecumenica argued: “people of faith in Jesus Christ, who reconciled all human beings unconditionally to the Father, Christians as individual persons and churches as communities cannot be prisoners of the past; they have to liberate themselves from the past, to be able to forgive and to look into the future, then they have been forgiven and they have to forgive.”⁶

The Faith and Order Committee of the World Council of Churches has published its decades of experience with reconciliation. In the summary of the experience begins the paragraph “The Reconciliation of Memories” with the sentence:

“Human Development, and all acquired knowledge, are to great extent based on the ability to organize and the advantage of memories. Without memory human beings cannot take advantage of what they have learned or experienced... Memory enables every human being to function effectively.”⁷

Every human society bases its identity on memories in historiography and cultural history. Memory connects with the living as well as with the pre-generations. Because “the past is not dead; It has not even passed.”⁸

³ *Verantwortung für ein soziales Europa*, Denkschrift Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland EKD, Gütersloh 1991, pp. 80f.

⁴ *Verantwortung für ein soziales Europa*, p. 81.

⁵ *Verantwortung für ein soziales Europa*, p. 81.

⁶ Viorel Ioniță, *Reconciliation - A Permanent Concern for the Conference of European Churches*, in “Reconciliatio” nr. 4: “Telling Stories of Hope – Reconciliation in South East Europe Compared to World Wide Experiences – Festschrift in Honor of Dieter Brandes to his 65th Birthday”, edited by Vasile Grăjdian, Olga Lukács, Cluj Napoca – Leipzig, 2010, pp. 93-98, here p. 98.

⁷ *Participation in God’s Mission of Reconciliation – A Resource for Churches in Situations of Conflict* – Faith and Order Paper 201, World Council of Churches, Geneva 2006, S. 52 (Nr. 147)

⁸ Christa Wolf, *Kindheitsmuster*, Darmstadt-Neuwied 1977, S. 9

According to the presumably oldest confession to God in the Old Testament, Miriam praises her God by referring to the history of her people with the same God in the “Reed Sea”: “He threw horses and chariots into the sea” (Exodus 15,21). This as well as many other experiences of a common history (with God) connect the people of Israel together for over more than 3000 years now.⁹

And “Faith and Order” reminds us that even Christians in the Eucharist break bread and pour out the wine “in remembrance of Him”¹⁰ (Jesus Christ). Thus, the authors of the Gospels and letters of the New Testament also placed great emphasis on the fact that the stories of the redemption of humanity were held by Jesus Christ as the foundation of faith.

Later it was then as important to the church fathers that the many subsequent experiences of people and peoples with the Holy Spirit of God in history have been recorded.

“The confession of fathers and mothers has become a confession of sons and daughters. The communion with former generations is the foundation for the communion with the present generations in the church. The awareness of

- the past histories of the fathers and the awareness
- that we, Christians inherit a future ranging beyond the existing world,”¹¹
- and “the perception that the memory awakens the conscience” that the “conscience”-related speech and action is not a matter for the individual, but also for the (Christian) community.

These attributes and characteristics of human coexistence in community are contributions to the European (identity and) integration.¹²

Examples of reconciliation paths between churches, as they have been going since the end of the Second World War, are exemplified below:

⁹ Johnston McMaster, Dieter Brandes, *Healing of Memories / Healing through Remembering* in “Reconciliation” nr. 1: “Healing of Memories in Europe - A Study of Reconciliation between Churches, Cultures and Religion”, edited by Dieter Brandes, Cluj Napoca – Leipzig 2008, pp. 3-12, here p. 4.

¹⁰ *Participation in God’s Mission of Reconciliation* a.a.O. S. 52, Nr. 148.

¹¹ Johnston McMaster, Dieter Brandes, *Healing of Memories*, p. 4.

¹² Walter Herrenbrück, *Der Beitrag des Protestantismus zur europäischen Integration*, in “Protestantismus in Europa – Das ‘Zentrum Europa’ des 29. Deutschen Evangelischen Kirchentages 2001“, edited by Christoph Quarch and Hans Michael Heinig, Münster-Hamburg-London 2002, pp.12 – 18 , here p. 15.

*The Need for Reconciliation in Europe***a) 1945 The church confessions of guilt in Germany****i) The Pastoral letter of the German Catholic Episcopate**

At the tomb of St. Boniface, the German Catholic bishops formulated a letter of August 23, 1945, which is generally regarded as the first catholic ecclesiastical confession of faith immediately after the Second World War. In a “pastoral letter”, the German Catholic bishops formulate:

“We deeply deplore the fact that many Germans, even from our ranks, have been deceived by the false doctrines of National Socialism, and have remained indifferent to crimes against human freedom and human dignity. Many by their attitude, the crime of crime, many have themselves become criminals. Serious responsibility comes to those who, by virtue of their position, could know what was happening in us and which by their influence could have prevented such crimes and had not done them. Indeed they have made these crimes possible, and have thus declared themselves solidarity with the criminals.”¹³

However, here either guilt and crime are mentioned, nor the bishops comprise themselves as “co-responsible” and as such, “who could know because of their position what was going on with us”.¹⁴

Shortly after the end of the war, individual bishops had publicly condemned the Nazi crimes, but this also connected with warnings of the revenge of the victorious nations and references to the suffering of the Germans too.

In a climate of uncertainty, the bishops formulated a common confession here at the tomb of St. Boniface in Fulda, which clearly indicated the failure of many individual Catholics, but at the same time left open the question whether the church had failed as an organization.¹⁵

ii) The Stuttgart Protestant Church Declaration of Guilt

The Stuttgart Declaration of Guilt (*Stuttgarter Schuldbekentnis*) 1945 October 19 was a declaration of guilt by representatives of the Evangelical Church in Germany (*Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland*, EKD), in which the German Protestant Churches confessed: “We did ... not stand-

¹³ Georg Denzler, and Volker Fabricius, *Die Kirchen im Dritten Reich. Christen und Nazis Hand in Hand?*, Volume 2, Frankfurt, 1984, p. 58.

¹⁴ 1945: *Die Kirchen vorher und nachher* - Die Kirchen in Deutschland 1945: Vorher und nachher, <https://www.ibka.org/artikel/ag98/1945.html#6>.

¹⁵ Compare *Ein historisches Schuldbekentnis*, <http://www.katholisch.de/aktuelles/aktuelle-artikel/ein-historisches-schuldbekentnis>.

ing to our beliefs more courageously” against “the National Socialist regime of violence”.

Beforehand at the “Conference at Treysa” 1945 August 27-31 was founded the Federation of German Protestant Churches “Kirchenbund” as the “precursor” of the EKD.

But in the final declaration of the assembled protestant Church leader of Germany was no word about guilt of the churches. Only the following part was included:

“Where the Church took their responsibility seriously, she called to the commandments of God ... But they were pushed back into the church rooms, like a prison. We separated our people from the church. The public was not allowed to hear their words.”¹⁶

The Treysa Conference achieved some administrative unity requirements regarding organization of the new intended Federation of German protestant Churches.

Martin Niemoeller¹⁷ however already confessed in Treysa:

“The real guilt pertained to the Church. The Church solely has known that the degenerate way would lead to destruction, and she did not uncover the injustice done.”¹⁸ And subsequent after the conference Niemoeller stated with some frustration, that „you should have seen this self-satisfied church at Treysa.”¹⁹

Robert Murphy, a career diplomat of the USA, commented: “There is (only) little evidence that the German Protestant church repented German’s war of aggression or the cruelties.”²⁰

On the occasion of the first meeting of the “Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany” (EKD) together with West European and North American Church representatives on 18 and 19 October 1945, the “Stutt-

¹⁶ *Wort der Kirchenkonferenz der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland an die Gemeinden, Treysa – August 1945*, http://www.ekkw.de/media_ekkw/downloads/ekkw_kriegsende_wort_kirchenkonferenz_treysa_1945.pdf

¹⁷ Prisoner in concentration camps (KZ) 1937-45, church president of the church of Hessen and Nassau 1947–1964

¹⁸ Michael Heymel, Martin Niemöller, *Vom Marineoffizier zum Friedenskämpfer*, Darmstadt: Lambert Schneider 2017, p. 123 f.

¹⁹ Matthew D. Hockenos, *A Church Divided: German Protestants Confront the Nazi Past*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2004, pp. 75–90.

²⁰ Michael Heymel, Martin Niemöller, *Vom Marineoffizier zum Friedenskämpfer*, p. 123.

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gart Declaration of Guilt” was pronounced on the German side with the well-known passage:

“Through us infinite wrong was brought over many peoples and countries. That which we often testified to in our communities, we express now in the name of the whole church: We did fight for long years in the name of Jesus Christ against the mentality that found its awful expression in the National Socialist regime of violence; but we accuse ourselves for not standing to our beliefs more courageously, for not praying more faithfully, for not believing more joyously, and for not loving more ardently.”

This confession of the German Protestantism after the war opened again the way to international ecclesiastical ecumenism. The Stuttgart Church Confession of Guilt paved the way to reconciliation with churches in Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary and in Western Europe with France, the Benelux countries, Great Britain, Denmark and others.

b) The Reconciliation process between the Polish Ecumenical Council and the Evangelical Church in Germany

In February 1957, for the first time, an official EKD delegation, headed by the President of the Church of Hessen-Nassau Martin Niemoeller, visited the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland (Polish: Kościół Ewangelicko-Augsburski w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej).²¹ This visit of the EKD delegation initiated a phase of rapprochement and mutual encounters between German and Polish protestants.

In 1958 in Luebeck, at the conference of the “Evangelischer Bund” and the “Institute for Ecumenical Studies and Research“ Zygmund Michaelis, deputy bishop of the Evangelical Augsburg Church in Poland and President of the Polish Ecumenical Council, called for “to reconcile and balance opposites, to forgiveness and to overcome distrust”.²²

But particularly in 1965 the so called “East Memorandum” (Memorandum regarding the relations to East Europe) of the “Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany” EKD brought the sustained breakthrough.

²¹ Compare *Neue Gräben in Europa ? Versöhnung, Aufgabe der Kirchen in der Ukraine, in Weissrussland, Polen und Deutschland*, edited by Kontaktausschuss des Polnischen Ökumenischen Rates und der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland, Hannover, 1997, p. 8.

²² *Schweizerischer Evangelischer Pressedienst*, Nr. 39, 1958, October 1.

The full title of this memorandum was: “The situation of the expellees and the relationship of the German people to their eastern neighbors.”²³

The “East Memorandum” consistently followed the theological-ethical and inter-human pastoral path, emphasizing that the participation of the theology is “less concerned with the upper stratum of concrete political decision than rather with the ‘deep layer of inner injuries’ ... and the real willingness to achieve reconciliation”.²⁴

But anyhow the “East Memorandum” of the EKD was strongly controversial and triggered large discussions in Germany. But this memorandum “regarded as the pioneer of the policy of *d’etante*”.²⁵

On the Catholic side, 1960 in the early phase of the process of reconciliation, Julius Doepfner, Bishop of Wuerzburg and Berlin, addressed the topic of reconciliation between Germany and Poland in a preachment instead of the mutual set-off of guilt: “for the future the communion of peoples and states is more important than the border questions.”²⁶

In 1964 then, the German Catholic lay movement Pax Christi started a pilgrimage to the concentration camp Auschwitz with visits also to concentration camp victims and surviving dependants in Poland.

In the following correspondence 1965 of the Polish and German Catholic bishops, the Polish bishops encouraged that “despite this almost hopelessly distressed situation” shall apply “no polemic, no further cold war, but the beginning of a dialogue”. And the German bishops took the offered hands with “fraternal reverence” and asked God “that never again the demon of hatred would separate our hands”²⁷.

²³ *Die Lage der Vertriebenen und das Verhältnis des deutschen Volkes zu seinen östlichen Nachbarn. Eine evangelische Denkschrift*, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, Hannover, 1965.

²⁴ *Die Denkschriften der Evangelischen Kirchen in Deutschland*, Bd. 1/1, Gütersloh, 1978, S. 119.

²⁵ *Dialog, Versöhnung und Brüderlichkeit*, Gemeinsames Wort der Deutschen und der Polnischen Bischofskonferenz vom 13. Dezember 1995, Pressemitteilung der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz, Bonn 13. Dezember, 1995.

²⁶ *Versöhnung aus der Kraft des Glaubens - 20 Jahre deutsch-polnischer Briefwechsel*, edited by Pressestelle der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz, 1985, quoted in *Dialog, Versöhnung und Brüderlichkeit*, p. 26.

²⁷ *Dialog, Versöhnung und Brüderlichkeit*, p. 9.

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The exchange of letters between the Polish and German Catholic bishops was only little controversial in Germany. On the other hand, the EKD's East Memorandum triggered a heated debate not only with the expellees. The allegations ranged from "unnecessary renunciation" to "treason against the German people".

Conversely it was in Poland. The East Memorandum of the EKD was generally accepted positively. On the other hand, the exchange of letters of the Catholic bishops caused a violent controversy between the state and the Catholic Church. Politicians denied the church the legitimacy to be allowed to speak about questions of Polish national existence.

However, today it is a consensus that both courageous paths, the Protestant and the Catholic, have marked a new beginning for the reconciliation between Poland and Germany. Both reconciliation paths can be described as the predecessors of the famous Genuflection by Chancellor Willy Brandt in Warsaw on the 7th of December 1970 at the memorial for the dead of the Warsaw ghetto. They can be seen today as the first triggers of a new German East German politician.

c) The separating fence between Czech and Germany is broken

In 1955, the official church dialogue between churches in Germany and the Czech Republic had begun with the first visit of an EKD delegation to the Churches of Czechoslovakia (including Otto Dibelius and later Federal President Gustav Heinemann) and a visit to Germany in September.

In the course of the difficult discussions, it became evident that reconciliation always involves mutual reconciliation as well. Therefore it became possible to jointly commemorate the atrocities of the Nazis in the Czech and Slovakia and the displacement and the injustice that happened to the Germans sometimes in the same concentration camps.

There followed a long and painful process of reconciliation, which reached its preliminary climax in 1998 with the joint memorandum of the Evangelical Church of the Bohemian Brethren and the Evangelical Church in Germany "The separating fence has been broken off".²⁸

²⁸ *Der trennende Zaun ist gebrochen – Zur Verständigung zwischen Tschechen und Deutschen*, edited by Evangelischen Kirche der Böhmisches Brüder und der EKD, Leipzig, 1998.

d) *The consultation process “Reconciliation in Europe” – Responsibility of the Churches in Ukraine, Belarus, Poland and Germany*

In 1997, consultations “Reconciliation in Europe - The Church Ministry in Ukraine, Belarus, Poland and Germany”²⁹ took place, in which the main question was: “What has to happen to finish this historical bonding?”

Finally it was found that injuries between humans, cultures and peoples did not only root in the wars of the 20th century. Very often they date far back in history. In the case of Orthodox, Greek-Catholic (Eastern Catholic) and Roman-Catholic churches in the habitat of Ukraine, Belarus and Poland have to be retraced back to the time of the Brest jurisdiction in 1596 (inception of the Union of Brest of the Greek-Catholic church).

Other consultations followed:³⁰

1997 June 23-29 in Graz-Swiss

1998 June 21 in Warsaw-Poland

1999 May 7-12 in Minsk and Grodno (Hrodna) – Belarus

2001 April 26-29 in Kiev (Kyif) – Ukraine

2001 October 18-22 in Minsk and Witebsk (Wizebsk) – Belarus

2002 February 7-10 in Minsk – Belarus

2002 February 22-23 in Warsaw-Poland

2002 September 18-22 “Consultation of visiting” in Ukraine

2003 May 8-11 in Mikolajki (Nikolaiken) - Poland

2003 September 29-30 in Berlin-Germany

2004 January 29-30 in Berlin-Germany

2004 September 15-19 in Minsk and Hlubokoye – Belarus

2005 March 7 in Odeca (Odessa) – Ukraine

2005 June 24-25 in Kiev (Kyif) – Ukraine

2005 September 14-18 in Kiev (Kyif) – Ukraine

2006 September 14-16 in Bialystok - Poland

²⁹ Compare *Versöhnung in Europa – Aufgabe der Kirchen in der Ukraine, in Weissrusland, Polen und Deutschland*, edited by Kirchenamt der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland (EKD), Hannover, 2006.

³⁰ Compare *Versöhnung in Europa...*, pp. 8-29.

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The final paper 2006 in Hannover declared as results:

“Es ist der zwischenkirchlichen Arbeitsgruppe gelungen, in den beteiligten Kirchen der jeweiligen Länder Vertrauen in ihre Arbeit wachsen zu lassen.“

“The Interchurch Working Group succeeded that in the participating churches of the respective countries was growing trust in their work.”³¹

The working group “did not conduct theological dialogues” but the concept has proven successful, “the (topics of) reconciliation to connect with practical-theological, social and social issues“ and there to find „much more similarities”.³²

The “intercultural working group and the entire project” had succeeded in performing a “bridging function:

- a bridge between eastern and western churches
- a bridge between EU countries and non-EU countries
- a bridge between church and society.”³³

e) The Orthodox-Anglican Dialog

Early in the 17th century already Orthodox and Anglican Church leaders were in contact with each other. Patriarch Cyril of Constantinople and Archbishop George Abbot of Canterbury communicated one another from 1611 to 1633 and Archbishop Abbot invited the Ecumenical Patriarch to send Greek students for studying theology in England.³⁴

From 1699 to 1705a Greek College came into life at Oxford.³⁵

In 1725, the Anglican Archbishop Wake wrote to Patriarch Chrysanthos: “we, the true Bishops and clergy of the Church of England, as, in every fundamental article we profess the same Faith with you“.³⁶

In 1840, the Anglican Bishop of Gibraltar was sent to the Middle East and directed “to make it clear to the Orthodox that the Anglican Church

³¹ *Versöhnung in Europa...*, p. 30.

³² *Versöhnung in Europa...*, p. 31.

³³ *Versöhnung in Europa...*, p. 31f.

³⁴ Compare *Orthodox Anglicanism and Christian Reunion*, <https://www.pravoslavie.ru/59798.html>.

³⁵ “But closed because of the difficulty of getting Greek students to England“ , <https://www.pravoslavie.ru/59798.html>.

³⁶ Vasil T. Istavridis, *Orthodoxy and Anglicanism*, trans. by Davey Colin, London, S.P.C.K., 1966, p. 5.

had nothing to do with proselytizing activities among Orthodox Christians in the Middle East³⁷.

On February 1873, the Patriarchate of Constantinople interdicted proselytizing among Anglicans and the international Assembly of the Anglican Bishops at the third Lambeth Conference in July 1888³⁸ stressed that proselytizing of Eastern Orthodox Christians must stop.³⁹ In the final document the Lambeth Conference declared at resolution 17: "This Conference... desires to express its hope that the barriers to fuller communion may be, in the course of time, removed by further intercourse and extended enlightenment."

In 1925 to the 1600th anniversary of the Council of Nicea the Archbishop of Canterbury invited representatives of the Patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem and the Metropolitan Antony, primate of the Russian Orthodox Church.

These contacts between the Orthodox and the Anglican Churches led to three official common Conferences: 1930 and 1931 in London and 1935 in Bucharest. This last Conference was the high point in Anglican-Orthodox rapprochement. In the final document of the 1935 Conference in Bucharest, the delegates declared: "A solid basis has been prepared whereby full dogmatic agreement may be affirmed between the Orthodox and Anglican Communion."⁴⁰

After the Second World War in 1964 unanimously the Third Pan-Orthodox Conference at Rhodes invited officially the Anglican Church Community to resume the dialogue.

After separate preparatory commissions as inter-orthodox commission (1966 Beograd, 1970 Chambésy/Genf, 1971 Helsinki, 1972 Chambésy/Genf) and as inter-Anglican commission (1969 Jerusalem, 1971 Haywards

³⁷ *Orthodox Anglicanism and Christian Reunion*, <https://www.pravoslavie.ru/59798.html>.

³⁸ For more information compare *The Lambeth Conferences of 1867, 1878 and 1888*, edited by David Randall T 1889, London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. Retrieved 11 June 2017.

³⁹ Compare *Orthodox Anglicanism and Christian Reunion*, <https://www.pravoslavie.ru/59798.html>.

⁴⁰ *Orthodox Anglicanism and Christian Reunion*, <https://www.pravoslavie.ru/59798.html>.

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Heath England), the following Orthodox-Anglican Dialog may be scaled into four phases:⁴¹

First Phase :

The Anglican - Orthodox dialogue began in 1973, with its first meeting in Oxford. The first phase of the dialogue was concluded by the publication of the “**Moscow Agreed Statement**“ in 1976.

As important declarations are cited the following articles:⁴²

18b For Anglicans, the concept of infallibility has acquired unfortunate associations by reason of the definition of the First Vatican Council ... For the Orthodox, the concept of *indefectibility* has ambiguous associations on account of the way in which it has been used in modern theology.

21 The Anglican members ... agree (regarding the issue of the filioque) that:

(a) because the original form of the Creed referred to the origin of the Holy Spirit from the Father,

(b) because the Filioque clause was introduced into this Creed without the authority of an Ecumenical Council and without due regard for Catholic consent, and

(c) because this Creed constitutes the public confession of faith by the People of God in the Eucharist, the Filioque clause should not be included this Creed.

Second phase :

The publication of “**The Dublin Agreed Statement**” in 1984 brought the second phase of the Orthodox-Anglican Dialog to a conclusion.

As important declarations are cited the following articles:⁴³

Conclusion :

We are not required to solve outstanding problems ... Nor are we trying to produce too quickly materials

44. Further discussions on the Filioque led to the reaffirmation by both Anglicans and Orthodox ... that this phrase should not be included in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed

⁴¹ For more detailed information compare for instance Gary Vachicouras, *Historical Survey on the International Bilateral Dialogues of the Orthodox Church*, *Derecho y religión*, nr. 3, 2008 (Ejemplar dedicado a: Christianity in Europe), pp. 151-190; and *Dokumente wachsender Übereinstimmung. Sämtliche Berichte und Kon-senstexte interkonfessioneller Gespräche auf Weltebene*, Bd. 1: 1931-1982, Bd. 2: 1982-1990, Bd. 3: 1990-2001, edited by H. Meyer u.a., Paderborn-Frankfurt a.M., 1983 and 1992.

⁴² http://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/103815/the_moscow_statement.pdf

⁴³ http://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/103812/the_dublin_statement.pdf

47. Looked at from outside, the two Churches appear to be very different in their attitude to tradition, the Anglicans allowing a great variety of attitude and teaching, the Orthodox being strongly attached to the definitions and the structures of the tradition

Epilogue :

90. We agree in our basic understanding of the inspiration and authority of Scripture... But we have not attempted to state in detail how critical methods of historical research are to be applied to the Bible

99. But while we agree that the Church is one, holy, catholic and apostolic, we are not agreed on the account to be given of the sinfulness and division which is to be observed in the life of Christian communities.

113. In regard to icons ... there is no serious disagreement here between Anglicanism and Orthodoxy.

Third phase :

The third phase of the dialogue began in 1989 at New Valaamo, five years after the publication of the Dublin Agreed Statement when the Orthodox-Anglican "Internal Commission for Anglican – Orthodox Theological Dialogue" (ICAOTD) was (re-)constituted in 1989 at New Valaamo. In 2004 was stated that the Commission's goal is to bring together all the Interim Agreements since 1989 in a Report for publication in 2006 which is entitled "The Church of the Triune God" known as the "Cyprus Agreed Statement".⁴⁴ The document "presents a considerable agreement over a range of issues".⁴⁵ The co-chairmen, Metropolitan John Zizioulas of Pergamon annotated in the preface: "Now it is a conversation of delight and illumination".⁴⁶

As important declarations are cited the following articles:⁴⁷

1.25 The universal Church exists only as a communion of local churches. In this respect there is a convergence between Orthodox and Anglican understandings of the Church.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Gary Vachicouras, *Historical Survey...*, p. 160.

⁴⁵ Gary Vachicouras, *Historical Survey...*, p. 160: „The question of the ordination of women remains unresolved in this document.“

⁴⁶ *Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue: The Church of the Triune God. The Cyprus Agreed Statement of the International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue 2006*, London, The Anglican Communion Office, 2006, p. 9.

⁴⁷ *Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue...*, p. 9.

⁴⁸ "It is a fact of both Orthodox and Anglican church life that each church is organized on the basis of national or regional local churches.;" Hugh Wybrew, *The church of*

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3.33 Christology has never developed in a cultural vacuum... Gospel and culture ... should be vigorous interaction and dialogue between them.

5.2 In the Anglican and Orthodox vision the primary way of ecclesial being is the local church.

5.21 This ensures a proper balance between primacy and conciliarity: and the primate is the first among equals in synods of bishops.

5.24 Mutual questioning in charity and ecclesial fellowship reveals aspects of church life which may need to be changed. ... This process may open up new horizons; and we may be able to help each other more than we can imagine'

6.18 The Eucharist is not the action of an ordained individual but that of a community; it is celebrated by priest and people together.

7.24 Our present aim is therefore to understand each other's theological position on the place of women and men in the presbyterate and episcopate. Our initial task is ...to commit ourselves to the more difficult task of asking ... whether the ordination or non-ordination of women is such a weighty dogmatic issue that it justifies division in the body of Christ.⁴⁹

7.37 The Orthodox subscribe fully to the biblical and patristic teaching that ... the Incarnation is extended equally to male and female.

Fourth phase

The International Commission for Anglican–Orthodox Theological Dialogue began its fourth phase in 2009 in Crete in 2009, and has met in 2010 in Oxford, 2011 in Albania, 2012 in Chester, 2013 in Serbia, and 2014 in Jerusalem. In September 2015 the Commission completed this with the Agreed Statement, “In the Image and Likeness of God: A Hope-Filled Anthropology”, known as the Buffalo Statement.⁵⁰

the Triune God: the Cyprus agreed statement of the International Anglican Orthodox Theological Dialogue 2006, in “Zeitschrift Internationale kirchliche Zeitschrift: neue Folge der Revue internationale de théologie”, Band 97, Zürich 2007, Heft 4, pp. 249-274, here p. 260.

⁴⁹ “The Cyprus Agreed Statement presents a striking contrast to the official attitude of the Roman Catholic Church, for which the ordination of women is a change the Church has no authority to make.”, Hugh Wybrow, *The church of the Triune God ...*, p. 270.

⁵⁰ Published by the Anglican Communion Office: <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/208538/in-the-image-and-likeness-of-god-a-hope-filled-anthropology-2015.pdf>.

f) 1996 The Porvoo Declaration between the Anglican Churches of Great Britain and the Lutheran Churches of Northern Europe

In 1985 discussions started between the Church of England (CofE), the Federation of Evangelical Churches in the GDR (BEK), and the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD). The goal of this process was, to bring a 460 years old schism to an end between the Church of England and the protestant churches of the continent.

As a result of six years proceedings the involved churches declared the “Meissen Agreement”.⁵¹ In 1991 the Meissen Agreement was signed in London and in Berlin.

Based on this 1992 the Anglican Churches of Great Britain and Ireland, and the Lutheran churches in the Baltic’s and Scandinavia declared the “Porvoo Common Statement” in Porvoo-Finland. Through the Porvoo Common Statement was achieved the full Church communion and interchangeability of offices between the Anglican Church Community and the Lutheran churches in the Baltic’s and Scandinavia.

But compared to the Meissen Agreement the Porvoo Common Statement included the conditions of the Anglican “Chicago-Lambeth Quadri-lateral” of 1888, that has been made recognition of the “historical episcopate” as a condition for the full church communion between the Anglican Church Community and other Christian Churches. Therefore since then there has been a disparity in the relations with the Anglicans between the Protestant churches of Europe, which have bishops in historical succession, and those who have neither preserved the historical succession, and those who have neither preserved the “historical episcopate” nor have been prepared to restore it.

Other churches around the world have joined these agreements, “so that a clear trend towards greater communion in the Churches of the Reformation can be spoken”⁵².

The restitution of “full, visible unity” is determined through the Porvoo Declaration to conditions which go beyond what the Augsburg Confession

⁵¹ “With the Meissen Declaration, the EKD and the Church of England recognized each other as churches belonging to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ, and committed themselves to taking all possible steps to closer fellowship in as many areas of Christian life and witness as possible, as well as to strive together for full, visible unity.”; <https://www.ekd.de/en/Meissen-Declaration-289.htm>.

⁵² *100 Jahre ökumenische Bewegung. Ein historischer Überblick*, in “Brixner Theologisches Forum” 120, Brixen, 2009, pp. 9-21, here p. 13.

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“satisfies the true unity of the Christian Churches (satis est)” namely “a consensus about the authority of the Holy Scriptures, of the sacraments of baptism and of the Lord’s Supper, as well as of the validity of the early church confessions”.⁵³

On the contrary, the Porvoo Common Statement, founded on the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, also makes the acknowledgment of the “historical episcopate” a condition for the full church communion of Anglicans with other Christians.

At a conference in Oslo 2003 the churches of the Porvoo Communion approved Guidelines for Inter Faith Encounter. Later in 2011 in Goteborg at a “major Interfaith Engagement Consultation” additional guidelines were further developed.⁵⁴ The purpose of this updated resource is “to enable people to ... (be) engaged locally with their neighbors from different faith/belief communities to support and develop Inter Faith engagement locally”⁵⁵.

g) Pro Oriente reconciliation process regarding the schisms of the “Union of Brest“ 1596/1692 and of the “Union of Transylvania 1700”

Between the Orthodox and the Greek Catholic Churches in the former territories of the Habsburg Empire in the Baltic area, in the Ukraine and in the area of Hungary - Transylvania, a history of mutual injuries and infringements sustained since the time of the Russian-Hapsburg-Hungarian-Ottoman wars with a persistent great influence. In this time originated the Jurisdiction of the “Church Union of Brest” 1596 (newly confirmed in 1643) and the Union of 1692 in today’s Ukrainian territory. Additional with the founding of the Greek Catholic Church 1698 to 1701 in Transylvania it is very necessary to clarify the relationship of orthodox and Greek

⁵³ Paul Oppenheim, *Auf dem Weg zur vollen sichtbaren Einheit / Der theologische Dialog der EKD mit der Kirche von England*, Reader zur EKD-Synode 2000, http://archiv.ekd.de/international/berichte/2000/oekumene_reader2000_11.html.

⁵⁴ Compare Porvoo Communion of Churches Keys to Inter Faith Engagement : http://www.porvoocommunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Porvoo_Keys_to_Inter_Faith_Engagement_updated-February_2014.Final_.pdf.

⁵⁵ *Porvoo Communion of Churches Keys to Inter Faith Engagement*, Conference of European Churches CEC: Ecclesiology and Theological Dialogue, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation 2016 June 19, <http://www.ceceurope.org/porvoo-communion-of-churches-keys-to-inter-faith-engagement>.

Catholic relations.⁵⁶ But also needs to clarify their own sensitive character between the Roman Catholics and the Greek Catholics.⁵⁷

Since 2001 the Foundation “Pro Oriente” in Vienna has been conducting a source-critical research project, which deals with the controversial questions of the emergence and the direct ramifications of the union of the Greek Catholic in Transylvania with the Catholic Church (1697-1761) and the resistances against.⁵⁸

Since 2002, the Foundation has been conducting a further source-critical research project dealing with the controversial questions of the emergence and ramifications of the union of the Greek Catholic with the Catholic Church (Union of Brest) in the Rzeczpospolita Polska, the Polish Lithuanian double republic, and the resistances against.⁵⁹

j) Pro Oriente reconciliation process regarding the schism of the “Union of Brest“ 1596/1692

The reasons for the confessional conflicts between the Orthodox Church and the Greek Catholic Church in Ukraine and Belarus “hark back to the church history of Rzeczpospolita Polska and are located particularly in the mutually painful chapter of the Church Union of Brest at the transition from the 16th to the 17th century”.⁶⁰

The Greek Catholic Church has been prohibited in the Soviet Union since 1945.

With the reapproval and strengthening after the political change of 1989 tensions between the two churches in the Ukraine reappeared.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Compare to this passage Dieter Brandes, *Healing of Memories – Eine Aufgabe christlicher Kirchen in Europa*, in “epd-Dokumentation” nr. 40 / 2005, Evangelischer Presbiterien, Frankfurt/M 2005, pp. 16-25, here p. 18.

⁵⁷ Compare to the sensitive relations between the Roman Catholics and the Greek Catholics: Mirosław Marynowych *Die Osterweiterung der Europäischen Institutionen – Historische Belastungen am Beispiel der Ukraine*, in “Versöhnung in Europa – Aufgabe der Kirchen in Belarus, Polen und Deutschland”, edited by the Kontaktausschuss des Polnischen Ökumenischen Rates und der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland, Hannover 1998, pp. 35f.

⁵⁸ Compare *Pro Oriente - Union von Siebenbürgen* : http://www.pro-oriente.at/Union_Siebenbuergen/.

⁵⁹ Compare *Pro Oriente - Union von Brest* : http://www.pro-oriente.at/Union_Brest/.

⁶⁰ *Pro Oriente - Union von Brest* : http://www.pro-oriente.at/Union_Brest/.

⁶¹ Compare *Pro Oriente - Union von Brest* : http://www.pro-oriente.at/Union_Brest/.

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The ecclesiastical circumstances around the foundation of the “Union of Brest“ 1596/1692 are very controversial discussed historically and the confessional representations and interpretations are often contradictory.

Therefore “the aim of the research project is to compose a compendium of the (important) occurrences common taken in responsibility by all the contributory researchers”.⁶²

With this research project should be achieved

“that the conversations between the denominations in the future will be not burdened by no unilateral statements, pseudo-historical accusations and historical myths regarding the history of the Union, and confessional hostilities can be overcome”.⁶³

ii) Pro Oriente reconciliation process regarding the schism of the “Union of Transylvania 1700”⁶⁴

Since 2001, an interdisciplinary workgroup of historians and theologians has been working to write together “the church history of Transylvania, which has unfortunately already been subjected to too many unnecessary confessional disputes”.⁶⁵

The workgroup wants to work of “over the course of centuries (tragic) prejudices and historical myths, which stand in the way of the intended community of all Christians” and contribute to the “dismantling of such tensions and to the reconciliation of the churches”.⁶⁶

The “aim is the ‘purification of memory’/‘healing of memories’, as also described by Pope Benedict XVI and his predecessor, as well as by the Conference of European Churches (CEC) is demanded”.⁶⁷

⁶² *Pro Oriente - Union von Brest* : http://www.pro-oriente.at/Union_Brest/.

⁶³ *Pro Oriente - Union von Brest* : http://www.pro-oriente.at/Union_Brest/.

⁶⁴ Compare *Pro Oriente - Union von Siebenbürgen* : http://www.pro-oriente.at/Union_Siebenbuergen/.

⁶⁵ *Report of the first session 2001 “Zur Union von Siebenbürgen“*: <http://www.pro-oriente.at/>, Initiativen – Union von Siebenbürgen , 1. Tagung 2001 zur – Union von Siebenbürgen”.

⁶⁶ *Report of the third session 2001 “Zur Union von Siebenbürgen“* : <http://www.pro-oriente.at/>, - Initiativen – Union von Siebenbürgen - 3. Tagung 2005 zur – Union von Siebenbürgen”.

⁶⁷ *Report of the third session 2001 “Zur Union von Siebenbürgen“* : <http://www.pro-oriente.at/>, - Initiativen – Union von Siebenbürgen - 3. Tagung 2005 zur – Union von Siebenbürgen”.

The Greek Catholic Church has been prohibited in the communist Romania since October 1948. With the re-admission and strengthening after the political change of 1989 the tensions with the Orthodox Churches in Romania developed.

One of the important reasons for the disputes was the different view and interpretation of the church history of Transylvania, especially the mutually painful chapter of the Transylvanian Church Unions at the turn of the 17th to the 18th century.

The question of the “Unions” also burdened the work of the official Orthodox - Roman Catholic Dialogue Commission from 1989 onwards.

The aim of the project was, as in the process of the “Union of Brest”, a description of the beginnings, the spread and the implementation of the union of the Greek Catholic Church with the Roman Catholic Church and the resistances against the union and the occurrences of the years 1697 ensuing (conquest of Transylvania by the Habsburg army) until 1761 (installation of an orthodox bishop for the orthodox Romanian citizens who refused the union).

The project was concluded 2016 in Vienna with a public presentation of the results.⁶⁸

III.2. Reconciliation: A Permanent Concern for the Conference of European Churches⁶⁹

a) The Ministry of Reconciliation of the Conference of European Churches CEC. A report of 50 years serving reconciliation in Europe⁷⁰

The Conference of European Churches CEC was founded “in order to serve as a platform of encounter and dialogue between the churches in

⁶⁸ The contributions and results of the meetings are published in the “Annales Universitatis Apulensis” of the University of Alba Iulia in Romanian language (with German abstracts).

⁶⁹ This is the origin title of a report of Viorel Ioniță at the WCC International Consultation of Healing of Memories in Sâmbată-Romania, published in “Reconciliatio” nr. 4: *Telling Stories of Hope – Reconciliation in South East Europe Compared to World Wide Experiences – Festschrift in Honor of Dieter Brandes to his 65th Birthday*, edited by Vasile Grăjdian, Olga Lukács, Cluj Napoca – Leipzig 2010, pp. 93-98.

⁷⁰ This chapter is mostly oriented to Viorel Ioniță, *Reconciliation: A Permanent Concern for the Conference of European Churches*.

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the divided Europe”.⁷¹ The movement to create a Council of European is dating from the time of the Cold War in the years between 1953 and 1957. First a small group of church leaders in the West and the East Europe started to reconnoitre the willingness and readiness of the churches by different political, economic and social systems in East and West Europe to communicate about Peace and Reconciliation in both sides of the political European systems. The aim of this group was “to enable the churches of Europe to become instruments of peace and understanding”.⁷²

Also “CEC has consistently tried ... (to overcome)... the iron curtain” among the churches... (and)... to build bridges between minority and majority churches ... and between Christians of different confessions”.⁷³

In **1959** representatives of more than 40 churches met for the **first assembly of CEC in Nyborg Strand**, Denmark⁷⁴, with the theme “European Christianity in Today’s Secularized World”. 1960 (“The Service of the Church in a Changing World”) and 1962 (“The Church in Europe and the Crisis of Modern Man”) took place the second and the third Assembly of CEC in Nyborg too. 1964 on board of a ship in the Baltic Sea the assembly adopted a constitution.

The 5th Assembly 1967 in Poertschach-Austria Reconciliation was the guiding theme (“To Serve and Reconcile - the Task of the European Churches Today”).⁷⁵

At least in Poertschach the European churches “were aware of their responsibility to promote reconciliation”⁷⁶ and to be ready “to give themselves in service and reconciliation”.⁷⁷

⁷¹ Viorel Ioniță, *Reconciliation: A Permanent Concern ...*, p. 93.

⁷² *Conference of European Churches* in https://www.oikoumene.org/en/member-churches/europe/cec?set_language=en

⁷³ *Conference of European Churches* in https://www.oikoumene.org/en/member-churches/europe/cec?set_language=en

⁷⁴ Today the CEC has more then 120 Orthodox, Anglican, Protestant and Old-Catholic Churches as members.

⁷⁵ Regarding the guiding themes oft he assemblies please compare *Conference of European Churches*.

⁷⁶ Viorel Ioniță, *Reconciliation: A Permanent Concern ...*, p. 94

⁷⁷ Michael de-La-Noy, *A Task for the Churches in Europe, A Report of the «Nyborg V» Assembly of the Conference of European Churches in Pörtschach, 1967*, Geneva, 1968, p 42.

1982 at Goslar-Germany the consultation of the CEC Study Department focussed “Reconciling Power of the Trinity”. The consultation mentioned that “the Trinity supports us in our activity for reconciliation, unity and peace in the world of today”.⁷⁸ This consultation encouraged to start a process to develop “a common theological basis for the action of the churches in their service for reconciliation, as well as ... for the work of reconciliation in Europe”.⁷⁹

1989 May 15-21 in Basel-Swiss the CEC in cooperation with the Council of the European Bishops’ Conferences (CCEE) 700 delegations from the most Churches of all the Christian denominations of Europe “meant to bring a European contribution to the world wide **process of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)**”⁸⁰

Jean Fischer, the General Secretary of the CEC annotated: “the top and bottom levels, the clergy and the lay, men and women, activists for peace, justice and the environment, wanted to achieve reconciliation between the Churches”.⁸¹

In the final document of the First European Ecumenical Assembly the Churches under Section 5.3 nr. 55 committed themselves “to have a special responsibility to contribute to this reconciliation”.⁸²

During the Basel Assembly the issue of Healing of Memories became a special focus concern for CEC. In this way CEC was well prepared to the radical political changes in Western and Eastern Europe still within the same year.

1997 June 23 – 29 the Second European Ecumenical Assembly took place in **Graz-Austria** with the theme: “**Reconciliation – Gift of God and Source of New Life**”.⁸³ The Graz-Assembly continued the process

⁷⁸ Viorel Ioniță, *Reconciliation: A Permanent Concern ...*, p. 94.

⁷⁹ Viorel Ioniță, *Reconciliation: A Permanent Concern ...*, p. 94.

⁸⁰ Viorel Ioniță, *Reconciliation: A Permanent Concern ...*, p. 94.

⁸¹ <https://agensir.it/quotidiano/2009/5/15/ecumenism-ccee-cec-the-first-european-ecumenical-assembly-in-basel-20-years-ago/>

⁸² *Peace with Justice. The official documentation of the European Ecumenical Assembly, Basel, Switzerland, 15–21 May, 1989*, edited by the CEC, Geneva, 1989, p. 49.

⁸³ Compare the final document at <https://www.bing.com/search?q=second+european+assembly+of+churches+graz&form=EDGHPC&qs=PF&cvid=796dd26ae5e0426c8830884f15cebc0a&cc=DE&setlang=de-DE>

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from Basel regarding the processes to promote Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation in Europe. But the Graz-consultation did put more focus to the self-confident contributions of the churches within their own environment and in comprehensive responsibility for peace and reconciliation in Europe.⁸⁴ Concrete the European churches committed themselves “to take on an active and persistent role in the peaceful transformation of conflicts (e.g. in Northern Ireland⁸⁵, in Cyprus⁸⁶) and in peace and reconciliation processes following violent conflicts (such as those in Bosnia⁸⁷, Croatia⁸⁸, Serbia⁸⁹, Czech⁹⁰ etc.).”⁹¹

⁸⁴ But Graz also formulated: “And unfortunately, the church communities must confess that throughout history they often showed themselves as a bad example for the Christian message of reconciliation” and “Religions and Churches became themselves part of the problem” in *Final Document Nr. 3 of the Second European Ecumenical Assembly in Graz 1997* (Graz 3), www.kek-cec.org, B34: *Role of churches in conflicts*.

⁸⁵ Compare for instance *Reconciling Memories*, edited by Alan D. Falconer and Joseph Liechty, Dublin, 1998 or Kieran McEvoy, *Making Peace with the Past – Healing Through Remembering – Options for Truth Recovery Regarding the conflict in and about Northern Ireland* in “Reconciliatio” nr. 1: “Healing of Memories in Europe - A Study of Reconciliation between Churches, Cultures and Religion”, edited by Dieter Brandes, Cluj Napoca – Leipzig, 2007, pp. 144-155.

⁸⁶ Compare Jelana Nolic *Exploring the context of memories in the Cyprus conflict – How to reconcile the irreconcilable*, in “Reconciliatio” nr. 7: “Reconciliation between Peoples, cultures and Religions”, edited by Manoj Kurian, Dieter Brandes, Olga Lukács and Vasile Grajdian, Sibiu-Bonn 2012, pp. 131-142.

⁸⁷ Compare Maida Haseč ić and Marko-Antonio Brkić, *The influence of Religion and Ethical Identity of the Development of Values in Culture and Society of Bosnia Herzegovina* in “Reconciliatio” nr. 4, pp. 165-171, and Muhammed Jusić *Challenges of Fading the Past – Healing of Memories in Bosnia and Religious Communities*, in “Reconciliatio” nr. 7, pp. 200-206.

⁸⁸ Compare for instance Carolyn Boyd Tomasović, *Ecumenical Woman's Initiative – Healing and Reconciliation*, in “Reconciliation between peoples, cultures and religions: reconciliation in Bosnia-Herzegovina compared to the european-wide experiences / The European Interreligious Consultation on «Healing of Memories», Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, May 3 - 6, 2010”, edited by Manoj Kurian, Bonn; Hermannstadt: Schiller, 2012, pp. 166-169.

⁸⁹ Compare for instance Angica Dragin *No-Small-Issues-World – Reconciliation Experience in Segrbia*, in “Reconciliation between peoples...”, pp. 193-200.

⁹⁰ Compare Milos Calda *Healing fo memories in the Czech Republic*, in “Reconciliation between peoples...”, pp. 94-99.

⁹¹ *Reconciliation – Gift of God and Source of New Life. Documents from the Second European Ecumenical Assembly*, edited by Rüdiger Noll and Stefan Vesper, Graz, 1998, p. 51.

Just the Graz Assembly encouraged several European processes of reconciliation. But the Graz Assembly also “was well aware that ecumenical recommendations do not necessarily motivate the churches in their action”⁹². Consequently that led to develop a common European document of Churches after the recommendations from the Graz: the *Charta Oecumenica*.

2001 April 22 at the end of the European Encounter at Strasburg, France the presidents of the CEC, Metropolitan Jérémie of France, and of the CCEE, Cardinal Vlk of Prague, underlined the **Charta Oecumenica**⁹³ as a “Fundamental ecumenical responsibilities ... to promote an ecumenical culture of dialogue and co-operation ... and to provide agreed criteria for this.”⁹⁴

Translated into more than 30 languages the *Charta Oecumenica* confesses on the one hand in Chapter 3 that “the Christian churches, which has been marked by many beneficial experiences but also by schisms, hostilities and even armed conflicts”.⁹⁵ But on the other hand in Chapter 8 the *Charta Oecumenica* committed that the European Churches “are called upon to serve together the cause of reconciliation among peoples and cultures”.⁹⁶

“The *Charta Oecumenica* became a European frame for the ecumenical cooperation including the work of reconciliation and of Healing of Memories.”⁹⁷

2003 June 25– July 2 the 12th Assembly of CEC took place in Trondheim with the theme “**Jesus Christ Heals and Reconciles: Our Witness in Europe**”.

⁹² Viorel Ioniță, *Reconciliation: A Permanent Concern ...*, p. 96.

⁹³ “However, it has no magisterial or dogmatic character, nor is it legally binding under church law.” ; Viorel Ioniță, *Reconciliation: A Permanent Concern ...*, p. 96, compare also below the chapter 3.2.b) “The *Charta Oecumenica* as the ecumenical church’s confession of Reconciliation in Europe”.

⁹⁴ Viorel Ioniță, *Reconciliation: A Permanent Concern ...*, p. 96.

⁹⁵ *Charta Oecumenica*, chapter 3 Moving towards one another, <http://www.cec-kek.org/content/charta.shtml>.

⁹⁶ *Charta Oecumenica*, chapter 8 Reconciling peoples and cultures, <http://www.cec-kek.org/content/charta.shtml>

⁹⁷ Viorel Ioniță, *Reconciliation: A Permanent Concern ...*, p. 97.

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The message to the churches by the Trondheim assembly “stressed the need for the Churches of Europe to work towards the healing of memories”⁹⁸. The message also requested the CEC Churches to “be part of the solution to the problems of growing violence, terror and fear in Europe, rather than being part of the problem”.⁹⁹

At the Trondheim Assembly where 16 Hearings. Hearing 8 was “Minority and majority churches – conflict and reconciliation”, organized by organised by Prof. Martin Friedrich from the Leuenberg Church Fellowship (now called the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe CPCE) and Rev. Secretary General of the Gustav Adolf Foundation (Gustav-Adolf Werk, Germany). Prof. Elisabeth Parmentier, President of CPCE, focused: “The ecclesiology of the Reformation” contains that, “the shape and size of a church doesn’t matter: what is important is to be rooted in Jesus Christ.”¹⁰⁰

Father Michael Tița, Romania Orthodox Church and presenting a perspective of a majority church reported the majority/minority church relations communist time before 1989 with for instance inter-confessional conferences held twice a year. He focussed: “The fact that churches’ representatives managed to meet during the regime time, in order to discuss issues like freedom or disarmament, helped the ecumenical relationships stay alive.”¹⁰¹

In the final statements, Moderator Prof. Martin Friedrich, from the CPCE, invited the churches “not to regard themselves primarily as minority or majority churches, but to see themselves simply as churches of Jesus Christ with obligations to all people and to other churches”¹⁰². Moderator Dieter Brandes focussed the results of the Hearing as perception, that the most conflicts between minority and majority churches in Europe are originally non church conflicts but conflicts between different cultures and nations. He appealed to start a process “Healing of Memories between Churches, Religions and Cultures in Europe”.

⁹⁸ *Jesus Christ heals and reconciles: our witness in Europe. Report of the 12th Assembly of CEC, Trondheim, Norway, 25 June – 2 July 2003*, edited by Lucam. Negro, Geneva, 2004, p. 92.

⁹⁹ *Jesus Christ heals and reconciles...*, p. 92.

¹⁰⁰ *Jesus Christ heals and reconciles...*, p. 26.

¹⁰¹ *Jesus Christ heals and reconciles...*, p. 26.

¹⁰² *Jesus Christ heals and reconciles...*, p. 27.

Prof. Viorel Ioniță deduced: “The Trondheim Assembly constituted one of the inputs for the Healing of Memories project in Romania, led by Rev. Dieter Brandes in relation with the CEC and the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (Leuenberg Church Fellowship)”¹⁰³. As a matter of fact In June 2004 the headquarters of the CEC and the CPCE decided to carry out together the Project “Healing of Memories between Churches, Cultures and Religions in South East Europe - Bridge between Churches, Cultures and Religions”¹⁰⁴.

2003 December 13-18 Geneva the **CEC Central Committee** in his first working took adopted in his resolution, that “Usually human beings are acting in the present on the motivation from experiences they had in the past. To ‘heal memories’ does not mean to cancel out the past, but to find ways in which **healing and reconciliation may become possible**”.¹⁰⁵

2007 September 04-09 in Sibiu-Romania the Third European Ecumenical Assembly started the guiding theme “The light of Christ shines upon all. Hope for renewal and unity in Europe”. Either in this guiding title nor within the three subtitles¹⁰⁶ became visible the leading theme from 1997, 2001 and 2003 Reconciliation through Remembering (Healing of Memoires) war. But within the Forum 5 and the Forum 9 the need for Healing of Memories in Europe was addressed. In Forum 5 “Religions” the interreligious processes Healing of Memories in Romania, Serbia and Bosnia Herzegovina where represented.

In Forum 9 “Peace” in common statements as well the Northern Irelands Initiatives of “Healing through Remembering” as the South East Europe processes “Healing of Memories between Churches, Cultures and Religions” where represented.

2008 April 6 in Sibiu-Romania as “a fruit of the Third European Ecumenical Assembly and the Healing of Memories process” (Metro-

¹⁰³ Viorel Ioniță, *Reconciliation: A Permanent Concern ...*, p. 97.

¹⁰⁴ Led by Rev. Dieter Brandes, compare Gisa Bauer *Healing of Memoires*, in “Die evangelische Diaspora. Jahrbuch des Gustav-Adolf-Werks” 82 [2013], p. 92.

¹⁰⁵ *Conference of European Churches*, Minutes of the Meeting of the Central Committee, Geneva 2003, p. 31.

¹⁰⁶ *The light of Christ and the Church – Unity, Spirituality an Witness / The light of Christ an Europe – Europe, Religions and Migration / The light of Christ and the world – Creation, Justice and Peace.*

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politan Bishop Dr. Laurențiu Streza, Sibiu) the first common **ecumenical Foundation “Reconciliation in South East Europe“** was created with representatives of all Christian Denominations of Romania and the World Council of Churches WCC, the Lutheran World Federation LWF, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches WARC and the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe CPCE as members.¹⁰⁷

The Foundation “Reconciliation in South-East Europe” (RSEE) was the first in this vein in South-East Europe, which is respected and supported by all historical churches in Romania.

Main aims of the foundation are, to advance:

- Reconciliation processes between churches, cultures and religions
- the intercultural and interreligious dialogue in South-East Europe

and so to counter the estrangements between western and eastern European culture.

2009 July 15-21 in Lyon-France the 13th Assembly of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) was focused to the guiding theme **“Called to One Hope in Christ”**.

As one of the key speakers Dr Munib A. Younan, Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), pointed a “Sign of Hope : our ministry of reconciliation” with an evidence that peacemaking “is not simply political” but an assignment from the bible to the Christians and to churches :

“I believe true reconciliation has the following marks:

1. Genuine reconciliation can grow only in a culture of truthfulness.
2. Reconciliation is built on justice, and the fruit of justice is peace.”¹⁰⁸

The Final Message of the assembly to the Member Churches included the following recommendations:¹⁰⁹

“All Christians are called to the one hope in Christ, as a way of love, forgiveness and reconciliation.” But “While we eagerly work for ... a reconciled and united Europe, we mourn that new walls of separation are being erected between nations, cultures and religions.” Therefore “We declare: There is hope! – in our struggle for truth and justice.”

“We affirm that the churches need to work for justice and speak truth to power! It is about breaking down walls between people, cultures and religions. It is about respecting and not only tolerating other human beings.”

¹⁰⁷ The first president of the ecumenical foundation was his Eminence I.P.S. Metropolitan Dr. Laurențiu Liviu Streza.

¹⁰⁸ *Called to One Hope in Christ, Report of the 13th Assembly of the Conference of European Churches (CEC), Lyon, France, 15-21 July 2009*, p. 66.

¹⁰⁹ *Called to One Hope in Christ...*, pp. 100f.

b) The Charta Oecumenica as the ecumenical church's confession of Reconciliation in Europe

A significant step regarding the Church Ministry of Healing of Memories and to promote an ecumenical culture of dialogue was created with the Charta Oecumenica. With this common ecumenical document, ratified 2001, the European Churches confessed their own responsibility for reconciliation in Europe.

Reinhard Frieling as one of the main actors in developing the document Charta Oecumenica, annotated:

“In this spirit, the churches, like no other organisation in Europe, have not only the job, but also the opportunity of effectively reconciling peoples and cultures, for example through ... conflict resolution commissions, through joint studies such as the ‘healing of memories’.”¹¹⁰

One main outline to start the European Church Ministry of Reconciliation through Remembering was focussed in Graz: “And unfortunately, the church communities must confess that throughout history they often showed themselves as a bad example for the Christian message of reconciliation and “Religions and Churches became themselves part of the problem.”¹¹¹

This confession was taken over in Charta Oecumenica 3: The Christian world must recognise that even the “history of the Christian churches” is formed “through many good experiences, but also through divisions, hostility and even warlike confrontations”.¹¹²

For the processes of Healing of Memories the following Ministries of the Christian churches are confessed in the Charta Oecumenica:

The Ministry of Reconciliation **between Churches**:

Charta Oecumenica 3 “Moving towards one another”:

“In the spirit of the Gospel, we must reappraise together the history of the Christian churches, which has been marked by many beneficial experiences but also by schisms, hostilities and even armed conflicts. (...) We commit ourselves to overcome the feeling of self-sufficiency within each church, and to eliminate pre-

¹¹⁰ *Charta Oecumenica. A Text, a Process and a Dream of the Churches in Europe*, edited by Viorel Ioniță and Sarah Numico, WCC Publications, Geneva, 2003, p. 65.

¹¹¹ *Final Document Nr. 3 of the Second European Ecumenical Assembly in Graz 1997* (Graz 3), www.kek-cec.org, B34: *Role of churches in conflicts*.

¹¹² *Charta Oecumenica*: http://www.ekumenia.fi/opillinen_vuorovaikutus/asiakirjoja_-_documents/charta_oecumenica/charta_oecumenica_in_english/

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judices; to seek mutual encounters and to be available to help one another”

The Ministry of Reconciliation among Peoples and Cultures:

Charta Oecumenica 8 “Reconciling peoples and cultures”:

“In view of numerous conflicts, the churches are called upon to serve together the cause of reconciliation among peoples and cultures. We know that peace among the churches is an important prerequisite for this. (...) We commit ourselves to counteract any form of nationalism which leads to the oppression of other peoples and national minorities and to engage ourselves for non-violent resolutions.”

The Ministry of Reconciliation regarding Judaism:

Charta Oecumenica 10 “Strengthening community with Judaism”:

“We are bound up in a unique community with the people of Israel, the people of the Covenant which God has never terminated. (...) We deplore and condemn all manifestations of anti-Semitism, all outbreaks of hatred and persecutions. We ask God for forgiveness for anti-Jewish attitudes among Christians, and we ask our Jewish sisters and brothers for reconciliation. (...) We commit ourselves to

- oppose all forms of anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism in the church and in society;
- to seek and intensify dialogue with our Jewish sisters and brothers at all levels.”

The Ministry of Reconciliation regarding Islam:

Charta Oecumenica 11 “Cultivating relations with Islam”:

“Muslims have lived in Europe for centuries...(But) there are still strong reservations and prejudices on both sides. These are rooted in painful experiences throughout history and in the recent past.

We would like to intensify encounters between Christians and Muslims and enhance Christian-Islamic dialogue at all levels.

(...) We commit ourselves to

- conduct ourselves towards Muslims with respect;
- to work together with Muslims on matters of common concern”.¹¹³

¹¹³ Upcoming will be published the third part of “The need for Reconciliation in Europe”.